

"I don't want to be reconciled - I don't want to be reconciled - I don't want to be reconciled"

VOICE OVER

MAGAZINE FOR ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSE

1ST
ISSUE

CONFLICT



SEPT. 2020

WITH
**JIMMIE
DURHAM**



INTERCULTURAL CITIES
BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING WALLS

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CE OVER TIMES _ VOICE OVER LIFE_ VOICE OVER ART _ VOICE OVER CULTURE _ VOICE OVER LA

SEPT. 2020



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LANGUAGE _VOICE OVER ARCHITECTURES _VOICE OVER INSTITUTION _VOICE OVER REALITY_V



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Let us all
feed the birds

Naples, Berlin

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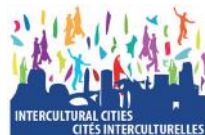
(p. 39) Satchie Noro - François Combin. Still from the film "La danseuse et le container" by François Combin, with Satchie Noro (Performance - Origami).

An Urubu Films production. Curtesy François Combin.

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urubu

**“By the simple fact
of speaking
we contribute to the silence,
to the nullification
operated against
us ”**

SEPT. 2020

Jimmie Durham

EDITORIAL

DAVID LIVER

Conflict, if ever it ends,
ends with reconciliation.
But is this always what
we aim for?

In an episode of the kids TV show, *Sesame Street*, Robin Williams tries to get the Two-Headed-Monster to demonstrate conflict. Despite all of Williams' attempts to get them to fight, the two heads don't grasp the concept and can't help but to get along. The actor gets frustrated and it all ends up with the three screaming at each other. When they suddenly realize that they are in the midst of a conflict, the grunts and growls turn into silly dancing and celebration.

Conflict, if ever it ends, ends with reconciliation. But is this always what we aim for? Or, as the song says, "is this what we wanted, to live in a house that is haunted, by the ghost of you and me?"¹

What does freedom of speech mean in the current climate of civil crisis? Fundamentally aren't all intercultural conflicts potentially meaningful for nurturing criticism, exercising resistance and experimenting with alternative discourses?

There is much at stake in social inequalities. Conflict theory impels us to recognize that every dimension of social structure is built on a base of social conflict and inequality. And we recognize this despite the tragic consequences that it implies.

We were all supposedly taught how to deal with conflict as kids. Now we hardly know how to put the lesson into practice, and in a grown-up world it is often best to avoid conflicts as much as possible; because their direct consequences are plain ugly.

Let's face it, this strategy, the one supposedly leading to unification and reconciliation through dialogue, is a privilege of those ruling the discourse, who in the guise of wisdom and rationality, uphold a «midway solution» that basically files down the sharp corners of difference until they are safely rounded.

Let's see how ethics might become rejuvenated when looking at the benefits of abandoning the sacred middle ground. Maybe, there are some advantages in cognitive conflict. And maybe, setting the end goal away from consensus might clear the way for a fair and fertile ground for intercultural discourse.

As we saw on *Sesame Street*, not only is conflict finally demonstrated by the Two-Headed-Monster and the great Robin Williams, but more importantly, so is its unexpected potential.

¹ Leonard Cohen, *Is This What You Wanted*
© Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC

THE HEMICYCLE

BITA AZIMI

A neutral decor.
Three similar do
When the curtain
all the character
They chat, knit, p
The Prologue bro
and move forward

ors.
n rises,
s are on stage.
play cards.
eaks away
rd.

“Here they are!

These people will play out the story of Antigone for you. Antigone, that little skinny girl sitting over there, not saying anything. She is looking straight ahead. She is thinking. She thinks that she will stand up alone in front of the world, alone in front of Creon, her uncle, who is king. She thinks that she will die, that she is young, and also that she would prefer to live. But there is nothing to be done about this. Her name is Antigone and she will have to play her role until the end... and, since the curtain has risen, she feels that she is parting at dizzying speed from her sister Ismene, who chatters and laughs with a young man, from us, who calmly watch on, us who will not have to die this evening.”

Once, this fragment filled me with much enthusiasm, and it has been with me since my adolescence. Perhaps the rebellious spirit which inhabited me, and “History” which moves forward only in cycles of tragedy, have left a permanent mark in my memory.

Tragedy VS Philosophy

The theme of conflict in the play refers to an impassable state of confrontation and opposition. It takes place between two distinct quests: one being Antigone’s desire for tragedy, and the other, Creon’s search for a political unity that could appease the city. Conflict must find a resolution, and we seek reconciliation, a consensus that finds its meaning in the need for unity. Tragedy is consummated only in destruction and death. The opposition of these two Ancient Greek postures : the Sophoclean tragedian and the Socratic philosopher, reminds me of Nietzsche’s words in *The birth of tragedy*, which argue that philosophy arose from the necessity to break from the destructive spiral of the tragic process.

In a way, philosophy and politics overlap.

Anouilh advanced the idea of theatrical performance as the place to organize debate, but also as a “manipulative” space between reality and fiction.

Representational space

The playwright leaves a lasting impression by revealing his own narrative apparatus: “*Here they are...*” is a representation of the representation embodied in the play from its start. This is a forceful disclosure and is followed by a *mise en abyme* of the scene which positions the spectators as helpless witnesses of the announced tragedy (Antigone’s death): “... *from all of us, who are fine to look on, from all of us who will not have to die tonight*”. The piece is set during the time of the occupation, and mobilizes the imagination by overlapping the spaces of theater and of political representation. This is possible because the form and geometries of theater and of politics are identical. As an architect, I can attest to the strength of this form and its influence on our perception.

In France, the spacialization of political debate was implemented with the hemicycle, a form borrowed from Greek and Roman theater — and the origin of Italian style theater. The hemicycle is a space for fictional and political (and sometimes religious) representation. It appears to be the most suitable architectural form for parliamentary deliberation.

The force of its pure geometry is unifying but defines a distinct center. Its pure geometric form serves as a veritable mechanism of governmentality. Its form assumes a dominant strategic function inseparable from power relations. The hemicycle model highlights the stage and downplays the audience thereby emphasizing the speaker, or, the expression of an opinion. It appears to me, that, when considered as architecture, the spectacle-like relationship that the hemicycle’s form establishes

between the public and the orator is easily perceptible. The tribune and the stage take on the same meaning, the same symbolism and the same power of persuasion.

