

# CONSTRUCTIVE ALIENATION



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**AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL REVOLUTION**



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## DEAD-RECKONING AS A METHODOLOGY OF EMANCIPATION THROUGH NAVIGATION IN TIMES OF STRUGGLE

In urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations. Staying with the trouble does not require such a relationship to times called the future. In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters<sup>1</sup> entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings.

Donna Haraway

There are these days when nothing is as it is suppose to be, when body and mind refuse to function and lose the ability to be sold for labour. Under Neo-Capitalism we call this state of being 'dys- functional'. But who says to function the expected, the known way is the only way of functioning? Would we ever try otherwise, as in those moments of 'dys- functioning', where we have no other choice as to abandon the expected and the known, to look for different and new approaches of being and thinking?

When body and mind refuse to function, we can't know anymore how much we are able to do or achieve before we try. There is no exact direction or method to be taken towards a specific goal. Nothing that we can usually expect of our Self is certain and reliable anymore. We've lost control and can't gain it back, no matter how hard we try; our navigation system is shot down due to some system failure. And as if our Self was a ship, steering through a desert of endless seeming water, there is only the estimation of the current location – by trying to assume velocity and distance from the last known position, by estimating the drift, the unknown, the unexpected, the (without a working navigation system) incalculable – and based on that the choice of a movement or task to try on, aimed towards the destination of our action. These days, when we struggle to recognize our Self, our environment, our location, we rely on a sort of dead reckoning<sup>2</sup> to get through.

Being in this unplanned and unexpected situation, when our being refuses to be 'normal' – the norm we are used to, of our Self – makes us very aware of everything around and inside us. All the senses have to be sharpened and have to turn to the right now, the immediate, because it's the only thing of which we can be sure. We notice our body shifting around these new perceived limitations, trying to adjust to them, breath by breath. And like a child we have to attempt again and again, fall down and get up, several times, until we understand how something works under this new condition of not-functioning-as-we're-used-to / as-is-to-be-expected-of-us.

These are moments that ask for radical honesty towards our Self and the world we perceive around us, a moment of total merging with the situation at hand, that nevertheless can become a choice for emancipation. Emancipation as a tool to question the norm, the ratio, its use in statistics and how it defines the rules and systems of the society we part-take.

These rules that never consider us as being human, being flawed, unpredictable and vulnerable and try to standardize us, norm us, idealise us by posing limits that are no given limitations, but demand from us a specific way of being / acting / thinking / navigating under the pretext of regulation and politics. Dead reckoning is a way to navigate around this demands while focusing on the here and now, the circumstances that are given to us, that skim us while we try to steer our Self through life.

When we forget what we are supposed to be able to do and just perceive what we can do, our way of navigating the space around us changes radically. We stop doing for the sake of doing and start doing for the sake of being able to do it. The appreciation towards every move we can take will never be

1  
'Critters is an American everyday idiom for varmints of all sorts. Scientists talk of their "critters" all the time; and so do ordinary people all over the U.S., but perhaps especially in the South. The taint of "creatures" and "creation" does not stick to "critters"; if you see such a semiotic barnacle, scrape it off. In this book, "critters" refers promiscuously to microbes, plants, animals, humans and nonhumans, and sometimes even to machines.'  
Donna J. Haraway, 'Staying with the Trouble Making Kin in the Chthulucene', Duke University Press Durham and London 2016, p.1

2  
Dead-reckoning, determination without the aid of celestial navigation (use of the observed positions of celestial bodies to determine a navigator's position) of the position of a ship or aircraft from the record of the courses sailed or flown, the distance made (which can be estimated from velocity), the known starting point, and the known or estimated drift. [...] Because the uncertainty of dead reckoning increases over time and maybe over distance, celestial observations are taken intermittently to determine a more reliable position (called a fix), from which a new dead reckoning is begun. (<https://www.britannica.com/technology/dead-reckoning-navigation>)

bigger, as well as the chances of (re-)discovering ways of being, freed from restrictions and expectation that are not real limitations, but rules that are supposed to understand and regulate us, our life's, our geographies, our thoughts and affections. I want to introduce dead reckoning as a methodology of emancipation through navigation for times of struggle – to stay with the trouble.

Suppose the space of the universal as a homogenous informational landscape in which everything is one and the same. It is a desert for which no map and no compass yet exist. In order to navigate in this desert, first we have to inject a designated instability into it so as to disturb or qualitatively excite the epistemologically opaque homogeneity of this space. This designated instability and local disturbance generates the first opportunity for organization and navigation in a space, which is not there to tell us a story or guide us through its mysteries.

Reza Negarestani

In spring 2014 in a day clinic, after a mental breakdown in September 2013, I was diagnosed with an emotional unstable personality disorder (BPD, also known as Borderline Personality Disorder<sup>3</sup>) – the depressive type – a very confusing and unexpected diagnosis. Everything in my life had to change from this point on. Knowing and learning about this new unpredictable condition has transformed the way I look at myself, society, politics and education. Living with an emotional unstable personality disorder and trying to understand and research it's location and overall impact through 1) neuroscientific findings, while initially searching for true objectivity, in order to be able to talk about emotions outside the preconceived realm, 2) through the history of emotions by asking the question 'what are emotions?', 3) through philosophy by considering / trying out / speculating different forms of logic and rationalism, and 4) my own artistic practice, developed into a new perspective, a new position to think from.

Living with an emotional unstable personality disorder is getting to know my Self in a completely new and more precise way. The 'dis- order'<sup>4</sup> lays itself over the personality known to my Self like a parasite, a filter, whose darkness is depending on the graduation of the illness. Due to that filter I and other depressed people have a reduced sensitivity to contrast – as if saturation was taken out of the colours – and therefore we may perceive the world differently from others<sup>5</sup>. We have an overall different brain activity: The amygdala – the area of the brain where all neuronal processes caused by and responding to threats take place, an event that activates the nervous system out of it's state of relaxation – is highly stimulated, whereas the rest of the brain activity and therefor the perception tones down into a grey, tasteless world, a desert of opaque homogeneity. All of a sudden we are only capable of noticing the highs and lows, the extremes sticking out, from our mellowed down being. What once were reactions I could trust, changed with this 'dis- order' in some situations about 180 degrees, leaving me confused and in doubt about myself, my own actions and reactions. I didn't recognize my Self, didn't trust anymore in my own responses, but they did feel like the only right ones in those particular moments.

There is a chance of widening ones horizon, deepening ones knowledge, re-ordering the given, in those moments, the moments of system failure, when we get to ask ourselves why something doesn't work anymore and what has changed that triggered this failure. Being radically honest towards my Self I had to admit to my Self, that every system fails eventually if it doesn't calculate in the unpredictable, the unknown, the outside, that what is not or not yet perceivable; we can only grow our understanding of a system, of knowledge through approaching the unknown, the invisible, the ignorant, the other – especially in a moment of system failure.

## THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL RUPTURE OF THE NORM

3  
Personality disorder characterized by a definite tendency to act impulsively and without consideration of the consequences; the mood is unpredictable and capricious. There is a liability to outbursts of emotion and an incapacity to control the behavioural explosions. There is a tendency to quarrelsome behaviour and to conflicts with others, especially when impulsive acts are thwarted or censored. Two types may be distinguished: the impulsive type, characterized predominantly by emotional instability and lack of impulse control, and the borderline type, characterized in addition by disturbances in self-image, aims, and internal preferences, by chronic feelings of emptiness, by intense and unstable interpersonal relationships, and by a tendency to self-destructive behaviour, including suicide gestures and attempts. 'F60.3 emotional personality disorder', International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10)-WHO Version for ;2016, <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en#/F60.3>. For further definition consider as well <http://www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com/what-is-bpd/bpd-overview/>

4  
The chapter on Re-Reading explains the use of 'dis- order'

5  
<http://scienceblogs.com/neurophilosophy/2010/07/22/feeling-blue-seeing-gray/>



Floating in this opaque homogeneity, faced with the emergency to find a new navigation system in order to understand and steer my Self forward under this new, clouding condition of emotional instability, forward through a world that didn't accommodate me anymore flawlessly and frictionless, I turned to philosophy, searching for a new knowledge system that can/would include the condition of unpredictable emotionality – this unknown incalculable condition I was experiencing, that would not be ignored and would not leave me anymore. Could this, my emotional dis- order, be an event that provides the 'designated instability', the 'epistemic cue', 'the gesture that specifies the process of conception' through 'a local rupture and regional discontinuity' of the system, the known, the norm, the 'universality (also generality)' that Reza Negarestani is talking about in his text 'Where is the Concept'?<sup>6</sup> And is the unpredictability of my emotional reaction part of this unknown, this incalculable, this unpredictable drift that co-informs the 'process of conception'?

## MY LOCAL HORIZON, INFORMED BY REZA NEGARESTANI'S PHILOSOPHY

6, 7

This part refers to Reza Negarestani's transcribed lecture 'Where is the Concept? (localization, ramification, navigation)', a transcription of a lecture given at 'When Site Lost the Plot', a conference organized by Robin Mackay at Goldsmiths, University of London, 2013

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6 Symposium: Speculations on Anonymous Materials - Reza Negarestani, Fridericianum, Published on Jan 18, 2014, Symposium: Speculations on Anonymous Materials, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg0IMebGt9I&t=1656s>

9

manipulation in the sense of changing parts in it's form / in relation to each other and the space around it

10

Quoted from: 6 Symposium: Speculations on Anonymous Materials - Reza Negarestani, Fridericianum, Published on Jan 18, 2014, Symposium: Speculations on Anonymous Materials, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fg0IMebGt9I&t=1656s>

11

'Localization here should be understood as an epistemic condition, which, if pursued precisely cancels any conserved relation between the knowing subject (Self) and the world and detaches the subject (Self) within a navigational space, rather than pin pointing it to a specific place. By doing so, we recognize the state of absolute certainty [as proven through the change that has happened] as false popular notion, a sort of flattening or trivialization [seeing only one of different possibilities], while 'tackling the stagnating correlation between uncertainty and inaction' by activating a constant revision. The concept behaviour changes through a constant feedback loop in accordance with the change in the logic of rules and alternative paths that connect it to its inferential system network.'

Localization has obvious implications for thought not only because we ourselves are local instantiations within the terrestrial horizon, but also from an epistemological perspective: the concept as the space through which we gain traction on the world is a local horizon. As the most fundamental unit of knowledge, the concept, is a local horizon, a locally organized space of information within a vast inferential economy and immersed within the general structure of knowledge. So the question of localization allows us a form of systematic study of the local context, and in particular a systematic analysis of conceptual behavior. In this sense, we can say that localization is the ultimate procedural framework of thought.

Reza Negarestani

According to Reza Negarestani<sup>8</sup>, in the last 30 years there has been a revolution in the definition of what a system is, (based on an actually much older and re-discovered definition already present in Greek philosophy,) that has allowed for the unfolding of a completely different understanding of what epistemology of matter is and how material can be rendered intelligible.

For philosophers like Sokrates, Seneca, the Cynics and the Stoics the Self is such a material that needs to be manipulated, needs to be constructed – like a chunk of clay or rather like Ikea furniture – in order to get to know it, to be rendered intelligible. Meaning you cannot know your Self unless you construct your Self, manipulate<sup>9</sup> your Self. The process of construction and manipulation is the process of conception of Self. Hence Self becomes a hypothesis, a proposed explanation for the manifestation of Self, by way of construction and manipulation, respectively by getting to know one's Self. Consequently Self 'is no longer bound to some identitarian understanding of itself, a certain form of constitution; its no longer moral its no longer contractual, but its rational and destinal; destinal in the sense of self-realization'<sup>10</sup>. With other words: as the observations of one's Self feed into a hypothesis of Self, the Self is self-realising. The idea of self-realisation as a project of understanding of a system, through identification of that system according to its function and behaviour – in a technical sense – has its origin in the classical project of ethics.

Hence, through getting to know my Self with this new condition (BPD) that informs the process of conception of my Self in the present time – and in a self-realising (destinal) way – is a way to identify the system according to its function and behaviour through a local horizon. The local horizon is the concept, a locally<sup>11</sup> organised space – the accumulated knowledge of what my Self is – within the general structure of knowledge. Whereas my condition of BPD set in motion the epistemological rupture, a local disturbance in / of the local horizon, causing a dis- order, a re-orientation / re-order or so to say re-reading<sup>12</sup> of the given / general / universal through studying restricted motions that are already available in the existing system. From this new

frame of reference we process 'concept-ion' into (new) knowledge / into an epistemic revolution.

By approaching the space of the universal through local contexts in an environment where continuity and contingency are interwoven – that is, where different layers of mediation between universality and particularity, the global and the local exist – we can arrive at intriguing conclusions. [...] the passage from the local to the global is not simply a form of transit through which the local element preserves its constancy. It is instead a mode of production of new orientations, structures, dimensions and new intuitions of locality and globality. In this respect, universality becomes the operation of productive locality which is globally oriented.

Reza Negarestani

Since the scope of the global horizon is not given, since we have no prior information about [the totality of] the global structure in which we are working [on new epistemological conception], demands of knowledge will be directed toward procedures of local construction, organization and examination' conceived through epistemological ruptures in the local horizons, the hives for productive locality. The passage from the [productive locality] to the global is 'a mode of production of new orientations, structures, dimensions and new intuitions of locality and globality' feeding into the production of knowledge; universality is 'the operation of [this] productive locality, which is globally oriented'<sup>13</sup>

The theoretical perspective that my Self, which is inscribed with the condition of emotional unstable personality disorder, is a productive locality, enables me to draw connections between my self-fulfilling Self through the passage from the productive locality to the global locality, via different layers of mediation between particularity and universality, such as the layer of philosophy, the layer of the Swiss government, the layer of the European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process (known as Bologna System for higher education), the layer of the research of emotion, the layer of the limit of the human condition, the layer of non-knowledge (the unknown), and more.

All layers of mediation that co-inform my Self have been affected and disordered through one or several symptoms of BPD<sup>14</sup>, the condition that caused the epistemological (/qualitative rupture?) rupture in my Self. In the mediation layer of the government, we have the authority of the SVA (Sozialversicherungsanstalt), the Swiss social insurance department responsible for several different services<sup>15</sup>, one of them being the Invalid Insurance that includes several evaluations to establish the degree of invalidity and the right program of re-integration according to that degree of invalidity. Most of all they evaluate how much my work value was before the entrance of invalidity and based on that how much monetary support the government would give me. It took four years to establish that my invalidity is 50% and that based on my work in museum supervision at Kunsthaus Zurich where I worked 60% before my breakdown, I was worth the amount of CHF402 of monthly support. The unofficially fair minimum salary in Switzerland for 100% work is CHF4000<sup>16</sup> per month, the average salary in Zurich lies by CHF7696<sup>17</sup> a month, numbers I became aware of through my encounter with the governmental social insurance department.

