

STATE OF EMERGENCE

A DOCUMENTARY OF THE
FIRST NSK CITIZENS' CONGRESS

EDITED BY ALEXEI MONROE

STATE OF EMERGENCY
First NSK Citizens' Congress, Berlin
October 21st – 23rd, 2010

Initiated by:
IRWIN
Concept/programme coordinator:
Alexei Monroe
Concept/online coordinator:
Haris Hararis
Co-production:
IRWIN and sauerbrey | raabe .
Büro für kulturelle angelegenheiten



Bibliografische Informationen der Deutschen
Nationalbibliothek: Die Deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet
diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie;
detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über
www.d-nb.de abrufbar.
Alle Rechte der englischen Ausgabe /
all rights reserved

© Poison Cabinet Press PCP002
an imprint of Plöttner Verlag GmbH & Co. KG,
Marbachstraße 2, 04155
Leipzig & London 2011

1. Auflage / 1st edition
ISBN 978-3-86211-048-3
Edited and proofread by: Alexei Monroe
Series Editor: Alexander Nym
Book production: IRWIN

Cover design: Haris Hararis,
based on the 1st prize of the NSK-congress poster by
Valnoir Mortasonge
Typesetting & Layout: New Collectivism
Printed by: R-risk

Plöttner Verlag

PCP
POISON
CABINET
PRESS

Supported by:



Education and Culture DG

Culture Programme

This project has been funded with support from the
European Commission. This publication reflects the
views only of the author, and the Commission cannot
be held responsible for any use which may be made of
the information contained therein.



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA KULTURO

Second order utopia

Because of this cathartic moment, I assume that there is a therapeutic moment in the artistic work of NSK. But how does this correlate with a re-thinking of (European) space and with the moment of social imagination?

A potential answer is the NSK State in Time, founded in 1992. The NSK state offers a self-chosen identity to its inhabitants, independent of their factual nationality, age, sex, religion or economic position.

With this project of the state NSK creates a new imagination of space – and a kind of *second order utopia*.¹⁰ Slavoj Žižek considers this utopia as a construction of social space derived from existing parameters.¹¹ Such a utopia is a question of highest priority in case it will not be possible to live on in the existing parameters.¹²

The moment of catharsis and the reflection of the traumatic experience of Europe's dark past lays the ground for imagining the NSK state. The manifestation of the NSK state can thus be seen as a consequence and an advance in the process of imagining (European) space.

NSK State as Heterotopia and Popular Culture *Bianca Ludewig*

One of the most powerful tools in the work of NSK State and Laibach is to me the use of humour through, e.g., forms of overidentification. Since Laibach and NSK always dealt with serious issues like totalitarianism, fascism or fanaticism – which was often referred to at the congress as the “dark side” – it is especially important to recognize this work also in the perspective of humour because it is about the serious things we should and must laugh. Through humour we are questioning the common status quo – especially ethical values and morals. It enables us to fight fatalism¹.

I will discuss the following questions: What practices of popular culture are reflected and linked in the work of Laibach/NSK? What is the significance of humour and fiction within the work of NSK? Do these aesthetic practices also have a political dimension? What is their social value? And what heterotopias² are present in the NSK State in Time? I am interested in the connections between imagination/fiction, humour/art, utopia/heterotopia, construction of realities/possible lives and responsibility/ethos.

During the Congress, migration and citizenship, art and politics were extensively discussed. Alexei Monroe pointed out after the final presentations on the outcome of the congress, that there are hidden connections between all of the statements and issues that were raised. Even to the opinions of the opposite extremes. This is due to the mystical dynamic of NSK that evolves from its ambiguous and ambivalent qualities – one could argue: that's because we are confronted with real humour. After attending the public parts of the congress it was surprising to me that nobody really responded to or commented on humour as a part of the NSK State and its toolbox – except for the *Declaration of Atomic Dependence*, which was not approved by all the delegates. The NSK toolbox is in large parts supplied by the world of art and popular culture but also by political strategies and symbols that refer often to the dark sides of European history. The use

