

LANGUAGES

AT/OF

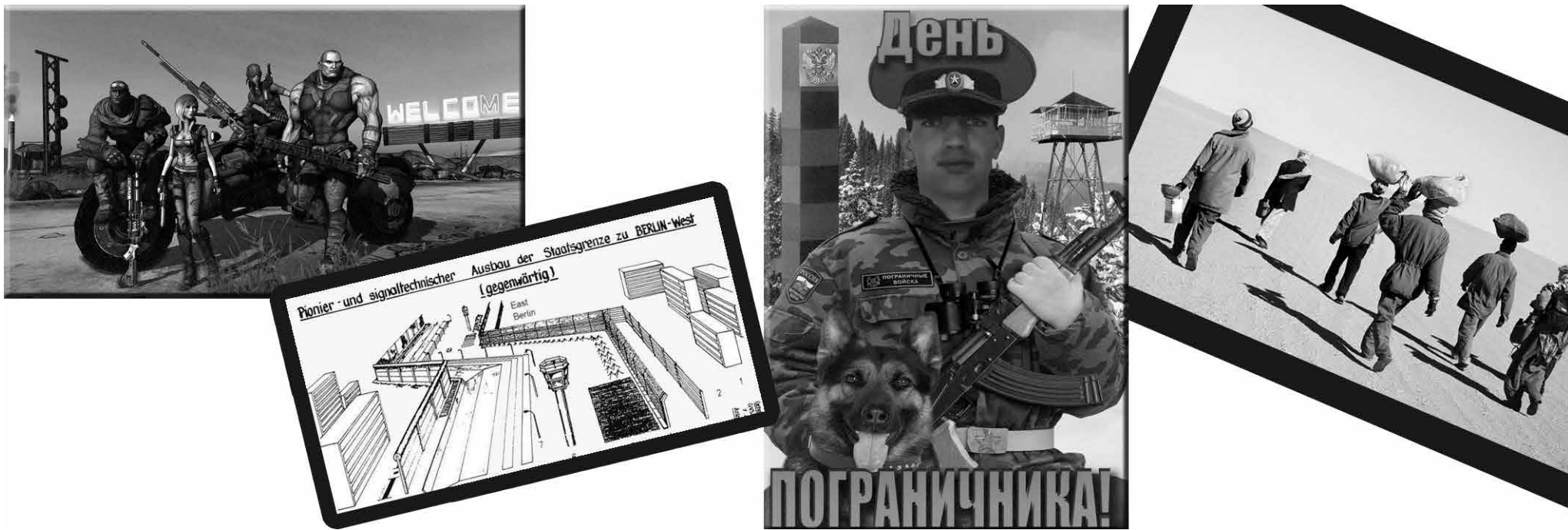
THE
BORDER

The idea for this issue arose when we began working on our film *A Border Musical*, whose screenplay is also printed here. This film is based on a study of the situation on both sides of the Russian-Norwegian border: we were interested in how a range of differences, which inevitably serve as sources of conflict in border areas, shape the subjectivity of people in daily contact with each other.

Borderlands always aggravate differences – political and social, behavioral, linguistic and economic, and so on. The border's physicality, particularly in the form of rigid paramilitary zones impeding the free circulation of people, causes anyone who becomes caught up in their force fields to re-examine the world and themselves. On the map of the world, such areas have always been not only the focus of geopolitical tensions, but also special habitats encouraging the development of new forms of language, behavior and culture. The border is a place for experiment, a zone of mobility and change.

The history of state borders has always been a history of violence: a history of wars, militarization, securitization, bureaucratic control, biopolitical regulation, forced displacement, flight and migration. Historically, state borders are shaped by the balance of violence. The winners dictate them to the losers, without taking into account either real geography or ethnicity. Borders separate "us" from "them," and these divisions are set down in documents determining state loyalties and citizenship. Paradoxically, borders, which are always artificial forms, are an essential factor of existence, shaping not only the lives of people, but also impacting the natural environment and the animal world.

Familiar to anyone who has ever participated in European protests, the slogan "No borders, no nations. . ." (which can be continued in various ways as tactics demand) is a radical utopian response to the current delineation of the modern world. It says that one and the same common extraterritorial border runs everywhere – the boundary separating the world of prosperity from the world of poverty. This border runs both along the real boundaries of the so-called First World (e.g., Fortress Europe) as well as within it, generating ever-new ghettos and zones of exclusion. The fall of the Berlin Wall was a celebration of the hope that the



Cold War's division of the world was over, and the whole planet would be a single home for everyone, with people united by a common, global citizenship. It was a foretaste of the performative unity of the world described by Alain Badiou in his text "The Communist Hypothesis," which we have excerpted in this issue.

More than two decades have passed since then, and we see this beautiful utopia has turned into its opposite: borders and walls have multiplied, inequality has grown, and the freedom of globalization has given way to the total freedom of global financial speculation and the establishment of new forms of market colonization and imperialism. It is not worth indulging in pessimism, however; the true dialectician always strives at history's most depressing moments to identify those potentials that emerge despite everything (or are concealed on the flip side of all reactionary processes) and work on implementing the prerequisites for alter-globalism. It was this movement for as-yet-untested grassroots forms of globalization that, despite its current downturn, was able to outline a range of ideas and initiate a series of political processes that are still alive and evolving.

Constantly keeping in mind the sociopolitical problems of the modern border, in this issue we have decided to focus primarily on an analysis of linguistic differences and show that, in the fight for a new unified world, it is also important to take into account the structural features of human consciousness, its intrinsic limitations. And here our understanding of the dialectics of subjectivity is formed not only in the search for unity, but also by the insurmountable limitations imposed by one's body, one's language and one's finitude.

It is in this context that crossing the border is problematized not as a universal right to equality and a decent life, but as the fundamental human desire for another, unknown experience, the desire for an encounter which conceals the potential for love and the possibility of death, the possibility of arriving at a place where everything would be different. The experience of the border as an experience of sublime knowledge of the world is how Johan Schimanski describes this state of being in his text for this issue.

The desire for a harmonious existence with oneself, with others and with the world, in which all barriers and borders would be removed, is a vital trait of human beings as a species. Existing boundaries constantly remind us of how far we are from that lofty ideal. At the same time, it is their everyday oppressive presence within and around us that stimulates our search and our thirst for transformation. As the song has it, "If you press with your shoulder, / And you and I push together, / The walls will crumble, crumble, crumble, / And we will breathe freely."

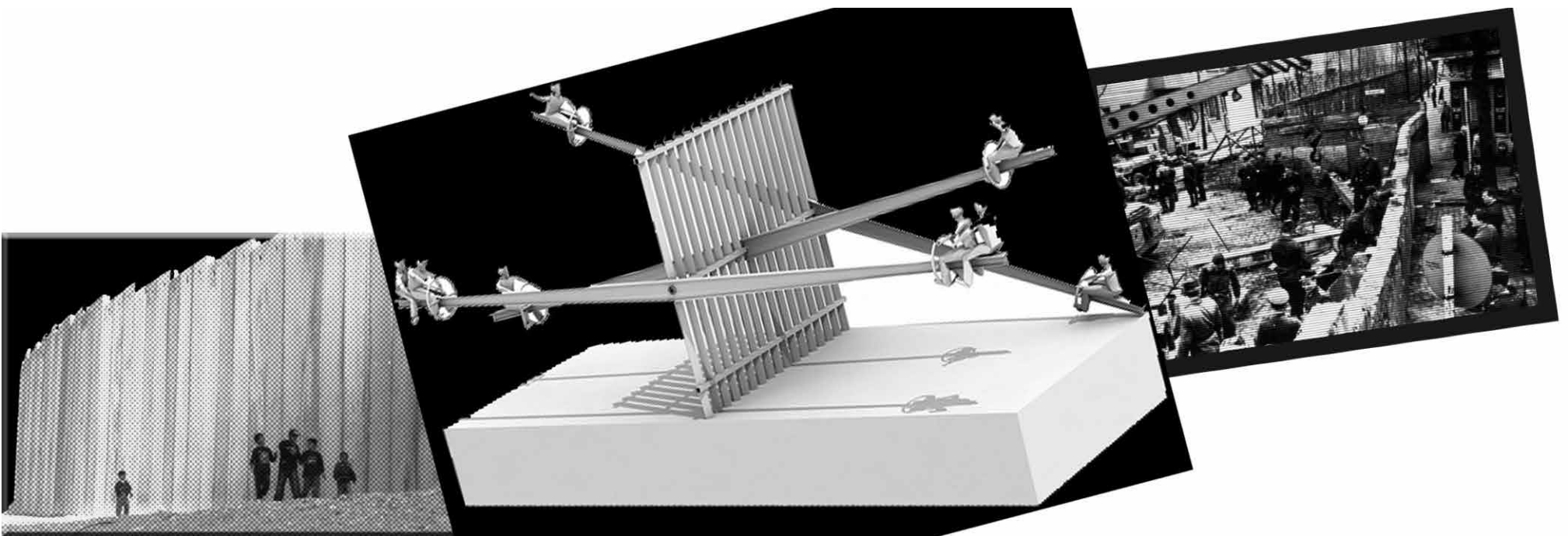
Alain Badiou | A performative unity from *The Communist Hypothesis*

The political problem, then, has to be reversed. We cannot start from an analytic agreement on the existence of the world and proceed to normative action with regard to its characteristics. The disagreement is not over qualities but over existence. Confronted with the artificial and murderous division of the world into two—a disjunction named by the very term, ‘the West’—we must affirm the existence of the single world right from the start, as axiom and principle. The simple phrase, ‘there is only one world’, is not an objective conclusion. It is performative: we are deciding that this is how it is for us. Faithful to this point, it is then a question of elucidating the consequences that follow from this simple declaration.

A first consequence is the recognition that all belong to the same world as myself: the African worker I see in the restaurant kitchen, the Moroccan I see digging a hole in the road, the veiled woman looking after children in a park. That is where we reverse the dominant idea of the world united by objects and signs, to make a unity in terms of living, acting beings, here and now. These people, different from me in terms of language, clothes, religion, food, education, exist exactly as I do myself; since they exist like me, I can discuss with them—and, as with anyone else, we can agree and disagree about things. But on the precondition that they and I exist in the same world.

with the invariance of the possible object of desire; the identity of a foreign community in a country is that by which membership of this community can be recognized: language, gestures, dress, dietary habits, etc.

Defined in this way, by invariants, identity is doubly related to difference: on the one hand, identity is that which is different from the rest; on the other, it is that which does not become different, which is invariant. The affirmation of identity has two further aspects. The first form is negative. It consists of desperately maintaining that I am not the other. This is often indispensable, in the face of authoritarian demands for integration, for example. The Moroccan worker will forcefully affirm that his traditions and customs are not those of the petty-bourgeois European; he will even reinforce the characteristics of his religious or customary identity. The second involves the immanent development of identity within a new situation—rather like Nietzsche’s famous maxim, ‘become what you are’. The Moroccan worker does not abandon that which constitutes his individual identity, whether socially or in the family; but he will gradually adapt all this, in a creative fashion, to the place in which he finds himself. He will thus invent what he is—a Moroccan worker in Paris—not through any internal rupture, but by an expansion of identity.



At this point, the objection about cultural difference will be raised: ‘our’ world is made up of those who accept ‘our’ values—democracy, respect for women, human rights. Those whose culture is contrary to this are not really part of the same world; if they want to join it they have to share our values, to ‘integrate’. As Sarkozy put it: ‘If foreigners want to remain in France, they have to love France; otherwise, they should leave.’ But to place conditions is already to have abandoned the principle, ‘there is only one world of living men and women’. It may be said that we need to take the laws of each country into account. Indeed; but a law does not set a precondition for belonging to the world. It is simply a provisional rule that exists in a particular region of the single world. And no one is asked to love a law, simply to obey it. The single world of living women and men may well have laws; what it cannot have is subjective or ‘cultural’ preconditions for existence within it—to demand that you have to be like everyone else. The single world is precisely the place where an unlimited set of differences exist. Philosophically, far from casting doubt on the unity of the world, these differences are its principle of existence.

The question then arises whether anything governs these unlimited differences. There may well be only one world, but does that mean that being French, or a Moroccan living in France, or Muslim in a country of Christian traditions, is nothing? Or should we see the persistence of such identities as an obstacle? The simplest definition of ‘identity’ is the series of characteristics and properties by which an individual or a group recognizes itself as its ‘self’. But what is this ‘self’? It is that which, across all the characteristic properties of identity, remains more or less invariant. It is possible, then, to say that an identity is the ensemble of properties that support an invariance. For example, the identity of an artist is that by which the invariance of his or her style can be recognized; homosexual identity is composed of everything bound up

The political consequences of the axiom, ‘there is only one world’, will work to consolidate what is universal in identities. An example—a local experiment—would be a meeting held recently in Paris, where undocumented workers and French nationals came together to demand the abolition of persecutory laws, police raids and expulsions; to demand that foreign workers be recognized simply in terms of their presence: that no one is illegal; all demands that are very natural for people who are basically in the same existential situation—people of the same world.

Morten Strøksnes / Borderland

In the desert I never run into anyone except agents of the Border Patrol in their four-wheelers. The forest green uniforms are everywhere in the border region. Since September 11, 2001, the entire Border Patrol has been reorganized under the new Department of Homeland Security.

Americans felt that hostile terrorists were closing in on them from all directions, and all means were set in place to improve the border controls. The Border Patrol was subsumed under the newly established Customs and Border Protection, and since then it has doubled its number of agents. They are now more than twenty thousand, and almost all of them are working along the Mexican border. The operative logic is that anyone who crosses the border illegally might just as likely be an Arab terrorist as a Mexican labor immigrant.

In 2005 the Border Patrol arrested nearly 1.2 million people along the Mexican border, but no terrorists. Three years later, the number of arrests had sunken to approximately 700 000. The number keeps sinking. Part of the reason for this drop is that illegal immigrants already living in the US have stopped going back to visit their families on the other side of the border. The risk of not being able to return to the United States, and the prices charged by human smugglers are too high. Another factor is the economic recession and hard times in the United States.

Part of the decline in apprehensions of illegal migrants may also be explained by Arizona implementing the strictest laws in the country against illegal immigration, and penalties for those who hire immigrant workers without legal work permits. But the most important reason is that the Border Patrol is becoming increasingly efficient. Efficient enough to dissuade people, who are not sufficiently desperate, from illegal attempts to cross the border. Not only has the Border Patrol placed thousands of new agents along the border; the US has also spent enormous sums of money securing the border with new surveillance technology. The Border Patrol makes use of helicopters (including Black Hawks), airplanes, and drones, fully rigged with surveillance equipment.

All along the border, tall metal towers with cameras and sonic sensors have been built. High-tech sensors are buried in the ground at strategic locations in the desert. Purpose-built vehicles equipped with cranes enable agents to observe the desert. In the nighttime they scan the terrain with infrared goggles. Many of the vehicles have sophisticated ground radars.

The most exorbitant idea to secure the borders was to build a virtual fence. Advanced cameras mounted on top of high towers would continuously overlook the entire border perimeter. The former president, George W. Bush, set aside billions of federal dollars for the Secure Border Initiative, implementing the initiative in the 2005 budget. At the price of one billion American dollars, a hired contractor, Boing, built approximately one hundred kilometers of the fencing system. A quick examination of the terrain reveals that the idea is not realizable, not with a million cameras. The project also ran into technical difficulties. President Obama scrapped it in 2010, having dismissed the entire idea as "absurd."

In and around urban areas, however, tall fences have been built, which are practically impossible to climb. The border between Mexico and the United States sees more traffic than any other national perimeter in the World, with more than three hundred million legal crossings annually. The two countries have a free trade agreement, and goods flow both ways. Still, the fences that have been built along the border have caused people to draw comparisons with the Berlin Wall. Whereas approximately two hundred people died in their attempt to cross the Berlin Wall over the course of 28 years, an estimated 1400 have died in the attempt to cross the border from Mexico and into the United States. Fewer now try to cross the border illegally. At the same time, the number of deaths is increasing. The reason is obvious: More dangerous routes are being taken. Many wander for days through the hottest and most inhospitable deserts in Arizona, among poisonous

snakes and scorpions, and where nearly everything that grows has long and needle sharp thorns or spikes. In the summertime the sun can kill you in a short time if you run out of water. In the winter, temperatures often drop to temperatures below zero degrees Celsius. If it starts to rain, or gets windy on one of those cold winter days, people could easily freeze to death in the barren landscape. On the Tohono Reserve alone, about six hundred migrants have been found dead in the past few years.