The impact and length that these procedures had on my life – the procedures I had to go through in order to have a chance to get support by the government were devastating for my health. First of all the waiting and never knowing when the waiting would be over, having no control at all while already having little to none control over my health, and second, the filling out of tremendous amounts of paperwork, getting tremendous amounts of

## LAYERS OF MEDIATION

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This part refers to Reza Negarestani's transcribed lecture 'Where is the Concept? (localization, ramification, navigation)', a transcription of a lecture given at 'When Site Lost the Plot', a conference organized by Robin Mackay at Goldsmiths, University of London, 2013 14 marked sensitivity to (social) rejection or criticism and intense fear of possible abandonment, via Gunderson, John G. (26 May 2011). "Borderline Personality Disorder". *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 364 (21): 2037–2042. doi:10.1056/NEJMcp1007358. PMID 21612472. difficulty regulating and control emotions and impulsivity; tendency to quarrelsome behaviour and to conflicts with others, especially when impulsive acts are thwarted or censored; intense (sensitivity) and unstable interpersonal relationships; disturbances in self-image, aims and internal preferences; chronic feelings of emptiness; stress-induced paranoid thoughts; tendency to self-destructive behaviour, including suicide gestures and attempts, s'F60.3 emotional personality disorder', International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10)-WHO Version for ;2016, <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en#/F60.3>.

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AHV, IV, EL, Familienzulage, Mutterschaftsentschädigung, Erwerbsersatz (Militär), Prämienverbilligung

16

<https://www.unia.ch/de/arbeitswelt/von-a-z/mindestlohn/>

17

[https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/prd/de/index/statistik/publikationen-angebote/publikationen/webartikel/2015-08-20\\_Haben-Sie-es-verdient\\_Loehne-in-der-Stadt-Zuerich.html](https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/prd/de/index/statistik/publikationen-angebote/publikationen/webartikel/2015-08-20_Haben-Sie-es-verdient_Loehne-in-der-Stadt-Zuerich.html)

letters, that in one way are written very precise, but still open enough, so I could never know exactly what was happening, unless I would have 'knowing-the-content-of-these-letters, the decisions-that-are-being-made-and-what-these-decisions-were-based-on' as my job. This Kafkaesk de-centralized bureaucracy buried my last energy and hope to be able to help myself getting better, depending 100% on a government service that does not care for my personal process of recovery. After two years I broke down and I gave up, lost control over the letters, the bills, everything, not knowing where to get help, not knowing who to ask to get pointed in the right direction, until I was lucky enough to find the support of a foundation, that helps and supports me to get through this process now.

In the meantime, till the SVA made their decision on my case: I had to apply for Social Help, which depends on the information of the SVA, but has completely different rules and its own bureaucratic processes, with the main goal to get people depending on social help as fast as possible back to work. None of the caseworkers there have a special training for people with mental disorders that are waiting for the approval of the SVA to insure them in one way or the other. They are overloaded with cases, pressured by the promoted image of the social help fraud through the press, and told by their management to give people as little support as possible (unless proven and decided otherwise), so they would in no way be able to benefit from not working. For some months I would get so little money that coffee, care products, clothes and healthy food became a luxury and eating out or having a drink with my peers, going to a museum or a play (which would have been part of my informative tasks as curator and artist) were mostly impossible, unless someone was offering. This made me withdraw (socially) even more often, into solitude and depression, making me wonder, if I was maybe not able to afford to be a curator and an artist, within the Swiss Health System, struggling with Mental Health Issues.

The internal communication of these de-centralized governmental services was disconnected and inaccessible for me. Each department would only know about its own part and progression in my case evaluation, consequently slowing down the process of evaluation tremendously. Gaining an overview over the overall progression of my case was impossible, even less so with the little energy I had due to my illness. After the official one year waiting period I was told it would take another half a year till the decision for my case would be made, it took another three years. And still now the money that has been spoken is not being paid. Right now it stays at the department for social help, where they are calculating how much of that money pays for the services they provided for me during these last three years. And there is no way of knowing how long this process will still take and how much money there will be for me in the end. I have no right to be demanding a faster process or to be constantly and thoroughly informed about it. There are not enough caseworkers is the argument. Knowing from friends of friends, that the caseworkers themselves have no chance to really change anything in the system they work for, the protocols they have to follow are quite strict.

And all the time I was told, that I had a choice, while in each part of the process of evaluation I was given papers to sign in order to state that I was aware of and agree with the rules to the benefits I would get, over and over again. But the only choice I had was not asking for benefits at all, trying it on my own. In my mental condition (even if invisible to an untrained outside set of eyes) that was impossible and so I was fully depending on an opaque system of evaluations and decisions to provide me with the support I needed, so I could stabilize my health again.

For both of these governmental services my invalidity existed purely of numbers and percentages, while my sickness had to be constantly double-checked and proven. How can one get better and healthier again under the constant pressure of having to prove one's invisible sickness to be real,

the fear of loosing support and not knowing how to go on living, if this would happen? How can one focus on health, if there is barely enough money and a tremendous amount of external pressure and paperwork? Should I have given up and gone for eight weeks<sup>18</sup> into a Mental Hospital? (Unless ordered by a psychiatrist eight weeks is the maximum you get, to recover from a mental breakdown – so the system can keep the costs minimized.)

Just last March (2018) the government decided to allow private detectives and the use of drones and GPS tracking to investigate potential social insurance fraud, without having to get permission from a judge.<sup>19,20</sup> (Not even with the suspicion of a terrorist threat this degree of surveillance is allowed.) And this after the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) decided in 2016 that the juridical base for the surveillance through insurances is insufficient. Which was the response to a Swiss law set in motion in 2008 that was allowing the combating of invalid insurance fraud through the use of 'specialists'. This genealogy reveals a history of fear of invalid insurance fraud in the Swiss population still present nowadays,<sup>21</sup> even though in 2017 they were merely 630 cases of insurance fraud by 220'000 assured people, which is a quote of 0,3%.<sup>22</sup> And more than 2 out of 3 of these cases were uncovered through a renewal of the medical evaluation of those cases. Still 62% from 7255 participants in Switzerland of a survey by the media group tamedia<sup>23</sup> would endorse social insurance detectives to uncover social insurance fraud, leaving me with the question: what kind of life are we humans with dis- orders allowed to live, without raising any unfounded suspicion?

Instead of easing my process of recovery, the pressure of the governmental systems activated more stress, having to constantly provide them with my information, often also the same ones multiple times, for each part of the process again and letting them control my bank accounts monthly (as if I was a criminal), triggered the condition of BPD to become stronger and more out of control.

That I was intellectually able to understand and formulate my limitations given through the symptoms of the BPD and that I was able to keep myself together towards the outside was not helpful either, quite the contrary. Even though 'letting it all out' would have drawn people even further and much faster away from me, consequently resulting in getting even less support in a time where support was needed the most.

Through the question of localization activated by a rupture in the local horizon it is possible to study the local context, systematically analyze the change of conceptual behavior, the product of that locality. The tendencies that were being amplified through the epistemological rupture caused by my unstable emotional personality dis- order and mediated through the layer of the governmental services, rendered the limits and issues of the current government system in Switzerland for people with mental health problems visible and even further, on a more profound level made the contradictions, moral restrictions and objections towards mental health dis- orders float to the surface.

The subject of the world as a ready-made object of experience and a reservoir of meanings is quite stubbornly an anthropocentric and conservative form of subject even though it claims to be completely the opposite.