¹ These and the following statements about humour are taken from the ARTE TV-series *Philosophy*, episode about humour from March 2011. *Philosophie. Dokumentationsreihe, Frankreich 2011, ARTE F, Regie: Philippe Truffault, 19. März 2011, 01:25. Raphaël Enthoven diskutiert mit Robert Ziegler über das Thema Humor. Documentary series, France 2011, ARTE F, Dir: Philippe Truffault, 19th March 2011, 01:25. Raphaël Enthoven discusses humour with Robert Ziegler.*

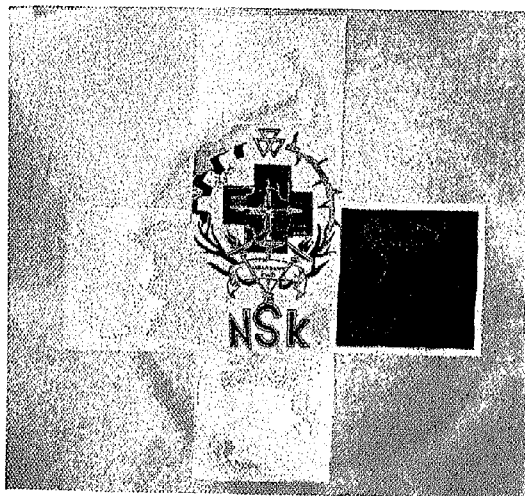
² “There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.” Michel Foucault: *Of other Spaces (Heterotopias)*, 1967. [Lecture given by Michel Foucault in March 1967. Although not reviewed for publication by the author and thus not part of the official corpus of his work, the manuscript was released into the public domain for an exhibition in Berlin shortly before Michel Foucault's death. Translated from the French by Jay Miskowicz]. See <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>, (Accessed 15th March 2011)

¹⁰ See also the concept of “heterotopia” in the following contribution of Bianca Ludewig.

¹¹ Žižek, Slavoj, *Die politische Suspension des Ethischen*. Frankfurt am Main 2005. p. 198 - 199.

¹² *ibid.*

of strategies from the art world and the use of humour are the elements that outline NSK as a heterotopian escape for me. Heterotopian because it manifests in time, not territory, but also in the “real” world: in the internet, in artworks, in events and in effects that are very much real. In formulating semiotic resistance, media-heterotopias, theory-fiction, imagined worlds or militancy of communication Neue Slowenische Kunst has built the basis for the NSK State as a heterotopic space.



Crossfade by Christian Matzke with Peter Blase.

In the delegates' discussions at the congress it was often mentioned that there is a fear of losing the NSK State's ambiguity and just becoming a so to say conservative or regular citizen initiative, a “Laibach-lite” version of the original project. A member of NSK stressed in the final discussion the connection of art and politics and mentioned that he was surprised that everybody was so serious even though they had taken it seriously themselves. He also said that when they started the NSK State project they “made lots of nonsense statements which were kind of a joke”.

The Laibach items of 1982³ talk about the relation between ideology and culture, art and totalitarianism – I also perceive Laibach as an attempt to show the influence of politics and ideology on popular culture, art and music. Even though the world has changed in some of its

³ See especially item 2: “LAIBACH analyses the relation between ideology and culture in a late phase, presented through art. LAIBACH sublimates the tension between them and the existing disharmonies (social unrest, individual frustration, and ideological oppositions) and thus eliminates direct ideological and systemic discursiveness of all kinds. The name itself and the emblem are visible materialisations of the idea on the level of a cognitive symbol. The name LAIBACH is a suggestion of the actual possibility of establishing a politicised ideological (system) art because of the influence of politics and ideology”. *Laibach: Recapitulation, Ausstellung Laibach Kunst, Lódz 2009* (Exhibition Catalogue) p. 14.