Even though it has become more difficult for drug traffickers, and illegal migrants, nicknamed "coyotes" and "pollos" in local terms, to cross the border, they have in no sense capitulated. Smuggler mafias run a billion dollar industry and have begun a weapons race with the Border Patrol. If the Americans build a fence that is five meters tall, someone on the other side of the fence responds by building a five meter tall ladder. The smugglers improve their own surveillance and investigation by sending scouts into the desert, equipped with satellite phones.



I am on my way toward the sacred Baboquivaris Mountains – the center of the Tohono universe – of which the highest peak is visible from almost anywhere on the reserve. On the endless gravel road I continually come across crucifixes and statues of saints, many of them decorated with fresh flowers. When I spot a Border Patrol vehicle, an unmistakable white and green Ford Explorer, parked on the side of the road, I decide to pull over. I have submitted a request to accompany a Border Patrol unit and observe a patrol mission on the border, but my application was denied because I am not a US citizen. The Border Patrol are not known for their hospitality to journalists and do not seem particularly concerned with PR. But, meeting an American alone in the desert, chances are he'll get into a conversation with you, Border Patrol Agent or not.

The heat hits me like a punch when I step out of the car - it is well over forty degrees Celsius. The agent rolls down his window, with raised eyebrows. He has a number of questions for me: "One hundred years ago?" "Carl Lumholtz?" "Never heard of him!" "All the way from Norway, you say?"

The man is in his mid fifties, his name is Chet and he has worked for the Border Patrol half his life. He explains that he is prohibited from discussing his work, but adds that it is probably not too difficult to guess what a Border Patrol agent is doing out here. He is in the area looking for tracks and signs of crossings, or "cutting sign," as he puts it. In spite of all the new technology, some of the methods the agents rely on are as old as mankind, from the times when our ancestors tracked the footprints of prey across the savanna.

I have heard that Border Patrol agents are legendary trackers, and I relate this to Chet. He does not seem displeased with that reputation, and, without further solicitation, he begins to elaborate with his own stories. About "bodies" with balloons, or Styrofoam cushions strapped to their feet so as not to leave traceable prints. About some who carry blankets which they lay down on the ground and walk over as they move through the desert. About those who sweep the ground with branches to brush away their footprints. About some who walk backwards to confuse the agents.

Chet lists these examples as if they were all insults to his abilities as a tracker. If anyone has passed through, he will know it, especially if they have come across what he refers to as "a drag." These are gravel lanes along the border, made by Border Patrol vehicles pulling tires behind them to create a smooth surface that will expose fresh prints. If people have crossed it, Chet will be able to tell how many they were, whether they were tired, and how long it has been since they passed by. He demonstrates by giving an example. Most beetles, lizards and rodents are active just before dawn, and these small animals leave tracks. If there are human footprints on top of these small tracks, it means that someone has come through after dawn. If that is the case, whoever made them is likely near by, because most people stop walking when the sun comes up.

Chet claims that he and his colleagues save dozens of lives every month. They find people who are disoriented and staggering about the desert without direction and aim. Some are delirious and in their last stages of dehydration, they take off all their clothes and literally bury their heads in the sand. He has found women in their last stages of pregnancy, and with newborn children in their arms. The mafias behind the human trafficking charge about a thousand dollars per head, and the larger the group, the higher the profit. If someone in a group of ten or twenty collapses along the way, no mercy is shown for them.

UNDOING BORDERS & QUEERIFYING THE UNDOCUMENTED NARRATIVE

SF Pride at Work/HAVOQ will be exploring the question: What does Queer have to do with Borders? UndocuQueer artist Julio Salgado will be presenting his work.

TUESDAY Dinner at 6:30 PM at the LGBT Community Resources Center, floor, Fire Truck Home, 433 Santa Teresa St.

Conversation at 8 PM at El Centro Chicano

NO BORDERS
NO NATIONS
NO FLAGS
NO PATRIOTS

MEXICO U.S.A.

from the book *Tequila diaries*

"Many of the people who try to come through the desert are from Southern Mexico, and they have never been in a desert before. Some will try to carry a gallon or so of water with them, a few cans of Coke or Red Bull, and they are lugging little kids with them. If they get sick, are injured, or run out of water, they are simply left behind by the Coyotes. If we don't find them, they die before long."

We are a few miles from the border, in an area where it is possible to find some shelter in little patches of shade under Creosote bushes, Mesquite, or Ironwood trees, or perhaps by a skeletal wattle near a dried out watering hole. In the daytime, "illegals" pack together under such trees and bushes. At sunset they come out and continue on their way, northbound. If they run out of water, it is no longer a matter of the Border Patrol finding them, but of them finding the Border Patrol.

Chet says he has lost count of how many people he has arrested and whose lives he thereby has saved. When they discover severely depleted persons, they call in the Border Patrol's special unit for life rescue, BORSTAR (Border Parole Search, Trauma and Rescue). Other places in Arizona,

civilian volunteers of the humanitarian organization, No More Deaths, are providing desert aid by putting out large cans of water. Their counterpart is the Minute Men organization, which consists of volunteer border guards who wish to protect America from illegal immigrants. But neither of these groups is permitted to operate within the reserve. The Tohono Nation have self-governance over their land, but not above the federal level of law enforcement, such as the Border Patrol.

Chet also tells me there is a Tohono unit of "sign cutters" on the reserve, hired by the Border Patrol. They are called the "Shadow Wolves," and know the desert better than anyone.

Suddenly it seems as if agent Chet remembers that he is not supposed to speak to strangers about his work, not even to a legal Norwegian with a visitor's permit. I am glad the conversation is over. While Chet has been sitting inside his cool vehicle, with the air conditioner on, the Norwegian has been standing outside in the scorching sun for ten minutes, and is beginning to feel dizzy.

Morten A. Strøksnes is a Norwegian writer, journalist and historian. He has written seven books, from Eastern Europe, the US, Middle-East and Norway. His previous book was "A killing in the Congo". Last October he published "The Tequila-diaries. Through the Sierra Madre", a piece of literary reportage, where he travel from the border-areas through the lawless, legendary Sierra Madre-mountains of Mexico.



Holger Pötzsch / Mind the Gap

Colombian artist Doris Salcedo's artwork *Shibboleth* (2007–08) consisted of a large crevice in the floor of the Tate Modern's exhibition space in London. The long crack stretching through the fundamental fabric of a modernist industrial site carries obvious connotations. According to the Unilever Series description of the work, Salcedo subtly subverts the Turbine Hall's claim to monumentality and grandeur, and exposes a fracture in modernity itself. Salcedo herself states that *Shibboleth* critically addresses the long legacy of racism and colonialism: "it represents borders, the experience of immigrants, the experience of segregation [...] a negative space" (quoted in *The Guardian*, October 8, 2007).

Indeed, the peculiar location and innovative form of *Shibboleth* make it resonate well with a post-colonial discourse that directs attention to underlying divisions and naturalized practices of exclusion. What such readings of Salcedo's work often seem to overlook, though, is the fact that the crack not only points to a constitutive division at the heart of western modernity, but that it emerges as a space of its own – a third space in Homi Bhabha's sense – that not only delimits inside from outside, inclusion from exclusion, qualified life from bare life, represented from representation, but also contains the potential to question, challenge and possibly undermine the very entities that are formed in and through this line, and that are maintained in and through a relation of mutual exclusivity. The crack does not only make visible the excluded subjects on the other side, but also draws attention to the dividing

line itself. I believe that precisely such liminal aspects of *Shibboleth* make for its genuinely subversive impact.

During the exhibition of *Shibboleth*, Tate Modern staff constantly patrolled and monitored the crevice to make sure no inattentive visitor would step over the edge and get hurt. Despite these protective measures, according to the gallery's health and safety executive, fifteen people sustained minor injuries during the first month of the show. The crack obviously constituted a certain threat, yet due to its nature as an artwork, it could not simply be fenced off. It is, apparently, quite dangerous to get close to a liminal third space from which unprecedented articulations might arise that point to an as yet unarticulated, still dormant alternative beyond.

What does the crack imply, then? In Chantal Mouffe's understanding of politics, the crevice emerges as a liminal third space that alerts us to the ultimate impossibility of society. This does not mean that any societal formation or arrangement is impossible, but refers to the fact that any hegemonic, objectified order will with necessity always be challenged and eventually subverted by an alternative framework. This inarrestability of the social constitutes the core of an understanding of politics as an eternal process of negotiation. The purpose of a democratic politics is, as such, not the creation, and subsequent defence, of a perfect and all-inclusive political system, but the acknowledgement of any political arrangement's ultimate contingency. This understanding is vested in the acceptance of the other, not as an implied mirror-image of the self to be benevolently included, but as the legitimate enemy who constantly alerts us to the precariousness of own naturalized and sedimented structures of meaning and understanding. According to Mouffe, the peculiar thing about a democratic politics is its ability to accommodate such constant change, effectuated in and through perpetuated subversions, and to direct these processes into nonviolent directions.

What *Shibboleth* alerts us to, then, is not that the other's inclusion into a given reified frame subverts an established order (and its borders). Rather, through their encounter, both divided entities are exposed to a radical difference that reasserts the ultimate contingency of the social and reactivates active searches for meaning and belonging on both sides of the constitutive dividing line. This active search for new configurations, new possibilities, new b/orders emanates not

from the one side or the other, but from the dividing line itself that brings the two sides in contact. As such, the line emerges as a liminal space of its own that is inherently connective and subversive, and that enables the formation of new identities and structures of belonging on both sides. The gap not only neatly parts, but also facilitates contact and constant change.

The new and challenging element in this line of thinking is that it treats both sides of the crevice as equal and, within their respective frames, equally exclusive. One result of this is that the objective of a progressive democratic politics cannot be reduced to the benevolent inclusion of a constitutively excluded other into what is implicitly (if not always deliberately) framed as a superior order, but must be seen as lying in the institutionalized acceptance of a radical difference at the heart of any order – a difference that constantly reasserts the contingency of any objectified order or border.

Hegemony must be seen as going both ways. Each of the sides divided by a constitutive barrier, crack or gap is equally blind for what lies beyond, and precisely through this shared blindness both sides become mutually constitutive as the respective other's largely imagined negative mirror image. The acceptance of a radical difference, of the ultimate absence of a common ground for political articulations and practices, forces both sides to constantly rethink all that is believed to be simply true and natural. Salcedo's gap alerts us to the fact that any objectivity in reality only resembles partial and temporary objectification, and that this wisdom emanates from, and is equally valid on both sides of, the dividing crevice.

Shibboleth has a haunting quality. As if to underline the futility of any attempt to hide the ultimate logic of contingency underlying all possible orders, the crevice retains a ghostly presence in the floor of the Tate Modern Turbine Hall even today, long after the show has been officially dismantled. We'll have to make do with its spectral shadow for the time being.

Holger Pötzsch is Research Fellow at the Department for Culture and Literature, University of Tromsø. He holds a PhD in Documentation Science. His research focuses is the interrelation between aesthetics and politics in the discursive construction and reproduction of borders. Research interests: war films, cultural memory, discourse theory, and cultural analysis.

Mladen Dolar | The tiny lag

I will start with perhaps the most famous philosophical statement regarding the borders of language. This is Wittgenstein's notorious thesis from his *Tractatus* (1921), one of the most influential books of modern philosophy: "The limits of my language are the limits of my world." (5.6) This statement immediately confronts us with the idea that the experience of language imposes a limit, it limits our experience of the world while at the same time structuring it and thus making it accessible in the first place. At the minimal, if we follow this logic, language imposes a constraint which is both enabling and disabling. It enables our access to the world by providing its mapping, while limiting this access by its own configuration, and for whatever doesn't fit this configuration there stands a warning 'access denied'. Our world appears as limited, and its limit is our language. This stands in line with Wittgenstein's concept of language where a proposition is ultimately, to make it quick, a picture of reality [1], or more precisely, our thought consists

side of, Wittgenstein's prohibition. The mystical tradition is based on the tenet that only what lies beyond the limit of language is worth speaking about. Only what cannot be said logically and clearly has the value of truth.

The English version of this famous sentence, 'The limits of my language ...' is usually quoted in an inaccurate form. The original says: "*Die Grenzen meiner Sprache bedeuten die Grenzen meiner Welt.*" 'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.' Mean, not are, not the same thing. There is like a cleft between being and meaning that opens up here and seems to be 'lost in translation'. Does meaning cover being? Is there a being outside meaning? What does it 'mean' for a limit to be or to mean? One could tentatively say that the very limit of being and meaning either is or means. If it means, it pertains to the logical world as its inner limit; if it is, it could be considered as the outer limit, bordering on the world beyond words which merely is, not meaning anything.

A distinction should be introduced here between a limit and a border. The distinction exists in German between two words, *die Grenze* and *die Schranke*. Wittgenstein says *Grenze*, and let us keep the word 'limit' for it, while *Schranke* can be translated as 'border' for our present purpose (although this goes against the grain of the common German usage with the trivial thing like the German border, which is *Grenze*, nowadays easily crossed without even noticing). Hegel makes this conceptual distinction in his *Logic*: "In the very fact of determining something as border, one is already beyond it." (TWA 5, p. 145) [2] If we conceive something as a limit, *die Grenze*, then we conceive it as something that forbids us to pass it, we can only stay on this side, and what is beyond is unfathomable, unreachable, unspeakable. While if we conceive something as the border, *die Schranke*, then we have already made a step beyond. Border means trespassing. We have already crossed the border by conceiving it as the border. In a further far-reaching extension, for Hegel



in making pictures of facts, of the 'states of affairs' which form the world, and thought can only be expressed and articulated in language. This statement further stands in line with two basic theses which summarize Wittgenstein's endeavour: "What can be said at all can be said clearly; and whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."

But if we are to follow this 'picture theory of language', what would then be beyond the limit that language imposes? Is there a world beyond the language world? Is there the unspeakable? Wittgenstein has a clear and simple answer to this: "There is indeed the inexpressible (*Unaussprechliches*). This shows itself (*das zeigt sich* – this can also mean 'it is what can be shown'); it is the mystical (*das Mystische*)." (6.522) So there is a beyond, unstructured, inarticulate, mute, indecipherable, it pertains to the mystical. All that can be said about it is that nothing can be said about it. This coexistence of two worlds, the one we can speak about and the one we can't, has been amply and laboriously commented upon by a vast host of scholars. I will not dwell on it, except for adding another quote: "Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that* it is." (6.44) So the very existence of the world is what escapes language, it points to the impossibility that one could ever, from the inside of world and language, endow the world with sense and grasp it in its totality. And neither can one account for the logical form itself – the logical form which makes it possible for language to refer to the world of facts – for to account for it one would have to step outside of language. Hence: "The subject doesn't belong to the world but it is a limit to the world." (5.632) So the subject stands on the very limit between the speakable and the unspeakable.

But there is another side to this. One can point out that the black abyss of mysticism which opens on the verge of *Tractatus* as the unspeakable stands in obvious opposition with the entire vast tradition of mysticism. For the common and conspicuous feature of virtually all mystics is that they wouldn't keep silent at all, they cannot stop talking about their mystical experience. The mystical propels endless speech, but certainly not of the kind Wittgenstein had in mind, for it is anything but stated clearly and logically structured. So the bulk of this tradition presents a counterpart to, or a reverse

reason (*die Vernunft*), hence all true thought, consists precisely in constantly passing all borders and limitations. Ultimately, reason is for him the very capacity to conceive every limit as a border – every alterity is the inner alterity of reason, not its outer beyond. The limit forbids, the border allows. Limits are external, borders are internal, they border on an outside which lurks within the inside. But what is it that we find once we have crossed the border of language, if it is not simply a limit? What would be the other of language across the border, if it is not simply the non-linguistic mystical being? Is the grass greener on the other side of the border of language?

Before leaving Wittgenstein let me point out that the so called 'picture theory of language', is not Wittgenstein's last word on the matter, far from it. There is a long controversy around the question of how many Wittgensteins are there. Is the author who wrote the foundational *Tractatus* at the end of WWI the same person as the one who wrote the equally foundational *Philosophical investigations* thirty years later? For what we find in the *Investigations* is rather the opposite problem to that of *Tractatus*, namely, the impossibility of establishing the limits of language. The problem he is struggling with here is that language cannot be totalized, it doesn't form a totality, hence its borders are hazy – do they cease thereby to be limits? Language is no longer tackled through its capacity to present the pictures of the world and its states of affairs, but through an entirely different concept of the language game. It is not its logical or grammatical structure that is at stake now, but its capacity to be played as a game. There are so many games constantly played with language. Games have rules, having rules is what defines a game. But there is no meta-rule which would regulate all language games. Language games form an inconsistent whole, actually not a whole at all, it is rather a non-whole, a not-all (*pas-tout*, to use the Lacanian parlance) whose limits can never be spelled out. But if language cannot form a totality, if therefore one cannot conceive its limits, then neither does the world.