Parliaments

Undeniably, a parliament building personifies an expression of its country’s political culture. I deeply believe that the architectural form of the parliament chamber can literally shape its politics. Semicircular chambers, such as the French National Assembly, for example, are naturally conducive to the formulation of speeches. I like to compare this schematic to the British model, with its rectangular form of opposing rows of benches, which in contrast, encourages two parties to debate in distinct opposition. The small size of this space facilitates very direct speech and stimulates debate rather than oration.

“An *Anarchitecture* which allows a freer, more democratic life, an architecture which does not govern people, but which helps them”.

BITA AZIMI is an architect. Born in Tehran in 1969, she lives and works in Paris.

In 2002 she founded the CAB architecture agency along with Marc Botineau and Jean-Patrice Calori. Together they conceived architectural public space and housing projects in the Alpes-Maritimes region. Working with constrained spaces, their approach focused on the development of original manufacturing processes intuitively adapted to the elements available on hand in region: light, horizon, topography, works of art. Migrating to new territory, the Ile de France, they questioned and adapted this same process by building the University center of ENSAE in Saclay, social housing in Pantin and the Lycée Balzac boarding school in Paris.

Azimi questions the values of architecture in the context of a constantly changing and doubting society. She upholds that pragmatism should never lead to cynicism. Faith in the fundamentals remains the agency's benchmark.

In 2013, CAB was awarded the prestigious EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture - Mies Van der Rohe Award for the Trinity Early Childhood Center project. The same year CAB was granted the Prix de l'Équerre d'Argent.

In 2017, CAB was again nominated for the EU - Mies Van der Rohe Award this time, for the Ariane Futsal Gymnasium project in in Nice.

In 2018 CAB won the l'Équerre d'Argent prize for ENSAE University Pole project in Paris-Saclay.

Since 2015 she has taught at the Paris-Belleville School of Architecture.

This layout is reminiscent of the Elizabethan theater, with its rectangular geometry of boxes and galleries organized in a face to face configuration. It can be said that the space for political dialogue often borrows its forms the theater space. While the forms of theater have evolved over time and have been questioned by playwrights, scenographers and directors searching for new relationships between spectators and stage, the space of «parliamentarism» has changed little, despite the evolution of political dialogue.

So, I look at new forms of theater and wonder if they, like the ancient Greek and Roman stage, could influence the space of parliamentary representation and impact the paradigm of political dialogue.

Total theater

A proposal for a theatre space seeking to reinvent the established relationship between the public, the stage and the actors themselves saw its design in the (unrealized) Synthetic Theater Project conceived by Walter Gropius in Germany, in 1925.

Part of the room would have had to be mechanically turned at a 180 degree angle in order to bring the stage in the middle of the spectators. This daring proposition was espoused by directors, such as Max Reinhardt, who aspired to move away from traditional theatrical spaces (such as the hemicycle) and who wanted to push the form of the arena beyond the amphitheater.

THE HEMICYCLE - BITA AZIMI

Where none of the points of a circle are fixed *vis à vis* the audience, the circular architectural system provides the possibility of psychological withdrawal to the viewer. It permits the presence of an audience without the point of view of pure spectators. Such a spatial experience could for example, generate a form for parliamentary dialogue today.

In the 2005 exhibition *Making Things Public* in Karlsruhe, Germany, Ludger Schwarte, along with a team of architects, explored a model of a utopian parliament, "... an *Anarchitecture* which allows a freer, more democratic life, an architecture which does not govern people, but which helps them, which is for them a possibility, a resource ... ". The spacial arrangement, built on the possibility of coming together in different ways, made use of small revolving amphitheatres that could generate a plurality of perceptons.

This experiment conveys the idea that a space of representation can influence political dialogue. We can reflect on the organization of the debate through the possibilities the design of a building offers.

When I look at parliamentary buildings, I notice they have often been fitted into existing buildings (l'Assemblée Nationale is an example). In a certain way, democratic space has had to adapt (even constrain) itself, to pre-existing structures chosen out of convenience. To my knowledge) no existing theater has been "naturally" transformed into a place of political representation. That hasn't stopped politics from performing so far! •

SEPT. 2020

EUROPE

Handwritten graffiti on a door, including the letters "R" and "S" and other illegible scribbles.



JIMMIE DURHAM

With Jimmie Durham you never know which path you'll be taking to reach your final destination. What will the atmospheric conditions be like? The mood of the day? If one is familiar with Durham's work, one can expect that the routes he charts will lead to a surprise attack on mainstream discourse – specifically, discourse that frames the other as an ethnographic phenomenon.

Language finds itself at the center of the conflict. Durham unveils its illusory neutrality and confronts with us the ambiguities of our own points of view as critical viewers of history. We know that the road will be long but we also know that we will have opportunities to be surprised, to smile, or to cry at the end of each stage of our voyage. If at times we feel disoriented, this is only proof that we are moving, alone and forward, to a place that finds our world not exactly as we had left it.

Jimmie Durham's biography is, in itself, part of his work. His personal history simultaneously embodies a system of personal mythologies and national narratives that he challenges. In the 1960s Durham was active as a poet, sculptor, performing artist and civil rights advocate. In 1973, he became an active member of the American Indian Movement, and was named its president and representative to the United Nations. This cultural affiliation gradually transformed into a more universal kind of activism. His fight subtly shifted gears and became an open ambush on language for the role it maintains in defining the world and consolidating its hierarchies. If I had to define his work I would say that it is an attempt to dismantle cultural hegemonies and a friendly encouragement to us all.

Years ago I read a very short statement in one of his books that said something like "I don't want to be reconciled". These words have never left me. They seem particularly relevant in current times as we bear witness to differences widening and conflicts deepening as products of a global, and uninhibited, refusal to listen.

This article is the result of a conversation with Jimmie. I asked him this question: "I don't want to be reconciled, can we develop this statement further? Without trying to explain it, but just by using it material for construction?"



LET US ALL FEED THE BIRDS

(misuse of punctuation and spelling is intentional)

bene; a good place to start::
in my mind to not be reconciled
means that i do not accept the way
things are.

in 1963 i began to write poetry seriously (and still see it as my main endeavor). language is so stupid. so inadequate. so enveloping. first of all, it tells us that we cannot think without it (a ridiculous idea). then it refuses our attempts to communicate,, especially if i want to say something important to another person, “i love you”, “stop doing that”, “look at this”, etc. it is impossible;;; always misunderstood. yet we cannot tolerate being alone; we need to communicate.

poetry, for me, can break the stranglehold of language by using it against its own rules and strictures. i hate language, but i try to use it. to imagine that i am full of hatred,,, yes i am. no i am not. i do not accept what is,,, and i think people do not, we only pretend to. maybe this weirdity has led me to resist whatever is presented as what must be. i mean, how is it that the human world has been run by men for the past half a million years and why should that continue? why should one group of people act superior to another? why should i accept stupidity?

resistance and survival are probably the same thing, n'est ce pas?