parameters e.g. through the technical progress and the new media, some aspects are still valid today. Provocation and taboo-breaking is in general use within popular music and culture, and also within Laibach/NSK. The over-identification with Taylorism, brutality and especially Nazi Kunst in combination with disco music is without a doubt extremely disturbing. Branding is performed impressively by Laibach/NSK. With the development and technical progress of media and especially new media the significance of images grew constantly and today we can view music also as an image-world through logos, photos, videos and live performances. This image-world became crucial for the construction of self-images, identities and the imagination of other possible lives as suggested by Arjun Appadurai in his postmodern theory on globalisation as a configuration of scapes, one of the main scapes is the mediascape. We perform these media images and the images perform us. They become the contemporary form of self-presentation and self-dramatization, a visual staging of imagined reality. Imagination, fiction and reality blend into each other; today we are dealing with a fictionalization of reality, with a simultaneous aesthetization of the world. Sabine Wetting says that it is crucial for the media-inflated world of today to differentiate the real from the fictional which coexist side by side. “Through the convergence of fiction and reality we are faced with a complete new situation in front of which the conventional and traditional strategies of orientation and resolution collapse.”⁴ I believe that humour is a helpful skill or tool to accomplish this task of orientation.

Contemporary popculture seems to be very successful when it plays with what I would call “postmodern ambiguity”. Through this ambiguity artists are able to widen their audience, which sometimes leads to mixed audiences that seem to have nothing in common, or that even hold opposing beliefs and practices e.g. extreme political left and right – a condition Laibach/NSK State are also confronted with.⁵

But this is something you could call expected, because this is also due to the methods and tools used by NSK, like overidentification and other forms of humour (actually overidentification should be seen as a form of humour). But since 2007 there appeared another not expected side-effect which Inke Arns called in the public seminar at the congress “the founding of a third way of overidentification”⁶ by the Nigerians who applied for NSK passport by thousands. Loren Hansi Momodu, a curator from London/Lagos, was asked in the following discussion if they talked with

⁴ Wetting, Sabine: *Imagination im Erkenntnisprozess – Chancen und Herausforderungen im Zeitalter der Bildmedien*. Transcript Verlag 2009, Bielefeld. p. 12.

⁵ In reaction to the posting of the “Iron Sky” film-trailer the following comment was posted on the NSK State homepage (10/2010): “It’s unfortunate that the producers and participants in the IRON SKY project are using this antifa slogan, “get ready to kick some Nazi arse” to advertise their film. I was interested in it, but if that’s the way they want to capture an audience than count me out. Their slogan should be, “when the Nazis return from outer space the world would be a happier place!””

⁶ Inke Arns comment: “(...) So it is really this belief in something of which you perfectly know that it is fictional. And I guess this is what makes this passport a precious document (...) I am asking myself if those people in the seminar...whether they invented or found a third way of overidentification. Isn’t it rather about subverting the meaning of the NSK passport. And isn’t it really about taking the NSK passport more seriously than it takes itself. This is the definition of overidentification that we know. I thought: wow they are way ahead of us taking this passport seriously.”

the Nigerian passport holders about the source of their information, how they know that people actually travelled with the passport to NSK State and that it is a beautiful country. She replied: "You are faced with individuals that have real emotional investment in something and actually you are the bearer of bad news – the person saying 'the joke is on you'. People have this genuine and deep seated emotional attachment that they place on this document – whether it is misplaced or not. And I think in the context of Nigeria it does relate to a variety of issues and somehow the issue of migration has adopted the NSK State whether it was part of the initial impetus or not."