In this view we would have another, the third paradigm of the borders of language: the border between the rule and the unruly in language, the border between the rule and breaking the rule – does breaking a rule establish another rule? One must presuppose a rule for there to be a (language) game, but one can never quite sustain it, make it simply objectively valid and universal. So the border is now rather conceived as the border between one language game and another, where all games are played on the border of rules they assume and presuppose, but always without a guarantee.

After these three paradigms of conceiving the borders of language let me briefly bring up a fourth one. There is another border of language spelled out by the Freudian notion of the unconscious. The unconscious clearly presents a border of the common use of language, a border of meaning, for it always appears as something that doesn't make sense. Meaning slips for a moment, and having slipped it can never be quite recuperated. There is like a break-down of language, its accident, in both senses of the word. The first three inaugural books in which Freud presented his discovery (*The interpretation of dreams*, 1900; *The psychopathology of everyday life*, 1901; *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious*, 1905) all have to do with such linguistic accidents: the dreams, the slips of the tongue, the jokes. They all deal with language and its vicissitudes (and Lacan will try to sum this up by his famous adage that 'the unconscious is structured like a language'), with the moments where the language doesn't quite work. It doesn't produce meaning, but something recalcitrant to meaning, some points whose meaning escapes, where meaning is displaced, condensed and distorted. These quirks and slips present an enigma which calls for interpretation, that is, for an analysis which would endow the meaningless with meaning. But there is a simple and crucial point: psychoanalysis is not about unearthing a hidden meaning. All hidden meaning that one discovers and works out – and this calls for a strenuous and laborious effort – all this meaning can be recuperated by consciousness, but this doesn't do away with the breakdown that produced it, it doesn't heal its crack. Psychoanalysis presents a border of language as meaningful, and the crack of language it presents evokes the crack of this world itself.

I can briefly examine two further instances of borders of language, both appearing as a border within language itself, at its very core. The first instance is the problem of the voice. At the minimal, the voice is the very medium of language, its vehicle and its home-ground, something that enables the very use of language, yet something that is not reducible to language. The voice is like a left-



over of the signifying process, its condition and its surplus in one. It is something which invokes the body, yet this is not simply the firm physical body, made of palpable matter and physiology, for two reasons: first, the voice appears precisely as a dematerialized body, a body sublimated into the mere undulation of the air, the ethereal, the immaterial matter. And second, it invokes a divided body, a body split precisely into an interior and an exterior, and the voice embodies the very passage between the inner and the outer. The experience of the voice, of both emitting and of hearing a voice, may well be what makes possible the experience of having an interiority at all – a soul, a psyche, a self – as opposed to the exteriority of the external world and its objects, separate and standing at a distance from us. So the voice, on the one hand irreducible to language, is on the other hand equally irreducible to the body, it invokes its split – and the way of its being irreducible to both may well be what, paradoxically, holds the two together, the language and the body.

Another border of language, intimately pertaining to the nature of language, but in an opposite way than the voice, is writing. The voice is the border of language which summons interiority, writing constitutes a border which refers to exteriority, objectivity, materiality of a trace. It is a border with something which exceeds speakers, interlocutors, presence, intentions, it gives language an independent body, it turns it into an object existing and circulating in the world. There is a long history of a spontaneous hierarchy between the two, the voice and the writing: the voice was seen as the natural soil of language, it evoked interiority and spirit, it evoked the living presence; the letter, on the other hand, was the dead letter, something that threatens to kill presence, to thwart it and to erode it. It was generally seen as a secondary supplement to language, an auxiliary, an optional instrument, not pertaining to its essence. And after all, writing appeared late in human history, people could do without it for god knows how many thousands of years, and it appears late in the individual history, one only learns to write after acquiring a proficiency in speech. This spontaneous hierarchy is what Derrida described with the notion of phonocentrism, the allegedly self-evident primacy and supremacy of voice over writing. Yet, and this is the gist of Derrida's argument, what seemed to be so obviously exterior and secondary may well belong to the very essence of language: its capacity of being written, of leaving a trace, is what enables language at all. In this view writing would be the interior border of language itself, something enabling it. This would be the sixth philosophical paradigm of conceiving the borders of language – something in language referring it to the materiality of inscription and trace.

The borders of language are myriad, countless and heterogeneous, and one could say that there is nothing else in language but a constant bordering, it only works through addressing its edges, it constantly proceeds on the edge with its other. It can only be itself through its borders, that is, by trespassing. I have no ambition to set up an exhaustive list, but only a series of glimpses into its various borders. Let me stop at the mythical number of seven, with the seventh paradigm on my makeshift list.

What I have in mind is not the mystical experience of the unspeakable; nor bearing testimony to the unspeakable by endless proliferation of speech; nor a language game with its rules and breaking the rules; nor is it unconscious; nor is it a voice – or at least not an emitted voice that anybody else could hear; nor is it a writing. It is not something rare or exotic, quite the opposite, it is something so common and trivial that no one ever bothers to speak about it, or hardly ever. It is the phenomenon of the inner speech.

The inner speech is ubiquitous. If one stops to think about it for a moment, one easily realizes that one's life is constantly accompanied by a companion speaking in one's head, keeping us company at all times of our waking life, never ceasing to speak, relentlessly. It looks like this is the very stuff that conditions and perpetuates our consciousness, and given its absolutely general operation, in all heads at all times, there is an astounding silence about it: nobody seems to be talking about it, having conversations about it, expounding about it, boasting about it, mentioning it at all. It just seems too trivial, almost embarrassing, something totally private and slightly tainted with an air of a dirty secret, not fit for disclosure. This is the most common of all experiences, but completely passed over in silence, not reflected upon in our daily life and very seldom reflected upon in philosophy.

In order to approach it, one can perhaps try to state what it is not. First, it is not vocal. No voice is being heard outside, not a sound, there are no undulations of the air, nothing can be physically described. Yet, it is an acoustic phenomenon, even if internal one – it doesn't address any other sense

except hearing. There is an insistent internal hearing, although there is technically nothing to hear. Second, inner speech obviously doesn't fit into the mould of language as communication, it doesn't divulge anything to anyone, it doesn't dispense information, it is uniquely a speech not directed at anyone else, and moreover, not accessible to anyone else. It has the audience of only one privileged listener, it is for his ears only, and not even really for his ears. If there is communication, then it's singularly a communication between myself and myself, between the ego and the alter ego – but is there an ego without the inner speech? Is there an ego without this alter dwelling at the closest to it, inhabiting the same tiny studio? One can see that immediately high philosophical stakes are raised at this point. Is the very notion of the ego dependent on language? And if on language, then perhaps not on its conspicuous public image, but on this unglamorous fellow-traveller of language, hidden in the cellar, or rather in the attic, indeed 'the madman in the attic'. Third, this is not a madman at all, this is the most strikingly normal phenomenon, boring and tedious in its normality. This is not the phenomenon of hearing voices, of vocal or verbal hallucination. Fourth, this is not the voice of conscience. Notoriously, conscience has a voice which addresses us in second person and tells us what to do or not to do. 'Do your duty', or 'Do not give way as to your desire'. There is a very long tradition linking conscience, ethics and morality with a voice, a voice imposing itself insistently, not giving us rest until it is heard. But conscience is not consciousness, and what we are concerned with here is consciousness, not conscience, not morality, but something which rather appears not to give a damn about morality. And fifth, this is not the unconscious, it's rather the very stuff that one is constantly conscious of, if vaguely, whether one wants to or not.

If this is what inner speech is not, what is it then? I can draw only a very provisional and haphazard list since the phenomenon is haphazard by its nature. It is a patchwork, a hodgepodge, a *mélange*, like a rhizome underlying and redoubling consciousness, stretching in all directions.

The first element of it is its quality of a tape-recorder or echo. It is like a device which records various pieces of conversation, words said by other people that one can't get out of one's mind, one's own words previously uttered, words accidentally overheard, words read. Anything can be recorded, and the inner speech doesn't have the filing system to sort out recordings by categories or by relevance. Something has stuck in one's mind, and there is something in the inner speech that one can designate as 'stuckness', for lack of a better word. Words stick, and the stuck words are being endlessly replayed. This is a tape-recorder with a particularly prominent rewind button. At the bottom of it, there is the crucial fact that the very function of speech, the acquisition of language, depends on a recording device. One repeats the words heard, there is no other way to learn how to speak, but before repeating them they must linger for a while and simmer in the limbo of inner speech. All future speech comes from past speech, with the hiatus of inner speech in between. Both past speech and future speech are public, but between them there is the private recess of inner speech, for the audience of just one.

Second, there is the function of altering the past, or remedying the past, compensating the past. This is a large slice of inner speech: replaying what one should have said but didn't. There is always a delay and retroactivity in realization and insight, so the inner speech tries to remedy whatever failed. And this delay, or this inequality with oneself, is very much what structures consciousness as such. Does one ever say the right thing? There is a lag which structures consciousness, and the inner speech sneaks into this lag. 'What a fool I was that I didn't say this or that, what an idiot to let myself be humiliated in this way, what a fool I made of myself' and much more along these lines – and one is always structurally an idiot and a fool to be retroactively vindicated by the inner speech. There are many variations to be put under the general rubric of 'Why am I such an idiot?'

If these two functions look backwards, either recording bits of the past or remedying them, then **the third crucial function looks forwards**. It is the function of anticipation, of rehearsing in one's head what one is going to say, immediately or at a future occasion. One rehearses the possible conversations with a boss, a friend, a lover, a child, one rehearses the paper one is going to write, the lecture one is going to give. It all has to be rehearsed beforehand in one's inner speech before turning into outer speech, before coming out into the open of what is usually understood by language.



Fourth, what one hears in one's head is not merely speech. One can most insistently hear a melody, a piece of music, it just repeats itself over and over again, compulsively and tormentingly, against one's will. There is a hodgepodge variety of sounding in one's head intermingled with speech, particularly music but also other sounds. And in a further extension, the inner speech is not only accompanied by a soundtrack, but also by images and pictures, it is an illustrated magazine; one pictures particular speech situations, faces of particular people involved, the scenery.

Fifth, there is the function of the running commentary that the inner speech constantly provides. 'Where did I leave my keys? And here is the electricity bill. Now what was I about to do? Let me have a cup of tea first.' Etc. One comments the dreary trivia of one's life, and there is no life so trivial that wouldn't call for a comment in one's head, no occasion so banal that wouldn't deserve one. Living an everyday life and commenting upon it in inner speech are one and the same thing.

Sixth, there is the function of day-dreaming, the function of self-indulgence in wishful scenarios, imagining rather implausible scripts in which one would play the role of a hero, take revenge on some dragon and rescue some gorgeous maiden. It's very predictable, there is always a happy ending, Hollywood didn't have to invent anything, it merely had to listen to the inner speech for scenarios.

A further variety of the day-dreaming scenarios, and closely connected with the very function of the inner speech, is the constant dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor. One invents a friend, an accomplice, a sparring partner, a confidant, with whom one discusses one's secrets, one's problems, one's dilemmas, one airs one's opinions and imagines arguments. The constant interlocutor may well be a real person, the beloved person, a far away close friend, or someone dead, and one can lead one's entire life in dialogue and in constant discussion with this one person in one's head, justifying one's life in his or her eyes.

Seventh, and last – what of meditation? What of reflection? What of the strenuous endeavours to figure out a difficult philosophical problem, or a mathematical problem, or a problem in computer programming? No doubt this happens in inner speech as the home-ground. One tries to systematically look at all the angles, one considers all possibilities, one invents virtual models, one mentally consults the authorities on the subject, one consults the library in one's head, one follows a certain argument to see where it could lead. Ultimately, and this is the bottom-line – what of thought? Is inner speech, apart from its other functions, also essentially the function of what is called thought? What does one think with, if not with the inner speech? How does thought cohabit in this very crowded space with elements which seem to be the very opposite of thought, rather the evasion of thought?

Let me stop here, again with the proverbial number of seven: recording, remedying/vindicating, rehearsing, soundtrack, running commentary, day-dreaming, thought. If we look at this provisional list, it all looks like a very mixed bag indeed, there is no criterion to sort out this mess, no general principle of division, no good way to label the categories so that they would form some sort of a system. This is a haphazard coexistence of the heterogeneous, a universe of total inconsistency. What renders it consistent, eventually, is the passage from inner speech to outer speech, where one must come up with a word, an utterance, a sentence, a response, a question, something addressing the other, the private suddenly rendered public, stepping into another realm where it exists for others, and hence for what is in Lacanian psychoanalysis called big Other. All the drama of consciousness is constantly played out on this edge.

What is at stake in inner speech is the double of consciousness without which consciousness would not exist. This double of consciousness is not the unconscious, but a constant rambling accompanying consciousness. There is a strange mixture of freedom and compulsion in it – one is nowhere as free as in one's own head, but one is also strangely ruled by compulsive repetitions, by the essential stuckness. The tiny lag, populated by the inner speech, is a space of both constraint and freedom. The inner speech is the minimal and the paramount border of language, constitutive of language as such as well as of consciousness as such. Can one say, finally: consciousness itself is nothing but the border of language, its tiny lag?

Let me end with this quote from Samuel Beckett: "I shall transmit the words as received, by the ear, or roared through a trumpet into the arsehole, in all their purity, and in the same order, as far as possible. This infinitesimal lag, between arrival and departure, this trifling delay in evacuation, is all I have to worry about." (*The Trilogy*, London: Picador 1979, p. 321)

Footnotes:

1. I am using the classical translation by C. K. Ogden, first published in 1922, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, London/New York: Routledge 2002.
2. I quote Hegel from *Theorie Werkausgabe* (TWA) in 20 volumes, Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp 1970.

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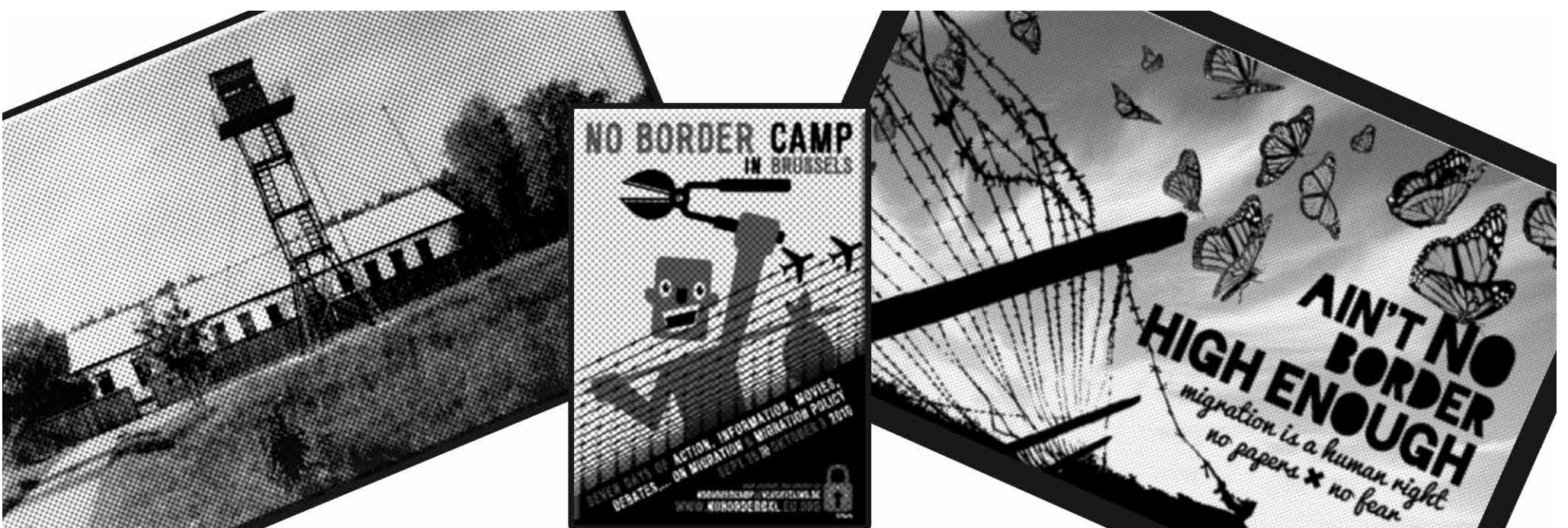
Stephen Wolfe and Henk Van Houtum

Waiting at the Border

with Franz Kafka and J.M. Coetzee

There is a need to see that not only migratory, refugee, and immigrant populations find themselves caught in the web of the borderscape, but we all are caught as well. We bring the border with us into any territory we enter, and have become increasingly aware of the diffusion of the border across other territories such as airports, travel offices, CCTV cameras in our cities, and also most every government office. It is in this space that we come before the Law and are forced to place ourselves within “the imagined community” of the nation and disciplined by our internalization of its laws. We must relate to established narratives of the state that are enacted at a distance from us, usually in metropolitan centers, and often force our decisions into an algorithmic order calculated for “threat” risk and “terror” potential. As we resist these dominant narratives we also live inside them, making us very aware of the provisional nature of the boundaries placed around our communities.