“to imagine that i am full of hatred,,, yes i am. no i am not. i do not accept what is,,, and i think people do not, we only pretend to.”

in english the concept, if one exists, of “wheretofore” is truly esoteric,,, i have always loved that word, even though i am not exactly sure what it means;;; for me it is like the word “salubrious”, it connotes sophistication and education while having a pleasant sound. english speakers say (and of course, english writers write) “anywhere” “nowhere” “somewhere” “wherewithal” “wherefore”,,, then they say that they do not know where you are coming from when they mean that they don't understand what you mean to say.

i like the way aliens say “buon giorno”::: “greetings earthlings”,, to use the word greetings as a greeting is silly but almost german; for bon appetit germans say *mahlzeit*, which means lunchtime. but in english [buon giorno] it is normally *hello*, which was originally a call to

the fox hounds during a hunt. they once said good morning, and i still do because of an influence of the italian “buon giorno” [since he lives in Naples].

but no cherokee would really say such a thing; we are worse than the americans;;; normally one says “osiyo”. (pronounced “sho”). but even that has no meaning;;; it is like the scandinavian “hej”. “osda” (good) is pronounced “sda” with a very soft A. so now then;;; i have a theory about “osiyo”. i think the old american slang word “pshaw” is a different pronunciation of the same word. it was often used by early black blues singers as a musical expletive. the *P* in front is meant as a kind of plosive unpronounced hesitation, just like the *O* is in “oisyo”... the blues come from cherokee chants to make one’s enemy turn blue.... africans got it because so many cherokee had bought into the american slave trade... (we fought also on the side of andrew jackson to defeat the creeks, destroying more than half of their population over slavery (since they were against it). isn’t history inspiring?

on one level, every language has evolved as the culture that it is part of;;; so that the entire environment, political, social, natural, make the language. so that every language is obviously of equal importance to humanity.

on the other hand, we each must translate, simultaneously, what the other person is saying to us. and we always misunderstand. if we did not, that would also be monstrous, horrible. we would be machines. in school i was told that no 2 snowflakes are alike even though there are zillions of them. i thought, it would be frightening to a point of terror if there were 2 alike. no 2 of anything could possibly be alike. what a horrible idea that there might be... american men, i am told, often say to a sexual partner, “what do you like?”, in the sense of sexual goings-on.... i always think that what one likes alone, or with one partner, probably would not be good with another. for it to be so would mean no communication. to say what one “likes” is to imagine total privacy with an assistant. who would “perform” without communication, only language.

**“i hate music because it, like language,
is undeniable.”**

VOICE OVER



it is astounding, miraculous and funny that we do communicate. and language itself, especially when we so desperately need to communicate with another person about some specific, and try so hard to use language (which always promises us that it can do the job)::

anyway, other animals are able to use body language to a degree almost unbelievable. and could speak with us much more if we would observe more, with the desire to communicate, to comprehend. instead, scientists continue to test them on their ability to speak our language.

there is a magical stone that you can talk to. it will then talk to another person, saying what you had said to it. its name is musical, poetical but no one uses it any more,,

i guess because we have no time for such stuff. it is *combilene tantalon*, and is in every mobile phone.

And there is the very sensitive *europium*:: like europe itself, *europium* hardly exists. *sodium* exists but does not like to.;; it always wants to form alliances. so that it is not noticed. And *hafnium* tends to burst into flame if you leave it on the table. this year *mercury* and i have the same number, 80. i have some of it in berlin because i once did an artwork with it. the work broke in the gallery. don't know what happened to that *mercury* but i still have some left.... not very useful... maybe that is also my condition. funny.

all of life is funny, because it is so serious and unfunny. no death is at the right moment, no death is funny.

LET US ALL FEED THE BIRDS - JIMMIE DURHAM



in the morning you put on your shoes, intending to eat breakfast. but then you are struck dead instead. that is really funny. or maybe you intend to tell your lover something vital, find that it is too late. died a few minutes ago... the fact that we cannot reconcile ourselves to death is really funny.

a friend of mine worries about death all of the time, he is afraid of it. i say, don't worry,, you are going to die:::

as a child i was kind of a fanatic; i saw animals in nature all around me, some were small , turtles, frogs, snakes, birds,, others were rabbits, racoons, dogs and cats, possums, etc. all were always hungry, always being fearful of being eaten, always full of ailments. (if a large turtle was wounded in a fight with another

turtle. the wound would have maggots, and lead to a horrible death. and yet. everyone lived life without pause or timidity.

i decided early on to not accept the way things are. and at the same time i could see that i was helpless to do much. (i did everything i could to make sure that everyone around me had food, even the tadpoles in rain pools which would die when the water dried up. sometimes i would add water to the pool until they became frogs).

i don't want to be reconciled;;; when i say i hate music people often imagine that i mean i do not listen to it. but of course i do, it is what humans do. i hate music because it, like language, is undeniable.

**“i decided early on to not
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the water dried up. some
water to the pool until the**

if i hear a military marching band i am ready to march along and join the killing. if i hear Peter Tosh or Toots & the Maytals i cannot help but move. BUT i have always really disliked film because i knew it first in movie theaters, where it COMES AT YOU, WAVES ONTO YOU with music, low lights, no distractions (in my life i depend on distractions). only later in life i saw a miraculous film, *ZOOT SUIT*, and began to have a different idea of cinema and how it is, away from hollywood.

i am really serious about not being reconciled::: so that i do not accept that we american indians from both continents have been defeated. i want the invading nation-states and their settler colonies (the american nation-states). to completely disappear. and all other nations-states also. but my work towards that aim is not of the type that i imagine some great revolution,.. or even much change in my lifetime. and i have no clear plan or ideas of how the world will be managed afterwards.

not accept the way
some time i could see
much.

to make sure that
and food, even the
which would die when
sometimes i would add
they became frogs).”