What Hansi Momodu said reflects some important issues: one is the reference to ambiguity and humour within the work of NSK, which is one of the most powerful aspects to me; and the other one is the linking of the NSK project, after being created in the 1980s, with the present. To me it shows that NSK State is really a state bound to time. The situation with the Nigerians proves that the imagined or virtual state is connected to reality, approaching directly (though unintentionally) one of the major and most urgent issues of global entanglements⁷ in the post-postmodern world. It shows that the methods work, even beyond the expected and predicted. One of the delegates even drew parallels between the establishment of IRWIN and Slovenia with the establishment of the NSK State and the wave of Nigerian passport holders⁸, which goes well with Alexei Monroe's statement of how everything is connected. In that sense the NSK State could be understood as a "temporary autonomous zone" formulated by Hakim Bey in the 1990s which was also mentioned by one of the delegates in the discussion. Bey is also concerned with states and nations or better alternatives to it: "Vital in shaping TAZ reality is the concept of psychic nomadism (or as we jokingly call it, "rootless cosmopolitanism") ... "The death of God", in some ways a de-centering of the entire "European project", opened a multi-perspectival post-ideological worldview able to move "rootlessly" (...) This description covers not only X-class artists and intellectuals but also migrant laborers, refugees, the "homeless", tourists (...)". The delegate concluded (referring to an older work of Wilson/Bey): "So maybe the question isn't about the people who think or heard that you can actually visit the NSK land – maybe wherever they thought it is possible, that's in fact when they were there".

This leads to some of the motifs from the Congress that Ian Parker – one of the facilitators recollected also as signifiers. I will pick up some of his signifiers and later again some of my previous ones. The first of his signifiers deals with the notion of the *political*: "There is a deliber-

⁷ See Entangled History Sebastian Conrad & Shalini Randeria (Hg.): *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus. Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt 2002.

⁸ Transcribed delegate comment: "(...) I see if not a relation than a certain parallel between what was happening in the 90s in Slovenia and what was happening in the last three years, this influx of applications from Nigeria. They embraced the limitation that this passport is not good for travel, they embraced the limitation that they have never been to the state and that it doesn't exist but they strongly believe that it either exists somewhere where they haven't yet been or that it will exist in some near future. (...) I just wanted to draw some parallels between the establishing of IRWIN and the NSK State.

⁹ Bey, Hakim (Peter Lamborn Wilson): *T.A.Z. - The Temporary Autonomous Zone: Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. 1991. pp. 14-15.

ate ambiguity in the organisation of NSK state as well. It opens up a question about what the engagement of NSK citizens is in the State? Whether it is a space for those who are being politicized – and I think there are people coming in that are being politicized, and that's a good thing. Or whether it operates as a space for those who want to escape politics? Those who have been through political action and now look to this as an open neutral space". He continues with the signifier *territory*: "There is a process of (...) disturbance of state identity in NSK State's activities. And surely one of our reasons of being should be to speed up the decomposition of all existing states." He also comments on *fanatical* and *collective*. In connection to those signifiers I found the comments of some delegates helpful. One mentioned Fridtjof Nansen and the Nansen passport, a form of identity for stateless persons that was issued after the First World War and in time recognised by more than 50 governments, and which allowed refugees to cross borders legally. He ended his comment by suggesting: "So that is also something to consider for NSK that we could actually help people". Also mentioned was Garry Davis who in 1953 founded the World Government of World Citizens. The delegate concluded: "So for the NSK State it is a challenge to give recognition or as Manray Hsu said 'protection'".¹⁰

This leads to another important point which is also relevant to art, popculture and especially the use of humour and ambiguity, which is also implied in Hansi Momodu's statement: the question of responsibility. Philosopher and communication researcher Siegfried J. Schmidt talks about a *renaissance of responsibility* in the age of media which is not ethically motivated but epistemological because we have no other choice but to be responsible for our constructed realities because the validity is not longer covered by "the reality": "This responsibility is a risky advance action – because you never know what else could happen subsequent to your actions (...) if reality does not relieve us from responsibility then we have to realise that we ourselves function as the benchmark of our reality, then there is no retreat from responsibility ... for anyone taking part in the media-process."¹¹

To imagine that people are questioned and imprisoned by border patrol or customs police is a terrifying vision that also challenged IRWIN and NSK. That's why Inke Arns explained: "It's a feeling of responsibility that nothing bad happens to people if they use it [the passport]. That's why we made this explanatory approach within the seminar in Lagos. It's not that everybody is just perfectly overidentifying with it, there is a large variety of approaches." In the continuing discussion a delegate interpreted this form of identifying as "not only to be retro but futuristic to some degree".