These stretched border zones or borderscapes are not only potential sites of negotiation, but also are constantly being negotiated. The view that borders are processes – *borderings* – rather than fixed lines is clear. And this includes figurative or imaginative borders, which surround us and are created for us and by us. We are, as we argue in this article, caught between a schizoid desire for, and a paranoid fear of borders. Often, however, a moment of intervention is reached or a space of negotiation is opened. This space is part of the borderscape, sometimes contiguous with it, but often far away from the geopolitical border. It is located on the outside of the geopolitical field altogether, but it always retains some link to the territorial border even if at a distance. For the migrant or citizen waiting to cross the border or come before it, this border zone is the space of the border and before the law.



Waiting for the Law at the Border

We propose examining the state of waiting at the border in two famous works of literature, Franz Kafka's "Waiting for the Law" by Franz Kafka (1914–15, published 1925) and J.M. Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980). It is with these two texts that we approach the issues of waiting, so typical of a b/ordering and othering process. We will argue that the act of waiting consists of two mutually reinforcing parts. First, we will use Kafka's text, with its emphasis on the individual who waits to come before a state system of authority, and the limitless postponements and adjustments society makes through its officials to subjectify and control the expectations and rights of such individuals within that state system. Second, we discuss Coetzee's text, in which the citizens and the army of the state identify their social responsibility with a settlement in a borderscape, where they are always awaiting a transgression of their borders by an invading “barbarian force.” The borders they construct and those protected by the Empire's army symbolize insecurities on the periphery of the Empire. To “contain” such a threat, more walls must be built; a border security force must discipline the citizenship and must “spy” on both its citizens and the “barbarian” Other. Such a force acts in the name of corporate sovereign authority and disciplinary “necessity.” But such necessary waiting and awaiting the barbarians, for both the citizen and the border guard, is intrinsically double edged, as the last line in the poem “Waiting for the Barbarians” by Constantine Kavafy, from which Coetzee has derived his novel's title, makes clear: “[A]nd now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians? They were, those people, a kind of solution.”

In Kafka's brilliant short story, the man from the country is waiting before the Law. He has been waiting all his life to have permission to enter. The principal activity of the man from the country is waiting. For to wait is to discipline oneself. Waiting calls for a standstill, a fixation in a place, and subjection to the passing of time. It makes you aware that you are not taking part in other activities; you cannot spend your time otherwise in other places when you have decided or are forced to wait.

A striking element in Kafka's text is that the man has to wait before the Law, yet he has no entrance to it. That is, the man from the country is *not yet* allowed entrance. This “not yet” for the man from the country, however, is a permanent status. It is this waiting before the Law and the *not yet* that fixes and reproduces state power and creates the internalization of control. The terms are also a destiny, a future, a promise, a life beyond the present reality that can only be reached through training, devotion, honesty, and working, depending on whatever the promise consists of. We are constantly waiting before the Law, and constantly reproducing the time-spatial b/order. It is the promise of good behavior, of good internalization of the dominant order, the promise of final appreciation by the other that constructs the social self, the waiting self. The consequence of this act of waiting is that we live our lives in a “not yet” status, in the flux of constant be-coming, or in the words of Kafka, in indefinite postponement.

We interpret the law of the territorial border in Kafka's text as a belief. It is a belief in the presence and continuity of a spatial binding power, which becomes meaningful and objectified in our everyday social practices. The spatial separation that a border represents is both goal and means. The border makes and is made. A border should be seen as a verb, *bordering*, not a noun. The making of a border is the making of a desired be-longing to an order, an in-group in an inland, and in-side, and the making of others, is the making of a be-longing so that the out-group, in an out-land, is out-side.

Although the b/order is an imagined-and-lived reality, that does not stop the desire for the true Self. The true b/order has no end, for realizations of wholeness never align with the fantasy perfectly. The perfect identity is always there, beyond the threshold, beyond the gates of the Law. The identity is the desire of a self or an order that is an unattainable Other. The emptiness of the Law produces a contingent reality and the contingent rituals of truth-keeping of those who wish to maintain the constructed b/order. That means that the lack of fulfillment is perpetual and the final truth of the b/ordered self is unattainable. In the words of the guard standing before the Law in Kafka's parable, "You are insatiable."

The man from the country is waiting before the Law, and by internalizing and believing in the fantasy of the Law he has found a pseudo-home, an in-the-meantime home at the gate, yet his desire to unmask the void, to have access, to know the truth, to truly come home, is insatiable. This feeling of endlessness is also constructed by the gatekeeper, who warned him already at the beginning of his life, when he first sought permission to enter, that *there is no end indeed in searching for the truth*, for after the first gatekeeper there are only more gatekeepers, even more powerful and harder to trespass than him. For the man from the country and for us there is no final homecoming. To fill in that lack, we create a fantasy home by waiting before the Law, a simulacrum-home. Hence, we necessarily live in a condition of not yet and never will be. We are unavoidably waiting before the Law.

Waiting for the Barbarians

Let us now turn to Coetzee's novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* and see how the state of waiting before and at a border are used there. Published in 1980, Coetzee's third novel brought him international acclaim. Set in an unspecified time and place, the novel has been read as an allegory with a strong focus on the South African security police and how the language of the novel reflects the language of the apartheid regime. Dealing with issues of torture, the novel was scrutinized by South African censors on its publication, but avoided being banned. The book is divided into six chapters spread over 170 pages, and the chapters are divided into shorter segments or scenes with allusions to Kafka's *The Trial*, the novel that contains the short story "Waiting for the Law." Many articles have been written on *Waiting for the Barbarians* since its publication, but we want to stress its depiction of the border and border guarding, the laws of Empire, and the complexity of identifying "barbarians."

At the beginning of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, the Magistrate, who is the narrator, despairs when Colonel Joll's prisoners are not "barbarians": "Did no one tell him the difference between fishermen with nets and wild nomad horsemen with bows? Did no one tell him they don't even speak the same language?" (19). It is evident that the Other is not merely one kind of Other, but a diversity of Others. Colonel Joll, who is commander of the Third Bureau protecting the town, is ignorant of the frontier



settlement; he is incapable of distinguishing "barbarians" from the "fisher folk" of the local community. From the beginning of the novel, what is foreign is always relative to the inside, the domestic, the familiar. The Third Bureau of the Civil Guard, who have come to assess the Magistrate and the frontier community, are "guardians of the state" and are part of the technical machinery of the Law and civil society. They enunciate who are Other according to the Law and have come to see for themselves how the laws of the Empire are enacted by the Magistrate. The creation of the other is crucial not only for creating images of the outsider, but also equally essential for constructing the insider: a white European male, the Magistrate and the colonel.

Kafka's and Coetzee's texts both begin with a prohibition: an act of forbidding action or of forbidding a person to act by command or decree. The Magistrate will no longer be allowed to perform his role in the community. He is discredited by not knowing the law, but he is also guilty of ignoring the Law. The countryman and the Magistrate are not allowed entrance, in any case, not yet. Unable to cross the threshold, the men stay and wait. And by so doing they are inside the Law without knowing it.

Let us see now how this is relevant to Coetzee's novel. To begin with, we will focus on the Magistrate. In the novel, the Magistrate is a border guard both implicated in and self-consciously critical of the "the Law" ("one thought alone preoccupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era") and he is "no less infected with it than the faithful Colonel Joll" (146). The Magistrate's realization of his role, in the scheme of things, seems to be what triggers his unyieldingness to the Empire and its policies. The acts committed in his jurisdiction in the name of Empire and necessity are acts that rob him of his individual authority and from which he seeks to distance himself. But he cannot distance himself from the torture, rape, and "the dark chamber" Joll uses to torture his victims. The Magistrate becomes increasingly connected with a "barbarian girl" whom Joll tortures: identifying with her becomes an escape from his colonial identity while at the same time confirming it. The Magistrate sets out to mend her broken feet and failing eyesight. The girl's body is always sexual to him while also symbolizing the conquered land he imagines he can also heal. The girl's body has traces of the border written on it. He follows the biblical injunction to wash her damaged feet, hoping for a sign of healing but without any corresponding signifier.

The question of the torture of the girl, her father, and the young boy is impossible to evade in any meaningful discussion of the novel. Coetzee says that the novel is about "the impact of the torture chamber on the life of a man of conscience": the Magistrate (Coetzee, 1992, 363). Further, in his article "Into the Dark Chamber," Coetzee suggests the torture room as a metaphor for the novelist's imagination: "[T]he novelist is a person who, camped before a closed door, facing an insufferable ban, creates, in place of the scene he is forbidden to see, a representation of that scene, and a story of the actors in it and how they come to be there" (1992, 364). Coetzee is suggesting that the novelist has the ability to cross boundaries through the use of his imagination. But the Magistrate cannot imagine the girl's suffering or Joll's abuse of her. Not, at least, until he is tortured can he begin to understand and "identify" with the girl's suffering and silence. The room is a border where the victim is held in isolation, waiting.

But the room itself gives nothing away: "I stare all day at the empty walls, unable to believe that the imprint of all the pain and degradation they have enclosed will not materialize under an intent enough gaze" (87). Exclusion itself is what spurs the

Magistrate's search for "the truth" of what has gone on in the room. The Magistrate searches for a confined space as the setting of his own interrogation of the barbarian girl about her torture. When he washes her feet in his attempt to piece her back together, the curtains are closed, preventing others from seeing what is going on in the room. Recognizing that his interrogations of her body might not withstand the light of day, a sense of secrecy and taboo is created. Yet the barbarian girl's body comes to represent a closed room in her own right, one that the Magistrate desires to invade, but he finds no way of "penetrating the surface."

In another sense, the rooms of torture mirror each other. Both are locked rooms, windowless, closed from sight but open to expressions of desire: attempts to capture the "truth" or the promise of forgiveness. The Magistrate is unable to read the traces of torture on the floor or walls. His room and the prisoners' cells are not transparent; there is no way of peering into the room where acts of torture have taken place except as torturer or victim.

The barbarian girl enters the novel in chapter two and leaves at the end of chapter three, yet her presence is central to understanding the process of waiting at the border. Her presence in town is a disturbing factor for the Magistrate. Her father died during interrogation early in the text, and her people have abandoned her; like the Magistrate, she is a solitary and isolated person. The Magistrate, after discovering her, quickly takes up a peculiar relationship with her. Her *body* bears the marks of Joll's intensive interrogation: her eyesight is damaged, leaving her with peripheral vision, and her feet have been broken. Moving her from a life outside on the streets, the Magistrate invites her into his chambers, draws the curtains, lights the lamp and asks to see her feet. Like the torturer Joll, the Magistrate prevents outsiders from seeing what is going on. Then the Magistrate commences his cleansing ritual of washing the girl's feet. The Magistrate's search for forgiveness is aligned with Joll's search for truth.

Colonel Joll uses pain to find truth. The truth he is searching for is the barbarians' guilt, but that is something he already *knows*, so what he wants from torture is an "admission of guilt." We know the Magistrate is no more looking for the truth than Joll is. His relationship with the girl becomes an exploitation of her body rather than an attempt to heal it. He uses it to find a reflection of his own "truth" and to cleanse himself of the guilt he feels. But to do so, the Magistrate must force her to speak and to see himself as an object of desire. Thus the girl becomes the possibility for him to recreate himself, yet his act of forcing her to speak about her torture is an act of torture, mirroring Joll's attempts to make the tortured speak "truth." In this way, the Magistrate is no different from Joll.

The Magistrate wants to save himself from the barbarity of the "civilized": "what has become important [...] is that I should neither be contaminated by the atrocity that is about to be committed nor poison myself with impotent hatred of its perpetrators. I cannot save the prisoners, therefore let me save myself" (114). Watching his fellow townsmen, women and children all participate in the beating of the "barbarian" prisoners, the Magistrate is determined to be the "one man who in his heart was not a barbarian." He wants not to be infected by the dis/ease that has overtaken the town. The "barbarians," in this instance, first have the word "ENEMY" written on their backs, then are "washed clean" through beating. The ironic parallelisms with the Magistrate's earlier actions in his room with the barbarian girl do not bear repeating.



Waiting processes at the border and their significance

The first part of the process is the internalization of the desire to cross the border hoping that something will be decided or performed on the other side. The man from the country belongs to the Law while he waits for the border guards' permission to even allow him entry for consideration of his case. The rite of passage and its attendant feelings of anxiety and tension are internalized, as the man becomes his own gatekeeper: he comes to prevent himself, as he is both disciplined and policed by his own desire for b/ordering. This applies to the reader reading as well, since we read, "Before the law stands the doorkeeper" and we go on reading. The text as law functions the moment the text starts and we do not move.

The second part of the process is marked by the self-controlled performances of border guards: they know that, behind the door, the Law *must be* present but is concealed from the supplicant. In the words of Walter Benjamin, "even if the law remains unrecognizable, this is not because it is hidden by its transcendence, but simply because it is always denuded of any interiority: it is always in the office next door, or behind the door, on to infinity." The act of waiting is enacted by border guard and border crosser, and is part of the same machine: the machine that demands you wait for "justice." But it is a machine with a "necessary" metaphorical form and function. It has books, symbols, personnel, and precedents controlling what can be said and what can be desired. And it is this process that becomes internalized.

In Coetzee's novel, however, citizen and border guard both wait for the barbarian Other within the machine of Empire and its Law. These figures wait in fear, making the Other subject to torture and the necessity of censorship of themselves and their speech. Coetzee complicates this by representing the Magistrate as both desiring to escape the waiting as well as being a border guard who waits. Can he escape the emptiness of his own sexual desire and guilt through his prescribed desire to be free, outside possession by the system he has served so well? Does he really have any strategies for refashioning himself? He seems, at the end of the text, to be a man without content. So, in both these texts, the border stands between fear and desire and as a representation of both fear and desire.

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Oxana Timofeeva | The Border Of The World

For a true dialectician, the ultimate mystery is not 'Why is there something rather than nothing?', but 'Why is there nothing rather than something?': how is it that, the more we analyse reality, the more we find a void?¹
—Slavoj Žižek

The world consists of borders. Without borders, there is no world. Not only are borders in between all worldly things, but also everything that is potentially meets its own border in everything else that it is not. In turn, every something is itself the border and the edge of the other and for the other, which it delimits and even shapes. Every body borders another body, being itself the border beyond which there is the other than itself. This is the structure of the world, which operates according to the law of the border, the law of difference.

The world as pictured by the physicist is a world of material bodies. But, in trying to find a perfect physical body, the particle of particles, the indivisible, science encounters the flexibility of matter and ends up with an infinitesimal reality as much material as metaphor, from oscillating neutrinos to superstrings or quark flavors with their strangeness, charm, beauty, truth, topness or bottomness. In this material world, as we know it, boundaries are never fixed, since even the rocks are moving, and even within crystals there is motion and change.

The world as pictured by the mathematician is a world of numerical or geometrical bodies. In his dialogue *Timaeus*, Plato outlines his theory of the universe, and claims that everything is made of triangles. These archaic, tiny triangular Platonic bodies are to be identified, without any bias, as a kind of sub-atomic particle, and linked to quarks in contemporary physics. One might say that the three legs of each triangle are the borders beyond which there are always already other triangles.



Although they have borders, both quarks and triangles cannot exist separately or autonomously, but only as elements of bigger and more complex structures, like atoms or regular polyhedral solids. They do not have structure or, to put it simply, they do not have any consistent inside. Elementary particles – prima materia – do not consist of anything, but, instead, everything consists of them. But if they do not consist of anything, aren't they imperceptible pieces of nothing, each being a border between nothing and thing, nothing and something, nothing and everything? Pure Being and pure nothing are the same, Hegel says.² What is the thing, then, the elementary thing or the particle of the particles, which contains nothing, if not the border of these two, the border of the same, where all difference is produced?

The world as pictured by the biologist is a world of living bodies, which consist of cells. Cells – elementary living bodies – are complex. The borders of their internal structures are cell membranes, and sometimes (in particular, in the case of plants) even cell walls. The world as pictured by the politician consists of countries, between which there are frontier guards and border controls. The world as pictured by the sexist or the feminist is made of gendered bodies, where the walls between men and women are to be built or destroyed. The world as pictured by the humanist consists of humans and other animals, or non-humans (plants, monsters, vampires, zombies and aliens included), and the boundaries of the human can be either open or closed towards what they call animality.