(except that part of that is the end
of rule by men).

soon i will write 3 connected lec-
tures for a project at the serpentine
gallery in london. i will talk about
how we do not change until we are
forced to. that does not mean phy-
sical force by some tough guys but
climate change, etc. i will also talk
about how we have never been in
such a situation as now, even though
many people talk about how times

have been very bad in the past and
we pull through to get better on the
other side. it is not true this time
because so many of us have already
become extinct. “us” must include
all of life. we are all one family.

i wish i was a thin black guy, ethio-
pian or sudanese. just when i would
wear beautiful african clothes. (not
all the time because it would be
too much sad trouble). i have seen
white men wearing such clothes
and they look ridiculous. although
Marlon Brando in *sayonara* looked
pretty good in japanese clothes,
and before the war, japanese men
often wore traditional clothes with
western-style hats and looked ex-
cellent.

i look scottish (our most famous
chief, John Ross, almost 200 years
ago, was pure scottish, not a drop
of native american blood,, even
though spilled on the ground all
blood looks the same). i look com-
pletely inauthentic in a business
suit, and think everyone knows that
i am just dressing up.

in our neighborhood in berlin there
is a korean baptist church. a friend
tells me that now most people in
south korea are baptist christian.

**“in my mind categories can be helpful but are
usually harmful because we come to think of them
as reality.”**

VOICE OVER

they do not look like the baptists i knew as a child, nor act like them (although they do act weird). i think they may be fake baptists, as most baptists in louisiana would surely agree.

but music is the most extraordinary,, flamenco music in spain is known to be pure spanish. yet flamenco means flemish. spain ruled flanders for a long time, i lived there for 2 years and tried to imagine what dances the spanish interpreted.

i saw it in the north, germanic part of

the country, and then in germany,, as *schuhplattler* type of dance. typically germanic, not graceful or easy.

George Washington kept a diary as a young man and wrote in it that working as a land surveyor (!). he was invited to cherokee villages, where people danced continuously. knowing how unimaginative our dancing is now, i must assume that in those days we knew how to dance and then with all of the genocide, could not maintain it.

“it is justice we need, and liberation from our oppression by us.”

SEPT. 2020



but the way we dance now “american indian” dance, is known worldwide. part of that is of a style called *fancy dance*, which is always done for competitions and is completely invented as a tourist attraction in oklahoma. when i was younger, old people would complain about such dancing, saying that it was “not the way we do it”.

there is an accusation/observation about “gypsy”, roma, music that it does not really exist; only borrowings and appropriations from what they hear and pick up as they travel around. that they have no music of their own. excellent! to have no music of your own, but only what other people are doing. exactly the way i learned language!

in my mind categories can be helpful but are usually harmful because we come to think of them as reality. i mean categories seem necessary but i bet they are only to the degree that we simultaneously deny them as we use them. many people now look for identity,, and want to keep it against someone else. it is justice we need, and liberation from our oppression by us.

no matter what the subject under discussion, whatever discourse, the current situation changes the ways we have been normally thinking....

when we try to think about appropriation now, it is not possible to discuss the problems of power structures and who participates

“in my mind truth and lies are not different sides of the same coin. they are the same. and they are not useful as a way to be in the process of knowing the world.”

now, and how, in them, nor the ideas of good work vs sloppy work nor anything useful.

so MANY PEOPLE are in every single non-discourse, always without any possibility of really participating;;; no actual voice, no possible influence. when we all have fewer rights and more “freedom”. in other words, extreme alienation disguised as autonomy. i mean, everyone is crazy now.

for me the problem growing in size and complexity is about society itself;;; when europe sent its troublesome extra people to the americas (a 300 hundred years program that diffused so many ideas of possible changes), those people were free only to be more of what they were not allowed to be at home;; i mean within the strictures of being set down by the systems in place. they were not at all free to become nice or smart or thoughtful; free only to act, as best they could imagine, like the bosses back home.

“If one is not supposed to stop and smell the flowers I will stop longer. Only children and old people are allowed to stop and feed the birds. Let us all feed the birds, then.”

among the monstrosities of that were the ideas of “personal”, monetary “success”. So, over years art became more tied to that practice, so that by the time Picasso came along europe itself had already taken its settler idea of fame, success and money. after the 2nd world war some american artists began to play with the concepts of art, but only in the tight

framework of eurocentric commercial art itself. so that now, when one reads the news or watches any news media, one reads about how much money some artist or actor or singer makes. that is the only criterion for “success”, in a world where every day money takes a stronger role. as that develops, the population grows and those with extra money multiply so much that all of the

northern hemisphere seems like the world’s bourgeoisie.

so then, that being the framework, i see that systems of categories have become too big and too commercial to be viable. i mean really,, there are very many people with little idea of what anything might mean for us all, maintained by fame and money. much talk about nothing over and over. so much access to so much trite silliness passed off as culture. so many stupid books and so many people to read them celebratorily.

yet we are social animals. i do not mean that we have a fondness for sociality, i mean that is our biology. like having 2 legs or opposable thumbs. everything we do we do socially. therefore. suppose i retire and read a book in private.

LET US ALL FEED THE BIRDS - JIMMIE DURHAM

what book? not one of mine. why do i read it? to be in discourse with "someone" whether i admit that or approve of that or not. we cannot withdraw from society and we cannot take part in society.

it is like a double *koan* [a sort of irrational enigma that we install in our mind and let mature until the evidence appears], what is the sound of 3 hands pretending to clap?

i wrote some texts about the books of moses, the story of moses.... i love it because it is so complex, so strange and so familiar. there is no moral to take from it and no lessons. yet it is so moral, so instructive also... if, like the christians, we took it as truth it would be monstrous in every way. yet there is not a word of lies in it. and no truth and no moral.... something much more important to us. like all stories, it is a compendium of many stories from many places, but retold, redone, reinterpreted.

all of our science is stories. but now usually presented as truth. lies and truth are not opposites. but we should learn to recognise lies more. the essential question is why should we assume the concept of questions is essential? in my mind it is related to truth. related to religion, and therefore to inquisitions;;; being "put to the question". but if we do not ask questions how would we learn anything?.,.,.,.

