

Festivalization 2.0

autonomous zones
and the event-economy

Luc Sala

Participation, identification, realization and transformation as the core parameters of permanent or temporary autonomous zones as platforms of physicalization and social change. Outline of a new industry

The need for physical contact, anonymous freedom, communitas and transformation, fueled by cyber-isolation and the Corona crisis, gives rise to new models of togetherness and autonomy. Expressed in festivals, eventification communities, free cultural spaces, freehavens and tribes, this influences our communication modes, states of mind, bring new ideas, innovation and help change our world view.

with Aja Waalwijk, Britta Lillesøe, Wolfgang Sterneck, Ferry Maidman, Peter H. Rosen

We like to go to festivals, more than ever. Is it to play, to meet, to experience or just to escape the normal, the organized, the suffocation of daily routines and cyberspace isolation? This book deals with the roots, background and mechanisms of what is now a global trend, turning into an industry.

What do autonomous zones like festivals or free cultural spaces, communities and urban tribes bring beyond the leisure and entertainment? Are they also a tool to experience and shape a different paradigm, changing our personal world view and political consciousness?

Festivalization is not only an economic trend, it is a social phenomenon that seems to compensate for a lack of physical contact in modern life and cyberspace, but also the loss of meaning in an overly material world.

Commercial, cultural, artistic, alternative, religious, spiritual or tribal, transformational, everybody can find something of his or her liking in the festivalscape, for a day, a weekend or longer. It makes us feel connected, tolerant and inclined to share.

In a world of stress, fear, ecological threats and educational coercion there is a need to escape to places and events where the 'normality' is shelved. Places where we can still play, have fun, make mistakes, and thus learn and grow, even as this might entail a dark side.

Festivals fit in with the experience economy and eventification of society, but they also offer anchor points for an expanded identity for the festival-goers. They offer entertainment, culture, participation, meaning and identification, and the more alternative events are a platform for personal and social transformation.

The perspective of this book concerns the transformative qualities: how autonomous zones facilitate the alternative and offer transformation. It is about understanding why people flock to events that offer something extra. It looks into what that extra is; how that brings innovation and personal growth and under what conditions. Manifesting change is what the world needs to understand. The book is less about commercial and entertainment oriented categories of festivals or about event management, which are well covered elsewhere.

How the need for physical contact, anonymous freedom and community gives rise to new models of togetherness and autonomy in festivals, free cultural spaces, communities, and tribes

We like to go to festivals, more than ever. Commercial, cultural, alternative, spiritual or tribal, everybody can find something of his or her liking, for a day, a weekend or longer. Festivalization is not only an economic activity, it's a social and psychological phenomenon that seems to compensate for the lack of physical contact and privacy in modern life and cyberspace.

This book deals with the roots, background and mechanisms of what is now a global trend, turning into an industry and the favorite of urban policy-makers. Cities are competing to become the global FestiValley competence center.

Humans like to be together, to celebrate, experience, feel happy. Intentional communities, parties and festivals make us feel connected, tolerant and inclined to share. There is a need to escape to places and events where the 'normality' is 'shelved' in a 'temporary autonomous zone'.

Festivals fit in with the experience economy and identification of society, they also offer anchor points for an expanded identity of the festival-goers, the new tribalism. They offer entertainment, culture, meaning and identification, and the more alternative events are a platform for personal and social transformation.

These influence in turn our personal states of mind, but also bring new ideas, innovation and help change our worldview.



€ 19,95 £ 15

Festivalization: the boom in events

Festivalization the boom in events

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Platform for change, outline of a new industry

Participation, identification, realization and transformation as the core parameters of permanent or temporary autonomous zones.



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1 Introduction

Many of us want and seek freedom, play, fun and personal growth. Not by the virtuality of cyberspace, but in real life. Browsing, zooming, social media are inescapable in modern times, but they bare poor substitutes for physical presence. Attending events, festivals or join communities and tribes seem to provide this and is becoming very popular, especially since the Corona crisis. Before that festivals were already quite trendy, but with a our release from the virus restrictions the sene and industry has exploded. There are the classic government sponsored “cultural” events, traditional and usually bringing “high culture” to the people who can afford it, but now a multitude of festivals, events, pilgrimages, camps, emerge, catering for specific interests, without much support from governments or sponsors. It’s an industry, making money, changing the music scene (artist now make more money from performances than from sales of recrded music), influencing the political climate as these “free” events bring together people with a different agenda. Since Woodstock the “underground” has become visible, has become more mature, and, different from before, the cities and governments line up to facilitate such events, as they are becoming an economic factor.

All this goes beyond the purely economic and rational needs and wishes of people. We obviously need *communitas*, as the magic ingredient beyond mere entertainment or being together for some practical purpose. That is what draws miillions to events, small and large. Our need for physical contact, of being able to touch and experience the “other”, friend or foe, partaker or just visitor, has become a real issue, as the Corona-crisis and the lockdown made us aware of what isolation, loneliness, and limitations in our civic liberties affects. This trend is relevant and the subject of this book because, apart from the leisure and entertainment aspects, such autonomous spaces are potentially laboratories of change. Looking at what happens in Free Cultural Spaces (FCS), permanent or in more dynamic, short-lived events like festivals, is relevant in a psychological, economic, social and political perspective.

Understanding the processes, preconditions and constraints of events like Burning Man or in communities like Christiania or the Amsterdam Ruigoord community may well hold keys to better apprehend how change happens. Identification, participation, realization and transformation are parameters in this process, relevant not only to understand how we can create a wonderful weekend event, but essential in the much broader process of changing our world.

Understanding change, political transition, innovation, personal and social transformation is what the world needs.

-Festivals have become a boom, a business and an industry. The impact of this trend may be as important as what Silicon Valley brought to us, a FestiValley phenomenon. Regions like around Amsterdam, are becoming festival hotbeds, and influence worldwide trends, fashions and staging of festivals elsewhere.

There are all kinds of festivals, identifying them is not easy. Labels like authentic, religious, commercial or alternative, participative, or intentional are used but not really distinctive. Conforming or autonomous is a dichotomy that comes closer to what is discussed in this book. Are festivals only used to confirm what we are, supporting the status quo, the social order and our egos, or do they offer a way out, an escape from what we pretend to be? The distinction in mask affirming or mask breaking (in the context of transformation) thus makes sense. I will focus on the conforming versus the transformative qualities, accepting that this is only one way to look at this broad field.

Festivalization is an economic trend, fitting in what is called eventification, but even more a social phenomenon, and it reflects how society is changing. Our lives are virtualized, emptied of meaning, we are data, not humans, consumers, not cocreators. People therefore seek engaging, live entertainment, but also contact with others, participation and identification.

There emerged a class of 'alternative' festivals, that focus on bringing something 'extra' beyond the purely commercial entertainment

many large festivals offers. That extra can be idealistic, a message to the world, transformation or personal growth, but it requires more than managing a crowd and selling tickets. It asks a special focus and an intention that goes beyond the materialistic.

Their popularity grows. The success is maybe related to what we miss in our Facebook, Twitter and Netflix digital world. How we want to use our mobility and free leisure time to find contacts and meaning. Seeking an escape from the stress and continuous presence of our cybervirtual and often lifeless connections. More and more people attend festivals, feel being part of tribes in real, tangible environments; it seems this balances and counteracts the emptiness of internet presence, allows the anonymity and freedom we need to learn and offers an escape from the invasive privacy breakdown. Such festivals are what this book is about. It's not an overview of what is available or merely a description of specific festivals, just a few are mentioned. The book is about looking for what makes the alternative, spiritual or magical festivals different. How they offer authenticity and what Peter Lamborn Wilson (Hakim Bey) called 'autonomous zones', or what in anthropological terms is called 'the magic circle'.

Such events range from small meetings to large festivals and communities which are pockets in time and space where the control of 'normal' society doesn't matter much, and the tribal, the magical and the sacred can be experienced. They are temporary or more permanent places where one can experiment with decision making, relationships, art, sex, drugs and music.

What makes this 'special' or 'magical', however, is not very clear, except that the experience is there. Many experience a feeling of happiness, exaltation, connection; things are different.

Experience economy and eventification

One of the trends in economy and marketing is recognizing, along with the emotional drives, the importance of experiences. In the emerging experience economy, seen as the next stage in consumer behavior, the production, buying and consumption of services, products and places is no longer based on consumption, but geared towards producing events, spectacle, impression, performances, the-

ater; all towards creating subjective emotions. The festival and eventification trend (event consumption) is an obvious part of this, the changed attitude concerning 'shopping' another.

The festivalization trend impacts not only the events as such, but has many effects. It requires allocation of public funds, urban planning and influences time allocation of the citizens. It effects many other areas, like tourist facilities, security, law&order, health, and even education as new kinds of jobs appear, and 'Event Management' becomes part of the curriculum.

Events are not only economic endeavors, they are complex cultural products, combinations of many fields. It involves economy, marketing, security, arts, music, theater and of course applied psychology and sociology, not to forget ecology. The cooperation of many parties and discipline specialists is necessary, both local stakeholders and international artists, ceremonial managers and mood experts. The need for integrated event and experience management, staging and planning studies, also at an academic level, is obvious.

This book, however, is not a study about festival management or festival tourism, it is an attempt to identify the major dimensions and attraction of the autonomous zones that we describe as alternative festivals, group meetings, communes or free cultural spaces.

The focus of this book is to clarify why there is such a boom in festivals, especially of the 'alternative' kind and why is there also such an interest in intentional communities and free cultural spaces (FCS). Why do people go there, what are they looking for?

To study this, we have to look at what history, the notion of Utopia and modern psychological and social insights have to say about this. Among the perspectives are needs, meaning, group mind and the resonance with play, ritual, social media and even computer games. Existing models like Maslow's pyramid and McLuhan's tetrad are used, but also new models and graphic representations.

The general tone of this book is critical. The idea is also to identify how the participation, identification, realization and transformation these more engaging events and places offer can counteract or complement shortcomings in education, society and culture. The purpose

is not ranking or comparing them with events of a more commercial character, where passive consumption and entertainment prevail. The 5th Futurological Symposium in Christiania (Denmark) in September 2015 was the inspiration for this book, which also contains contributions from participants of that conference. New development in this direction are also covered.

Personally speaking, looking at festivals and communities, with an eye open to modern technology, fits my interest in rituals, cyberspace, the connected city and altered states of consciousness.

It is like a logical step in my life path, coming closer and closer to what I am as a human. Still honoring the technology and science that were so much part of my earlier career, but more and more drawn to the otherworld phenomena and the intangible that shape my and everybody's life. Are beauty, happiness, community, connection, peace, so obviously the true goal of festivals and intentional communities, not worth our attention? Modern economists acknowledge that emotions and these intangible notions play an important role in our decisions and behavior, more than the rational utilitarian considerations. I go one step further, I want to acknowledge the sacred, the magical or spiritual dimension(s) too, as those do influence our sense of belonging, our happiness and thus our decisions and actions.

My personal fascination with the subject is not only my participation in many festivals all over the world, from the massive Kumbha Mela in India to small neighborhood events, but also how festivals are an expression of how humans find a balance between the individual and the social. The way society works, the law and government are always a compromise between the interests of the one versus the many. In the festivalization trend I sense a playful way to experiment with new bridges between the I and the we, new models of living and enjoying together.

Luc Sala, 2015, 2016. 2022



2 Festivalization: a new boom

More and more people attend festivals, of all kinds. It has become a big business, a growing industry. Every weekend millions of younger and older people travel to events, for entertainment or amusement, in pursuit of happiness, leisure, diversion or maybe just to escape from their tedious or dull daily routines. They are looking for fun, go for the music, the scene, the drugs, the group mind, identification, contacts and maybe participation and transformation. They usually don't go alone, but with a partner or a group of friends and also enjoy feeling part of a tribe that shares a common interest.

Festivals are of all times, the word comes from the Latin 'festal', but more and more they become a major social and thus economic phenomenon. More and more people gather for such events, in all kinds of venues but usually in the outdoors and in weekends or holidays times. It surpasses the village fairs and religious events of old, the larger events have become a marketplace by themselves. Festivals are a melting pot where the money economy meets, exchanges and mixes with the cultural, symbolic economy (art), the attention/visibility/fashion business and the experience economy. There has been an explosion of festivals, the size has expanded and the term is used as a flag for all kinds of events.

The word festivalization, mentioned since 2006 (B. Quinn), tries to describe this trend, as it seems to be a broad movement, an undercurrent that is beginning to have serious economic and social consequences. Festivalization describes the rapid expansion of the festival concept. The word refers, in a somewhat narrow sense (Négrier), to the process by which cultural activity, previously presented in a regular, on-going pattern or season, is reconfigured to form a 'new' event, a festival.

There fundamental questions concerning this trend. Are festivals a viable industry or just social compensation, are they consumerism or a help and platform for self-discovery? Are they a way to escape in anonymity, rekindle some privacy and the right to make mistakes? However you see them it's certainly about fun and games, but also

about identification and transformation. We want to belong to something, follow an ideal, seek meaning. Grouping around an event, a movement, a hobby, a band or music style makes sense. The boy scouts, the unions, the football club, the parochial events, they are now traded for events where we meet like-minded people but in a less formal setting, befitting the individualist tendencies of the 21th century. We can hook up with anybody via the social media, but meeting in the flesh has its benefits too.

The concentrated experience of a festival, where the density and diversity is so high and so immediate, makes for easy immersion and even flow, going with the tide. The new tribalism and virtual communities on the internet don't offer this, even as social media and internet are also a factor in the boom in festivals and meetings. We seek a compensation for the lack of physical interaction; maybe festivals are an incentive to go out and meet those web-friends, while experimenting with identity, food, clothing and taste. We want to experience the difference, and are willing to be different ourselves, but within limits and maybe a bit anonymously, being part of the crowd and still private.

Escaping the need to owe things, rather using and sharing the accommodation and facilities, fits also well with the notion of an 'experience' economy. We are suffocated by what we owe and have to maintain, the material and immaterial; James Wallman talks about 'stuffocation'. Escaping that burden by joining pilgrimage or festivals makes sense.

The live meetings and festivals are becoming an industry and this goes well with the cyborage trends, using and sharing technology without deifying it, using the social media and internet services to connect to the festivalscape. New technology is used, demonstrated

Cultural permanence	↔	Ephemeral, 'presentism'
Asceticism	↔	Hedonism
Classical individualism	↔	Tribalism, new-individualism
Cultural legitimacy	↔	Eclecticism, diversity
Cultural specialisation	↔	Flexibility, tolerance, muddling
Cultural inheritance/legacy	↔	Cultural path

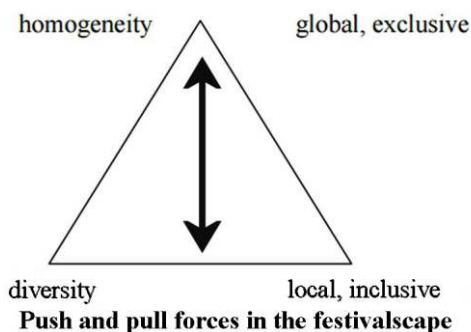
source E. Négrier

and shared, the need for distinctiveness, for ever more penetrating experiences has brought ever larger screens, ever louder sound systems, more impressive props and effects to the festival stages. A performance now is very different from what we saw a few decades ago, and as income for talent has shifted from distributed carriers like CDs to performance fees, stage acts have evolved and changed with it. Emmanuel Négrier indicated (see illustration) how festivals have changed over time.

What jumps out is that festivals are more and more platforms for change, antidotes to stasis, bot in society, in groups and in individuals. The world is changing, the balance between individual and social interest is shifting, and festivals are focal points for this. There social interaction peaks, ‘presence’ is displayed and the concentration of acts and audience is cost effective. According to Owe Ronström this means not only maximizing producers income, but facilitating the exchange process of cultural capital, attention value and money. He points at the make-over of local events towards global attention grabbers and tourist attractions. Distinctiveness, visibility, uniqueness is what makes a festival, and yet globalization forces the same formats. The large public festivals often have the same acts, the talent travels from event to event. The festivalscape seems liquid and zappable; in reality there is not much difference between the big commercial music festivals.

Ronström states:

“Raised density, homogeneity and distinctiveness are thus aspects on one and the same reification process that produce festivals. Tourists are the main targets for the process, their presence complete and confirm the transformation from concrete place to abstract destination.



source Owe Ronström, 2011

The rationality which one dictated how festivals were to be run, disappears, we have to accept that festivals are non-rational cultural expressions. This means the traditional models and cultural programs have to adapt and change. This is another aspect of festivalization, it forces the old cultural power-brokers to adapt.

According to Négrier;

“Festivalisation also describes the process by which cultural institutions, such as a cinema, theater, arts centre or gallery orients part of their programme around one or more themes or events, concentrated in space and time. Festivalisation therefore results in part from the explosion of festivals, but also from some eventalisation of regular, cultural offers.”

Festivals, once a more or more obligatory, the church or state demanded presence, are now more a matter of choice, and the organizers and promoters have to negotiate between the old model of fixed and often subsidized standard event and the new, wild and fluid scene. The expressive action, once only at the stage and often only instrumental, now is everywhere, the public is as much expressing themselves in dance, in singing, shouting, in clothing (or non-clothing), social media messaging. The producer and the consumer roles are no longer clearly delineated, they mix and reverse, the festival goer has become prosumer, an active participant.

Towards a wider definition of festival

Fredrick Barth described a festival as a ‘vessel of meaning’ and although that is true in an anthropological sense, these days festivals are more than a cultural phenomenon, they are manifestations of grass roots movements as well as gigantic moneymaking enterprises and tourist traps. They are very local and very global at the same time, the range of festivals has expanded and differentiated.

Wikipedia, that mediocre truth by commission and utterly entropic medium, defines:

a festival or gala as an event ordinarily staged by a community, centering on and celebrating some unique aspect of that community and its traditions, often marked as a local or national holiday, mela (India) or eid (Muslim).

Not a very inspiring and traditional encyclopedic bit, not looking at what else happens in the festival world.

Donald Getz, who researched festival trends in depth, identifies festivals as ‘themed, public celebrations’ and highlights them as: *‘unique leisure and cultural experiences, powerful travel motivators, and facilitators of community pride and development’*. *Festivals and events provide authenticity and uniqueness, especially with events based on inherent indigenous values.*’

Festivals are becoming more complex, the combination of more performances, stages, the whole ‘carnival’ of supporting acts, scenery, stalls selling clothes and food, the separation in activity and relaxed lounging, the facilities, support systems, logistics, camping makes for a *‘poly-system of linked sub-festivals’* (Temple Hauptfleisch). A festival has become a network of activities, a pool of energies, with many actors, but we should not forget that the core is the facilitation play.

Temple Hauptfleisch, says about arts and cultural festivals (2007): *“a festival is a cultural event which in its own way eventifies elements and issues of the particular society in which it is taking place.”*

and

“Festivals are not only where the work is; it is where the artistic output of the actor, director, choreographer, etc. is eventified. It is where the everyday life event (performing a play, a concerto, a dance, exhibiting a painting, a sculpture, an installation) is turned into a significant Cultural Event, framed and made meaningful by the presence of an audience and reviewers who will respond to the celebrated event.”

A festival is more than just a concert, performance or play, it involves combining and framing a number of aspects and actors, ideas and acts in a theatrical way, a super-play or meta-play. The whole is more like a multi-ring circus, with a moving audience. There are many parties, considerations and constraints that play a role, the complexity of certainly the larger festivals and public events is immense, hence the need for event science. Many universities are now offering studies and do research concerning festivals.

There were initiatives like the EFRP (European Festivals Research Project) an international research consortium, set up to analyze the

contemporary dynamics of artistic festivals in Europe and their implications and perspectives and deliver conclusions, trends and recommendations. EFRP emerged from a belief that festivals have become emblematic for the issues, problems and contradictions of the current cultural practices in Europe, marked by globalization, European integration, institutional fatigue, dominance of cultural industry and shrinking public subsidies. EFRP noted that:

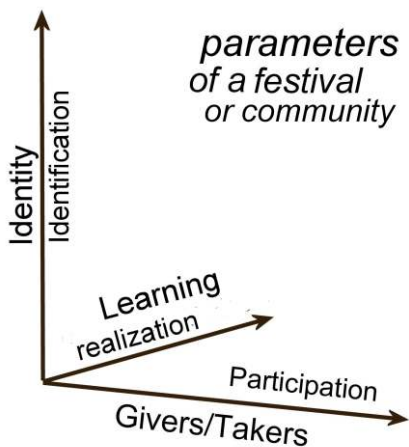
- Festivals are reshaping the public space in Europe, assert new focal points beyond the traditional cultural centers and have a potential to forge new alliances and partnerships and further the intercultural competence of all parties involved.
- Festivals are intensive, logistically complex undertakings that rely on multiple stakeholders, creating divergent and sometimes mutually excluding expectations.
- Festivals achieve much media exposure, are closely watched by the professionals, appeal to the sponsors and are funded by the public authorities for the reason that are not exclusively related to the arts and culture. Those circumstances make festivals rather visible, even prominent, but also vulnerable and prone to be caught in turbulence and public controversy.
- And yet, the complex dynamics affecting the functions and the impact of festivals in Europe is rarely systematically researched, especially in a longitudinal and comparative manner and in a European perspective, and thus widely misunderstood.

People go to festivals for many reasons, to satisfy all kinds of needs, seek happiness, contacts or just to kill time. But to what kinds of festivals would you go, and why? Do you go to play, to be entertained, thrilled, to get stoned, to meet new friends or share with old? The question how festivals are staged, managed and organized and how they influence culture and society has spawned libraries of articles, books (See Donald Getz, *The Nature And Scope Of Festival Studies* 2010) and journals like *Event Management and the International Journal Of Event Management Research* (www.ijemr.org), but why there are festivals is still more of an enigma, which with this book tries to deal.

Just to bring some realism, a quote from Hope Tschopik Schneider, producer of The Olympic Arts Festival in 1984:

“Festivals are not necessarily “good” things nor are they always very good parties or great communal celebrations. Indeed, most festivals are awful. They present local artists under bad performance conditions, on temporary stages, using rented sound systems. This to a bemused audience unsure of who is performing, who sit in the sun on rented folding chairs with children who are uncomfortable and restless, surrounded by a sea of people who are milling about, looking for food, shopping amidst assembled street fare items, inhaling the delicate smell of fried food mingled with the even more exotic fragrance of porta-potty chemicals.” ...

Classification of festivals



There are all kinds of festivals, small and large, public, commercial and free, more tribal or more commercial, community based, for members or associates only or for everybody, with a strict for profit set-up or based on sponsors and donations. Festivals can be limited to one location and moment, or spread out over more places and different moment. They can be spectacular or very humbly. Take your pick,

there are the no-logo events without commercials, festival models where money is replaced by giving or sharing or events very much about making money. They can use cultural performances, music or art as the main attraction or concentrate on seminars and workshops. They can happen in the city, in nature or in some venue, with a religious or spiritual character or just for fun, be music oriented or with another focus like sport, creativity, networking or partnering; with or without limits on food, drugs, drinks, the way we dress and express.

It is not easy to define the essential dimensions of festivals and to create graphs to identify and differentiate the diversity .

Many parameters play a role, like

- Size (in number of attendees, area, stages, status)
- Attendance modality (camping, sitting, standing, fluid)
- Participation model (volunteers)
- Contact opportunities
- Business model (money orientation or idealistic)
- Main focus (art, music, contact, transformation, participation)
- Music, what kind, what talent, lineup, live, DJ, VJ.
- Target audiences (age, interest, tribal, ethnic)
- Ecology and event impact
- Location, scenery and setting
- Spiritual ambition
- Ritual focus

In this book many aspects are touched, but not all as there is a focus on the psychological and the alternative, notably on autonomy.

Themes, authenticity and dynamics

Festivals have themes, and try to differentiate themselves this way, attract specific audiences. There are many themes, and finding a catchy one that resonates well with the target group may be the key to success. The theme may manifest in just the choice of music, but can go as far as more or less obliging the visitors to dress up like at some heritage festivals or at a ‘steampunk’ (Jules Verne imitation) event, and at the Star Trek festivals speaking Klingon means really immersing in the theme.

Themes and thus festivals are fairly dynamic, things change. Burning Man in 2016 is quite different from the ones a decade ago. The music, the decorations at a Goa Trance festival change over time, the drugs change, the audience too. The demographics change, the fans of the Rolling Stones are aged with their stars, the ‘Big Ride Home’ for 100 years Harley Davidson was more a senior citizen event than a hot bikers fest.

Festivals may be named after the location, after the activity like Burning Man or FireDance, but the smaller and specialized one have

catching names, indicating what the theme is. Even when there is a general name, the subtitle explains the theme. The Psy-fi festival in the Netherlands is obviously a psychedelic event, but the subtitle is 'Holographic Universe' and the German Fusion festival uses Kulturcosmos to explain the focus and theme.

The authenticity of events is often an issue. Especially if the events have cultural value or are related to local and often endangered traditions, keeping the 'tourists' out is a concern. The massive interest of tourists in this or that festival has been the end of authenticity, money takes over and it may become a 'show', a commodity to be marketed outside the original interest group. This is an enduring theme, not only for the indigenous events, but festivals like Burning Man also suffer from the influx of just onlookers, tourists coming to see the 'spectacle' rather than participate.

Different subcultures, backstage

The larger festivals are not all the same all over, there are subcultures, more active and more passive parts, where different facilities, different music and décor invite different experiences. Dancing in front of the main stage is different from chilling out at a more quiet spot. Commercial festivals often monetize this need to experience a different sphere by offering VIP-passes or backstage passes, at a price, or just for special guests. Exclusivity is then what matters, not so much the free drinks or the option of sharing in some 'special' treats.

One of the most desired spaces is the backstage, where the artists hang out, and the real action happens, imagined or real. Scoring a backstage pass is the ultimate reward for many, the see the backstage space as the realm of authentic experiences, as the spot where one can best experience being part of the tribe.

Understanding Festivals

There is a need to understand and manage this trend, and the old ways of dealing with it like in the Harvard Business Model looking at profits and risks seems inadequate or only partially applicable. As it is all about people, psychology is probably the first base, sociology follows and anthropology may offer insights in how the various

cultures deal with this. Only when we understand the needs and motivational mechanisms of all the stakeholders, the customer, participants, cocreators or attendees can we start to look into economic models, in educational trajectories etc.

The need to study the phenomenon of festivals has a number of dimensions:

- Psychological needs and motivation
- Tribal and social structures (networks, interaction models)
- Marketing approaches
- Management structures
- Business models
- Artistic models
- Entertainment/leisure models
- Tourism (location promotion)
- City planning

In this book I concentrate on festivals that offer more than an extension of the ‘normal’ cultural, music and arts routines. I mean festivals that offer something more, something ‘extra’ than business as usual, with their commercial offerings and entertainment for money. I will try to identify the ‘extra’ these spiritual or creative festivals and communities offer along the three dimensions:

- **realization**
- **participation/contribution**
- **identification**

which influence each other and in turn influence the **transformation** potential, see the chapter on transformation.

Such places and events are commonly referred to as ‘alternative’ or ‘extended’, but that term is a bit too broad and not very specific. The festivals discussed here offer a setting that is often so different from ‘normal’ life that the phrase or moniker ‘Temporary Autonomous Zone’ or TAZ coined by Hakim Bey (Peter Lamborn Wilson) seems appropriate. See the chapter about this.

Focus on the alternative

I will try to deal with that part of what is very broadly identified as the festival trend and festival industry, that doesn’t fit into what 20th century thinking would call business as usual. That means mostly

looking at profit maximization, budgets, shareholder value and measurable (digital) results.

In the TAZ-festival perspective the much wider and mostly analog concepts like stakeholder interests, ecology, event impact, sustainability, trust, happiness, meaning, freedom, sanctuary, authenticity and connectivity play a role. In the 'normal world' these values are superficially professed, but we need some steps away, some isolation, some autonomy to really explore them.

Festivals are an antidote for the stress of everyday life, offer entertainment, leisure, opportunities for self-exploration and growth and real-life contact with people. We need to balance the sometimes empty 'always on' virtuality of the social media and the phone. The festival scene adds physicality and experiential diversity to what in cyberspace was called web 2.0 or 3.0, the community, sharing and the new tribalism.

The underlying mechanisms, like connectivity, group mind, the sense of belonging and identification, the ritualization, the intangible meta-senses (for beauty, justice, kinship) and the sharing and gifting economy, are not really part of what science accept as productive

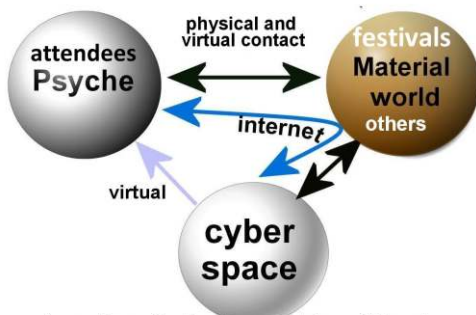
concepts. Economy, psychology and for a large part sociology have covered the superficial mechanisms, only the anthropologists have taken an interest in how festivals and rituals help shape and balance the individual psyche and society.

The sages of old had some notion of this, the Confucian ritualist XunZi stresses the importance of ritual, rules and pomp to keep the masses in line. But even he didn't really accept the magical reality of the group mind and the



In the days of Chinese Confucianism ritual and public festival was seen as a way to manipulate the people.

power of the masses, like Albert Speer manifested at the Nuremberg Nazi rallies. Events like Woodstock have changed the world. There is the belief or hope that from the festival scene a new 'Zeitgeist' emerges, more powerful than what science or religion can bring.



A modern festival cannot be without internet communications

Looking into the wide impact and effects of festivals is not just an idle game of speculation, as the value of festivals for the economy, the sociological stability (or renewal) and the mental and physical health of people is considerable.

Enjoying a happy summer event can mean mental happiness and health, a way to fight the oppressive stress of 'normal' life, letting go of frustrations, an opportunity to broaden one's scope, make new contacts and feel connected to others, nature and the heavens.

But what are the root benefits of a festival when we look beyond the money? Let's look at values.

The new ethics, value development

In the modern Western World, morality and ethics have become rationalized, otherworld moral influences like the revelations in Koran and Bible are only paid lip-service. The Western individualistic paradigm that is rigged as Universal Human Rights with the emphasis on rights and ignoring duties, has replaced consciousness, meaning and faith.

Yet in older cultures and outside the materialistic world view, morality, values, virtues have deep roots, in the faith, in the deeply felt connection with nature, in notions like karma, bhakti (devotion) and social responsibility. Ecology, dealing with the other in the widest sense, is not a hallmark of the Christian ethics (the Ten Commandments lack ecology) and here the importance of festivals as change

agents becomes visible. At many festivals new approaches and rules concerning the environment are tried and executed, like the notion to leave no traces, no debris, no damage to nature.

But also other values are challenged, with gifting for instance the notion of reciprocity, with nudity and free sex the morality of decency, with drugs the concept of freedom to ingest and influence one's state of mind, with peer level decision making the grand idea of tiered democracy, with hugging the size of private personal space, with sharing, the idea ownership.

Experiments with new forms

At festivals, especially as a new and independent autonomy is achieved, morality can be defined and explored in new ways and this is exactly one of the great qualities of many of the modern alternative festivals. The way we deal with interpersonal relationships, with issues like sex, ownership, power, face and favor games, democracy, coordination, management styles, etc. can be modified, experimented with and even the threatening perspective of a privacy-less society is something that one can play with. Not because the outcome is always positive, things go wrong often, but because we have to think and act out of the box sometimes, to find out what works and what doesn't.

Such experiments and experience can happen at festivals and in the new tribal communities where the normal rules, laws and morals can be shifted. There we can experiment, go forward to sci-fi kind of societies or back to the Confucian Chinese Ren-Yi-Li (urging that everybody should follow ethical norms for different social rules in order to obtain adequate resources of life with the primary consideration of maintaining social order) or the Australian Aboriginal Ngarra law systems (no personal ownership).



Boom in Portugal is a no-logo festival

Think about experimenting with different modes of social hierarchy, ways to distribute resources, different hierarchies of needs (like the choices between interpersonal harmony or individual goals), different valuations and respect models for vertical in-group, horizontal in-group, horizontal out-group relations (see Kwang-Kuo Hwang's theoretical model of "Face and favor: Chinese power game"(1987)) beyond the prevalent equality ideals of the Western world. Multiple levels of morality (public stance, private action) are then acceptable ways of resolving conflicts without open adversity.

All this is possible only in situations where the local autonomy is in the hands of participants and not forced upon them by society, tradition or custom. Non-hierarchical ties, in-group ties, instrumental and even expressive or affective ties between participants and stakeholders can create new community structures, think about the link between adepts and a guru, where love and devotion overrules many equality or utilitarian considerations.

In many festivals there emerge court-like structures, where the founders or organizers and their in-group create their own rules and structures, hire the talent they like and hand out favors. Not always with optimal results, but all depends on what yardstick is used for the results.

The dollar, the independent self and human rights of the Westerner are not the only way to define one's individuality, social role, boundaries and relationships. On the other hand, try to define meaning, sustainability or even happiness, not very easy.

Innovation, coyote mind

The role of festivals and autonomous zones as social and political innovation hotbeds is important and deserves more attention from education, science and government, if not from business. Walk around at festivals like Burning Man and see how creativity finds expression and solutions, how new trends in decoration, relaxation, transport, fashion, music and co-operative thinking emerge from the festival floor. To have such places where the 'coyote' energy can express itself, where one can live and think different, is important.

These are events and places where the hidden understanding of social and ecological mechanism as carried by indigenous people, but

also by minorities and outcast groups like the English ‘New Travelers’, come to the surface. Innovation, as shown at the many festivals, not only by erecting the most fantastic structures and art-pieces, but by ways of dealing with each other, organizing the events, decision making and developing political positions, statements and declarations. Festivals are very productive in this respect. It is the coyote mind appreciation and the out of the box possibilities that inspire people to come up with new, better, alternative and often fantastic ideas.

Security and red tape

Just gathering a bunch of people and having fun, a fire and some music was how it all started, but time have changed. These days a festival requires a lot of paper work, permissions, controls and dealing with authorities. Facilities, security guards, audio-level limiters, drugs-control, first aid, medical emergency units, control of the food quality, and not to forget the issue of taxation of concessions, workers, talent, their visa and work permits; the list is endless and grows. Now terrorist attacks are a new danger, meaning even more control, frisking, more security at the gate, more cameras etc. etc. When for instance security guards have to be hired and need to be present 24/7 this bears heavily on the budget, makes festivals more expensive and limits new initiatives.

The days that one has to register in advance and be checked by the authorities before issued a ticket are not far off. Much of this is so expensive and cumbersome, that many initiatives don’t make it and only the large and professional operators have the resources to comply, it becomes a regulated industry with limited competition.

Of course the authorities want to eliminate all risks, don’t want to be responsible if something goes wrong, but are all these regulations really effective? When things go wrong, like the stampede at Duisburg in 2010 or when really bad weather hits like in 2014 at Pinkpop, more security people didn’t make a difference. Of course such accidents lead to more regulations, higher cost and in the end stifling red tape and less innovation. Risk, however, is part of progress, to make something totally safe will kill it.

Are festivals the big business of the future?

A new era is emerging, where production and work are slowly disappearing and age-old questions around meaning and happiness need new answers. New society and business models appear, old ones fade away, and everywhere governments, politician, businessmen and investors are looking for the next big thing.

Technology is old hat, the smart city, smart home and smart care is on the way, autonomous transport, drones and robots ready to roll, no big surprises there. Although technology and new (social) media will play a role, the developments there are kind of predictable, it is in other fields where real needs appear and thus opportunities arise. Enough Silicon Valleys, we need a FestiValley!

In this book I point at the opportunities opening up in the field of meaningful entertainment, but also at the need for some freedom, away from Big Brother and GoogleWatch. Counteracting the trend towards virtuality and digital online we as humans need a way to physically experience and meet others. We also need to escape from the attack on our freedom and right to make mistakes, from the loss of privacy that makes us vulnerable, defensive and closed. Festivals are where we can be private, different, experiment and make mistakes, at least as long as the data and images are kept out of the hands of the NSA, Homeland Security and big corporations. Humans need to play, without mistakes and risks we don't learn. Being online and supervised all the time and without the privacy to fail our sense of initiative is stifling, numbing. Social and technical innovation are often a result of friction not of comfort.

Most things can be done online now, like working, education, government interaction, even sex becomes a virtual activity. Robots and drones will take over many jobs, automate our lives even more.

Meeting people however, remains a real need, and even technology like virtual reality and immersive gaming is not coping with that need. Close physical contact offers more and different modes of interaction, humans are social being after all. To cater for this need will shape society, a juxtaposition with technology, but for instance the purpose of a city will shift towards offering physical contact, meeting others, experiencing 'live' music, food, shopping, art.

Events like festivals, meetings, raves, indoors and outdoors are great ways to meet and experience physical contact, with music, food, adventure, gene pool mixing and much of what Maslow described in his pyramid of human needs and maybe even more, the contact with another reality religion catered for in earlier times. The need to meet is of all times, and events like the Kumba Mela or pilgrimages were also massive events, but the rise of the festivals like Glastonbury, Boom, Burning Man, Black Cross, Rainbow that started in the last decades of the 20th century is now becoming a major economic factor. Side by side with the rise of the social media and internet the physical festival and meeting industry is on the rise. I will use the term festival to cover all events, from large to small, from creative to purely consuming, from artistic to just recreational.

A new business, in fact a whole industry is emerging. The moniker FestiValley is a play on the somewhat silly attempt by many to recreate another Silicon Valley, mostly focusing on technology and applications of ICT. FestiValley is not about technology, it is about creating an industry serving the less material needs of the people, using the resources available to create meaning, purpose and hopefully some happiness with activities that are sustainable, entertaining and divers.

The festival business has already grown to be an economic factor of some importance. From the very small gatherings to the mega festivals like Burning Man, Boom, Fusion, Glastonbury, etc. etc. people seem to escape the materialistic prison of daily stress and worries to join in dance, music and creative activities.

This maybe heralds a paradigm shift in the wider society, moving towards a more shared, more social and yet more individual experience. This is not unique to the festival (party, meet, community) trend, but shines through in many fields and apps like AirBnB, Uber, Facebook, using new media to increase the mobility and flexibility by sharing, connecting, creating new ways to turn scarcity into abundance.

Tribal Revival

For some time, the notion of technology as the great economy driver has shaped society, created places like silicon valley and the endless

me-too copies of that center of innovation and business emergence. However, there are signs that we are over the hill concerning this. Moore's Law, describing the enormous progress in silicon technology, runs out of nanometers, there are still advances but more and more this is just development. The fundamental research is less and doesn't yield the great discoveries of the last century. The ICT industry stabilizes, the new mega-corporations like Google are building a semi-monopolistic power base; the medium term future is more or less predictable and without surprises. Robotics, augmented reality, big data, AI, unless Ray Kurzweil's singularity happens (silicon consciousness) things are more or less predictable. The downside of this is that the entropic nature of cyberspace, efficiency and science will eat away at work, diversity, privacy and meaning.

One of the most poignant phrases to describe the trend towards extended festivals and meetings of like-minded folks is also 'Tribal revival', a term used by writers like Terence McKenna and songwriters like Rainbow's Fantuzzi. Many of the events are tribal, with people sharing ideals, a way of living, eating, smoking (or dope), recreation, a means of transport like motorbikes, a passion for something, and the notion of a tribe is quite appropriate.

Urban en Cyberspace tribes: bonding or superficial escape?

New social media like Facebook and Google give the impression, that the cyberspace generation is more connected and social than before. Communication is faster, often instantaneous, knows no boundaries and you have "friends" all over. The reality is that loneliness, isolation, addiction and depression are rampant, cyberfriends don't replace real people in your life.

How does this relate to the family and tribal connections we had in the old days, and in urban tribes like the Ruigoord community? Now I believe, that tribal awareness and kinship recognition are part of our primal (meta-)senses. These are senses deeply hidden in the subconscious, where we can also touch dimensions like beauty, intent, balance and justice, and also can reach beyond the normal limitations of time and space like with ESP. These senses, thwarted and filtered as they are when they reach daily consciousness, influence

our lives far more than the rational reality of the normal senses. Our likes and dislikes, our do's and don'ts are mostly driven by these meta-senses, which I call primes. A concept that needs some explanation.

These intuitive other (prime) senses for the intangible are hardly recognized but essential in direct physical contact and thus in tribal relationships and group mind processes, where a common past (experience, genes) and a common direction or goal, amidst an environment that is perceived as dangerous or hostile, unite. Togetherness, tolerance, a shared vision are the building blocks. In the past rituals, festivals, in general a common platform to address the otherworld was the cement of a tribal community. The new (social) media offer, like other tools and media, the possibility for contact and communication. They are, in the Marshall McLuhan sense, extensions of our senses. Whether they are or will (with time and experience) also become extensions of the meta-senses or primes, essential for group mind and tribal bonding, is not (yet) clear.

For the moment, most social media are too superficial, more an escape than a real outreach, a mask that's easy and uncommitted, but there is potential. The challenge we face, being part of urban tribes and groups that still have real roots and physical contact, is to use the new media and contact potential there to nurture and develop the feeling of belonging and closeness. Not by participating in stupid junk communication, but by energizing our contributions online. Maybe we will learn to deeply connect via cyberspace, as the cyberpagans believe we can. For the moment, festivals and direct contact are a sure way of bringing back the magic, the intangible that we deny in science and rationality, but rules our lives, as humans, as family, as tribe and as part of the resonating consciousness we call reality.

Ecology, the green angle

The green wave is everywhere, there is hardly a festival without ecology in the program. There are festivals and communities totally dedicated to ecology, the Ecovillage Network (gen.ecovillage.org) links eco-initiatives worldwide. Such places and events try to live and implement the message that the environment, healthy living and

sustainability are essential. This message however, has spread to many other events, notably the more spiritual and intentional happenings have adopted more or less stringent ecological guidelines. A common creed now is that a place should be left after an event just as it was found, nature and the ecology should not be burdened unnecessary.

Social and political impact of festivals

The economic importance of festivals or the festival industry is now widely recognized, but festivals, free cultural spaces (FCS) and intentional communities also play a role in changing the way society looks at issues like ecology, expression, performance, diversity and many other things. Festivals, especially if they are really temporary autonomous zones, can experiment with the prevailing cultural and political notions, rules, laws and morals, and the effects can spread, they can become change agents. Festivals are becoming places where political and cultural critique can manifest, in often powerful ways. They become more and more vehicles for cohesion and for the mobilization and cementation of new tribal, local and global communities and movements. Woodstock opened the eyes of the world to the youth-culture we now call the sixties and got the message across, that times were changing, Burning Man shows that an alternative society is possible, that the material and neo-liberal fixation is not the only option for a society. The impact of such messages is often larger than what results from political meetings or even demonstrations, as the message is 'embodied' in the sense that the talk is walked, that the words in the manifestos, charters and creeds are actually lived and manifested.

Festivals were traditionally the place, where people were often physically (the travel, the dance, the ritual, the contact) experiencing the culture, the ideologies, stories and myths, sharing the values and traditions of their tribe, country, association or movement. Festivals were not intended for transformation, but for conservation, bonding, cohesion and status quo reinforcement. It feels as if festivals are now more and more the place, where social change happens, where people gain new insights, reframe their notions about society and their

own roles in society, and in this way festivalization is a political trend too.

Socially the old pattern of meeting friends, potential mates and forming in-groups is shifting from the local bars, parish venues, town halls and sports facilities to the festival grounds. There one can expect to meet like-minded people, but there is also the possibility to escape from the societal lockup of one's town or group, enter new circles and find social mobility. One can climbing different ladders than what is available in one's normal life, engage in new discussions and topics, experiment with different behavior and identities, dress different, feel different and maybe change and transform.

Festivals as a lifestyle

For those who are unhappy with their normal life a festival can be an anchor point, a link to another lifestyle. They extend their normal lifestyle and personality with being a festival-go-er, adding a touch of the nomadic, the cosmopolitan, the daring, to their persona. They maybe dance different at festivals, act more communicative, use drugs, try this or that, take on a new avatar profile, but this makes them also less likely to change their 'normal' life.

Of course this is also why governments (and churches) have always accepted and used festivals, fairs and carnivals, allowing some 'excursions' and social/behavioral inversions, mostly as repressive tolerance. Let them play out there, as long as they come back to the fold afterwards, is the motto. Allow for the Gay Pride, Queer Marches and other exuberant festivals and outings, even praise them as promoting tolerance and acceptance and profit from increased tourism and traffic, but restrict this to specific timing and places!

There are now people who spend the whole summer and maybe even the whole year trekking from festival to festival. They made festivals their mode of being, their lifestyle. What used to be a necessity for the more or less homeless and destitute 'travelers' in the UK in the twentieth century, has become a way of living. Not out of necessity, but as an interesting way of spending time, meeting friends and becoming part of a new community, festival nomads. Often they find some kind of business to sustain this kind of life, peddling some wares, dealing some substances, doing massage, healing, etc.

Fan-community

A festival, free cultural space or an intentional community these days is more than the physical or even spatio-temporal entity, it is the focal point of a web of people networks, of sites, emails, tweets, facebook pages, traditional and social media, of a community that is permanent or at least exists for half a year to a year. The fan-community, with fan-zines, emails, blogs, discussions, evaluations, transport options, local meetings and all kind of exchanges, is a vital part of the formula. Without internet things would be much harder to organize, ticket sales would involve resellers, bookings would be a nightmare, communication slow and cumbersome and the cohesion among the stakeholders would be less. Building a fan-site, connecting with supporting and sympathetic organizations, potential sponsors, it all starts long before the event actually starts and goes on long after the grounds are deserted.

A good fan-community with both online and off-line contacts is essential for success and repeat events, but requires a lot of energy and creative input to keep the potential attendees interested.



3 The structure of the book

Subjects as festivalization and community have many dimensions and perspectives and it's too ambitious to state this book covers them all. A selection is made, also based on what the various contributors have to say, from their specific experience and expertise.

This book is also an attempt to bring together and correlate the main root mechanisms and phenomena concerning community, like TAZ, *Communitas*, and the ethics of community.

The effects of festivals and intentional communities are relevant beyond the mere economic factor and the entertainment value, society can and does benefit from what happens at formal and informal gatherings, where "out of the box" thinking and expressing gives rise to innovation and societal change.

The various perspectives on events and communities, like those from the organizers, the government, but also of participants, partakers, volunteers are important, not only for them, but to arrive at a rounded view.

Why we have festivals or band together in all kind of community formats is a important subject, how does this fit in the broader development of society, where gamification, drugs, group mind, mass hypnosis are, with the experience of the Corona-crisis under our belt, have become part of the public discourse.

The various places, events and communities that we cover, and again that is just a small selection from many, many initiatives all over the world, are placed near the end of the book. We didn't want to make this an encyclopedia of interesting festival etc., but picked what we knew or attended ourselves.

Of course we finish with some ideas and suggestions about where this trend might lead us, expressing some hopes and outlining the

Autonomous zones: freedom to change the paradigm

In the world of alternative communities, festivals and counterculture movements, the concept of the ‘autonomous zone’, either temporary (TAZ) or permanent (PAZ) has gained popularity and deserves acknowledgment as an inspiring metaphor and maybe even a major social indicator. The notion refers to zones or places at the border of society, non-conformist, free, colorful, cultural in their own right, in a sense icons of what freedom and autonomy could entail. It resembles the term ‘magic circle’ as used by people like Johan Huizinga in the context of games, but TAZ originally had a more anarchistic flavor. Pelgrimages, games and play have much in common with festivals and will be dealt with in later chapters.

Beyond the postwar anarchists like the beat poets, hippy communities from the sixties and the religious enclaves of all times, the idea of a more or less isolated and autonomous ‘bubble’ of activity, thinking and experimenting in new directions, emerged. Beyond a social ‘collectivist’ concept it involved an individual process. It made sense for these basically anti-authoritarian folks who cherish what Isaiah Berlin has called ‘negative freedom’, a somewhat libertarian escape from rules and structure.

It was the post-anarchist and Sufi thinker Peter Lamborn Wilson (Hakim Bey) who came up with the term ‘Temporary Autonomous Zone’ (the book with that title is from 1991, he died in 2022). The book describes, in the context of ‘Ontological Anarchism’, the socio-political tactic of creating temporary spaces that elude formal structures of control, for structural systems in his view stifle creativity.

Ontological Anarchy implies that no “state” can “exist” in chaos, that all ontological claims are spurious except the claim of chaos (which however is undetermined) and therefore that governance of any sort is impossible. “Chaos never died.”

His focus was to create a non-hierarchical system of social relationships by concentrating on the present and on releasing the controlling mechanisms, for new information emerges at the boundary lines. He was looking for empowerment mechanisms In the formation of a TAZ.

Hakim Bey later expanded the concept beyond the ‘temporary’ to also cover ‘permanent’ autonomous zones (PAZ). Autonomy is a broad socio-political notion and covers a spectrum from self-managed or self-ruled via feminism to the more political self-valorization or ‘going beyond the contract’ and squatting, ‘disobedient spaces’ and even a refusal to negotiate with authorities. Although usually seen as a leftish or even anarchistic concept, autonomy does not preclude very hierarchic and conservative models. It is less isolating than striving for autarky, being self-sufficient, independent from the outside, ‘off the grid’ (energy, water, food, communication). Autonomy and integration are somewhat at odds, note the idea of commonsing or opening spaces for public common use like in squatting or creating open door projects and freehavens. The term TAZ is fairly recent, but the concept of a special place, outside the formal structures of control (or with its own) is age-old. Think of communes, monasteries, pilgrimages and indeed, festivals. Even modern philosophers like Peter Sloterdijk, influenced by the Osho thinking, talk about ‘bubbles’, which are spheres of influence with demarcations. An autonomous zone is a more collective bubble than Sloterdijk’s personal spheres, but as modern technology makes it harder and harder to isolate oneself, the importance of understanding and protecting privacy sphere, grows.



initiatives under way to coordinate and create a platform for those involved in these developments.

Change agents, political stemcells

Life is change. Society needs change, not so much growth but some kind of movement towards a teleological goal. This is probably not the technological singularity of yielding all purpose and meaning to machines and robots, but more likely a development towards consciousness. As I have argued elsewhere, cyberspace is growing towards entropy, flattening and leveling everything towards a communal mediocrity. I may seem to favor change, but exchange is entropic, anti-life, dulling towards the equilibrium of death. Change is the result of polarity and diversity. It is fired by a third factor, the anti-entropic universal force *G*. Gurdjieff and J. Bennett discerned in all phenomena and is hidden behind notions of karma, universal consciousness, chi, and love: the stuff philosophers and cosmologist battle about.

So where do we find change, what spawns innovation, who and what are change agents? Here the role of isolated and autonomous agents (people, movements, places, events) is undeniable. Science and profit are supposed to be major factors in innovation, but time and time again the real breakthroughs emerge in a different way. The change agent is often like the cells in a pupa of the caterpillar that ‘decide’ to become the butterfly. Epigenetic researcher Bruce Lipton talks about the butterfly gen and assumes that the phenomenon also exist in some humans, (or in some combinations of us) and that this is a change agent. Finding and supporting such change agents is what brings progress, but also adverse effects as not everything new or different is beneficial. As the world faces increasing challenges, precisely because not all progress turns out so positive and ecological sounds, we are in dire need of innovation (or rediscovery of old and universal truths) to save the day. More and more the notion is supported that the ‘out of the box’ solutions require ‘out-of-the-box’ conditions. This is not limited to the positive, as necessity is the father of invention. Autonomous zones of any kind are a great cultivator and incubator.