A crucial problem is that explanation, interpretation or definition are the gravestones of humour and ambiguity, so this leaves work that uses those tools and strategies open for different perspectives that develop through the background and imagination of the observer and consumer. And if we laugh we ourselves become author of the humour. Humour itself is dia-

¹⁰ See footnote 13.

¹¹ See Schmidt 2005: 30,39. See also Kleiner 2006: Kleiner, Marcus: *Medien-Heterotopien. Diskursräume einer gesellschaftskritischen Medientheorie*. Transcript Verlag 2006, Bielefeld. pp. 401-402.

lectual and we can not know if the consumers or participants are laughing secretly, using it for self-reflection or if they are taking the symbols and performances seriously. Because humour is the outcome of a thinking process and it can be the most extreme form of self-reflection. Are Nigerians or Neonazis overidentifying or misunderstanding? Can both even happen at the same time? And have both of those possible readings of the NSK work the same importance regarding responsibility? The delegates already pointed out during the congress that the question of misunderstanding maybe misses the target: "Perhaps there is another dimension in this process which is not strictly a question of whether the passports are real or not or whether there is a misunderstanding or not. (...) ¹² Actually this statement of "this is not real" is real in the fact that it exposes you to a cultural phenomenon". Also Manray Hsu and other delegates pointed out that the so called "misunderstanding" is crucial: "I think the misunderstandings are very important because it tells so much about how we relate to the state and something called passport ... Passport is not only a sign of citizenship but also of protection that the state promises you to help. Another passport means also another possibility of life (...) ¹³."

In an art performance or a popcultural performance we have to act out the overidentification or ambiguity consequently, that's part of the performance, the artwork. But we could argue that the piece of art is also part of a context, a network, a public sphere, possibly a world audience. And in this context there is the possibility and maybe even necessity of contextualisation and positioning without disrupting the process of awareness through subversive art or communication. This explanatory approach was tried by NSK for the first time in London 2007 and 2010 in Lagos. Miran Mohar of IRWIN explains: "I think it was right that we didn't stop it, we took responsibility. At the beginning we didn't know exactly how to do it but now we are doing it more and more" ¹⁴. Another

¹² Transcribed delegate comment: "In a way you could say that the statement that the passport is not real – but that it is part of an art project – is some bizarre and exotic form of bureaucratic difficulty in the sense that it is some part of a naturalization process. I am not saying that necessarily people who are more naïve might have this misunderstanding. Because I can also account for myself that sometimes I am trying to deceive myself to this conspiratorial thinking... you can always think that there is more to the process than you think you know. But the point is that there is an actual process – it is not virtual – the process of naturalization is real, because you are actually familiarizing yourself with a strain or current of thought or of behaviour or cultural phenomenon from a different civilization".

¹³ Transcribed comment: "Citizenship becomes more and more flexible, people with money can buy citizenship but the NSK passport is also affordable for the poor... This issue of protection is very important for NSK because it relates to naked, bare life – it is a pity that people don't have more protection. In Chinese we call passport 'protection certificate'. It comes from ancient times of war. So a passport is an extension of this protection and this is an important issue... it is affordable and in that sense it is also idealistic and utopian. We all long for that protection of our naked life and we can not ignore those misunderstandings."

¹⁴ Transcribed comment by Miran Mohar: "So [from] 2006/2007 hundreds of applications were coming from Nigeria. We thought about blocking it or stopping the project. We decided to stop it would not be fair but we decided to inform the people. So with the passports we were sending to Africa we included information that this passport is not for travelling. We send thousands of mails and we went [for] three days to London to discuss the issue with Nigerian passport holders who were living there to explain everything to them and told them to tell it to their families. And what happened was that the applications were reduced. There were still requests, but now we have three or four a month before we had hundreds. So people get the message. We felt responsible and that was the most important reason why we were so happy about the invitation to Lagos to go there and be able to discuss it. Before we haven't had channels in Africa".

much more collaborative and creative approach was made through an international platform of communication with NSK passport holders through the Congress in Berlin in October 2010.