Reza Negarestani

To introduce 're-reading' (re-viewing) as a methodology to this thesis, as an example the word 'dis- order' is visually portrayed as a word-to-re-read, symbolically and visually split into dis- and order by a hyphen as well as a blank space. By distinguishing the prefix dis- through separation from the suffix order, each part of the word dis- order is dissected, putting the focus on the relationship this fragments have to each other while asking the ques-

18

the recommended time for a recovery by the health department of the government

19

<https://www.beobachter.ch/politik/sozialdetektive-bald-mehr-macht-als-die-polizei>

20

<https://geschichtedergewegenwart.ch/die-debatte-ueber-missbrauch-ist-aelter-als-die-sozialversicherungen-selbst-ein-gespraech-mit-der-bloggerin-marie-baumann/>

21

<https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/Mehrheit-befuerwortet-Sozialdetektive/story/11201528>

22

<https://geschichtedergewegenwart.ch/die-debatte-ueber-missbrauch-ist-aelter-als-die-sozialversicherungen-selbst-ein-gespraech-mit-der-bloggerin-marie-baumann/>

23

<https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/Mehrheit-befuerwortet-Sozialdetektive/story/11201528>

## RE-READING DIS- ORDER

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<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/order> and <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/order>

25

<http://www.dictionnaire.com/browse/dis->

26

Norm 1: an authoritative standard : model, 2 : a principle of right action binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control, or regulate proper and acceptable behaviour, 3 : average: such as a : a set standard of development or achievement usually derived from the average or median achievement of a large group, b : a pattern or trait taken to be typical in the behavior of a social group, c : a widespread or usual practice, procedure, or custom, 4 a : a real-valued nonnegative function defined on a vector space with value analogous to length and satisfying the conditions that the function is zero if and only if the vector (see *1vector 1a*) is zero, the function of the product of a scalar and a vector is equal to the product of the absolute value of the scalar and the function of the vector, and the function of the sum of two vectors is less than or equal to the sum of the functions of the two vectors; specifically : the square root of the sum of the squares of the absolute values of the elements of a matrix (see *matrix 5a*) or of the components of a vector, b : the greatest distance between two successive points of a set of points that partition an interval into smaller intervals

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not artificially changed

28

This part refers to Reza Negarestani's transcribed lecture 'Where is the Concept?' (localization, ramification, navigation)', a transcription of a lecture given at 'When Site Lost the Plot', a conference organized by Robin Mackay at Goldsmiths, University of London, 2013

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either free from pretension or calculation or synonymous with natural, ingenuous, naive, unsophisticated, artless. For more detailed definition look up <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/natural>

30

Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.6

31

<http://www.laboriacuboniks.net/>

32

'Ox1A Xenofeminism indexes the desire to construct an alien future with a triumphant X on a mobile map. This X does not mark a destination. It is the insertion of a topological-keyframe for the formation of a new logic. In affirming a future untethered to the repetition of the present, we militate for ampliative capacities, for spaces of freedom with a richer geometry than the aisle, the assembly line, and the feed. We need new affordances of perception and action unblinkered by naturalised identities. In the name of feminism, 'Nature' shall no longer be a refuge of injustice, or a basis for any political justification whatsoever! If nature is unjust, change nature!' <http://www.laboriacuboniks.net/qx8bq.txt>

tion: What is dis- order?

Let's first look at the etymologies and definition of the words dis- order. The noun or verb order is 1) an entity, a separate, self-contained existence, a being / being in existence, an organization of a plural of elements, with an identity separate of it's members, with a life and drive of its own in an objective or conceptual reality. Order is 2) also a concept of freedom from confused or unruly behaviour, conceived in the mind through thought and notion, generalized from particular instances, in form of a taxonomy of a pre-determined scheme, according to quality, value, or natural characteristics. Order 3) defines a state, a condition of being, of mind or temperament, characterized by definite quantities, as well as a rank (in a hierarchy). And Order 4) is as well a quality, an essential, distinguishing characteristic of nature, that is either an inherent feature or degree of excellence trough an acquired skill or a logical proposition of gathering and arranging in preparation for a particular operation or effective use, by setting in sequence, relationship, or adjustment, imposing an orderly procedure rather than a fixed scheme, in order to eliminate confusion.<sup>24</sup> Whereas dis- is categorised a prefix, that produces a related word or an inflectional form of a word, through a turning point, a turning around of meaning, indicating, either reversal, negation, removal or release – sometimes through expressive intensive force<sup>25</sup> – in this case of the definition of 'order'.

Thinking about BPD being categorised a mental dis- order (outside the norm<sup>26</sup>), which often are also called 'unnatural' conditions (see the last definition of order just above), we should remind ourselves that in biology, in nature – uncontrolled and unaffected<sup>27</sup> by modern humankind – there is no such a thing as an optimal or specific trajectory, as 'the invariances of physics which inform mathematical invariances through maximally stabilized concepts do not exist in biological systems.' In biological systems there are always deviations from the average and even that average is processing, developing and changing with time, while continuously forming new constellations of relationships conceiving new knowledge in a multidirectional movement between the particular and the universal. We could say that in biology epistemological ruptures happen naturally (ontologically come into existence), from time to time. 'Darwinian natural selection is the expression of navigating [these] compatible and possible trajectories. The system evolves and adapts because it does not have a specific – the most optimal – trajectory or evolutionary path.'<sup>28</sup>

So, why are we still hung up on this human shattering ideal enforced upon the human by the word 'natural', which is in itself an absolute anthropocentric concept? A concept that fully obeys a man-made hegemonic verbal power structure none the less, enforcing norms and orders to govern humankind's worldview through an otherwise highly ambiguously<sup>29</sup> defined word.

Before the 17th century 'nature' was understood as mutable, something that could be modelled, as well as a subject of allegory. With the entry of the Enlightenment the terminology 'nature' became known and used as 'state of nature', the period before society existed, untouched and unmodified (or pre-construction and pre-manipulation) by the conscious human species and was defined as 'primitive'<sup>30</sup>. Consequently the use of 'natural' as the ideal to measure humankind's 'purity', 'untouched-ness' or 'perfection' is in high contrast with how this same word is used synonymously to describe something as ingenuous, naive, unsophisticated, artless, in order to state an alleged, necessary human hegemony over nature. Nevertheless this ambiguously used definition is still in use nowadays.

At the present day the words natural, norm and order are used synonymously, even though by definition their meanings are in no way synonymous to each other. Norm is defined i.a. 'a principle of right action binding upon the members of a group and serving to guide, control or regulate proper

and acceptable behaviour'. In that sense 'to norm' is the technology to instil order to govern civilized behaviour in the name of the natural. Pointing out again, that the same term 'natural' is also understood as primitive and uncivilized, which is a contradiction in itself, because of the demand it has on being the ideal of the 'pure' human.

The very last sentence of the Xenofeminist Manifesto<sup>31</sup>, which started my interest in the notion of alienation as an emancipatory feminist strategy, and Xenofeminism as a 'platform' or 'topological-keyframe' for the formation of a new logic, a feminist rationalism to navigate our 'world in vertigo', says: 'If nature is unjust, change nature!'<sup>32</sup> And the sentence just before: 'Nature' shall no longer be a refuge of injustice, or a basis for any political justification whatsoever!' In order to dis- order, to 'dis-' the 'order' of the definition of the word 'nature' as used with the entry of the Enlightenment, re-reading and re-ordering it through it's previous definition based on the Greek word physis (φύσις<sup>33</sup>; all that what physically exists/came into existence) I would argue that 'nature' is not 'unjust', because judgment is in no way 'natural' (of nature<sup>34</sup>; physically existing) but part of the 'artificial' anthropocentric hegemonic power structure defined by mankind, of which judgement is a human technology<sup>35</sup>. While agreeing that [the word] 'Nature' shall no longer be a refuge of injustice, or a basis for any political justification whatsoever!', I want to visualise with this example how crucial as well as emancipatory it is to dis- order, re-read and re-order definitions of vocabulary that has been set in place to limit, alienate and 'other', in order to justify decisions of hegemony and sovereignty.

As a repetition: natura, the Latin translation of the Greek word physis (φύσις<sup>36</sup>), defines all that what physically exists/came into existence. Which includes also the realms of nature that mankind does not want to term 'natural', like human determined mental and physical anomalies<sup>37</sup>, so called 'dis- orders', that included not so far back in human history homosexuality<sup>38</sup> and race<sup>39</sup>. These realms are defined as 'un-natural' and as synonyms of 'illegitimate', 'primitive' or 'ill' (or 'illness') even though they are actually and by definition of nature.

To understand the logic and reason behind emotions is one of the keys to understand human behaviour.