Change in society and innovation thus often spawns from a more or less isolated people, movements or projects, where the ruling paradigm has less validity and experiments with values, decision models and relational patterns. Technology, ecology and economy also yield new insights. As these insights are not always feasible, many such projects disappear. Yet once in a while the spark ignites a wider fire and things change. The successful religions are good examples, often the result of what a small and inspired group can achieve.

Identity, persona, Gestalt

One of the defining factors of a TAZ or PAZ is the identity and the mirror phenomenon, the identification. Being a ‘Burner’ at Burning Man, a ‘Boomer’ at Boom, member of the ‘Amsterdams Ballongezelschap’ for a Ruigoorder has meaning, gives identity, a feeling of belonging and instigates social behavior, sharing and participation.

We all adapt to our environment, we have a social identity (shown self) somewhat different from the private identity or assumed self (ego) but we give up more of our separateness and autonomy in situation with a strong signature, we join the group mind to some degree, we start to identify with the group spirit. Festivals, sport events and communities, but also broadcast and media events are situations where the group mind (group mood) can become stronger and take over individual judgment, participants can feel synchronized and

even act in unity.

This resonance is not accidental, it’s partly the goal and attraction of such events and media practices, propaganda and marketing use this on purpose.



*The freedom to be different (Zombie festival
Dusseldorf)*

Cyberspace as autonomous zone

Internet and digital always-on communication has become an autonomous zone of sorts, without much legal structure, ethics or restrictions of use, but growing on us. Cyberspace has opened new ways of identification, new ways of constructing masks and identities, allowing new avatars and identities to play with or to hide behind. It seems to offer flexibility in how we show ourselves to the world, but this is a two way process. The system, the portals, providers and social media services also create an identity for you, often beyond one's control.

One wants to be special, but our Facebook pages are very much alike, our tweets and chats become flat and uninteresting. Finding or creating a new, safe and 'original' identity seems easy in Cyberspace, but is increasingly hard. This is where real-life events, physical contacts and autonomous zones can bring some relief, an escape from the oppressing entropy of internet exchange.

Our identity is up for grabs in cyberspace, used as a marketing tool and sold to the highest bidder. Joel Farb makes this clear with his 'Persona Shown Gratis', a play on the words *Persona Non Grata*. Privacy, for many, is a thing of the past, even if this has severe negative consequences for our well-being and for progress, as I have argued elsewhere. We need the communal and supportive structure, but also the creative, the individual expression and appreciation.

The two are complementary, the social is not opposing the individual. Both are necessary and the danger is that cyberspace conspicuously ignores the need for individuality and identity. We are offered a hollow freedom to express, communicate and share, but within the confines of correctness and mediocre peer review like on Wikipedia.

The age-old dilemma of a balance between the two, confirming correctness and wild creativity, also in the context of ethics and karma is brilliantly depicted in the image of the two horses in Plato's *Phaedrus*. The dark, free, creative horse is next to the white, tamed, obedient one, but both are essential to get towards the common goal.

Freedom, the ultimate task of the state, not of your provider

The small pockets of independent, autonomous thinking and acting are the antidote against the serious attacks on our freedom and liberties, the ‘brave new world’ that is not far away. Big Brother comes as many little brothers or disguised as a helpful ‘connected’ Big Sister care giver or medic, all justified in a limited perspective, but together eliminating our freedom. The default power of the new superpowers like Facebook or Google to change the rules, formats, rights and profiling methods without consent of their mass audience constitutes cyber slavery. Users are both customer and producer of their own data. The communities and tribes that try to escape this slavery, in autonomous zones, are like the escaped slaves from an earlier era. Things are moving fast and our digital identities take over from ourselves. We have to add a digital self to our line of subjective selves, even as we have little control over it. Our digital self is not free, it is made up of bits and bytes we provided willingly and unwillingly.



Music is a great way to express freedom

These are turned in profiles and search filters we cannot alter or even perceive, but we do delegate our (re)search options, influence our credit status, our job opportunities and our social life. We think social networks and search engines are “open”, but in reality they are only public to those who have backdoor access. In 2006 the Ippolita Collective published “‘Open’ doesn’t mean ‘free’.”

“In other words, open source and free software are not the same thing. Freedom carries a cost, whereas opening up to the market can bring in rich monetary rewards.”

They were witnessing:

“a major paradigm shift: from the era of epistemology into that of ontology in digital worlds. The ‘who’ (what you are) was fast being replaced

by the 'what' (what you know). Put differently, the management of knowledge was morphing into the management (and creation) of identity."

In yet other words, what Google and Facebook make of me (describe of me) is what I am in cyberspace and increasingly in the real world.

Our interface options are, in reality, limited, even as we can now touch screens or speak rather than type. We are prisoners of the homogenized monoculture of internet, as Rasmus Fleischer noted at the 2014 Berlin Transmediale:

"Today's undead internet has a universal interface based on only two functions: the search and the feed."

You have to be on internet, otherwise you are out of the game, a cognitive dissonance message constantly heralded by government, industry and science.

There is a parallel with the way the Catholic Church monopolized and homogenized the information flow to the faithful in the Middle Ages, using ritual and limiting access to texts. Using Facebook and Google is slowly becoming a ritual, our email chores replacing the Agnihotra or Angelus prayer of old.

But even here we can feel the impertinence of this imposed cyber slavery and the supported ritualistic behavior. How long will it take before a new Luther stands up and declares Facebook, Twitter and Wikipedia empty and evil and advocates a new religious stance of "back to reality", a new anti-magical and anti-ritualistic 'Infotheistic' religion, as close to materialism and mathematics as the 'book of digital science' allows?

People like Jaron Lanier are pointing in that direction, telling us to take back our rights to our own information. In 1996, John Perry Barlow tried to make cyberspace a realm of its own with the Cyberspace Independence Declaration, a community outside the control of the 'haves'. His idealistic stance failed, big corporations took over and governments used cyberspace to control and take away individualism. Perhaps Hakim Bey (P. L. Wilson) with his TAZ did indeed see a new perspective. The question is, do we have to extend his space-time concept to a virtual autonomous zone in cyberspace?

The French situationist and Marxist Guy Debord also pointed at the need to create 'free' and autonomous events and places.

The proletarian revolution is that critique of human geography through which individuals and communities will begin constructing places and events suitable for the re-appropriation not only of their labor, but also of their total history. By virtue of the resulting mobile spaces of play, and by virtue of freely chosen variations in the rules of the game, the autonomy of place and the authenticity of life will be discovered.

Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*.

TAZ in a broad perspective

A temporary autonomous zone is not limited to a physical place or event and even Cyberspace can be seen as an autonomous place, but virtual. The importance of a TAZ is the psychological (and then social) effect, it is a safe and maybe even sacred place that allows us to step away from the normal law and paradigm and to enter a space where new laws and ideas can emerge. This is an inner space, a realm in our minds, part of our imagination, not necessarily related to the physical reality. In this context, reading a book, daydreaming or psychedelic tripping also constitutes a temporary autonomous zone, in the mind. In fact most of our activities are related to our ability to transcend the tangible and assume that we are somewhere else. Going to the theater, performing a ritual, watching a movie, having sex, even working in a building that we then equate with a corporation means that we enter into an imaginary zone, what differs is the freedom and autonomy we have or assume we have. The artist going to his or her studio doesn't see that as work, but as entering a creative free-haven. The 9-5 worker in a factory might see work as slavery, as unfree. Some prisoners do see their cell as the ultimate free autonomous zone, most see it as the end of freedom.

If we thus interpret a TAZ as a psychological construct, essentially a mind-state, and the freedom of a TAZ to experiment as a psychological process, we can link it to a wide array of concepts and categories. What is the influence of a TAZ and the inner autonomy that ideally comes with it, on creativity, ethics, law, innovation, growth, learning? What is the relation of a free and autonomous environment with happiness, fun and the development of humans as cognitive,

spiritual and social beings? As such the notion of a TAZ applies to many of our daily activities and is on par with concepts like cognitive dissonance. When we enter a shop for instance, we assume or are coaxed into having the freedom to buy whatever, give way to what our 'avatar' might want to have or to be, we are temporary master of our future. If we read a novel we are transported into another world, where we are more or less autonomous in how we create and imagine and sculpt a world based on the words we read. In a separate chapter I will look into computer gaming, a great example of a TAZ.



4 Physicalization, festivalization, the event economy

Going to festivals and “live” events was already a big trend before Corona. There were festivals in huge numbers, on all sorts of themes, large and small, with music or not. All together we went to mass events like Boom, Glastonbury, Burning Man or in the Netherlands to Pinkpop, Lowlands, Black Cross, or just coming together with a small like-minded group and much more intimate.

It became a whole industry and very commercial, replacing the income modality of the artist community from carriers like CD’s with festival fees. A lot of money (and resources) went into it, festivals and events resonated with the experience economy and the trend of doing exciting things, different from normal.

When it was no longer allowed, due to Corona, it became an issue, people missed them, needed them, it disrupted their contact patterns, their social life. Through all those lockdowns and isolation we became more aware of the need to physically meet. We felt how being together and physical contact is indispensable, beyond social media and Zooming.

Now that’s not news, we’ve known for a long time that we can’t actually live without some physical contact, without meeting others or physically being somewhere in nature, feeling and touching. This is a natural and evolutionary need, we are herd people, together we are stronger than alone. We need social and physical contact, to stay healthy, to experience and deepen our spirituality, because of our search for meaning and pleasure in life, to maintain a network and circle of friends beyond those chats and emails.

The lack of physicality was already becoming a problem because of the digital contact culture, smartphones, social media, NetFlix and the whole virtualization but Corona made it very clear how limiting that can be.

We want, if the weather and work allow it, to go to festivals, concerts, go out into nature with each other, camp, play and play sports

with each other. This trend towards festivalization and eventification has been going on for some time now; worldwide the number of events has grown explosively. In the Netherlands we were certainly a forerunner in that area. The festival culture and DJ scene here has developed quickly and widely.

The new physicalization; need to meet

Social media and mobile telecommunications have radically changed the contact patterns and contact needs between people; after all, we are always online and accessible everywhere. However, we lost depth and intensity, the physical contact was no longer there. The Corona crisis has made the consequences painfully clear; the lockdowns and physical isolation have led to depression, loneliness, powerlessness, suicide, feelings of meaninglessness and rebellion for very many people. The costs of this in human terms but also financially are enormous and will burden us for a long time.

Festivals, but also events and culture in the broad sense, theater, going out, sports, pubs, are certainly an antidote (antidote) to digital isolation. And also as an escape from the privacy stop of digital monitoring, because where can you still meet others undisturbed, experiment with your behavior and intimacy (shared privacy) and live out freedom (to be yourself). Lebensraum, right to expression, right to make mistakes, we have surrendered too much.

Spirituality should not go unmentioned either, traditionally big festivals like the Indian Kumba Mela, the Hady, pilgrimages, processions and church services are physical. Modern man may seek other forms and interpretation, but depth and spirituality is certainly a factor.



TAZ: temporary autonomous zone

A broader view of the festival business, the event economy and physical gathering in any form is needed. More appreciation for the social impact, for

identification processes, group mind processes, group identity, the renewal and new élan that can come from „safe togetherness“, the ritual aspects of coming together, etc. It's psychologically, socially, but even magically relevant.

An important concept in get-togethers is the degree of safety. Can you express yourself freely, is everything not fixed, can you go loose? Hakim Bey (Peter Lamborn Wilson) came up with the idea of a so-called Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) to describe situations where people can experiment relatively safely and autonomously with being together, with playing, participation and group processes. That concept is very much appreciated in the festival world, it is one of the pillars next to ecology and of course going along with what the target audience is looking for. A safe place is where social experimentation can lead to innovation. Social renewal often starts with meetings where people feel safe and free, where new plans and suggestions are not brushed aside.

Searching for „real“, excitement, escape from the grind

We think for ourselves a lot, communicate with others (who is really listening?) but at the human level there always remains an underlying need for physical contact and physical mobility, for exchange, networking, shopping, going out, enjoying diversity. In the face of all the robotization, automation and technological alienation, we seek 'authenticity', the human touch and the human encounter.

For all the threats of alienating fake news, mass hysteria, telecommunications and cyberspace, the antidote lies in physicality (meeting each other physically, being together physically and experiencing) and authenticity. Feeling, seeing, touching, education by living people, meeting each other in the pub, on squares, at parties, events and festivals with like-minded people is what we need to counterbalance the one-sided and increasingly virtual cognitive information and



‘thinking culture’. Closeness is important. Communication and distance are related, closer means more communication (the Allen curve).

This has practical consequences for society, spatial planning and the entire cultural sector. Festivals are here to stay, they need space and facilities, integration in city planning, regulation and codes for security and inconvenience to the people around.

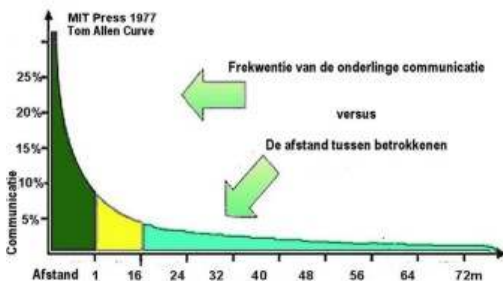
This not once in a while, it has to become part and parcel of the public policies. Not symptomatically, not subsidizing an occasional concert, neighborhood party or festival or clearing a pasture, but a constant, integral and broad approach is needed. Every municipality should make room for it, in the planning, in the physical facilities and in conjunction with residents and local enterprises and facilities.

Tribalism

Being together with like-minded people is attractive because we like the same things, share certain insights or ideals, are members of the same club or movement. It is an evolutionary legacy, but given the developments we can also speak of a revival of the tribal feeling, tribalism. Sometimes we do this with thousands, sometimes with smaller groups. You identify, belong somewhere, you dress accordingly, you go along with the eating habits such as vegan or vegetarian, you adapt (for a while) to the fashion, norms and values.

You meet your friends there or make new ones who you then contact again later via social media.

Entire virtual communities arise. The ‘burners’, people who have something to do with the Burning Man festivals in America and now elsewhere, are a good example of such a new ‘tribe’.



The ethics of community

There are evolutionary justifications for community, we need social cooperation to survive and thrive. These have rational roots and help organize and guide communities. They often organically developed from play via ritual to written laws or commandments.

The morality, which is the practical expression of an ethical stance, of a community often defines its identity, its image and Gestalt.

The religiously inspired ethics are often based on some otherworld interaction, a mystical experience or revelation, and codified in some scripture like in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faith.

Kantian Ethics

A rational approach to ethics is Immanuel Kant's "categorical imperative," in which we can determine right and wrong by asking if we would want to universalize an act. Not very different from what religions have always stated as "don't do onto others what you don't want done to you".

Utilitarian Ethics

The basis of this very common notion about ethics is that one has to go for the greatest good for the greatest number. This "good" is than more a material summation than an emotional one, these days expressed in money rather than in happiness or pleasure as the "fathers of utilitarianism" Bentham and Stuart Mill did. Their ideas were not really new, already in Confusianism the common good was regarded more important than the individual.

Utilitarianism doesn't really deal with values like justice and individual rights, even as Everyone's happiness counts equally.

Sacrificing the individual for the greater good is exemplified in the trolley thought experiment: do you use a switch to divert a trolley car that is about to kill five workers that diverts the trolley down a side track where it will kill one worker. A situation that also arises in medical triage situations, like selecting for transplants or when not enough capacity is available. Think of security situations like torturing someone to extract information that would prevent a an attack or bomb killing hundreds of people, or engaging in Bio-defense "gain of function" virus research. What about oppressing, censor-

ship and lying to the public for a limited time if it increased the overall well-being of the citizenry?

In utilitarian ethics reason rules and this makes it fairly absolute, something is wrong or it is right, resulting in a black-and-white construct of morality.

The future may entail consequences not foreseen when decisions are made. Utilitarianism also has trouble accounting for values like justice and individual rights in that “instrumental harm” is acceptable. Weighing in emotions or cultural differences is difficult in the fairly mental approach even as one assumes that Pleasure or happiness is the only thing that has intrinsic value.

Practical (act) utilitarianism often demonstrates the concept that “the end justifies the means”—or it’s worth it.

The consequences of this become quite visible when pharmaceutical companies release drugs like the CoVid vaccines (governmentally approved), accepting known side effects because the drug is able to help more people than are bothered by the side effects.

The ethical stance of post-structuralists (Jacques Derrida), situationists and post-modernists (Jean Baudrillardx) is that everything is relational and the result of complex situations, so simple right/wrong assessment are impossible and value the narrative (linguistic)

The **natural-rights theory** supports the idea that individual sentient beings have natural rights that override the moral claims of groups, tribes, races, nations and religions. It states that you are born with the right to life and liberty of both body and mind, rights that must not be violated, not even to serve the greater good or to fulfill a universal rule. It kind of limits the utilitarian stance and is safeguarded in legal terms by the Bill of Rights to protect us from the tyranny of the majority.



Hakim Bey (P.L. Wilson)

The festival business and the 'outing and event culture' has taken off and will surely be expanded after Corona. It has become a whole industry, the fairs of yesteryear have now become big events, the campsites became recreational facilities, all kinds of theme parks came into being, but also temporary festivals somewhere outside or right in the city populate the agenda. A lot of people are involved, a lot of technique is needed, tents, installations, toilet facilities, but also surveillance, first aid, control of drugs, a whole sector that dried up due to the crisis will become an economic motor again.

Responding to the need

You can see the effects on the festival and the catering industry, on theme parks, concert halls and the traditional events, parties and celebrations, but it goes much wider; the entire recreation and entertainment sector from the coffee house or senior citizens' club around the corner to Christmas markets, carnivals, experiential events, congresses and mega-events such as the Olympic Games, European Football Championships, 4th of July, Sail Amsterdam. Lots of money involved, many opportunities, but also a headache for local authorities, the fire brigade, the police, the health agencies. An integrated approach to fighting nuisances such as drug and alcohol abuse, parking pressure, noise and criminal or extremist influences is certainly needed. A disaster is always around the corner when so many people come together.

The entrepreneurs in this industry will go on, innovate, add technology to make things even more exciting, immersive, maybe addictive, but it is also the government that can and should steer the further development of this practical physicalization and eventification. The traditional concerts, theaters, professional exhibition organizations and the rave and party industry do not present major problems, but festivals are more difficult. It can get out of hand, especially music festivals are getting bigger and bigger, but also more alike. There is a tendency to lose the identity and authenticity of events, they flatten out, with more and more of the same types of events taking place at the same locations and with the same artists. Municipalities are aware of this and now increasingly allow and select based on the

theme, audience, content and approach (theme) of events. It must be somewhat original, just music, partying and drinking and swallowing pills, that is too limited.

Here lies a challenge. Until now (before the crisis) the event industry was mainly regulated and forced to have more and more security, safety, hygiene, limiting (noise) nuisance, parking spaces, fire safety, etc. This pushed up costs, led to ever larger events, and the industry began to complain, you can't organize anything like we used to do, the regulation is too limiting. Of course, that was not the intention of the governments, because events, exhibitions, congresses and festivals bring people to the city or the location, they bring excitement and income. So a new perspective is needed, what is the added value of an event for the wider community.

It becomes a necessity for the government, also at the national level, to take a look at the whole eventification trend. Just as in the past every village had to make room for a fair, processions and other celebrations, now every municipality should draw up an event agenda, plan, designate locations, provide basic facilities and start facilitating in a broad sense. Coordination is needed with other events, other municipalities, also on a regional and national level; this should also be placed as a task with a national body or agency. It's not just about planning and regulate events, but to control the whole development. For example, the cruise industry seems impressive, big boats with thousands of visitors and a very bad ecological footprint. Are they welcome in a city or country? But what do they end up spending there? They cater for an older audience, who eat on board and at best buy some tourist junk, some souvenirs or eat an ice cream. Venice is losing out as a city with these enormous floating hotels!

This is not just a matter of laws, regulations and licensing policies but of accepting that this is a growing trend and industry, where a lot of money is involved and there are many socio-economic and socio-psychological facets that need attention. Going out is important to break the monotony, important to prevent loneliness, but it is also a cultural platform, a place where new trends in music, fashion

and expression arise and where new rituals develop, which offer people and society cohesion and meaning.

Science does not yet look at it this way, there is now only some attention to the business aspects, the organization, the staff, the drug use and the impact on the environment. Festivals can also be seen as an essential alternative to digital de-physicalization, as a psychological health factor, as a contact option (broadening the gene-pool somewhat) and as a place where especially young people can experiment with their behavior (essential for learning and change).

Physicalization in a broad sense will prove to be an important factor in the Post-Corona era.

One can discuss endlessly about the need to meet, physicalization, diversity, biodiversity etc. A place where this comes together and becomes the attractor is the city.

Communitas; the sacred and secret ingredient

The presence of fear in our modern society is evident. Our fears are existential, government induced, and the Covid-cris has showed fear is a powerful weapon to enslave and manipulate the people. But is there an antidote, can we fight fear with grouping together, feel part of a community and experience what Turner named “communitas”.

The concept of communitas is complex, people like Hobbes, Durkheim, Turner, Esposito have (in various wording) written about it, but it remains somewhat ambiguous. Let’s start with why we need this experience of togetherness, of bonding and why this goes beyond the rational “social”. Why is there this appreciation of some extra “glue” to help people cooperate and share?

A: The necessity and need for community, social structures, and co-operation can be seen as evolutionary given that we can study it in terms of how the individual is weighed against the communal. We are stronger and safer together.

B: Another approach is to see human interaction as part of individual growth, we need the other as a mirror, as an inspiration, as a friend or even as an enemy. This means to see the “commons” as a dynamic interplay, a battleground for humans to learn and grow, where the inner “Jihad” manifests.

We tend to confuse these perspectives, but the difference is very relevant, the B approach brings a spiritual dimension in play, beyond the rational, psychological and social of A.

Translating community in a social political modality like in democracy, communism, Confucionism or in the various community models we see emerging like in communes, tribalism and identifications tends to be symptomatic, we aim for practical results and “progress”. This, however, is similar to what science does in the modern medical paradigm, just dealing with the symptoms (like poverty, inequality, inclusion) and not looking for the root of what humans need in the social context.



*The psyche has two horses
to control, a tamed,
safe one and a
wild, creative one
white-black
collective-individual
digital-analog
social-liberal*

It often means to see community as a static ideal or object, not as a process of giving up individuality to a common cause or interest. It creates a polarity, an axial thinking, similar to placing safety and security on the same axis and trading the one for the other, as we have seen after 9/11 and in the corona crisis. The proper (individual) and the munus (the collective commons) are separate dimensions, each need to be honored and included in decisions.

This axial thinking, looking at the symptomatic and ignoring the multidimensional holistic is a theme that comes back in discourses about democracy, the legal system, justice, culture, the medical and scientific paradigms, analog versus digital, and is probably most pertinent in looking at the male/female dichotomy. The male as symptomatic, separating action oriented, Anglosaxon law, “Gesellschaft” versus the maternal as holistic, integrating, Roman/Rheinland law, Eastern wisdom and “Gemeinschaft”.

Plato, in the Phaedrus, offers the very insightful image of the charioteer that has to steer two winged horses. It represents the mind as responsible for making a black horse, the wild one with creativity and a manifesting drive, work together with the white horse, the tame, obedient one that will do what needs to be done. The horses are winged, indicating it's not all about the material world, the heavens are part of where the charioteer has to go, the direction of the chariot. This image is not only valid for an individual who has to manage his or her drives, but applies to society, to culture, to the managing of both flux and permanence, as separate dimension that both need to be honored and not treated as a juxtaposition or polarity.

Community has also negative connotations, like that the identification with it allows for avoiding responsibility, no more need for a personal opinion and conscience. The extreme consequences are visible when we look at war, when people are then willing to give their lives for what they believe is the common good.

The symptomatic view on community and communitas

We can look at what distinguishes a place where people live or work together in a more or less practical and material relationship from a real “community” with an expressed common goal and structure, where there is some magical component, which has been named

communitas by Victor Turner. He was an influential Scottish cultural anthropologist, also known for his work on symbols and rites of passage.

One way to describe the sense of feeling together, being a “commune” is to look at how it works out in behavior, in customs, at what then emerges in rituals, in a culture, in the Gestalt of such a place or group. This is looking at what results and is basically a symptomatic view and that is what Turner did.

Communitas in this perspective commonly refers to either to an unstructured community in which people are equal, allowing them to share a common experience, usually through a rite of passage or to the very spirit of community. It is inspired fellowship, a group’s joy in cooperation, sharing common purpose and experiences, the sense felt by a group when their life together takes on full meaning.

There is a relation between structure and what causes a structure to emerge and sustain itself. Structure results from chaos, from the absence of order.

Victor Turner¹ was interested in the interplay between what he called social ‘structure’ and “antistructure”. Components of antistructure are liminality, in his view that what distinguishes social togetherness from just living together and the notion of communitas.

Turner showed how communitas is a driving force in history as it operates personally, in religion, in revolution, in all the domains of human life. It is grounded in lived events, and may occur as the climax to a process that takes people from violence to shared intimate transcendence.

Communitas is an acute, and in Turner’s view a sacred point of community, he definitely recognized the spiritual dimension. It takes being together for some practical purpose to the next level

1 *Turner, Victor; Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society. (1974).*

and allows the whole of the community to undergo and share a common and in some sense “sacred” experience,. This brings everyone onto an equal level: even if you are higher in position, you have been lower and you know what that is.

Turner kind of treats *communitas* as similar to the religious experience and distinguishes between the personal experience of togetherness, the normative *communitas*, when it is transformed into a permanent social system with some social control and the ideological *communitas*, which can be applied to many utopian social models.

Edith Turner², Victor’s widow , later gave an extensive overview of the anthropology of *communitas*, outlining the concept in relation to the natural history of joy, including the nature of human experience and its narration, festivals, music and sports, work, disaster, the sacred, revolution and nonviolence, nature and spirit, and ritual and rites of passage.

Beyond the symptomatic view in just looking at what *communitas* brings, the effects, Roberto Esposito³ pointed at a wider perspective, and asked why community is necessary, what it causes. beyond the symptomatic view of looking at what it brings. He sees the “commons” as an obligation not as a right but as a duty and based on reciprocity and acknowledging it provides something we miss as individuals.

“Community isn’t a property, nor is it a territory to be separated and defended against those who do not belong to it. Rather, it is a void, a debt, a gift to the other that also reminds us of our constitutive alterity with respect to ourselves.”

Here the notion, that people need a social context to grow and learn about themselves, comes into view. We not only work together for material gain, but because it is part of our human development.

2 Turner, Edith; *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*.(2011).

3 Esposito, Roberto; *Communitas. The Origin and Destiny of Community* (1998)

Relating *Communitas* to what Mattheus 18:20 says; “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” may not be popular in these secular days, but it shows how historically one has been aware of this effect of being together. And who can deny that in a group setting a new level of emotional awareness and togetherness arises, experienced as joy but sometimes as fear or anger. There are psychological and emotional benefits one derives from joining a crowd, but also spiritual and even what could be classified as magical or supernatural.

The crowd and the group mind, groupthink

The psychology of crowds has always been an interesting subject, as governments had to deal with this, could manipulate this, but were also afraid of what a crowd could turn into. The 18th century philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau proclaimed that “...we have a very imperfect knowledge of the human heart if we do not also examine it in crowds.”

People like Gustave le Bon⁴, Freud and these days Mattias Desmet⁵ have looked into crowds. Initially this was not with a very positive outlook, group mind was dangerous, people could oppose the status quo, revolutions and looting, hooliganism, fascism. Le Bon noted how history and the nature of man had been dependent on what the masses, the crowds want and what they were willing to sacrifice, like their lives for the cause. One ceases to operate as an individual, becomes a pawn in a game, a sheep and automaton, compromising one's true beliefs and identifying with the group's goals and morals.

He stated that a crowd forms when an influential idea (of an individual great leader, not originating from the members of the crowd) unites a number of individuals and propels them to act towards a common goal. Of course the emergence of communism and fascism supported this idea. More recently one has accepted

4 *Gustave Le Bon, Charles-Marie; La Psychologie des foules (1895)*

5 *Desmet, Mattias; The Psychology of Totalitarianism, The Pursuit of Objectivity in Psychology (2022)*

that also very positive communal sentiments arise, when a group of people comes together for a concert, a lecture, or just having dinner together.

Mattias Desmet⁶: mass formation

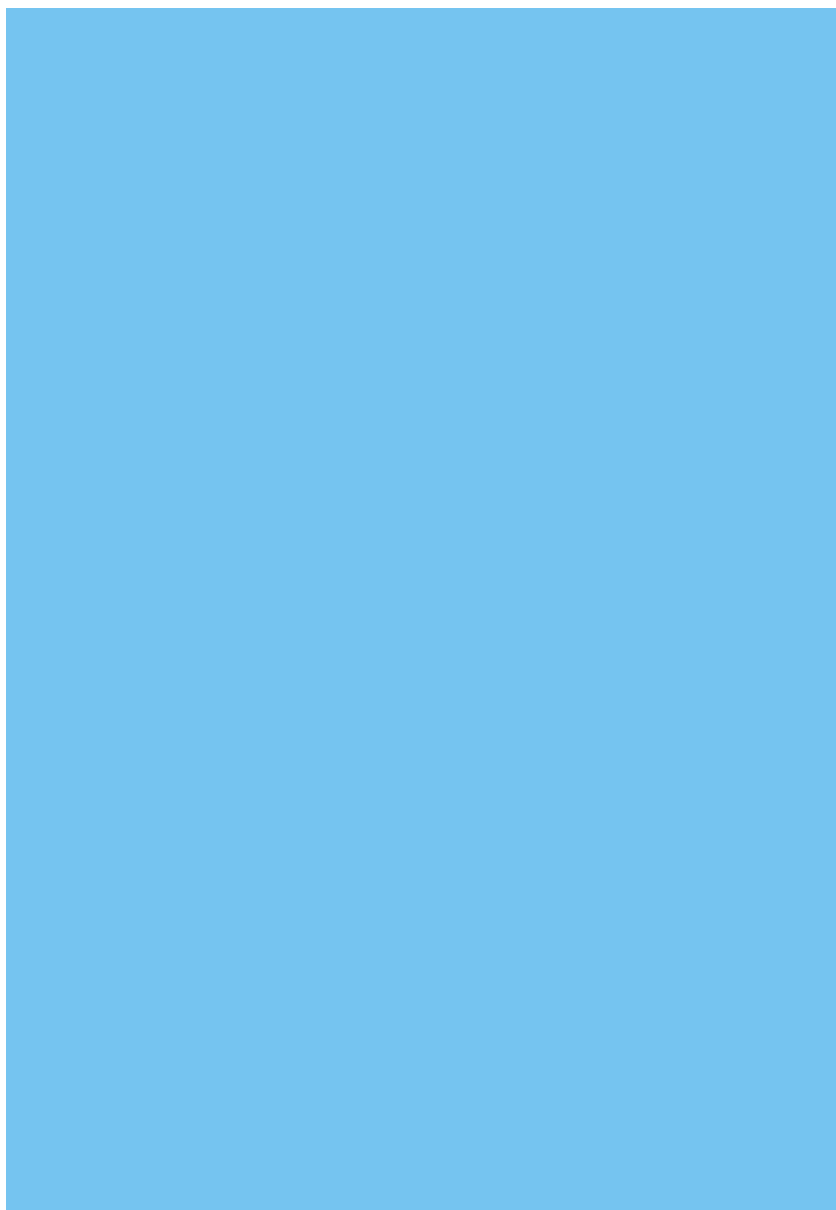
The Corona crisis and the Ukrain war have shown really unheard and historical levels of mass manipulation, crowd control, mass hypnosis, and what the Belgian psychologist Mattias Desmet called mass-formation. He observed a tendency towards totalitarianism, the dissolution of civic liberties and the forcing upon the people and the media of a single narrative.

The world, he wrote, is in the grips of mass formation which he sees as a dangerous, collective type of hypnosis. It results in societal and mental damage, loneliness, free-floating anxiety, and fear giving way to censorship, loss of privacy, and surrendered freedoms. It is all spurred by a singular, focused crisis narrative that forbids dissident views and relies on destructive groupthink. People are aligning with the leadership and their interpretation (or the version they want to convey) of the reality.

He deconstructs in his book the societal conditions that allow this collective psychosis to take hold and relates it to totalitarianism.

He has impacted the public debate, is called a conspiracist, but tends to keep his observations very rational and psychological, he ignores that group mind could be a supernatural phenomenon that is not dependent on rational and physical communication, mirror neurons, etc. but develops at an extradimensional level. Desmet has used the Corona crisis to illustrate his beliefs concerning the tendency towards totalitarian states.

6 Desmet, Mattias; *The Psychology of Totalitarianism* (2022)





6 Contact and interaction: the basics

Festivals are now a mainstream way to spend time, but what do people expect to find, what needs or drives are taken care of? Entertainment, leisure, fun, identification, I listed some needs in the previous chapter, but how about meeting the other? Feeling together, safe in anonymity, aligning with the group mind and the ‘vibes’ is great, but what about making meaningful contacts?

Contact is essential for human beings. as is illustrated in a macabre way when in the thirteenth century Frederick II had a group of infants raised who were cut off from human interaction, other than the most basic care and food. He wanted to see what language would spontaneously arise in the absence of any communication prompts. However, the result of this notorious experiment was that the infants all died before the age of 7, being deprived of any human discourse or affection.

We are social beings, a biological need not only to procreate, for survival we needed to pool resources and develop specialized skills. But to do so and feel comfortable with others, we need to communicate and in the old days this necessitates physical meeting, and some travel. We need contact, we seek contact and this is where parties, meetings and festivals offer contact-opportunities. This is a crucial drive, a social instinct.

The need for contact led to communication media like the telephone, and ore recently to the rise of social media, like Facebook, Skype, Twitter, but surprisingly this has not resulted in less travel. Obviously we like and need physical contact and as cyberspace has widened our scope, we can easily and cheaply communicate with people in other countries or even continents, we seem to travel even more to actually meet this wider circle of friends. The expected global ecological and financial savings in travel cost have not materialized.

We like to meet other people, maybe resonate with them, bond with them, establish lasting relationships beyond the tweets and Instagrams. Contact opportunities are thus one of the parameters for a festival, a way to identify the type and attraction of an event for those who seek those opportunities. There is a differences, the one

event sees contact opportunity as a core task, others only offer music and a space and don't stimulate or manage contacts. Is participation limited to just being in the crowd and watching the show, or is the whole setup geared toward offering more interaction with each other?

Contact stimulation

We may pass many people on the street, but making contact is a different thing. It requires a shared glimpse, eye contact, a shared interest, maybe a way of dressing, a mood resonance, but contact opportunities can be organized too, speeddating is a good example.

There are a few ways to stimulate contact in a festival setting. One is to bring together people with similar interests and similar mood and let the resonance do its work. Another is to influence en homogenize the mood of an existing crowd, so that resonance will happen. A third way is coerced contact in acceptable and agreed upon ways, like in many games, pairing, speeddating or in separating a larger group in smaller parts.

The approach to concentrate like minded people can take many forms, like creating special places, workshops or performances with a specific atmosphere that will attract a certain kind of people. More invasive is to identify people with a specific interests and identify them visibly. At some events people wear some kind of sign, indicating what kind of contact they are looking for, but race, color, gender, clothing or dance style are identifiers too. Sharing such a sign or identifying trait makes for easier contacts. We all feel more free to contact a fellow and recognizable compatriot when travelling in foreign countries.

Harmonizing an existing crowd or audience, in the sense that a congenial atmosphere develops where contact happens naturally and a sense of connectedness emerges is an art. This is basically the task of the MC's (master of ceremony) or the presenter fulfilling that role. Some performers and DJ's are very good at it, but to create such a mood that people feel free to make contact with their neighbors standing or dancing there is a special talent. There are tools and mechanisms to harmonize the mood, using music, lighting, imagery,

suggestions and all the effect modern stage technology offers. Using them is more of an art than a science.

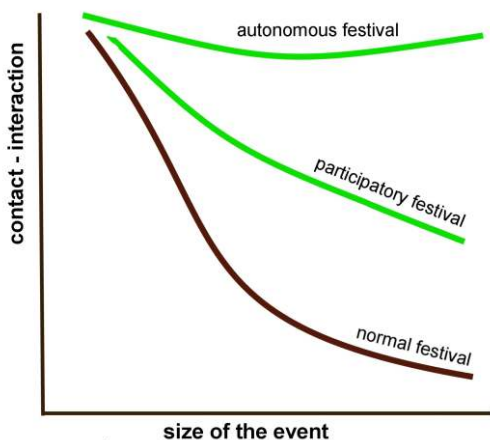
Event size

A small event makes it easier to meet and make contact, especially if it last longer, Large festivals and mass-events are entertaining, enjoyable and offer the best artists

and performances, sometimes the group mind reaches high peaks, but there seems to be an inverse relationship between size and the possibilities making contact. This is of course the challenge for the organizers, how can one stimulate and create contact-moments, even in large events.

Events like Burning Man or Boom obviously succeeded here, while equally large events and mega-music festivals are nothing more than a big crowd of unconnected people. Most are sticking to their partner or friends they know and not reaching out. Being exposed to the music, the facilities and the atmosphere the festival attendees do interact a little,, look at each other, make occasional eye contact. But is further contact left to individual initiative, or is the whole set-up in some way geared to connect people, to create deeper links?

What role does this play in the festival? Are ‘staged’ contact opportunities one of the success factors or do we leave this to the empathogens (drugs, alcohol) and the bonding force of music, dance and excitement? What made Woodstock such a memorable and even historic event? It was obviously a ‘temporary autonomous zone’ where the rules of normality could be broken, a political statement emerged (‘we count’) and the hippies realized a new level of identity. It was the start of the modern festival trend, but it was also something special in that there was this great sense of connectedness, of experiencing the ups and down, the bad weather and the



great performances and happenings all over the lot. Maybe the adversity of the situation is what made it easier to make contact with others and share?

Undoubtedly new friendships were forged there, while walking around naked or sliding in the mud, sharing a dry spot or some acid, but how much contact opportunity does a festival offer when the conditions are more 'regular'.

It seems related to the size and the participation level, but also to the way it is made part of the festival curriculum. Are contact moments part of the deal, or is it all left to individual initiative?

Are there workshops, sharings, circles, or smaller events where more intimate contacts emerge, does the event start with a welcome procedure (welcoming home), a parade, a meeting court, a Tantric dance event, are there nametags or wristbands with additional info, are modern social media used to forge contacts, are there special teams on the dance floor to animate? The possibilities to actively promote contacts are endless.

In the positioning of an event this is an important choice; do we actively stimulate individual contacts or are we happy with what will emerge naturally. This choice effects the whole organization, the physical layout, the routing, the choice of concessions, catering, it's a fundamental one. The matrix of a festival, the complex of acts, facilities, services and messages needs to be geared towards this. Events like Burning Man, where sharing and contact are basics, offer more contact opportunities than massive music festivals with more or less isolated attendees.

One could say that the normal situation at larger festivals intentional and in many ways effectively has been inverted by focusing on contact opportunities, rituals and participation. Working on something together, even very mundane tasks like cleaning, bring community, contact, social control and a sense of meaning. It's a game where the consumers become producers too, using all kind of symbols to identify themselves or to indicate who they are or what they want. Often the regular festivallers wear the wrist bands of earlier events, to show they are part of the scene. Clothing, hair, food, dance styles, what kind of tent one has, choice of drugs, music preferences, what

camp one belongs too, all this not only as participants in the ‘meat market’ and dating game, but to meet new in-group people and enhance the tribal feeling of ‘belonging’.

Contact needs vary

Meeting the other is a priority for some, others are happy to be alone,

with some friends or a partner. There are people that move towards others, ignore them or move away from others, that is a basic psychological characteristic. In a festival setting, however, such an attitude can shift, and one can shed maybe the normal ‘mask’ and experiment with lowering the defenses and thus the contact-threshold. It’s part of the social nature of humans, in a group things get easier and in ritualized setting like at a festival one going with the flow is the natural thing to do. If the group mind turns toward making eye contact, greeting each other, touch, hug or have sex, it’s easy to follow.

This doesn’t always happen, and the whole setting of an event is conducive to this, or not. When joining a festival starts with a welcome procedure that involves hugging, contact and hooking up with some others, that colors the whole event. Not always so sincere, there are alternative events where everybody hugs and touches, but hate each other’s guts, gossip and scheme.

You can have fun at tending an event with just a partner or some close friends, but it’s nice to make new contacts, meet old friends and people you recognize from other events.

Meeting others, for intimate contact or just to network and share is what many people like. A party or event that allowed you to meet new people, engage with them in some way and in that way offered you an expansion of your world, was a success. It is always nice, coming home from a party, to have met some new people, made a



Sharing at a festival (M.Bakker)

significant contact, but this doesn't always happen. Part of the secret of a good event is that one can let go of one's (normal personality) mask, or experiment with different 'personalities'.

This has to do with how the safety of the group is ensured, the freedom of anonymity, but also with the sense of ambiguity or disorientation, of being without status that comes with stepping in another



Decision making, a group exercise and contact moment

zone, the liminality Victor Turner talks about. Here again the issue of transformation pops up, not everybody wants this. Just consuming the 'communitas' is enough for many, and this is what the more commercial events usually offer. The transformation happens in a different setting and needs a different festival formula, but of course

individual experiences vary enormously.

The circle; contact, consent and decision making

Contact works best when we are on equal terms. Autocratic or top-down decisions only work in times of extreme stress, or when the leader has a special position. Peer level meetings and decision processes need a format, in a way ritualized. Arriving at a consent, not overruling a minority position or interest are what matters. Democracy at the level of community is a great good, but has practical limitations, as a majority vote doesn't really guarantees that all agree and compromises in the end often don't satisfy anybody.

The idea, that a decision not needs universal support and separating the group, and that some people will go along with a proposal (consent) and the pro and contra is left to those more involved is called aiming at consent. Consent means the absence of objections. A decision is ratified when there are no meaningful or "paramount" objections. Arriving at consent in some formalized way attempts to com-



Venlo Parkfeest 2015: picture Peter H. Rosen

bine both speed and inclusiveness. It is consultative, encourages iterative, “good enough” solutions, doesn’t require agreement and promotes objective debate. The “Consent Decision Making” process works well when the attendant are familiar with the procedure, speed is needed, when the proposal is clearly defined, and when the impact of the decision is limited and reversible.

There are limitations, For larger issues it can be time consuming, allows egotistical positions, ignores team coheasion, limits the forging of compromises, may lead to suboptimal solutions and can de hard to document or make minutes.

The circle has been the traditional way to achieve at least some equality. Circles form more or less automatically, the fire in the middle makes it the logical way to gather. Circles, in all sizes and for all purposes, form naturally during large events, and are a great start for peer decision making and conflict resolution.

Sharing

The meeting and contact aspect of a festival can be a major goal and can have much emphasis in the whole set ting and programming. Creating circles to discuss things and share experiences, using dating event and speed dating, randomized links, meeting rituals, workshops, and social media hook ups can be part of such a formula. The persona or ‘gestalt’ of an event of course will at tract people that resonate with the formula.

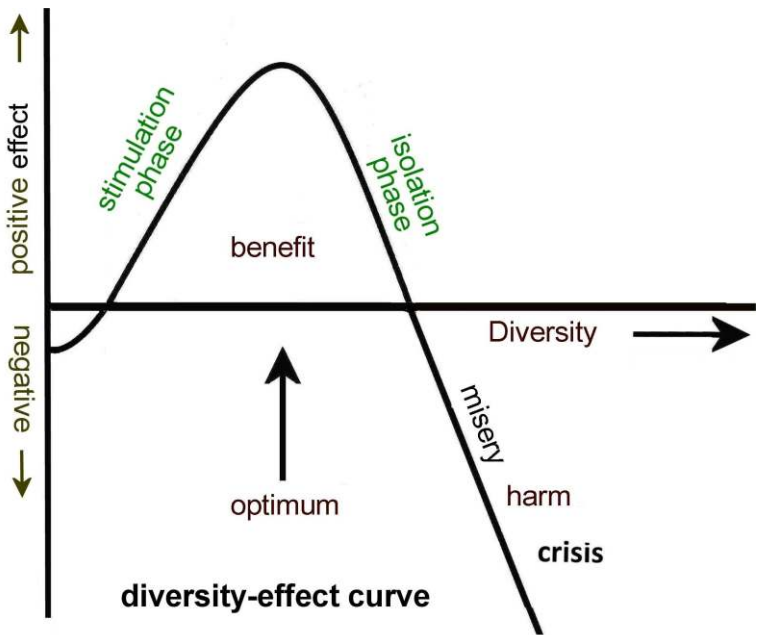
Contact opportunities can have many forms, but for intimate exchanges smaller groups are more effective, especially if clear rules exist about how the conversation goes, how and when one can interrupt, how time is shared.

Sharing, discussing one’s experiences and feelings in small groups of up to 8 people can be very effective to form alliances, meet new friends and feel part of the events. Such sharings, when held for a few days with the same group, are often cited as a main attraction and reason to attend.

Spatiality, routing, mini mood climates

The Spanish ‘Ramblas’, boulevards used for strolling, making contact and observing are a great example of contact-oriented spatiality. On the festivals grounds routing is also important. These days festivals usually have more than one stage. Large festivals may have many, from a massive main stage down to small tents or camp fires where a few people enjoy programmed or spontaneous acts, workshops etc..

The spatial set-up then becomes important, also when the event goes on for days. Are there quiet spaces, chill-out facilities, lounges, first-aid and medical, lost & found, the drugs-care, how are the catering units placed, where can there be open fires? Where are the sleeping quarters, are there camps for kids or families, for people



that want a quiet night time, where are the shower and toilet facilities located, how far to the parking lots, etc. etc.? The terrain of course has limitations and constraints, but the spatial arrangement of the festival activities, and this concerns not only the acts, can be a important factor in the atmosphere and the success of an event.

Predicting and guiding the movement patterns of the crowd, synchronizing performances and acts, here experience matters. People do move, part of what one does at a large festivals is walking around, sampling the atmosphere here and there, alternating between listening to an act, joining a group, workshop or circle, and just ambulate the grounds, maybe shopping, eating some, at a leisurely pace going around. The mood at different places and at different times during a festivals can change and often one creates specific local mood-climates with an emotional identity by specific entourage, props and set ting. Such mini-climates are important and don't have to be permanent, the guitar player at the breakfast is there just for that, the camp fire ritual circle starts late, in the afternoon a large tent is reserved for siesta.

The enormous Glastonbury festival site has distinct socio-geographic regions, catering for commercial and non-commercial activities, quiet areas and camping for specific groups.

Multi-culturality, pluralization, diversity

Cultures of old were often fairly closed, but these days globalization, mobility and influx of foreign newcomers has led to pluralization of culture and festivals are part of this trend. There are more or less culturally closed events, but most public festivals are becoming multi cultural. Maybe the attendees are still from a specific group or layer in society, but the music, food and culture offered is often very global. Cultural differences are seen as part of the experience, but can also help to represent minorities or cultures maybe otherwise seen as threatening to the locals. Festivals offer a great opportunity to link the local and the global.

Having just the usual local bands, DJ's, food stalls and drinks is not very ex citing, not much of an 'event', but to offer exotic cooking, different kinds of music and a cultural and global mix of films, per-

performances and mood-climates makes for a more sensuous and sensational experience.

As the diversity in ethnic and cultural back ground increases and the 'diversity-issue' and the xenophobic fears for the 'others' grows, multi cultural festivals or even ethnic festivals open to all are a great way to get acquainted with each other. They can be a great mixing bowl, of culture per se, but also of people.

Usually there are specific groups targeted as attendees of a festival, and this limits diversity. But this focus can be broken and many festivals add multi cultural accents. Allowing a cosmopolitan touch with different music, different performances and cultures participating makes festivals not only more interesting, it helps communication between groups, minorities and the general public.

Festivals are a great way to achieve what in daily life is difficult, bridging cultures, create cohesion, disperse the 'party line'. They can be an antidote to polarization and marginalization, help managing diversity. By offering minorities a chance to show off, they can increase self-confidence and thus peaceful co-existence. To be proud of oneself, of the community or of the culture is easy when the contact between different cultures, also expressed in music styles, food and clothing, is more fluent and congenial in a festival atmosphere.

Diversity philosophically

Festivals are entertaining, but also places of contact, of experiencing group mind. In

the twentieth century philosophers and anthropologists have looked into the human need to have contact. From Durkheim's 'effervescence' to Victor Turner's 'liminality' and 'communitas' and Peter Sloterdijk's 'bubbles', the social interaction, the polarity between individuality and community has been a topic in a world experimenting with various compromises, ranging from outright individualistic capitalism to communism, alas with little respect for the earth we





live on. Earlier things like religious festivals, World Fairs, theme parks and mega-attractions like the Olympics did and do attract large crowds, but miss the sense of freedom of adventure. Being outside the confines of the normal city and physical order is thus one aspect, being outside the confines of 'society' is another defining factor in the festival trend.

With the rise of internet and the essential entropic cyberspace it felt that the individual would be the great winner, but it is clear that the new monopolies, big data, AI and robotics will eat away at privacy, individuality and flatten our intellectual world. Wikipedia is the great equalizer of truth. Diversity, the anti-entropic or even syntropic driver of life and change, is under attack. Managing diversity, the quintessential task of government, balancing the individual and the communal, is a hot topic, but even people like Thomas Piketty (*Capital in the 21st Century*) have done little more than point at the extremes and the dangers of oscillations (revolutions). At the grass roots level, however, the rise of the festival model seems to be a sustainable and human way to deal with and enjoy our differences.

Diversity practically; the Nescafe Model

Diversity is not only negative, differences are the lifeblood of change, of progress, the essence of life. No marketplace of ideas or goods can exist without it. Diversity is thus not something to be afraid of, but something to be used.

To understand this, I have drawn a general diversity-effect curve. This shows that diversity does have positive effects, and only when there is no difference (stagnation) or when the diversity is too much, the effect is negative. This curve is fairly universal, applies to many situations, also in biology, and helps to understand how managing diversity, aiming at the optimum in positive results, is possible and desirable. Not only in government, but in all kinds of situations, like on festivals. The right kind of diversity will bring life to the situation, stimulates, but too much will lead to chaos, a crisis. This, in

some situations, can lead to a transformation, but is not what we normally consider acceptable.

Bringing people together means mixing, with confrontations of different skin color, dress, attitude, wealth, cultural background. This is what we often try to escape in daily life, living with 'our kind of people' in specific neighborhoods, visiting specific restaurants, theaters and schools. The problem is that this also ignores the positive effects.

The art of managing diversity, for it's not easy to find the right mix, can benefit from looking at what I call the Nescafe Model of mixing. When pouring water in cup of Nescafe (or soup or sauce) powder, it's better to just add a little bit of hot water, stir first and only then add the rest of the water. This prevents clogging and lumps, anybody who cooks knows this. It is a metaphor, an image that shows that dealing with diversity requires a certain tempo and stages, Starting with introducing a small amount of different people (water) and mixing that first, and only later expose that to more people (the rest of the water).

The Nescafe Model can be applied to many situations, like how to deal with kid of different capabilities in school, in introducing minorities in society (including very rich people) and suggest that a little dilution first might work better than just throwing the lot together.

In festival situations, the same applies. Allowing a limited amount of diversity will work better than brute dilution. Festivals are great places for mixing and exchange, the optimum there allows far more diversity than in normal society, but there is the same danger for overkill and chaos.