Returning to my signifiers I want to conclude that it was sometimes hard for me to understand that some of the delegates were so serious while making decisions about "their state" and being very serious about how some Africans that might misuse "their state's documents" (also IRWIN members were equally serious in London talking to Nigerian passport holders). The delegates even affirmed the right not to choose which was pointed out by facilitator Ian Parker as problematic ¹⁵, and it again brings up the issue of responsibility. As Marcus S. Kleiner puts it: "For Schmidt responsibility is to choose over choices [ein Entscheiden über Entscheiden]. As a criterion of critique for the contention and examination of media responsibility has a crucial meaning and significance because media owns an all-embracing normative power over the social" ¹⁶. I also think that this last point of the Congress *Findings* is problematic if the NSK State wants to continue to be subversive (a taboo like this should rather challenge and provoke humour within the NSK State). At the same time the issue of gender within NSK, which is obviously also one of the "weak points" within the NSK State, was discussed in the work groups but was not picked up in the final statement. This was because – as I understood the comments about this – to address the lack of women directly would not have been NSK-like or ambiguous enough. Instead, as facilitator Conor McGrady pointed out the entire gender debate was lost on the final day. Let's remember: The laughter of the culturally strong (it doesn't matter if subversive or conformist) is a male laughter. And the hedonist or fun society is the last regression of the pubertal staging of masculinity ¹⁷. So what's next? Instead of abandoning the issue of gender at least a good joke about the boys' network could have been made. It's hard to grasp but somehow through this absence of positioning in combination with the mentioned seriousness (which is not the same as responsibility) NSK state loses some of its creative potential. Another delegate's input was very inspiring because she pointed out that the misunderstanding could be on the side of the NSK State itself ¹⁸.

In order to laugh about humour one needs to know about the adversities of life. And surely there are plenty of them and probably the adversities of some Nigerian passport holders are not the

¹⁵ Ian Parker's comment: "There has been an attempt to clarify which tempts to cover over, obscure the traumatic moment of state formation as if it could solve that moment. The question of traumatic choice for example – you have to make a choice – and turned it into a set of answers which is rounded off with a comforting statement that you have the right not to choose. I don't think we have the right not to choose. And I hope later in the discussions we will have some conflicts around how to interpret this".

¹⁶ Kleiner 2006: 402

¹⁷ See Roger Behrens: Alles geht kaputt... und ich lach, ha, ha, ha! In: *Die Diktatur der Angepassten*. Bielefeld, Transcript 2003.

¹⁸ Transcribed delegate comment: "I am surprised by the level of anxiety connected to the question of a large number of Nigerian citizens because for me the fact as it happened (...) it is a huge promise for the future of NSK State as a platform where these issues can be discussed and were through the shared membership some sort of solidarity could be established, a lot of bonds for the future can be made. So I think that the misunderstanding is maybe on the other side, maybe it's on your side?"

same as those of most European citizens, which Alexei Monroe called “reality crossovers” or the “disrupted potential” of the so called “misunderstanding”. This is also interesting if we think about humour and imagination. Because if the overidentification with and the imagination of the NSK State of the Nigerians is much stronger than that of the rest of the citizens there could be indeed something to learn on the side of the NSK State. Especially if it wants to go beyond an art project in the sense of a closed community of artists, intellectuals and people who like sharp humour and achieve a “social sculpture effect” as Alexei Monroe called it. If art or humour is also coming about through the observer than what does that mean for the NSK State?

Without a doubt the decoding of irony or overidentification and the criticism it delivers demands a great deal of activity on the side of the recipient, as Kleiner points out in his book about media-heterotopias¹⁹, where he also mentions NSK/Laibach and the tool of overidentification. He also stresses the importance of the transmission and communication of critique and that its acting out through presentation or design is only possible through networks of diversity and in the dialogue. It is only this way that the discourses of critique can anchor in society²⁰. This pushes forward the relevance of the unexpected side-effect that brought together Nigeria and the NSK State.