In order to dis- order and to be able to single out and amplify the tendencies that are responsible for the system that we try to understand, let's reflect on the mediation layer of emotio and re-read the word 'emotion' from different epistemological entry points:

The synonyms feeling, emotion, affection, sentiment, passion introduce us to a definition of emotion as 'a subjective response to a person, thing, or situation'<sup>40</sup>. The first question arising from this definition is: What is the meaning of 'subjective response' in connection with the word emotion?

According to the dictionary emotion is to be understood as 1 disturbance or excitement, and/or 2 a 'conscious mental reaction (such as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioural changes in the body.'

For Eric Shouse<sup>41</sup> 'emotions are social, feelings are personal and biographical, and affects are pre-personal'<sup>42</sup>. An emotion is the projection and, or display of a feeling. Unlike feelings, the display of emotion can be either genuine or pretended. Infants display emotions although they do not have the biography nor language skills to experience feelings, to feel. The emotions of the infant are direct expressions of affect. The transition from childhood to adulthood is one in which we partially learn how to bring the display of emotion under conscious control.

33, 36  
based on φύω "to grow, to appear".  
First source: *Odyssey* 10.302-3: ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας πόρε φάρμακον ἀργειφόντης ἐκ γαίης ἐρύσας, καί μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε. (So saying, Argeiphontes [=Hermes] gave me the herb, drawing it from the ground, and showed me its nature.) *Odyssey* (ed. A.T. Murray).

34  
from Latin naturalis

35  
Greek technologia systematic treatment of an art, from technē art, skill + -o- + -logia -logy

37  
as in outside the norm

38  
Link to Silvia Federici's account on how the church forbade homosexuality when it became politically relevant to them to raise birthrates: "Then, forty years later, with the III Lateran Council of 1179, the Church intensified its attack on "sodomy," targeting at once gay people and non-procreative sex (Boswell 1981:277-86), and for the first time it condemned homosexuality ("the incontinence which is against nature", (Spencer 1995a:114)." Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, p.38

39  
"We should add that Whiteness [in turn] was, in many ways, a fantasy produced by the European imagination, one that the West has worked hard to naturalize and universalize." Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason*, Translated by Laurent Dubois, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2017, p.41

## RE-READING EMOTION

40  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion>

41  
Eric Shouse (Dr. Eric Shouse is an Assistant Professor of Communication at East Carolina University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of South Florida in 2003. His teaching and research interests include rhetoric, cultural studies, and the role of humour in popular culture. Volume 8 Issue 6 Dec. 2005

42  
This quote and the whole following definitions are taken from the essay by Eric Shouse, "Feeling, Emotion, Affect." *M/C Journal* 8.6 (2005). <<http://journal.media-culture.org.au/0512/03-shouse.php>>.

43  
Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual*. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.

44  
William M. Reddy, an American historian and anthropologist, was the first to make productive use of the life sciences in his own study of emotions, in particular cognitive psychology.

45  
William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.15. Cogmation comes from Douglas Barnett and Hilary Horn Ratner, 'The Organization and Integration of Cognition and Emotion in Development', *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 67/3 (1997), 303–16.

46  
William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.12.

47  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/emotion>

48  
'In other words, since the scope of the global horizon is not given, since we have no prior information about the global structure in which we are working, then demands of knowledge will be directed toward procedures of local construction, organization and examination.' Reza Negarestani, 'Where is the Concept? (localization, ramification, navigation)'

49  
Donna J. Haraway, 'Staying with the Trouble Making Kin in the Chthulucene', *Duke University Press Durham and London* 2016, p.1

An affect [on the other hand] is a non-conscious experience of intensity; it is a moment of unformed and unstructured potential. Of the three central terms [...] – feeling, emotion, and affect – affect is the most abstract because affect cannot be fully realised in language, and because affect is always prior to and/or outside of consciousness (Massumi, *Parables*<sup>43</sup>). Affect is the body's way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of an experience. The body has a grammar of its own that cannot be fully captured in language because it "doesn't just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it infolds contexts..." (Massumi, *Parables* 3024).

[Whereas] a feeling is a sensation that has been checked against previous experiences and labelled. It is personal and biographical because every person has a distinct set of previous sensations, from which to draw when interpreting and labelling their feelings.

In William M. Reddy's<sup>44</sup> opinion 'it is not possible to unambiguously define emotions' as mostly there are several emotions coexisting in one person at the same time, (sometimes even diametrically opposed to each other,) which makes it hard to separate one from the other. Trying to reduce them to some basic emotions would simplify them in a similarly problematic way. Simplifying the complexity of emotions is always connected to a loss of information.

Reddy also believes that emotion is Cogmation (Cognition + Emotion), 'overlearned cognitive habits'<sup>45</sup> that are constrained in two respects: '(1) Most psychologists agree that emotions have a special relationship to goals. They have a 'valence' or 'hedonic tone' that renders them either inherently pleasant or inherently unpleasant; and they have an 'intensity' that determines how easy or difficult it is for a person to override them. (2) New work on the nature of mental control shows that there are special constraints on the kind of learning or unlearning that involves emotion.'<sup>46</sup>

Following the etymology of the word 'emotion' we learn that the middle French *emouvoir* meant 'to stir up' and originated from the Latin *emovēre* translating to 'to remove' or 'displace' from *e-* + *movēre* 'to move'<sup>47</sup>, introducing the concept of something being moved or displaced. But what is it that causes a movement? Where is that movement being caused, by what, to what end and where to?

In Reza Negarestani's text 'Where is the concept?' it's an epistemological rupture, a local disturbance of the general (universal)<sup>48</sup>, that is causing a dis- order / a re-orientation, a so to say re-reading and re-order of the given. Through analysing the space before and after the rupture occurs, through amplifying the difference of the behaviour of the system-space, we can single out and identify the tendency that is responsible for that change. Through this change, from the moment of non-rupture to the moment of rupture: a process of conception occurs; new knowledge is formulated. For Donna Haraway it is our task (our subjective response) to create that movement, to make trouble, to molest, to disturb, in order 'to stir up potent response to devastating events, as well as to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places.'<sup>49</sup>

What if it is the information that we can access through our emotional reactions, that stirs up, 'dis- orders' and moves the given towards a re-order through a process of conception, setting in motion an epistemological revolution?

## THE HISTORY OF EMOTION - A SHORT(ENED) GENEALOGY AFTER JAN PLAMPER UP UNTIL THE ENLIGHTENMENT<sup>50</sup>

The concept can be identified (i.e. it can be conceived) via different alternative addresses or paths. This understanding of the concept and the process of conception leads to a new interpretation of knowledge as a navigation system of concept-spaces endowed with universal orientation (i.e. all global-local paths, structures, levels of organization and layers of the concept should be navigated,

the eleventh commandment: “if it (navigation) is possible, then it is mandatory).<sup>51</sup>

Reza Negarestani

Recognising dead reckoning as methodology of navigation for times where no orientation aids are available, the book ‘History of Emotions’ by the historian Jan Plamper is being introduced to its reader as a ‘navigational aid in the search for [...] a working definition’<sup>52</sup> of emotion while (as he says) ‘piecing the islands of knowledge that we have into an archipelago and then filling in the ocean that separates it’.<sup>53</sup>

In order to gain an understanding of the enlightenment notion ‘emotio’, we have to consider a complex genealogy of an understanding of emotion that differs and sometimes overlaps in time, geography and cultures, asking the question: Who defines what emotions are?