"shut up and try to learn something".

in my mind truth and lies are not different sides of the same coin. they are the same. and they are not useful as a way to be in the process of knowing the world.

now X is a racist. Y is a reactionary nationalist.. that is not true. not a lie either; a non-sequitur. if someone says that stupid old Z is the son of a god it seems to me that my position should be someplace else. singing, perhaps. If the person wants to force me to confess his truth, perhaps a better song is needed,,, but i am not sure of that, and have no plan, no program. that is not the same as indecisiveness nor inaction; simply a different place.

the world has really been taken over by a mentality that sets up ideas of investigation and curiosity necessarily leading to answers, solutions, reasons and understanding. as though these were not only desirable but possible and central to life.

i want change. but if cherokees became free from colonization i would immediately want to try to force us to actively admit our role in the slaughter of creeks and the enslavement of africans.

when the state begin to exist so did state religion, and therefore heresy. the christian inquisition was about question-and-answer::: we say "putting someone to question". that is making them confess.

so now as a consequence of it we must all look each other in the eye (a weird phenomenon in most of the world)

and we always need the answer, we need to find the solution::: we need to ask the right questions. the purpose of science then becomes unscientific, it becomes a “search”, a question; to find the truth, and the “what is to be done?” then needs an answer (which must be false) and “what do you mean” becomes a debate. many things can be done. so, shut up with the questions (i don’t mean you i mean us)

some days i think the world is so complexly bad that i cannot continue. but then i need to piss or to eat lunch, and after a while some other distraction occurs and before i know it life has gone on. then the next day i think the world is so good there is no limit to what i can do. then i need to piss or maybe eat lunch, which turns out to be nasty... and suddenly life has moved on. then i wake up feeling that i am silly, influenced by every breeze or my bladder. but maybe i write a poem and maybe i think that someone will read it someday and be encouraged.
that must be the condition of life, even for a racoon or donkey.
very funny.
very tragic.

So then, that being the framework, resistance and refusal to be reconciled are just common sense for survival. If one is not supposed to stop and smell the flowers I will stop longer. You know, only children and old people are allowed to stop and feed the birds. Let us all feed the birds, then. •

Jimmie Durham
Naples and Berlin.

Jimmie Durham is a visual artist, performer, essayist, and poet, born in 1940 in U.S.A.. He has been living in Europe since 1994.

Durham often combines found objects and natural materials with text to expose Western-centric views and prejudices hidden in language, objects, and institutions. Durham is oftentimes critical in his analysis of society but with a distinctive wit that is simultaneously generous and humorous.

Jimmie Durham moved to Geneva in 1969 and enrolled in the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts where he worked on sculpture and performance. In 1973 he moved back to the U.S. and became involved in the American Indian Movement as director of the International Indian Treaty Council and its representative before the United Nations, thus becoming the first official representative of a minority within this organization.

In 1980, he focused his attention back to art, but remained concerned with dismantling stereotypes of American Indians that had been widely accepted and disseminated in American culture: a theme he returns to in many of his essays.

Disappointed by the American government’s intractable policies regarding the Indian movement, he left the U.S. in 1987 and moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico where he remained until his return to Europe in 1994.

In 2019, he received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale.



SEPT. 2020



OTHER VOICES

KONSTANTINOS PAPAGEORGIU

On Offensive Freedom in Art (The paradox of intolerance to art)

Stavros Tsakyrakis' deontologically structured views about the meaning and justification of constitutional rights in public and private life, and in particular his engagement for the protection of free speech,¹ shed light on a dimension of liberalism that is sometimes overlooked. In a liberal democratic regime freedoms are meant for all citizens and their protection is essential for the quality of our common life. As individuals we opt for democracy because democracy is the regime that can best guarantee freedom for all. *Democratic freedom* for all should be understood as meaning nothing less than what it states; it amounts neither to the rule of a few, nor to the rule of the many, but to the rule of all under conditions of reasonable pluralism. This point is also relevant for the freedom of art and the good we might eventually associate with its protection. As in the case of the constitutional protection of speech, likewise with art, the question of its constitutional guarantee becomes acute whenever a majority or a dominant view feels disturbed or offended, or is in some other way displeased with a certain expression of opinion or the publication of an image. As I will also try to propose, something similar applies in cases where a minority or an otherwise suppressed group, a race or a nation that has suffered and suffers injustice at the hands of a majority, not only voices criticism and protest for being offended by a reference or the choice of subject, but also demands the form of expression deemed offensive to be suppressed.² The question is whether this kind of motion, seeking to suppress an artwork in the name of some alleged group interest and sensitivity towards some particular subject matter can be viewed as legitimate in the context of a liberal political and constitutional morality.

In the beginning of his widely discussed book *Religion vs. Art* (2005), Tsakyrakis makes an interesting remark. While constraints on political expression are standardly interpreted

1 Cf. his classic monograph *Freedom of Speech in the US*, P. N. Sakkoulas, Athens, 1997

2 For the related case of symbolically protecting collective disapproval of atrocities through "memory laws" and their normative implications for freedom of speech cf. Ioanna Tourkochoriti, *Challenging historical fact and national truths: An analysis of cases from France and Greece*, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2919826. It is highly ironic that a sculpture made by South Korean artists was recently removed from a Japanese art exhibition (entitled "After freedom of Expression") because it referenced the tragic case of so-called "comfort women", who were forced to work in military brothels during the Japanese occupation of Korea in the II World War. On the degrading and brutal treatment of women by occupation forces (but also in some cases by the civilians themselves) during the war and in the aftermath in Europe and Asia cf. Ian Buruma's masterly account, *Year Zero: A History of 1945*, 2013.

“The same applies to the claim that whites talking about black lives is offensive.”

as compromising the level of protection of freedom of speech in a democratic country, the same does not apply to similar constraints on artistic freedom. We seem more willing to tolerate inciting speech than provocative works of art and are much less mobilized and upset by the suppression of the latter than by the suppression of the former. As Tsakyrakis observes,

*«this is a paradoxical ascertainment. Art, even if subversive, manages to keep a distance from every-day affairs and can rarely be taken as incisive. On the contrary, political speech is immediate and can motivate action with serious social consequences. How can we account for the fact that we are more tolerant vis-à-vis political speech when we consider it harmful and less tolerant vis-à-vis art when we deem it bad or harmful?»*³

Although Tsakyrakis avoids responding to this paradox directly, his poignant analysis of a series of court decisions leads us tentatively to an answer which we can reconstruct on the basis of a hypothesis of how art functions compared to political speech. Call it the *discontinuity* thesis. In the field of art a confrontation among foundational values, ideas of the good and their relevance to human life are carried out in a way that is far less structured, processed and distilled, than in the case of similar controversies in social and political discourse. Art by its nature is a practice and a platform for the manifestation and expression of ideas, attitudes, feelings, processes, interpretations and forms that are indefinite and incomplete but innovative. Although it connects to systems of meaning, to reasonable discourses, to meaningful narratives, to the social, natural and material world and obviously makes use of this access and its perceptual and conceptual potential, art as a world creating practice is only seldom about what it seems to refer to. In a nutshell, art poses non-obvious questions in modes that appear unusual and discontinuous to ordinary, conventional, majoritarian and dominant expectations.⁴ In fact, as is often pointed out, art's gist in modernity lies in subverting expectations. Even if art has been historically understood to be in the service of

³ Stavros Tsakyrakis, *Religion vs. Art*, Polis, Athens, 2009, pp. 13-4. For a review of the book see Dimitris Kyritsis, *Theory and Practice of the Right to Artistic Expression*, *To Syntagma* 2/2007, pp. 395-425. In a more recent statement (2016) Tsakyrakis observes a certain reversal of this trend. Cf. *Justice, the essence of politics*, Metaichmio, Athens, 2019, p. 233.