From a sociological perspective, festivals are great meeting places, offer a path to more integration and dealing with diversity. The meeting of others is not only an individual need, society needs places where contact is possible, where cultures are mixed and potential conflicts are mitigated by the spirit of the festival and the relaxed group-mind.

Segregation, the rich and the poor, the VIP space

To cater for all and everybody is impossible, festivals need a focus, a target-group or groups approach, in that respect it is business as usual, not very different from what is valid for malls, amusement parks, hotels museums or sports events. So there are festivals that target young adults, others look for the creative middle class, and certainly in commercial situation one aims at attracting disposable income, if necessary by creating subgroups among the audience. The VIP-rooms and VIP-tickets with special privileges for those who can spend more are a common phenomenon, are nearly a necessity to have a healthy bottom line.

Even where the official policy is equality, everybody is nominally the same like at Burning Man, but there are back doors. Very rich people smuggle in paid workers to cater for them, these 'servants' come in as normal participants, but work for those who are 'more equal' than others. The great openness and free for all mottos sound great, but what if a festivals is too expensive, so the poor and the 'them' stay outside. In events like Burning Man that require expensive resources like mobile homes that have to be rented, the audience tends to become middle- or high income people with similar values and interests.

Another phenomenon is the setup of VIP spaces, a monetized version of the backstage passes of the early days. For more money the VIPs, the invited influencers, the beautiful girls and boys that are used as decoration and the ones who can afford it are given a better view, more services, free drinks and food, an incrowd setting and contact with the performers.



7 Eventification

The size, scope and cultural impact of festivals has grown. Individual performance, plays, shows and arts events become embedded in festival formats, are promoted in that context. Often the traditional theater and arts season is condensed and brought under a single banner, like the Dutch ‘Holland Festival’, the ‘Edinburgh Festival’, etc. The label ‘festival’ is attached to utterly commercial events, like fashion festivals or film festivals; there is a crossover between traditional fairs and exhibitions and festivals.

Those catering for the traditional cultural elite are trying to attract an international audience by concentrating and combining the separate events. The problem is that now every town or even village has their festivals, the offering and the format has so expanded with stalls, eating drinking and promenading, that distinctiveness is hard to achieve. All starts to look the same, the same variety not only in music, but in food, concessions, market, the ‘colour locale’ disappears, a somewhat political correct multiculturalism in what is offered also has become part of the standard. And outside the traditional scene a new class of festivals has emerged, the large and small festivals out in the open, the music festivals and the events that cater for specific groups and markets, like the alternative and cultural creative scenes.

Festivalscape

These trends, in line with the general trend of isolating intensifying experiences (eventification) are changing the cultural landscape, a festivalscape has emerged. The festivalization of culture in the world today is taking over the tradition expressions of culture.

As Temple Hauptfleisch, who coined the word eventification in 1999, stated (2007):

Festivals are not only where the work is; it is where the artistic output of the actor, director, choreographer, etc. is eventified. It is where the everyday life event (performing a play, a concerto, a dance, exhibiting a painting, a sculpture, an installation) is turned into a significant Cultural Event, framed and made meaningful by the presence of an audience

and reviewers who will respond to the celebrated event. Festivals thus become a means of retaining the event in the cultural memory of the particular society.

Even as alternative festivals and communities are the main topic of this book, the wider trends and the economic realities cannot be ignored.

Commoditizing festivals as part of eventification is such a trend. The same festival concepts and formats are now transferred, exported, franchised, artist are booked for series of festivals, there developed a kind of festival subculture, a festivalscape of global dimensions.

The large music festivals are already more or less commoditized, maybe the names are different, but for an extraterrestrial observer making a distinction between the one mass-event or the other would be nearly impossible; often the acts, the DJ's, the kind of music are interchangeable. The producers (some use the term publisher, as festivals are, after all, media events) follow the same rules, often are linked to the same owner or production company, and the results are predictable and similar. Screaming fans in front of a stage are a universal identifier of the festivalization trend.

Festivalization, turning places or seasons into a constant festival mode, has become a political fashion because of the PR value, the cultural capital and the economic impact, especially at the urban level. It has become a popular strategy with urban planners and political leaders. Festivals are, maybe over optimistic, seen as a solution for all kinds of urban problems.

But this is done everywhere. A global competition emerged between venues and cities to attract the best events, biggest stars and have the best image as a festival environment or party city. This can lead to skewed situations. Economies of places like Ibiza, where party and festival tourism is rampant in summer time, rely very much on the income generated.

Festival and event science

The importance of a festival economy is well recognized, and as experience and expertise in staging festivals has grown, a body of knowledge evolved, a festival science. There are many very rational aspects concerning festivals, like money, profit, the economies of

scale, ecology, marketing and sales, where also traditional insights are used and useful.

It is big business, not only the festival turnover as such, the sponsoring (subsidies), ticket prize and the concessions, but the whole deal of housing, transport, security, food, etc. A main festival can draw hundreds of thousands and the large public events like Sail Amsterdam even millions of people. However, the business model at the floor level, the installations, toilet facilities, sales of food, drinks, cloths, drugs and what not, is basically the same on all festivals and the standard models and economic insights apply.

So the emergent science of how to organize events follows the traditional route. Data are obtained, studies made and these days questions like how many toilets are needed, the logistics, power needs, and cost estimates are textbook issues. The question why there are festivals, why some are successful and others not, the deeper mechanics and psychological roots of festival popularity are less studied and understood. Maybe this book helps in this respect..

Trendification

It is fashionable to label developments in society as trends, this in itself could be labeled as trendification. A number of relevant trends in society and economy have been identified in recent years, like gamification, diversity and segregation (rich/poor, ethnic), the emotional economy, and experience marketing.

Eventification is a broad term and refers more to the trend towards a constant 'happening' and the experience of partaking in something 'worthy' or 'new' than to just identifying the occurrence of musical, cultural, sports and political events. An event is something special, something worth remembering.

In the psyche it is not a chronologically bounded entity but a highlight, an occurrence that disrupts traditional notions of value and temporality. It's about making things 'special; and 'unique', not just stacking events in a row, too much similar 'events' turns into routine and become boring.

Eventification fits well into the notion of an experience economy, which refers to "a socioeconomic system where aesthetic experi-

ences, rather than goods or services, form the basis for generating value” (Johansson and Kociatkiewicz, 2011).

The notion of the experience economy has changed the established and deconstructed (isolating influences) theories of the culture and event value economy, integrating also the emotional value. It is bringing back the focus on what the consumer wants, beyond mere product pushing. It means recognizing that place, company and mood by themselves have value (which can be converted in economic value) and quality and need to be assessed as such.

Also the role of the performer/actor versus that of the audience has changed, the producer and consumer mingle, the prosumer emerges. They can exchange places, the spectator becomes the spectacle. Being in the crowd, dancing and interacting with each other is what often matters more than what happens on stage, the same goes for sports and demonstrations.

Local talent

Experiential staging has a strong local aspect, the home-team, the local bands are well known and liked and may provide the distinctiveness the large and look-alike festivals lack. This makes smaller festivals thus less dependent on big names or acts, the local networks and artists can, together with the audience, be very effective in providing value.

Authenticity in this perspective can be a real value, being recognized as locals and ‘real’ people and hitting a nerve with the audience can be more important than a big name line-up. Certainly now that the choice in events is so big, the local input and territorial dynamics become more important, creating identification and distinctiveness.

Others values like the possibility to make a contribution to the group mind state, the general emotional state and the welfare of the people and the environment are what obviously matters but remains hard to define or assess.

An event that matters is something that’s compelling enough for people to leave their homes, buy a ticket and go there. The motives to do so can vary; what matters is that enough people join, have fun, want to come back and generate not only money income but positive feelings. Happy people are an incredible asset, they become unpaid

ambassadors, attract others, cause less problems, have less health issues and contribute more.

The economic and social impact of these trends and the influence on urban planning, city promotion, branding and urban competition are substantial. Cities like Amsterdam strive to become global centers of festival knowledge; a festival industry hotbed, a true FestiValley.

One aims at making the own city or region a good place for festivals to happen, but ultimately looks at competence and maybe global leadership in an industry that grows and grows.

Here a warning is in place. This is an industry that impacts the local economy, but also the educational system, will attract the hip and rich, but also the criminal elements associated with this industry, the druggies, the gangs, the crooks, the bikers. The darker side doesn't make it into the promotional material or project plans, is seldom mentioned publicly, but is a reality. Maybe it helps mentioning the cruise industry. It is another darling of city officials, but less recognized as also being a broad tax-evasion scam; it makes and white-washes money mostly on the offshore and tax-free liquor and gambling, with working conditions not acceptable on shore.

Eventification is not a static phenomenon, it is very dynamic and aiming for ever more engaging experience opportunities. What today seems like daring and exciting, tomorrow is old hat, a festival in the desert will give way to festivals in the jungle, on high mountain tops. An Everest Base Camp festival with everybody wearing oxygen masks may be a hit. Underwater or parachute events are likely, nakedness already a station passed, swingers have their festivals, and what about a festival for people over 2m tall, D cups, only bold ones, millionaires, transgender folks, whatever we can dream up is a possibility.

How crazy and weird can we make it? The SciFi movies show us what can be imagined and technology will find ways to make that a reality. This raises questions about sustainability, about the levels of diversity that are acceptable, about segregation and how much transformation and impacting of society, the normal living, is acceptable.

In cities like Amsterdam, where tourism and eventification are taking over normal operation, the people start complaining; are we unpaid performers in a Disneyland-like space, part of the staged experience for the benefit of the tourist industry? Event consumption and experience marketing sound great and may be the wave of the future, but do we want our kids to live in such a world or city? And how many times do we go to similar events, and how long before another event just irritates?

Are we raising a generation with EDHD symptoms, the Event Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, kids looking for constant gratification of their need to be entertained, kept busy, and lacking the mental tools to be happy without external stimulation?

Keeping the 'plebs' entertained by bread and circuses was what the ancient Romans did then, but aren't we heading in the same direction, keeping everybody entertained and busy, but weakening the individuality, the entrepreneurial spirit, sacrificing all on the new altar of shared 'experience' which is distributed and supported by the utterly entropic and flattening social media.

Events that bring together people and allow real contact are the antidote for the isolating trend of the always 'being on' in the social media physical isolation. Within the experience economy, the production and consumption of products and places is transformed from use and utility into all encompassing sensorial stimulation, into immersive events, into total theater or spectacle. With technology like virtual reality even more intensive immersion is possible, one can reach a 'flow' state. However, the contact with the 'other' remains the crucial factor for the social beings we are and festivals are fairly effective in that sense.

Marketing is shifting from pushing product to pushing experiences, and it's most economical to push the same experiences to many, scaling up to mass events, where people are treated as cattle, and using those events to also push the products, the fashion, the image of things that we need outside the festivals. Using festivals (as a sponsor or vendor) to push one's brand is now quite common, think about the trend in sports events where promotion and advertising colors the public space. The commercialization of large international festivals highlights that trend; producers and marketers of all kinds

of products and services including the cultural sector use eventification to advance their market positions and establish branding.

Crowd reading and crowd control

Reading an audience, responding and controlling the mood and group mind is something most artists do, to some degree, but it can be hardly called a science. It is where experience and sensitivity count, some MC's (master of ceremony) are very good at it. The term 'Crowd Reading' is used in the DJ-scene, where 'feeling' the mood of the audience at the dance floor is very important. DJ's watch the dance movements very carefully, know to interpret body language, facial expressions, know how to sequence the tracks, and use lighting and even groups of assistants on the dance floor to change the mood, get people dancing a different way, etc. Skills that are valuable at festivals too. Crowd reading is a talent that comes handy in many situations.

I have been present, as a cameraman, at many a demonstration, some very violent, and noted the interplay between the 'leaders', the people, a crowd that often behaved like cattle, and the (riot) police. There were some incredible good 'crowd readers' in the police force, and some very stupid ones too, sending in the riot police at the wrong moments and often intentionally cause a panic (and being praised for their heroic acts by the mayor afterwards).

Crowd control can be used to manipulate situations, but in emergency situation it can be essential to disperse a crowd in an orderly manner, not overloading exits, preventing a panic and stampede situations. These are dynamic situations and there is little science involved, every situation is different. The laws of fluid dynamics don't apply to people dynamics.

Crowd control is as old as the first mass events in the ancient cultures, only today we increasingly use modern technology and applied psychology to control the audience and manipulate the mood and group-mind. This is what DJ's do, not only with music but these days we have video, smoke, and smartphones, tweets and apps open a whole new perspective. Using infrared imaging, temperature sensors, all the data mobile devices and wearables convey, the art of crowd reading may evolve into a science. The use of ultrasound and

special frequencies are options in crowd control, but not much is known about it, there are rumors that the Eastern bloc has been using this at some scale.

Interdisciplinary event science

Of course the knowledge and art of staging big or small events is not new, all through the ages meetings took place, performances, theater, concerts, religious festivals, pilgrimages and sports events.

There must have been a body of knowledge and skills, probably not far removed from military science, things like pilgrimages, holy year and crusades were sometimes massive events.

Things can be handled in a much wider perspective now. It is only recently that disciplines like theater, music, crowd control, promotion, marketing, sponsorship handling, marketing, production, contract and legal, guest list management, concession management, programming, post-event nurturing, fan-community building, and all those other aspects of a festival are combined under a general and very interdisciplinary ‘event management’ umbrella and seek help from the psychologists, sociologist and anthropologists. It is a very wide field, of course with specializations and sub-disciplines, but the whole is impressively broad and interconnected.

Event organizing talent, flexible and meticulous

There are career opportunities in this field. People who can understand, oversee and innovate in this field are in high demand. Beyond the level of actual implementation and realization of the often meticulous project plans, a serious ‘event science’ is developing. This is a field that will attract both generalists and specialists, and offers great job possibilities.

Especially at large festivals there is a kind of separation between the planners, the preparation staff, and the folks out there, at the gates, in the artists quarters and back stage areas, the volunteers, security people and the disaster team. Two worlds, the hand-on folks and the hands-off management and planners, that need to cooperate but often clash. Handling the sometimes large numbers of unpaid volunteers, during, before and after the event can be a nightmare.

One can, like in any field, be working in the line or in the staff, but because of the broad interaction, no doubt good teamwork will be required. And flexibility, people skills, on top of any academic or educational qualifications.

Of course there is the possibility or better probability that the truly great organizers, programmers, talent and MCs are without a PhD in event science. It remains an art, as the whole 'persona' or 'gestalt' of a festival is hard to define in rules, budgets and matrices. This requires special talents and ambition, running a major event 'off the cuff' is not given to many.

The talent of the programmers, the sensitivity of the producers for trends in 'Gestaltling', the quality of the performers and acts, those are important factors, but what about the weather, the appearance of a bad drug, the trains or planes that don't arrive, the 'stars' that do as they please, the local hoods that appear, the bomb or terrorist alarm? Usually there is one or a small group of fixers, people who are deep and high enough in the organization to know the general machinery, but who can take action and solve problems on the floor (or in the field, the playa, etc.). Flexible people managers with an overview, decision makers with experience are nearly always there, they are the kingpins in the actual running of things, the hands-on guys or girls that can swim the muddy waters of a festival where egos, money, booze and drugs run rampant.

Part of integrated event science is concerned with the economics, the money side of things, but psychology, sociology are always needed. They are often decisive, it's a people business. The technology develops fast, not only how to construct podia, domes, tents, set up lighting, music and video, connect everybody and everything, but using the technology of internet, social media and the new Internet of Things and sensors to guide and enhance the project. Big data, available because of internet booking, tracking and tracing of mobile devices, mobility patterns, visitor profiles, communication on the premises and all what the smart technology will bring, can and will be used to figure out trends, predict behavior, concession income,

appreciation of services and acts and help solve problems before they happen.

Of course much of the modern management techniques, helped by forever better information systems and communication have found their way into event science and event management expertise. There are great successes, big profits, but now and then a festival fails miserably, and disappears.

This book will not go much into general event marketing and management of large commercial and public events, as these are fairly rational operations following established best practices and business models, dealt with extensively in literature about this field.

The word 'Festivalization' (festivalisation) is fairly new. In the nineties it was noted (P. Kaptein 1996 festivalisering) that the arts festival circuit came to represent the theatrical "season" like with the Dutch 'Holland Festival', but of course the music festival and the English Free Festival tradition was there before and religious festivals are of all ages.

The large festivals are usually well organized, well financed and stick to the rules concerning security, health, sound and the thousands of rules imposed on them, even as they often claim these are suffocating the events,. They are in that sense predictable, there is adequate accounting and management structures; this is where the insights of all the contributing disciplines are integrated into a smooth machine.

There is stiff competition. It's not everybody's turf and there are high entry barriers. Already there are main players, with the experience and knowledge, the track record and financial stability that local governments now require, but they are obviously not the most flexible. Innovation can come from their co creators, the artists and stage directors, but they mostly operate within the borders of a fairly strict business model.

Even as the large and usually fairly commercial and strictly rational festivals now attract the most attention, it is usually in the small and mid-size events and in the overlap with the more spiritual and transformational events that the development of the whole industry happens.

Smaller events are usually more creative, more free, more experimental. Innovation comes with challenges and benefits from some struggle and opposition, forcing the people behind it to come up with new solutions.

Social centers

Solutions with impact, social innovation, new uses for old locations, pots of alternative activities, gentrification and cultural renewal. Festivals and alternative communities, but also the artist activities in the neighborhood

level can influence the whole atmosphere of a street, quarter, and even a city. Places like Ruigoord and Christiania are obviously part of what attracts visitors and citizens to Amsterdam and Copenhagen. The crucial contribution of such local artistic and cultural initiatives towards gentrification and thus urban development and even investment strategies is clear. What starts as squatting will turn into local urban activism, localism and social engagement, spreading and ‘infecting’ the wider community.

Smaller events and local initiatives often add so much value to a neighborhood, that real estate prices rise; gentrification often starts when event producers (and artists are often event producers) create an experiential and experimental scene. The sad part is that these change initiators then are driven away by high prices and usually don’t benefit from the value they created. The social effects will turn into profits for speculators, the initiators usually don’t benefit.



Massive public festivals like Sail Amsterdam can draw millions (M. Bakker)

Political angle; squatters

The most famous creative communities started in squatter places, where money played a minor role. The political drive, a certain anarchistic or 'autonomous' protest against capitalism, but also the shortage in affordable housing led to occupation of empty houses, facilities, abandoned industrial and cultural complexes. Sharing, social action, the old 'commune' idea found enthusiastic support, squatted places became social centers, as such with much impact in notably Italy. Social centers that are open to the general public are also part of the general third place movement in community building. Third places include small commercial or non-reclaimed urban spaces (or reclaimed from commercial activity towards cooperative use) such as community coffee houses.

The squatter movement became even a political force, an inspiration for mostly small local political initiatives with some success like in Amsterdam (Provo) and influencing the larger political landscape in the last decades of the last century (notably the left and the green). Those 'left wing' and somewhat anarchistic ideas resurfaced when the West-European welfare state started to crumble and the financial (euro-)crisis led to broader political and mass-protest movements like the 'Pirates' and 'Podemos', Syriza and the Five Star Movement.

Squatters joined with extreme left, manifested themselves in demonstrations and especially the often very violent eviction struggles made headlines and secured support from left-oriented citizens. The idea of social centers, where the 'free' squatter locations offered social help, education, ecological initiatives and refuge for 'no-papiers' has made a difference. A whole-subculture emerged, mostly in big



Fire at opening ceremony (Eigentijds Festival)

cities, and joined forces with political anti-authoritarian movements but also initiated new uses, cultural hot spots and stamcell rejuvenation of the surrounding buildings and streets.

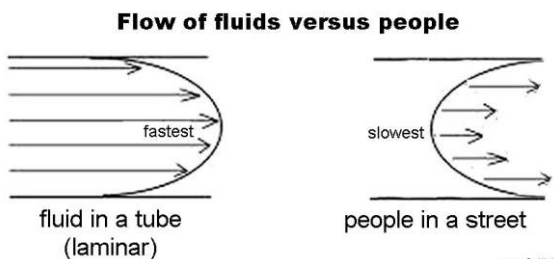
Not to the linking of the authorities, home-owners and conservative politicians. Those locations and activities were often too easily closed or driven away, as the real estate value increased because of the attractiveness. These days most former squats are legitimized, rent paying or owned by the aging squatters and lost the original energy, even as the myths of the glorious and autonomous past are kept alive. Local government did see the value of such bottom-up local initiatives, but often commercialized and organized the new 'free-havens' into art- or business incubators.

Freedom sacrificed for profit, a trend also very obvious in festivals. The initial success, based on participation, volunteers, and building identification, gave and gives way to money interests, streamlining, commercialization and eventually decline. The contribution in this book by Aja Waalwijk illustrates how this developed.

The 'old school' squatters deplore how their 'movement' is taken over by 'normality' and tend to mythologize their past and political achievements, often a bit too idealistic and ignoring most squatters just enjoyed low/no rent and the freedom to smoke a joint.

Society and the political powers have, at times, fought but also embraced the squatter movement and the

social centers (Italy), using their energy and popular support to serve their interests, left or right. Managing the cycle of creative, social or otherwise entrepreneurial initiatives is limited, most we can do is observe and see there are stages and eventually decline. Very few companies, cities or communities survive in the long run, even as one often attempt to revive or refocus, but re-kindling the original energy and drive is very hard.



Of course creative people, artists and entrepreneurs are a market pull as well as a product push, but here political choices are to be made. The gentrification of inner city neighborhoods for instance, driving out the lower incomes and with that often the artistic and community initiatives that started the quality lift that led to the attractive image can lead to enclaves that look very lively and creative, but offer little more than trendy coffee shops and restaurant, the lifeblood disappeared with the people.

Audience diversity, target groups

Are festivals only something for specific groups, like the young 15-25 or young adults in the 25-35 year bracket? Those are obviously the target for the large music festivals, even as there are clear demarcations in income and ethnicity. But here superficial observations may be misleading. The less affluent seem to save all year in order to attend their events of choice. So it is hard to specify target audiences and use traditional marketing strategies, the internet and social media offer a better way to reach the crowds.

But for alternative and public festivals, is there a different age group? Are they targeting the creative folks, are they for middle class, all ethnic groups, for people with money or do all people like them and attend? An important question, as much public money and effort goes towards festivals, and who benefits from this, or can we expect that the benefits eventually will seep through? Many 'cultural' festivals paid for with public money only target an upmarket audience, like those for opera or classical music, dance or ballet. This was supposed to benefit all, because of the extra turnover in hotels and horeca, but since the 2008 financial crisis there is less money for such elite-festivals.

One often looks at the creative class or the cultural creatives as the main audience for alternative festivals. In 2000, the book 'The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World' by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson pointed at a group they believed to be as large as a quarter of the North American and W. European population, but that notion has faded a bit, also because of the financial crisis. It now seems income and educational background are adequate identifiers and predictors of real behavior. The

notion of Ray and Anderson that “values are the best single predictor of real behavior” is replaced by the idea that emotions drive most of our decisions and actions, the emotional economy. The values that dictate a ‘Cultural Creative’s’ behavior like authenticity, engaged world view, idealism and activism, globalism and ecology and the status of women, altruism, self-actualization, and spirituality are still there and certainly play a role in staging and marketing events, but mostly in the alternative festivals.

The idea that the cultural creatives, the ones often mentioned but hard to isolate in political and marketing terms, are a main factor in the festival economy is not very practical or specific. They are obviously often the consumers but probably not the creative minds driving the ‘creative city’ development as was suggested by Richard Florida in his 2002 book “The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life”. His ideas have some value, but are these days most middle class and well to do people not more individualistic, less conforming and more looking for expression in ways that elude the old target market ideas; with constant shifting preferences and spending patterns.

Alternative or inspirational festivals are not specifically for the creative folks, there is also the pull of the bored, the need for diversion, the less idealistic and highbrow reality of the manipulation of the consumer, the McFestival idea of franchised amusement.

Although there is thus a tendency to see festivals as part of the creative culture, the wide variety in festivals, the kinds of venues and pricing makes clear, that festivals or events are there for all, by all and with all. They attract the overly active individuals, but also the bored ones, the sensation seekers and those who want to escape the stress of the city and work, they are there for the old and the young, the smart individuals and the cattle that just follows the signposts.

The consumer needs can be met by the push of the creative artists and event organizers, but more likely the ‘perceived’ needs are the result of smart marketing and emotional manipulation. Is Lady Gaga the result of quality in performance or of clever marketing, using emotions rather than values? Is staging ‘health food’ or ‘fair trade’ events in big malls a creative innovation (push), or just following changing interests in the customer base (pull).

Again looking a bit beyond the obvious and into what drives the real 'owners' and decision makers in the festivalscape may help to discern what interests are really at stake. There is a tendency to use this trend to manipulate the masses, keep them entertained and content by 'bread and circuses'.

Security and drugs

Keeping drugs away from festivals requires a lot of security, and seems to be ineffective nevertheless. These days going to a festival means accepting security measures that resemble airport or customs security. The fear for terrorist attacks, the war on drugs and preventing accidents goes very far and is in many ways eating at the freedom and autonomy that once was the root quality of festivals. The autonomous zones are degraded to safe zone, but only in the perspective of the authorities, and this is often backed by the organizers and their insurance policies. The reality is that the organizers know very well that drugs are part of the formula, and that allowing alcohol may lead to more violence and problems than some weed or XTC. So there is a certain amount of theater, of bowing to the rules but in fact allowing the true formula to happen out of sight.

In general, to obtain permits for events is harder and harder, more and more conditions are placed on hygiene, drugs control, the facilities, catering quality, the working conditions of the staff, administrative integrity (to prevent black money, laundering), sound levels and ecology.

All these measures are understandable from the perspective of responsibility of the parties involved, but the trend to eliminate all risks is counterproductive in the perspective of transformation, learning and innovation.

8 Needs, motivation, incentives and values

Why do we go to festivals? No longer because the church or state makes us go. Festivals are no longer cultural, religious, seasonal or historical events within local communities, religious groups and with a limit on attendance, but have become a popular and accepted means through which the people of all walks of life consume and experience community, culture, art and music.

But are there more incentives, like ‘tribal’ cohesion and identification, and what about a need for transformation? Why are there festivals anyway? A question that can be answered from many perspectives and will come back later in this book.

What needs are met and what corresponding values, what meaning is offered? This again can be looked at from the perspective of attendees, of organizer/producers and that of the government.

Beyond the needs and the goals of the organizers or operators (and the talent, sponsors, concessioners) and the government, which might be purely materialistic but can be idealistic and philosophical, there are the needs of the people, attendees and potential attendees.

What one needs or perceives as a need can easily become a goal if the need is not met, and we tend to rank our needs as values, for ourselves or projected onto others. Needs, goals and values and especially the priority (ranking) differ between individu-



Adapted Maslow Pyramid of Needs
adapted to fit chakra model and with a spiritual top

als, are dependent on culture, the mood of the moment, the group mind or group mood, and the situation.

A widely used way to look at needs and thus what is meaningful and important for people, the values that we have and how they decide our priorities is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy, a pyramid that ranks human needs in a certain way. His ranking reflects a certain 'Western' and individualistic bias, the social is less prominent and otherworld connections kind of ignored.

In the context of modern festivals we can assume that physical needs like for security, shelter and food are well catered for. This is not always the case in traditional situations. Other cultures have different hierarchies, often the social means more than the individual goals, especially in situations where religion or culture is important. For the Indian Kumba Mela millions of people travel to the Holy River dip forgoing those physical essentials.

Let me list some goals/needs (there are many more) that are relevant in the festival context:

- The need for entertainment and leisure, fun
- The need to be free
- The need to meet and mix
- The need to belong, to identify
- The need to participate and contribute (help)
- The need to be seen (as special, different, as desirable, as good, as individual)
- The need to know (the music, the texts, the bands, the VIPS)
- The need to be secure (of position, body, health, status)
- The need to grow, transform oneself, to feel real
- The need to act, to do (manifest)
- The need to hide, to be anonymous
- The need to be there, out of the fear of missing out (FOMO)
- The need to see (fashion, people, trends)
- The need to play (and learn and realize).

Festivals do offer more than just an alternative to staying at home and some fun, they are no doubt escapes from normality, but with the possibility of meeting new people and of seeking identification, participation, realization and transformation. Not for all and all the time, but it's not hard to find a fitting festival, choice enough.

All those needs do fit in an individual hierarchy, as not everybody ranks them in the same order (a unconscious process anyway) and to complicate things, not even stable in time. We vacillate between priorities, some needs have a periodicity, dynamic patters and can be more or less dominant in a certain situation. Just think about our need for sex or food. We are not hungry when we just ate.

Optimally an event offers exactly what every individual in the audience needs, aligned with what the performers expect and even satisfying the organisers. This of course is an illusion, but it makes sense to try getting there. A good step is to look at the various levels of development and consciousness of the stakeholders and identify where an event stands, and where the event goals are aligned or not with what the participants (or talent) deem important. Richard Barret's Value Model is a helpful tool. If the music offered only aims at conforming, but the audience expects transformation, then things are not likely to work out.

From needs to motivation (to attend, or not to attend in some cases) we have to see how needs can be met and become goals and motivations. There are a number of theories, but none goes very deep.

Motivation: seeking and escaping

Seppo Iso-Ahola's 'seeking and escaping' motivation theory asserts that 'personal escape, personal seeking, interpersonal escape, and interpersonal seeking' motivate tourism and recreation and thus festival attendance. Novelty seeking is part of this, as is socialization, but usually multiple motivations are at play for attendance at a festival.

A somewhat theoretical approach used by 'behavioral school' social scientists identified two primary goals of social meetings. These are process goals and outcome goals. Process goals are about the immediate experiences like comfort, interactions, emotions, that what happens on-site. Outcome goals are about what one takes home, the lessons, personal growth, improved social skills. Transformational events obvious focus more on the latter goals, but usually there is a mix of the two.

We are all different, but somewhat alike

I think needs and motivations are very individual and diverse, just tallying how many of the visitors want this or that will give a general, but not very specific image. Much research into the motivations of people to participate in events doesn't honor the individual profile, the dynamics in preferences and the 'group mind'. The results are aggregated and ignore the personal differences.

The marketing people know this and work with target groups, split up their customers into all kinds of subgroups, differentiate their approach accordingly and of course this works for festivals too. The problem is that people change so much, are not the same at home or as part of a group or an audience and especially at festivals become unpredictable and often exchange their individual preferences for those of the crowd.

Maybe it makes sense to look for some more basic ways to classify or profile the festival audience. There are fundamental similarities in how we deal with the world, with challenges and opportunities; that can help to find handles in how to deal with the variety.

Differentiation in type and need priority is essential if we want to get meaningful results. The lack of adequate profiling, for that is what identification and classifying individuals and audiences entails, is what renders most research into festivals, but also in computer games and much psychological research fairly useless. Just tallying (online or offline) how many people find



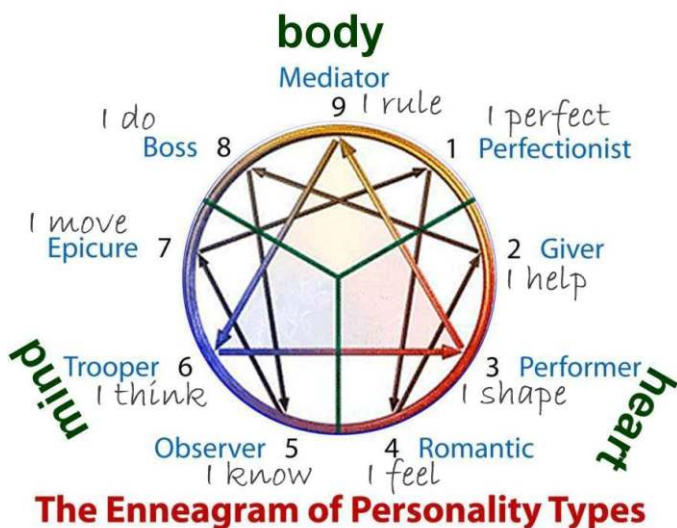
Plato's Phaedrus

*The psyche has two horses
to control, a tamed,
safe one and a
wild, creative one*

*white-black
collective-individual
digital-analog
social-liberal*

an event ‘challenging’, ‘engaging’ and such is what most studies do, but the results are often just platitudes.

Psychology and personality type models can help to identify the val-



ues, preferences and their ranking for an individual or a group.

There are relative mature systems like the ‘Enneagram’, ‘Big Five’ or Myers-Briggs typology that can help here, and the marketing world has many more schemes and typologies.

Here the issue of privacy is a serious concern, but profiling and crowd reading is possible without singling out individuals.

Using those typologies and audience differentiation tools, looking at how one behaves and makes choices can be a great tool in staging and running a festival or event. Not only in attracting the right people, but tuning into how they behave and change, form groups and relate to what is offered, in music, ambiance, mood, decoration, substances (drugs, alcohol).

Festivals tend to cater only for certain needs, for certain groups, for certain personality types. This is where the organizer makes choices, in setting, in acts, in atmosphere. To offer all for everybody is possible but even then there is a need to diversify in what is offered.

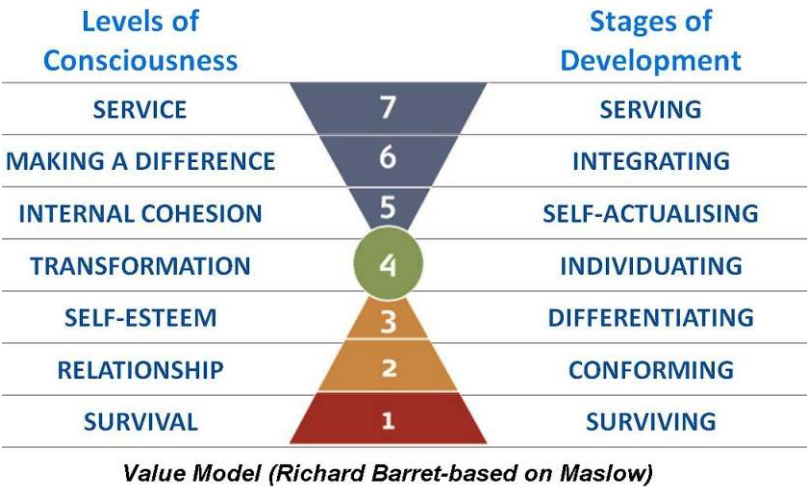
Organization like Disneyland are masters at this and at Burning Man many subgroups have their own camp, most festivals offer multiple stages now. Diversity management (as in catering for different needs and values) is the real secret of success!

The danger of trying to be all for all is that is that it makes things flat and mediocre, and a reason for people to shop for something else.

The need to be free

One of the most relevant needs is freedom, certainly in the context of festivals. Humans needs freedom, not as an empty phrase, but as a reality, in order to learn, grow and find meaning. Freedom is thus a lot more than giving some leeway to prevent mutual conflict (as with rats in a cage). It is fundamental for humans, related to our self-consciousness and search for meaning.

A festival needs to offer some freedom. These days there is a tendency to trade freedom for security, but this is a fallacy. Freedom is not on the same axis as security, even as that model is used all the ti



me, to take away more freedom (civic rights etc.) in promising more security. Freedom and security are different dimensions, also in our mind.

Already Plato points (in the Phaedrus dialogue) at the tedious task of the psyche to control both the tame and the wild horse, which are also the social (safe) and the individual, creative (free) side in us. His model can be applied to society; there the leadership (ruler, boss, judge) has to steer both horses (social and individual) in the direction the stakeholders want or need. Society tends to focus on the good, white, obedient one of Plato's twin horses and denies the wild, black one, that wants to go its own way. The "wild" black horse of Plato is necessary to have progress, to prevent stagnation. This happens in societies that tried to limit individuality in order to promote the collective like the communist ones. Criminal behavior in that sense is often entrepreneurship crossing the line and philosophically thus necessary for progress.

We need this kind of freedom more and more to escape the technological and privacy crunch of internet, big data and mobile connectivity. The always on-always connected-always quasi-safe sedation and numbing of the underlying fears is really becoming an anti-depressant that flattens our experience of reality. Also science and the codification and canonization of knowledge becomes like a blinder, limited perception and creativity.

People are looking for freedom, for places and events where they can be free, private, not identifiable. The paradox is of course that they will use their smartphones and apps to mail pictures and recordings of the event all around. They thus annul and spoil their newfound freedom. Festivals banning smartphones and cameras are on the rise!

The freedom to fail, in anonymity

We need some freedom to make mistakes and experiment, it's essential for learning and personal growth, but where are we not monitored, followed, observed all the time these days.

Festivals are free in the sense that one can experiment more or less anonymous or at least without repercussions with one's individuality, expression and behavior.

The larger and alternative festivals offer an opportunity to disappear in the crowd, become invisible, free to behave different, experiment and make mistakes. The same goes for communities outside the 'normal'. Modern life makes it harder and harder to do this, we are

followed from crib to grave by monitoring systems, and we will-
ingly oblige by putting all and everything on Facebook. Mistakes,
flunks, everything is recorded and may show up some time. No
space for errors, flaws, mistakes, and thus little chance to play and
learn.

Freedom is what breeds innovation, and as even computer game
playing is now monitored and used to compile profiles and big data
files, festivals and autonomous zones are a way out.

I would even go so far as to state that the whole festivalization trend
is a logical development, the people are looking for a sanctuary, a
place to be free. Not for fun only, but because it is a basic human
need. If personal growth (learning) is not only a formal right, but a

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FESTIVAL CHECKLIST
BonnarooChris.com

Camping Gear

- ☐ Tents x ☐ Poles and stakes
- ☐ Sun Tent / EZ Up /
- ☐ Tarps x
- ☐ Tent Poles (Free standing) ☐ Bungee Cords
- ☐ Rope / Cord / Zip Ties / Duct Tape
- ☐ Heavy-duty Tent Stakes / Mallet or Sledge
- ☐ Multi-purpose Knife / Camper's Tool
- ☐ Koozies / Mascot / Bill Murray
- ☐ Flashlight / Lantern / Headlamp
- ☐ Extra Batteries x
- ☐ Table ☐
- ☐ Camp Chairs / Tapestries
- ☐ Chairs: Lawn / Concert / Backpack
- ☐ First Aid Kit / Blister Kit / UTI Kit
- ☐ Radio / Media Player / CDs
- ☐ Paper / Pen / Sharpies® / Binoculars
- ☐

Kitchen

- ☐ Large Tub (Dishpan / storage)
- ☐ Cook Stove / Fuel x
- ☐ Lighter / Matches / Tinfoil / Pam®
- ☐ Pan / Pot / Spatula / Tongs
- ☐ Plates Cups Bowls Silverware
- ☐ (Metal ones last forever!) x
- OPENERS:** ☐ Beer ☐ Can ☐ Corkscrew
- ☐ Zip Lock® Bags ☐ Tupperware®
- ☐ Paper Towels ☐ Handwipes
- ☐ Trash Bags x ***LEAVE NO TRACE***
- ☐ Water Bottle ☐ 5-Gallon Jugs
- ☐ Dish Soap / Scrub / Dish Towel
- ☐ Short Hose Connects to sink spickets
- ☐

BRING SHOWER - A COMFORTABLE CHAIR - AN OPEN HINGE
USE EARPLUGS TRY FOOD VENDORS. BRING JUMPER CABLES.
BYOND SINGLE - USE FILMS. LIMIT TRASH & RECYCLING LEFT BEHIND.
COOLER FOOD HOLE - NOT SAFE. USE SHOWER. ADDRESS TO INQUIRE.

- ☐ Buy Ticket ☐ Get Friends To Go
- ☐ Secure Transportation
- ☐ Check Batteries + First Aid Kit
- ☐ Buy Supplies ☐ Get Cash
- ☐ Pack / Cook / Freak Out

Coolers/Ice

- ☐ Cooler#1
- ☐ Cooler#2
- ☐ Cooler#3
- ☐ Cooler#4
- ☐ Dry Ice (15lbs *day of departure)
- ☐ Ice (As much as possible *day of departure)

Sleeping and Comfort

- ☐ Pillows / Sheets / Blankets
- ☐ Air Mattress / SlumberJack® Cot
- ☐ Mattress Pump / Laundry Bag
- ☐ Sleeping Bags /
- ☐ Earplugs* / Condoms* *Use them*

Bath

- ☐ Towels / Washcloths
- ☐ Toilet Paper ☐ Babywipes
- ☐ Deodorant / Baby Powder / Gels
- ☐ Toothbrush / Paste / Floss / Q-Tips®
- ☐ Soap / Shampoo / Brush / Razor
- ☐ Sunscreen / Insect Repellent / Mirror
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer / Buttscratcher / Tampons Pads

Clothing

- ☐ Floppy Hat / Cap / Beanie / Helmet
- ☐ Bandanas / Headband / Hair ties
- ☐ Shirts: Short / Long-sleeve / Wife-beater
- ☐ Sweatshirt / Jacket / Raincoat / Umbrella
- ☐ Underwear / Socks / Bras ☐ Extra
- ☐ Shoes: Sneakers / Closed-Toe / Flip-Flops
- ☐ 5-Finger / Boots / Sandals
- ☐ Shorts ☐ Swimwear ☐ Bodypaint
- ☐ Pants ☐ Jeans ☐ Skirts ☐ Dresses
- ☐ Sunglasses ☐ Extra pair ☐ Belt ☐ Good Vibes
- ☐ Costume ☐ Sign:

"People may be weary at the idea of living four days
in campground conditions with portable toilets, but
I would say it's an easy trade for a weekend of music,
friends, art, entertainment and, most importantly, a
much-needed escape from reality everyone needs."
— Amy Martine

Extras

- ☐ Fan (Solar / battery)
- ☐ Camp Shower (Or pay \$7 ea)
- ☐ Camera ☐ Phone ☐ Chargers
- ☐ Mister Bottle / Hula Hoop / Glow Sticks
- ☐ Camelback / Yoga Mat / Day Pack
- ☐ Music Instrument / Random Acts of Kindness
- ☐ Solar String Lights / Stake Lights
- ☐ Solar Charger / Broom & Dustpan

Food

- BREAKFAST**
- ☐ Bagels Granola Cereal Bread
- ☐ Cheese: Mozz Chedd Swiss Prov
- ☐ Grapes Avocado Bananas Melon
- ☐ Eggs x Bacon Saus Hash
- ☐ Coffee Espresso Tea Milk Sugar
- LUNCH**
- ☐ Chips Salsa Dip Trail Mix
- ☐ Sand Meat: Turk RB Ham Bol
- ☐ PB&J Veg Mushrooms Tofu Tempeh
- ☐ Cliff Bars® Kind Bars® Gum

DINNER

- ☐
- ☐ Pasta Chili Lasagna Ramen
- ☐ Greens Toms Cukes Onion Carrot
- ☐ Steak Burgers Chick Dogs Saus
- ☐ Rice Beans Burritos Tacos Wraps Buns
- ☐ Brownies Cookies

OTHER

- ☐ Salt Pepper Ketchup Must Mayo
- ☐ Emergen-C® Packets ☐ Advil ☐ MEDS
- ☐ Water x
- ☐ Juice x Coke x
- ☐ Beer NO GLASS! ☐ Liquor ☐ Wine

festival checklist like this from Bonnaroo are on the web

r meaningful life, then we need places and events to do so.

Schools (and businesses) allow lesser and lesser freedom in this respect, the 'system' follows you there every step and mistakes are costly and career risks, so you adapt and fit the mold. A festival is a way out, and if we limit the freedom there, people find other ways, go underground. Humans need freedom, including privacy, otherwise we become like cattle, and progress stops.

Festivals offer a new bridge between the individual and common interests in a world where cyberspace seems to offer individuality and identity but increasingly eats away at privacy and pushes towards an entropic mediocrity.

And the practical?

This book is not about all the practical and necessary preparations for the festival visitor, but there is much to be found on the internet. Lists of all kinds, good advice about what to take, warnings about the effects of drugs, any search will yield useful and practical information.

9 The real potential of festivals

This book is not about the business models of festivals or the practical aspects of staging events or setting up communities. It looks into the social and psychological impact of festivals. This can range from just entertainment or leisure via personal growth, contact opportunity, building group awareness, community resilience to broad transformation and even a paradigm shift.

No doubt much of what is mentioned in this context can be useful for promoters, producers, organizers and all those who see festivalization as an industrial trend and a new branch of economic activity, but my focus is on something different.

- Can festivals, and especially transformative festivals, be used as a tool to initiate, in individuals and in groups, as tools for transformation?
- Can we address the problems caused by an educational system and an economy mainly aiming at individual gains and not at social cohesion by attending such events?

Given the fact, that our society suffers from a deepening rift between the have' and have nots, a lack of ecological awareness and a neo-liberal focus on profit and individuality, might festivals and such offer a way out of the dilemmas we are facing? This also means that we may have to look at the festivals and rituals of old as primarily ways to re-educate or initiate the people, enhancing their level of consciousness, social adaptation and happiness.

The initiations of old, like helping adolescents to become adult and responsible member of a tribe or people, were obviously more than superstitious primitivity, they had a social function. Many anthropologist have pointed at the lack of (rites of) initiation in our modern curricula and how this leads to immature and irresponsible adults, with costly results for society as they become egocentric and maybe antisocial citizens.

One of my deeper questions is if we can see festivals as an effective and even necessary tool to address the shortcoming of our educational system, and materialistic world view. Can we see them as po-

tential initiation (transformative tools) even as we accept that such rituals can also have the opposite effect, containing the mask, fortifying the ego, just as psychedelics and all transformative tools and therapies.

This approach might be an illusion, but as I personally experienced one of the more transformative festivals (FireDance) as an initiation and mind-blowing experience, that started me on a path of appreciation of the tribal and group consciousness, it is a valid question for me. I have spoken to many, for whom festivals like Boom or Burning man opened their eyes and made them aware of their own psyche and the way we tend to live our ego rather than our true self.

Not only the positive, there is symptomatic fixing

In the various perspectives concerning festivals and communities the focus is on how they can contribute to transformation, change, innovation and social cohesion. This is, alas, not the only effect we can expect from festivals. Like with any tools or media, there are other outcomes too. The psychological transformation, broadly the collapse of the false identity or mask of people and the emergence of a better integrated identity (closer to the whole self), may not happen, the reverse effect can result.

Partaking in a festival can lead to preservation or collapse of the old identity. This distinction between preserving or breaking the ego-mask (changing the deeper belief system) is also what makes



partaking in psychedelics drugs events, psychotherapy and in fact most educational projects often so ineffective. If we just do that and fortify our masks, maybe fix a bit in the way we behave, but not really go for the root problems and the core of our selves, we gain little. The image of the self-states illustrates this and may clarify, why much of what we think is healing, in fact is no more than fixing our ego-state or assumed self-state. The results may look positive, but in fact may prevent us from looking at the deeper level where the real problems reside. This symptomatic approach, which we all know very well from the accepted medical approach, is the danger.

In the festival perspective, we can make visitors fairly happy, feed their ego and pamper for their superficial needs, and call it a successful event. If we want to change people and society, we may need to look deeper into what drives people and how we can change them for the better. For transformation, how lofty it may sound, can also lead to a self state and belief system that is even worse.

Transformational efficacy

To answer this question, in this book a number of perspectives is dealt with. It is clear that there is no easy answer, the various angles may help to outline the underlying problems, which lies at the core of our present paradigm or rational science and extreme individualism. The final answer to the question of transformational efficacy will no doubt depend on a new synthesis, and may require a paradigm shift of enormous proportions, like re-instating the sacred. That is not a new message, many have warned against the limiting scope of materialistic rationality, but maybe the alarming realities of ex-



Community festivals can be small, but still have international recognition (Ruigoord)

treme diversity, ecological disaster en economic crisis will help to change our priorities.



10 The perspective of the organizers/producers

Here we first look at the incentives and motives of the organizers, publishers, producers etc. of events small and large. For the larger event maybe we should say producers and include the economic backers, authorities and local communities behind them, as this becomes, certainly for the large music and public festivals, more and more a regulated sector.

All the parties in the wider ecosystem of a festival, from participants to promoters, media-partners (local or national broadcasters, magazines, websites, portals), media in general, organizers, financial backers, sponsors, contractors, sub-contractors, merchandiser, IP rights organizations (music, video), retailers, caterers, security services, the talent pool (artists), the local authorities, the neighbors, the local politicians and who not are part and stakeholder in such events, should be consulted, considered and included in the planning and execution. The authorities do have an important role and responsibility, the job of a City Chief Event Manager is emerging.

While there is the formal distinction between no-logo, no-money, not-for-profit, government and private entrepreneurial festivals, in reality income has always to cover costs and meet the risks carried. The marketing of non-commercial events has to follow the same approach as profit operations. Maybe the image of an event will play some role in defining the target group, in actuality at the larger festivals a beer will cost roughly the same. The ticket price of a festival tends to go up with size and popularity, even for the non-commercial ones.

Organizing a small event can still be done by amateurs, interested citizens, host communities or hobby groups, with internet as an effective tool. The industry at the other end of the line has become professional, uses professional tools, and needs to consider economic, ecological and social impact, including disaster planning.

Places or cities where larger festivals happen or where one considers attracting such events, should therefore consult professional help. A festival destination will impact the identity, media and tourism image, city-marketing (for other purposes too), prosperity, culture, city planning, zoning, road-maps and facilities. Festivals can become identifiers (think about Woodstock, Glastonbury), attractions and markers in the tourism system.

Publicly funded Festivals (art, music, sports) are increasingly used as social marketing tools, to market and implement public-sector policies. The government wants to increase the cultural or social capital of a location, promote urban image making and revitalization, protect the status quo (often of a select elite) or a specific genre, offer an alternative to a private event (competing or just refusing permits) or influence voters.

Why, For Whom, What, Where

Hope Tschopik Schneider, producer of The Olympic Arts Festival in 1984 said:

“I do think it is possible to create a Festival, a festival of value, distinction and purpose. To do so requires real integrity of purpose (WHY?), real definition and intimate understanding of its audience (FOR WHOM?), a real commitment to the uniqueness and quality of the artists to be presented (WHAT?), and a real sense of the magic of place (WHERE?). It also requires enormous hard work in both planning and implementation. In essence, because a festival is a series of one-time, unique events with new combinations of people, there is no room for error and no time for refinement. It takes enormous resources to do a festival well, either in the form of a highly motivated and involved community or in the form of large sponsorship/funding commitments. Festivals, once the definition of who, what and why is set, are exercises in precise technical and production planning. There are endless details to run down and nail to the floor. There are fund-raising, accounting and cash flow problems to solve. There are production problems to solve. There are audience amenity problems to solve. There are public assemblage and flow problems to solve. There are political problems to

solve. There are huge marketing and public relations problems to solve.”

Many festivals were started by well-meaning amateurs with a mission and great ideals, and let's hope many more will emerge, but these days the larger event require a professional staff, financial reserves, and solid business and event plans to convince the authorities, backers, sponsors, partners and the artists that things will go smoothly. The transition from small and non-profit events to commercial has not always been easy, the initial people were often not capable to scale up, and were sidetracked or ousted.

The originals ideals are maybe still there, but the reality kicked in, even an organization with high ambitions and lofty goals has to at least run even, and maybe need a little profit to build up reserves. So the normal economic considerations do play a role, beyond the very small and amateur events, dealing with money, marketing, workers and regulations and taxes is a necessity.

The process of growth is often necessitated because there are more and more costs like for permissions, security, toilet facilities, electricity and such and local governments do require these, even for small events. The risks grow as the size grows, for events like Glastonbury, with over 175.000 visitors, the costs are enormous and thus the risks. Of course one tries to make people buy tickets in advance, but the profit is always in the last bit, and not everything is sold out. Some risks can be insured, but as the weather is a fairly insecure factor and insuring against rain is prohibitively costly, not all events can do this. The same goes for talent, when big name stars don't show up, people may want their money back.