The ensemble of borders of the world seems to be all-too-multiple and heterogeneous. However, to put it bluntly, there are three essential kinds of borders:

1. The border between something and something *similar* – between one and another triangle (a side), one and another cell (a membrane), one and another country (international lines), one and another man, one and another gray cat, one and another clone, etc. These are borders within a certain continuity or homogeneity, within a certain dimension or a certain genre, where we rather deal with differences in degree.
2. The border between something and something *different* – between different dimensions, between man and woman, animal and man, dream and reality, organism and mechanism, light and darkness, allowed and prohibited, sacred and profane, external and internal, life and death, poor and rich, etc.
3. The border between something and nothing. This third kind of border is difficult to imagine or represent; it goes beyond representation or imagination, towards the particle made of nothing (which cannot be really observed, but only scientifically, mathematically, philosophically deduced from observation of some larger entities captured in certain processes). At this border, one potentially faces the ultimate edge of the world.



Things can be measured by all three kinds of borders, in various ways. Thus, in the dimension of morals, on the first level of borders we can think that we choose between different goods, or between the better and the best, but we can also seek for the lesser of two evils. On the second level we encounter what is supposed to be the border between good and evil. And then, there is still another borderline: to cross it means to go beyond good and evil.

We say “borderline” as if it were really possible to draw lines between something and something alike, something and something unlike, or something and nothing. But, in a way, line as border, such as the side of a triangle, is not anything, but the pure in-between of two planes, surfaces, places, bodies or territories. A borderline consists of nothing, but, nevertheless, has two sides, one shifting into another. In some spacious reality, there is no line between a window and a cat sitting on it – where the cat ends, the window begins: in between them, there are some mixtures of infinitesimals, belonging either rather to the cat or rather to the window, but never a proper line.

A borderline of the second kind – between cat (as animal) and man – seems even less perceptible and even more abstract (though every line is abstract), but nevertheless something very serious goes on here in between. A dialectics of exclusion and inclusion envelopes this site where a human being either recognizes or does not recognize, either accepts or rejects her own animality and appropriates her own humanity: no less a process than anthropogenesis runs along this line. In this process, human being creates borders – not only between herself and the animal others, but all borders of all kinds: borders are a human way of positing a difference. Animals do not know borders, do not respect them or do not take them into account: large and small animals run through fences, skin, walls, without even mentioning them; they find small holes to pass through; they cross state frontiers without asking permission and showing papers. Of course, people, with their enormous passion to count and to control, try to regulate the migrations of animals, to delimit their movements back and forth – especially if it concerns European agricultural animals. But animals themselves don’t care. They are, as Georges Bataille says, “illegal and essentially free beings (the only real outlaws).”³

Although animals ignore borders (or may be even because they do), they can provide us with some striking knowledge on what borders are. Thus, borderlines of the second kind can be seen as passing through different multiplicities, series or packs. Each pack, according to Deleuze and Guattari, has its anomalous or exceptional individual who runs alongside the pack. It can be a loner, or the leader of a pack, or its outcast, someone who inhabits the edge of a certain whole (like Moby Dick for whales, or the Wolf Man, or sorcerers, who live between villages or at the edge of fields and woods), being itself “neither an individual nor a species,” but “a phenomenon of bordering”:

If you change dimensions, if you add or subtract one, you change multiplicity. Thus there is a borderline for each multiplicity; it is in no way a center but rather the enveloping line or farthest dimension, as a function of which it is possible to count the others, all those lines or dimensions constitute the pack at a given moment (beyond the borderline, the multiplicity changes nature). [...] The elements of the pack are only imaginary “dummies,” the characteristics of the pack are only symbolic entities; all that counts is the borderline – the anomalous. [...] In any event, the pack has a borderline, and an anomalous position, whenever in a given space an animal is on the line or in the act of drawing the line in relation to which all the other members of the pack will fall into one of two halves, left or right: a peripheral position, such that it is impossible to tell if the anomalous is still in the band, already outside the band, or at the shifting boundary of the band.⁴

Exceptional individuals create alliances or blocks of becoming, heterogeneous combinations of the becoming-animal, through which an infinite production of difference is operating. As Catherine Malabou has noted, their “role is to mark out the end of a series and the imperceptible move to another possible series, like the eye of a needle of affects, the point of passage, by means of which one motif is stitched to another.”⁵ This super-flexible world of multiplicities and series, where, through the eyes of needles of affects, the anomalous are bordering, is measured by intensities of becoming.

The ultimate borderline of the third kind – the edge of the world – would be, however, the most problematic at this point. How is it possible, if possible at all, to think of bordering on finitude? How is it possible that on one side we have something, but on the other side there is nothing? The third borderline has only one side. The ultimate edge of the world is nowhere, since the nothing cannot be anywhere, cannot really occupy this or that place: everyone knows that only things occupy places – there is stuff everywhere. But if things, surrounded by their borders, occupy all the places, how then is change ever possible? How can one ever shift from one series to another? In the world, which is packed, how can a pack change its nature?

The paradox is that, in the last instance, everything consists of what does not consist of anything. Isn’t it that each elementary particle itself, having neither internal structure nor autonomous existence, but oscillating between various combinations, is a kind of bordering anomalous, which faces nothing and makes an alliance, if not a secret pact, with it? Isn’t it that this totally imperceptible one-sided borderline is a grain of freedom, which withdraws every piece of matter from the void? If so, then the edge of the world is everywhere. Insofar as we border not only something, albeit something similar or different from us, but also nothing, which opens up our horizon of similarities and differences, we are the edge of the world. All of us – quarks, men, cells, cats, windows, women, subjects, bodies, sorcerers, triangles, and others – are involved in this risky bordering, where actual movements and potential changes are at stake.

Notes

1. Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London; New York: Verso, 2012), 925.
2. Hegel’s *Science of Logic* (London: Routledge, 2002), 82.
3. Georges Bataille, “Metamorphoses,” in “Georges Bataille: Writings on Laughter, Sacrifice, Nietzsche, Un-knowing,” *October* 36 (1986): 22–23.
4. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 245.
5. Catherine Malabou, “Who’s Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?,” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 128.

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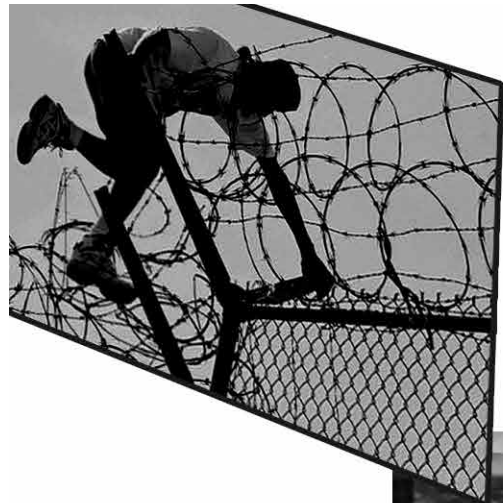
Urban Wråkberg

The new north

The north-western part of Russia is special by its short sea-links to Western Europe and nearby Scandinavia. In times of central neglect, not least so after Tsar Peter initiated the construction of St. Petersburg and connected Russia to the global oceans via the Baltic Sea, the Russian Northwest with the Kola Peninsula, the White Sea and Arkhangelsk were left on their own. But regional trade developed by itself across the border to Scandinavia. Grain and timber from Russia were exchanged for fish from north-eastern Norway. This so-called Pomor trade even caused a pidgin language to evolve "Russenorsk" far from any state control. Today that language has been forgotten and replaced by better skills in the language of the neighbour and in English.

The planetary, centre-periphery model of the relationship between the north and its national metropolitan capitals in the south is contested but still partly relevant today. Among the traditional tasks of the northern borderland officials was to send reports, taxes and raw materials to the centre and from there on to the world markets. All margins of the metropolis have also worked as buffer zones designed to absorb problems before they reach the centre. The remote border town remains in the shadow of the metropolitan centre as a terminus on its communication lines; the end of its body with the façade it has chosen to turn towards its exterior. On site in the north this was always seen differently by indigenous peoples and by other later migrants and permanent settlers. In post-Cold War Europe and after the economic transition of Eastern Europe and Russia, power balances have been negotiated, re-set and rebuilt.

In 1993, as part of the innovations in the EU and Scandinavian-Russian diplomatic relations a Barents cross-border region was inaugurated that included the northernmost counties of the Scandinavian countries and five of the counties/oblasts of north-western Russia. A new declaration on the cross-border region's course and goals is to be presented in 2013. Barents regionalism opens for local initiatives to collaborate on many levels. Cross-border exchange started in schools, in the cultural sector, sports and youth programmes, while foreign ministries were watching nervously at first. In northern Norway it is often said that the distance is longer from Oslo, the capital of Norway, to the



northern towns on the Barents Sea: Tromsø, Hammerfest and Kirkenes, then in the other direction. Kirkenes, the Norwegian border-town to Russia has Murmansk as its closest major city about 240 km east in Russia. Kirkenes' nearest town in Norway is Alta situated more than double that distance to the west. Communities up-north in both Scandinavia and Russia are losing inhabitants to the south but several towns in northern Norway are growing these days. Living happily up-north is to place the centre on the periphery, you don't think you are away when at home; it is an odd idea to most minds to believe you are "not in a central place" when you are at work, or outdoors enjoying your own time.

Another northern metaphor conceived in the metropolis is the idea of the fragile and sensitive nature of the north. There is a scientific consensus on the exclusiveness of northern nature, nevertheless nature reserves in the northern "empty wilderness" are far more popular in the capital than among those living up-north. Getting on over the barren cliffs of the Norwegian sub-Arctic county of Finnmark, across its tundra and the taiga, the idea of a fragile glass house of nature is not the first one to cross most people's mind, and you wouldn't like to have your hands tied when expected to make a living here.

Over the centuries many Russian planners have claimed to grasp the distances across the Arctic part of the country, and envisioned ways to manage its logistics, all have failed. Local people have more modestly tried to set-up functional regional systems. Disappointments in the capital have turned minds towards the opposite idea of the north as just a costly burden. Some launched a pessimistic metaphor, or rather an enigma, that of Russia's Siberian dilemma. Scientists may have proved the Russian Arctic rich in minerals and renewable resources but the complexity of the infrastructure to build, and the costs of running it, to get those extracted from the vast tundra and taiga, and on the global markets have proved staggering, perplexing. This explains the enthusiasm today in the north over what is by most other people seen as the problem of the increased melting of sea-ice in the Arctic during the summers of recent years. If trends are stable the Northern Sea Route (North-East Passage) along the mouths of the Siberian rivers will come true, creating the transport grid so long envisioned between the Arctic coast and the Trans-Siberian Railroad in the south where the taiga meets the steppe. Time will soon tell if the "opening" of Arctic Russia is for real.

Nations as organisms

In the eyes of the capital city everyone on its outskirts is close to the border of something: spheres of interest, the nation, culture and identity. Locally in the periphery it has always made sense to disregard and move further across those borders. The border on the tundra between Norway and Russia was agreed upon in 1826. It follows the central branch of the river stream in the Pasvik River; it is the youngest segment of Norway's national borders but the oldest part of Russia's existing boundaries. Nineteenth century geopolitics regarded nations as Social Darwinian organisms or Hegelian individuals with different characters formed by their route through history; this character was believed to predetermine the future of the nation. In the heydays of colonialism holding the high-ground of Asia was launched by some geopolitical strategists as paramount for any nation striving for global supremacy. The whole of Eurasia was a fortress. Secured by the huge distance to its inaccessible centre anyone holding the land beyond Pamir, Mongolia, Xinjiang or perhaps Afghanistan would control the vast continent in the long run. This belief and the ensuing rivalry for supremacy in Central Asia between the Russian empire of the Tsars and the British colonial empire went on for most of the nineteenth century and became known as The Great Game or The Tournament of Shadows.

Part of the alarmist spirit behind the many popular forecasts that have been launched in recent years speculating in the coming international conflicts over the natural resources of the continental shelves in the Arctic seems inspired by an anachronistic transposition of several of the old ideas of The Great Game. Staying in the old vein of thought of wandering and clashing civilisations the border between Norway and Russia should probably be seen as the point where the Evangelical Christian sphere and the Byzantine, Russian Orthodox civilisation somehow ended their expansion. Like two beasts they are facing each other across the border river exhausted after the long march from their different southern origins, finally frozen up by the Arctic climate. But the ancient threat of conflict experienced at the centre of empire has passed thus this metaphor of menace is turned by adding the ridiculous

effect from anachronism to the horrific altering it into what is termed the grotesque in continental philosophy and modern media theory.

There is a whole border paraphernalia of still perhaps partly functional devices spread around the Norwegian-Russian boundary consisting in surveillance towers, odd gates in endless barbed-wire fences, check-points on the roads including the highway Kirkenes-Murmansk, border poles and snow-mobile teams of patrolling guards. It loads symbolic drama on the bridges of the land. Some of these impediments to the travellers have been decommissioned and removed in recent years as the result of high-level negotiations at the national centres. Properly defused these objects are cherished by the tourists who like to play around with them. In the aesthetics of borders this play on the peaceful but very real border is made more fun as part of various dark tourism concepts by allowing the visitor to move on from the horrific, via the grotesque to the sublime: the memory of the once all-encompassing Cold War cannot be undone as the result of historic reality but it can be exorcised individually and in groups.

The power of this rite is tested every day at the Norwegian-Russian border and it has proved strong enough to move tourists the year around from Kirkenes with buses or boats to within sight of the Russian border. Joint performances of sham border surveillance takes place at well-prepared pavilions overlooking the border river; ritual photos are taken, smiling back against the border. The tourist gaze is assisted by binoculars across the border as part of enactments amusing a steady stream of visitors. The participants in these outings are mainly passengers on the coastal express the "Hurtigrutten" who take a tour to the border in the morning after having flown in to Kirkenes the evening before and that are leaving on their cruise ship at noon. Nowadays it is not the costs for any of them of having a Russian visa that limits their will to spend another day or two to really cross into Russia, it is the fact that many well-off western Europeans doesn't need to have a passport at all to travel within the EU; without a valid passport no visa to Russia is possible.

Turning to borders elsewhere in Western Europe and Scandinavia they are often too invisible to be exiting to the travellers. To challenge this the curators of the winter art festival of Kirkenes "Barents Spektakel 2011" placed discarded border poles from the on-going renovation of the Norwegian-Russian boundary in the hands of artist Morten Traavik. He deconstructed the idea of the peripheral border by moving its icons, the border poles, to places where they are not supposed to be. By placing rows of them inside Kirkenes and in Murmansk – even outside the Norwegian parliament down in the capital of Oslo he made the periphery appear in the centre, thus violating hierarchy and order. Iconoclasm can be detected in all of this but these discarded border poles had been desecrated by the official border commissars so the strength of their remaining iconic power was in the aesthetic perception of the audience.

Contested Metaphors in the European North

Liminal states of border-crossing

What is in the waiting at the border? Crossing the Schengen-border between the Scandinavian countries and Russia time is spent on waiting in lines, on carrying your personal belongings in and out of the border station, and on replying to questions. This and filling out forms regarding the importation to Russia of your car (if you travel with it) and the exportation of it some days later drags on in time and make palpable the liminality, sometimes the limbo, of the political state of the traveller in transit. These procedures are stressful but when successful gratifying. They are often fun to those unfamiliar with them but a source of concern for policy-makers, migrants and business people.

While in between the two border stations the traveller is temporarily virtual as he or she is in-between the jurisdictions of two nations resembling the threshold state of the “rites de passage” described by social anthropologists. The first step in the rite of passage is the separation or detachment from the regular environment, movement to the margin with the subject passing the ambiguous liminal stage to a new fixed state. The liminal phase has been described by Victor Turner as neither located in the departed stage nor in the arrived-at, the liminal persona is characterised by a series of contradictions: having departed but not yet arrived, at once no longer classified and not yet classified, neither here nor there, maybe even nowhere, between the recognised fixed points in the space-time of structural classification. Immediately along these thresholds of the Norwegian-Russian border, beside the line of passage of the border-travellers, there are Tarkovskian zones and no-man’s land where only the border guards dare to thread and

and function of the relationships of the layers and the reasons for the “return of traditions” often believed/wished dead from political points of view.

Thomas Seifrid has discussed the particular workings of the “illusion” in modern Russian culture by comparing the grand new construction of St. Petersburg with the reconstruction of pre-existing European cities such as Vienna of the Ringstrasse or Hausmann’s Paris. Seifrid claims there was no palimpsest at work behind the facades of St. Petersburg. They provided instead an illusion the result of an appropriation of culture and European splendour behind which there was only a “shore of wilderness waves” in Pushkin’s words. But St. Petersburg with its new admiralty, canals and neoclassical structures, was not only built to function practically, it was by that same technical and scientific functionality overtly European in origin and intended as a readable exteriority of European Russia. With time many more traditions and significantly European and Russian phenomena “bled through” to its surface in the multifarious and diverse ways of the palimpsest.