Finally I want to return to the issue of pop-culture or subculture. An enduring positive quality of pop-culture is that in opposition to high-culture it does not exclude, it is potentially open to anyone. I was really glad that one delegate, one of the younger ones as he himself pointed out, mentioned the possible potential of NSK tools for youth-cultures and other subcultures which could introduce “young people to art which is not consumable like other art”²¹. At the Congress closing party I was haunted by imaginations and thoughts on other subcultures using NSK tools²². Different musical genres and subcultures are using similar strategies that could be really powerful in combination with the NSK toolbox. Especially music is a good example because through the dynamic function of sound it has the ability to create a feeling of belonging and communicates desire as well as power which produces possibilities for determination and resistance. Popular music expresses something the listener may not be able to articulate. Musical codes are inscribed within the sound event and enacted through performance where they interact with the audience’s perception and experience. This means that in this interaction meaning is constructed through and via the background of the listener.

¹⁹ Kleiner 2006: 392

²⁰ Kleiner 2006: 394 /395

²¹ Transcribed delegate comment: “I am surprised because that thing has such a big potential of creating a new movement which introduces young people to art which is not consumable like other art. It is not so superficial and that is really a nice thing and potential that could get more support by NSK. Like it was just said – some people may strive for fanaticism or fascism that is not political but cynical or symbolic it could even get some perverted fun thing, like a NSK Jugend. Some good music, good parties in a group movement of youngsters... I think there is a demand for more depth. NSK would be able to deliver that depth to the youth”.

²² The reason might have been the homogenous nature of the musical programme – which seemed to me a bit old-school or NSK-traditional – in contrast to the impressions of the discussions at the Congress which appeared more diverse and fresh.

I just want to give one example which is interesting in connection to the other signifiers I used like imagined realities or heterotopias. In Hip Hop culture self-staging, staging of reality and performance of the social are extensively used; the media plays an important role as the images construct reality and the images are performative. In contrast to other subcultures Hip Hop images and videos are not representing an illusory world and are not understood as such. The production of images is used as a strategy of authentication. The distinction between real and not real is crucial for the Hip Hop movement and is delivered and negotiated in Hip Hop through the image-world. So the image-world in hip hop produces not illusion but authenticity. This is because the question of realness is the core of Hip Hop – in this sense hip hop is a “realworld”²³. Hip Hop culture also produces semiotic resistance which I mentioned at the beginning. That’s why Hip Hop also goes very well with strategies of humour (Hip Hop’s founding myths are connected to Africa and there is a huge Hip Hop scene in Lagos).

Another delegate mentioned the Turbo Jugend²⁴, which also uses strategies of humour. And which is another good example where already established strategies could go very well together with tools of NSK. And of course there are several groups and musicians of different genres in Germany that make use of humour or art strategies.

So what are the possible connections between NSK and other subcultural or popcultural groups or artists that use humour, irony and similar tools to question cultural hegemony²⁵? And why do I stress humour so much? It is because of the image-world we are now living in and the fact that we need tools for this new age. And humour requires a sense for the precise, so through humour we can develop autonomy²⁶. As Wetting puts it: “The image as allegory, symbol or metaphor always leaves some openness in its meaning. (...) The creation of pictorial thinking as an active, vivid act of construction is subject to and requires a quantum leap from the logical and rational standpoint – it demands the ability to provoke yourself”²⁷. This is necessary as Wetting stresses in order to prevent the unfolding of the manipulative character of images and media. As suggested we have to see media and society as interdependent and the same is true for the social construction of reality and the reality constructed through media. NSK was aware of this very early on and that’s why its ambiguous toolbox is still helpful today; especially for bringing the “dark sides” to the table. Humour re-stages the disparities and incongruities of existing extremes, that’s why it is destructive and liberating at the same time.