The usual approach to save on costs is to use volunteers, and this is a common practice for the more idealistic events. There is much variety in how the volunteers are compensated for their work. They may get free admission, a lowered fee, free food or lodging, but the problem is that the government tends to see free food and board as payment and wants her share (income tax, social security).

Also the issue of work-permits for foreigners is becoming more and more a problem. The red tape to get permission to performs is becoming a nightmare, especially if it concerns people from far away.

The organization has to vouch for their insurance or assume responsibility in case they don't leave the country or fall ill. Smaller organizations are unable to deal with this, don't have the legal status necessary or the financial backbone to make such arrangements. This is seen as a serious limitation of the possibilities to organize meetings, limiting the freedom of assembly.

Especially for idealistic events, where more and more shamans, spiritual teachers, priests, monks and assorted holymen are invited, the visa problems are nearly insurmountable. The required guarantees and administrative procedures, the formal limitations of tourist visas (no allowance to work; giving lectures is more and more considered working for money) are felt as unduly restricting even the freedom of religion. The measures to keep out jihadist preachers, terrorists and fortune-seekers are often equally restricted for the people that come to share their insights and talents.

Restricting policies

The national and local regulations are supposedly there to prevent accidents, criminality, tax evasion, protect the local industry and workers, ensure safety and orderly process and much more, but in practice this is often felt as undue repression and abuse of power, for the benefit of the larger operators and as a way to keep the 'alternative' away.

The smaller and new festivals are facing serious barriers, they may get away a few times with an amateur approach, but then the authorities show up and make demands. The requirements are then so restricting, require money, physical facilities and changes in the setup, that people have to give up.

In the context of promoting festivalization it feels that the restrictive regulations that mostly hurt beginning and smaller events ignores that all festivals started small. Like elsewhere, innovation and initiative starts from the bottom and a more lenient policy towards new festival initiatives helps to grow the whole industry.

Talent

All the creative people, the performers, the designers and much of staff are often referred to as 'talent'. They are the blood and life of a

festival, the build the stages and decoration, perform on stage, create the atmosphere and interact with the public. The big acts, the global luminaries and superstars are hard to contract, have something outrageous demands and are costly. They do act as big audience attractions, but this is only affordable for the really large events and comes with a high ticket price. Such acts need to be booked years in advance, serious financial commitment are necessary, but they can make or brake the success.

Some visitors come for specific acts or artists, others come for the whole lineup, the combination of performances offered.

The big bands and artist these days earn less from their recordings, the live performances and tours are a major source of income and producers fight for them. The smaller and less prestigious festivals do tend to look for less expensive acts, often with a clearly different sound or character like African percussionist or singers, and resort more to local talent.

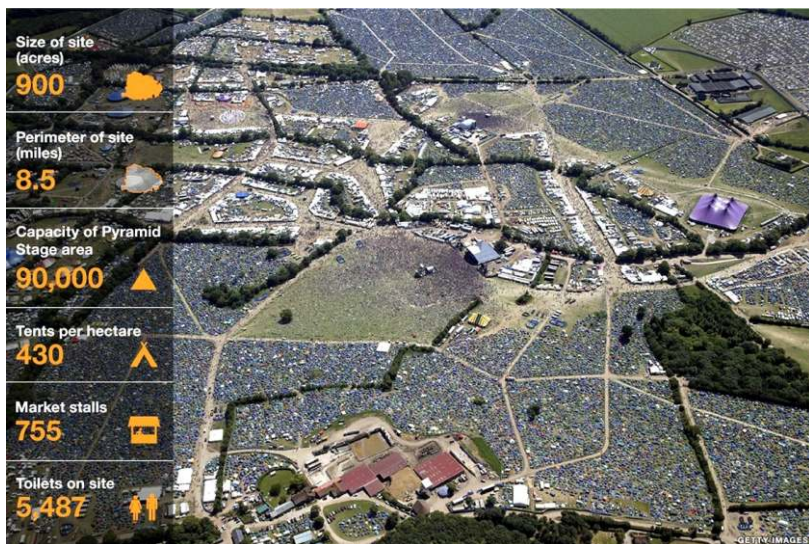
For the intentional and alternative festivals the big name bands are less important, it's not all about the music, but good MC's (master of ceremony) can demand a high fee. Their job, in opening and closing rituals, is important, they can set the mood for the whole event.

Ambitions

Is it all about money and power or are there other motives to organize festivals? Profits are important, but often the opportunity to influence the crowd plays a role. This can have commercial grounds, brand (and band) awareness will eventually means cashing in, but there are political movements and religious organizations too, that use festivals to steer their adherents.

The support of sponsors and government supporting events with money, services, free security is a way of buying sympathy, brand recognition, attendee data, access to people in a different





Statistics of Glastonbury, one of the mega-events (source BBC)

state of awareness (and easily brainwashed with suggestions). This is one of the dangers of the whole trend, situations and conditions are created where influencing the crowd is relatively easy and positive, but also dangerous messages can be planted in the unconscious. The group-mind mechanisms and potential for manipulation are not (yet) well understood by science, but there are enough people who are intuitively masters of persuasion. Their message may be political correct or incorrect, left, right, liberal, anarchistic, leading to peace or violence, the one on the stage has the power to swing opinions, votes and behavior.

The motives may be less materialistic and more friendly, from seeing festivals as a way to keep the peace, promote cohesion and integration, spreading culture, promoting ecology and other lofty stories. The angles are varied and different, but the do-gooder style is often unmistakable.

Many 'alternative' festivals claim to have no ties with big industry and call themselves 'no-logo' festivals, alternative, ecological, gifting, equal opportunity. But beware, opening addresses are full of this and the amount of BS dished out by the organizers and their

spokespersons is enormous, not much short of what politicians on the campaign trail and CEOs trying to sell IPO-shares will tell their listeners. Of course all this backed up with brochures, videos and books that underscore the message. Events like Boom or Burning Man have PR-machines that equal those of large corporations and do sail with the tide, building support and followers (potential attendees).

Image and gestalt counts

It's how the (potential) audience sees a festival that decides its success. So try to look 'good', emphasize how healthy, vegetarian, drug free, smoke free and supportive an event is, in addition of course to what is offered as entertainment, the music, stars and scenery. Investing in image pays off, the promotion and marketing of festivals is all about that, using internet and social media, but also old fashioned ways like flyering cars on parking lots at the end of a festival.



Marketing Overview	Yes = 1	No = 0
1. Your main event page/s have a clear link from your home page (and vice versa)		
2. You segment your events to help people find the type of events they are after (for example conferences / dinners / training)		
3. Your event lists are truly searchable (i.e. you don't need to know the name or the date to find it)		
4. You can search your events by topic, price and location		
5. You separate your own events from other organisations' events which you list on your website		
6. You separate events which are run by smaller parts of the organisation e.g. 'regional' from your big national events		
7. You have microsites (or all the functionality you need on your own website) for your large events		
8. Delegates are able to book online		
9. Delegates are able to pay online		
10. You do not use paper booking forms		
11. You offer a telephone line for bookings or a number if bookers experience difficulties		
12. You update your event pages 3 – 5 (at a minimum) times with new information over the course of an event		
13. Your web pages have more detail than your marketing email		

Festival organizers and producers have to reckon with the perception of people at different moments. There is the ‘appreciation’ and ‘meaning’ at a distance (in relation to the image of the event) and the immediate drives and emotions of the moment, where also the talent, the acts and performers of course are the direct link and the group mind happens. In the moment one can be hilarious, in overdrive, but also shortsighted. Going for this chick or that joint is what drives people and gives immediate gratification and thus meaning, a sense of scoring.

As an example, the interest in encounters labeled ‘tantra’ is often enormous and it’s a very profitable label to carry. People flock to



opportunities that transcend the normal, and then of course sex, drugs and rock&roll score, before transcendence or the mystical. Is that the soul-level and ‘other worldly’ deep meaning Viktor Frankl talks about or just our animalistic and atavistic side? Maybe a tantra work shop doesn’t bring you buddhahood, but a new partner or some good sex, for many that’s meaning enough.

Apart from the three dimensions participation, transformation and identification that I use to demarcate the field a bit and separate the more active and engaging events and places from the merely consumptive festivals and entertainment/leisure/theme parks there are of

course many more practical considerations and motives to attend or join as volunteer.

The very mundane considerations like money, hidden additional costs, timing, the holiday period of the children, can we bring an animal, what is the food regime, what kind of music is there, how far do I have to travel, what kind of people of what age attend, these are all important, but for different people.

Festival or community organizers have to look at these factors, but the more or less basic economic thinking and marketing applies here. What is the target group, what do they want, how do we reach them, what talent (act) do we hire, how do we and create interest, desire and action to join, how to combine push and pull forces, what general attendant-profiles can be discerned in the festival World, with what specific demands and teasers, music style and profit potential for the producers.

In general this is covered in 'normal education and literature' about event management and we will skip that in order to focus on alternative ways to discern the needs of potential participants.

There are a number of issues that are real, but not above board and can only be dealt with outside the public sphere. The availability of drugs for instance, for many attendees that is an issue. Will there be 'house-dealers', strict control or torpidness and nonchalance, when is the police called in, what are the consequences in overdose situations for those reporting problems. Smoking is another, formally forbidden indoors, but at festivals permitted (not always). This has been indicated as a factor in the disappearance of much of the disco and dance venues in many cities, many people don't want to go to a place where they have to go outside to have a smoke. Other issues like segregation, do we want minorities, gays, gang members, bikers, seniors, poor people, travelers, etc. to be part of the crowd and how do we exclude them, are also dealt with behind the curtain. And what about the age-control, minors usually find ways to get booze or cigarettes, how much of that is allowed? Nakedness, sexual misconduct, gambling, dealing, is all this clear and above board, communicated in a proper way or left to improvisation in the moment.

The rules of conduct and whether and how they are communicated or enforced are important. Even as it looks like total openness and communication is the best strategy, in reality many choices are made. At many festivals, stealing happens and can become a real pest, as organized gangs start to operate. But sometimes, in order not to damage the ‘friendly, permissive and spiritual atmosphere’ incidents are not made public, apparently nothing is wrong, everybody happy, but this means the bad elements will have a field day.

Design and Gestalt

To create or design a festival at the ‘Gestalt’ level is, even with the enormous number of events, still more of an art than a science. There are people very good at it, intuitively, but don’t ask them for the secrets of their success, they just do it, learned it by doing and try. This is also the case for computer games. There is much about how to make games, but little theory or science as to why they are successful. It’s often a matter of trial and error, of repeating and extending successful formulas, formal design at the level of game creation is rare.

The design space and human problem solving notions of people like Herbert Simon have remained a theoretical ideal, except that there is this awareness that design space or solution space are different, that great ideas need practical trials. Looking for design ideas and improvements in both the space of hypotheses (generation of ideas) and the space of experiments (testing of ideas) helps to identify flaws and improves feedback..

Event impact; ecological, social

A growing concern is the impact festivals and ‘alternative’ communities can have and this implies much more than the ecological damage, the waste and damage to nature. Many festivals call themselves ‘green’, even claim they leave the place as they found it, but the long term impact of any activity needs to be considered. Nature reserves turned into festival grounds, will they have the resilience to recuperate? Not all life forms will come back once the place has been used, not all waste can be removed.

The social, economic and infra structural impact of festivals can last for years. Woodstock has become a landmark and tourist attraction, the economic long term impact is clear there. The city of Amsterdam and surroundings, where not only many festivals are held, but a real festival industry developed, made a name for herself as ‘festival city’. It attracts many festival tourists, but many are just backpack budget youngsters, attracting dope dealers, irritating the citizens and not filling the more expensive hotels and facilities.

Considering all the positive and negative aspects of festivals, including long term effects, should be part of the regulations and permission procedures.

Volunteers

Many festivals have volunteers, people that help build, facilitate, control or perform. There are volunteers manning the ticket-booth, coping with internet, medical or drug-abuse support, they are often

essential to make the event happen and show black figures. For non-commercial festivals maybe all are volunteers, but even very large events use them, in return for a free or discounted tickets, food stamps, access to facilities, back-stage passes, etc. For many acting or pretending as volunteers is what participation makes possible, the fees of festivals are often pretty steep (and the

Fall Festival Checklist



- 2-3 Months Before**
 - ☐ Decide on a theme. Such as a Gourd Festival, Halloween, or a Scare Fair.
 - ☐ Assemble a team. Include an Activity Planner, Shopper, Volunteer Coordinator, and Marketer.
 - ☐ Create a budget. Calculate costs of food, entertainment, and promotions.
 - ☐ Contact local businesses to ask for donations, sponsorships, or to buy booth space.
 - ☐ Recruit volunteers. Ask parents, relatives, and local high school students to help.
 - ☐ Set date and location. Plan with parking space, weather, and lighting in mind.
- 1 Month Before**
 - ☐ Plan a variety of games for all ages.
 - ☐ Create booths and plan festival setup.
 - ☐ Display posters and send flyers home with students.
 - ☐ Use email, social media, and the school website to increase ticket sales.
 - ☐ Add the festival to your SmartCal calendar.
 - ☐ Plan the menu. Delegate who should make or bring snacks.
 - ☐ Make a shopping list. Purchase door prizes, game prizes, and other supplies.
- 1-3 Days Before**
 - ☐ Set up booths and tables.
 - ☐ Confirm orders if ordering food or begin preparation.
 - ☐ Double-check all supplies are purchased.
 - ☐ Send reminders to volunteers.
- Day of Festival**
 - ☐ Have a great time!
 - ☐ Record lessons learned for ways to improve next year.

Artwork by QuietVell LLC, QuietVell.com

**SmartCal**<http://www.smartcal.it>

Event planning can be small or very extensive

popular ones sell out months or a year in advance or can only be had via a lottery).

The problems with volunteers are many; how to manage them, separate the hard workers from the lazy profiteers (some estimate 35% or more), prevent abuse, drug smuggling or dealing, criminal intentions, stealing, etc.? There are many ways of dealing with this, and often the volunteers or co-creators are the core of the whole set-up, but there is also a trend not to use volunteers and hire paid personnel and staff from reliable contractors only.

The issue of working permits, working conditions and taxable compensations (food, shelter etc.) for volunteers is a growing concern. Governments like the income, fear all this gifting and sharing makes them miss out on VAT or sales-tax, want to prevent illegal workers and in general will do anything to prevent them from being held accountable if things do get out of hand.

The money issue plays a role here too. Trusting volunteers with money is asking for trouble. Very often there are tokens or festival coins to prevent the use of cash, concession operators are not supposed to accept money, but this is hard to enforce. The idea is to prevent stealing or hiding income from the organization (who might want a percentage of the sales) but electronic money, credit cards use etc. make this hard to enforce.

After-Care

A festival ends at a certain moment, but the attendants may need some care afterwards. The need to take care of people that went through serious transformation or OD'd or need help otherwise is obvious, but often ignored and not a main worry. It should be, anyway! But there may be other concerns, people may have experienced either some revelation, some life-changing meeting or revelation, but also things like depression, loneliness, or just bad memories may affect many. To deal with this in a responsible way is quite a challenge.



Offline and online, fan & tribe building

The number of attendees that matter these days is not only those physically present, many follow events online, remotely via internet or traditional television, paid or free. Cyberspace broadens the scope by transcending physical limits. People can follow the event online and this 'remote' participation feeds back into the crowd by social media contacts. Business models capitalizing on these remote audiences are developing, one can charge for this, make money off the commercials, sell the database etc.

Cyberspace is definitely a factor in the growth of festivals and some believe in the overall size and effects of festivals, because its effects on crowd behavior. Messages, opinions, disappointment and enthusiasm are spread quickly by way of sms, tweet, Whatsapp, apps and social media. The increased connections between people with different views, looking at the same thing, can create a collective image, a group mind. The movement of such an interconnected group or audience resembles that of fish in a school, of birds swarming: they operate together, in a coordinated way. In such a pattern, there always will be a few people leading the majority, and their influence is making (allowing) others to see a limited perspective. The feedback is fast, the mood swings follow suit and thus also dangerous oscillation can happen, the crowd can get out of hand.

Internet as a major tool

To plan, promote and organize events these days of course requires internet and computers. Cyber-promotion, fan-sites, loyalty programs, online ticket sales, social media, without internet things would be nearly impossible. Adequate project management and event management software, dedicated apps, booking services, etc. etc. are essential. There is a host of companies offering specialized or general software for specialized festival project planning and event management. Dedicated apps for promotion or on-site guidance are a necessity these days and serve for loyalty programs too. There is a tendency to use profiling, attendance history and such to filter participation. With concentration of festival operators and globalization of the industry with large players like ID&T (now part of US owned SFX/Live Nation) this is a possibility, even as those

organizations claim visitor data are not stored. However, big data techniques and anonymous profiling can lead to very focused promotion and pricing strategies.

Opportunities, sponsors, partnering

‘Eventification’ can mean growth – for the publishers, sponsors, the city. That is, if one succeeds, but it’s a tough business. There are many competing events taking place and often simultaneously. An events proposition, certainly at the promotional level, really needs to capture the imagination rather than iterate what competitors are already doing.

It is a matter of combining and mixing more or less fixed elements into an attractive proposition. Attractive to the potential visitors, these days mostly addressed by email and social media. Using fan-sites, blogs, LinkedIn groups, twitter and Facebook and supporting informal exchanges to advertise events is an important marketing avenue.

The sponsors are a main source of income. Different from media exposure like television the sponsors are offered direct physical contact and feedback opportunities, using offline, face-to-face relationships. This can be used for image building, but also direct lead generation with immediate conversion possibilities. The connection with media-partners, like radio-stations, magazines, web-portals or newspapers, can not only be used to assure publicity, but also on-premise (VIP) sub-events and transmissions. Cross-licensing the use of logos and names can maximize effect.

The event producers have a role similar to that of publishers in the old model. Editing an event, shifting and co-ordinating the acts, resources, timing, mood setting, it is more than just making a line-up of acts. They need to make sure to get the necessary buy-in from the outsiders, sponsors, the artists, local governments and venue owners but also from their teams, especially the editorial team where the preparatory decision-making process is concentrated with often meticulous planning and a time horizon spanning years. A clear vision and ambition should be defined (by the top people) and embedded in the culture of the business, to ensure everybody walks in the same direction.

Partnerships and joint ventures at or around festivals, with transport companies, hotels, campsites,, pizza services, vendors and service providers, in that way offering additional services, can boost success and income. The list runs endless, like charging telephones, lockers, showers, rentals, bikes or other on-site transport options, drugs-tests, OD-facilities, dedicated contact services (like local Tinder or Twitter) and taking care of kids or animals. Farming out such things or working with partners makes sense, and sometimes the additional services turn out to be a main assets, like the “healing fields” in alternative festival settings. The variety in financial or barter deals in this respect is a challenge and a science per se, but also a minefield of potential problems.

The technology to track and trace the audience, who goes where and at what time, which artists make people move, when does one go for food and drinks, these are the data that help analyze the event and plan the next one. Internet, smartphones and sensors, NFC and Bluetooth, all can be used. Which source is triggering the most registrations? Where are the best results coming from? Which promotional avenues are the most effective, which act the most popular, what food sells best at what time? Understanding where results are coming from by tracking every response will help to spot where the most effective marketing opportunities lie.

Deconstruction and priming

Festival producers probably thoroughly evaluate past events. Deconstruction of successful and failed events, in order to pinpoint what works and what doesn't makes a lot of sense, but not much has been published about this. Given the sometimes extreme and extravagant structures and expanded stages like at the Tomorrowland festivals, Burning Man and elsewhere it is sensible to analyze the effects of decor, lighting, dynamism and of course music in a structured way. Not only the positive ones like enthusiasm but also how some effects, levels and frequencies of sound, lighting and imagery may lead to aggression, disinterest, boredom or even sexual arousal.

The frequency following response (FFR) of periodic or nearly-periodic auditory stimuli is of course well known and is used by DJ's to influence the mood of a crowd, but video imagery, décor, lighting

are obviously factors in ‘playing the audience’, and often cleverly used by the artists. Neuropsychology has found support for such effects in so-called mirror-neurons; people more or less automatically imitate what they see. Dancing on the stage makes the crowd move too.

This is also a concern, since aggressive, antisocial, racist or overtly sexual behavior on stage (or in video games etc.) is imitated. The priming effects of media, not only television, movies, but also internet, computer games and festivals, are well researched by people like Leonard Berkowitz and for internet Nicholas Carr (in *Shallows*) warned against the negative impact of screen-addiction.

We seem to pick up easily on media-messages, especially in crowds; the group mind is easily tricked and repeated exposure will train our brain to go with the flow. This is exactly what marketing and building loyalty is all about, we like specific bands or music because we know it, it reminds us of earlier exposure, it feels familiar and trustworthy. This can be used in positive and negative ways, think about political rallies and demonstrations. Kindness Priming (positive psychology) is a specific form of priming that occurs when a subject experiences an act of kindness and subsequently experiences a lower threshold of activation when subsequently encountering positive stimuli. A unique feature of kindness priming is that it causes a temporary increased resistance to negative stimuli in addition to the increased activation of positive associative networks.

On the other hand the general aggression model (GAM) integrates the priming theory with the social learning theory to describe how previously learned violent behavior may be triggered by thoughts, emotions, or physiological states provoked by media exposure. This however is a complex field and the theoretical models are still far from real explanations. Most focus on cognitive processes, but emotions and the body probably play an important role in how we deal with stimuli. The impact of festival performances on the individual and group mind and behavior can be very intense, and should be taken serious!



11 Size of events

Many people ask whether they should go to a large event or look for a smaller and more cozy festival. There is no easy answer, as this depends on what one wants and what the event offers. It may look like large events are less personal, more commercial and with less contact opportunities, but if the organizers emphasize contact they can set up smaller sub-units or areas, where specific moods are realized. It all has to do with the resonance between the visitor and the event and this is where the identification is important. Many people go to the same festival every year, they are fans and indeed ‘citizens’ of such an event.

Size does matter, but having been at supersized religious festivals held for hundreds of years like the Kumba Melas in India, I can testify that those can be as engaging and impressive as a small alternative camp in nature. Of course the mass of people can cause problems like a stampede at the 2013 Allahabad Maha Kumb Mela where millions (some claim there were 30 million people at the peak day of the event) gathered at the confluence of the Yamuna and the Ganges rivers to take a holy dip. The grounds are very well organized, and have been a safe and very colorful and even supportive environment, but at the station a stampede caused some 40 deaths. The 2010 stampede disaster in Duisburg has obviously made clear that safety is a big issue at these enormous events.

At public events like Sail Amsterdam or the ‘Koningsdag’ in Amsterdam easily more than half a million people crowd the inner city with often small streets. It’s a miracle and testifying to the friendly mood and smart crowd control that no major accidents then happen. Many different sub-events and stages, and public signage systems help to disperse the audience.

The largest music festivals are in Europe like Glastonbury (175.000), Werchter, Roskilde, T in the Park, Sziget, Open’er, Sonar. But America is catching up with Coachella, regional Tomorrowlands, Bonnaroo, where also more than a hundred thousand gather to enjoy the music and the atmosphere. The Bogota Roque al Parque is also gigantic. The lists of festivals and atten-

The largest music festivals (2012)

comparing visitors per day (not the total)

Festival	Location	Duration (days)	Estimated attendance per day
Glastonbury	Worthy Farm, Pilton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, United Kingdom	5	175,000
Roskilde	Roskilde, Denmark	4	110,000
Rock Werchter	Werchter, Belgium	4	110,000
Rock al Parque	Bogota, Colombia	4	88,600
T in the Park	Balado, Kinross-Shire, Scotland	3	85,000
Summerfest	Henry Maier Festival Park, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, United States	11	82,000
Exit	Petrovaradin Fortress, Novi Sad, Vojvodina, Serbia	4	75,000
Coachella	Coachella, California, United States	3	75,000
Reading-Leads Festival	Reading, Leads, United Kingdom	3	75,000
Sziget	Budapest, Hungary	6	65,000
Pukkelpop	Kiwi-Hasselt, Belgium	3	62,500
Pinkpop	Landgraaf, Netherlands	3	60,000
Big Day Out	Gold Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Australia and Auckland, New Zealand	11	56,000
Burning Man	Black Rock Desert, Nevada, United States	7	50,000
Bonnaroo	Great Stage Park, Manchester, Tennessee, United States	4	40,000
Fuji Rock	Naebi Ski Resort, Japan	3	40,000
Hurricane	Scheeßel, Lower Saxony, Germany	3	40,000
Download	Donington Park, United Kingdom	3	37,000
Benicassim	Benicassim, on the coast between Valencia and Barcelona, Spain	4	32,000
Wireless	Hyde Park, London, United Kingdom	3	17,500

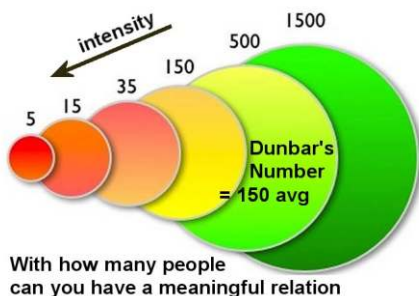
Sources: <http://www.wikifestivals.com/wiki/list-international-music-festivals-attendance>, http://www.cnn.com/id/42150834/The_Worlds_s_Biggest_Music_Festivals, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_festivals.

dance are not very accurate, as the exact number of attendees is a trade secret and bi-annual festivals are not always included.

The relationship between size and focus has not been the subject of much study, it seems that positioning a festival is much more a matter of intuition and art than the subject of serious research. In a way this is amazing, for understanding what makes people attend is valuable material, for the marketers, the government and the organizers. The general approaches in commercial economy with target groups, audience differentiation, market research and such are of course used and valid, but things like crowd control, group mind manipulation, the effects of mobile phones, social media and drugs on the audience and potential visitors are not extensively studied. How scenery, location, lay-out, decoration, weather, facilities and catering

influence the mood at a festival is a matter of intuition, not of science.

The matter is very complex, but mass-marketing and in fact sociology are not much better in coming up with clear guidelines and models to evaluate group processes. Even understanding how group size affects outcome has to draw on some experiments in the sixties, where T. Leary and the psychedelic gang established that for transformational effect, a group size of 6 is optimal.



How these days social media like Facebook influence behavior, attendance or psychological welfare is an issue much has been written about, but no clear model or formulas emerged.

There is the network approach, where technology is supposed to bring more connectivity and cohesion and more is considered better. More nodes, more network connections lead to more value. People who were actually involved in the design and implementation of the internet and network technology are optimistic about what networks will bring to us. They believe in further development of the internet (bandwidth, technology, intelligence, big data), some see a development similar to the growth of a living thing.

Cyberspace (as an extension of life really) is a not a thermodynamically closed system and therefore doesn't obey the rules of entropy. It evolves like a living entity, growing and offering new opportunities, overcoming obstacles. There is the danger of entropic homogenization, of losing diversity and identity, but this is not widely recognized, technology will save us, with even major jumps, like the singularity jump Ray Kurzweil is so optimistic about.

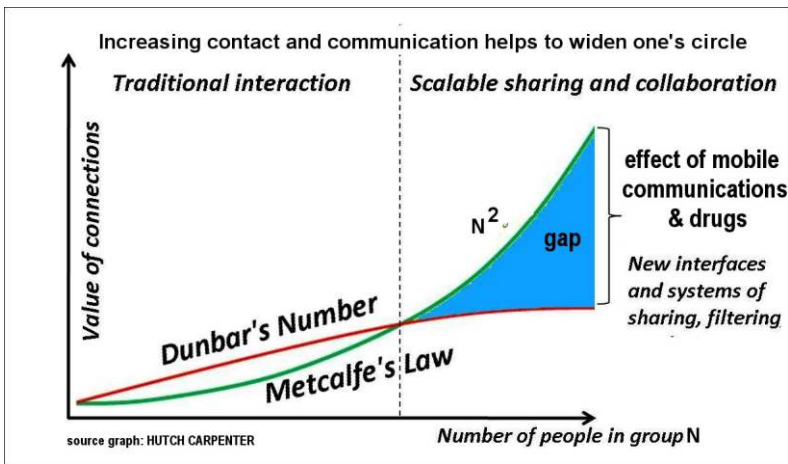
This optimism centers around the idea that more contacts increase the value of a network, Metcalfe's Law stipulates that the value of the network increases with the square of the number of nodes. This may have some value for technical networks, but when there are

people around there are other mechanisms, like Dunbar's number and the Allen curve, both limiting the value.

Group size and social platform, Dunbar's number

The cohesion effects of electronic devices and social media are substantial, but there is an important social effect that limits the number of people we can interact with, also in the festival context. We can be part of a crowd but as social beings we are not able to have a meaningful relation with all. The size of a tribe or isolated group is thus limited in the sense that we have a limited span of people we can relate to. It takes time to know, recognize and trust other people and this limits the effective group size.

This was noticed in groups of monkeys, first by Robin Dunbar, their groups are limited in size as they have to spend much of their time establishing and maintaining social hierarchies and pecking order. This applies to humans as well. For humans the group number varies but the median number according to Robin Dunbar is about 150. This is supposed to be influenced by the basic living conditions and also the stage of development of a culture. The more people can live and work together the more specialization is possible and this brings technology, progress etc. Rituals, as being a very core contact platform, would help to structure inner tribe contacts, increase the potential group size and thus would be instrumental in sustainability and development. In this way rituals are part of the development

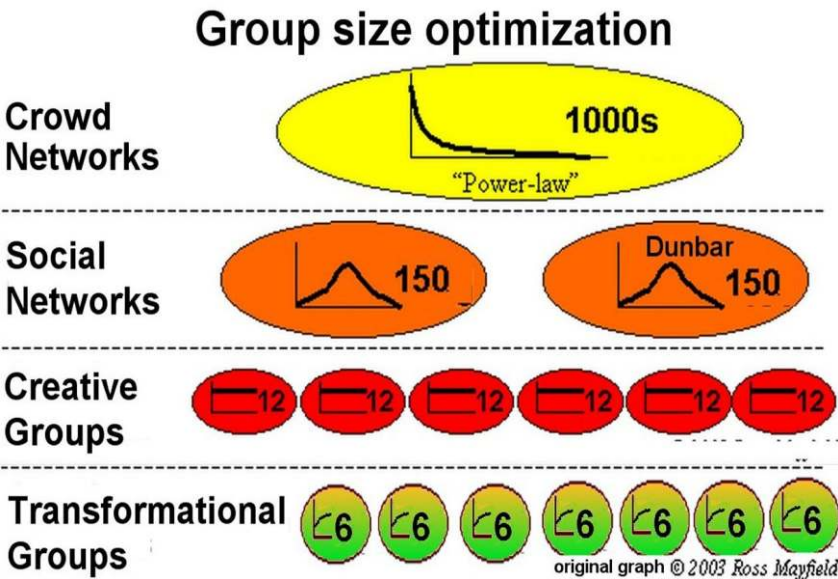


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nes toward more complex societies, as they help increase Dunbar’s number.

They provide a means for structuring the ties between people, establish a network of stronger ties. To turn accidental contacts into something more is what physical contact can achieve, and to help this festivals can organize contact opportunities, create smaller groups, workshops, sharings, chill areas and such.

Now on a large festival the level of interaction is less intimate, as we are unable to hook up with everybody, even for just a chat. If we split the crowd up in smaller groups, a higher level of meaningful contact is possible. Here the goal of providing contact plays a role, different group sizes are appropriate for different purposes. For having sex obviously two is a logical number, for transformational groups six is recommended, for talking and creative encounters twelve, for social events Dunbar’s number (150) comes into play and the loose crowd networks can run in the thousands.



Serving all or just you

The challenge for organizers is to serve as many of the attendance as possible. The crowd rules, but it's the individual who has to decide to come back. The challenge for organizers is to serve as many of the attendance as possible, find a compromise between the collective needs and the individual variations. The individual need to connect, make meaningful contacts, is one of those individual needs that requires planning, creating contact opportunities.. Partitioning the crowd, forming smaller units, stimulating bonding in smaller groups, create one-on-one meeting spots, next to facilitating the larger acts and crowds is what is now done at most of the festivals and often in very creative ways. This process of atomizing the group to allow new molecules to emerge and new contacts to be made is one of the least understood mechanisms of festivals, but very important for how it is experienced and the success of it in the eyes of the participants.

Festival in festival, differentiation

Large festivals with just a main stage and a single line-up don't happen anymore, there are multiple stages, a choice in artists and activities. Operators understand that certainly for longer festivals the people don't all want the same thing at the same time and that to cater for the differences, more activities, more stages, tents, meeting places and such have to be provided. Add to that the need to spread the concessions, food places, facilities and to control the mood and movements of the crowd, the large festivals become clusters of sub-festivals. This means not only offering more stages, it means also a variation in the size of the acts and sub-events. More engaging, more transformative meetings are usually smaller, and having a campfire with 5 or 10 people enjoying some music and the company should also be possible. The marketing people now realize that the modern customer is not the same person with consistent needs, but changes, joins groups and leaves them, is in fact not easily profiled. So festivals try to offer everything, and of course some statistical and predictable trends emerge, but the whole is fluent, a festival is a flux of people, moods, energy.

Catering to different rhythms, different styles, different moods, different group sizes for different purposes, compartmentalization becomes a necessity. The really large festivals like Glastonbury become festival-cities, often the size of a big town, with a planning and layout like that of a city. Burning Man, because it is held in a normally empty desert, is even laid out in a form that approaches the ideal of city planners.

Just as in shopping malls, shop-in-shop, festival-in-festival is emerging, the one visitor can have a totally different schedule and experience than the other, listening to different music, attending different workshops, meeting a different crowd and eating different food. The notion of a 'festival city' emerges and as these large festivals are temporary, unlike for instance a Disneyland with more or less fixed layout, rides and building, this is a great opportunity to experiment and learn about urban planning.

A future with less work, and more need for entertainment will require cities that cater for the needs of participation, transformation and identification, will offer some kind of meaning, and so the experiments with large festivals offer a perspective, a laboratory for the future of cities.

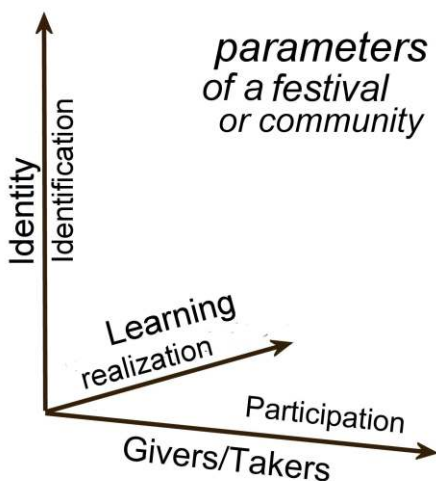
12 Classification and parameters of evenst, festivals, autonomous zones

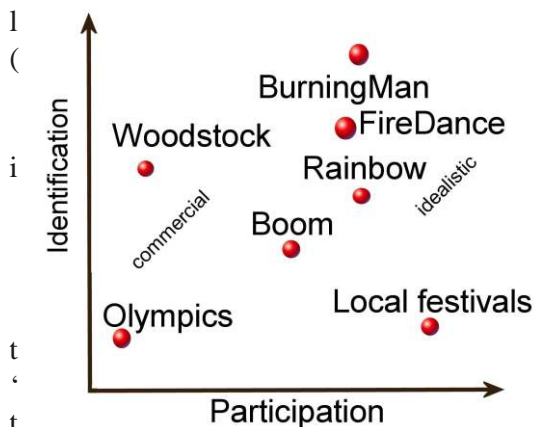
There are many different kinds of festivals, the economic and cultural diversity of society is mirrored in the variety and diversity of the festivals. There are Alternative / Art / Carnival / Comedy / Culture / Electronic / Folk / Hip Hop / R&B / Indie / Music / Pop / Reggae / Rock / Ska / Theater/ Spiritual/ Shamanistic/ Poetry/ Healing/ Feminine/ New Age/ Religious/ Political/ Eco/ Rainbow/ Fringe and a host of other types of festivals. Wikipedia identifies bird festivals, religious festivals, arts Festivals, food and drink festivals, seasonal and harvest festivals. But there are also festivals for hackers, swingers, bikers, veterans and gays, in fact nearly every group and subgroup in society has festivals, gatherings, feasts or meetings.

A mirror of diversity

Trying to classify and identify the trend in the festival world, especially the boom of the past decades is therefore comparable to analyzing and understanding society and as such quite an endeavor. Too big for the scope of this book, so the emphasis will be on understanding the differences rather than the similarities with a focus on festivals that offer a markedly different regime and some autonomy, the TAZ-type of events.

That the normal social and economic models are applicable is not contested, but the purpose here is to come up with a different approach to understanding and model festivals. So we to look beyond the established models. As argued before, the large music festivals are, with exceptions





like Boom, Fusion Berlin) and Burning Man, usually fairly commercial and not into offering a really autonomous zone experience. But the what makes a TAZ or autonomous community attractive, apart from the hard' parameters of autonomy like physical isolation, economic

sustainability, ownership situation, borders with the outside world and different rules and morals.

Why do people like to visit Ruigoord, Christiania or go to a desert location like Burning Man, what makes these emotionally attractive? A broad answer could be that these places are different, alternative, exciting, but can we find a way to seize up and compare what they offer?

Parameters that matter are still fairly intangible and not really independent dimensions, but are part of the persona, the gestalt of a place. Maybe they are illusionary, just an image that reached the public or the tribe, but let me offer a framework. I limit the factors or parameters to only three, ignoring the parameter size as it turns out, that even very large events can offer a great TAZ experience, if that is made a priority.

Participation, contribution

Even at a small party we notice that there are people who contribute (givers), while others are just consumers (takers). Our judgment in this is often a projection, we rate others as mirrors of ourselves, but the general idea is clear. Festivals also have givers and takers, and of course one pays for what is consumed, but offering ways to participate beyond cheering and applause is what distinguishes a festival. Being part of what happens, contributing more than paying the fee for the entrance ticket or wristband is what stimulates people and

gives them meaning. This can be done by participation as a volunteer, but there are many options to create participation, engage the visitors, stimulate exchange and helping others. As a volunteer, as unpaid performer, helping out at all levels in the organization and on the floor is what many people like about the participatory events. Volunteering options are appreciated, they lower the threshold for attendance, help increase diversity and appeal to the community feelings. It helps that other important parameter, identification, makes one feel being a partner and cocreator. It's also a great way to make contacts, feel important and save some money in the process. The level of participation offered and possible is usually a good indicator of the openness of the organization and producers. The volunteers or cocreators are also a strong base for promotion, the fan-community and become 'ambassadors', spreading the word.

Identification

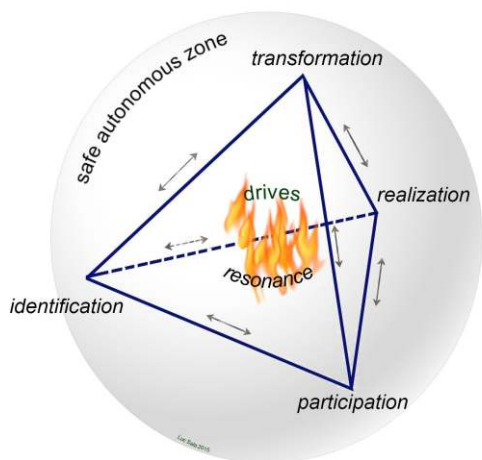
An event needs identity to allow identification. Just having the T-shirts, buttons and a website is not enough. Identity is earned, and an important factor in the emotional bonding between the event and the attendees. It may take some time, require experience and building trust, as identification means also commitment. To see oneself proudly as a 'Burner', as being part of the scene, the tribe or the event adds to the sense of meaning, of belonging, of being part of it at an emotional level.

The feeling of being connected to the event persona is precious, for the people, but it is the invisible capital, the true value of the event. Identification and participation together allow for some ranking of festivals (see picture).

Realization

The cognitive realization is also important, our minds are where all the emotional and body information eventually will end up. To realize what is happening and integrate that into our plans for the future is what will make any transformation effective.

As explained earlier, the three constituents, body, mind, and heart (emotions) are what drives us, of course depending on your personality and the situation, but together they are what then can lead to



the parameters and mechanisms of change

transformation, to change. To make this happen, resonance between the three aspects need to happen to make the transformation to occur.

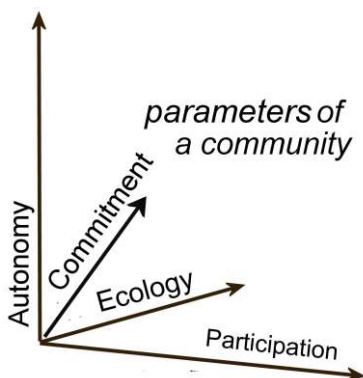
Transformation inner and outer creativity

Do people go to festivals to seek transformation? Not many visitors will admit this, but

there is this silent hope, that they will meet their soul mate, find self-realization, go through an inner transformation by using some substance, find ‘their’ teacher or guru.

Many alternative festivals have the explicit goals of changing the world, bring realization of ecology, the human condition or spreading a belief system. They promote change and this may resonate with those also looking for a break in their routine, a new start, a transformation.

Transforming the world or transforming oneself, both mean change, causation, new views on reality. Both are a creative process, and creativity in that sense comes close to transformation. Festivals that promote art, experimentation in the program and the setting are usually also sympathetic to personal growth, offer engaging workshops, contact possibilities and the necessity of some autonomy to do this is obvious. As a group setting helps transformation, offering support and some security, contact opportunities are an important part of it.



There are risks, like flipping in a trip, being disappointed in those new friends, not being respected for your ideas or efforts, things can go wrong, but without risk and trying The creative processes in staging an event, building a community or making oneself vulnerable are often amazing and the results fantastic, but not always sustainable or economically and ecologically sound. It is however in the experimentation that we learn and innovate.

A festival that is serious about offering transformation will attract people genuinely interesting and willing to walk the mile, but it also will scare away the folks that just want to be left alone, the consumers looking just for entertainment. On the other hand, transformation, experiments, grandiose rituals and constructions will in the end also attract the tourist. This is what happens with successful event like Burning Man, the ‘newcomers’ are less interested in transformation, they come to see the “zoo”, be astonished by the art and diversity, but are not really contributors, just paying visitors.

Community parameters

In general the same parameters as for festivals are at play in more permanent autonomous zones, the intentional communities and what are called free cultural spaces. There are many of these places, like Christiania, Ruigoord, leftovers from the squatter days or located in old industrial complexes, army depots and such.

These ‘alternative’ communities are considered breeding places for artistic and social change, but they also are places where people live and work. Ecology and identity are more relevant as one has to live at the place. Also the relationship with the authorities is usually more strained. Autonomy is harder to sustain if the world of money, laws and regulations has time to call at the entrance.

13 The role of the government

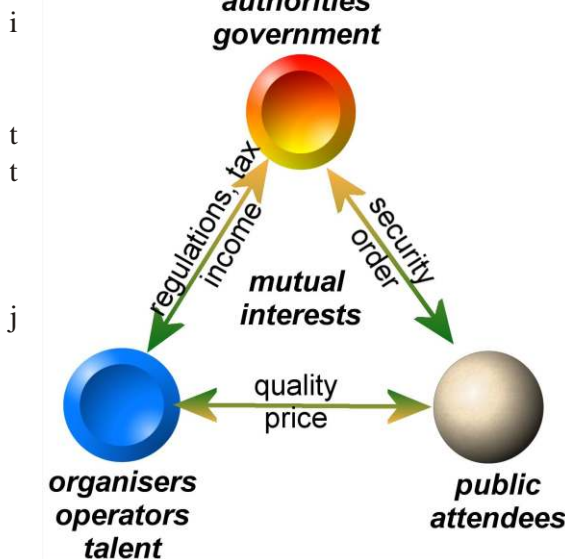
The authorities and the government are an important factor in the festivalscape. Festivals are more than the result of commercial push and pull, of providers of a service and customers trying to make a buck or push their ideals. They impact the wider society and have to follow certain rules concerning security and law and order. The authorities are involved as regulators, but also as facilitators and as the importance of festivalization is more and more recognized cities see it as a way to attract business, tourism and status.

Governments also use festivals as a way to control people, not necessarily in a negative way. Festivals are good tools to 'vent off steam', unite the people, create cohesion, overcome cultural or ethnic diversity, breed a common vibe or disperse the 'correct' morals. This is of course not new, most cultures and traditions used festivals and ritual gatherings to give meaning and order to public and private life, or to unite the social and the sacred. Often these events were rooted in natural sequences, the weather, the seasons and planetary movements, superimposed with otherworldly (religious)

considerations, magery and myths.

It is good to note that many indigenous cultures would spend up to 70% of their time on ritual. The circumstances of life were often so good, that just little time was spent on food and safety.

Festivals are great ways to keep the people in line. The Romans provided



‘bread and circuses’ to keep their middle classes happy, we face the same challenge in the 21st century.

Festivals are cultural and creative impulses and may be also motors for the economy. They are also a risk as things can get out of hands, accidents and even disasters happen and the role of the government, mostly the local authorities, is thus important. They can regulate and limit the choices, like between quality and quantity, are not easy. As Monica Sassatelli remarked at the Boekman conference about festivals in Amsterdam in 2013, cities have to compromise between innovation and McFestivalization.

Cities can stimulate, but also limit the scope of festivals. This by imposing such strict rules and demands that things don’t work anymore, that new initiatives are stifled or just ‘trusted’ partners are allowed to run things in what then becomes a regulated industry. A closed shop, with large operators and little control and much opportunity for corruption, there is as yet no such thing as a ‘Federal Festival Authority’; things are mostly left to the local authorities like the mayor, fire department and the security authorities. These can have much influence on what is actually happening, the rules and regulations can be used to promote the one and close down the other event, condone this, allow that. Most event organizers complain about the suffocating red tape, the control and associated costs, but the disaster like the staqmpede at the 2010 Love Parade electronic dance music festival in Duisburg kind of reinforced the regulation trend.

That regulations, fire protection, sound level limits, security, health, permits and in general red tape are hampering the evolution of initiatives is the downside. Cities with an ambition to grown towards “FestiValley” centers of the festival and event industry have to compromise here, and sometimes these compromises mean condoning and allowing a certain permissiveness in drugs, sex and security. Not always openly, most festivals publicly call themselves ‘drugs free’, but organizers and police know the reality and act accordingly. The economic realities are there; no drugs, no visitors. Attempts to curb things like sex and drugs in Amsterdam have backfired, tainted the attraction value of the city, the branding of what was known as the most magical city of the world.

Opportunities to boost this industry

Politicians and notably urban politicians see big potential in festivals and large events to bring business, visitors and work to their city and maybe see the long term necessity to offer their citizens something to do, some kind of occupational therapy. For cities like Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Berlin the festivalization trend offers opportunities, new ways to use the infrastructure, resources, cultural and human capital. Already the festival business is recognized as an important economic factor, but to turn this into a real ‘motor’, creating a new focus and source of innovation, requires more than just allowing events to happen.

To become a FestiValley, a leader in the worldwide festival business, serious study and an open attitude are necessary. Educational and scientific resources should be made available, financing options and planning of public places directed towards optimizing direct physical contact opportunities. The rules and regulations need to become more flexible, allowing scaling of events and elastic management rather than strict planning.

Event management is more than just making and approving a budget, in terms of city governance the idea of a Chief Event Manager responsible for coordinating all those city and government branches involved in events, seems like a logical step.

Silicon Valley remakes don’t work

Festivals are the industry of the future, especially in the context of a partially work-less society model with more automation, robots and Internet of Things. Unless some kind of pill (like Huxley’s Soma in ‘Island’ will be used to sedate and control us all, we need some kind of pastime, some form of entertainment, preferable some meaning to fill our lives. There looms a future where work will not only be different, but the prerogative of a few talented ones, with maybe many at the bottom of the food/money/power chain. We need, to keep the masses happy and to prevent uprising and neo-Luddite movements, some kind of activity, and just more social media won’t really work, or not for all. For what do you do when there is less and less work and less meaning? Watch TV, Netflix, surf, e-date or game, or go to the gym?

Given the speed of technological implementation of what we now regard as basic including internet, smartphones and government controlled security (sacrificing privacy in the process) we need to look at what the people and society need a few decades from now. Organizing meaningful events like festivals may be a social necessity, just like creating more opportunities for permanent education, art, sports etc.

Festivalization is becoming a social and economic phenomenon, and most likely a long term trend. It is somewhat unfair to label this trend as just something to keep the people happy or accuse the status quo of seeing it an expedient means of pacifying discontent and diverting attention from real problems. That may be a consideration for some, but in general the positive benefits are clear, it is felt as a great way to spend the time.

Political choices, government position

As the festivalization takes hold, many cities and regions are trying to get a share of that business, by urban planning, facilities, adding event management and event studies to the curriculum of their universities en education, offering support and benefits for organizers, changing zoning laws, and sometimes bending the rules to accommodate what they see as a growth industry.

What is interesting in the perspective of trying to find out what defines and makes a good festival, or a good festival creation atmosphere, is how political choices influence the local or regional festivalization. How do festivals fit into government policy, in long term urban development and how can the eventification of society be managed? How much influence of the sponsors, how much commodification, loss of local identity and consumerism is acceptable? Will innovation and experimentation be condoned, supported or does one stick to old tried and tested rules and concepts? Where is the innovation coming from? Is a Ferris wheel the most daring or does one allow the use of deserted underground stations, factories and an occasional submarine as a festival or party venue.

As potential organizers line up to ask for slots to organize events, all wanting the best time, the best place and at the lowest cost, it is in fact at the city level (and not very open to public scrutiny) where

things are decided. A clear policy and vision concerning eventification is essential. City councils, mayors and maybe Chief Event officials or executives are the key players here. They need to understand the consequences of their policies. How do those relate with considerations of security, city planning, segregation, diversity management, protection of local merchants and organizers and the integration in the whole of the urban stakeholder community.

Festivalization is often driven not so much by the demand of the consumers, but by the ambition of the politicians, who in turn are driven by the voters, the lobby of corporations and businessmen and, alas, often their own interest. Using 'creative' and more and more 'cultural' strategies (often just outbidding competitors and gambling with public money to stage promotional events) cities strive to be distinctive in order to attract 'mobile' citizens and tourists with time and money to spend.

Cultural festivals are popular as a means for branding cities and attracting people, but slowly one has mixed in the notion of a 'creative city' with culture. Now this confusing mix emerged, culture as creativity and innovation instrument with festivals as expression. One sees them as a means to attract creative individuals to make things happen, hoping to transform cities, neighborhoods and cultural quarters into thriving experience spaces.

Creative cities, culture as snake oil

Creative, permissive and culturally active cities have attracted energy and entrepreneurial people all through the ages, it's the basis of success of places like Amsterdam, Paris and London in the past. More recently cities like Barcelona and Berlin attract the pioneers and cultural creatives. What makes a city successful in this respects is not totally clear. Real estate prices, availability of slum and underdeveloped neighborhoods, tolerance, multiculturality, many angles are mentioned but there is, as yet, not a magic formula.

Cities compete to attract the new and fashionable, there are endless lists and rankings of cities according to all kind of parameters, but no clear model to predict the next hotspot. The use of 'culture' in stead of emphasizing more economic markers is a trend.

It's a nice sticker, culture can be used to cover or suggest all kinds of aims. The 'creative city' now is even relabeled as 'culture city' but to what effect? Culture has, in this view, become as an economic commodity with its own market, demand and supply sides, not a psychological and social necessity. Culture then as highbrow, elite, for the happy few; the opera, dance and ballet scene.