The archaeologists often refer to a cumulative palimpsest when they consider cases where older intact or partly ruined buildings have been reused and enlarged without any attempt to eradicate the original structure. The grandest example is probably Angkor Wat, the large Hindu temple in Cambodia, which was built during the Khmer empire in the early 12th century AD. Towards the end of that century it was rebuilt, mainly by being enlarged, into a Buddhist shrine. Turning for a decidedly more modest example on cumulative palimpsests we may consider the house of culture in Kirkenes called “Malmklang” which had its interior destroyed by an accidental fire in 2005. Paradoxically today its exterior looks just fine from a distance, but all windows are dark and closed as are its entrances. Nothing has taken place in the direction of creating a

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where strictly regulated common annual inspections may be the only thing happening. Here time and movement should ideally not exist to make the tracing of any trespasser over its ground easier. Any old constructions are in ruins, vehicles have just been abandoned, all is fossilising as nothing must be moved, scrapped or even photographed. Most such security zones further south in Europe have been re-used as commercial and population pressures are stronger; the ones up-north are slumbering-on creating aesthetic effects by their odd or sad reminiscences of the past. If properly defused by skillful policy-making and cross-border agreements their potential as tourist attractions maybe be realised by the event industry, but so far these zones have only been experienced by small groups of special guests.

The borderland palimpsest

The Border Aesthetics research group of the University of Tromsø, and its members at the Barents Institute in Kirkenes, have discussed the concept of palimpsest while interpreting the public spaces and re-uses of built structures and signs in the Norwegian-Russian borderland. The cultural palimpsest is based on an analogy with the original concept of palimpsest which is a palaeographic object created by the recycling in medieval times of the scarce parchments of vellum used then for writing books. Chemical agents were applied to bleach away the original text of the parchments to be re-used and an apparently unrelated new text was written and illuminated on it. But after some considerable time the pigments and ink of the old text wandered or “bled” back on to the surface of the parchment causing the new and the old texts to fade together into a confused but often still readable double narrative of texts. This analogue has facilitated reflections on intertextuality and of the continuity between old and new phases in history. Great changes are often seen as modernisations or revolutions where posterity is believed to have broken away more or less completely from the past. But in the palaeographic palimpsest it is seldom a pure coincidence what texts are superimposed on each other, the succession mirrors broad contexts. When the palimpsest is applied metaphorically in for example architectural interpretations and in archaeology it facilitates seeing the actual closeness

new cultural scene for the town, only legal discussions over the house’s wanting insurance at the time of fire. The lack of ability, or rather the will, of the local municipality and relevant Norwegian state agencies to prioritize the reconstruction of the house of culture in Kirkenes, or even to dismantle the ruin, is obvious. Instead it presents an ironic lack of palimpsest today where the immaculate exterior of what is in fact a ruin symbolises a pretention to cultural values that has been beaten by an overarching commitments to neoliberal principles of always restricting public spending.

Across the border in the nearby Russian mining towns of Zapolyarny and Nikel slightly larger cultural house from the days of the USSR are fitted into the public space of the impressively sized squares in front of them. In Nikel also the statue of Lenin amidst the square is in a good state of preservation. A cumulative palimpsest is developing where local oligarch owned mining companies, which by their taxes keep the regional authorities going on a relatively lavish budget, also contributes directly to the maintenance of the existing public building of Soviet origin. By this and by supporting local culture they prove their willingness to be seen as the socially responsible successors of the old USSR combines. While renovating and expanding housing and public spaces in their neighbourhood this commitment extends to keeping some of the Soviet symbols, not emptied of meanings, instead in keeping them they are consciously reconnected to. In the eyes of the local citizens they were among other identified with the idea of a good life up-north. But no doubt the number of employees of these mines and metallurgical plants were cut quite considerably during the neoliberal transition of Russia in the 1990s.

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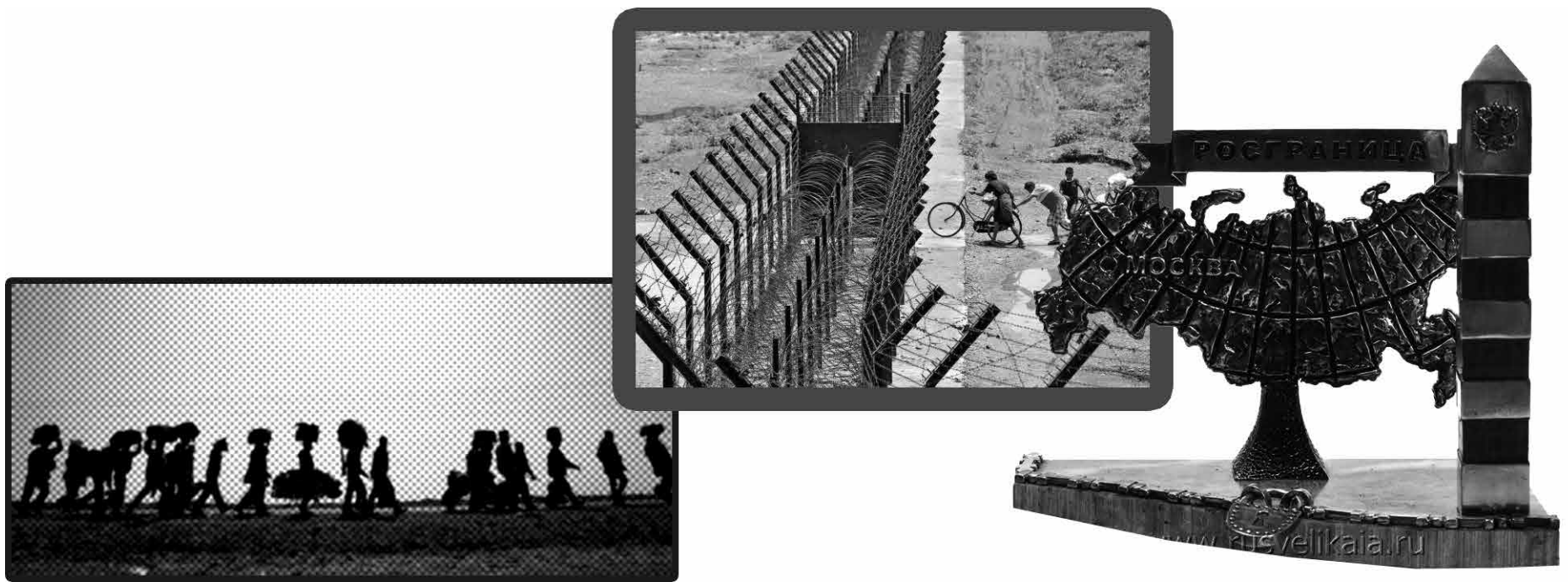
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Johan Schimanski

The *borderscape* is a way of thinking the border beyond the line of the border, beyond the border as a place and beyond the landscape through which the border runs. The borderscape is flexible, following interweaving flows and connections, and inclusive. Borders happen at a distance, as well as at the borderline itself. One could say that a borderscape *is* the border, disseminated across space, defined by what it includes. It is a complex, symbolic landscape of power that resists the instrumentalization of territory by the nation-state.¹ Art and literature can help create such resistances by articulating an aesthetic of distancing. There is something unmanageable about borders that makes them both sublime and graspable only at a remove.

The contemporary borderscape of the Russian-Norwegian border brings together many disparate elements by their implication in the bordering process. Most obvious of these are the historical conditions and social effects of the border as a marker of territoriality, a delimiter of sovereignty and a barrier to mobility. Sometimes the political dimension of the borderscape is performed on or near the border itself, with places like Kirkenes and Murmansk becoming the sites of high-profile meetings, but as often as not, such negotiations take place in Moscow or Oslo. The border is not only part of local, but also global and national discourses; it was for example once a Cold War border, and now it is a Schengen border crossed by the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR), the latter originally conceived as a strategic project with strong cross-border economic and cultural components.² Today the Barents Sea is perceived as a resource bonanza and the region itself has been radically re-envisioned as an aesthetic product in itself.³



International arrangements have resulted in increases in the numbers of border crossings and migrations, and are manifested in everyday experiences, such as those of Russian women traveling across the border to Kirkenes once a month to set up market on the square there. Such experiences are woven together with historical memories of the border, of pilgrimages to the Boris Gleb enclave church, or the fact that from 1920 to 1944, the border was in fact two borders, with the Finnish Petsamo corridor in between.

Also part of the borderscape is the technical apparatus of the border, much of it situated physically on or adjacent to the border itself, the signs detailing special regulations, the colorfully painted border posts, the border rivers, the crossing point at Storskog-Борисоглебск, and the security fence further in on the Russian side; but also, spreading across the globe, standardized technologies of border control all along the borders, passport and visa technologies in consulates and embassies, the production and distribution of maps, databases, etc.

Parallel to this technoscape of the border we find the mediascape of the border, again maps, reference works, guidebooks, histories, exhibitions, websites, television and newspaper reports. We find two spheres that may have the potential to provide critical alternatives to hegemonic discourses: science and aesthetics. Kirkenes especially has become a magnet for researchers doing fieldwork in the social sciences, and for artists and artist groups doing residencies or shows, including many invited by the cultural production and curator collective *Pikene på broen*, often in connection with the yearly Barents Spektakel arts festival or the traveling Pan-Barentz Art Triennale. The region is the base for the Samovarteatret and has been host to the Finnmark International Literary Festival and to the Sámi Arts Festival. This presence of researchers and artists on the border comes at a time when research in border studies is experiencing a cultural turn,⁴ and when art is experiencing a research turn, with artists incorporating politically informed field research into their projects.

The borderscape concept allows us to see aesthetic works not only as representations of the border, but at the same time as part of the borderscape and part of the bordering process. Aesthetic works participate in the same field of play as, say, a border fence or a border commission. Literary texts and other artistic practices can also reflect upon and negotiate our notions of what a “border” is.

Border aesthetics

Wolfgang Iser has suggested that the ways in which we use the term “aesthetics” falls into three groups.⁵ The first group has to do with the *aesthetic-as-sensory-perception*. A border must have a sensible component in order to give it meaning; and if it did not have meaning for somebody or something, it would not be a border.⁶ The border rivers, the border posts, maps, documents, land use, personal appearances and practices, language, and artworks are perceptible elements which can be connected to the territorial and symbolic differences between Russia and Norway.

The second group has to do with the *aesthetic-as-beauty*, though “beauty” alone will not suffice as an aesthetic

Borderscaping the Norwegian-Russian Borderline

category.⁷ Borders may of course be beautiful, attractive objects of desire. Border tourism is a growing industry on the Norwegian side of the border. It is difficult to deny that the border landscape, like many other remote border landscapes, is beautiful, with its hills, rocks, rivers, and forests, along with the picturesque churches of Boris Gleb and King Oscar II's Chapel. At the same time, the aesthetic attraction of the ravaged and polluted landscape around the nickel mines and plant of Nikel is more properly defined as grotesque, gothic or sublime. The "sublime" is a quality that paradoxically attracts us to something more powerful than ourselves and which allows us to find pleasure in the destructive when it is observed at a safe distance.⁸ The sublime relates both to the distances implied in the *borderscape* concept and to an *aesthetics of distancing*.

The last group of meanings has to do with the *aesthetic-as-art* and as artistic production. Here it is enough to point to the considerable artistic activities going on in the borderlands and sometimes adjacent to the border. Groups such as Pikene på broen may truly be doing *borderscaping*, in the sense that they actively attempt to modify the borderscape (cf. the term "landscaping"). Their activities involve utopian visions of future forms of bordering, and "transborder" acts of connecting the local borderland with the rest of the world in the form of artists coming in from many different places and cooperation with initiatives in other borderlands.

Distancing the border

In an article analyzing site-specific artworks on the Mexican-USA border wall, Norma Iglesias Prieto notes that the 1997 work *Ayate Car* by Betsabeé Romero *relates to* the wall rather than being an actual intervention *on* the wall.⁹ Romero's recycled, found art, site-specific installation of a car a few meters from the border wall – half-buried as if it had crashed into the ground after hopping over the wall from the US side – is indeed located at a (short) distance from the wall. It is however very clearly a border work and part of the borderscape even if it is not located on the wall itself. Like many of the other seemingly very located artworks discussed by Iglesias Prieto, *Ayate Car* also plays on different forms of mobility across the border: recycling, the colonial gaze, tourism and, above all, the often deadly realities of migration. This mobility implies an element of distance in the borderscape. Likewise, many of the artworks produced in relation to the Norwegian-Russian border are eminently mobile. Indeed, to locate them on the actual borderline would involve real jurisdictional problems. The 2008 multimedia



and multi-artist participatory site-specific performance *Border-Crossing Exercises III – Pikevannet*, produced by Pikene på broen, involved soundscapes, Norwegian and Russian choirs and contemporary dance, Siberian singing and Sámi joiks, ice sculptures and lightwork simulacra of the border, all taking place on the frozen surface of Pikevannet Lake, a lake transected by the Norwegian-Russian border. But the performance had to be held a few meters away from the actual borderline itself. The fact that the border control might have threatened the performance is part of what made the performance a sublimely attractive event.¹⁰

Other art relating to the Norwegian-Russian border is more distant from the border, though it often involves representations of the border or the border region. The main location for such art is Kirkenes, seven and a half kilometers from the border. But most activities are highly mobile and invoke a cosmopolitan scale. Pikene på broen have arranged a series of Transborder Cafés and concerts in different locations (Kirkenes, Murmansk, Linz, Istanbul, Harstad) and the Pan-Barentz Triennale, which included a traveling art exhibition and highly mobile books and catalogues. The collectively written 2011 play *Radio Barents III* was performed by Samovarteatret in Kirkenes, Tromsø, Oslo, Petrozavodsk, St. Petersburg, Arkhangelsk and Murmansk.

One site-specific, recycled art installation in particular, Morten Traavik's 2011 piece *Borderlines*, illustrates how the materiality of a border artwork can perform the distances involved in the borderscape in a very direct manner. This piece consisted of two simulacra of the Norwegian-Russian border set up in the border town Kirkenes and the Norwegian capital Oslo. In each location, the installation was made up of parallel lines of Russian and Norwegian border posts – indeed, actual, material border posts, decommissioned and moved from the border itself.¹¹ Traavik's installation is both part of the distances of the borderscape and represents those distances.