⁴ For an ancestry of this opposition between an understanding of art as a “disinterested” practice (Shaftesbury) and a more associative one (Diderot) see Anthony Pagden, Denis Diderot on the perils of detachment, in Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (ed), *Politics and Aesthetics in the Arts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 85-111.

established power structures, this aspect never really succeeded. The Meissoniers of the history of art never really survived posterior judgment, and if they did, then they did not at face value, that is not as propagators of great deeds. So, the aesthetics of good art rarely coincide with mainstream aesthetics and the interesting beauty in art cannot be reduced to current perceptions of beauty («beauty» being allegedly a common denominator of what art strives for).⁵

In democratic political discourse, especially under conditions of reasonable pluralism, we are all as a rule aware of the roots of our controversies but we are disposed to listen, discuss and reflect on the basis of alternative reasonable views. We know, for instance, why some of us are upset to see religious symbols and dogmas removed from school curricula and classes and we understand the difficulties that those who are upset confront in following a secular democratic line of argument. We don't necessarily agree, but we are expected to understand and tolerate and restrict our arguments to considerations that others can follow from within their own reasonable view. In a sense, we understand disagreement in these matters as a necessary stage in a process of political, democratic acculturation and maturation under the fact of pluralism. Or we understand that we have to accept a certain view or practice as a matter of *right*. Whether we are Christians, Jews, Muslims, or simply non-religious, we need to understand that we have to live together without oppressing each other in normatively vital domains. So with time and rational democratic discourse we have learned to see that we can coexist without serious damage to our belief system. That makes us more tolerant.

Art however seems to undermine this structure. There is no democratic tool kit, no rules of thumb on how to proceed when we see an image we cannot classify and have not learned to deal with.⁶ Emotion, notably anger and taking offense, gains the upper hand, especially when we find ourselves confronted with something that resists classification.⁷ We feel anger when we cannot process an image as it presents itself and simultaneously feel unable to further interpret it. We often read images as *representational*, as standing for something «real» in the systems of signs we are used to invoke and believe in, and are thus naturally offended and angered when we are unable to account for a shift in meaning, a subversion. We take it at face value and we

5 Cf. Robert Pippin, *After the Beautiful* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago-London 2015); Byung-Chul Han, *Die Errettung des Schönen* (S. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 2015); Alexander Nehamas, «A Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art», The Tanner Lectures of Human Values, Yale University, 9-10 April 2001 (tannerlectures.utah.edu/_documents/a-to-z/n/Nehamas_02.pdf).

6 This is one reason I consider a view that attempts to reread freedom of art exclusively as an social practice rather than as an individual right highly problematic. Joshua Cohen makes a similar point while discussing one of the core interests supporting expressive freedom. The expressive interest is a “direct interest in articulating thought, attitudes and feelings on matters of personal or broader human concern and perhaps through that articulation, influencing the thought and conduct of others” (Joshua Cohen, *Freedom of Expression* in his, *Philosophy, Politics, Democracy*, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 2009, pp. 114-5.) Cohen distinguishes in this respect between three classes of expressive interest: those that manifest a concern to “bear witness”, those addressing matters of justice, and those concerned with human welfare and the quality of life. He is quick to note however the importance of safeguarding the internal and personal aspects of expression compared to their public function and meaning and makes an interesting comparison between expressive freedom and freedom of conscience. I believe this point is eminently important for artistic freedom, taking everything into consideration including its ultimate social and political meaning. As Cohen remarks, focusing entirely on public discussion and debate underestimates the weight of the expressive interest and narrows the scope of protection for expressive freedom.

7 See Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought, The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2001 and John Deigh, *Emotions, Values, and the Law*, OUP: Oxford, 2008, pp. 103- 135.

8 For confusions and misunderstandings concerning offensive remarks about terrible crimes like the 9/11 terrorist attacks cf. the subtle analysis by Christel Fricke, *Kunst und Öffentlichkeit, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer ästhetischen Reflexion über die Terrorakten auf das World Trade Center am 11. September 2011*, *Kunst und Demokratie*, Sonderheft des Jahrganges 2003 der Zeitschrift fuer Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft, herausg. Von Ursula Franke und Josep Fr ü chtl, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg.

9 Otto-Preminger-Institut vs. Austria, 20 September 1994, Series A, no 295, para 47: «Those who choose to exercise the freedom to manifest their religion, irrespective of whether they do so as members of a religious majority or a minority, cannot reasonably expect to be exempt from all criticism. They must tolerate and accept the denial by others of their religious beliefs and even the propagation by others of doctrines hostile to their faith. However, the manner in which religious beliefs and doctrines are opposed or denied is a matter which may engage the responsibility of the State, notably its responsibility to ensure the peaceful enjoyment of the right guaranteed under Article 9 (art. 9) to the holders of those beliefs and doctrines. Indeed, in extreme cases the effect of particular methods of opposing or denying religious beliefs can be such as to inhibit those who hold such beliefs from exercising their freedom to hold and express them. In the *Kokkinakis* judgment the Court held, in the context of Article 9 (art. 9), that a State may legitimately consider it necessary to take

read what we see superficially. Even in democracies, citizens lack the patience and the cultivation necessary to read the complex, multi-layered images and texts that are so important in art.⁸



(...) In light of this fickleness of being offended it is time to ask whether there is any point at all in arguing for and against offensiveness. But if the problem with offensive art lies not with its offensiveness, then what do all these motions to restrict artistic freedom aim at? What is astonishing with both decisions is that the Court of Human Rights never questions per se the freedom to express dissent, criticism or rejection of ideas, views or for that matter religious creeds (in the original text, the author refers to the approach taken by the European Court of Human Rights in two seminal decisions: *Otto Preminger Institut vs. Austria* and *Wingrove vs. the United Kingdom*)⁹. What it does question

however, is not the content but the form in which criticism is cast. The Court focuses in particular on whether a work of art expresses its otherwise legitimate critical stance in «depictions» that convey disrespect in a *particularly* provocative manner for the religious *feelings* of others and thus fail to exemplify the spirit of tolerance which is essential to democracy. The Court never really argues why respect vis-à-vis religious feelings is due (supposedly guaranteed by article 9 of the ECtHR) and how democratic tolerance entails this kind of self-censorship. Why should religious feelings be tolerated while political expression, even if extremely provocative, not tolerated?