When only the very rich can attend such posh cultural festivals so many cities stage, with opera, dance and ballet way beyond what the normal people could afford, what identification, connectivity and joy for the other citizens can one expect?

With as a result that the real 'cultural' needs, which are more psychological like meaning, identification, transformation, escape, will find new expressions, new artistic impulses and new forms. New carriers of culture appear, also in festival land, like at the alternative festivals, where one can identify, contribute and find what very broadly can be called 'meaning'.

The changing function of a city

With the disappearance of production from the urban environment and the separation of work, education and government interaction from physical presence, the a city is more and more becoming an off-line place to live and interact. Managing things, manufacturing and data processing can be done elsewhere. Providing contact opportunities is the charter of tomorrow's city.

I have explained the consequences of this in a book "de Verbonden stad /Connected City (2015)" with a.o. Luud Schimmelpennink (the white bike - Provo of Amsterdam).

The eventification of a city economy is obviously connected with this need to change the economic models, but the question is whether this should be seen as more than an economic activity.

Calling startup and commercial initiatives 'creative' in stead of 'entrepreneurial' as was done in the past, is now common in urban planning and policies. It doesn't however change the reality, just the name. The values produced are still measured in monetary terms, not as increased happiness or other intangible values. How much money, income and profit will this or that festival, parade, event, championship, museum or venue bring the city, is what is asked, not what it

brings in contact, permissiveness, love or happiness. One tries to identify these intangibles, in the various rankings and the branding of a city, an events or place, but only to relate that to future profits.

Competition

A city that offers a wide array of services and mixes in things like tax-breaks and anonymity can attract not only the artists, but their business establishments, offices, agents and studios. Media owners (music and movie studios, game designers, artist) often do not possess the right skills, know-how, time and budget to stage and run successful events. The concentrated availability of resources like marketing knowledge, financial instruments, capital, specialized operators and pure 'play event organizers' can be an efficient way to close that capability gap.

As mentioned before, the eagerness of some cities to attract festivals makes one think of similar efforts to create me-too Silicon Valleys. Some succeed, some fail. One hopes that such FestiValley competence centers are bringing creative people to town, attract tourists and enhance the attractiveness of a city or region.

Amsterdam for instance, one of the big festival places, is very active and recognizes the festival industry as an economic motor. One sees gains not only for tourism, but recognizes the benefits of such an industry for education, city planning, the creative industry, attracting expats and corporate headquarters, stimulating gentrification and changing industrial complexes in free havens and creative settlements (Free Cultural Spaces) of all kinds.

The approach is not always totally above board, free sex and drugs are not explicitly mentioned in the promotion. Places like Amsterdam and Ibiza use their image as a drug-friendly environment in this inter-urban competition, the red light district and permissive atmosphere are attractions too. Like in the Enbossa part of Ibiza where the police, in the interest of the tourism industry, looks the other way as the discos offer festivalized entertainment for large groups of youngsters, obviously using stimulating substances at a large scale.

14 Meaning and ritual angle

The meaning of a festival is very broad, and depends on the perspective. Meanings exist at personal, social, cultural and economic levels, maybe even at the magical and may vary between individuals and change over time. The meaning is related to the goal, does one go for the music, for meeting people, to partake in an arts or heritage event, just for leisure or for transformation. There is meaning as a concept and as an experience.

The experiential meaning potential of partaking in an event is both personal and social, and differs with each type of festival and the culture.

As pointed out before, I make a distinction between two kinds of effects and thus meaning of a festival (but this also applies to drugs, therapy, etc.). One is whether the experience fortifies the ego-state (personality, mask) and the other if that state is broken down or at least weakened.

Transformation obviously aims at breaking down the ego, but it is quite possible to attend a very transformational event like a psychedelic festival and just have fun, participating in whatever but just as entertainment.

The different experience potentials of the various festival formats can be 'consumed' or not. This is also a social issue, as festivals (and ritual) bind people together in communities and cultures, forti-

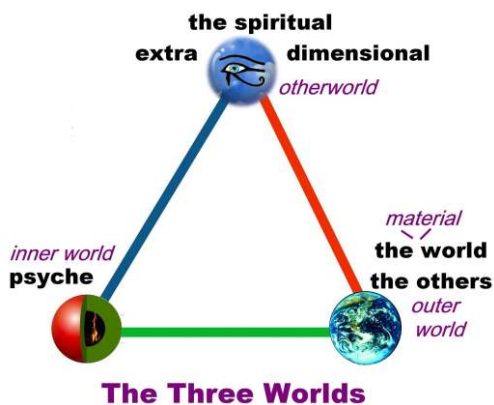
fying the status quo, but sometimes they do reflect and encourage disagreement, social change and even anarchy or revolution. This is where the notion of festivals as change agents surfaces. The people staging transformational festivals, the event designers, are usually aware of the difference; they



Balinese water festival (M.Bakker)

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now there are just tourists' and others who come for a deeper ransformational experience or try to use the latform to change the ommunity or even society. They try, in their tagging and manipula- ion of setting, program nd various human inter- ctions to guide the au- ience and/or partici-

pants and cater for both groups. Offering both very active spots and lounges, chill-out and such facilities, is one way to seapate the two groups. How this all works out requires insight in what Donald Getz indicates as 'environmental psychology'.

Looking for meaning, high and low

One way of describing the trend towards more spiritual and meaningful festivals, beyond the standard music and arts events, is to call them intentional or extended festivals. There participation, identification, realization, the ingredients necessary for transformation as explained earlier, are a more prominent part of the mix.

It's easily said, such extended festivals are spatio-temporal events that inspire and determine meaning in people's lives, but what precisely does this entail? Looking for meaning in life and specifically in attending a festival could be answered in the somewhat elated and philosophical way Viktor Frankl kind of defined the territory. His account of concentration camp hardships and his search for meaning and purpose which resulted in his 'Logotherapy' approach, is a classic.

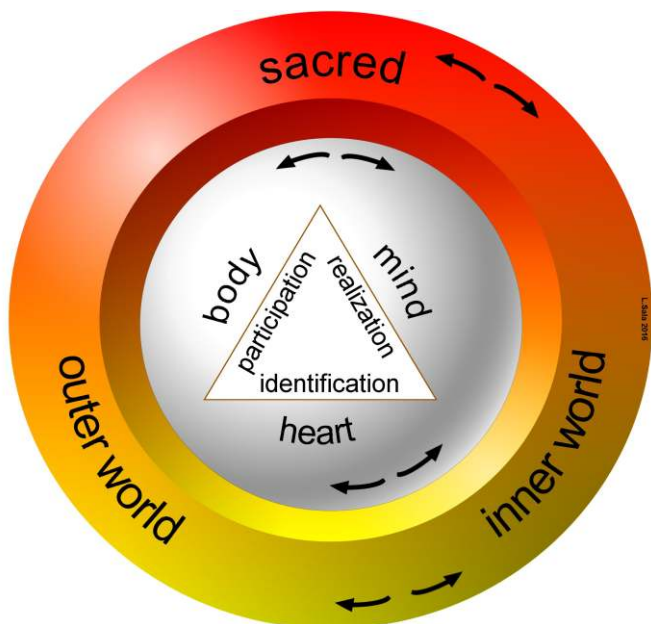
Holding on to one's convictions, trying to maintain decency and human compassion even in the most averse conditions is what he found to be important and meaningful and made him a survivor.

It is nice that festivals boost community, the sense of belonging and in-group bonding, offer cultural values (cultural capital), maybe a

sense of identity and identification with a higher goal as a collective meaning, but is individual meaning not more diverse than what Frankl saw? Is meaning not also related to where one stands in fulfilling more basic needs, as indicated in the chapter about needs? The question festival producers ask or should ask themselves is what gives meaning to people in less dramatic circumstances, what goals inspire people, what meaning do they seek and how to provide handles for that?

The higher goals we usually associate with ‘meaning’ are of course relevant for people who have everything, in a material, status and relational sense, but are looking for something more. If we look at the lower levels of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs or at how our lower chakras are about security, sex and power there is of course ‘meaning’ in satisfying those needs. Not high-brow and lofty purposes, but very real.

Having a goal, a sense of purpose is fine, but what if your goal is to get drunk, stoned, have as much sex as possible, to be admired for your looks or dancing, find a date, get a VIP-card or back stage wrist band, make pictures or boot legs of all the bands, get in without pay-



two discs of transformation

ing, or a myriad of other purposes. We tend to equate meaning with



high ideals, with notions of spiritual significance, but in reality meaning often is fairly flat, practical; not what is perceived in the rear-mirror or on evaluation forms. There we may think about consequences and what we are supposed to have experienced.

Meaning is a process

The (existential) meaning of something changes, what is offered as a structured offering (like transformational, life-changing, entertaining) is maybe not what is perceived or projected (our individual interpretation) and then as we experience it (like a festival or concert) the meaning may change again, after afterwards we may recall a totally different meaning.

Suppose some is attracted by a poster with a certain message like 'exciting event' but interprets this in his own way, then goes to the event, finds it cold and wet, has a bad experience but coming back hears this was the wettest festival ever, so that's what he will afterwards tell his friends. By affirming a specific meaning it becomes anchored in our mind, we start to believe what we repeat.

Sergio Salvatore sees meaning as a dynamic process with a latent and an ostensible dimension. There are levels of meaning, the obvious ones and the more hidden, that may become visible later.

The data and statistics from festivals in this respect have little value for me. How many people honestly fill in the online (post facto) questionnaires and evaluation forms about their sex experiences, drug use, loneliness or despair? Not many and hardly will recall the 'in the moment' feelings. The same goes for happiness, Daniel Kahnemann pointed out how happiness in retrospect is often quite different from happiness in the moment. This applies also to experiences like mindfulness or meaning.

Meaning cannot be limited to just looking at the entertainment value, the economic contribution, or the possibility to escape normal life, some reference to the root mechanisms of festivals is needed.

Apart from play, needs/values discussed in previous chapters, there is the ritual origin. The ancient rituals were often some kind of festivals and had a number of purposes and meanings.

The Sacred

The primary meaning of those ancient events was, according to the 'Collège de Sociologie' (1937-39 with Caillois, Bataille and Leiris), to integrate the sacred in the social. There are psychological effects, so the three world model applies. Festivals of course served confir-

mation of the status quo, the order of things and the power structures, but also could be a platform for counter cultural activities and a safety valve, a vent-hole to temporarily break with conventions, taboos and prohibitions; offering excess and return-



Kumba Mela in India (2001)

ing to chaos for a while. Such disobedience, as we see in carnival and under the cover of laughter in the jester, the clown, the fool and in role-reversal, could relieve social tensions. Mocking the establishment, but also allowing intoxication, sinning, sexual promiscuity and ecstasy as in the Dionysian Mysteries, the Bacchanalia, Saturnalia and orgiastic feasts would normally be a transgression. Elevated to a religious duty it would help to establish the borders and demarcation between the profane and the sacred, the ordinary people and the priests or initiated. The excess offers the potential for rejuvenation, crossing borders, renewal on an individual (initiation) or social level.

The natural tension between the rulers and ruled is alleviated. A reversal of power, even temporarily, and some contest helps to maintain the balance, but also can bring hidden controversy to a crisis. The function of ritual is manifold. Evolution and civilization owe a lot to the ever-recurrent forms of ritual (as sacred performance and magical act) in the festal context. Hierarchy and specialization do emerge from these events.

Much of this also happens at today's festivals and there is resonance with the ancient practices; there are common psychological and social mechanisms at play. Festivals are platforms for social change, as well as a way to solidify the status quo..

The link between play, games, rituals and festivals is obvious, they use the same elements like rules, sacred space, dynamics and involvement of the participants. In fact many ritual events are festivals, meetings, gatherings of like-minded people, and follow similar formats.

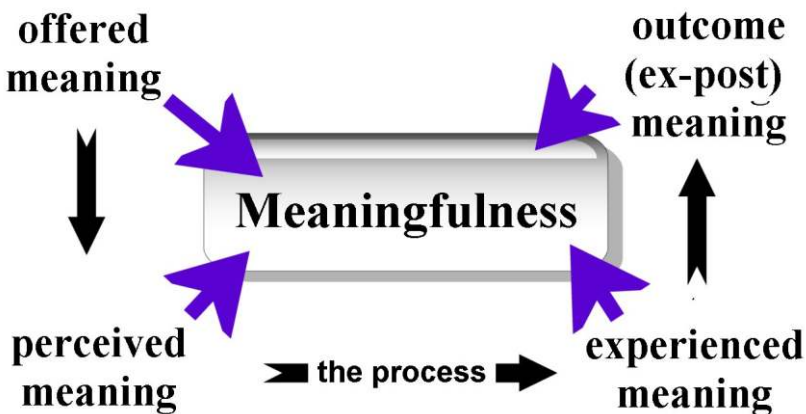
So the study of ritual can help to understand what matters at festivals. In an earlier book (*Ritual, the magical dimension*, 2014) I argued for including the

contact with the otherworld (not only the sacred but also the magical) in the modeling of ritual. In a rational world view this may seem unnecessary, but as many people do experience otherworldly effects and transpersonal connections

including the additional spiritual world helps explain how rituals work. What exactly this sacred dimension entails is not necessary to specify as long as we accept it is part of the deal, even if only in the minds of the believers.



Offerings are part of most rituals (Bali)



What is meaning?

A simple model then involves interaction and effects in three realms, the innerworld (one's psyche), the outerworld (including the body) and the otherworld.

The outerworld effects of ritual are the physical and the social.

The more deep and transformational (psychological) effects of rituals are that they offer a means to rise above oneself, to experience an altered state of consciousness in letting go of (part of) the ego, usually in a special space (the autonomous zone).

Rituals thus have in common that they guide people towards an altered state, where the loss of the ego-fixation allows access to inner layers of the psyche. This then also brings the possibility to transcend the limitations of self, time and place, and for many this means entering the sacred or spiritual plane.

The model is very general, many effects involve more realms, like that meeting with others has an effect on the social and the psychological.

Rituals usually have a liturgy, a sequence or scenario, a special and separate (safe/sacred) place and have meaning for the inner world (psychology), outer world (social/community) and the otherworld (sacred). Their purpose is thus threefold, it may make one feel better (innerworld), improve the social situation (bonding, community) but

also to establish contact with the otherworld and obtain material or immaterial gains like healing e.g. by praying, offering etc.

This approach of ritual of course also applies to festivals, free cultural spaces, monasteries and other ‘autonomous’ zones. Just as we can classify and analyze rituals in this model, we can look at the elements of festivals to see what effects they have in the three realms. It sounds irrational, but many believe that their participation in a festival helps global awareness of ecology, helps healing, peace and betterment even outside the location and the participants. They believe that their efforts affect the otherworld and this will also reflect back on the tangible reality.

The ritual angle

Festivals, especially the ones with the transformational ‘extra’ are often ritualized, with opening and closing rituals, with the attendees behaving like a congregation and the artists as priests. They offer, like proper rituals, a liturgical sequence in which the psychological, social and even ‘otherworld’ needs of the attendees are met. The otherworld aspect can be religious or more general spiritual. The focus on the intangible is not hidden or silently assumed, most song texts or performances refer to love, beauty, justice, etc.

Another way to look at ritual and thus festivals is to recognize that they affect body, mind and heart, a fairly classic triad (other triads are possible, like body, mind, soul or kapha pitta vata).

Festivals engage the body, the mind and the heart (the emotions).

We move, sing, dance, hug or touch, we think and try to make sense of what happens, of the music, the song texts, the setting. Emotions and feelings are probably why we came to the festival in



Siberian Summer Festival(photo M.Bakker)

the first place, but our body and mind are not left behind.

Festivals are embodied events, people dance, move, there is embodied thought as Gregory Bateson called it; by dancing and moving (symbolic) understanding is transferred. People tend to dance in the same way, mirror neuron processes cause resonance and a group mind happens, just as in rituals of old. The three 'human' dimensions are not separate, at a festival they work together, we feel better because we dance, we can relax our mind by being engaged.

The body, mind and heart triad is related, if not identical with the participation, realization and identification triad and transformation model given in the previous chapters.

If we combine the two triads, the human dimensions and the three worlds model, like in a two ring model, where the one triad can revolve around the other, a method of classification of festivals or festival elements emerges. We can establish to what combination of the two rings a certain aspect is geared towards

A performance, a specific ritual act, a setting or decoration can then be focused on a specific combination of the two triads.

If one does this for well established events like the Catholic Holy Mass it often turns out they are well balanced, all the realms and all the humans aspects are served.

For a festivals, this helps evaluation situations and staging choices. Is the dance floor something we can look at as a combination of engaging body (participation) and a social moment, or is it more like a ritual and individual activity? Are the dancers, given a specific sound and lighting situation, in the one or in another state?

The art of festival programming requires an understanding of these elements and their effects and the two circle model can help identify them.

It's often not the rational or cognitive that is important. In many ancient rituals the literal significance of the chants and the words is often lost or no longer understood by the participants or officiators but that doesn't seem to bother them much. The other levels of meaning and transference are more important and as long as the combination of sounds, movements and acts are in line with the perceived purpose and intention of the ritual, this has value.

The deeper meaning of a festival can be that it offers opportunities and forms of encounter and exchange that are very different from everyday life. The use of ritual elements can help to kind of channel and guide this to cash in on these opportunities. Being invited to shake hands, or hug the one next to you seems maybe silly, but it helps to break the ice.

A festival has, like a ritual, certain goals. Apart from the personal goals, like feeling good, having fun, meeting people, supporting some deal or cause, transformation etc. there are the social goals, ranging from manipulating and controlling people to more elevated aims like community building. There are idealistic goals, there is the otherworldly, the spiritual, the contact with the intangible realities. The purpose of the ritual, different for the various stakeholders and participants, gives it meaning. There are different kinds and levels of meaning in a ritual, the literal, the moral, the allegorical, the symbolic/anagogic (mystical) and the transcendental/ magical. This does not exclude practical meanings and goals like social, financial, bonding, diversity management, but it helps to widen the perspective.

Festivals and rituals thus have a lot in common, I would say that the kind of festivals discussed here (the general TAZ-category) are ritual by definition. They address the three worlds and offer more than mere ceremony, even as there is much diversity in how these worlds and goals are addressed..

The stages of a ritual

There are usually stages or elements in the liturgy of a ritual (ritual matrix) relating to specific purposes, like:

- Preparing the site and dedication, creating a magic container (circle)
- Purification and welcome
- Invocation of spirits and good energies
- Healing, expressing the intention of the event
- Devotion /Commemoration

- Sacrifice, Communion, a symbolic act of offering and sharing, the unifying
- Transformation, Ascension
- Thanking and closing

these are the logical steps to follow in setting up a ritual inside a festival, some like healing can be left out, but the general and traditional ritual matrix does make sense.

Purification is usually the first step, to clean oneself from sins or bad karma. Water, salt and fire are used for this, again in connection with prayer, chanting etc. Purification may involve not only the participants but a lot of material and immaterial stuff like the tools and implements may need to be cleaned and purified.

There is the communication with the spirit(s) or the earth and sky, asking for favors and paying respect. Here the devotional offerings become sacrifice, a gift in order to obtain something in return. The communication is often two-way. Oracle signs or divination outcomes are interpreted as an answer of the spirit(s). Already Plato saw sacrifices as communion with the Gods and divination as their answer. A further step is the communion involves uniting with the divine, partaking in the consecration, even eating the transmuted sacrifice. A communal meal is a common part of the ritual order.

Transformation in this context means reaching a higher level of consciousness or power in this or the inner world. Ascension means rising to the heaven, reaching the mystical state. The thanking of the people and the spirits present is not only a polite, but an essential part of a ritual.

Intention and purpose

Rituals and festivals have a purpose and meaning. That they help on the psychological and social level is clear, the efficacy in magical terms is less understood; the same goes for festivals.

As for the effectiveness (efficacy) much hinges on the belief of the participants, if you believe it works, it works. The Kumba Mela pilgrims believe their dip in the Ganges cleans their soul, and they return home relieved and happy. I think many participants of Burning Man believe that their symbolic acts do influence the state of the

world and help global consciousness. They go home relieved and happy, spreading that belief.

To be effective in this respect, it is necessary that all levels of meaning are aligned and point in the same direction. If we see a ritual as a magical endeavor, intention is the main attribute and the key to success in terms of both material and immaterial results. If one tries to achieve peace and harmony, it doesn't make sense to stage a conflict and use violent symbolism.

One can assume that coordination and harmonization, the correspondence between the tangible and the intangible (the virtual, including emotional and spiritual) matrices is key to the success of a festival and ritual, in whatever terms, material or immaterial. The old traditions tell us that using the right names, the right movements, even the right breath is essential. Resonance is what matters, in older text this is called correspondence. If love is present and expressed in body, mind and heart of the people, little can go wrong. However, bad intentions by some can turn things sour.

15 The central place of fire

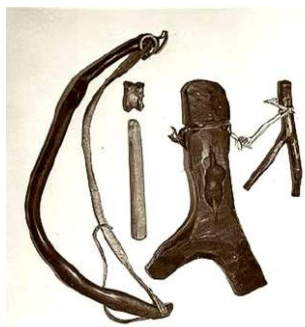
An important element of many festivals is the fire. Events like FireDance and Burning Man, dealt with in the next chapters, are clearly fire-oriented, but there are central fires at many meetings and festivals. They are an important focal point, a place to meet and rest or perform rituals like opening or closing the event..

The fire-ritual is the most common and probably oldest of all rituals. The first ritual, in the Bible, is the fire Noah kindled after the Great Flood.

In our modern world, fire is everywhere, it drives our cars, gives us electricity, propels our planes, it is more omnipresent than ever before. We have a symbiotic relation with fire. It has become the central active principle in our world of combustion, incandescence, without fire modernity would be a pretty un-

comfortable state. At many festivals the central fire and campfires are often the places where people meet, talk, make music and warm themselves in cold nights. There are also water-rituals, but fire is very central to our human evolution, and intimately connected to ritual. Most festivals in nature will have some kind of fire-ritual, or a fire as a central meeting place.

Fire of course gives light and warmth, can be used to cook, for healing and to scare away predators or insects, and we know also that watching a fire calms and relaxes body and mind. Ritual around the fire is a defining factor in the evolution, I presume. It allowed pre-hominids or proto-humans to divert the energy used for chewing raw food to growing their



Burning Man 2009

brains (the main difference with the large apes). Ritual and fire allowed, long before there was symbolic language, to have specialization and hierarchy, allowing larger groups beyond the Dunbar limitations and progress. We have inherited ritual from the animals and probably used ritual long before there was symbolic language and myth; self consciousness emerged only some 10 to 12.000 years ago and developed in a stepwise fashion.

I even believe that the larger apes are degenerated humans, who maybe lost their power to use fire.

Fire symbolizes transformation and change, it offers catharsis and can act as a catalyst in transformational processes in ourselves and society. It therefore deserves a special place at meetings or events where people come

together to honor the spirit, especially in a world torn by ecological and human violence and terror, lacking a clear direction.

At large gatherings like Burning Man in Nevada, Rainbow and at the many alternative festivals, the fire has become part and parcel of the festivities. It is, many regret, not always honored in the proper way. Especially when many different nationalities, people and nations come together, it is important to give the fire its proper place for all to partake and understand.



Fire at the Siberian Summer Festival (M.Bakker)

Traditions like the Native Americans (Indians) have a great respect for the fire and their ceremonies are certainly valid, but there are other and very old and refined fire-rituals that deserve a place too. Fire-rituals are very basic; most traditions honor and venerate fire, often in connection with the sun. The first hymn of the Rig-Veda is

devoted to Agni, the divine fire. There is the old Persian Mithras-cult, the comprehensive Vedic Agni-rituals, Egyptian earth/Star fire-worship, the Hindu Bridged, the Slavic winter solstice and the Mayan new year, the Phoenix



and Promethean myths, the volcanic Pele-worship of Hawaii, the middle column of the Cabbala as the pathway of fire etc.

The moral meaning of fire is that it represents transformational power. As it is dangerous, it stands for energy and passion and can burn evil (hell and purgatory) in ourselves and our enemies. Fire is also the way to talk to the Gods, the Hindu Agni and the Greek Prometheus make this link.

Rites of passage often use fire. Jumping over the fire, through a fire-arch, or walking its hot ashes, the fire helps to achieve something new and better, to pass a threshold. The alchemical qualities of fire are well known, in fire rituals the transformation can be psychological and/or social, but a funeral rite with fire is of course also fairly practical.

The symbolic and mystical meaning comes from the deeper notions



about function, form and outline of the fire. Symbols derived from the fire are a spoken wheel, concentric circles, the Arabic flame in the tent, the sun-image and the colors of red and yellow/gold and white.

The allegorical meaning of fire is first and foremost its quality of purification and transformation, but it also resem-

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bles the sun (the father) and the original creation. The Phoenix myth of rebirth from the fire is a good example.

As for the transcendental/magical qualities of a fire ritual, the fire as the mouth of the gods, as the window or doorway to the heavens, the link between the seen and the unseen gives us a broad idea as what can be achieved. The fire itself can be seen as an intermediary (the original role of Agni) or as a divinity itself..



16 Group identity, group mind, group spirit

We all have a personal identity, expressed in our personality, and part of that is a social identity, the way how we relate to others and groups, ranging from how we deal with significant others to being part of a large group or movement. But beyond this personal dimension, we also experience a group identity, we align ourselves with the morals, ideals and behavior of the groups we associate or identify with. This identification is both

A: rational, cognitively partitioning off an environment (group) to reduce uncertainty and to cope with boundaries, becoming stronger and more effective, and

B: emotional, looking for bonding and community out of the need to deal with existential fears, anxiety, inferiority complexes (by joining a superiority) and also find a space to grow and develop.

The second incentive to join a movement and identify is becoming more and more relevant, as identifications have taken over the public discourse, with even extreme and large scale phenomena like adhering to the “vaccination” narrative in the Corona-crisis.

In a group we will sacrifice some of our individuality to the common cause, this is the root of any social system. We will accept hierarchy, specialization and even sacrifice of some kind, as we know that dealing with the dangers and challenges of the world outside makes this a necessity. This social behavior has biological and evolutionary roots, most animals live in groups. humans can do things together they can't do alone.

There is of course a whole science, sociology, that deals with social processes, like how we behave in groups, decision models, etc. etc. Collective behavior resonates with the idea of a group mind. That in a group some kind of new identity emerges, that a group mind of its own takes over, has been observed, but in the context of a festival or free autonomous zone it can become a major factor, worth looking into.

The hunting group model

Going out to a festival has some resemblance with the hunting groups of old. Forming a group to go out for adventure is nearly an universal theme, part of the Monmouth (Joseph Campbell) and idealized in many books and movies like 'Lord of the Rings'. It has deep roots, in hunter-gatherer societies of old, (mostly) men would assemble, prepare (often with rituals of divination, ingesting stimulating substances) and venture out for game, horses, cattle, women, slaves and loot. This was out of necessity, for food, but the hunting party also served to establish leadership, status, and expansion of the gene pool. In the old times war wasn't so much for territorial purposes, but to obtain slaves.

The great myth of the 'Noble Savage' (Rousseau) is mostly an illusion. Slavery and slaughter was common, The Viking economy was based on thralls, slaves raided from England and Ireland, sold to Byzantine and Islamic buyers. The North American Indians had a slave-based economy, there was cannibalism, while in South America the Aztec, Maya and Inca cultures were cruel and brutal. Trading slaves was common in Africa, long before the West engaged in shipping slaves to the Americas. In fact in the seventeenth century the English shipped hundreds of thousands Irish slaves to the Americas. A hunting or raiding party had to follow certain procedures, to ensure success coordination and leadership was essential, just like in the animal world. These procedures were ritualized to some degree, including the feast and celebration after coming home successfully. The hunting group model has survived, is more or less genetically ingrained, and is certainly part of the festival culture. Going to a festival alone is less common than joining with some friends and forming a small group. This, however, means that such group may have a different agenda, expectations and display aberrant behavior.

Group Mind, Groupthink, Mass hypnosis

Looking at transformation or learning processes, the notion of a group-mind has received relatively limited attention. The notion of a Group Mind is not deeply researched. There were many group process experiments like the Stanford Prison Experiment, many theories like Richard Dawkins 'Memes' and Gustave LeBon's mass-psychol-

ogy, and of course Wilhelm Reich's work, but there is little group-mind research in connection with festivals and in general with rituals.

Yet in multi-person environments, in real life or on internet, group mind phenomena are an important factor in learning and innovation. We influence each other, a great team or group produces better results.

We all are not only our individual self or selves, but part of something larger; a family, a group, a nation. We are social beings and have a social identity, we act altruistic as well as egoistic. This dichotomy is very fundamental, in our psyche but also in our physical existence, and not always conscious. Without interactions with others we would not survive, We communicate with those around in many ways, the copying of behavior and feelings of others by way of mirror neurons being discovered only fairly recently.

To elucidate the importance of group mind, also in relation to collective behavior we need some history and how philosophers and social scientists have seen this.

There is much research into individual psychological phenomena, for groups there is less material and usually concerns the negative side. Social psychologist Gustave Le Bon identified the crowd and revolutionary movements with the excesses of the French Revolution and psychologist Boris Sidis noted the resemblance of crowd behaviour to mental disorder.

These early theories described collective behavior as an atavism, in which humans regressed (Freud) to an earlier stage of development, losing evolutionary accomplishments of civilization.

William McDougall in *Group Mind* (1920) tackled the issue, more in the vein of understanding nationalism and national idealism, he treated individual human behavior as the result of a conflict, or an integration, of a few root tendencies. McDougall's notion goes beyond the "participation in group life degrades the individual," and poses that "only by participation in group life does man become fully man." He shows how group organization:

"counteracts degrading tendencies; and how the better kinds of organization render group life the great ennobling influence by aid of which

alone man rises a little above the animals and may even aspire to fellowship with the angels.”.

Floyd H. Allport’s criticised Le Bon and William McDougall for their concept of “group mind,” and for their apparent assumption that collective behaviour makes people do things to which they are not predisposed. Allport posed that collective behaviour involves merely a group of people doing what they previously wanted to do but for which they lacked the occasion and the support of like-minded.

But is group behavior not more than the sum of individual tendencies?

These days we can look at collective behavior and group moods and even crowd control with new tools and instruments. Things like deep psychological manipulation, frequency following response (going with the beat) and subconscious effects, mirror neuron copycat behavior (circular reaction) are recognized now. Researchers look into groupthink, hive mind and how birds swarm, but this is not all very practical and the combined effects of for instance dancing, drugs and music have not been evaluated very much.

The concept of Groupthink, mostly influences by Irving Janis and centering on the ethical and the influence of group cohesiveness describes a psychological phenomenon that occurs within a group of people, in which the desire for harmony or conformity in the group results in an irrational or dysfunctional decision-making outcome. Group members try to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternative viewpoints, by actively suppressing dissenting viewpoints, and by isolating themselves from outside influences. This is a negative approach and not very relevant for festivals, unless they have the wrong goals like in some political events. It also turns out, that prediction of groupthink results is very hard. Crowd/group homogeneity and group insulation (the idea of autonomous zone pops up) are generally supported as factors predictive of groupthink.

Revolutionary theorists such as Frantz Fanon see various forms of crowd and revolutionary movements as liberating man’s creative self-assertion from social imprisonment.

Erich Fromm related the appeal of crowds to the escape they offer from the personal isolation and powerlessness that people experience in the anonymity and bureaucracies of modern life.

Some group interaction theories try to explain why a group of people feel and act unanimously, intensely, and differently from the manner in which they customarily act. They are indicated as contagion and convergence theories. The first assumes a contagious spread of mood and behavior; the second convergence of a large number of people with similar predispositions.

The necessary conditions for the development of collective behavior were specified by Neil Smelser.

- (1) the social structure must be peculiarly conducive to the collective behaviour in question;
- (2) a group of people must experience strain;
- (3) a distinctive type of belief must be present to interpret the situation;
- (4) there must be a precipitating event;
- (5) the group of people must be mobilized for action on the basis of the belief;
- (6) there must be an appropriate interaction between the mobilized group and agencies of social control.

There are a few famous group experiments like Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (loss of morality and conformity in groups), there is the Bystander effect (less people, more help), the Asch Conformity Experiment (group pressure), the Bobo Doll Experiment about learned aggression, there are Group Mind Experiments on the internet, random number generators are used to gauge responses to global events by Dean Radin, but there is little true insight in how a Group Mind emerges and affects us. Wars and large social conflicts, but also sports events are of course heavily influenced by the Group Mind present, and propaganda seems a major tool to influence this, but then isn't advertising a facet of Group Mind manipulation?

In management studies teamwork and self managing by workers is often described as leading to improved quality and production, like in the notion of 'concertive control' (James Barker). In cooperating,

however, there is also the effect of a mediocre common denominator or entropy effect, like in Wikipedia.

At festivals and in communities there often emerges something which is larger than the individual or even the collective of individuals, a group identity or group mind.

An organization/group/community/festival crowd usually has an identity; the distinctive, enduring and essential character of it. We can distinguish two parts of that identity, one subconscious and one overt identity. The subconscious part can be indicated as the group mind, while the more visible group image or identity is more or less perceived by the participants.

Social identification

To understand how group mind evolves, we have to look at some mechanisms concerning the notion of self. We have a personal and a social identity, and maybe more. This identity is what we assume to be our self in a group or social context.

Social identification is a perception of oneness with the group, stems from the categorization of individuals, the group image, the perception of out groups and other group formation processes, and leads to congruence in actions, perceptions and opinions. The individual adapts to the group. Such identification has an effect both on the group (organization, party, mob) and the individual.

Social Identity Theory (SIT) as developed by H. Taifel and J. C. Turner in the 80's (and as Group Identification by Edward Tolman -1943) points at the process of self-identification and classification, one feels to belong to a category, like race, age, gender, affiliation, activity, likes or dislikes. The identification with a group can vary in degree (and appreciation), it is a process and involves also giving up a prior identification or identity.

One's social classification and identity not only defines one-self, but also the others, the in-group and the out-groups and serves as a referent or anchor in the social environment, it defines who one is in the world. There are often multiple social identities, one adapts to a situation, is influenced by the group mind (the subconscious group identity and the personal self-state (ego-mask) one is in. The social

relation of a child with the mother is obviously different from that with a hobby club.

Identification is a cognitive construct, an idea in the mind, and not necessarily related to behavior. I can feel to be a socialist, and never join a party or vote for them. Affect and behavior are results and consequences of identification and the desire to emulate, reinforced

by mechanisms like mirror neuron resonance and embodied cognition, we mimic what we perceive in others.

Identification means feeling what happens to the group, and often increases in situations of (perceived or expected) success and suffering. Identification is not internalization, it doesn't mean embracing the group values and attitudes as core ethical principles. Social identification is different from personal identification, but sometimes complementary; being a fan of a person, hero, guru means involves joining a group, being an Apple user may help to see Jobs as a hero.

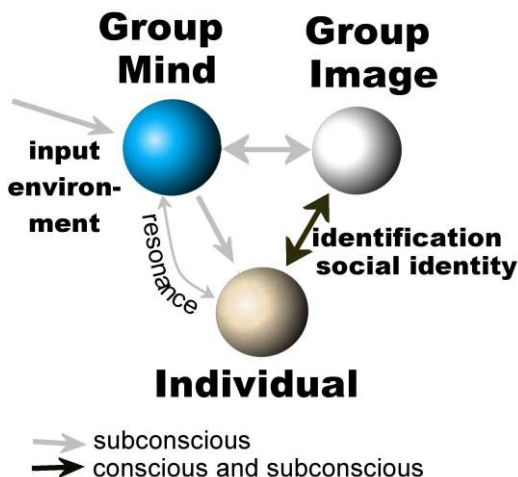
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Organizational Identification is a form of Social Identification, one can identify with a company or a unit in a company, a party, a union, a community, a religion, but in varying degrees and for different reasons. Identification in this sense follows needs, one will identify more easily with whatever or whoever fulfills those needs. In a Maslow or chakra kind of hierarchy (of needs) we can distinguish not only material and practical needs but self-esteem, respect, meaning, empowerment, self-realization). 'Whose bread one eats, etc.'

Collective memory

The group mind has a group memory, things that are remembered and shared, not necessarily truthful, sometimes even fabricated and



manipulated, but serving the collective identity and communication mode. Often myths and ritual serve as anchor for such an image, and such stories are mostly favorable for the victors and those in power. Often the beginnings of a community or event are somewhat polished stories, if not outright falsifications of what really happened, often used as propaganda and in marketing. This is then picked up by sincere but gullible historians and scientists, and shows up thwarted in studies and books. As an example; the history of the New Edge movement and Mondo 2000, of which I was part of, has been described as cybergnostic and inspirational for Burning Man. I was part of that movement and don't recognize what really happened in what the dissertations (Zandbergen) and studies describe. Collective memory refers to the shared pool of information held in the memories of members of a group. Collective memory can be shared, passed on and constructed by small and larger groups. The mechanism of collective memory parallels individual memory (like with better recall for pictures and symbols than for words), but also has special features like cross-cueing, the enhancement of recall during group discussion when $1+1=3$ situations emerge. Collective behavior is commonly seen by sociologists as a normal accompaniment and medium for social change.

The effect of Group Mind on personal and social transformation

The whole idea is that in a Group $1+1>2$ or that there is an effect that brings more than what the individuals could cause. This can be seen as a practical effect of cooperation, as people may bring complementary pieces of a puzzle. The one knows this, the other that, together they know the whole.

It can also be seen as an immaterial intangible effect, as in Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.". This more or less magical dimension of group mind is of course ignored in the 'scientific' world, but may hold the key to how and why it works.

In the context of social change, Stephan Schwartz identified eight laws of change that help to achieve more wellness and life-affirming changes, in the group but also throughout society. These laws are

relevant for group processes and communities, he states that the results and influence of the group depends on:

- The individuals and the group must share a common intention.
- Though they have a goal, the group shouldn't have a cherished outcome.
- The individuals and the group must accept that their goal may not be reached in their lifetime.
- The individuals in the group must accept that they may not get either credit or acknowledgment for what they have done, and be authentically O.K. about this
- Each person in the group must enjoy fundamental equality, even while respecting hierarchical roles.
- The individuals must forswear violence in word, act, or thought.
- The individuals must make their private selves consistent with their public postures.
- The individuals in the group, and the group collectively, must always act from the "beingness" of integrity.

These are important guidelines for ambitious communities or movements or for staging events like festivals, but also for virtual meetings via social media or in computer game setting.

The subliminal power of the organizers and sponsors

Festivals can change the agenda of the participants, manipulate their beliefs and be used for propaganda. Because of the density and intensity of the experience they are effective mind-changers and there lies a danger. They can take over the role of traditional media, the press and television and even internet and push social, political and ethical agendas.

The economies of scale lead to larger and larger events and less and less players able to finance and deal with such a scale. There is already a trend towards cooperation among the large players and monopolistic tendencies, the general format and even the artist line-up of the very large music festivals is already more or less homogenized and globalized. The organizers and talent-agencies, also serving the interests of the larger sponsors behind this, have a predominant influence on the style, the content and the messages. Even as at the surface difference and distinctiveness are emphasized, in reality

a few major players set the tone and the cultural identities. Their choices, pricing and publicity define content, atmosphere and messages, with results not only in what people wear and buy, but how they think.

Group mind dangers

There are clear dangers associated with group mind effects, enhanced by isolation and identification, one of them the fascistic tendencies of in-groups to create us-them dichotomies.

We have to realize that of course identification with a group, ideals or person is not by itself a positive thing, or at least not appreciated as such by the environment. A 'Hells Angel' biker may feel supported and powerful in his club, the outside world is not so happy with motor clubs. Apple users feel part of 'the others', different and superior to those without Eve's apple as a hypnotic reminder and anchor. Adepts and followers of any movement run the risk of over-identification, deifying their practice, leader, symbols, rationalizing their emotional attachment. Here the notion applies, that often a superiority environment is used, joined or constructed to cover up inferiority complexes, as becomes clear in the thinking of Wilhelm Reich about fascism.

The influence of alcohol and drugs on group mind

It is well known that some level of alcohol intake will help lower the contact barriers. Too much makes for aggression and causes problems, but a little booze helps the mood. The same goes for most empathogen drugs like MDMA, cannabis, while stronger psychedelics also influence the group mind, but not in a negative direction, mostly increasing tolerance. It is widely accepted that on the so-called psy-trance festivals there are less problems than at music festivals where alcohol is the drug of choice which makes people aggressive and less tolerant. Drugs like cocaine, especially mixed with alcohol, do have negative effects, people flip out, OD happens and it is harder to keep the peace.

There is quite some material on how drugs affect the individual, but less studies on how specific substances affect the group mind, how these effects can be used for crowd control, the days that the military

believed massive distribution of LSD could be a weapon are gone. There are many anecdotal stories about how nice and tolerant the early British Free Festivals with widespread use of LSD were, but little fundamental research in this direction.

Yet the whole idea of a festival is crowd control, by way of music, sound, setting, decoration, so why not figure in the use of substances. (see also chapter 17)

Can we control group mind?

Understanding ways and means to control collective behavior (either to change or stabilize it) or in practical sense crowd control are of interest to festival organizers. In fact all performances, speeches or events intend to control the crowd. To do so, one must start by establishing or reading what mood of the group is, crowd reading is what is becoming a kind a science for entertainers and DJ's and new technology expands the possibilities to do so. This involves profiling, using facial expressions, body language etc. but as far as the group mind is concerned, this is less easy. And yet, the group mind is what drives the emotions, and is what makes crowds and especially mobs and agitated folks so volatile and unpredictable. Problems arise often without an apparent reason, based on some incident or interaction, but they spread like a virus, transformation a docile in an active, fearful or even aggressive crowd. To spot the precipitating incident is the most important, but very difficult. To create such an incident, from the stage or in the audience, is an art. Who can initiate a wave, a round of applause, booing? Once a crowd gets into a mood, it requires force or very tactical signals, and understanding that such signals are part of negotiating with the crowd, that for instance police activity or just showing weapons and riot-gear can fire up the mood or cause a panic.

Once fully escalated there is hardly any control technique available except massive suppression. Sometimes it just needs to run its course, intervention makes it worse. This is one of the reasons why better understanding of group mind mechanisms deserves attention.

The magical ignored

Groups and collective behavior can be dramatic, unpredictable, and frightening. Hooligans, but also soldiers in war, political rallies, bikers, lynch mobs and gangs, there are many examples, while the positive side, like in peaceful congregations is less noted. Not all revolutions are bad. Mostly one sees collective behavior as a pathological manifestation resulting from social disorganization and cultural or economic conflict. The idea, that group mind can be a positive influence, that it is the basis of our social consciousness, is historically not very much appreciated.

And yet, I believe that gatherings of likeminded people, like festivals, can have a positive (as well as a negative) influence of group and individual behavior. The study of how group mind emerges and can be influenced deserves much more scientific attention, as it is at the root of most conflicts in the world. I happen to believe that the magical dimension, totally ignored in scientific studies, plays a major role in how the group mind works.



17 Play, transformation, innovation models

The question why we go to festivals or like to live in more or less ‘free’ communities can be answered from many perspectives, in this book some of those angles are covered.

An interesting perspective is to ask what role there is for play, as a basic condition for learning and transformation, something many are looking for in going to festivals. Even as at the surface it is all about fun, and entertainment, obviously the whole idea of fun has something to do with stimulation, reward, with play. Maybe the word transformation is too ‘heavy’, as if partaking will fundamentally change one’s outlook of life, but then there are many stories of people who went to Burning Man, FireDance or Boom and called that experience life-changing.

The transformational festival culture can be seen as a hotbed for change, but such a claim requires we look into the root mechanisms. The question, how to cause change, in people, organizations, science and cultures, is a very fundamental one. Can we steer, control, stimulate how things develop? Is it all a matter of positive stimulation and curiosity or is adversity the father of invention? Do we just react to environmental stressors and chance mutations or is there an underlying direction, are we masters of our fate? Better insights are needed in how curiosity works, change and learning happens in our mind, in nature and how social (group) interactions and setting influence this. In this chapter I look at some mechanisms, propose some models and look into how existing models can be used to analyze and optimize an event.

The mechanisms of change

How do we acquire new skills, new knowledge, new insights, new consciousness, how do we change, how do progress and innovation happen? This question arises in business, education, in event staging, workshops and seminars, in politics and philosophy. It is so fundamental that we have to go back to fundamental biological roots, to

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derstand how our mind (and that of animals and plants) works; how we learn and transform ourselves and the world.

en more deep, the core question about how reality manifests, comes to mind.

we assume there is something like free will the relation between causation (as divergent from the deterministic pointed arrow of pre-bound causality) and learning (as part purposeful evolution and progress) needs be clarified. What makes things happen as

they do and what can we do about it? If we change, beyond the normal process, are we creating? If we assume all is just a deterministic probability, a matter of chance and emergent complexity it still makes sense to look for the mechanisms that lead to what could be called negentropy or information. But what is them play, unless we assume it is a fundamental piece of the cosmic puzzle. The maybe not only humans play, but reality at both ends of the scale, the quantum and the cosmos, play or are being played. Creation as God's play, or lesson; this comes close to what Eastern sages have told us. There is an innate need to play, something we inherited from the animals and must have a clear biological reason, like to activate refresh our brain connections, but also seems to be a fundamental part of evolution. Darwin made evolution into some kind of game, where the fittest would win. New insights in epigenetics have led to a reconsideration of JB de Lamarck's vision, that we also change through adaptation, while Darwin's ideas and neo-darwinism are under fire; natural mutation is too slow to explain what happened. .

I propose that learning is a fundamental response to stimuli, to changes in the environment but also impulses from within and that play is the root of learning, just as Huizinga suggested. It can have entropic (deterministic) or anti-entropic (information) results for the learner, the environment and the intangible realm (ideas philosophy). It is not limited to the logical and rational, we have to include things like inspiration or intuition. Often new ideas transcend logical induction and deduction.



CLASSIFICATION OF GAMES: ROGER CAILLOIS

Where it all starts is play. When thinking about festivals, words like play, fun, excitement are where we have to start.

Play

Children need to play, in order to develop, learn skills and not only the cognitive skills, but social, motor and political skills. We live in a world where children's opportunities to play are under threat.. Our school system and even day care centers , forced upon them earlier and earlier, leave little time for uninterrupted free play – both indoors and out. Children are spending substantial time in peer-group settings from a very young age, with often a focus on structured educational and recreational activities, not on participation in open-ended, self-initiated free play. The priority currently given to the early acquisition of academic skills by parents and society is a threat to children's play, and maybe to their sense of well-being in later life.

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the significance of play in the lives of children, acknowledging

play as a specific right, in addition to and distinct from the child's right to recreation and leisure.

This right didn't make it into the adult Human Rights, but should have! Humans should have a right to play and opportunities to do so. Festivals are playgrounds, and their popularity may have a lot to do with the lack of play, in education, in the working environment and in society. We have institutionalized play, we go to the gym, exercise, attend sports events, but is this play?

The notion of play as a fundamental quality and necessity is age-old and the role and importance of play in our development, not only in humans but in animals, has been noted by many. Plato recognized and identified in sacred acts the element of play. He saw play as an action accomplishing itself outside and above the necessities and seriousness of everyday life. Poetry was sacred play; the child and the poet are at home with the savage. The origin of play lies in the need of all young creatures, animal and human, to leap. He wrote:

You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.

Michel de Montaigne:

"Children's playthings are not sports and should be deemed their most serious action." and "Children's games are hardly games. Children are never more serious than when they play."

Freud regarded play as the means by which the child accomplishes his first great cultural and psychological achievements; through play he expresses himself. Beside the dream as the "royal road" to the unconscious, play is also a path to the child's conscious and unconscious inner world; if we want to understand his inner world and help him with it, we must learn to walk this road.

The function of play in developing cognitive and motor abilities has been explored by Karl Groos, Jean Piaget (how and what the child learns intellectually and socially from play and obeying rules), Anthony Pellegrini (the combination of biology and culture in play), Friedrich Froebel with the Kindergarten (play school) approach and many others.

For children obviously a game can be, and more often than not is, a serious undertaking and a true reality, effecting feelings of self-esteem and competence. This does not mean we can ignore the role of

playing in adulthood. More and more we learn that playing remains an essential, if not juvenating activity. Adult playing is different, can be more artistic, but even simple games like playing cards seem to fight aging and dementia.

One of the most influential writers about games was Johan Huizinga with his 1938 book 'Homo Ludens'. The resonance between the 'magic circle' which is one of the defining qualities of a game and the TAZ concept has been mentioned already.

Huizinga sees play as older than culture, as a recognizable, utterly primary category of life, a totality we need to understand and value. Playing is not rational, but it is evident, just like beauty, truth, goodness, God, spirit. He makes the connection between play and ritual, law, war, poetry and art.

Huizinga integrated the notion of play in that of culture, not being part of culture but defining culture. In a congenial but demanding style Huizinga asks, why all the common and more or less valid but partial explications of game, like learning, acquisition of skills, expression and reinforcement of self, relaxation, energy and vitality release, need to compete or exert power, preparation for the real challenges of life, mimicry, learning to control oneself, compensation and processing for alienating experiences, not really look into the fun, the excitement, the joy that playing brings. He sees in that the essential quality of play, beyond the biological functionality and beyond the material, is that; fun is why play makes sense, gives meaning.

He pointed out that many institutions gradually lost the connection with the play aspect. Something that we need, it is now commonly accepted that playing may help us deal with much physical and mental discomforts of old age.

Huizinga identifies five characteristics that play must have:

- Play is free, is in fact freedom.
- Play is not "ordinary" or "real" life.
- Play is distinct from "ordinary" life both as to locality and duration.
- Play creates order, is order. Play demands order absolute and supreme.

- Play is connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained from it.

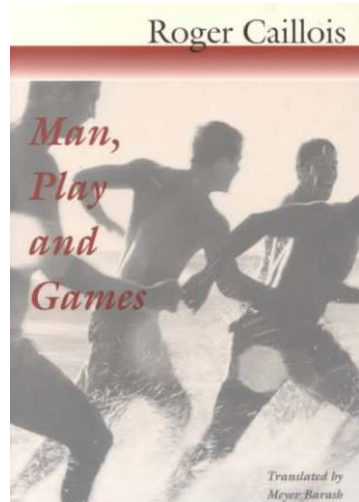
Huizinga mentions the equation of play with, on the one hand, “serious strife”, and on the other, “erotic applications”. He also mentions but steers away from the theological (magical) meaning of play, as in cult and ritual situations.

To extend Huizinga’s notion that play is an irrational but essential part of life, I dare even propose that play is as essential to our homeostatis and our body-mind balance as is sleep. It is an activity that we need to stay alive and kicking, also as adults if we want to play our role in evolution and life long and healthy.

One step further is the hypothesis, that play is the fundamental mechanism of evolution and manifestation, but this means seeing the very small and the very large as following and reflecting the same basic patterns (the Hermetic notion) or in other words, see all creation as play.

According to Roger Caillois, play is “an occasion of pure waste: waste of time, energy, ingenuity, skill, and often of money.” In spite of this - or because of it - play constitutes an essential element of human social and spiritual development. In his classic study ‘Man, Play and Games’ (1961) Caillois defines play as a free and voluntary activity that occurs in a pure space, isolated and protected from the rest of life. Play is uncertain, since the outcome may not be foreseen, and it is governed by rules that provide a level playing field for all participants.