Novels are highly mobile material objects, often located far from any borders they may depict, and as such are somewhat of a test case where the material location of artistic production in the borderscape is concerned. A work such as Kjartan Fløgstad's 2009 *Grense Jakobselv* reconfirms established images of the border as sublime, and ascribes negative ethical or political values to these border sublimities. Kirkenes and the Norwegian-Russian border during WWII and the Cold War period dominate the novel, and the border region is aestheticized as an attractive and exotic place. One of the Nazi protagonists writes about his time at the Northern Front: "[T]he Sub-Arctic borderland was not as I had imagined it. Wide valley lands, old pine forests, ice-free harbors, warm summers. The Sámi had been mine workers for three generations. The women were dark and exotic. The aurora flames."¹² The border is sublime because it is the beginning of something limitless. "Here we were on a border, an absolute border, on the other side of the border something new began, something completely different. Asian in its power, as was the fear. It was just about to happen. We were going to be part of moving the border. If not today, or tomorrow, whatever happened, we were going to be part of writing history."¹³

Using the *aesthetic-as-art*, Fløgstad's novel activates *aesthetics-as-sensory-perception*, making visible the hidden histories and hidden geographies of the border and their connections with Cold War Nazi continuism.¹⁴ It treats the artistic aesthetic as a form of cognition in which perception is heightened through distancing – or to use the Russian formalist concept, *ostranenie* or *defamiliarization*. By folding the border across the distance between the external and the internal and to the center of personal or historical narratives, it seeks to make the invisible visible and the sublime part of our selves. Common to the borderscape and to defamiliarization is an element of distance or distancing. Historian Einar Niemi has identified three continuities in the Norwegian-Russian borderland: 1) the mirroring of national concerns, 2) a dynamic frontier, and 3) the desire and need for an open border landscape on the part of local populations.¹⁵ *Grense Jakobselv* is mostly concerned with the first two; it is a novel about geopolitical frontlines. The protagonists use a common stereotype of the Norwegian-Russian borderlands as a peripheral wilderness, and also an Orientalist Western perspective whereby Russia is seen as an extension of that wilderness. The novel both figures the borderscape as a geopolitical sublime located in the other, and a network of interconnections across internal borders and distances penetrating the self. It negotiates the Cold War period through a form of *temporal* distancing, placing its crucial actions in a pre-Cold War period in which the border is held in the grip of the sublime forces of nature, rather than in an impenetrable, technological regime of border surveillance and control. The opening up of the border region has given rise to new tensions, in which a less absolute East-West divide has continued to exist alongside a renewed “frontier” interest in marine oil and gas resources. The construction of the cross-border Barents Region attempts to create a framework for development to the economic benefit of both central elites and local communities, with cross-border contacts encouraged on many levels. Border art takes on an important role in international relations, confirmed by the channeling of state funding to cultural initiatives. Such well-meaning geopolitical bridgings of Cold War divides may, however, have unexpected consequences. The synchronization of new resource-oriented perspectives in Barents cooperation with the transnational flows of contemporary art has given some cause for alarm.¹⁶

Fløgstad's *Grense Jakobselv* has a plot that is at times set within the post-communist period, but creates a negative borderscape of Nazi continuism that confronts technocratic scenarios of exploitation in a dialectical fashion. The negative form of its critique contrasts it with much contemporary artistic borderscaping connected to the Norwegian-Russian border region, which places more weight on creating resistant cross-border identities. Pikene på broen has ironically accepted the label “Barents Liberation Army” and sees the role of art in the region as a form of resistance against both geopolitical exploitation and the continued selective permeability of the border.¹⁷ In the foreword to an anthology of short stories from the region, an appeal is made which implicitly understands the performative



borderscaping in border art and literature: “We want these stories to be like border crossings – to assist in showing us what we share, what our common experiences from the past are and perspectives for the future.”¹⁸

Other works playfully appeal to the circulatory power of consumerism as a popular way of fragmenting the borders of the Barents region, resisting what earlier was called “Barents rhetoric” and “Barents euphoria.” In his 2007-2009 performance, installation and website *USB - United States of Barents*, Amund Sjølie Sveen uses the opening of the world's northernmost IKEA store on the Finnish-Swedish border in Haparanda as a departure point, as ceramic plates representing the Barents nations are slowly fragmented and reformed into a map of the Barents Region. Olga and Alexander Florensky use a fin-de-siècle advertising aesthetic in order to brand the “eternal values” which the border towns of Nikel and Kirkenes potentially have in common. These humoristic and ironic devices create a form of aesthetic distancing and a resistance to the technocratic goals of cross-border cooperation in the political sense. Local populations may, however, ask what economic benefits it brings to them, and may be influenced in a skeptical direction by what has been called the “hegemonic masculinity” of the region.¹⁹

As Iglesias Prieto points out, the border can be marked by practices that both offend and please.²⁰ This paradox points both to a problem concerning aesthetic practices connected to what are institutions of power and potential violence, and to the mixture of danger and pleasure in the sublime. A tension between repulsion and attraction structures the borderscape as an affective dynamic of approach and distancing on both individual and geopolitical scales. Modern and postmodern forms of art and literature make it possible to address this dynamic in a self-conscious and critical way by performing the borderscape within an aesthetic of distancing.

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Notes:

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2. G. Hønneland, “Identity Formation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 33.3 (1998); O. Tunander, “Geopolitics of the North: Geopolitik of the Weak,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 43.2 (2008).
3. A. Phillips, “Making It Up: Aesthetic Arrangements in the Barents Region,” *Hotel Polar Capital*, H. Methi and K. Tårnesvik, eds. (Kirkenes: Sámi Art Festival 2008-2011, 2011).
4. J. Schimanski and S. Wolfe, “Cultural Production and Negotiation of Borders: Introduction to the Dossier,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 25.1 (2010).
5. W. Welsch, *Undoing Aesthetics*, trans. Andrew Inkpin (London: SAGE, 1997), 34–35.
6. S.E. Larsen, “Boundaries: Ontology, Methods, Analysis,” *Border Poetics De-Limited*, J. Schimanski and S. Wolfe, eds. (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2007).
7. W. Welsch, “Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics,” *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education* 2.2 (1997): 8–9.
8. Edmund Burke, *Of the Sublime*, accessed at Bartleby.com; within the northern context, see Urban Wråkberg, “The Quest for Authenticity in Narratives of Northern Borderlands,” *Nordlit* 22 (2007).
9. N. Iglesias Prieto, “Le mur à la frontière entre le Mexique et les États-Unis: Flux, contrôle et créativité de l'esthétique géopolitique,” *Outre-Terre* 1 (18) (2007).
10. O. Aagedal, “Kirkenes: Når lokalt kulturliv blir utanrikspolitik,” *Lokalt kulturliv i endring*, O. Aagedal, H. Egeland and M. Villa, eds. (Oslo: Fagbokforlaget, 2009), 46.
11. A website was also part of Traavik's installation: www.borderlines.info. See also J. Schimanski and S. Wolfe, “The Aesthetics of Borders,” *Assigning Cultural Values*, ed. K. Aukrust (New York: Peter Lang, 2013).
12. K. Fløgstad, *Grense Jakobselv: Roman* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2009), 150. My translation.
13. *Ibid.*, 172.
14. Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, “Introduction,” xix.
15. E. Niemi, “Grenseland og periferi: Møtested for stat, nasjon og etnisitet,” *Det hjemlige og det globale: Festschrift til Randi Rønning Balsvik*, E. Niemi & C. Smith-Simonsen, eds. (Oslo: Akademisk Forlag, 2009), 446.
16. Phillips, “Making It Up.”
17. L. Kuzovnikova, “Pan-Barentz: Identity. Energizer. Urbanity,” *Pan-Barentz: III Barents Art Triennale* (Kirkenes: Pikene på broen, 2009), 8.
18. M. Bjerkgeng, “Forord: Grenser,” *Grenser: Fortellinger Fra Barentsregionen* (Kirkenes: Barentsforlag, 2008), 8.
19. A.E. Espiritu, “Re/En/Acting Masculinity,” *Northern Experiments: The Barents Urban Survey 2009*, E. Røyseland and Ø. Rø. Eds. (Oslo: 0047 Press, 2009).
20. Iglesias Prieto, “Le mur à la frontière entre le Mexique et les États-Unis,” 2. My translation.

Tsaplya Olga Egorova and Dmitry Vilensky

«A Border Musical». The script.

radio broadcast and the song «I Love My Cold Land» are written by Jesper Alvaer

Characters from the Russian side of the border:

- **Tanya, wife of Ola Nordmann.** Former director of the children's choir in the Russian town of Nikel, she plays the accordion. She still has a poor grasp of Norwegian.
- **A Chorus of Miners.** Manifestations of Tanya's conscience, her "inner miners," the men double as workers at the local mine and processing plant.

Characters from the Norwegian side of the border:

- **Ola Nordmann ("John Q. Public"),** Tanya's husband. Owner of a trucking company, Ola himself enjoys getting behind the wheel of a big truck from time to time.
- **A Friend.** Ola Nordmann's schoolmate, he currently works in the civil service.
- **Child Welfare Inspector**
- **First Neighbor Lady**
- **Second Neighbor Lady**
- **Third Neighbor Lady**

Scene 1

Starting on the Norwegian side of the border, the camera slowly pans across the scenery. It gently tracks over the quaint streets of Kirkenes and enters a cozy Norwegian house. First, we see a well-equipped workshop, equipment for underwater hunting hung on its walls, then a living room with a large window and, finally, a tiny kitchen. When the camera pans across the living room, we see two border posts, Norwegian and Russian. This is their first and last appearance in the film. After passing through the house, the camera enters the Russian side of the border and slowly tracks through the town of Nikel, whose landscape features black clouds of smoke puffing from the plant and trees disfigured by acid rain. The camera settles on the Chorus of Miners, who sing.

Miners

Our work is not for the weak.
Our work
Is for strong men.
Nickel forges our character,
The character of miners,
Of northern men.

Tell me, miner,
What do you have?
What wouldn't you betray
Or abandon?

I have everything
A man needs.
The shoulder of a friend
Who won't let me down.
The heart of a mother
Who waits.
And the hands of a loving woman
Who has graced me with her care
Every day, in grief and in joy.

Whence this pride
Of yours, miner,
In being a real man?

Nickel will not let
Our souls go to ruin.
Rust will not penetrate them
Nor corrosion consume them.
And all because
Nickel forges our character,
A firm character,
A northern character.

Tell me, Miner,
In what do you believe?

What gives you strength?
I believe my son will grow up
And take my place,
To maintain our character,
Our firm character,
Our northern character.

Tanya appears on camera, carrying an accordion.

Tanya

Your songs are a pack of lies, enough!

Miners

Uh, hello, Tanya.

Tanya

What a joke—
The masculine character!
Just look at yourselves, miners!
Your work is dangerous and tough,
But you're paid pennies.
Why?

Miners

The laws of survival are well known.
Shut up and work: it could be worse.
Everything's a lie,
But it isn't forever.
We are real men,
And we know what is fair and just.
The day will come when we rise up and . . .

Tanya

It'll never happen!
You're lazy slugs!
And drunks to boot!

Miners (confused)

We drink on occasion
Because our work is hard. . .

Tanya

You defend the family!
Really?
You hide behind your women's backs!

Miners

The things you say, Tanya!

Tanya

The nickel you dig up, miners,
Has long ago corroded your souls!
You're only specters of mighty labor.
I've had enough!
I've had it!
I'm leaving town.

Miners

Where are you going?

Tanya

To Norway,
The country where everyone is happy.

Miners

Who's expecting you there?

Tanya (takes accordion from case and gets ready to play)

My new husband is waiting for me.
A Norwegian!
Now there's a real man for you.
(sings)
He doesn't drink
Or beat his kids.
He respects women
And goes to work in his car
As if he were going on holiday.

Miners

What about your son?

Tanya

I'm taking him with me.

Miners

You can leave of course,
But you can never escape yourself.
You will always be
A girl from Nikel.

Tanya

Don't kid yourselves.

Miners

We're the miners of your heart, Tanya.

Tanya (not listening to them, playing the accordion)

I'll be singing different songs
In that marvelous land
Where everyone is happy.

Miners

We are the miners of your heart.
We dig the ore of your soul
And bring to the surface
From out of your depths
Your songs, Tanya.

Tanya

Goodbye!
I've had it.
I'm leaving
For that beautiful country
Where everyone is happy.

Tanya leaves, taking her accordion with her.

Scene 2

A typical living room in Kirkenes. The photos and posters on the walls reveal the owner's commitment to the environmental movement. A Tom Waits concert tour poster is also visible. Ola Nordmann is alone. In a close-up, we see him tuning a radio. He finds a local news program. The announcer first reads world news—reports from Palestine and Russia—before segueing to local news—cute, insignificant events.

The news broadcast ends with a report about a concert the evening before by the local church choir. It featured the premiere of a song by a local amateur composer, "I Love My Cold Land."

All this time, Ola Nordmann moves about the room. He goes in and out of his workshop to fetch something, then hangs a framed portrait of Tanya (she is depicted with the children's choir and holding an accordion). As the music plays, Ola puffs up the pillows and straightens the curtains. He is waiting for Tanya.

It is evident he likes the song. There is a knock on the door and the sound of the radio cuts out.

Scene 3

Ola Nordmann meets Tanya at the threshold of the living room. They hug. Tanya speaks broken Norwegian.

Ola Nordmann

It's you! Finally!

Tanya

I'm so happy!

Ola Nordmann

Me, too!

They kiss.

Ola Nordmann

Welcome to your new home. (He spreads his arms, proudly showing off the house.) I built it with my own hands, but without you it was empty. But now a happy family will finally live in it.

Tanya (uttering a phrase she has evidently memorized)

I'll be the best wife to you, and my son, the best of sons.

Ola Nordmann

Our son, Tanya. Our son. He'll become a real Norwegian. I'll teach him to drive a truck. What happiness it is, Tanya, to travel the snow-covered roads, delivering goods to people and being at one with nature.

Tanya looks at him admiringly.

Tanya

How well I understand you.

Ola Nordmann

And I you!

Tanya (having trouble pronouncing the word "understanding")

Mutual understanding is the most important thing, right?

Ola Nordmann

Of course.

They look at each other, holding hands

Tanya (taking her instrument out of its case)
Here. This is my accordion.

Ola Nordmann

I wanted to ask you. Are you sorry you quit your job?

Tanya

My children's choir? No, because my music is always with me. *(She points to her accordion and laughs.)*

Ola Nordmann

You can form a new choir here. We'll sing Russian songs.

Tanya (laughing happily)

How nice! Russian songs are good, yes?

Ola Nordmann

Tanya, play our favorite song. *(He hands her the accordion.)*

Tanya plays her own arrangement of Tom Waits's "Russian Dance" as Ola Nordmann dances passionately. As Tanya plays, she turns toward the window (and the camera) and sees the Miners standing outside. Continuing to play, she addresses them. (Ola Nordmann cannot see them, of course, and continues to dance.)

Tanya

Is that you, miners? You see how happy I am without you?

The Miners say nothing, but they mock Ola Nordmann's fervent dancing. Tanya smiles and continues to play. When the song's last chord sounds, Ola Nordmann freezes.

Scene 4

The camera pans across the lovely townscape of Kirkenes: illuminated by different lights, the scenery imparts a joyous, festive feeling. The camera zooms in on the War Mother's Monument, where two women, the First

Neighbor Lady (who is radically minded) and the Second Neighbor Lady (who is more thoughtful), are chatting.

First Neighbor Lady (continuing the conversation)

. . . yes, that's right. Not parents, but pedagogues. We have to get over our dependence on biology.

Second Neighbor Lady (haltingly)

I agree, of course. . .

First Neighbor Lady

All children in Norway are the property of the state.

Second Neighbor Lady

Even the children of tourists? Or of foreigners who've come here to work temporarily? There was recently an incident—

First Neighbor Lady (interrupting her)

Definitely! Every child's welfare is more important than the biological rights of parents.

Second Neighbor Lady

But how do we strike a balance between not interfering in people's private lives and society's responsibility for posterity?

First Neighbor Lady

Professionals should decide. Experts. They have special training and can best see what's best for the child.

Second Neighbor Lady

But parents aren't professionals.

First Neighbor Lady

And that is why they don't always understand what's best for the child. Our job is to find families where the children are having problems, remove them and place them with families who have a correct understanding of the child's welfare.

Second Neighbor Lady

(ironically)
Then maybe we should immediately send the kids to children's homes?

First Neighbor Lady

Yes, to children's homes! I'm confident that children will be raised collectively in the wonderful future society we build.

Second Neighbor Lady

Well, you know, not all parents share your communist ideas.

First Neighbor Lady

What's communist about them? How else can we reconcile freedom, individualism and a sense of community?

Second Neighbor Lady

It's so simple, something our forebears have done for generations. Be like everyone else and you'll become an individual.

First Neighbor Lady

While we're still only building the future, we can't waste time: we also have to create the individuals who will live in it. We must focus on children.

Second Neighbor Lady

Maybe we need to begin by educating parents?

First Neighbor Lady

We don't have time to educate parents. We cannot risk children's lives. Imagine how a child who hasn't gotten a proper upbringing will feel in our future society. It will feel like an outcast!

Second Neighbor Lady

How awful!

First Neighbor Lady

We can't let that happen!

The Third Neighbor Lady runs up to them.

Third Neighbor Lady

Hi, girls. It's settled. I'm moving to the south, to Stavanger.

First and Second Neighbor Ladies (expressing their amazement and hugging her)

Congratulations.

First Neighbor Lady (coming to her senses)

But I still don't get you. How can you trade our north country for the spoiled south?

Third Neighbor Lady

I'll come back for visits.

First Neighbor Lady

I'm certain you'll move back for good. Anyone who grows up in the north cannot betray it.

Third Neighbor Lady

I wouldn't leave for anything, but the offer was so tempting. It's such a good job.

First Neighbor Lady

The more so since such opportunities are opening up here. You can see yourself that money is flowing into the Arctic. With your experience you'll be in demand here.

Third Neighbor Lady

Well, we'll see whether the money comes or not.

First and Second Neighbor Ladies

Yeah, that's right. . .

First Neighbor Lady (after a pause during which each of them thinks about her future)

By the way, we were at a performance by a Sámi dance group yesterday.

Third Neighbor Lady

A Sámi dance group? But I thought Sámi dances didn't exist.

Second Neighbor Lady

Imagine, they recreated them the way they might have been in the past. It could have been that way, right?

First Neighbor Lady

It was great! I especially liked this dance. (Addressing Second Neighbor Lady) Do you remember?

Second Neighbor Lady

Uh-huh, like this!

She begins to dance and is joined by the First Neighbor Lady.

Third Neighbor Lady

How do you do it? Show me! Is it like this?