(...) there are moments in democratic life when our civic right and obligation to critically monitor and control power may demand non-violent but drastic forms of expression, and it would be very counterproductive, if not self-defeating, to introduce

criteria of legitimacy for such forms of expression.

One could surmise that as with free expression of opinion, art should be practiced «responsibly», that is with deference to the views and sensibilities of the audience, especially those with differing views. But this would be pure nonsense: it would impose an incredible burden on the artist and exert unbearable pressure for self-censorship (chilling effect). If it is arguable that as citizens we all stand under some kind of civic duty to respect our co-citizens and conduct critique in a civilized and fair-minded manner, the artist qua artist has no such obligation. The work of art is under no obligation whatsoever to be pleasant, palatable, harmonious and acceptable to dominant, or for that matter deviant, views. If we were to stipulate such a qualification for art, art would become superfluous, irrelevant, redundant.

(...)The kind of challenge to artistic freedom we have so far adumbrated represents the classical kind. A more recent challenge is more subtle and therefore more difficult to deal with, because it does not usually involve state intervention. In this case it is not religious organizations seeking government intervention for the suppression of a work of art deemed offensive to their creed. It is rather racial or ethnic groups who have been (and still are) historically victimized and who protest the appropriation by non-minority artists of narratives, subjects, events and symbols they identify with and consider as belonging to their own bitter history of injustice and suppression.

(...) As the discussion concerning the display of Dana Schutz's painting "Open Casket" suggests, whites, white artists, even

measures aimed at suppressing certain forms of conduct, including the imparting of information and ideas, judged incompatible with the respect for the freedom of thought, conscience and religion of others (ibid., p. 21, para. 48). The respect for the religious feelings of believers as guaranteed in Article 9 (art. 9) can legitimately be thought to have been violated by provocative portrayals of objects of religious veneration; and such portrayals can be regarded as malicious violation of the spirit of tolerance, which must also be a feature of democratic society. The Convention is to be read as a whole and therefore the interpretation and application of Article 10 (art. 10) in the present case must be in harmony with the logic of the Convention (see, *mutatis mutandis*, the *Klass and Others v. Germany* judgment of 6 September 1978, Series A no. 28, p. 31, para. 68).

10 «Aruna D'Souza, 'Open Casket' and the Question of Empathy, Did Dana Schutz's painting engage with her subject, Emmett Till, ethically and responsibly? <https://longreads.com/2018/05/21/open-casket-and-the-question-of-empathy/#fn7>



Konstantinos Papageorgiou
Athens

Konstantinos Papageorgiou is Professor of Philosophy of Law at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, School of Law and Professor at the “Interdepartmental Postgraduate Program in Bioethics” in the University of Crete. He received his law degree from the University of Athens and his PhD (Dr. jur) from the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München.

His main research areas are Philosophy of Law and Theory of Criminal Law, Liberalism and Republicanism, the Theory of Just War and Global Justice, Freedom, Equality and Democracy. Occasionally he also contributes in the fields of Intellectual History, Bioethics and Philosophy of Art. His Munich doctoral dissertation was published by Nomos Verlag under the title “Schaden und Strafe. Auf dem Weg zu einer Theorie der strafrechtlichen Moralität” (Baden Baden, 1994). Also, he is the author of the following monographs: *The Political Possibility of Justice - Contract and Consent in John Rawls*, Nisos: Athens 1994, *War and Justice, A Political Philosophy for the World*, Polis: Athens 2008 and more recently “Duties to Refugees”, Polis: Athens 2018, a book based on Prof. Papageorgiou’s plenary session lecture at the 2017 World Conference of IVR in Lisbon (The session proceedings will soon be published in English by Steiner Verlag). In 2019 he received the Greek State Special Award for an “essay on a socially significant issue”. Currently he is working on a book entitled “Equality as Freedom”, which is close to completion.

Moreover, Prof. Papageorgiou is a co-editor for the section “Liberty and Equality” of the IVR Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy published by Springer, a member of the Scientific Committee of the Foundation of the Greek Parliament (since 2006) and a member of the Board of Directors of the European Cultural Centre at Delphi.

white mothers, have nothing to say on Emmett Till’s murder. “The subject matter is not theirs”. But this strikes me not only as self-defeating, but also as unfair. Imagine a compartmentalized social and political world where everyone would be only allowed to speak out and act only on the basis of one’s own real or perceived history of pain and defeat. Artists and writers and filmmakers would only address issues relevant to the group they “legitimately” identify with. What would the margin of moral progress be in such divisive conditions? Such a right to an exclusive use of a group’s legacy is self-defeating because sympathetic identification and its expression through any available means is a personally and socially very important process; actually, pace Adam Smith, it is an essential factor for our moral evolution. Everybody stands to win through sympathetic identification and particularly the members of a group that has been victimized and suffered injustice. On the other hand, nobody can be blocked from developing and expressing it in public. Social evolution and cultural transformation are based on it. Don’t we all have a freedom to creatively express what we think and feel? Exclusion of a non-minority member from touching upon certain subjects seems to be also unfair, even if not perceived as such by black activist artists.

(...)The complaint of “illicit appropriation” of a subject matter by non-minority artists seems thus overstated. The claim that Black Life can only be successfully represented by black people may be absolutely correct. But the expectation that non-black people are not authorized to touch upon such issues, the claim that only black people have the right to address the history and the ordeals of African Americans, seems to lack adequate grounding in political morality and constitutional law and turns out to be self-defeating. The same applies to the claim that whites talking about black lives is offensive. Like with religious offense, this claim is neither empirically nor normatively substantiated. Every citizen has the right to think with others and express his/her/their opinion on common history and common or not troubles. Even if every

group has its own “cultural forms and historical legacies”¹⁰ it identifies with, these cannot be private and exclusive. They form part of the public space of reasonable exchange and communication. Otherwise protesters of the Shutz painting would not have addressed the issue in public. It is also a civic duty to think deeper about historical tragedies and own the responsibilities that accrue to the descendants. In this respect there are no exclusivity rights to tragedies and a history of pain. In a common polity everybody has the right and the duty to reflect and identify with these issues. Conversely, nobody has the right to feel offended about co-citizens’ right to own, to reflect and feel about past and present tragedies and crimes. Ultimately, the complaint of «illicit appropriation» also represents a dangerous trend for artistic freedom, because it exerts a huge pressure on institutions to censor their art projects and adjust them to expectations.