In western Europe from the antiquity till the mid 19th century, it was primarily philosophy and theology that defined thinking about emotions, conveyed through rhetoric, medicine and literature, followed by experimental psychology, which in the late twentieth century shifted to and focuses currently mainly on neuroscience.<sup>54</sup>

For Classical Greece (c.500–336/323 bc) emotions were understood ‘to be reactions, reactions not to events but to actions or situations that resulted from actions, the consequences of which affect one’s relative status, or the relative status of others’.<sup>55</sup> In many of the earlier human cultures, emotions were perceived as something external: ‘Homer’s literary figures [Greek Mythology] saw themselves as more or less helpless in the face of the power of emotions’.<sup>56</sup> Up until today, many of our daily metaphors to express emotions still correspond to the idea that they are something external: we are ‘overcome with rage’, ‘seized by pleasure’, ‘love-struck’.<sup>57</sup>

The Greek philosopher and scientist Aristoteles (384–322bc) conceived the earliest recorded, and one of the most enduring and influential definitions of emotion describing the Greek term *pathos* (in plural *pathē*). In the ‘Art of Rhetoric’ he writes: ‘emotions are all those affections which cause men to change their opinion in regard to their judgements, and are accompanied by pleasure and pain; such are anger, pity, fear, and all similar emotions and their contraries’.<sup>58</sup> For him each emotion has itself a positive and a negative sense, being capable of producing pleasure or pain. Hence Aristoteles did not distinguish between positive and negative emotions [, as it is usual today]. He believed that emotions can be altered, not only in oneself, but also in others and that this alteration has to be learned while young, ‘so that proper judgement [becomes] second nature’.<sup>59</sup>

The Aristotelian and later the Stoic division of the emotional process conceived both of a more physical initial movement (*primus motus*) and a second, cognitive and moral evaluation. Contrary to Aristoteles, who did not judge the emotions themselves and thought them inseparable from the cognitive<sup>60</sup>, the Stoics aim was to achieve an emotionless or calm state of apathy (*apatheia*), followed by *ataraxia*<sup>61,62</sup>. Their pantheism led them to emphasize the bigger picture and the irrelevance of emotion thereof.

Influenced by early Christian writings on emotion, Augustine (354–430) replaced the Aristotelian and Stoic division of the emotional process, in his hierarchical seven stages model of souls with a unitary category of the emotions (*motus*), subordinated to the will: the lowest stage being purely vegetative and physical, the highest resulting in beatitude or divine epiphany.<sup>63</sup> Unlike the Stoics, whose pantheistic conceptions led them to discover the divine in earth and nature, Augustine located divinity in an unreachable, transcendent sphere and welcomed emotionality in life, as long as it was subordinated to the will and aimed at divinity.<sup>64</sup> His model adumbrates already the striving of the Renaissance man to become as god-like as possible, surpassing his own vegetative and physical being,

50

For a more detailed and profound analysis of the history of emotion read: Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, Oxford University Press, 2015

51

Reza Negarestani, *Abducting the Outside* (a summary of the talk, part 1), 23 Nov 2012, point 1

52

Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 38

53

Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, p.10

54

Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, p.9–10, footnote: Philip Fisher provides a description of the fields that dealt with emotion, although he gives no chronology: ‘What we know or how we think about the passions was, from the beginning, a complex product of overlapping and sometimes mutually encumbering work in philosophy, in literature— especially epic and tragedy—in medicine, in ethics, in rhetoric, in aesthetics, in legal and political thought. In our own time, new work in evolutionary biology, psychology, anthropology, and most recently in the neurobiology of the brain, along with work in game theory and economics, and, above all, in philosophy, continues the interwoven texture of shared, interdependent, sometimes interfering, even damaging, and sometimes enhancing collaborative thought’; Philip Fisher, *The Vehement Passions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 7.

55

William W. Fortenbaugh, *Aristotle on Emotion: A Contribution to Philosophical Psychology, Rhetoric Poetics, Politics and Ethics* (2nd edn, London: Duckworth, 2002)

56

Christoph Demmerling and Hilge Landweer, *Philosophie der Gefühle: Von Achtung bis Zorn* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007), 2.

57

Robert C. Solomon, *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 190.

58

Aristotle, *The ‘Art’ of Rhetoric*, trans. John Henry Freese (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 173.

59

A. W. Price, ‘Emotions in Plato and Aristotle’, in Peter Goldie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 121–42, here 137–8.

60

Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.17.

61

ongoing freedom from distress and worry

62

On *ataraxia* and *apatheia* see Joachim Ritter (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, i (Basel: Schwabe, 1971), 429–33, 593.



63  
Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p.34.

64  
Augustine dealt with voluntaristic control of emotion autobiographically in his *Confessions*, which for the most part concerns his efforts to repress his own lust (libido); Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p.51–2.

65  
Robert C. Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993). According to Thomas Dixon, Robert Solomon is wrong to hold Christian thinkers like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas responsible for the separation of emotion and reason. In fact, they dealt in terms of passion and reason, in which reason, just like passion, could be 'moved' (motus), although this was only as a positive movement such as love; Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, p.53–4.

66  
René Descartes, 'Préface to "Passions de l'âme": Letter of Descartes to the editor, 14 August 1649', in Roger Ariew (ed.), *Descartes in Seventeenth-Century England*, ii. *Descartes's Works in Translation* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2002), p.B3.

67  
Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715) radicalized the mind–body dualism.

68  
Patricia Reed, 'Seduced by Dragons: On the Necessity of the Hypothetical' published in: *Grasping a Concept is Mastering the Use of a Form*, ed. Beatriz Ortega Botas, (Madrid: La Casa Ensendida, 2017).

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF EMOTIONALITY AS ILLNESS OF THE MIND

69  
Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. and ed. Robert B. Louden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.151.

70  
Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) [Ger. orig., *Metaphysik der Sitten*, 1797], p.166.

71  
Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 149, emphasis in original.

72  
see *Constructive Alienation*

73  
French historians traditionally place the Enlightenment between 1715 (the year that Louis XIV died) and 1789 (the beginning of the French Revolution)

being in control of it and by that being in control of himself and as far from the original sin as humanly possible. Augustine had thus already anticipated the duality of emotion and reason<sup>65</sup>, influenced by the theological mythology of Christianity, for which René Descartes (1596–1650) is usually credited [blamed].

René Descartes wrote in 'The Passion of the Soul' his intention 'of investigating emotions as 'a physician' and separating them from the soul, so that they might be studied as mechanisms, like all living organisms'<sup>66</sup>. He is said to be the real inventor of dualism, an 'above all mind–body dualism' involving a contrast between emotion and reason.<sup>67</sup>

This dyadic structure evolved later into the discussion Social Constructivism vs. Universalism, arising out of the dichotomy between culture versus nature, ratio versus emotio, that still dominates the scientific research into emotions today; Social Constructivism believing that each emotion has its own history determined by general historical changes, where as Universalism states that human feelings have remained the same for millennia, only the means of expressing them has changed.

Many researchers since got stuck in this dyadic and were not able to move beyond the question of social constructivism or universalism, in order to re-orient their point of view in a more forthcoming way for their research. It is my quest to move beyond this dyadic structure, to dis-order it, and focus on the more pressing question: What lies beyond the supposed wall of universalism vs. social constructivism that we can't reach while we ask the question if emotions are either learned or inherent to the human condition? Which other structures of knowledge, layers of mediation can we approach and think through in order to not get stuck on a question that can't be simply answered with either or, that limits the scope of our research unnecessary?

Gaining understanding and knowledge does not require certainty and researching reality through speculative thinking entails recognizing that (with Patricia Reed's words) 'the particular, or the point [of research] never exists in isolation; it doesn't exist in a vacuum space where it can simply be dissected to generate a proper picture of that object in question'<sup>68</sup> without crucial simplification in our comprehension of it. When we focus on one layer of mediation only to access our question of research, other layers start to seem less accessible, seem to move further away and we seem to lose a more complex understanding of our point of investigation.