She joins their dance. All three women laugh, dance and goof around. Tanya walks past. She stops to look at them, and they draw her into the dance. Everyone laughs and falls in the snow.

Scene 5

Ola Nordmann is in his workshop going through his fishing tackle. The radio is playing a literary program entitled "The Life and Work of Aksel Sandemose: The Law of Jante."

Radio (begins in mid-phrase)
As you know, of course, the Law of Jante is a set of rules for the typical Norwegian. Aksel Sandemose described it in his 1933 novel *A Fugitive Crosses His Tracks*. Today we'd like to examine certain problems of growing up vis-à-vis the Law of Jante. Our first guest has recently published a book that has garnered a lot of reaction in the media. The book is entitled *Humiliation: An Inconvenient Pride*, and it deals with the dark side of the anti-individualism common in our society. What could be bad about wanting to be like everyone else? Writer Per Anders Juvik will help us answer that question. Welcome! Hello! Thanks for inviting me. The second guest in our studio is head of the national parents organization *Respecting Children*. Welcome to the program, Linda Ramm. My first question is to you. What is the place of the Law of Jante in today's society? We see that the Law of Jante is, thankfully, on its way out of the Norwegian popular consciousness, but there are still many problems, especially with children and adolescents. . .

Tanya runs into the room, excited. When Tanya sings in Norwegian, she mangles the words in a Russian manner, so that they sound funny and unrecognizable. Ola Nordmann remains seated while Tanya whirls around him in happiness.

Tanya

Dear! First prize! Imagine, first prize!

Ola Nordmann (looking at her puzzled, turning the radio down)
What did you say? There's an interesting program on the radio now. . .

Tanya

Yes, yes. Listen, I just got a phone call. My choir took first place at the competition in Murmansk. I'm so happy.

Ola Nordmann

Your choir? The one you worked with in Nikel?

Tanya

Yes, my kids from the culture center. I gave so many years to them. I put so much inspiration into them. The money was bad, but that's not even important.

Ola Nordmann

I still remember your concert in Kirkenes.

Tanya

You remember?

Ola Nordmann

How could I forget? That's where we met.

Tanya

You see how much music means? Music brought us together.

She twirls around the room, knocking things over. Ola Nordmann picks them up.

Tanya (singing in Russian)

Music brought us together. Music la-la-la-la-la. . . (Turning to Ola Nordmann) I'd really like to be with my choir.

Ola Nordmann

What's the problem? You definitely should go.

Tanya

Do you think? What about my son? Will you look after our son?

Ola Nordmann (correcting her)

On the radio, they said it would be more correct to say our "nurturee," Tanya.

Tanya

Yes, yes, I forgot. Will you look after him?

Ola Nordmann

I'll look after him, of course.

Tanya (singing)

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Ola Nordmann

By the way, have you noticed anything strange?

Tanya

Strange? (Singing) Strange, strange, strange, la-la-la. . . Strange about what? (It is clear she is thinking about something else.)

Ola Nordmann

About the boy's behavior?

Tanya

His behavior? No, I haven't, la-la-la. . .

Ola Nordmann

Nothing of yours is missing?

Tanya

Mis-sing, mis-sing, mis-sing. Nuh-uh-uh-thing. . .

Ola Nordmann (looks puzzled at Tanya and realizes she doesn't understand him)

Okay, go. I'll take care of things here myself. I'll consult with someone I know.

Tanya (almost not listening to him; in Russian)

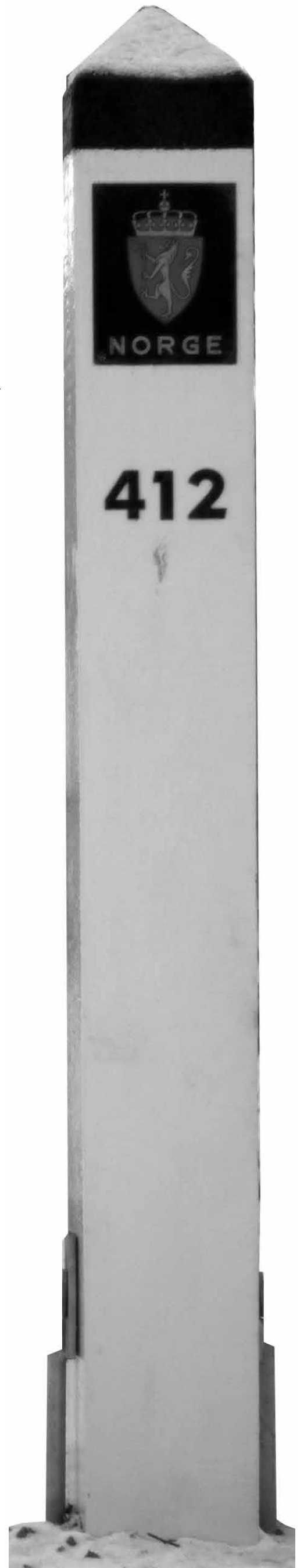
I'm going! I'm go-ing! I'm go-o-o-ing!

Ola Nordmann turns up the radio.

Ola Nordmann

Tanya, I caught a fish. Look, it's in the kitchen.

Tanya darts into the kitchen and sees a fish on the table. It is breathing. She gazes at it. Then she grunts and flies off in the direction of Nikel.





Scene 6

Ola Nordmann continues listening to the radio program on Aksel Sandemose and the Law of Jante while going through his fishing tackle.

Radio
So where is this place where we can enjoy success, our own or that of others?

Wherever it is, it isn't Norway! Even in the Old Norse Hávamál we find such admonitions as, "If you speak too softly, they will think you stupid; if you speak too much, they will think you a fool."

That means everyone should be the same, eh? Social equality can play an oppressive role. We're talking about humility, when recognition of your outstanding abilities is experienced as "inconvenient pride," a sense of guilt. For example, one should not seek to be too successful in school. . .

Ola Nordmann continues working for some time. Then he looks at the clock, removes his apron and turns off the radio. It is evident he is waiting for someone. The door opens and his Friend walks in.

Ola Nordmann
Thanks for coming. I really wanted to talk with you.

Friend
How could I not come? That's what friends are for!

They shake hands warmly and hug.

Ola Nordmann
Let's go into the living room. Would you like some coffee?

They go into the living room.

Friend Sure, thanks.

Ola Nordmann brings in the coffee. It is clear he is a little embarrassed, so instead of getting straight to the point he talks about the radio program.

Ola Nordmann
There was a program on the radio just now about the Law of Jante. Do you remember it?

Friend
How could I forget? (*Begins quoting the Law of Jante.*) "You're not to think you are anything special. . . You're not to think you're smarter than others."

Ola Nordmann
Yes, yes. That's what I meant. What do you think about that?

Friend
I think it hasn't gone out of date.

Ola Nordmann
Really?

Friend
Well, yes. It needs to be reinterpreted, of course, but. . .

Ola Nordmann (*working up his courage*)
I wanted to get your advice. I really love Tanya, you know. And her son too. I meant to say our "nurturer." (*Looks to his friend for support.*)

Friend
Yes, you're right to say "nurturer." It's the new trend in child rearing.

Ola Nordmann
I keep thinking about what a complicated job I have, bringing him up to be a real Norwegian.

Friend
I have no doubt you'll cope. Your older kids are full-fledged members of society.

Ola Nordmann
Listen, it's not the same. This boy is completely different.

Friend
Oh, come on!

Ola Nordmann
It's true! He's not an open person somehow. . . He doesn't smile at people, doesn't look them in the eye, doesn't want to be friendly. He hit a boy in his class!

Friend
You don't say!

Ola Nordmann
He steals cigarettes from his mother.

Friend
That's not good.

Ola Nordmann
He doesn't like sports.

Friend
Unbelievable.

Ola Nordmann
He doesn't go snowmobiling with me.

Friend
He doesn't go snowmobiling?

Ola Nordmann
No, he doesn't. And I'm even afraid. . . Don't get me wrong, I might be mistaken. . . I'm afraid he doesn't like the scenery here.

Friend
No kidding. . . Have you talked with him?

Ola Nordmann
How can one talk to him? He doesn't say anything. And Tanya yells at him in Russian.

Friend
She yells at him?

Ola Nordmann (*embarrassed*)
Yes, she yells. It's quite awful.

Friend
It's forbidden to yell at children.

Ola Nordmann
Yes, I know. . . And there's another thing. . . I saw her hit him once. Well, not exactly hit him, but still.

Friend
Yeah. . . It's a tough situation.

Ola Nordmann
That's why I wanted to ask you what I should do.

Friend
Let me think.

Ola Nordmann
Please do.

Friend (*after a pause, expressing his expert opinion*) Yes. . . First, you can't forget where the boy grew up. Have you been to Nikel?

Ola Nordmann
You ask? I've been there many times.

Friend
Then you know what things are like over there: total irresponsibility and environmental disaster. They're welcome to pollute themselves, but the acid rain splashes on our area too. (*He gradually gets carried away, talking about what really worries him.*) And they want to buy our mines to boot. Their church burned down, but they can't rebuild it. Our community gave them money for it. The mine owners buy themselves villas and yachts while the workers die in the mines. And no one could care less. (*He calms down.*) Whatever. Those are the conditions in which the boy grew up. Not particularly favorable ones.

Ola Nordmann
It's not right.

Friend
And his mother has been no help to him. Yelling at the boy! That's unmotivated aggression.

Ola Nordmann
Tanya's actually quite kind. . . Don't judge her too harshly, she's had a hard life: her first husband was an alcoholic, and her father was killed in a mine accident.

Friend (*almost not listening*)
Yeah, that's bad. . . So what must we do? We have to rescue the boy.

Ola Nordmann
You think it's that bad?

Friend
Yes, it's clear you can't handle this alone.

Ola Nordmann
Do you think?

Friend
I'm sure of it. The whole community needs to be involved in this.

Ola Nordmann (*repeating his words*)
The whole community needs to be involved. . .

The camera does a close-up of Ola Nordmann's brooding face.

Scene 7

Tanya and the Chorus of Miners stand with the Nikel scenery in the background. Tanya plays the accordion. She is happy.

Tanya
Oh, how my soul sings!
Like a bird soaring into the sky!
My work, my love,
All the energy
I invested in the choir,

It's all been recognized: our choir was named the best!
The kids didn't let me down.

Miners
Well done, Tanya, of course. We very much respect song, But how did you prepare the children For a miner's hard work?

Tanya
The mine? No!
The road leading to success Is open to them!

Miners
In the mine!
They will go work in the mine!

Tanya
They'll sing on stage!

Miners
How does your music matter? You think it has the power To change the course of events?

Tanya
I believe it does!

Miners
No, Tanya, Our sons will go work In the mines, And continue our dynasty. But the weaker ones, The ones spoiled by a soft upbringing, Will sink to the bottom. They'll turn into Scumbags Drug addicts Faggots Fascists And, maybe, murderers. Then they'll go to prison.

Tanya
The love I gave them Will make them wonderful people!

Miners
The belt is the basis of a good education. The father's hand is the key!

Tanya
Children aren't beaten in Norway.

Miners
And that's a bad thing!

Tanya
There's no violence there against the person. Father and son are equals.

Miners (*chuckling*)
You don't find that funny yourself? The father is the head of the family.

Tanya
I'm happy I'm going home To Norway, Where everyone is happy.

Miners
And tell your husband That the son should fear the father. Otherwise he'll grow up a sissy.

Tanya No way!

Miners
See that you don't have to be ashamed of your son.

Tanya



ANNA BULAVINA
HALDOR LÆGREID

IN A FILM BY CHTO DELAT

BORDER MUSICAL

PREMIER AT
BARENTS SPECTACLE 2013
IN THE SNOW CINEMA
BEHIND RIGA ARCTIC HOTEL:
FEB 6TH - FEB 9TH
16:00 AND 20:30
HOT TEA AND COFFEE SERVED
WARM CLOTHES RECOMMENDED



DIRECTOR:
TSAPLYA
OLGA EGOROVA

Idea, scrip, set, edit:
TSAPLYA AND
DMITRY VILENSKY

Music:
MIKHAIL KRUTIK

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:



SUPPORTED BY:

PRODUCED BY: JESPER ALVÆR



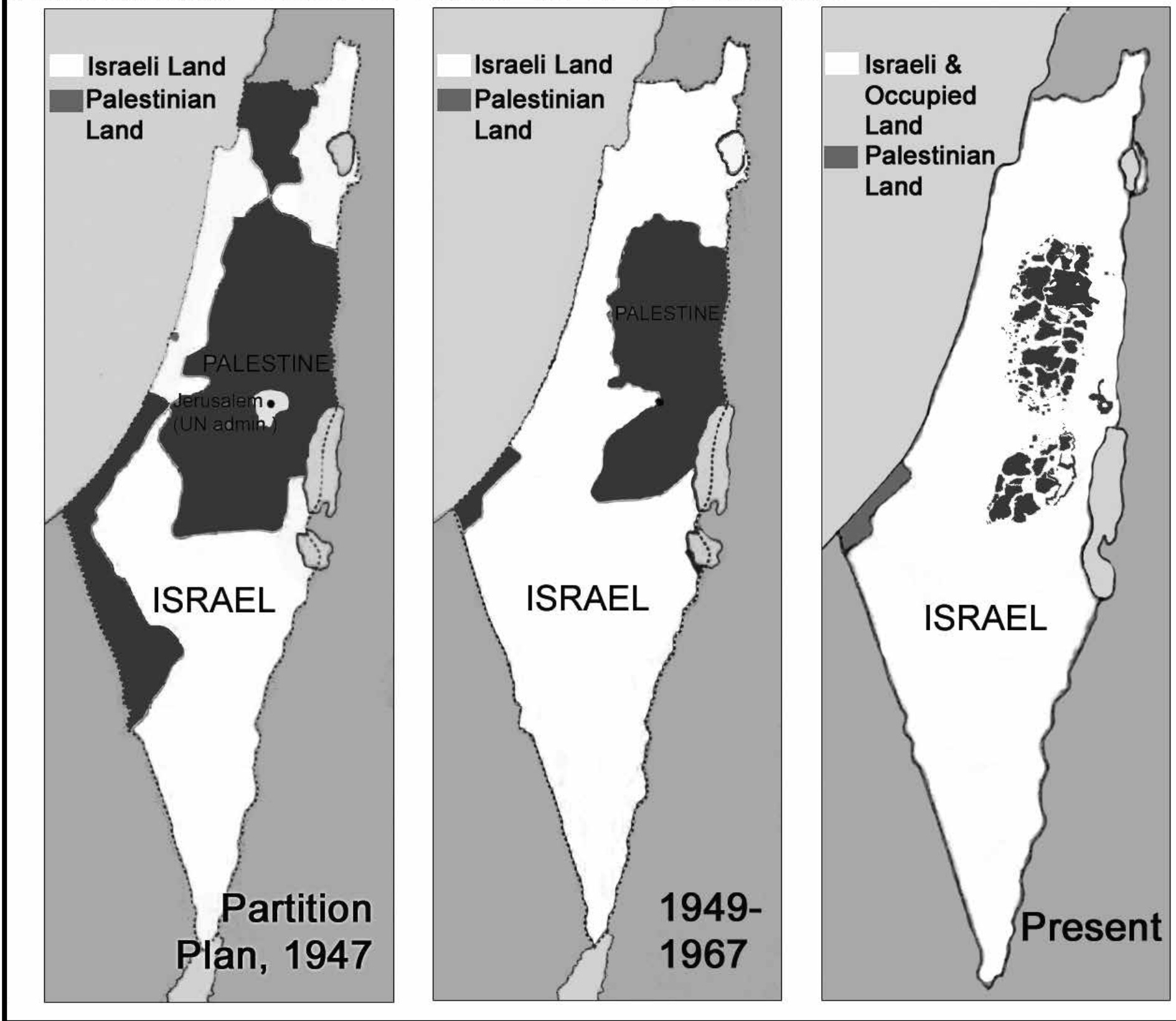
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FRITT ORD

Palestinian Loss of Land 1947 to Present



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Contributors to this issue **Henk van Houtum, Johan Schimanski, Holger Pötzsch, Stephen Wolfe and Urban Wråkberg** have all participated in the project The Border Aesthetics.

The publication also includes contributions by **Morten Strøksnes, Mladen Dolar, Oksana Timofeeva, Tsaplya Olga Egorova and Dmitry Vilensky**

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Платформа «Что Делать?» - это коллективный проект, создающий пространство взаимодействия между теорией, искусством и активизмом. Работа платформы осуществляется через сеть коллективных инициатив и их диалог с интернациональным контекстом.

Founded in early 2003 in Petersburg, the platform **Chto Delat** is a collective initiative that is aimed at creation and developing a dialogue between theory, art, and activism and about the place of art and poetics in this process.

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