We should never stop questioning ourselves and others (that is the tradition Socrates inaugurated) but only on the basis of convincing reasons and therefore good reasons, right reasons are colourless I believe. But we create them together, people of all races, all genders, all confessions and persuasions. I know what I am saying is contestable especially because a tradition of oppression and exploitation has many times reverted to the « language of reason”. But I believe there is no way to counter abuse of reason other than reason itself. And there is also no way to establish just terms of free human association in one polity. There are so many moments in the history of mankind that can clearly prove why we cannot abandon reason. Having said that I understand reason not as a kind of trump card in the hand of an impostor nor as a sword in an oppressor’s hand but rather as a principle deeply grounded in common concerns, ordering human feeling, understanding social, political and cultural history, exemplifying open-mindedness, love for humanity and concern for other people’s lives. Also a heightened awareness of what we may be doing to others while deciding about ourselves. •

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CROSSFIRE

DAVID MARTÌN ABÁNADES

**Theory says that the police were created to solve
are called, anyone who requests them claims a
when the cause of the conflict coincides with those**

In other words, what happens when the police are the cause of it?

The police are often at the center of conflicts when they make bad decisions (not individually, because the bad decision of one policeman is easy to rectify). Here, we are talking about systemic or institutionalized bad decisions. These are mostly the results of discriminatory actions coming from the police themselves and are based on previous prejudices rather than objective data. This is the great battle horse...

So why are the police making these bad decisions? What can we do to avoid being at the center of the conflict?

The first answer is to recognize that the problem exists. Only then, when aware that our actions are at fault, can we create adequate solutions. The police crisis is not just a public perception ... and even if it was, mis-perception is in itself sufficient ground

for a re-evaluation of the current police model in order to change public perception. However, the police crisis is a reality. No matter what country you travel to, you will always find parts of society that do not feel that the police are their police.

In states constituted as rule of law, with democratic societies, the majority of the population (fortunately) feels comfortable with its police, but the police's aim is universal, it should not be satisfied by simply pleasing the majority ... We must be able to satisfy 100% of the population. Coincidentally, this majority is generally represented in law enforcement's services, even more in its centers of power, both police and political.

The police should be made up of representatives from all groups of societies which it serves; that is to say, greater representation of women and members of minority groups both in the base police force and in its centers of power. This would be a key factor in solutioning the current crisis.

conflicts, but unlike judges, when the police an immediate «verdict». And what happens se who have to decide how to resolve it?

Finally, we need to accept that sometimes police are at the center of the conflict. The worst part being that this feeds a loss of confidence, and in such an institution, loss of confidence is a torpedo on the waterline of the ship, hence the critical state of the current situation. Instead of increasing arrest rates or focusing on the reduction of the number of crimes per thousand inhabitants, perhaps we should set ourselves the goal of eliminating conflicts caused by our own actions.

Perhaps we, the police, do not realize the importance of the role that society has given us. Perhaps we identify more with a «Hollywood» model, the heroic cop who stops the «bad guys», rather than the empathetic and understanding officer who is able to search for an optimal solution to the conflict at hand, the win-win agreement that we all want. •

David Martín Abánades,
Fuenlabrada, Spain

He is a local Police Inspector, and has been with the Fuenlabrada Police Service since 1996.

Since 2007 has been working on issues related to security and social diversity, discrimination and improvement of relations between police and minority groups. In 2008, he contributed to the establishment of the first Diversity Management Team within the Spanish Police.

He has collaborated as a police expert with the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), the Council of Europe and the United Nations, on hate crimes, racial / ethnic bias in police ID checks, and the protection of Human Rights and the improvement of relations between the police and vulnerable social groups.

The city of Fuenlabrada is part of the ICC network.



SEPT. 2020

URUBU'S CHRONICLES

SATCHIE NORO

Often at this part of the show, people mis-interpret my movement with this axe as violence, as an act of terrorism even. For me it's the image of Justice: a woman, the movement of a swinging axe, and it coming into balance.

In terms of what I feel when I am up on stage, it's a quiet strength, a feminine strength. We never say Justice is violent or aggressive. We recognize her as a force that knows her strength and who will not abuse it - a force that seeks balance.

The axe comes back in my work often. For me, it's fundamentally a tool. Yes, humankind has used it for defense, but above all, to cut wood for keeping warm and for building shelter.

I grew up in the world of *Aikido*. My father was a practitioner and teacher of saber and *bokken*. I grew up with this physical practice and with knowledge of these kinds of objects. They are not tools for harming the other, but for mastering one's own body in space. It is true a badly handled axe can create damage – especially to oneself. But this is precisely where being aware of the present moment is vital – staying focused on the position of one's body and channelling of one's movement.

The problem is injustice, when the axe is perceived as a weapon, unbalanced. And the problem with injustice is that we cannot always remain passive in front of it. I ask myself: is it possible to face injustice with an attitude of peace and “I extend my hand to you and open my heart to you?” I do not think so. But I do believe that there are always counterweights, such as human creativity and solidarity, which can eventually swing everything back into equilibrium. •

Satchie Noro is a dancer, choreographer, and aerial circus artist.

Satchie took her first steps in the dojo of her Japanese father, Masamichi Noro, master of Aikido and studied classical dance with Wilfride Piollet.

After a short stay in Berlin at the Deutch Oper, she embraced the prolific Berlin alternative scene as a choreographer and performer from 1991 to 1995.

Back in France, she performed with Andy Degroat, Shiro Daimon, Mié Coquempot. In 2002, she discovered aerial circus techniques and founded her company Furinkai. In 2006 she created her performance, Origami.

She has also collaborated as a dancer and circus artist with Adrien Mondot and Claire B, Carlotta Sagna, James Thierré, Michel Schweizer, Mohamed Al Khatib and Pierre Meunier, among others. Since September 2015, she has been co-directing the Circus School, Les Noctambules in Nanterre with Olivier Verzelen. In 2020, Satchie became associated artist at the Centre Chorégraphique National de Nantes.

“La danseuse et le container” is a documentary film directed by François Combin on Satchie and her performance “Origami”

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