No human being wishes to have passion. For who wants to have himself put in chains when he can be free?<sup>69</sup>

Immanuel Kant

Immanuel Kant wrote in 'Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht', 1798 (Eng., *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, 1974): 'But two things are required for inner freedom: being one's own master in a given case (animus sui compos), and ruling oneself (imperium in semetipsum), that is, subduing one's affects and governing one's passions.'<sup>70</sup> Therefor being 'subject to affects and passions is probably always an illness of the mind, because both affect and passion shut out the sovereignty of reason'.<sup>71</sup> Let me point out the following of his used words and get back to them later<sup>72</sup>: freedom, master, ruling, subduing, governing, being subject, sovereignty.

The canonization of reason and therefor the sovereignty of culture dominated the Enlightenment<sup>73</sup> (or Age of Reason)<sup>74</sup> and demanded the sacrifice of strict separation of reason and feeling, nature and culture; inner freedom was founded upon self-control and nothing was such a threat to this as feelings.<sup>75</sup> The terminology 'nature' became known and used as 'state of nature', the period before a society existed and was defined as 'primitive'. Consequently emotio was defined as unreason<sup>76</sup> as well as natural and primitive,

leading to the assumption that not being in control of one's Self equals being a primitive being, being a slave to ones emotions, ones vegetative and physical being, equals being ill and having a dis- order. Whereas ratio was the striving of the Renaissance man to surpass all these, having self-control, being the master of one's Self and as god-like as possible, through recognising the irrelevance of emotio in the perspective of the bigger picture.

The vocabulary used by Descartes and his contemporaries indicates a dealing with emotions – those primitive, cultureless parts inherent to the human – in a colonising way, drawing parallels to the ideology of that time that justified occupying the unknown territory through installing 'culture' on top of it, if needed with force.

140 years later, in 1939 the historical socialist Norbert Elias (1897-1990) published a book called: 'Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen'.<sup>77</sup> It entails a theory of European modernity initiated around 1600, which involves an ultimately linear process of increasing control of affect.<sup>78</sup>

According to Elias's research to be a modern man meant 'to be disgusted by the poor table manners of fellow diners, to be ashamed of a relative who spits on the floor, to find embarrassing the sight of a naked person in public space.'<sup>79</sup> Emotions that medieval men and women could freely express became in the transition to modernity, overlaid with taboos, emphasizing their conjunction to shame, guilt and disgust. These taboos were internalized by modern society; external compulsion became self-compulsion,<sup>80</sup> and at worst lead to 'compulsive actions and other symptoms of disturbance'<sup>81</sup> often in form of incomprehensible emotional outbursts. The retreat from emotio to ratio was linked to the unsettling sense that there was an 'emotional life within us [humans] which is always ready to drown intellectual life and to carry out sudden reversal of that evolution we were so proud of from emotion to thought, from emotional language to articulated language.'<sup>82</sup>

Elias's metaphor, the 'affect-economy', implied that a feeling that disappeared from one place had to reappear in another.<sup>83</sup> What would that mean for the feelings that are being controlled and suppressed by the human to be part of the modern society? Are we experiencing some of the consequences of emotional suppression in what we call mental illness or illness of the mind today?

Without affect feelings do not "feel" because they have no intensity, and without feelings rational decision-making becomes problematic.<sup>84</sup>

Antonio Damasio

As an in parts political reaction to avoid giving offence and therefor suppressing ones emotions, which dominated absolutist France under Louis XIV, it became common in the early eighteen century to express ones emotions, to proof oneself an absolute natural and authentic being (– and not bourgeoisie). This phenomenon under the lead of sentimentalists like Robespierre gained with the unfolding of the French Revolution a 'radicalizing dynamic'. Having to proof constantly ones emotions to be authentic – a contradiction in itself – 'or else face the death penalty, is likely to inspire furtive doubts in most people.'<sup>85</sup> For William M. Reddy<sup>86</sup> this, the terror of the French Revolution, ultimately was the reason – and not so much Descartes<sup>87</sup> – for the dualism of emotio and ratio<sup>88</sup> and the fear of emotio still present in western society today, that lead society to suppress their emotions while unlearning to be/live with them, valuing their informative communication with one's Self.

74

Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, Oxford University Press, 2015, p.6–7

75

'But two things are required for inner freedom: being one's own master in a given case (*animus sui compos*), and ruling oneself (*imperium in semetipsum*), that is, subduing one's affects and governing one's passions'; Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.166.

76

Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, p.23–24

77

Eng. *The Civilisation Process*, 1969

78

Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', p.50, see footnote text

79

Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', p.49–50

80

Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', p.50

81

Norbert Elias, 'The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations', trans. Edward Jephcott, ed. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Mennell (rev. edn, Oxford: Blackwell 2010)

82

Lucien Febvre, 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past', in *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre*, ed. Peter Burke, trans. K. Folka, Harper & Row, New York, 2073, p.14.

83

Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. Edward Jephcott, ed. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Mennell (rev. edn, Oxford: Blackwell, 2010)

## THE FEAR OF EMOTIO

84

Damasio, Antonio. *Descartes' Error*. 1994. New York: Quill, 2000. P.204–22

85

William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.197.

86

William M. Reddy, an American historian and anthropologist, was the first to make productive use of the life sciences in his own study of emotions, in particular cognitive psychology.

87

Descartes is being discussed in chapter , *The History Of Emotion – A short genealogy after Jan Plamper up until the Enlightenment'*

88

Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, p.143.

Febvre, *Sensibility and History*, 15–16, 26.  
Febvre, e.g. described literary or artistic occupations as 'means of sentimental anaesthesia' of feeling. He did not think of this so much as in Freud's sense of sublimation, but rather as simple substitution ; Febvre, 'Sensibility and History', p.15.

Febvre, 'Sensibility and History', 25.

Febvre, 'Sensibility and History', 14.

Simmel, *Sociology*, 256 ; see also for trust (Vertrauen), 315–16; for honour (Ehre), 387–9; for loyalty (Treue), 517–22; for enmity, envy, jealousy (Feindseeligkeit, Neid, Eifersucht), 255–8. Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015, p.47–48

see: Tania Singer, Matthias Bolz, 'Compassion. Bridging Practice and Science', Max Planck Society, Munich 2013 and Gerd Folkers und Johannes Fehr (Hg.): *Gefühle zeigen*, Edition Collegium Helveticum Bd. 5, Zürich: Chronos Verlag 2009.

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F60.3 emotional personality disorder, International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision (ICD-10)-WHO Version for ;2016 <http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en#/F60.3>

Emotives explained by Jan Plamper: 'In his 1997 essay Reddy at first only used the term emotive to reconcile social constructivism and universalism, so that he might regain a normative position. Reddy's position was this: by describing a condition of the world using emotion, we also seek to influence this condition; thus, we are adopting an evaluative stance.' Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotion', p.252, Reddy: 'The concept of emotives suggests that when words change their meaning, their emotive effects change as well'; the conception of emotives 'allows us to say this without requiring us to say exactly what any given person did feel'. Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling*, 143–4. (p.259 *History of Emotion*)

Lucien Febvre (1875–1956), historian and contemporary to Norbert Elias, believed that the linear historical narrative of 'the gradual suppression of emotional activity through intellectual activity was being undermined by 'most recent history' and the 'revived primitive feelings'.<sup>89</sup> The threat of European Fascism and the seductive emotional potential of National Socialism prompted Febvre's suggestion to study 'the history of hate, the history of fear and the history of cruelty'<sup>90</sup>. Especially as he observed, that 'emotions are contagious'<sup>91</sup>, an observation shared by his contemporary, the Sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918). Simmel had no doubt, that feelings such as trust, honour, and loyalty – but also enmity, envy, jealousy, anger, hatred, contempt, and cruelty – not only divided individuals and groups but also brought them together; and that this way feelings promote the formation of social groups.<sup>92</sup> Therefor social groups were the perfect incubator of raising tremendous emotions that for the individual being were perceived as 'primitive', but grew acceptability in its expressed multiplicity. Which eventually had a huge part in the rise of fascism in Europe in the beginning of the 20st century.