²³ Klein/Friedrich 2003: 128

²⁴ Comment of the delegate: “On the recruitment thing I just wanted to say that there is a Norwegian punk band called Turbo Negro and they play on the homosexual culture and have the Turbo Jugend (...) They dress in jackets with back patches and so on. They have sections all over the world”.

²⁵ See Antonio Gramsci: *Selections from cultural writings* (1985). See also Kate Crehan: *Gramsci, Culture and Anthropology* (2002).

²⁶ This is another important signifier for NSK I believe.

²⁷ Wetting 2009: 13

Foucault called for armouries of imagination²⁸ in order to be able to design other spaces and we do need them to challenge cultural hegemony, the media and media-usage. Bey describes the emergence of TAZ as a conscious radical tactic: "That is, we must realize (make real) the moment and spaces in which freedom is not only possible but actual. We must know in what ways we are genuinely oppressed, and also in what ways we are self-repressed or ensnared in a fantasy in which ideas oppress us."²⁹ In that sense I see the work of NSK and NSK State also as a possible communication guerrilla. Every member of society takes part in the construction of reality³⁰. This is heavily reflected through the use of internet or popculture. This may be something good as well as something frightening. But as Deleuze said: "there is no reason for fear or for hope – just reason to search for new weapons"³¹ (of critique and awareness of course).

²⁸ See Michel Foucault: *Die Ordnung der Dinge* (Les mots et les choses 1966) and *Archäologie des Wissens* (L'archéologie du savoir 1969).

²⁹ Bey 1991: 43

³⁰ See: Berger, Peter & Thomas Luckmann: *Die gesellschaftliche Konstruktion der Wirklichkeit*. Frankfurt am Main 1996.

³¹ Deleuze, Gilles: *Die Fürsprecher*. Frankfurt am Main 1993, p. 256.

Challenges of and from the East *Kornelia Ehrlich*

East vs. West

Although the dualistic conception of Europe, or more generally of the world, has been criticised in recent years, it is still vividly present in different social sectors. In particular the construction of the East of being somehow incomplete, underdeveloped or non-western, has led European Ethnologists to refer to the East being the Orient of Europe¹ Here they directly seize on Said's term of *Orientalism*². Although the border is being erected across societies and no longer on the basis of a geographical order, the term and its conception still seem to be valid (Buchowski 2006b: 470). Two examples where one can discover this still vivid dualism are the sciences and politics.

Michał Buchowski for example shows that structural as well as historic and social reasons have led to higher trust in western researchers compared to their eastern colleagues³: aspects like the lack of language skills on both sides and still existing colonial patterns which are expressed in the treating of eastern researchers as information objects and not as equal researchers stand for this circumstance (Poehls 2006: 27-37). One result of this is that scientific productions from Eastern and Central European countries often refer to ideas or theories that are produced by western researchers from their specific perspective. That leads to a constant reproduction of the differentiation between East and West and prevents the development of new perspectives (Poehls 2006: 33-38).

This dualism between East and West can also be found in the political sphere. Through the enlargement of the EU and its territorial extension to the East we now find the differentiation between "old" and "new" Europe which is comparable to the former separation of East and West. Eastern Europe until today stands for a Western European concept which had never been used for self-description.⁴ "New" Europe is referred to as still incomplete and not yet developed in the same way as "old" Europe, as if there was only one possible path of development.

¹ Kaschuba, Wolfgang (2005): Das alte und das neue Europa. Repräsentationen und Inszenierungen, http://www.kaschuba.com/texte/Altes_und_neues_Europa.pdf, (Accessed: 05.03.11.)

² See Said, Edward (1979): *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books.

³ Buchowski refers to the works of US-/British anthropologists, see Buchowski, Michał: The Specter of Orientalism in Europe. From Exotic Other to Stigmatized Brother, in: *Anthropological Quarterly* - Volume 79 (3), 2006b, pp. 463-482..

⁴ Kaschuba, Wolfgang (2005): 9.