Caillois qualifies four types of games - according to whether competition, chance, simulation, or vertigo (being physically out of control) is dominant, but many games combine the types. What is missing in Caillois qualification model here are the more transformational, social and sexual games. He came up with a sys-



tematic classification of play and games. Caillois's six conditions for a game are:

- 1 free
- 2 separate
- 3 uncertain
- 4 unproductive
- 5 governed by rules
- 6 make believe

they are, however more a definition of play, not strictly of games.

Daryl Koehn (1997) sees 9 factors in game and gamers,

- a game is played to win
- losers face limited consequences,
- there are rules
- rules are fixed
- rules are accepted by players
- players act intermittently
- narrow and defined space for bluffing
- the risks are only those of the payers

the gains and who gets them are well defined

Play at the festival

Participants and audience at a festival are part of the game, the idea of partaking in 'the festival game' makes sense. The game is both an Ilinx experience, the dancing and inebriation may bring about an altered state of physical and mental awareness, but there is also the aspect of role playing, of acting different, of experimenting. Looking for new experiences, the challenge to deal with them, the chance to meet new friends, to learn something new, it's all play and fun.

Dropping one's mask and engaging in what otherwise would be just childish acts, like in line-dancing, holding up a lighter or smart-phone, moving with the 'wave', it's not serious but could we describe it otherwise as playing?

Play and performance

From play, without much rules and lots of freedom, characteristic of child's and animal play, the addition of rules makes it a game. When the rules become too stringent, it becomes too much of a routine and

there is social pressure; the authenticity disappears and it becomes a performance. Much ritual has become empty in this sense, the original playfulness disappeared. This trend can be reversed, and in live performances at festivals this is clearly the case. In the interaction between the performer and the audience a new element of play emerges and this is what makes live performances so more special and engaging than a recorded one.

Mechanisms of play

Playing is a cascade of curiosity and rewards mechanisms. Playing is of all ages, kids play, animals play, even fetuses play, it is an efficient way to obtain information and skills. Play based education, like learning by doing and computer games are a modern form, as playing is usually more effective than just memorizing stuff and data. The freedom to change, to experiment with the rules, with the personas, with coping mechanism is of course most prevalent in games. One could even argue that all learning is in some way a gaming-process, playing with the parameters.

Play is the core of all learning, the road to transformation, but requires some freedom (the TAZ), some chance to make mistakes as well as score. The balance between success and failure, the score and reward for a hit must compensate for the misses, but this is very sensitive and different for everybody. Think about the payout policies for a casino or one-armed bandit slot machine, at what level of winning will a player keep inserting coins?

Innovation MATTERS or not?

The concept of innovation is usually limited to the improvement of existing, or the creation of entirely new products, processes, services and social, business or organizational models. A bright idea can change the world, but it can also stay within someone's mind. Does it then affect the material world? A philosophical question, but sometimes the same idea pops up at the same time in different places, how to explain that?

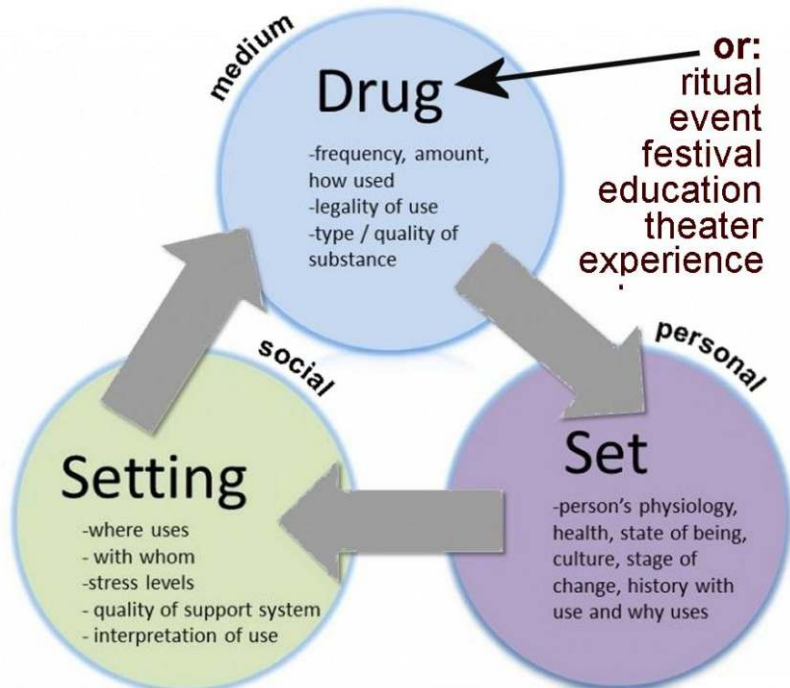
Essentially, innovation is creation of new value for the world, but this value can also be negative or turn out to be less valuable or en-

vironmentally dangerous in the long term. Change is not always positive.

Innovation is often seen as the snake-oil of the economy and progress, but it has to be realized that it is often the result of individual ambition, and not always geared towards the common good. Supporting innovation fits well within a neo-liberal, science oriented and ‘Western’ growth paradigm, but less in Eastern thought, where appreciation for what is, for the eternal values and the Tao is more about guarding the status-quo.

Curiosity

The quality curiosity, the desire and need to learn and obtain new information, is a biological necessity (a protection against adverse conditions) as well as a source of fun and excitement as in play. Curiosity is like a root condition for the process of actively dealing with stimuli and obtain new knowledge, learning. Curiosity is an emotional state, it is the platform for exploratory behavior and thus



the driving force behind human development and progress in science, language, and industry.

It is not something exclusive for humans, there is curiosity, learning and play in animals. Human curiosity as the need to understand oneself is supposed to be a class apart, self referential in relation to self-consciousness. Humans want to make sense of things and themselves, seek meaning; their curiosity entails a lot more than just self protection. They exhibit cognitive curiosity, as well as sensory curiosity.

Curiosity as a mental and emotional state is influenced by negative (uncertainty) and positive (likes, rewards, incentives) drives, but is also the result of experience. Being curious grows with experience, we build and expand the neural networks that stimulate exploratory behavior; it becomes a habit.

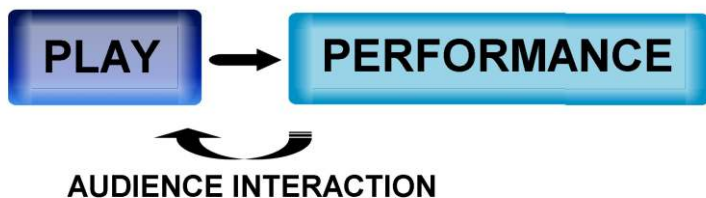
The curiosity-drive theory suggests people seek coherence and understanding in their thought processes, this quiets the mind and is a reward in itself. This, however, does not explain why we are curious and looking for stimulation even if there is no threat or novel stimulus. Optimal-arousal theory attempts to explain this aspect of curiosity by suggesting that one can be motivated to maintain a pleasurable sense of arousal through these exploratory behaviors.

Curiosity as exploratory behavior is a biological necessity to deal with uncertainty and perceived unpleasantness, but is probably sustained and became a normal way of behavior because there evolved some kind of neurobiological reward system (neurotransmitters; probably dopamine-based, but opioids and serotonin play a role too and cortisol can induce curiosity as a response to a potential threat). This exploratory behavior normally results in perceived security, but is evolutionarily useful and has grown into permanent reward mechanisms. These reward pathways deal with curiosity, attention, memory, habits, learning and motivation and are part of our happiness matrix. We need some stimulation and change, and sense of achievement to feel happy. Motivation and reward are the fuel of curiosity and thus learning. Liking, another reward pathway, can maybe seen as the elimination of a threat, the familiarity releases oxytocin or serotonin, as an alternative to the more stimulating dopamine.

Curiosity driven learning as in information-seeking can result from extrinsic or intrinsic rewards or incentives like an inner desire to reduce uncertainty. Discovering new knowledge, information or skills stimulates interest and curiosity. Finding new information thus leads to chemical and electrical stimuli, this fuels more curiosity. Stimulating curiosity is thus an essential element if we want to stimulate learning and change. This can be achieved by positive reinforcement and rewards, but also by adverse conditions and stress. The ‘carrot and stick’ approach refers to a policy of offering a combination of rewards and punishment to induce action.

Exposing people to adverse conditions like in survival or wilderness training may yield positive results. Adversity is part of most traditional training schemes, in the military, religious education and school systems. The notion that curiosity is a defense and an urge that draws us out of our comfort zones goes against the idea that fears keeps us within its boundaries. Curiosity and fear are more like partners in the reward pathway mechanism.

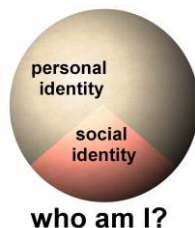
Curiosity is more of an attitude than an action, specific (internal or external) impulses can lead to focus and (re-)action. Attention (goal directed or stimulus driven) is thus a factor in curiosity, focusing on something, concentrating on particular stimuli in the surrounding environment can help single out the most effective way to deal with it. It means eliminating noise but there is the risk of also eliminating relevant information. Curiosity demands attention. The well known AIDA (attention-interest-desire-action) model in marketing illustrates this. **Interest** is a feeling or emotion that causes attention to focus on an object, event, or process and encompasses curiosity and to some extent surprise.



Practical

In practical terms, stimulating curiosity is part of marketing, sales, education and many more activities. As it involves both positive and negative stimuli, and people react very different to those stimuli, it is more of an art than a science. There are people who respond best to form, others to knowing, others to contact opportunities, one can use models like the enneagram to find out what fuels the curiosity of certain target groups. Often good marketing narrows the range of the stimuli to specific types, maybe sacrificing others. Things like a 'secret' (performance, service, product) may draw certain people, but keep away others. Curiosity is an emotional state, not very rational and not very conscious, so all kinds of subliminal signals do help.

The assumed self



Mistakes and error, but also successes are essential in learning

An autonomous zone, at a festival, in a community or in a computer game, offers the freedom to experiment, to make mistakes but also to score, to succeed. This is probably the most fundamental reason why we play, we need to rewire our brain to deal with new impulses, new situations. Playing and experimenting keeps us young and able to deal with life. We learn best by being wrong, by error, by having to try again, the learning cycle requires the freedom to be wrong, besides the incentive or reward of occasionally being right. For some reason we evolutionary have developed a reward path mechanism that allows us to try again, to keep doing things until we master them. The positive reinforcement of a hit or success gives us the energy to keep trying, even if we miss. Assuming that the penalty for being wrong is not too heavy, therefore the need to have a safe place. This cycle of experimenting, this curiosity that we have to engage and try is an evolutionary trait, without it we would not develop and survive. But this learning cycle needs more than just repetition, to prevent the dulling of the response. there must be a reward path.

I argue that activities like festival going and computer gameplay are more or less necessary compensation for the lack of freedom to experiment and make mistakes in our ever more constricted and privacy-ridden modern digital world. They are needed to refresh and stimulate our brain, just as sleeping refreshes our body and mind too. Games don't offer unlimited freedom, as rules and constraints limit the playing field, but they do limit the risks and offer security. Not hurting oneself (or others) beyond certain limits, not upsetting the homeostasis (biologically, psychologically, socially and even magically – the otherworld balance) too much. A game or play is the combination of a sacred and safe space and rules that allow some experimentation, and thus transformation.

This obviously is also the origin of rituals. Play and ritual are very close, as Roger Caillois noted and ritual pervades society. We can see serious situations like a courtroom or a parliament as a game, and a ritual; this is maybe is irreverent but does make sense. The inner experience is what matters, just like in computer games, Holy Mass or initiation rites, the outcome is more than the sum of the input. A ritual is a very fundamental and ancient (a heritage from the animal world) and pre-cognitive form of inner experience, myth is already related to cognitive processes, linguistic and more mental, a much later human stage.

A model & resonance

Learning happens when there is a situation that allows change, but more important, room for experiment and this means room for mistakes. Being curious is not enough, we need some space to act, prove, try, without dire consequences. In the human and social situation this requires some kind of freedom and protection, to err and to try again.

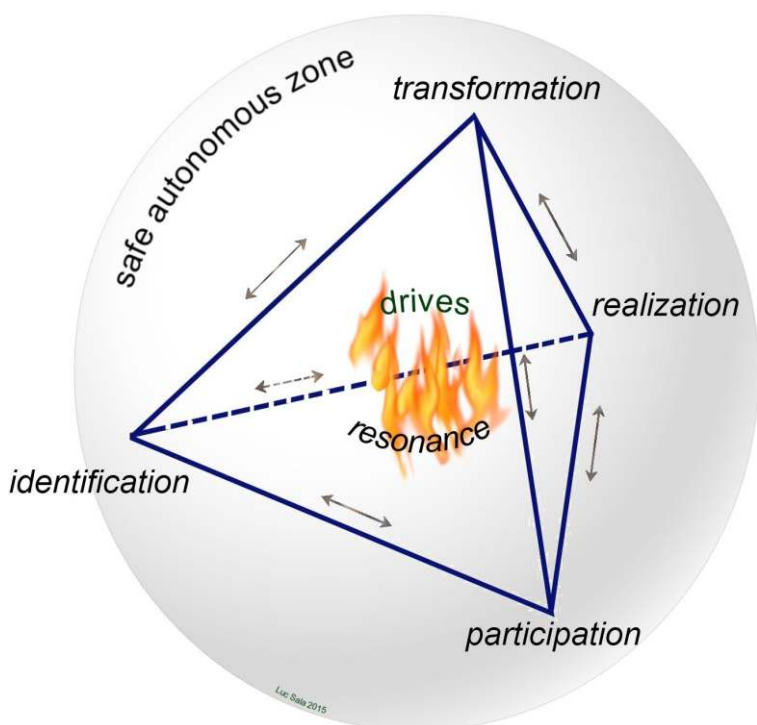
It makes sense to expand the notion of a TAZ to apply not only to events, festivals and meetings, but to basically all media, books, theater-plays, games including computer games and virtual reality and educational situations. In that interpretation of the concept it can be seen as a core (pre-)condition for learning.

But what happens within such a TAZ? In the human perspective we can (again as a generalization) assume that three basic elements,

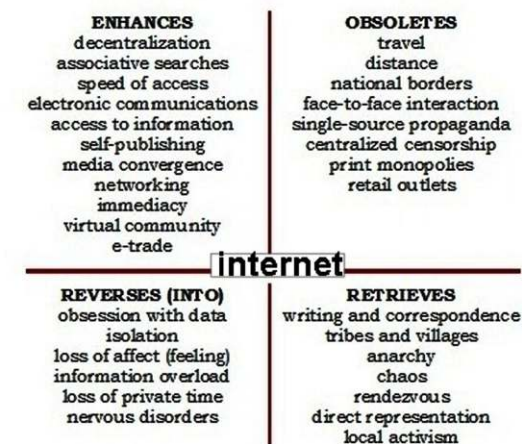
body, mind and emotion (heart) are involved. Not as separate influences, we know that for instance body and mind are linked in many ways (embodied cognition) and emotion and mind and body by mirror-neurons. The three factors however, are different enough to assign three different processes related to play and learning to them.

These are:

- Participation, actively becoming part of the play, by engaging in the action.
- Identification, becoming part of the scene, identifying with the image, the identity of the game (play, event). This requires giving up or exchanging part of one's own identity (assumed self) and trust.
- Realization, the mind picks up on it, new neural links are formed, new associations emerge, this could be seen as a tuning process.



the parameters and mechanisms of change



source: Martin Soules

These processes together create the opportunity for transformation or change, and together they establish the resonance. Resonance is what creates reality (according to the physicist) and is the force or flame that fires the transformation process. Res-

onance at the psychological and social level is a complex process, and if we add the magical dimension (the third realm) it becomes even more complex. However the so called laws of magic do point at the mechanisms of resonance, in the old days often described as correspondences, these days maybe better indicated as links. There are many sets of these laws, in the game domain like in the Dresden Files, the ones in Authentic Thaumaturgy by I. Bonewits and the laws by Sir James George Frazer in his “The Golden Bough, but in esoteric circles there are many variations and in science fiction there are insightful examples like Asimov’s Robot Laws.

Each process in the body/mind/heart triangle influences the others, so optimally body, mind and emotions work in the same direction, towards optimal transformation. In reality this seldom happens and we need many attempt, learning is of course a trial and error process. However, by looking into the three elements it is possible to optimize the learning process. Some situations are more suited for transformation, especially if they engage all three processes. The new wave of serious, meaningful and transformation computer games are potentially great tools for transformation, as they use multiple resonance mechanisms, virtual or augmented reality, new sensor technology, feedback and brain state cueing to enhance the TAZ quality and resonance mechanisms. Even non-traditional approaches like hypno-

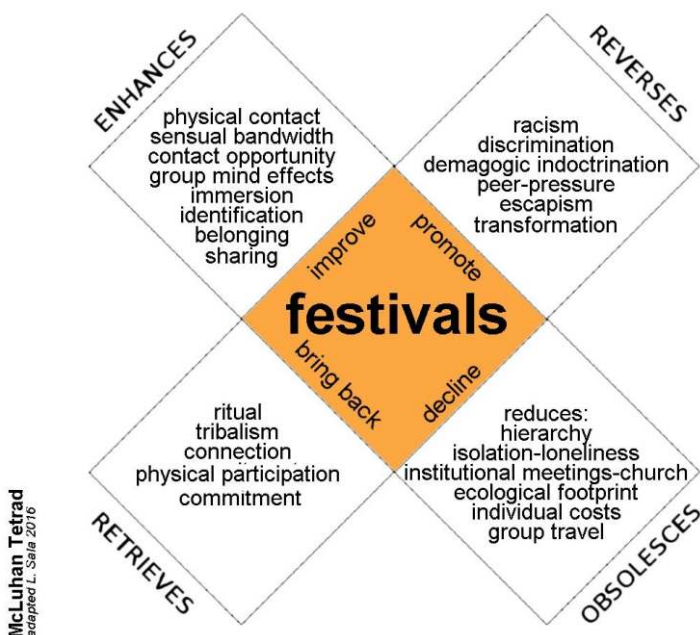
tism, frequency following inducement, meditation, breath work could be used to increase the transformational potential.

Set and setting, liminality

Festivals, especially transformational events, have much in common with rituals. One of the most ancient transformational ritual forms are the initiation rituals, many using psychedelic or psychotropic substances to induce what Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep called liminality, a threshold condition. It means bringing people, by a process of physical and emotional stress, towards a state where they are willing and ready to give up their ‘old’ identity and embrace a new one. The transformation from boy to man, from servant to warrior, from apprentice to master, all involves letting go of the old and embracing a new identity.

One can look at the procedures and ways such transformational rituals were and are staged, and in many festivals one has incorporated these elements. The idea that to reach the festival grounds one has to travel by foot, schlepping one’s gear over quite a distance, is part of the Rainbow festival gathering model, and has roots in the ‘vision

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Making things difficult is also a way to attract interest, easy achievements don't count much for many people.

In the same vein, another way to look at transformation processes is to use the well known set&setting model of the psychedelic luminaries like Timothy Leary. Set refers to the psychological state and the goals of a trip, the setting is the environment. If we assume that a festival, a book, a game and an experience also can act as a drug and have transformational effects (as drugs do) this model can also be used to analyze transformational processes.

McLuhan Tetrads

The media theorist Marshall McLuhan "the medium is the message" has given us interesting tools to look at media, and festivals are a medium. He saw media as way to extend and amplify our senses and capabilities, but also as ways to create new forms. Language led to poetry, books, movies to theaters, virtual reality to virtual worlds. "All media are active metaphors in their power to translate experience into new forms". The tetrad approach is a simple four-fold structure Marshall McLuhan employed to describe various technologies and as a way to analyze media from four different perspectives. Tetrads are a cognitive model that help to illustrate aspects and relations in media and technologies and often help to identify the less obvious. The four perspectives (McLuhan called them effects and even laws of media) are a complementary method to Aristotle's Four Causes: Material, Efficient, Formal, and Final. The 'Four Effects' were named as follows: Retrieval, Reversal, Obsolescence and Amplification or Enhancement. These Four Effects or media-laws are meant to apply simultaneously, and not linearly or sequentially, mirroring the method of Aristotle's Four Causes. McLuhan claimed these laws can be universally applied. The laws are:

- Extension/Enhancement: Every technology extends or amplifies some organ or faculty of the user. What does the medium enhance or intensify?
- Closure/Obsolescence: Because there is equilibrium in sensibility, when one area of experience is heightened or intensified, another is diminished or numbed. What is pushed aside or obsolesced by the new medium?

- Reversal: Every form, pushed to the limit of its potential, reverses its characteristics.

“When pushed to the limits of its potential, the new form will tend to reverse what had been its original characteristics. What is the reversal-potential of the new form?” – Marshall and Eric McLuhan, 1988.

- Retrieval: The content of any medium is an older medium.

The tetrad is arrived at through a process of asking questions concerning the effects: What does any subject enlarge or enhance? What does it erode or obsolesce. A tetrad concerning the internet illustrates the methodology.

This tetrad methods is used here to combine the various insights in how a festival ‘works’ in a single illustration.

McLuhan stated that understanding a medium and its message means analyzing (1) the medium in and of itself, (2) the message intended to be delivered by the medium, and (3) the message embedded in the effects of the medium.

If we apply this to the medium festival, we see that increasingly it absorbs older media, not only the meetings and fairs of old, but using video, audio, theater stage technology and more and more theme-park setting, it becomes an amalgamated medium, a combination.

The message of a festival ranges from pure entertainment to a transformational experience, but centers around the direct ‘live’ experience and the immersion in it, becoming part of flow of the event, being challenged and yet able to deal with the stress, the people, the excitement like in the ‘flow’ state Michael Csikszentmihalyi describes.

The effects of a festival can be limited to a nice memory to such transformation, that one changes the course of one’s life with many things in between, like meeting new friends, changing one’s loyalties concerning music, ecology, people or ideologies.

The above models are just a very general outline, more specifics are given in my books about ritual, cyberspace and sacred journeys (see website www.lucsala.nl), and it is important to note, that the resulting transformation is not necessarily a positive one.



18 Festivals & Computer Games

Play and games are precursors to ritual, festivals, sports events and courts. Many of our institutions like the judicial system and parliament. Even philosophical discussions can be seen as a game aiming at improving understanding and progress.

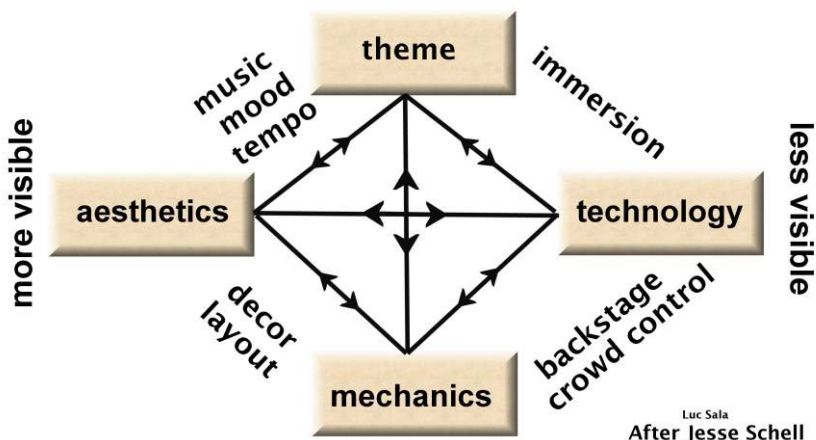
This has been dealt with in the previous chapters, in this chapter I would like to point at the resonance between computer games and festivals. Prof. Gino Yu (HongKong) sees in computer games, especially in so-called serious and transformational games a great mirror and parallel of festivals and translates design concepts from the one to the other realm. There are many similarities between the (multi-player) virtual game worlds and the real and tangible world of a festivals, both deal with emotions and feelings, use symbolism and subconscious manipulation.

Computer games and festivals have a lot in common, and these days the massive multiplayer online games (MMOG) and massive multiplayer online role playing games (MMORPG) are like online festivals. Computer assisted games and pervasive games are slowly entering the festivalscape.

Just like festivals, games develop, and there is an overlap between festivals and computer games. Pervasive games even reach into the real world like with on-site location-games. The use of smartphones and tracking makes insertion of such new entertainment options in the festival scene a possibility and a tool for crowd control and marketing.

I have not found a festival simulation game yet, but combining policy, strategy, business analytic games and simulations like Sim-city would no doubt make an interesting game; creating, modeling and running festivals, in a genre like tycoon games.

New kinds of computer games are evolving, like the serious and meaningful games category. They are used for learning, training and simulation. Designers, policy makers, teachers, and the medical world now see the usefulness of digital games beyond entertainment.



Elemental Triad in Festival Design

Games have been developed for teaching, assessment, recruiting and to collect data to improve search engines or crowd control.

What can we learn from games that is relevant for transformation, in relation to festivals and personal growth? Why is gamification (introducing game elements in normal life and the festival staging) a trend that parallels eventification? Do we lack challenge in our lives, and look for excitement and gratification in temporary autonomous zones, on our computer console, in movies, in theater and of course in festivals? Many questions, and fairly relevant ones.

We live in a world where the reality of materialistic and not holistic) progress has other effects, more computers and robotics will probably eliminate jobs. We can all predict driver-less logistics, farmer-less agriculture, drones, robot soldiers and watchmen, automated care, but what do we see as a future for the people, the normal folks out of a job, maybe out of a regular income? Will we go for ever more fun and games, gamification, travel, self-realization workshops, yoga, drugs, massive pilgrimages, even more festivals, or will boredom and easy euthanasia take over?

Gam(e)ification is one of the trends. It's a word introduced by T. Chang and popularized by Jesse Schell. Using the greed of people and the need to compete, to lure them into participation or buying isn't new. Our parents did also buy lottery tickets and collected bonus

vouchers and coupons, but these days it's becoming a major trend. It's rather opportunistic, smartly using human psychology to create fan-groups, followers, likers and of course buyers, but the results count. Having a game associated with your brand, used as an attractor for your site or shop, as a way to reach the general public is now common practice. Game-theory, once a mathematical oddity, is now part of the marketing curriculum. In the festival context using prizes, incentives, even lotteries are not uncommon, but is used increasingly in the marketing and in the fan-management. It fits into the incentive, schemes, why not give a discount for loyalty, award prizes or free tickets based on feedback, use the Loyalty 2.0 approach (like in GroupON and Foursquare) to create bonding with and between the participants.

Gamification, in the computer game or in real life (like sharing in the savings in medical costs) turns out to be an effective tool in this. Serious applications of games, in learning, and also in medical and psychotherapeutic applications, have become a game-category by itself, serious or transformational (transformative) gaming.

Games, especially in a group setting, influence the mood and group mind, they can create a specific gestalt, an identity. This again is also true for festivals.

In this chapter a number of shared fundamental elements of games and festivals are compared. One of the problems here is, that neither of these fields has much of a solid footing in psychology. There is much written about how to design games, but just as with festival much less about why we play games. This question has been addressed in the chapter about play and transformation, here follow the approach developed earlier in this book, starting with temporary autonomous zones. Later some models and concepts used in game design are discussed, as they also shed light on how festivals 'work'.

TAZ in games; immersion

The concept of temporary autonomous zones (TAZ) doesn't only apply to festivals, gatherings and communities, but becomes relevant also in the context of games and more specifically computer (video) games. A game provides a temporary autonomous zone, played

alone or in company; these days we can play multiplayer games in the isolation of our own screen.

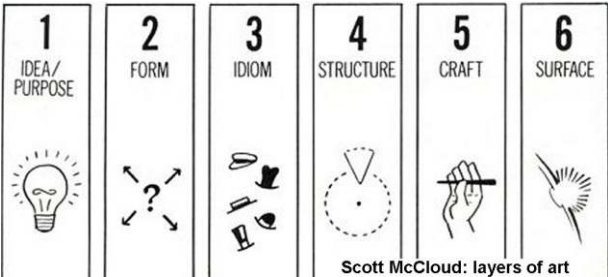
The sense of freedom that a physical TAZ or permanent free zone offers, has often little to do with the reality or physicality. It is a feeling, something we create in our mind and feel in our body, for instance if we enter the gate of such a place, make the ‘liminality’ step over the threshold, don a special costume or identify with our avatar in a computer game. Our heart rate goes up, we feel excitement, a sense of freedom, curiosity, ready to exchange our ‘old’ identity with a new one, identify ourselves with the world, the ideals and the limitations of the new realm.

In a computer game, and with augmented or virtual reality this ‘immersion’ becomes even more intense, we also enter a new world, with different rules and constraints, which comes with a sense of freedom.

As I already indicated in the previous chapters, play is very important (also for animals), in learning to deal with the world in growing up and later in dealing with stress, as entertainment, in risk assessment and even as therapy to keep one’s brain and body active. As was explained there play may be a fundamental aspect of evolution and life.

Games as structured forms of play are essential, not only for learning and developing skills but as a way to find one’s position in the social environment, as a way to resolve conflicts and as a psychological tool to deal with stress, hierarchy, self-worth, and even diseases. The serious of meaningful computer games now emerging can deal with education, but also with life-style transformation. In the case of diseases like diabetes this is very important, changing the menu and exercising for many requires more than just doctor’s orders.

Games can be very physical, like in sports, but also with little or no action like in chess or puzzles; just brain games. Computer games so



far have a limited scope of physical activity, but with techniques like movement sensors and virtual reality this can be expanded and the bodily engagement grows. Modern insights like ‘embodied cognition’ and mirror neurons show that body and mind interact in many ways.

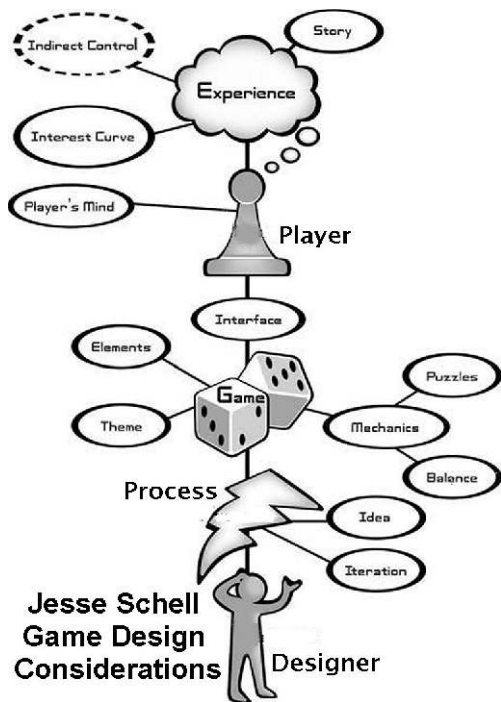
Transformative gaming

Games that change the attitude, lifestyle and beliefs of players and/or audience are termed transformational or transformative games and are increasingly important in all kinds of fields, from education, training, medical and therapeutic use to brainwashing and propaganda. There are designed to create experiences for learners that benefit (or influence) their lives and the lives of those connected to them. Life-style transformation is maybe too lofty a goal,

but for instance in situations where the purpose is to change fundamental behavior like in trying to change exercise and eating patterns for diabetics, it is the right term.

The use of games or game techniques (gamification) for all kinds of purposes, not only training, education, but for therapies of all sorts, tests and evaluations, and alas also in warfare. The use and benefits of gaming in supporting Alzheimer’s and other dementia patients, but in general all seniors, are well established.

These gaming experiences share some root qualities. They must be fun, engaging and rewarding to be successful, even if their ultimate

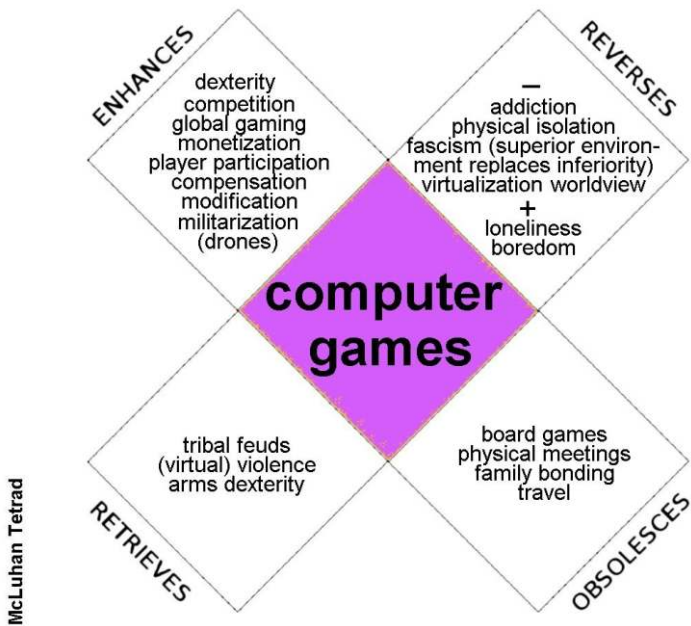


purpose is serious in nature. Game mechanics can be used to inform, teach, and shape behavior. Games are excellent learning management systems, capable of both teaching and assessment. The real-time nature of games allows them to occasion “teachable moments” for “just-in-time learning.” Well designed games adjust the challenge, the task difficulty according to user performance, which facilitates sustained attention, engagement, and learning while minimizing boredom and frustration.

Tetrads

There are of course a number of game design models, that also may help to see how festivals can be optimized, but they are not very deep. The McLuhan Tetrad approach is, amazingly, one of the more insightful approaches, it truly offers four perspectives that don’t really overlap and are not just two axes intersecting.

The ‘Elemental Tetrad in Game-design’ Jesse Schell proposed is one of the few design models one encounters in the game-design world, but does not delve very deep in why we play games, just indicates game elements.

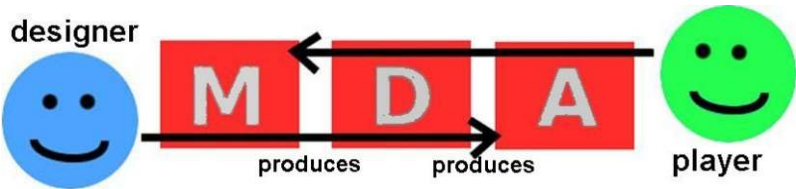


Schell’s Elemental Tetrad (Schell 2008) has four elements: mechanics, technology, aesthetics and story. Schell defines mechanics as “the procedures and rules of your game” and indicates six types of mechanics –“space”, “objects”, “actions”, “rules”, “skill” and “chance”. Space is where the users engage with the game (both virtual worlds and physical space). Objects are tools used by the player to advance in the game. Actions are the player interaction with objects and other players. Rules govern the game environment. Skills are physical, mental and social abilities used by a player. Chance refers to the randomness and risks that exists in games.

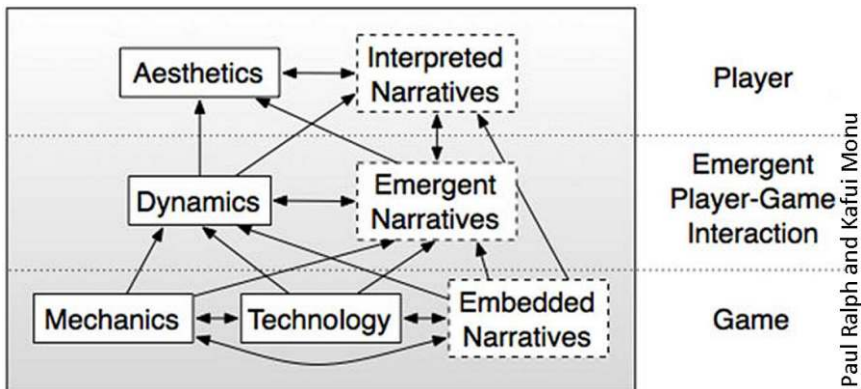
Technology is about the tools and systems used to implement or deliver the dynamics, the gameplay, based on the mechanics. Aesthetics describes how the game looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and feels, the emotions and experiences.

Story is the most interesting part of the tetrad, as a good story, supported by game figures, is what makes a game attract an audience, just as a good theme, supported by acts, attracts visitors to a festival. Schell defines story as the sequence of events that unfolds in a game, but even including the other parts of the tetrad this falls somewhat short of what really defines the game, the ‘Gestalt’.

His tetrad model can be adapted to model festival design, and then can help to identify the dimensions and elements, but remains a limited tool. What is lacking in this model is the motivation to play (or attend a festival), the variability in incentives, the differences in individual needs and self-states, the dynamic nature and self-state



shifts of players; this approach helps to differentiate the design process, but not much more. The basic drives and attractors as discussed earlier, identification, participation and realization, very relevant in games, are not covered. In general there is little differentiation and modeling based on individual preferences or personality types in



game design, even as it is realized certain types of games do appeal to different groups of people.

Schell, one of the inspiring personalities of the computer game-scene, mapped the various elements in game design in a kind of tree, with many elements, but again lacking more explicit models and feedback mechanisms.

In his tetrad he basically uses the visibility axis versus the hard-soft (digital-analog) one, but in essence just connects everything with everything and doesn't work out models for those relationships. The link between for instance the 'mechanics' or rules and the aesthetics (emotions, subjective experience) is clarified a bit by the MDA model, where more or less the same elements as in Schell's tetrad but minus story are used..

MDA game design

Robin Hunicke, Marc LeBlanc and Robert Zubek defined MDA (Mechanics-Dynamics-Aesthetics). The MDA framework is a popular tool to design and analyze games.

It formalizes the structure of games by breaking them down into three components - Mechanics, Dynamics and Aesthetics. From the perspective of the designer the mechanics generate dynamics which generate aesthetics, rules lead to emergent gameplay and this to form and appreciation, emotions and experience. Game designers plan, devise and manipulate the workings of the game (e.g. rules, algorithms, data structures, interventions, relationships).

Player interactions with game mechanics create the dynamics, the way the game develops and is played. These dynamics then affect

the player's emotional experience or aesthetics, the fun but also the irritation. From the perspective of the player, the emotions are what matter most, he has to deal with the gameplay and the rules, but how he feels matters most. He may understand the rules and dimensions of the game, but this is not necessary to begin playing.

For the designer the opposite is true, there the mechanics come first. This poses a challenge for the game designer as he is only able to influence the mechanics and only through them can he produce meaningful dynamics and aesthetics for the player. To create a game, he often has to become a player (the trial) to experience the outcome, and then go back to the design stage.

Some criticism of this MDA model makes sense, because by creating attractive and mood-setting visuals and comfortable controls and feedback, as is now common in high resolution and even more so in immersive games, the designer can more directly influence the resulting emotional state.

There are at least eight type of Aesthetics (according to Hunnicke, LeBlanc and Zubec):

- Sensation (Game as sense-pleasure): Player experience something completely unfamiliar.
- Fantasy (Game as make-believe): Imaginary world.
- Narrative (Game as drama): A story that drives the player keep coming back
- Challenge (Game as obstacle course): Urge to master something. Boosts a game's replay.
- Fellowship (Game as social framework): A community where the player is an active part of it. Almost exclusive for interactive multiplayer games.
- Discovery (Game as uncharted territory): Urge to explore game world.
- Expression (Game as self-discovery): Own creativity. For example, creating character resembling player's own avatar.
- Submission (Game as pastime): Connection to the game, as a whole, despite of constraints.

These are in effect eight subcategories of game use, each with their own dynamics, incentivising and disincentivising properties and attraction for different personality types. One could add categories like

surrender, transformation, self-exploration and learning, especially for serious and transformational games.

Relevance for festivals

We can take this model to the festival. There the organizer can make the rules, set the price, the line-up of the artist, choose a target audience, but it is the actual event, the run-time and the interaction of the participants (including the talent) that defines how things go and this makes for what the people experience, the fun.

The subcategories of games can be applied to festivals and offer yet another way to describe the qualities and values of a festival and what needs or drives are catered for. Again it must be made clear that not all things are relevant for all people. Typing of the audience or audience groups based upon systems like Myers-Briggs or Enneagram will reveal which categories or mixes of categories appeal to whom. There is amazingly little literature on this subject, most audience responses are aggregated, as if all humans are more or less alike.

The narrative; MTDA + N

One of the shortcoming in Schell's tetrad and in the MDA model, according to Paul Ralph and Kafui Monu is the lack of understanding and appreciating the narrative in a game in the models. A narrative is the story line, the underlying scenario, the recurring baseline of the game.

Embedded Narrative is what is told or shown to the player by the game's creators. It can be told at the start, interwoven in the gameplay, become clear through the artwork, underlying music or audio-narrative. Emergent Narratives unfold and can be influenced by the player, stories kind of develop with the gameplay. Interpreted Narrative is what the players makes of it and is dependent on interpretation, much as when reading a book a mental image forms about the people and places.

In the MTDA+N (Mechanics, Technology, Dynamics, Aesthetics plus Narratives) framework they combined MDA and the Elemental Tetrad, adding technology (tools and systems used to implement or

deliver gameplay) as a factor, relevant as new ways of interaction emerge and are a distinct element in game-design.

Applying this to festivals an example illustrates the relevance. Take the theme ‘Tribal Revival’. This is not only an indication, it can be rolled out as a narrative, not only in words, but in decor (embedded narrative), in the clothes of participants (interpreted narrative) and in the sequence of acts (emergent narrative) and tempo (dynamism, the emotion line in the line-up), supported by the garb of the artists, the kind of musical instruments, the imagery projected. This all will create the aesthetics, the emotional outcome of the whole process. The growing role of technology, these days with ever more and larger displays, holographic imagery, new drugs, wearables, smartphones, apps etc. etc, are part of the deal in enhancing or expanding the narrative..

Layers

The process of designing a festival also resonates with the ranked ‘six layers of art’ model of Scott McCloud, where surface resembles the idea of aesthetics in het MDA model, but is less comprehensive and consequential, but is useful for understanding the layers in a computer game from the creators perspective. In the festival context it can help to translate a theme into manageable levels of expression, or deconstruct a certain festival ambiance.

Convergence

The basic structures of a festival and a computer game have many similarities and studying those can help to improve either one. Looking into the transformative qualities of games, but on an individual level or at least more focused on individual needs and motivations, seems a fruitful exercise. The models and design considerations, to a large extend, seem to ignore the need for differentiation.

Just as there is a trend towards transformative gaming, but lacking deep insight in how people and groups change and respond, the transformative festivals could do with some more target group profiling. Research and statistics indicating that so many like this, or that, or feel such etc. has little relevance, unless we can relate this to individual preferences and those to psychological profiles.

This would take away a little bit of the magic and art of the game designers and the festival staging folks, but would help to get the most out of these exciting media.



19 Social media and festivalization

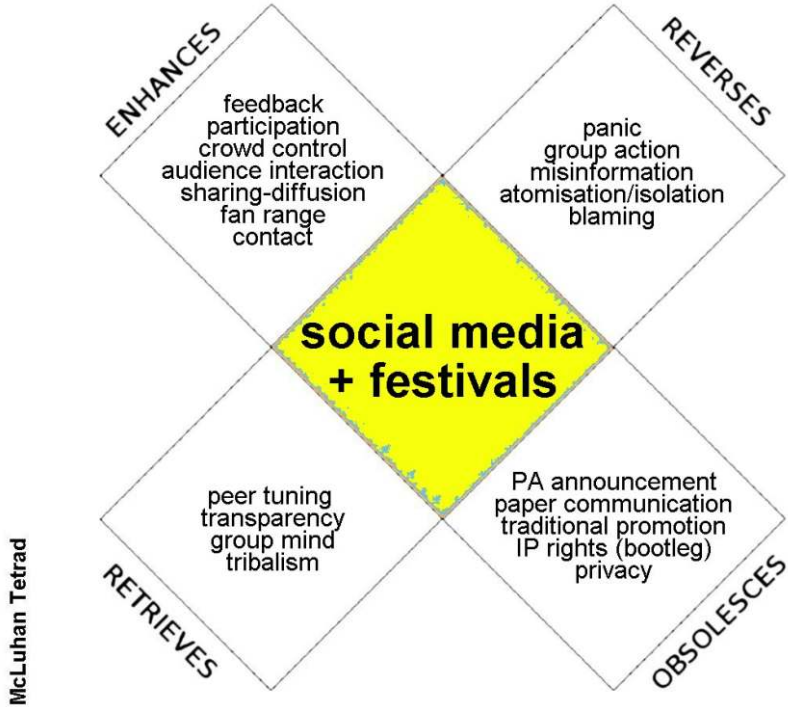
One could say that a festival or event is the essential real time social medium. Meeting others ‘in the flesh’ with far more sensory bandwidth than any electronic medium can provide is the ‘real thing’. The gadget-freaks may believe that 3D, holograms and virtual reality comes close, it still lacks the immersive quality of ‘being there’. The digital and the real social media however converge and this goes two ways. We can use digital social media to feel part of an event and we can share our experiences with those off-site, online and offline via sound, pictures and video. Festivals feel the influence of social media, off-site and on-site. It’s quite normal to see people at a concert or event sharing their experiences and their evaluations on the spot, holding up their smartphones to share with those at home or the world.

Convergence of media

The use of digital and virtual social media is now becoming very much part of normal communication patterns, this increasingly influences the marketing, positioning and staging of festivals. The websites, blogs, tweets are a major factor in how an event is received and judged, in how loyalty develops and how visitors are attracted. Price strategies and tactical incentives are no longer communicated in print, but via internet, allowing much more narrowcasting and targeting of specific audiences. Building a festival or event community or fan-group is a common practice. Keeping people informed and participating in planning and shaping the next event, organizing local sub-events, reunions, virtual meetings, there are many possibilities. Events like Burning Man have created a whole structure of support and off-site services and gatherings, a whole ecosystem that uses internet and live meetings to build a loyalty tribe.

In the process of communicating with the fan-group and potential participants much data can be gathered for ‘big data’ analysis and fine-tuning the event. With increasing availability of real-time sensor data of participants (smart watches, wearables, BlueTooth, NFC and mobile data) the possibilities for crowd monitoring and crowd

control will grow. Digital signage systems can help to guide the crowd, but apps, tweets and sms are also ways to communicate. On-site communications via social media and the post-event evaluation on internet and via social media are quite normal and are even becoming a growing concern for festival operators. The issue of rights (IP) to broadcast live events and performances is at stake. Such rights were once more or less safe, bootleg filming an event could easily be spotted, but these days such control is an illusion. The Grateful Dead approach of stimulating and facilitating bootleg recording as part of grass-roots marketing is more effective and in line with the social media trend. The projections and fear that digital and virtual communications would make live events obsolete didn't materialize, these days the income of performing artists depends more on their touring and performance income than on selling records, CD's and online music.



Extended range and coverage

Digital media and high-bandwidth communication will facilitate remote participation, of audience and talent. The wide array of visual and audio relay systems, the availability of cameras and screens and even holographic projection can be used to involve more parties and more (external, off-site) talent, and broadcast to a much wider audience and monetize such services. Linking events, synchronizing performances, even have musicians on different locations play and sing together, there are many possibilities to enhance the experience for those present and those participating online.

The effects of social media indicated in a McLuhan tetrad can be used to see where the convergence of festivals and social media will go. A combination tetrad shows that the increased feedback from the audience, which could be a positive effect, can also lead to such resonance, that a panic emerges. The group mind, stimulated by social media communications, could easily drift towards extremes, turning against the organizers, the performers or subgroups in the audience. The experience with hooligans in sports-events and during demonstrations shows that their 'internal' group communication goes very fast and without much damping and can overheat very quickly. These are of course extremes, the developments in the reversal corner of a McLuhan tetrad.

20 The dark side, morality

Amidst the many positive effects and remarks about festivals, free cultural zones and intentional communities, the dangers and negative aspects need to be mentioned too. The freedom comes with the possibility of abuse, criminal activities, tax-evasion and anti-social behavior.

Enforcement

Autonomous zones operate more or less outside the normal legal order, have their own legitimacy but this might be at odds with what's considered acceptable in the normal world. Even if the rules, charter and bylaws of an event or place are very clear, the lack of some kind of a law and order force and a legal system will make it hard to enforce them. Very often a group or subgroup will take over, create some kind of imposed security or blackmail allowing them to do as they please. They can use all kinds of power, not only the physical and violence, but money, access and psychological pressure.

The use of drugs like cannabis is an obvious example. Officially festival organizers may strive for drug-free events, the reality is different and problems arise.

In alternative communities and squats the situation is even more complex, as accepting the use of soft drugs is often part of the culture or even a principle. But these substances are to be grown, imported, sold and often a whole subculture develops, like in Christiania or Ruigoord, with less desirable effects.

This kind of symbiotic embrace of certain 'dark' activities in 'disobedient' communities is so common, that it seems a normal side effect of autonomy. Of course it is a matter of convention, why do we call the trade in weed and hash, the assistance of rejected refugees and 'no-papiers' illegal and accept and consider positive the also very common local bike-industry, recycling, artistic and media projects? Again the notion of innovation and social change has to include the acceptance of operation on and across the borders of convention, pushing the envelope. Not always with positive results.

Bikers and drug trade

The stories how many festivals were taken over by groups with less or no respect for the normal laws, like bikers and criminal groups using terror, extortion, blackmail and outright violence are many.

Places like Christiania, with all their nearly mythical stories about well intended freedom and experimentation with community morals, have seen horrible lawlessness, crime scenes, even murder at times. Christiania has been dominated by bikers in the 80's and 90's. The drug-scene and the 'pusher street' presence has always been a problems, with periods where hard drugs poisoned the whole community, and even now the trade in marihuana products is a very visible part of the culture.

The 'pusher-street' in Christiania has not only attracted the wrong scene and criminal involvement, but developed into a sub-autonomy, largely outside the jurisdiction and authority of the non-involved Christiania residents, with frequent police raids and hassle. The community has partly become dependent on the drug-money or related trades, pusher money went into rebuilding and renovation, festivals and events. For many Copenhagen citizens and even internationally the place is a well known drug-haven of sorts. This reputation by itself attract many visitors, which in turn support the local drug-economy and this has impacted the political status of the place, even as nearly everybody tries to cover up this darker side and support the myth of a happy alternative heaven.

Kids growing up in Christiania were confronted with the drug-scene, with rampant alcoholism, and many fell victim to this themselves. Not a nice place to live, most of the time. The underlying terror and violence was mostly kept out of the public eye in order to keep up the myth of a happy go lucky community, but the lack of enforcement of the community rules and laws is obvious. The difference between those profiting from the drug trade, living luxuriously in the nicest houses and displaying their wealth and those trying to live a decent life is very visible for anybody walking around in the community.

The sale and use of drugs, not only marihuana but psychedelics and hard drugs is quite common in 'alternative' communities. It provides

income for those wanting to live off the grid, but attract many addicts and losers and brings about a criminal or half-criminal subculture and underground economy.

Morality

Festivals and alternative communities often boast being 'free', meaning that the 'normal' morality and norms don't apply. One is artistic, involved, politically aware, autonomous, radical, anarchistic, ecological responsible, there are many labels. This identification with being different from the 'bourgeois' common folks has often become like a hallmark, one proudly emphasizes how much more permissive and tolerant one is. Free sex, poly-amorous relationships, different family constellations, more acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT), it is often part of the image, suggesting a better society, less constrained by the morality of churches and the 'square' society. One often claims that the social control mechanisms in the community or in the festival culture will prevent excesses or abuse, reality shows otherwise. The social control works the other way and keeps abuse hidden; snitching is seen as treason. Often misdemeanors and even felonies or serious transgressions like theft or abuse are kept hidden from the audience, in order to keep appearances up.

The downside remains hidden behind the facade. One ignores or denies, that the relationships inside the community are often thwarted, dysfunctional and not very child-friendly, that there is hierarchy, that there are have's and have-not's, that some are more equal than others, that there is abuse of many kinds. All this is mostly covered, hidden from sight, ignored or denied, but known by the leaders or insiders and coming out only in crisis or by whistle blowers.