To understand the logic and reason behind emotions is one of the keys to understand human behaviour. Suppressing emotionality is partly losing the connection to knowledge that can be accessed through ones own behavioural reactions (and that of others) towards a specific situation or object. Through ignoring the communication transmitted through the change of behaviour, we miss out on important information towards balancing our health, our proper eco-system that i.a. we call body. Recent socio-neuroscientific studies<sup>93</sup> show that emotional suppression releases stress hormones in the human body. The vicious circle of suppressing emotions plays out as followed: the released stress hormones chemically inhibit the process used for reasonable thinking, prioritising solely a focus on fight or flight decisions, consequently distorting the perspective on the situation at hand and releasing response actions that reciprocally can result in causing damages to surrounding relationships and environment. That in return activates the cardiovascular system inside the human in a way that produces long-term chronic illnesses, reciprocally releasing more stress hormones again.

Emotional unstable personality disorder follows the same vicious circle. BPD patients like me feel emotions enhanced, more easily, much deeper and longer.<sup>95,96</sup> Hence the differences between the various emotional states (triggered by specific situations) are being pointed out more exaggerated and therefor clearly. Our appraisal system is generally heightened compared to the (scientifically researched) human standard, hence emotions for us are more difficult to control and qualify.<sup>97,98</sup> Consequently, trying to follow the expected societal behaviour standard and not to seem too emotional, BPD patients often suppress their emotions to better fit in with their surrounding, eventually resulting in the opposite outcome, the production of more stress hormones and therefor more and stronger emotions to endure. This alone should indicate, that emotions are neither making us weak – actually suppressing them is making us more vulnerable – nor should they be ignored or devaluated as they are part of a vital communication system between us, our body, our mind and the environment. Hence I advert here for the importance of knowing ones emotions, understanding and incorporating the information they provide.

Nevertheless, I have to state very clearly that this previous argument is not a promotion of permanent expression of emotions and that we should be very aware that, e.g. after William M. Reddy's theory on emotives<sup>99</sup> 'the intensive experiencing of emotion is unsustainable for longer periods' and can 'lead to a kind of overheating'<sup>100</sup> too, as he lays out in this being the explanation for the afterwards incomprehensible Terror during the French Revolution.<sup>101</sup>

So I ask myself, as a person with an unstable emotional personality disorder

experiencing and researching this condition, its strengths and limitations simultaneously, what can I learn about the human condition of being afraid of Emotio<sup>102</sup>? How come our emotional connection (to our Self's and others) is still dominated / influenced / fueled by this fear of emotio? How could understanding this fear from my personal perspective – not always being able to follow behavioural standards based on my emotional perception or failing to adequately 'control' my emotions – have a socio-political relevance? What if this intensified perceived emotions can foster a more sensitive understanding of how to deal with the changes we go through right now and the limits we are encountering, in the beginning of the 21st century, that similarly to my 'dis- order' make us humans feel insecure, in doubt, out of control and comfort? How could understanding and employ Emotio (as well as Ratio) inform the formation of a new logic (by using radical honesty) to navigate a new rational thinking while, 'staying with the trouble'?

If the reproduction of social reality (ideology) is always constituted by a recursive interplay between space and its "vocabulary" of uses, it is our pressing labour to construct a foreign tongue to articulate desired estrangement.

Patricia Reed, *Assemblies for Alienation*, 2014

Through alienation from the given, the norm, the standard, activated by a local rupture, a dis- ordering/re-reading, re-ordering of the given is set in motion. This recursive moment of construction and manipulation is an investigative moment, a way to get to know the system of enquiry in a self-fulfilling (destinal) way through the production of concept(ion), that is being produced locally around the occurrence of the rupture. The re-reading and re-ordering is inherently constructive, productive in an epistemological sense and sets in motion an epistemological revolution, a change in meaning and definition of that what we can know of the system of enquiry, producing new knowledge through the entrance of a change in its causal fabric.

Via a designated instability in the local horizon that causes an epistemological rupture in the universal (general), the homogenous informational landscape in which everything looks like one and the same – may it causes a system failure or may the system failure have caused the qualitative rupture – the local horizon becomes a productive locality, producing new knowledge through the concept-ion of the unknown, the uncertain, the invisible, while asking what has caused this rupture and where it is being caused and what is consequently changing in the perceived / experienced system.<sup>103</sup>

The process of conception happens in 3 steps: 1) through observing the (new, post-rupture) given, using dead-reckoning and radical honesty, in order to detach ourselves from what we think we know / are supposed to know and that which is presented to us as the immutable given, while perceive merely what is actually existing, what is skimming us in that present moment and what not, and by 2) questioning the definition of the given through the methodology of dis- ordering, re-reading and re-order it's epistemological and ontological definition through different layers of mediation, while 3) formulating a hypothetical through speculative thought and philosophy, 'the could be', as Patricia Reed calls it, based on the given and the non-given, the known and un-known and their re-reading and re- ordering, which we established in the first and second step of concept(ion).

Reasoning as a human, even thinking through the inhuman will always have an anthropocentric taste to it. We can only think and understand as a human can think and understand; being human is our inherent limitation (to being human). But within this limitation everything thinkable is speculatively possible. Therefore the formation of a new rationalism should include the emotional perspective, not as a leading one, but as an informative one (what William M. Reddy would call cogmotion<sup>104</sup>), as 'to understand the logic and reason behind emotions is one of the keys to understand human behaviour' and

100  
Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotion', p.260

101  
see chapter Re-Reading Emotion

102  
Find the definition of Emotio in the chapter 'The History Of Emotion – A short(end) genealogy after Jan Plamper up until the Enlightenment'

## **CONSTRUCTIVE ALIENATION – AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL REVOLUTION**

103  
See chapters The Epistemological Rupture and My Local Horizon

104  
See chapter Re-reading Emotion

therefore human thinking.

Even though Emotions may seem uncertain and unreliable, they have cause, they are inherent and existent in the human condition and decision-making. And as long as we cannot understand and qualify, as long as we are not sure of the logic and reason behind the surfaced emotions, emotions become part of the unknown, incalculable, unpredictable drift that co-informs the 'process of conception', that takes place in a self-fulfilling, destinal way; we get to know them and our Self by experiencing them within our Self's. Ignoring them / supressing them as well as amplifying them has impactful consequences that need to be considered/acknowledged in order to formulate any kind of informed speculative hypothesis. Nevertheless (I repeat), it is not about forcefully perceiving emotions (as I revised through Reddy's <sup>104</sup>) argumentation), but about acknowledging them when they arise noticeably and on their own, in order to re-read what they are trying to communicate to / with(in) us humans about the situation or object that caused that emotion to rise. This is what I would call thinking through Emotio.

Thinking through emotio can stir up the given (the situation at hand) and can therefore lead to epistemological ruptures, causing a constructive and qualitative alienation from the universal given – that which is often termed the norm or the standard – in a locally productive way.

Emotio is conception through experiencing affect. Emotio is a non-verbal epistemology. Emotio is inherently multi-layered, uncertain and rapidly changing. Emotio is dis-ordering and re-reading the given while being moved (physically as well as metaphorically) while staying with the trouble. Emotio is not searching for long-term solutions in the future, but a technology to analyse the given, that which is being dis-ruptured and dis-ordered in the right-now. Emotio is actively non-neglective, but an emancipated and inherently constructive engaging with the problematic of existing structures, while being alienation by ruptures.

The position of alienation might not feel good, but it's there where friction happens, right there, where we are irritated, annoyed, uncomfortable, where we are moved to dis-agree, to dis-engage and to dis-order our Self's from the situation at hand, that we access and grow our knowledge to change our position in an emancipatory way.

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