The real economy, the real power in such communities is often in the hands of power brokers that keep out of sight and often for good reasons. Quite a few communities have rather dark pasts, they were an escape vehicle for the founders and thus attract like-minded folks. My personal experience after being involved with many communities and events is that rarely things are totally OK. I would say that only a very few and then often monastic and truly intentional communities seem to be above suspicion. The 'holy' often turn out to be



Pusher street Christiania (picture Steffen Hildebrand)

very 'human', the gurus falls for money, sex and power, the leaders are more 'equal' than the others, but this is not news, power corrupts!

Different kind of capital

The money issue is what often corrupts an organization. The ownership, the accountability, the final decision power is normally in the hands of those who control the money, but in the alternative world this is not always the case. There is spiritual power, which might be abused concerning money, but more often there is psychological, sexual, social abuse. The hierarchy is a spiritual community, even if equality is what is preached, can be stifling, with masters and slaves, with real victims who believe they sacrifice themselves for the greater good.

But there are many other powers, that play a role and where the power-base can be seen as a kind of capital and could be misused.. There is the artistic and cultural capital, the power of the headliners and the backstage folks and the possibility of abuse there. The power of transformation is less well known. Initiations, seen as steps up in

the spiritual hierarchy, can be used to manipulate too. The story of Osho (Baghwan) who sometimes indicate, as a joke, some of his devotees to be ‘enlightened’ and then retract this a few days later, is well known.

The possibility to set an agenda, for the group or reaching out in the world, is political power. As festivals more and more are focal points for change, and history tells us how powerful this can be, they can turn into political instruments.

Owe Ronström in 2011 posed:

“Festivals can produce desirable visibility and attention capital at the same time as they can contribute to rapidly devaluing and even consuming the capital for those who have partaken of it. Festivals are instruments for control of musical and cultural resources, as well of the aesthetics, ethics, values, symbols, representations, etc. of the presented musics. Festival organizers thereby become controllers of political and ideological power.”

Such an influence can be positive, promoting ecology, tolerance, diversity, but there is the danger that the economies of scale lead to a more mediocre approach, serving the hidden interests, the promoters and sponsors behind the scenes and their agenda. The owners of the festivals may have more power than what we think, they may use this power in positive or negative directions. As media ownership and especially cross media ownership has been a political issue in the old days, today’s integration and combination of influence in the festivalscape would deserve some kind of regulation.

The light comes with the dark

It seems unavoidable, with the possibility of transformation, change and growth there nearly always seems to come a fascination with the dark side too. In every organization, in every community, at every festival there are always the hidden corners, the secret self-serving manipulation, the siphoned off funds, the abuse of power. Maybe there is consolation in the theodice that we need the shadow to see the light. As Leonard Cohen sings:

There is a crack in everything, that’s how the light comes in.

21 Drugs at festivals, raves, parties, clubbing scene.

When talking about festivals one can hardly ignore that drugs play a role and some say a dominant role in the festival culture. They are, officially or not, part of the formula, and although it is possible to create a great atmosphere without drugs or alcohol, using them is like a fast track way to let go and arrive at an altered state. The drugs allow quick access to Victor Turner's 'liminal in-between state', where transformation and letting go of the mask can happen, but for many, using drugs is not about change, but about enjoying 'communitas' with the crowd in ecstatic dancing and partying without breaking the mask of personality and ego.



Festival use is usually not intended for 'sacral' purposes and transformation, but for having fun, becoming one with the group and escaping the dullness of normal, life. This means that the individual self transformation effects are less prominent and important than when drugs are taken in a therapeutic or self-exploration setting. The group mind effects are more relevant, of course apart from the personal physical dangers like dehydration, overdose, lowered perception and impaired judgment.

Individual effects, group mind effects

Most studies about the effects of drugs are about individual psychological effects. They look in the dangers and the positive transformative, sedative or escape effects of ingesting the various substances. Less work is done in studying group effects. In the festival context and concerning crowd control the effects on the group mind are also important. The group mind is the collective mood (and behavior) emerging when people are together and resonating (because of music, emotions, threats, We know that a group inebriated

with alcohol may enter into an excitable state of mind, and things can get out of hand. The combination of alcohol with other drugs like cocaine can make this worse. The excitation phase of drugs like cannabis is shorter, and substances like MDMA have a relatively short excitation phase. Crowds high on this are usually easier, less aggressive and less problems arise. However, as the serotonin depletion leads to more dopamine stimulation, after several hours of dancing the mood of an MDMA crowd can turn sour, just running in stimulation mode.

The combination of arousing experiences, like music, smells, light and the ingestion of substances in larger group settings is not widely researched. Seemingly the Russian secret services have experimented with this and the USA is accused of experimenting with HAARP (High Auroral Active Research Project), but serious work on group mind theory is hard to find. The excitation-transfer theory developed by Dolf Zillmann looks into the cumulative effect of stimuli, but influencing the mood of a group is very much an art, rather than a science and some DJ's and VJ's are great artists.

Great orators, politicians, performing artists DJ's and MC's do have a talent to excite a crowd, but this is mostly an intuitive talent and of course gets better by practice. Whether it helps if the artist is high on drugs to remains unclear, but seems to happen a lot; in a shamanistic context this is usually beneficial to the outcome of sessions.

Making contact

Certain drugs, enhanced by the situation, music, etc. do help to reach out and make contact with others, they are empathogens. This is not only an individual but also a group mind effect, The use of such drugs, even by a small part of the crowd will help to raise the general interaction contact level. The opening of the heart and senses by a few will influence the group mind creating an effect similar to piggybacking or hitchhiking, picking up the high from others.

As argued elsewhere in this book, new and engaging contacts are appreciated by the more socially inclined people at parties or festivals. Especially for large commercial festivals, where the contact opportunities are usually limited and everybody sticks to their own, reaching

out is not really part of the formula. You have to reach out on your own, not easy for most. Empathogens (like MDMA but alcohol is also an empathogen) then do help to make contact with others.

Psychedelic festivals

There are festivals, where the use of drugs is part of the formula. In England this started with the first Glastonbury Fair in 1971, organized by the Solstice Capers, with Andrew Kerr and Arabella Churchill. It was a free festival, based upon self-reliance, 'bring what you expect to find' and LSD was distributed freely, most people were on acid. This free festival tradition lasted till 1985 (the Battle of the Beanfield) with many similar and highly psychedelic (LSD) festivals like the Windsor, Watchfield and Stonehenge events and the Welsh Psylocybin festivals. Already then there were 'bad trip' sanctuary tents and a 'Release' ambulance site for harm reduction. Those were the days of the projected hippie oil slides and the Acidica light shows.

These days the ethos of self-reliance and participation, not consumption can be found at Burning Man, where drugs are all over the place and at the Rainbow gatherings (where the drug of choice is cannabis). The tradition is definitely in line with the psychedelic events of the late sixties, seventies and early eighties. Of course not too openly, the dominant cultural narrative of prohibition and silence concerning use and effects still rules.

Drug use is all over the place, at some festivals quite noticeable. For instance at the biannually Boom festival in Portugal there are such sanctuaries and facilities to take care of overdose and flipping attendees, that the focus of the whole thing is clear. You go to Boom to use, to listen to talks about drugs (I gave such a talk too), to look at psychedelic art, fantastic architectural constellations and to exchange experience with others.

Boom is called a visionary arts dance festival, attracts people from all over and is a cacophony of booming music. The actual site is not easily accessible, has a lake, and can be extremely hot during the festival but very few dare swim naked, it's Portugal after all. The whole atmosphere is psytrance counter-culture, offering a setting that is psychedelic even if one doesn't touch the stuff. The partici-

pants go for the max, there is ecstatic dancing where stimulation outruns the empathogen effects. There is also cognitive challenge, discussions about the problems of the world, much interest in ecology and all kinds of spirituality. The spiritual side of Boom now has its own festival in the years in between.

Boom is maybe an extreme case, there are smaller psychedelic events with less grandiose settings, but in general drug use (of cannabis, psychedelics, empathogens like XTC, speed, some cocaine but no hard drugs like crack or heroin) is widespread in the festival world. This is true both at the large consumerism events and the more intimate ones. Sometimes drug use (and smoking) is forbidden and this policy actually maintained, often this is when the focus is on people who bring their kids.

In some communities the use of substances can be part of the scene, but the consequences, in their effect on the energy of the place, the potential for abuse, drug dealing and in the relationship with the 'outer' world that might not like this practice, need to be considered. Using drugs is a reality on many festivals and in many communities smoking a joint is quite common. But then in 'normal' society people smoke, get drunk, and this is at least as dangerous as smoking cannabis.

The use of 'substances' of an inebriating or psychedelic kind during collective events or ritual is not new, it is of all times. Perhaps these days it is a bit more democratic, not reserved for the happy few. In ancient Greece, each year hundreds of people, sometimes thousands, participated in the rituals of the Eleusinian Mystery-school. However this was still a select elite. In most cultures the use of these substances remained restricted to a small group, to priests or shamans and was often a secret ritual for initiates only. The widespread use of substances (except alcohol) is relatively new and has increased. These days at music and pop festivals nearly everybody is high, pops a pill or is tripping, usually with adequate supplies of alcohol to make sure it works.

The broader festivals and group events like pilgrimages have always existed, nothing new there. In the past they were usually related to some religious purpose, connected to nature and the sky in seasonal festivals and even sports events like the original Greek Olympics

were in honor of the gods. But the broad use of drugs or stimulants we see now was not part of those events.

These days the religious focus is gone. There are meets, festivals and raves. All throughout the year one can find something to attend that caters to one's needs and desires. In the summer there are mass events like Burning Man or Boom and the music festivals with headline bands. In fact, the whole festival business is becoming a major industry, ranging from the super large music events to the small gatherings of kindred spirits in nature.

These events don't officially provide or condone drugs apart from alcohol, energy drinks with taurine and tobacco. The other substances or drinks were and are illegal, considered unhealthy and evil, leading to moral degradation and what not.

The reality is that the use of stimulating, liberating, reality escaping and consciousness altering drugs is widespread. Millions of people go to festivals, clubs and meet ups every weekend where they take pills, smoke or snort something and have made this part of their normal routine. Usually this works out fine, but there are accidents; some pills contain the wrong components, too much or too little of the active ingredient, some people overdose or can't handle it.

In general the number of incidents is very small, much smaller than when alcohol is at play. A few casualties or adverse situations do make it into the media and are often used as propaganda against the use of drugs, but statistically most of these 'drugs' are relatively safe.

The event organizers are aware of what happens, even if they publicly deny this, display 'no drugs' signs, have (ineffective) control at the entrance and play 'legal'. In reality many festivals have dedicated spaces for helping 'lost' users in trouble, facilitate testing and are on the look-out for vulnerable people. At the very least there are chill-out rooms and often there are sanctuaries. There is some social control, the organizers know what is happening and take care to have some people around that can spot casualties in time. Larger festivals sometimes have extensive harm reduction facilities, there are organizations like Kosmicare UK that provide excellent service,

working with well trained staff and peer-level volunteers, good protocols and medical back-up.

The availability of this in itself diminishes the anxiety and the need for assistance. Even as the authorities sometimes don't want to support harm reduction programs (why help druggies!) one of the nice aspects of most of these drugs is that they make the atmosphere a bit more social and people look out for each other. Alcohol, speed and cocaine, on the other hand, do have an adverse and antisocial effect and may lead to serious aggression and problems, but the psychedelics rarely cause group-mind problems. The only problem might be that people start to doubt the prevailing paradigms of society, become politically aware and critical, which the status-quo folks see as a danger.

Accidents are more likely to happen after one leaves the disco or club. In that respect one should plan in such a way, that going home doesn't involve driving cars, waiting for the bus in the cold for hours or having to cross unsafe places and neighborhoods.

Why are people using?

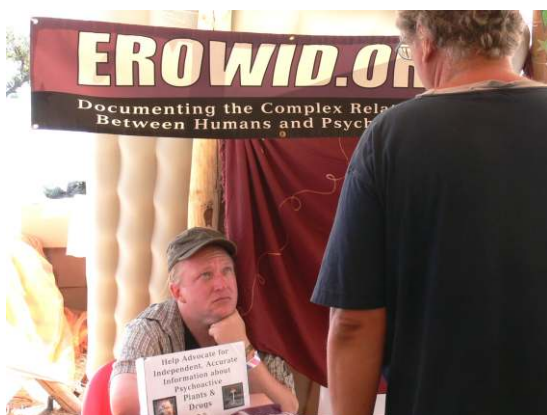
For those who just want to escape, dance all night and borrow some energy from their own future: the possibilities are there. The party drugs, the uppers, the XTC, the energy boosters, the speed or even cocaine are probably close by.

But maybe there's more to it. Isn't it also nice, as an antidote against the demands and stress of the neoliberal individualistic rat race, to use something to let go of the ego, join the community, go 'tribal' and feel one with the crowd? Venting off steam, enjoying 'communitas' (Victor Turner), experiencing the group mind of an ecstatic crowd,. This is not new, but very human, very old, and not much different from going to a large sports match, a parade or a fair. A different state of consciousness is what one seeks, away from everyday routines, rules and restrictions and the limitations of space and time. This freedom can be experienced as total bliss and the venue can become this place out of time. An autonomous zone for as long as the drug is working.

This is how many of the younger generation see it and they behave accordingly. In general, however, the atmosphere and setting at

larger events with substantial psychedelic usage are less likely to give one a deep experience of one's inner self or the magical world, and yield only superficial insights. There is the risk that one gets stuck in the isolation and fragmentation phase and doesn't integrate the experiences and insights. Taking care of a good setting, maybe choosing the right circle of people to be with amidst the larger crowd and taking care of a good re-entry is therefore important.

The older generation and the authorities may look upon disco and house and large festivals as senseless and even amoral activities, but isn't that prejudiced about the way the young express themselves? Not only as entertainment, as before in a church choir or dance classes, but as a kind of ritual, a way to make contact, to tune in to



Aerate drug info-tent at Boom festival

each other and feel part of the 'tribe' and enjoy the contact with the three worlds: inside, outside and the 'other'.

One can also see these events as the spiritual and ritual expression of a new generation, as Hans Cousto sees it. He argues that these modern festivals are also an expression of spiritual needs where, just as in the olden days at a pilgrimage, religious festival or seasonal event, the attendees do open up to the otherworld. In joining with others they enter a group mind state where the separation with the otherworld evaporates.

The union is not only with the others, but with the all. The divine emerges and some kind of mystical experience happens. The ingredients like music, drumming, dancing, lighting and ambiance are not fundamentally different from what initiation and religious events of

older cultures offered, and it's just the current rational world view that forbids labeling such experiences as spiritual. This spiritual motive, although the main reason for many events, congregations, mass, pilgrimage and such is usually not acknowledged in the studies and research concerning modern events like raves and music festivals, but does play a role. Beyond the consumer aspects, the recreational use, the economic impact of festivals there are deeper layers, both individual and social, and this also has to do with the political importance of festivals as paradigm shifters. There is even less recognition for the magical aspects of such events.

Attending actual events happens for many reasons and motives are varied. The actual incentive to go may come because some friends go, one knows the band, or just out of boredom, nothing to do and then why not? In the context of using psychoactive substances one tends to classify them as merely recreational, aiming at a state of sociability, empathy, dropping psychological armor and inhibitions, opening up to feelings otherwise suppressed and releasing the energy, fun and joy inside oneself, to share this with others.

The motives for going to a party, festival and such are based on needs and desires which can be classified, in very broad terms, as psychological, physical, social and spiritual. In the context of this book we could say inner world, outer world (including one's body) and other world.

We like going to a large festival with hundreds of thousands of others and big bands, or to a small gathering of friends because we can reconnect with ourselves, with others and the otherworld in a safe, protective and yet challenging setting. The physical aspect of being close to others, camping, using the body in getting there, dancing, doing yoga or another form of exercise, is quite different from sitting behind a desk, Facebooking or working in our increasingly virtualized world.

The physical touch, the direct contact at a festival adds something we miss in daily life. Seeing and hearing the live music, singing, sitting around a campfire is what modern life has taken away, replacing it with virtual and artificial entertainment, with much less

sensorial bandwidth (modern media are digital but also fairly limited in bandwidth). We like the immersion and the combination of the normal and extra senses we as humans have, not only to see, hear and touch but to experience beauty, friendship, justice and such intangibles.

Festivals bring that back, it's like jumping in a pool of humanness, of finding back our tribal roots, a revival of our evolutionary past. The young like to go for it, but many older and senior citizens also like to go to festivals, where often their generation performs on stage. The oldies are still going strong, like the Rolling Stones. It is, many say, an addiction in itself. The festivals are highlights for which one sacrifices much in terms of money, time, travel and even comfort to attend. And the drugs are part of it. Going berserk, dancing for hours, one uses anything to feel at ease in a big, anonymous but synchronized crowd.

This is very similar to what they did for ages in many other cultures. In Africa they danced for days and nights, long before they did this in Amsterdam or Woodstock. There they also used alcohol, herbs or mushrooms to get into the right mood and stay in it. For that matter there is clearly a revival of the 'tribal', a longing to return to the community.

This means, that using drugs (barring the more escape type of drugs like heroin which are not really 'sacred' in any sense) at festival, raves and in clubbing does have a sacred, spiritual angle. Maybe not for all, but certainly for some. The advice given in this book about set and setting, purpose and the stages and effects of those substances are thus also appropriate for such events.

What scenes, discos and places?

It is common knowledge, that there are drugs around at clubbing events, raves, in certain discos, coffee shops, at festivals, meetings, etc. and it really isn't that hard to find what you want. Usually at these 'in' places the staple-drug is XTC or similar amphetamines (pills are easy to hide and don't smell like hash), but also coke and speed. It does happen that mushrooms have become part of a particular 'culture' of tribe, also ayahuasca and peyote have their followers.

Soft drugs are quite normal in some countries. Pills are also but psychedelics like LSD and mushrooms are not mainstream for the average festival and disco-scene. The mushrooms just don't mix well with the hyperactive house ambiance, which made its reputation on speed and XTC, but some people get a body-kick out of it and for them dancing on mushrooms is far out. The same goes for low (less than 40 micrograms) LSD doses.

Those who like real psychedelics are usually more in favor of a peaceful trip, set and setting and there are festivals that cater to this too. For first time users, festivals and dance parties are often the first environment where they use any kind of psychoactive substance, and this is may not be the best. Preferably the first trip is safe, shielded, in a quiet setting, as one enters a whole new world when the normal shields, masks and ego are lowered because of the substance use. In general it is better to be an experienced user, if you want to take mushrooms or LSD amidst a group of people in a public place. It is easy to lose your balance there, as there are so many impressions, emotions and energy from others that come your way. Here set and settings have their impact too, if you are in the company of people that you know and trust and in a good mood, than this can be more fun than going out on a limb.

Hitchhiking and contact with nature

Every experienced tripper is familiar with the phenomenon of hitchhiking, to take off on someone else's trip without using a substance yourself. Drugs change your outflow, some talk about aura, the invisible energetic layers around the body and the people in your direct environment easily pick up on your energy. You function as a subtle energy source, people around you get into the same mood and that way you get back what you radiate.

This link with nature is more obvious when you are outdoors, it feels easier to communicate with trees, plants, and animals. Some claim one should stick to 'natural' drugs to enjoy that. There is much debate about 'chemical' or synthetic drugs such as XTC. Many prefer natural mushrooms, plants or herbs like cannabis or ayahuasca. While LSD at times feels very synthetic, hard and analytic, the mushroom-trip is often softer and more natural. But there is a down-

side and the effects vary much more because the active components differ. The mixture depends on where they were found or grown. The same goes for ayahuasca and other 'natural' concoctions which are actually also the result of a chemical process (cooking). Often there will be a synchronicity with what happens in the environment: LSD as well as mushrooms often attract thunder. To take a trip with a group of people often leads to local changes in the weather, to storm and rain. It is not by accident that mushrooms were (or are) used by medicine men, shamans, witches and wizards. Influencing the weather (rainmaking) often was one of their special gifts.

Sex: nice but beware of dark waters

Some indigenous tribes refer to mushrooms as the divine penis, and there certainly is a connection. Chromes are not explicitly an aphrodisiac, but they certainly don't cause impotence. They are an ingredient, just as in daily life sensuality, sex and love often pop up in a psychedelic voyage.

Therefore sex is a topic that can't be ignored. It is a bit repressed in our society, but a lot of people like to experiment with sex and drugs, in all kinds of combinations and with all kinds of substances. This can be fun although the lust and the libido on a trip will often come and go in waves causing you to be easily distracted. Especially because we often have deep frustrations and wounds in this area, this can result in deep encounters and unexpected landscapes during a trip. It can be quite scary to see what lives deep inside you and what almost all of us keep secret, while we often condemn it in others. Unsuspected homosexual tendencies can easily startle you. Be reassured, everyone has similar feelings deep down, that doesn't necessarily mean that this will change your 'normal' behavior.

Kundalini: the inner snake

Mushroom and psychedelic trips can provoke energetic spasms, which are sometimes referred to as kundalini experiences. Kundalini is a well known concept in yoga and is represented as a Snake Goddess wrapped three and a half times around the first chakra (Mula-dara) at the coccyx. The East has developed certain physical exer-

cises to have this snake, which is symbolic of a latent sleeping life energy, ascending to the higher chakras in order to unite at the crown chakra with the divine cosmic consciousness. This happens sometimes during a trip and is a strong experience. You might be in for a surprise.

Legalization or/and decriminalization

Eliminating the use of intoxicating or mood altering substances is a pipe-dream in itself, for all through evolution first animals and later humans have searched, found and used the plants and substances that offer relief from the stresses and problems of normality. Many animals seek out psychedelic plants, roots or mushrooms, even insects are known to be 'users'. Alcohol, tobacco, coffee, some clearly psycho-active substances are legal, others listed as illegal, dangerous, forbidden. Some cultures allow, more or less openly, the use of substances that are forbidden elsewhere, some recognize medical use, for some the whole or part of the economy is based on growing such substances or on tourists that want to experience them. Cities like Amsterdam rely and capitalize on some degree of permissiveness, the ayahuasca tourism in the upper Amazon region draws large numbers of Westerners.

The freedom of ingestion, not yet a basic human right, is limited because the supposed harm to oneself and others, but the legal suppression has spawned an often criminal alternative, meeting the demand or even creating a need for the more or less addictive substances. Fighting the use and the distribution system, the 'war on drugs' has not been very effective, just as the alcohol prohibition in the USA didn't really work. It has filled prisons and provided work for a whole criminal industry, but has had little effect on the use. The 'war on smoking' has yielded some more results, by way of pricing and information about the negative health effects.

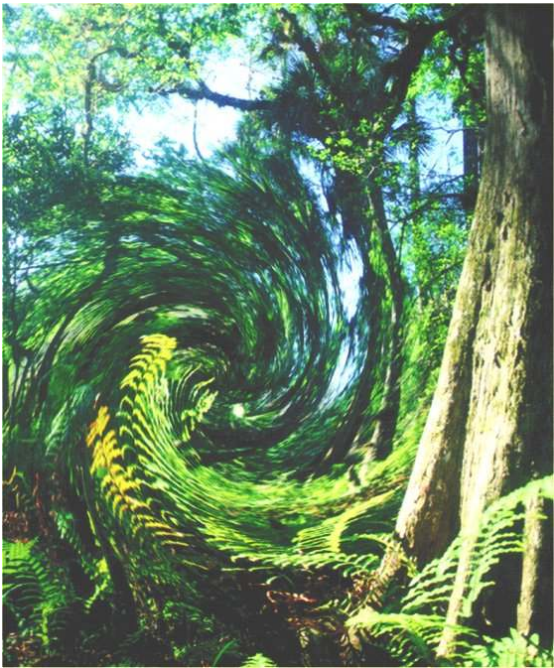
What to do? There are no easy answers, for there are health issues, minors deserve protection, and yes, the use of notably psychedelics can free the mind and lead to less docile citizens. The more common suggestions as a way out of the dilemma are legalization and decriminalization. In some countries the use and sale of cannabis is legalized, sometimes limited to medical use, is methadone provided as an

alternative for heroin, but outright legalization of all substances seems unrealistic, also given religious concerns. Decriminalization of some substances, cannabis as the most likely, is advocated by many, but there are practical considerations, like differences between countries and harmonization of the legal situation in e.g. the European Union.

Free water

An example of how even basic needs, are ignored or sacrificed to make more money selling drinks, is the availability of free water at festivals. This is increasingly understood and regulated as a medical necessity, even required by law or regulations concerning the permission by the authorities, but still an issue. Drugs users (and in fact all people) need access to free water, to drink, clean or fight dehydration. But in order to sell more drinks, including bottles of water, festival organizations find all kinds of sneaky ways to limit this like confiscating bottles, claiming water at the toilets is unclean, hiding

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the world changes with drugs

extreme, one does not organize free water. This could be seen as criminal neglect (for profit) like at a festival in Venlo (NL) in 2016, where the temperature was well over 33 degrees C. but the organization refused to comply with the legal requirements and even banned protesters from the premises.

In the context of festivals and alternative communities, where the use of cannabis and relatively safe substances is widespread, the double faced approach of official anti-drug but practical condoning individual use, is quite common. One searches for drugs at the gate, but sets up or accommodates harm reduction units, places where OD, psychological and physical problems are dealt with, often operating outside the legal protocols that would require reporting or even arresting the people involved. Much effort goes into keeping dealers and mob-controlled distribution out, but then this may sneak through the back door, the house dealer or a whole subculture of dealing like in Christiania takes over. There is money to be made and as long as part or the whole of the distribution chain is illegal, criminal activity emerges.

The option of local decriminalization, that is a more permissive operation within the confines of a festival or an autonomous zone, is common practice; it is realistic but lacks legal status.

The study of the effects of certain substances or combinations of substances in group or crowd situations is probably more important (given the amount of people involved) than looking at individual medical or psychological effects, but is hardly taken serious. Given the legal situation, organizations like MAPS concentrate on the individual and there is some interest in what Santo Daime like ritual brings concerning social cohesion. Of course the ethical and practical barriers to set up the new 'Acid Test' experiments with larger groups are enormous.

Yet it would be interesting if at events like Boom experiments with 'LSD only' or 'XTC-only' crowds could be staged. Of course with adequate monitoring of both physiological and psychological data, the effect of different types of music and lighting, the set and setting. To isolate the specifics and not let incidents color the picture is what could lead to more tolerant and less repressive attitude of the authorities, the medical world, the media and the public opinion. That for

instance magic mushrooms were made illegal (and thus criminalized) in the Netherlands based on incidents where multiple use and pre-existing medical or psychological conditions were not investigated, is a case in point.

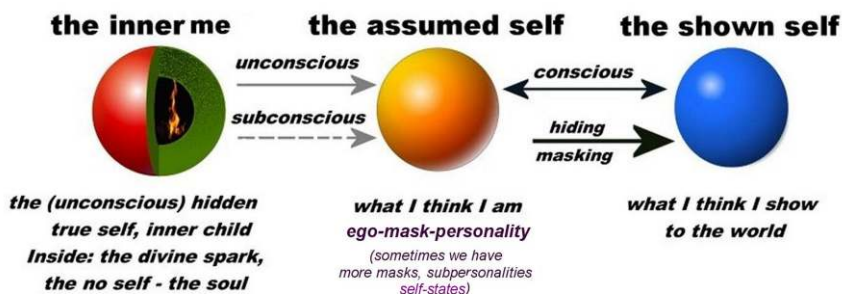
22 The magic of the TAZ

The idea of temporary or permanent autonomous zones is part of the discourse about communities, about *communitas* and is seen as esseential in the context of what such zones can bring beyond just the material and the entertainment. It deserves a more critical treatment.

Hakim Bey (Peter Lamborn Wilson), although spiritually well developed as a Sufi, didn't look into the root mechanism of what he called the magical extra that appears in what he called Temporary Autonomous Zones. He does speak about ecstatic, exalted experiences, but how can we interpret this, magic after all is not a very scientific concept. We do, however, experience the effects. Being at a concert, a demonstration or in a group meeting we notice that we may feel different, more engaged, united and often a group mind emerges. we may act totally different than from what we individually would act. (see next chapter). But also we may feel a personal transformation, opening up to a experience that changes us.

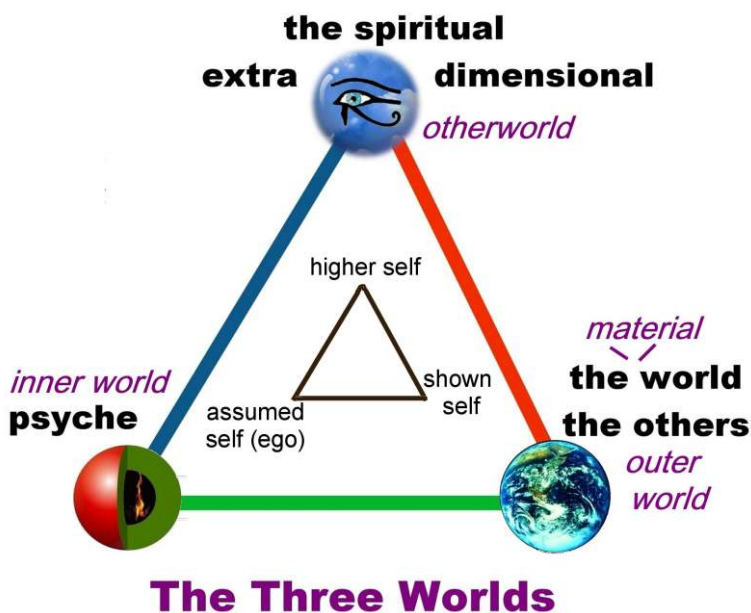
The TAZ environment is supportive and safe enough to allow people to let go of their masks. It's a kind of paradox, that we need a safe environment that allows unsafe experiments and exploration for change.

The three self images



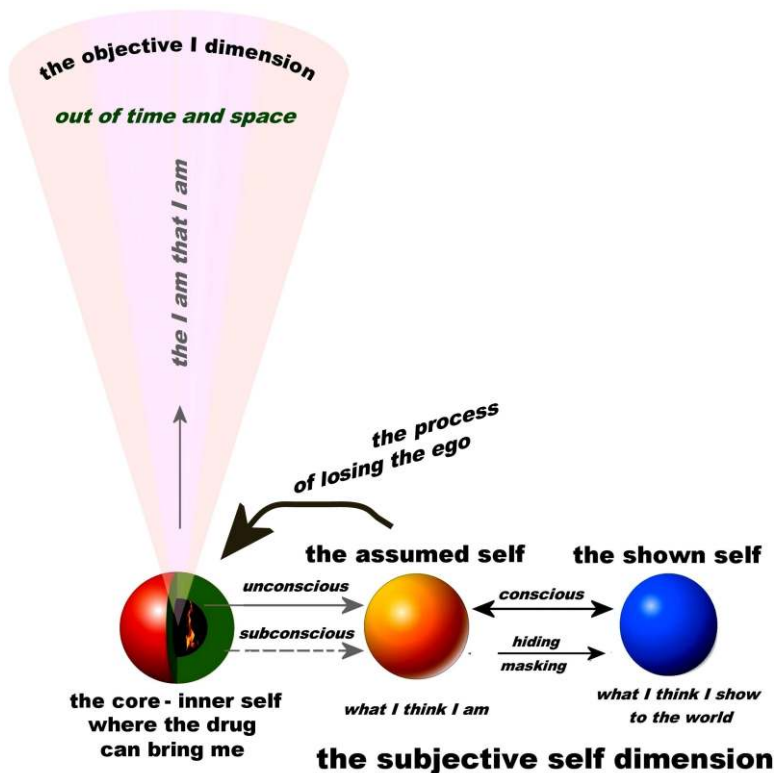
I will try to unravel the secrets of the personal magical extra, or at least come up with a hypothesis to explain what happens in our mind.

The theory and experiences are more developed in depth in my books about Rituals (2014) and Sacred Journeys (2022) but in short t



he model is like this.

I am using a fairly simple image of our psyche and specifically of our selves, our subjective self images that are different from our core higher self (soul, inner child, by whatever name). There is an assumed self, what we think we are, the self we see in the mirror as we say: I see me in the mirror. This is subjective, the I that somewhere exists is an objective entity. The me is just what we think we are, and can have multiple states, moods, subpersonalities or self states, but is usually perceived as the person I am. Terms like ego or personality are used to designate this me-image. It is not really what we show the world, for our shown self is maybe hiding a bit, and maybe the other sees through our assumed self, which is basically a mask. The higher or core self is usually hidden, we are not in touch with



our core, our inner child, our true self, soul, the name doesn't matter much.

To access and recognize the inner self, the true core of our being is the secret step, hinted at in all traditions. Let go of your ego, step away from the false self, the personality or mask that you have built to protect yourself, that is the essence of most teachings.

In normal life we are seldom in touch with our inner self, it pops up in our dreams, sometimes during sex, meditation, or when using psychedelic substances. Falling in love, meeting another person in that same essential self-state is another way to experience this, to be in state where everything is perfect, where time and place seem to conspire to perfect the experience. There are many ways, methods and exercises to help one to let go of the focus on the assumed self and reach out to the inner self, think about meditation, music, breath

work, praying, in fact all rituals and religious practices aim at bringing you to this state.

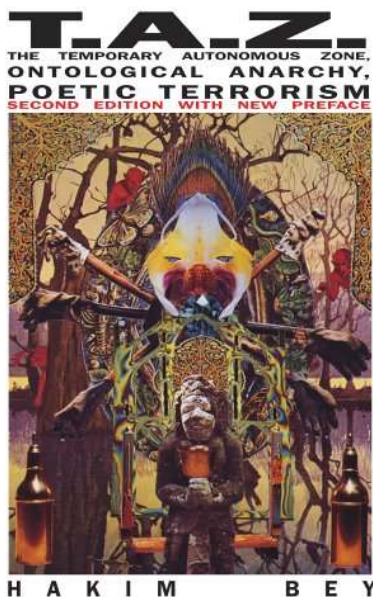
Maybe it is too much of a generalization, but the similarities between falling in love, a mystical experience, an LSD-trip and a dream are not coincidental, a similar process unfolds.

And here the magical extra of Hakim Bey's TAZ kick in. For some reason, very broadly because of some resonance, people are in way so synchronized, that they can let go of their masks and egos, and reach the inner self state that allows to step away from the constraints of time and environment, the extra appears, magical time happens.

In this sense a festival is what rituals of all times were, a way to reach a alternative state of consciousness to some degree and enjoy the ride. Letting go of the ego means less focus on the material, more openness, more contact with the all, more creativity, more happiness.

So a TAZ is just another way to reach the inner paradise, we hide so deep inside us. Organizing an effective TAZ means creating conditions that help to let go of the go, and just as in more general rituals, there are many ways to achieve this. Movement, music, closeness, a sacred and safe space, a good festival organizer and MC (Master of Ceremony) knows how to play his tools! But isn't this true for the most simple of meetings, for a dinner party, a business meeting or a sports event?

In all those instances there emerges a resonance, an individual and group mind phenomenon that also underlies the phenomena of transformation and change, even political or social innovation that is also



associated with a TAZ. This mechanism is relevant far beyond festivals.

23 Free Cultural Spaces: Utopian enclaves of freedom

There are many ways and forms of living together and communities or even communes of all kinds have existed through history. The ones that have distinguished or even isolated themselves and survived have become icons. Take the Amish for instance: an American religious group stemming from Mennonite Christian movements in Europe. Such groups, settlements or communities often do fit in the category ‘autonomous zones’ as the customs, culture and paradigm are different from the general ones surrounding such settlements.

The only free cultural space is the mind

Based on religion, ethnic roots, language, culture, political stance; the diversity of communities and festivals is enormous. What they share is some independence and a different, often divergent- perspective in the sense that they are autonomous and free, as in not aligned with the prevailing paradigm. Such enclaves of freedom exist for people of all ages and all cultures and have existed throughout historical time. Many of these initiatives are utopian. They believe in a better world and aim at using the magical energy and mindpower of the group (even as the word magic is not mentioned or even suppressed) to create a better, more harmonious and sustainable (ecological) community and world.

Free Cultural Spaces (FCS)

I will use this term, as it has been used to denote the movement and it kind of separates such communities from traditional religiously inspired communities, ashrams and monasteries. The term FCS is now applied to permanent, temporary, virtual, and nomadic free spaces. Free Cultural Spaces take many forms, including squatted and hacker communities, pirate radio collectives and stations, free towns, Eco-villages, perma-culture centers, independent festivals, (semi) nomadic groups, communes, communities, occupied grounds and Unceded Indigenous Territories.

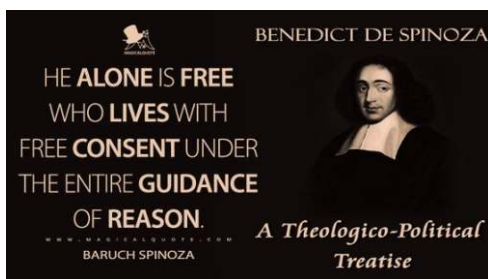
The term is not really to my liking, for a number of reasons. I better like terms like “Freiraum”, autonomous social freehaven, or even “fringe community”, tribal community or even something more referring to the notion of refugium or sanctuary as FCS doesn’t involve the social nature of such places. They are mostly Free Social Places, experiments with ways of living and relating. Words like culture are ambiguous, does it refer to the bottom up culture or to the top down cultural canon? Does its use in this term allude to the activities, symptoms or to the root processes of creating culture? The symbolic authority of the cultural community in question may see itself as “alternative” but rarely diverges from age-old patterns and structures, in quasi-new wording and expression. Culture, in American anthropology seen as the human capacity for symbolical classification and encoding of experiences, is not what made such communities emerge, often things like housing (squatting) and drugs were the roots, there are the spiritually inclined and these days also ecological motives.

Most of what are now called FCS or call themselves so are more cults than cultural, as they have developed a strong us/them position, they are better, more evolved, more free, but are they? Smoking dope is not really bringing freedom.

Freedom from what?

The only free cultural space is the mind, that’s where self determination starts. Every manifestation of the mind constitutes a culture. But assuring freedom, as what Spinoza saw as the role of the government (any government) is not just escaping the rules and morals of the status-quo society.

These communities are not really free in the sense that they have adopted just another set of ethical cultural and social norms, but often stick to them just as obstinate as those they reject in a us-them



setting that just mirrors how “society” sees them. Culture bottom up and top down it covers both the individual and the communal.

In this book I focus on communities and festivals with a distinct autonomy and more specifically on what is broadly termed ‘alternative’, but often also as ‘counter-culture’. Such communities have existed for a long time, but notably the post-sixties communes and the squatter-movement of the seventies and eighties (like the 50 plus years old Christiania and Ruigoord communities) have been the flag-bearers of the ‘autonomous zones’ concept.

One way to identify and specify them is to see them as spaces with a distinct culture and as being different from the ‘normal’. This involves some degree of freedom, and words like free town and free haven support this, the term Free Cultural Spaces (FCS) emerged. Many started in the post war period and notably the sixties, because of housing shortage (the squatters), as sanctuaries for Vietnam War protesters and draft dodgers, the “green” prisoners, ducking the “war on drugs”.

In the last decades, the festival and tribalism trends, notably the 1969 Woodstock festival with now Glastonbury, Boom and Burning Man as prime examples, have inspired many and have also led to physical and virtual communities.

There are within the broader FCS bracket, other constellations and groups of communities, with a specific focus. Notably, the ecological perspective has spawned many initiatives and communities and there are international cooperative platforms. The spiri-



Discussion group at the Vth Futurological Symposium Christiania 2015

tual angle, where the Osho, Buddhist and Advaita traditions are most visible, has its own networks of like-minded initiates. The general umbrella of these groups and the FCS is a certain body-mind holistic and idealistic stance.

The general trend to organize events and meetings in what very broadly can be called a tribal revival is of course also visible in sports, hobby, shared interests and music. A whole industry emerged, with massive events and large audiences.

Futurological Symposiums

The thinking about this trend and the interest in what unites and/or separates the various initiatives has led to serious studies, even dissertations and some of the communities have banded together to create a platform to discuss and coordinate things.

The Futurological Symposium on Free Cultural Spaces (FCS) is such a platform and has been held in Amsterdam (Ruigoord), Christiania (Denmark) and Boom (Portugal) inviting people from both the temporary and permanent autonomous zone world.

The stated goals are idealistic, but also practical. The Futurological Symposium on FCS is a platform for exchanging ideas and inspiring each other, but also for making plans to work together. Themes like 'The Importance of Festival Cultures, (Boom) and 'Individuals and Collectives' (Christiania) and a focus on (urban) tribes, political issues, ecology and sharing are dealt with in the perspective of the TAZ.

element of the celebration activities. One of the aims was to create a physical network that complements various 'virtual' ones – a network promoting the collective interests of activists, artists, musicians, writers, performers, ecological farmers, native representatives, painters and clowns. Really whoever.

Oral traditions – such as when people join and interact – play a prominent functional role during the symposia, and with them come the exchange of ideas. In 2013, for example, a Declaration on the Universal Right to Free Cultural Spaces was debated. At a 2008 exchange between Christiania and Ruigoord, the issue of 'Urban Tribes' was not only debated, but manifested.

The collective aim of the FCS platform is to co-create a dynamic, lasting, sustainable and non-hierarchical global network among FCS, and to further the exchange of ideas about the form and content of free cultural circuits and independent cultures, from all over the globe. It stands for durability, ecological approaches, and social experimentation.



The issue of freedom (in the name) is specified as:

“When you call yourself a ‘free society’, you appear to set yourself up in opposition to an ‘unfree’ society. But we don’t have to be against something to stand for something else. Autonomy, although derived from anarchism, is not the same as anarchism. Anarchism opposes repressive political systems, autonomous groups do what they think best. We see FCS as autonomous, and believe we are the ancestors of our future mini-societies. By working on our mini-societies, we give value to society at large.”



Heartweb art project at the 5th Futurological Symposium Christiania 2015



Participants in this initiative are Christiania and ThyLejren (Denmark), Fusion (which, like Boom, is a festival that is slowly turning into a permanent autonomous zone) and UFA-Fabrik (Germany), Doel (Belgium), Ruigoord (Holland), Umbrella House and Autonomedia (USA), Projecto Nuevo Mundo (Mexico), Eco Center IPEC (Brazil), and Boom (Portugal). In joining forces, stronger statements can be made about aspects of freedom, ecology, and culture in general.

The organization of the Futurological Symposia exemplifies how things can be manifested without the traditional budgets, proposals or even subsidies. It means collaboration without becoming a corporation, board, foundation or any other kind of umbrella or centralized organization. There's no hierarchy, no central office, and there are no functional roles – but there are fixed relations. It is always a handshake upon the very activity of the people, very much like in the way the festivals in the FCS perspective are organized like an elastic, even like a dance. Similar to structure with much individual freedom and yet there is also trust and commitment, without the financial ties normally used to get things going. Every society needs oxygen (energy) to exist in harmony. In this case this energy comes from within the people, not pushed upon them and is fueled by love, trust and communication. Different from money or material resources, these are renewable and grow by themselves and by interaction and exchange.

In the language of the global business elites, every corporation with respect for itself has a laboratory for research and development. The Futurological Symposium on FCS aims to be to the communities and countries involved what a developmental research laboratory is for a global business corporation, but with a different structure and model, more spiral than hierarchical.

The term Futurological Symposium is taken from Stanislaw Lem's novel *The Futurological Congress* (1971) and refers to a deep commitment to developing an evolutionary perspective on Free Cultural Spaces (FCS) or Autonomous Zones. Ruigoord, the Dutch village that originated the Symposium idea, has been an active Free Cultural Space since 1973. Along with ThyLejren (the People's Lair) and Christiania in Denmark, Ruigoord is one of the longest-lived of the Northern European utopian communities that emerged from the tumult of the Sixties. Its foundational principles, and thus those of the Futurological Symposia, rest on the notion of *Homo Ludens* (Playful Mankind), the idea that free and playful interactions between people generate powerful communal impulses.

Festivals are cultural breeding grounds. They offer playgrounds for the experience of freedom, and help to establish natural and elastic borders and ritual ways to transfer cultural information. They help shape group spirit and ethos and facilitate direct human contact among people who are nowadays often connected solely via the Internet. A festival experience often accelerates an individual's awareness that life offers multiple alternatives to the constrained and constraining experiences that mainstream society advocates. It can establish deep and mutually enriching connections between FCS and experiences of personal liberation. The importance of festivals for the co-creation of a counter-cultural reality links festival culture to autonomous zones around the world.

The "free culture" that animates FCS acknowledges the importance of developing and/or recognizing rites of passage as contributing to the mindsets that recognize the potentialities of humans as individuals and in communities.

Collective Aims within Free Cultural Spaces.

In order to clarify what the FCS and the Futurological Symposium tries to achieve, here is the following quote and listing from a 2020 press releases and material concerning their goals:

- 1) What is Free Cultural Space? (Free cultural space versus public space; the different relations represented by free cultural space and public space ? freedom of lifestyle; self-regulation and self-organization.)
- 2) FCS as defined by the groups that forms them. (Pioneers taking the initiative)
- 3) Collectivity as a social phenomenon. (The growth of social collectives; social cohesion within FCS)
- 4) Changes within FCS'. Changing structures of cooperation, coordination, communication and power; visions, roles, shared responsibilities, motivations.
- 5) Different understandings on individualism and collectivism in Europe and e.g. the USA.
- 6) Why institutionalize a collective? (Minimizing the importance of individual relations and the “social cost” of interaction)
- 7) What ties link institutional and social collectives? (Formally instituted collectives in relation to FCS and more flexible social collectives; formally structured collectives are more tightly bound to place than are flexible social collectives.)
- 8) What parameters define “the Culture of Freedom” that animates FCS? (What are the limits of freedom within FCS (aggression, hard drugs, etc.)? How unfree is a FCS? Do pioneers create the identity that determines a FCS’s forms of freedom” What are the limits on individual initiative within a collective environment?)



Aja Waalwijk's sign/pointer art project at the 5th Futurological Symposium Christiania 2015

- 9) Collectivism and individualism within FCS? The role of the individual as a part of many collectivities; losing individuality within collectivity.
- 10) Individuality within social collectives.
- 11) Individuality within institutionalized collectives. (EU-rules about collectives (normalization).)
- 12) Social versus institutional attitudes within FCS
- 13) Conflict resolution and cooperation between collectives and individuals within FCS.
- 14) Developing flexible juridical forms that are democratic and protect continuity, which forms best suit FCS?
-

The diversity between the projects and perspectives presented at each event will constitute its distinctive feature, with the connections, collaboration, and continuities it generates providing new and exciting synergies to the overall Futurological Symposium project.

The FCS declaration 2023

In preparation of more futurological events a declaration has been drafted about the importance of such places in a broad context. The idea is to arrive at a declaration to be presented at the United Nations. In the Declaration concerning the Universal Value of Free Cultural Spaces, 2023 a new definition of a FCS is:

Free Cultural Spaces:

- a) are physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual open spaces, embedding counter-cultural and sub cultural traditions and values on land, on and in water, in the air and in the ether;
- b) are experimental urban and/or rural zones and laboratories for inter-human relationships and cooperation, where ecological, social, cultural, economic events and experiments are created, developed, maintained and used;
- c) are environments where equality, equity, ingenuity, inclusion and diversity in form and content are standard;
- d) are ideally free of violence and aggression in whatever form;
- e) are free of oppressive control and creative limitation for the benefit of partakers;

- f) are distinguished from other parts of society whose status is regulated wholly or partially by customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;
- g) are real, virtual and/or media independent sites of cultural expression; common grounds for all those pursuing experimental, expressive and transformative lifestyles and/or ways of living;
- h) can be pop-up, temporary, periodical, permanent and/or static or mobile. They can serve on regional, trans-regional, national, trans-national and/or international levels.

Partakers: the humans, creators, developers, players, custodians, users, inhabitants, organised participants and/or their representative bodies of/in Free Cultural Spaces.

Synonyms for Free Cultural Spaces are Autonomous Zones, Freiräume and Liminal zones.

In Article 3 governments are held responsible for enabling FCS initiatives:

1) Governments, with the participation of partakers concerned, are responsible for developing, preconditions for the creation, support, maintenance and continuity of Free Cultural Spaces.

2) Such preconditions shall include policies and measures for:

- a) identifying Free Cultural Spaces within their environments (ecological, social, economic and cultural);
- b) recognizing environmental relevance of Free Cultural Spaces and/or partakers embedding and supporting Free Cultural Spaces in their jurisdictions;
- c) protecting the social, cultural and spiritual values and practices of these partakers;
- d) ensuring that partakers benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the national community;
- e) promoting the full realisation of the rights of these partakers with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions;
- f) assisting the partakers concerned to reduce socio-economic gaps that may exist between members of the national community;

- g) safeguarding the partakers' property; their labour, cultures and environment;
- h) safeguarding against the abuse of their rights and enabling them to initiate legal proceedings, either individually or through their representative bodies;
- i) international agreements to facilitate contacts and co-operation between Free Cultural Spaces across borders, including activities in the economic, social, cultural, spiritual and environmental fields;
- j) ensuring, whenever appropriate, that studies are carried out, in co-operation with the partakers concerned, to assess the social, spiritual, cultural and environmental impact on them of planned development activities. The results of these studies shall be considered as fundamental criteria for the implementation of these activities.

3) In applying the provisions of this Declaration, governments shall consult the partakers through appropriate procedures whenever consideration is being given to legislative or administrative measures which may affect them directly.

4) The consultations carried out in application of this Declaration shall be undertaken, in good faith and in a form appropriate to the circumstances, with the objective of achieving agreement or consent by governments and partakers to the proposed measures.

5) Measures shall be taken to ensure that Free Cultural Spaces and their partakers concerned can understand and be understood in legal proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other effective means.

6) Measures shall be taken to safeguard the right of the partakers concerned to use Free Cultural Spaces not exclusively occupied by them, but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities. Particular attention shall be paid to the situation of nomadic partakers and shifting cultivators in this respect.

7) The governmental authority responsible for the matters covered in this Declaration shall ensure that appropriate mechanisms exist to administer the programmes affecting the Free Cultural Spaces concerned, and shall ensure that they have the means necessary for the proper fulfilment of the position and scope of these Free Cultural Spaces. These programmes shall include the planning,

co-ordination, execution and evaluation, in cooperation with the Free Cultural Spaces concerned, of the measures provided for in this declaration.

24 The Emerging Network of Autonomous Zones

By Aja Waalwijk

The term *Temporary Autonomous Zone*, as coined by Hakim Bey in the 1990s, raises a question: How can a “zone” be autonomous?

Sure, *people* can be autonomous, and they can declare a zone theirs to manifest their autonomy. A country is not autonomous but has autonomy - many Basques want autonomy from Spain. But when it comes to free cultural spaces one can speak about “a zone for autonomy” or “an autonomous zone.” This implies a place of artistic action, where we show what we do - a place for acting out and, by so doing, shaping our own moral and ethical foundations.

There exists a rhetorical anarchist autonomy in which the term *autonome* becomes an alternative to *anarchist* for so-called “legitimate” political activity. For instance, autonomes can form political parties, anarchists cannot. The word *anarchy* literally means to do without the arcade of power or, metaphorically, the dome of domestication. However, *autonomy*, as “self-deciding” or “speaking for one’s self,” stands for independence in a different way than anarchy does. Unlike anarchy, it doesn’t oppose itself against the arcades of power but acts as it thinks best, regardless of the potential consequences for eventual confrontation with existing power structures.

An Autonomous Zone or *Free Cultural Space* is a topologically *opened* space, be it a landscape or building, it’s a *Freiraum* (a German term meaning *free space*) embedding counter-cultural traditions and values like the ones promoted by Provo (happenings), the Diggers (Free), the Situationists (Power to the Imagination), Woodstock (pop festivals), Rainbow Gatherings, Trance Parties (Boom), Squatting Movements (Christiania, Ruigoord, UfA-Fabrik), Goan hippies, the Free Festival Movement, etc. Autonomous Zones, sometimes also called *Liminal Zones*, are places for self-realization, places where ecstatic energies flower. Such zones lie between defined areas without belonging to any of them, like door thresholds

(*limen* in Latin). They articulate topographical topological as well as psychological connotations.

In the 1960s, Provo founder and magician Jasper Grootveld held his famous happenings in Amsterdam, creating an innovative Free Cultural Space with chants, smoke, fire, and ceremonial dances. These happenings took place on a square centered on Grootveld's chosen symbol of consumerism, *het Lieverdje*, the "Sweet Boy" statue that had been donated to the city by a tobacco company. *Provocation* was the key word. The Provos of Amsterdam became the original provocateurs by asking the question: What is the true extent of freedom in a public space? When the police made themselves ridiculous by arresting Provos who offered raisins to passers-by, liberty and tolerance came into conflict. As a unifying gesture Provo Luud Schimmelpennink drew on input from Grootveld to come up with the White Bicycle Plan. White Bikes without locks spread throughout the city. Everybody who wanted or needed a bicycle could use them. The originators of this plan were Practical Utopians: *Homo ludens* (playful man) was their focus, and their goal was extending childhood's imaginative dimensions.

In Holland in the early 70s, the Kite Company of Den Bosch and the Amsterdam Balloon Company introduced Kite festivals to Amsterdam's playbook. These took place at the four cardinal sides of the city of Amsterdam, in open sandy areas where new city districts were planned. In the early days no permission was required to inaugurate festivals in No Man's Land. Admittedly, free space is rare in Holland, but now even the sky is now no longer off-limits to those who endlessly invent regulations and proscriptions.

Enclaves of freedom exist for people of all ages and all cultures and have existed throughout historical time. In Holland when it snows children take possession of the streets, disregarding all externally imposed rules and regulations. Snow conceals the boundaries between footpaths, cycling paths, and roads. The children celebrate their Freedom by sliding over the vanished boundaries, by throwing snowballs and making snowmen. And just as snow brings people together, so does water. Amsterdam's canals periodically become free cultural spaces during skating activities, the Gay Pride canal parade, or when drunken Orange hordes celebrate football victories (leaving

chaos in their wake). They also serve as a semi-permanent autonomous zone for people living on houseboats and for those who create floating gardens.

In the mountains of central Portugal there is a yearly *Encontro dos Povos da Serra* on a mountaintop where inhabitants from surrounding villages gather to dance, share communal fires, make music, have singing duels, *desgarradas*, etc. It has been their Free Cultural Space, their Temporary Autonomous Zone, their place to be themselves for generation after generation. And yet there's a difference between traditional and modern free cultural spaces of these kinds. In urban areas like Amsterdam the elements wind and water are well represented, but fire, for reasons of "security," has virtually disappeared from the cityscape. Fire can be seen as the ultimate social sculpture, no statue can compete with its force of attraction unless it carries a fire within it. A few years ago, as an initiative to create a warmer more atmospheric city, a winter exhibition of lit stoves on wheels was organized in Amsterdam. The event attracted people of all kinds until the police ordered it closed down because it created too much smoke. In Paris in winter one witnesses the smoldering fires of the chestnut-sellers and in Lisbon sardines are roasted in the open. Yet in the cities of Northern Europe no passer-by or tramp can warm himself at a public fire, no child ever stares into a flame. (Just a little imagination could change this situation. Fountains that contain only water in summer could easily become winter fireplaces.) It has always been evident that fire is among the most vital of elements for any festival or free cultural space. Fireplaces draw people together to sit or dance in circles, offering the ultimate condition for contact. In the early 70s, one of the first initiatives undertaken in the ice-cold squatted military complex of Christiania in Denmark was the manufacture of stoves, an action that has since become a tradition in most squatted industrial places in Northern Europe. Autonomous Zones can be temporary, periodical, permanent, or mobile. Happenings, performances, invisible theater, and festivals fall into the first and second categories. Just as Situationist drifts (free movements through space), the English Tinkers and hippie caravans (which are constantly broken up because of police harassment) represent the mobile dimension.

The Situationists were mainly intellectual artists who related art to the situation and impulse of the moment. The 1968 Paris student revolt was seen as the biggest Situationist drift of all time. During the student revolt, streets and walls were covered with poetry and the slogan "*l'imagination au pouvoir*" (Power to the Imagination) became world famous. As part of a European response to American-initiated "flower-power," graffiti was reinvented. The walls and streets began telling a different story: "*Sous le pave, la plage*," (beneath the pavement, the beach). Previously, graffiti had commonly been the domain of toilets, as Pompeii makes clear. (The American soldiers of World War II ushered in the infamous "Killroy was here.") Yet political graffiti was also well-known, as were gypsy and hobo signs. Creating fantasy letters and hard-to-decipher words became a trademark for punks of the 1980s, from piss paintings to real murals on gray concrete. But in most Western countries graffiti is now forbidden by law, even if it beautifies the concrete deserts. According to the dictionary, *graffiti* means wall-scratchings. So, graffiti on canvas is a contradiction. Modern art museums brought graffiti art into their collections at the same time as it was being banned in the streets - no problem for a culture prepared to build a museum around Duchamp's toilet as an accepted theoretical paradox. By allowing graffiti only in a museum context the street was coopted by the establishment. Consequently, sidewalk artists (who create their art on the pavement and were once a common sight) are a rarity now.

In the 19th century, street-name commissions in Western Europe replaced local street and place names with those of politicians, artists, and writers of national importance, an exercise of psychogeographical control, a graffiti of the ruling class. In Paris, around 2003, groups of artists and students organized the Billboard Liberation Front and began dismantling billboards, tearing them to pieces, making de-collages, adding slogans - billboards were the only places where poster-graffiti was allowed because advertisers paid; gluing posters on walls was forbidden elsewhere.

Besides water, fire, air, and walls and streets, Free Cultural Space can also emerge from the ether and cyberspace. Initially, radio and TV networks promised a democratization of the ether - now business

has taken it over. Even local governments are losing control. The free radio stations that once flourished in different cities in Western Europe are no longer allowed. Stations like *Vrije Keizer* (Free Emperor) in Amsterdam ceased to exist. Yet music still plays an important role in the development of youth culture. The so-called “Pirate Radio Stations” that broadcast from a few yards beyond European territorial waters transformed pop stars and poets into cult-heroes: Dr. John the Night Tripper, Alan Ginsberg, Bob Dylan, etc. Everybody knows them now. The metaphorical use of the word *Pirate* referred to a specifically anarchic kind of freedom. It implied a rejection of *all* censorship. During the next phase of pop-music development, musical tribes of rockers, punkers, hip-hoppers, rastafarai, etc. manifested themselves. Tribalization via music was a new phenomenon. A musical tribe’s outfit reflected its state of mind, helped define its life-style focus. Hippies, Rastas, Emos, Goths all stuck together because “normal” people found them crazy. But identification with cult heroes was on the wane in the tribes, as it was in related sub- and counter-cultures. Authentically committed tribalists were rejecting practices that big business and the advertising industry could coopt.

Counter-culture

Because knowledge is power, in the 1990s it became a counter-cultural aim to liberate knowledge from its ivory towers. Freeing information was the drive for many hard core anarchist and hacker communities - the precursors to Cryptome, WikiLeaks, and WELL. The monsters of Cheyenne Mountain were ideologically bound to create a doomsday machine. In the NORAD cave, the mountain served as the armored heart of the American defense machine and internet. Everything was to be connected to this place at all times; it was built never to be switched off. But information chooses its own escape routes, from cyber-culture to counter-culture. And technology’s ether is not absolutely free. Twitter protest meetings connected by mobile phones can be disconnected anywhere at any time, as happened in Heiligendam (Germany) when Bush and Merkel met some years ago - no contact was possible between demonstrators within a certain area.

“Streaking,” running naked through the streets, became something of a sport in the 80s. “Why don’t we do it in the road,” sang Paul McCartney ten years earlier. Making love in the open is out of question. Fear of sexuality already makes nudist beaches suspect in many countries. (In Denmark nudist beaches don’t exist - either you are naked or you aren’t, nobody cares.) Why don’t we do it in the road, indeed?

As I mentioned earlier, *Freiraum* is a German word used to designate free space, particularly designating places where behavioral constraints are suspended. In theory, all “public” spaces are Freiraums. Yet behavior constraints in public places are exercised through, for example, one-way traffic signs and bans on drinking alcohol, smoking joints, making music, sitting on the grass, or lying on park benches. (Recently, the park benches in Amsterdam have been modified to make it impossible for “tramps” to sleep on them.) Public space is definitely not free space. So planning for the creation of new, actual, physical Free Cultural Spaces necessarily becomes a logical next step, planning places where nothing should be planned.

A strange kind of symbiosis connects mobile and permanent Autonomous Zones. In the 1970s, after Provo formally disbanded itself, the Kabouters (or Gnomes) called Amsterdam *Freetown*, a designation inspired by their concept of an Orange Free-State, which was the focus of their small, political Kabouter Party. Because gnomes were seen as nature spirits, one of the Kabouters’ core missions was to create a greener city. As well as focusing public attention on green areas, they planted flowers and plants along street-side walls, advocated placing gardens on the tops of city buses to offset the effects of pollution, and reopened the Provos’ White House Plan debate about squatting empty houses. They insisted on debating the immediate and long-term public influence on the environment.

At almost the same time, Jasper Grootveld began creating islands of styrofoam wrapped in canvas and fishing nets, some of which he modeled as boats and others which he covered with earth and plants. He and his uniquely innovative floating constructions) were soon forced to leave Amsterdam because the city government objected to these “accumulations of rubbish.” (Recycling wasn’t common at the

time.) In a spectacular rejection of the bureaucratic restrictions on his artistic and conceptual freedoms Grootveld and his wife sailed off on a construction he called the *Tand des tijds* (Tooth of Time). But soon, with the support of his friends and admirers, he returned in triumph and the Float Company came into existence. Nowadays, the Dutch government has hijacked Grootveld's initiatives. But in 2009, as an homage to his original vision, during the International Climate Conference in Copenhagen a 'Floating City' was built by the 'Floating People' as a Temporary Autonomous Zone.

Mobility

In the 1960s, one widely practiced form of freedom was hitchhiking. Thousands of youngsters with little money swarmed out over Europe and Asia. Many drivers were willing to take you with them if you put out your thumb, and in Holland there were official hitchhike stations along the highways. Such exhilarating liberation is frowned upon today, and nomadic lifestyles have slipped into disfavor. Those who travel and live in the tradition of the gypsies witness hard times. In England, the Caravans of Love are under constant threat.

Yet in Amsterdam new forms of nomadism are taking shape. The so-called "City Nomads" once clustered together in a caravan village, calling themselves the Human Garden behind the Animal Garden (as we Amsterdammers call the Zoo). After the authorities dismantled their wonderful free space, groups of City Nomads spread to the margins of the metropolis. These wanderers are not simply victims of circumstance. In their urge to be free, many have deliberately bid farewell to a fixed abode, financial benefits, and identity papers. They've relinquished everything except a caravan, accepting the possible consequence that in today's government's eyes such lack of status might transform them into "illegal foreigners."

Bureaucratic regimes have a fundamental problem with nomads and display characteristic patterns of repression against them: there were nomadic restrictions in Mongolia during the communist period; NATO troops killed Balkan nomads "trespassing" across the new Greek national borders in the 50s; Nazis massacred gypsies during World War II. Recently, in France, Roma families were driven out of the country. When you have no fixed address it's said that you're

hard-to-find, that you don't "belong" anywhere. However, gypsies can, in a way, be seen as the perfect earthlings, since they've never drawn borders around themselves and have never sought a "fatherland." (In order to get some form of autonomy for themselves, the Roma in Hungary recently accepted a "minority self-government system.")

The squatting movements in such centers as Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Berlin opened many temporary and permanent Cultural Free Havens that provided refuge to cultural nomads. Sometimes temporary became permanent, and vice versa. Within the squatting movement there are no leaders - it's bottom up. Power-mad people are ejected or disappear of their own accord.

In Holland, as a result of a law passed in 2010, squatting is now outlawed, though there are still social, cultural, and political squatting traditions in Holland - "social" for those who need housing, "cultural" for those who need space for cultural activities, and "political" for those wishing to focus attention on certain buildings or locations for provocative reasons. Such traditions can, of course, be interwoven. Social and cultural squats often develop into uniquely complete cultural spaces. The ADM, a squatted industrial complex with a minimum year-round population of about 100 people (with more resident in summer), is a true mini-society famous for its Robodock festival, among other things, and still organizes festivals free of control and the supervision of authorities. And in 2013, a separate settlement of City Nomads has established itself outside the ADM's gates. But most of Holland's early Free Cultural Spaces have been "cleaned out" by the government. Squatted military complexes like the one in Baarle in the south of the Netherlands were vacated because of the "pressing need" for golf-courses and other money-based planological projects. In the 60s, 70s, and 80s, Amsterdam flourished when youth culture took root. As a Magic Center, the whole city was a free cultural space, a real freetown. You could find people sleeping in the parks, making music in the streets, etc. Those were the days!

Permanent Autonomous Zones and Festival Culture

If you want something done, do it yourself. You can create your own Free Cultural Space by being (or getting) involved in Cultural Free Havens and festivals as a dreamer, thinker, doer, or celebrator. To create a free space all you need are companions, friends who also want to lay some creative eggs or who know places where things can or should happen. But free cultural space is only possible when there is space for it. "Space Is the Place!" It's all about territory.

"Act first, then legalize," is an old Amsterdam saying. In 1972, a group of artists and writers squatted the village of Ruigoord - because of planned expansion of the Amsterdam harbor the village had been almost emptied of inhabitants. In the same year that Ruigoord was squatted, the Amsterdam Balloon Company came into being, organizing four kite festivals around the city before finally settling down in the village. Many actions and festivals have since taken place in Ruigoord, tens of thousands of trees were planted creating a beautiful forest on the empty plains surrounding it. Around 2000, the authorities moved in. Police arrived, surrounding the village with barbed wire fences. The forest was destroyed, though hundreds of Green Front activists tried to save it. But in recent years the village has been legalized and now Ruigoord is a green oasis surrounded by industries, paying a modest rent to the harbor.

During its many performance tours, the Amsterdam Balloon Company (ABC), which acts as the nomadic component of the Ruigoord community, has created Temporary Autonomous Zones throughout Asia, Europe, and Northern Africa; as well as in Ruigoord (which remains its home-ground) where many festivals still take place. From the late 70s until the 90s, the ABC held yearly performances in Goa. When the Balloon Company performs everybody is a participant, borders between the public and the artists dissolve. In 1972, the ABC published the following statement: "The ABC is a floating movement in pursuit of freedom in airspace. Anybody who loves balloons, kites, birds, or other soundless heavenly vehicles (sun, moon, earth, stars, comets, etc.) can consider him/herself as a member." The implication was that during moments of action everybody is a member of the ABC. It was a very appealing idea, and in the early 80s I decided to join them.

From temporal to permanent

When an Autonomous Zone becomes permanent, the impulse to institutionalize may overwhelm its earlier freedoms. Though direct action that creates non-institutionalized autonomous space brings about conflicts with the authorities (as is evident from recent history in Germany, Holland, Denmark, Belgium, France, etc.), institutionalized Autonomous Zones and Free Cultural Spaces are also under constant pressure. Organization within such a space takes place on two levels: one deals with internal programming and infrastructure; another turns its face towards the outside world, mostly on the governmental front (be it local or national). If too much is given away to the official control system, autonomy fades leading to government control on many levels: police at the entrance, civil police among the audience, firemen controlling every fireplace, sound regulations and control, obligatory official medical assistance, controls on electricity, food quality, the use of drugs, etc. All this costs loads of money, turning what was once a “Free” Cultural Space into one based on consumption. And then it’s not free or autonomous anymore. (Also problematic here is the fact that small manifestations have to follow the same government rules and regulations as big ones, making it nearly impossible for them to remain both small *and* cheap.)

Scale matters. In Ruigoord, which is now officially part of the city of Amsterdam, for decades we have created a yearly Temporary Autonomous Zone during our yearly Landjuwel festival. In the beginning just artists and activists attended and we located our festival on the open territory that surrounded the village. We made works of art out of our tents, statues and sculptures out of what was lying around, had an open stage for poetry, music, etc. By 1993, roughly 10,000 people were attending Ruigoord’s Landjuwel. And because consumers outnumbered participants we made the organizational decision to hold subsequent festivals without electricity. In 1994, only 3,000 people showed up and the participants and the audience came together again. (After the city government destroyed our forest in 2000, the nature of our festivals changed.)

Festivals have become an industry. Besides hiring crowd control, one can rent tents of all sizes, musical and electronic equipment, generators, stages, bleachers, dance floors, bars, projection screens,

etc. The core values and ideas of the alternative circuit are coopted and commercially exploited as mass manifestations. Free Havens like Ruigoord set trends that are easily copied. To mention just one example, the relatively new mega manifestation, Dance Valley, takes place not far from Ruigoord and copies everything we do. Carnival in Rio has grown to a point where, as the rest of Brazil sits glued to TVs watching what was once a “local” carnival, local dignitaries appear on a national stage. In that instance, public space has become commercially exploited - people pay a lot to be seen in the streets of Rio during Carnival time. By way of contrast, in Salvador, Bahia, tens of thousands follow the local Carnival floats to the sound of music. There is a minimum of crowd control. People use their own energy to police themselves. The same happens in India during the Kumba Mela, which has only 20,000 cops to control more than thirty million people. At the Kumba Mela crowd control is absolutely necessary, because tens of millions want to take a sacred bath in the Ganges River on the same day at the same spot. But it also shows that, when they are allowed to, people naturally organize themselves.

Crowd control has become an industry, so nobody talks about the size of events. Capitalist commercialism leads to the desire for growth, for more and more money, unlimited cultural space, objects of interest to the playing masses. Not so long ago, the Love Parade in Duisburg (Germany), which presented itself as the biggest rave ever, turned into a Love Stampede, the Love Tunnel into a tunnel of death. Via the Love Parade, loneliness had become exploited. Of the one and a half million people gathered, dozens were killed, hundreds badly injured. More than 10,000 cops were there, and still they failed to control the crowd. Despite knowing it was too massive the organizers had let the party go on because so much money was involved. When the participants become a crowd, which becomes a mass, *freedom* becomes a hollow word, as do *autonomy* and *individuality*.

“You have to row with the oars you have” is an old Dutch saying. The authorities’ demands for guards and fences removes true “freedom” from events. (At Woodstock the fences were broken down by people who couldn’t pay.) During recent years we have organized

our Landjewels within Ruigoord's village boundaries, but the space is cramped and the authorities continue trying to exercise more and more repressive control. That's why in 2010, instead of organizing our own big festival, we visited the Boom festival.

We still held our thematic festivals: poetry, solstice, percussion, I-Ching, reggae, trance, didgeridoo, and so on, but our liberty was at risk and our admission fees were sky rocketing - for many even our thematic festivals had gotten too expensive. In Portugal, as you all probably know, Boom provoked the Anti-Boom Festival exactly because of this increasing reduction of festival liberties and escalation of admission costs. But an unorganized, mass-meeting of 10,000 people, as happened at Anti-Boom, can cause a total mess. No infrastructure often means no toilets, polluted water, dangerous drugs, police confrontations, etc. Total "freedom" can easily lead to disorder, chaos, and crime. Learning from all this, in 2012 the Boom Festival announced a price reduction for visitors from the former eastern-bloc countries.

Boom

During our preparations for Boom, a former participant at Burning Man told me: "The artists at the Burning Man Festival are allowed to create whatever they like, but they do not receive any of the profits. The money goes to stockholders, making the Burning Man Festival a 'capitalist free-cultural space.' Capitalism stands for quick money, making as much as easily as possible. On every tin of Coca Cola somebody earns 50 cents simply by filling a dispensing machine every day. Sustainability doesn't play any role at Burning Man. Unlike the Boom Festival, where ecological elements and health care play important roles, Burning Man is an ecological disaster."

In Denmark in the 70s, two important Permanent Free Cultural Spaces were created: in 1970, The New Society appeared in ThyLejren, and in 1971 squatters transformed a former military complex in Copenhagen into Christiania. These spaces did not appear out of the blue.

Gunnar Hjelholt, a professor at the University of Copenhagen whom I interviewed in 2003, had experienced his first "international mini-society," as he called it, during World War II in a German con-

centration camp and wrote a booklet about the positive aspects of the experience. Based on his work, teachers and students in the departments of psychology and sociology at the university developed new therapy programs. Empty villages in Sweden were used for their first experiments with these so-called “mini-societies.” The best houses went to the rich, the poorest to the poor, an arrangement that naturally brought about conflicts. The poor confronted the rich; the old, the young, etc. But as they came together as a community and talked, their social-class-based fantasies faded. Some of the students involved in the experiments were members of the New Student Society, and when it went bankrupt the name was changed to the New Society. Since democratization was a core part of the overall program, non-students were invited to enlist in the New Society. In Denmark this led to a fusion of the student and hippie movements. HIP, as an acronym for Housing Innovation Project, implies the search for different forms of living, being, and working together. In ThyLejren the students and hippies established their Free Cultural Space during a festival organized by the New Society. Temporary became permanent. Many visitors to the festival stayed to build a real New Society.

A year later, Christiania was squatted. Though squatting was banned by Danish law, the Danish public largely sympathized with the projects, so the 1990s saw the enactment of special legislation. People in ThyLejren and Christiania remained unsupervised by the government housing committee that set standards for how habitations should look and their lifestyles weren’t policed. In ThyLejren one could live in a cardboard box, a tent, or could build a hand-made house. Following the principles of free exploration, Christiania became a permanent autonomous community for many sub-cultural and counter-cultural groups. Residents have included the Inuit, bicycle freaks, communes of all sorts, alternative architects, the green front, hash-dealers, natural healers, artists, etc. Common ground (a permanently available temporary autonomous zone) lies centered on the Field of Peace (*Fredens Eng*), Christiania’s place for ceremonies, happenings, and festivals. But there are also many halls in the community available for such collective purposes as exhibitions and cultural manifestations. About 1,000 people actually live in Christi-

ania, and each day hundreds, sometimes thousands, of visitors arrive to seek inspiration or to be free, to act freely. “You are now entering the Common Market” proclaims a sign over one of the gates as you leave Freetown Christiania. Actress and culture coordinator Britta Lillesøe’s biggest concern is to keep Christiania a true Free Cultural Space, to keep it a real freetown outside the control of the government.

Just as the Amsterdam Balloon Company operates from Ruigoord, Christiania has its Sun Wagon (*Solvogn*) theater troupe, which organizes manifestations that blur the borders between life and theater. In an event I witnessed during Christmas time in 1975, hundreds of Santa Clauses gave away goods “liberated” from Copenhagen’s supermarkets and were collectively arrested singing Christmas carols, carrying an enormous crucified chicken with them on their way to prison. Extraordinary city-theater spectacles of this kind transform the whole of Copenhagen into an Autonomonus Zone for hours at a time.

Free Cultural Spaces are playgrounds and laboratories for alternative forms of organization. Researchers in Amsterdam undertook an inventory of the different ways squats functioned and their different organizational structures. One of the major points of distinction was the difference between those that organized a bar versus those that remained the domain of techies and artists. The ones that sold beer seemed more financially autonomous because they generated money enough to pay for repairs, etc. The study showed that there are many ways of being organized. Every place had its specific infrastructure, and all of them were valuable models for future development.

Creating an Autonomous Network

In the Netherlands during the 1960s the so-called “generation conflict” took place in nearly every family and seemed international: the Who’s song “My Generation” was a key text. The post-War authoritarian atmosphere pushed most parents to believe in military-minded moral codes. Family conflicts centered on the length of boys’ hair or on whether girls wore pants or refused to wear bras. The musical *Hair* galvanized the attitudes of millions of young people. The War had emptied Europe of critical intellectuals and artists, who had ei-

ther been murdered by the Nazis or had moved to the U.S. Young talent had a chance to flourish, with music playing a pivotal role in the culture of Dutch baby-boomers at the end of the 40s and early 50s. The invention of the birth control pill in the early 60s allowed women to finally choose for themselves whether to get pregnant or not. Women's lib went hand in hand with this cultural development, with the feminization of men playing an important role as well. I, myself, was a buzz-cut young man in a shirt and tie until, while walking through a misty Amsterdam day, I saw Jasper Grootveld sailing a canal on one of his early rafts. As children we'd all wanted to make rafts and float them on the canals. At that moment I realized that he, as an adult, still valued his childhood dreams. And I realized that I could dream too.

Now I live in a legalized former culture squat: ZAAL 100, in Amsterdam. It's a regulated, Cultural Free Haven combining a living group, small alternative offices, a vegetarian restaurant, stages for music, theater, multi-media, etc. When I first started participating in ZAAL 100 activities there was no stage for poetry and the walls were empty. I have since declared the walls to be "Gallery 100, an Autonomous Zone for the arts." This means that anybody can exhibit here - I make no curatorial choices. Nothing is insured, so the artists take a certain risk, but when a work is sold they don't have to pay any gallery percentages. For the poetry stage I have the same attitude: the artists performing there take a personal risk. And the audience that has developed for those events has proven itself extraordinarily generous and supportive, though it isn't uncritical.

I have a studio in Ruigoord, where I organize a yearly sculpture route and assist with the poetry events organized by Hans Plomp and the Amsterdam Balloon Company shows. I also run the Nomadic Museum, inviting like-minded friends to exhibit on important Free Cultural Spaces. Creating a Free Space depends on where you live. A periodic autonomous zone the size of the Boom Festival would be impossible in Holland. A permanent one of the size of Christiania could only happen in Denmark. Political and cultural differences generate different possible experiences and different forms of freedom. Rainbow Gatherings led to neo-tribalism, neo-nomadism. Ruigoord and Christiania declared themselves City Tribes or Urban

tribes. As a planetary gathering visited by a hundred different nationalities, Boom advances the slogan: **THIS IS YOUR TRIBE!**

In the early days of my time with the Balloon Company, I suggested creating a sculpture route for the full moon night, when we traditionally launched a balloon. The sculpture route became a theatrical interaction that included performers, acrobats, drummers, etc. This sort of initiative is necessary to provide Free Cultural Space with substance. Form and content are inseparable. My initiative was, of course, related to and became manifest because of hundreds of other individuals who contributed their own ideas, like Hans Plomp's open poetry stage; the Insect Sect conjured up by Theo Kley, Max Reneman, and the Hippie King Poet Leo van der Zalm; Montje Joling's Why Not Circus; Rudolph Stokvis's balloon ceremony; and Henk Spitteler's Freiraum concept.

In 1991, the celebration of Europe's "discovery" of America bounced back across the Atlantic. As a reaction to festivities in the U.S., the alternative circuit in Amsterdam joined in an international counter-culturally organized "Discovery of Europe," involving representatives of indigenous peoples from all over the world. In consultation with the community at Ruigoord, I wrote the following manifesto:

America was inhabited by the Indians, New Zealand by the Maori, Australia by the Aborigines. Europe was the robber that disturbed domestic peace. The invaders built themselves a home and now celebrate their 500-year occupation. Ruigoord, a squatted village, in solidarity with the destitute tribes of the world, hereby symbolically offers its grounds as an anchorage for positive energies, a place for rituals; in short, a stamping ground. We declare Ruigoord "Stamping-Ground Holland." We hope that this initiative will be followed by a reaction of our governments in enlarging the natural grounds for indigenous people all over the world.

In 1992, a Stamping Ground festival took place on the still-open space surrounding Ruigoord. South American Indians and Mongol shamans visited us and blessed the festival grounds with ceremonial dances and other events. In 1993, I initiated the "Dream-Time Awakening" festival, which was opened by the Australian ambassador. With the help of a group of Australian Aboriginal artists a ritual

dance was performed simultaneously in Holland and Australia, creating a Temporary Autonomous Zone on opposite sides of the globe. Our Stamping Ground is now covered with industrial buildings. What was meant to be permanent became temporary.

In 2001, I tried unsuccessfully to set up a Potlatch (give-away ceremony) between the Kwakiutl First Nation of Western Canada and the Ruigoord city tribe. Author and publisher Jordan Zinovich, who regularly visits our poetry manifestations, suggested that I might best open a discussion about Potlatch with the Kwakiutl if I spoke from the position of European Potlatching traditions. My initiative wasn't about copying or appropriating indigenous ideas.

"Potlatching" is an idea the Surrealists explored, and *Potlatch* was the name of a magazine published by the French Lettrists/Situationists in the 1950s - free to be copied without permission of the authors or publisher. Other European give-away traditions exist as well. We all know Santa Claus. ("Claus will come!" wrote Provo magician Jasper Grootveld on the walls of the city of Amsterdam.) I stressed to my Kwakiutl friends that we at Ruigoord are "the indigenous people of Europe" and proposed exchanging plants and seeds as well as ideas. ("Claus will come! Claus will come!") It's time again to contact the Kwakiutl, the Australian Aborigines, the African Bushman, the Papuans from New Guinea. Let's make magic happen!

Goa connection

Consider the Goa Tribe, to which many Balloonies, Boomsters, and Christianites belong. We all know Goa as a place for parties, an international meeting point for free spirits. Goa, isolated from the rest of India from 1963 till 1974, has been a Free Cultural Zone for at least twenty years. It was a paradise that is now vanishing under pressure from the tourist industry. Around 1969, hippies began arriving there, some traveling on the famous Magic Bus from Amsterdam to live on the beaches in caves or in huts they made themselves. Unlike the rest India, the Goan majority is Christian, so one could eat fish or meat and, equally importantly, light a chillum without problems. (After yelling "Boom!," of course.) The first trance parties took place there, and from Goa color came to Europe.

“Where do we Goa from here?” was the title of a theater piece created and performed by hippies in the early 80s. It was a valid question. Partly inspired by the ABC’s yearly performances, Diogo Ruivo, a Goa-born child, answered it by creating Good Mood Productions and starting the Boom Festival in Portugal. He brought a perfected form of Goa to Europe. Thanks to Diogo and his network of friends, we can now Goa to Boom, Ruigoord, Rustlers Valley, Christiania, Doel, etc. We Goa everywhere!

BOOM is a trans-national mini-society, a living learning community, a glimpse into a harmonious world. It offers an open environment for Situationist drifts, dances, environmental artworks, soundscapes, oral traditions, eco-awareness. Boom is an art, talk, walk, thought, do-and-dance drift, a place of participation, a gathering of free spirits, a place of cultural and natural synergy, a place to set you free, to banish routines: a Situationistic artwork in itself. Seeing Boom as a trans-temporary manifestation (every two years) makes the temporary relative. It might be more appropriate to call Boom a Periodical Autonomous Zone.

Freedom and cooperation

Despite the stresses of institutionalization, it can bring about cooperation. If Christiania, ThyLejren, UFA-Fabrik, Doel, Ruigoord, and Boom join forces, stronger statements can be made about aspects of freedom, ecology, and culture in general. In 2011, Christiania celebrated its 40th anniversary. Ruigoord established an embassy in Christiania, and vice versa. In 2013, Ruigoord celebrated its 40th anniversary. A trans-national conference (a Futurological Symposium) on Free Cultural Spaces with participants from many areas of the world was be a central element of the celebration activities. One of our aims then was to create a physical network that complements various “virtual” ones - a network promoting the collective interests of activists, artists, musicians, writers, performers, ecological farmers, and indigenous representatives from all over the world. Oral traditions will play a prominent functional role, and with them will come the exchange of ideas.

In 2013 a group of Belgian artists/poets and activists from the village of Doel near Antwerp arrived at Ruigoord seeking help. Doel is

about to be erased to make way for a harbor expansion (as almost happened in Ruigoord). Since the harbor is unlikely to be built, and the village is empty, these activists see the possibility of transforming it into a new Free Cultural Space. To assist them, the Amsterdam Balloon Company cooperated in raising an “Axis Mundi” in Doel - with Ruigoord opening a consulate in Doel and Doel doing the same in Ruigoord. A few weeks after our joint action the Ruigoord Consulate was evicted by the Belgian police. While at this moment the village is a graffiti museum, the Doel activists have also organized a Do It Yourself Festival - the name says it all: Do it Yourself! If you want to help shape a Permanent Autonomous Zone, go to Doel!

Symbolic and Actual Links

Cultural Free Havens like Christiania (Denmark), ThyLejren (Denmark), Ruigoord (Netherlands), Doel (Belgium), UfA-Fabrik (Germany), Catarredor (Portugal) and countless other squats and communes in Western Europe are mini-societies where festivals play a central role. (No Permanent Autonomous Zones without Temporary Autonomous Zones within their boundaries!) Mini-societies are not simply laboratories for social relations or playgrounds for alternative architects, artists, and eco-farmers. In important ways their social, ecological, and environmental concepts give shape to, and are a real foundation for, “trans-industrial landscaping” and future urban development.

Trans-industrialism explores the synergy between nature and culture. The Free Havens I have mentioned are among the first to attempt to realize this notion. That’s why, in 2009, Christiania organized and hosted the Climate Bottom Meeting. While The Climate Top Meeting (also known as the “UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen”) was a failure on many levels, the Climate Bottom Meeting successfully explored the alternatives demonstrated by eco-villages and other small-scale projects from all over the world. “THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY” remains the central focus for the Free Haven networks. Transcending culture’s industrial limitations is one of the aims of a trans-industrial strategy. As an example of how this might work in practical terms, from Ruigoord a network of green pathways between the industrial sites could connect the whole

of Amsterdam's industrial area to the so-called *Brettenzone*, a green belt between Amsterdam and the North Sea dunes. Instead of becoming increasingly isolated, Ruigoord could then serve trans-industrial planologues metaphorically as a green heart with green veins connected to a green body. Green belts, eco-links, or ecological corridors don't have a high priority in current planological schemes and generally function as buffers between expanding urban areas. City and country are still viewed as separate units. Many small plots of land that have escaped conventional planologic strategies simply remain "greenscapes," with no further conceptual value. Connecting these liminal plots of land should be a main focus for trans-industrial landscape development.

The Axis Mundi project (which has morphed to something I'm calling *Geopuncture*) aims to center utopian, ludic impulses at specific points on the earth in a network that includes and expands on the Free Cultural Havens I've been discussing. It raises markers at the spiritual centers of our efforts. In recent years the Amsterdam Balloon Company has placed Axis Mundi at Ruigoord, Christiania, Doel, and the Boom Festival grounds, developing a trans-national network facilitating cultural journeys to alternative cultural free places and festivals. An Axis Mundi, or "World Axis," symbolizes the center of the world. Throughout history it has been the notion projected on a sacred mountain, a column of smoke, a tree, totem pole, or imaginary line to the polar star around which the earth is believed to spin. Upholding the heavenly dome, depicted as world pillars or trees of life, they help center peoples living in microcosmic environments. An Axis Mundi establishes, for example, the four cardinal directions, and for many cultures it connects all the visible and invisible spheres. Seen as rising from the navel of the earth, an Axis Mundi serves as an umbilical cord for people like the Mongolian shamans. The aim of our developing network is to allow us as "free ranging people" to recognize the central importance of the lives we're living and to work together on different levels in the future. Since many of our city tribes are pushing for recognition, it seems important to continue finding ways to expand to include other tribal communities in the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

Psychonauts like us claim space for the spirit. In 2008, the ABC was invited to an inter-tribal gathering in Christiania. During this "Two

Urban Tribes” Meeting, we produced a **manifesto** that began with the following lines:

Ruigoord and Christiania are both urban tribes of people who are different, slightly aberrant, conforming not to what the world dictates, but to their inner voice, their spirit. Tonight we conform our spirits by shifting the Axis of our world to this location, where the magical tree Yggdrasil will be erected.

The manifesto ends:

Urban Tribes have a much wider importance than simply representing a nice way of living, an escape for a happy few. We show the world that there *are* alternative ways of living, working, and being together. The world needs experimental zones where alternative models of inter-human relationships, government, decision making, and social structure can be developed. They don’t need to succeed, but they must allow us to learn new processes and possibilities. Let’s celebrate life, let’s make this planet sing! We declare Christiania to be the center of our world.

From the treaty between the villages of Ruigoord and Doel, written in 2009, I draw the following lines:

We, freely creating spirits from Ruigoord and Doel, join in psychonautic cooperation with this aim: The United States of Spirit. Parties strive towards one global center as a safe haven, for the *Gesamtkunst* (collective art) for travelers of the mind, by making the world axis visible in all possible directions.

We welcomed the Boom People as our fourth Magic World Center. By raising an Axis Mundi at Boom, our growing web became a psycho-geographical artwork setting up a physical and virtual web. We, the Amsterdam Balloon Company, strive to establish powerful international creative and spiritual bonds and to proclaim the global importance of alternative, experimental societies and festivals. On the full moon night of the 24th of July 2010, we declared the Boom Festival grounds to be the newest center of our world. A world center is not necessarily static. Nomadic peoples carry their center with them, revitalizing and relocating it during meetings and festivals. Because the location of the Boom Festival may change over the years, our Boom totem expresses mobility. The actual center of the world is exactly where *you* are. For us, the Boom Axis Mundi marks a world center of consciousness, a place of positive power and peace.

Ecstasy and the Limits of Freedom

From a Speech, at the Ruigoord Symposium on Free Cultural Space, 2011 by Aja Waalwijk

Tolerance is labeling. Besides admitting something, it stands for enduring as well, implying that one allows something one disagrees with. Not to tolerate is to make something “illegal.” This happened to the squatting movement in the Netherlands in 2011. . . . How tolerant can one be against intolerance? One cannot tolerate violence. Where do the borders of freedom of religion, speech, information, or lifestyle lie? It started with free men and slaves who set themselves free - free farmers, freetowns, freebooters, and freedom of religion. Freedom of opinion (to raise a political party, etc.) led to freedom of enterprise, investment, and consumption.

The development of the signification of the word *free* is a story in itself. The Dutch word for free is *vrij*, which is etymologically related to *vrijen* (to kiss or to make love), *vriend* (friend), and *vrede* (peace). *Vrij* stood for a person you loved, like a family member or tribal member. Out of the word *vrijen*, as an equivalent of loving or caring, sprouted the word *friend*. Friends were free men consorting with other free men; less-fortunate others were serfs or slaves, unfree. Friends met in a *vrijthof*, a fenced or protected court where no weapons were allowed. Instead of war and enmity, freedom is thus a condition of love, friendship, and protection. Protection takes precedence. I have actually never felt unprotected in unfenced or unguarded areas, not even when surrounded by thousands of wild people; but I know others are.

The city of Amsterdam is under threat from a culture storm. An open society allows its members considerable freedom, but more and more doors are closing. Even the people who legislate the laws and create the rules and regulations that restrict us are happily surprised whenever something unexpected happens in the street. Yet they seemingly don't realize how difficult and dangerous they have made it for people just to live their lives. In 2011, a storm of protest arose when the police removed Blind Bennie from the place on Dam Square where he had stood for 30 years and strip searched him. He didn't have the correct papers and received outrageously high fines - something that often happens to the homeless, many of whom face

enormous debts as a result of fines given for sleeping in the street. Less and less culture is seen as suitable for public expression. And a climate of squatophobia has descended on our increasingly Disneyfied city with its miles of empty office space of use to no one. Cultural Breeding Places are touted as the officially sanctioned alternatives to squats, but they aren't mini-societies. Stripped of children, collective kitchens, etc., they're nothing but studios for rent. The architect Hein de Haan calls this whole situation "the Singapore-syndrome."

Freedom of speech is freedom of thought. What sort of space do we have in mind? How do we use freedom optimally? Control systems are autistic. When there is too much control, freedom becomes impossible. A festival is an open social concept of freedom, and therefore opposes autism. Indeterminate territories, or waste lands, are places where counter-cultural or sub-cultural events take place. The absence of limits can result in a sense of liberty and autonomy, but to be truly free, to practice freedom, you must have self-control.

Self-control doesn't mean the loss of all positive potential. By keeping your weaknesses under control you can let yourself go. Know yourself! The right to fuddle, to wear what you like, to be entranced or ecstatic (with or without drugs) is essential for coming to your senses. Absurdity loses its strangeness when everybody is simultaneously an absurdist, like during carnival. How strange!

Free space without freedom of thought is a contradiction. There's free space inside your head; doesn't that sound great? Cheers! Ecstasy is the spiritual condition that allows us to say, do, or think extra-ordinary things, to stand outside conventional life. Shouldn't freedom of ecstasy be considered a positive value? Drugs can stimulate ecstasy and influence thoughts, so restricting the use of drugs contradicts the basic freedom of spirit. Demonization of herbs is an essential component of the Singapore-syndrome. (The etymological myth connecting the word *assassin* to hash smokers came in under auspices of the Vatican during the times of the crusades.) Smoking gods exist in India and South America; grass seeds and weed pipes have been found in graves from 10,000 years ago. In tribal societies drug use isn't limited only to shamans and in the West it's not lim-

ited only to artists. Many “normal” people in the west like to smoke a joint.

Everything can be used or abused. Double standards exist everywhere. In Europe the pagan wine-god Bacchus was absorbed by Christendom. As a result, the drinking of alcohol is part of Western culture. Alcohol is used and promoted everywhere. Yet it affects one’s thoughts, as do all drugs. The number of deaths that result from alcohol abuse is gigantic but has never been viewed as a problem as significant as the use of drugs that are less harmful, or even sometimes beneficial. To make pilots in World War II more efficient and effective speed and coke were given to them. Since economy is war, a thematic war on “natural” drugs has been declared. Nowadays in Western politics, drug use is described in amazingly black-and-white terms. When it comes to weed politicians talk only about abuse, danger, intoxication, criminality, addiction, mental illness, psychosis, THC levels, brain damage, etc. Only the negative aspects are discussed. That’s how criminal networks are brought into life. Every politician knows this, but war is war. The same language is being applied to our famous coffee shops, which sell top-quality weed and hash, all regulated and controlled - if merchandizing returns to the street again you’ll get real “shit.” Completely snowed under by this rhetorical warfare is the creative power of drugs, and with it the creative attitudes that motivate many to use drugs. Such attitudes can lead to beautiful things, stimulate liberatory release, facilitate the urge to trespass “psychological” borders, relax, ease pain, bring people together, improve interpersonal relationships, etc. A joint isn’t called a “joint” for nothing; it can help enable joint action. Of course there are the ego drugs like coke, which makes people aggressive, especially in combination with booze. “Riot Powder” is what the football-tribes call it. But even coke can be nice as an aphrodisiac if you use it rarely. Happily, you can legitimately call mushrooms truffles, and truffles are legal. Such word play keeps reality elastic but is not always useful.

The recently-introduced “weedpass” doesn’t only discriminate against foreign visitors. As a Dutchman it almost represents having a little yellow star stuck on your chest. Everybody who smokes is registered and thus stigmatized. Then there’s a real possibility of being

refused the right to visit the U.S., of being denied work you're otherwise qualified for, of being profiled by the police and having your driver's license affected. No weedpass for me in this developing demonocracy!

Final Thoughts

As part of the festivities of the 40th birthday of Freetown Christiania, Ruigoord opened an Embassy there in 2012. Christiania now has an opportunity to buy its own ground, which means a new phase is starting in its existence as a Cultural Free Haven. Filmmaker and Christiania activist Nils Vest described the Christianites current situation:

The government wanted all the old ramparts of the old fortress to be put back in their original state. They wanted all new houses and trees removed. "So what about the birds and insects?" we asked. We took it to the Supreme Court. Since the ramparts are a historical monument, only the significant parts of them will be returned to their historical state. The Court agreed that as long as there are houses in other areas it's safer for passers-by at night. If we hadn't signed that contract, involving the removing of seven houses, they would have organized a general sell-out. We want to keep Christiania as a whole, so we've decided to buy it ourselves. We discussed whether we would buy it as an organization or individually. The government offered individual sales. Some people and many pushers wanted that, but happily also many pushers were against it. Eventually, 95% of the Christianites agreed to be part of a Christiania Association. Some houses fall under the preservation act and people can rent them. People in individual houses have to pay rent for the ground they're on. People in wagons have to pay less. The government wanted to choose the people who live here, but we may now decide ourselves who comes in. A lot of decisions still have to be made. But thanks to the economic downturn the interest we'll have to pay has changed dramatically.

It's natural that our Cultural Free Havens should change over time. In Christiania in 1972 the average age of a Christianite was 25; in 2011 it's 45. In Ruigoord and in Doel one sees the same situation, particularly when it comes to the average age of those who actively

initiate artistic actions. By way of contrast, the average age of the initiators in southern Europe, at the Boom festival, for instance, is about 30. In 2012, more than 50% of Amsterdam's youthful population originated from Turkish, Moroccan, or Surinam backgrounds. These youngsters have never heard of Provo, Jasper Grootveld, Magic Center Amsterdam, or the Lowland Weed Company, and they are unlikely to ever squat a house or live in a commune. But reclaiming public space continues here (as happened during Occupy Amsterdam), as it does in cities like Istanbul and Ankara and other centers throughout the world. New Cultural Free Spaces remain out there to be claimed and developed. And we remain open to welcoming them into our emerging, ever-expanding network of kindred spirits.

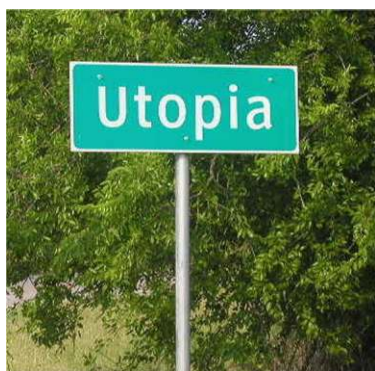
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140 Warren Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

25 Utopia, intentional communities

People with ideals and intentions deviant from the ruling paradigm have always tried to escape, create enclaves and isolated islands amidst those who thought different from them. These days however, the relevance of understanding the roots of this grows. Since Thomas More's satirical travelogue *Utopia* (1516) we refer to these as utopian communities, more recently the expressions 'intentional communities', 'free cultural spaces' and 'permanent autonomous zones' are used.

Why is the meaning and history of the concept of a Utopia so relevant to community living, autonomous zones, creativity cafes or intentional communities and in a sense to all of us? In thinking about communities that at least in some respects should be better, more humane and more ecological, we need to reflect on our ideals. Are they realistic or just a



nice fantasy? One could easily discard the whole notion of a Utopian society as an unrealistic, non- dynamic dream of some writers, do-gooders or religious leaders. People who believe that an ideal state or society could work but assumes ideal people. It is easy to point out how the human limitations like ego and material greed would make such a society a pipe-dream, a fata-morgana, an illusion that could never work.

"Utopia" is sometimes used pejoratively, in reference to an unrealistic ideal that is impossible to achieve. And yet, most of us strive to improve our lives and our part of the world, from either a selfish or social point of view, we vote for those who promise us those improvements and in most political movements there is a distinct utopian flavor. We can therefore learn from the utopists, those who made intellectual or artistic constructs and those who actually tried to create an utopian or eutopian (mini-)society. It does make sense to

study the historical and conceptual aspects of the virtual and real utopia's, even as we don't intend to separate from the rest of the world and have no ambition to be more than a little seed in the sea of awareness. The Utopian concepts do have value for us, as they usually deal with one or more of the aspects of scarcity, be it material or the less defined needs for happiness or security.

We all have dreams about a world that would be more perfect, better organized, less greedy, more humane than what we experience in our daily life. And even those who believe there is sense and direction in what we perceive as reality, that our world is a great school with a perfect curriculum, are tempted to change and transform the reality a bit and thereby make it a better place for all of us. These dreams, all through history, have been laid down in books or verse, painted or sculpted in art and appear in the various interpretations of heaven or paradise in the traditions. Many times these ideas or dreams were tested in reality, in communities, ashrams, monasteries, cults, in whole countries but alas, without much lasting success. Only monasteries and religious communities seem to have staying power and a sustainable model, but even there many were short-lived. There is hope, times are changing.

The concept of autonomous zones and free cultural spaces is catching on, maybe as a counterweight to the stress and digital monotony of modern life. It feels like a paradox, but because of modern technology, some self sufficiency with respect to energy, communications and food is becoming feasible and this maybe offers a better chance for utopian ideals.

Origins in history

We can find the origins of utopian ideas, the imagery of perfection and imagined ideal societies, in the classical and biblical literature. A tension between the ideal and the real can be felt in nearly all of the sources. Many of these worlds are set outside history in a golden age, before time began and things went wrong in the World, or in a mythical time governed by its own rules.

The powerful notion of a Garden of Eden is a kind of utopian concept. The Genesis story of creation, told in the opening chapter of the Bible, is one of the earliest descriptions of Paradise. The creation

myth and the Garden of Eden represent the beginning of human time and experience, and can therefore conjure up powerful images of a mythical pure time and place, unmarked by history and in a way it is set outside time. It was when Adam and Eve had to leave Paradise, became self-conscious and had to suffer in work and childbirth, that human history started.

The various utopian models that have surfaced since the Biblical Paradise, the Pythagorean Brotherhood and Plato (The Republic), in literature or in actual experiments have not yielded a

workable and sustainable concept, apart maybe from the inspired communities like monasteries and religious ashrams. Yet these models, from Plato, More, Rousseau, Thoreau, Bellamy, Marx, Skinner, Orwell, Huxley, Callenbach (Ecotopia), Heinlein, and many others often illustrate the various ways to cope with the constraints of reality, like scarcity, at the expense of freedom. The reality experiments, and there have been many communities with utopian tendencies, range from very small co-housing to the communist states. They yield valuable insights and history holds many lessons, but in most utopias either the legal or the psychological freedom is sacrificed on the altar of equality, often the books and movies picture a more dystopian or negative outlook.

Plato (427 - 347 BCE) argues, notably in *The Republic*, that wisdom based on truth and reason is at the heart of the just person and the



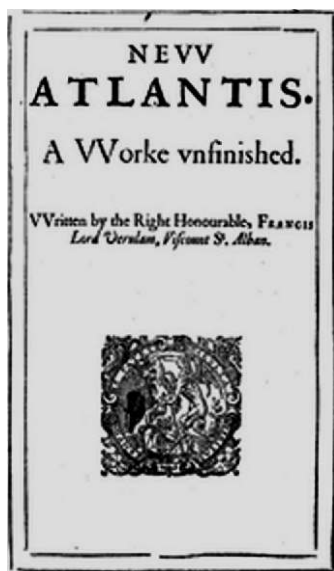
The Cover of Utopia of Thomas More

just society. One of the passages describes prisoners trapped in a cave, watching shadows of life outside cast on the wall by the light of a fire. After a while they will think of the shadows as reality. But in truth reality is different and can only be known by those outside the cave who live in the light of the sun. Plato describes his statesmen (guardians) as people who have struggled to the sunlight of reason and learnt the truth about the material world (physics) and the moral and spiritual world (metaphysics.) Only such philosophers can be trusted to rule the state. In *The Republic* dialogue, written in approximately 360 BCE, Socrates and various other Athenians and foreigners discuss the meaning of justice and whether the just man is happier than the unjust man by constructing an imaginary city ruled by philosopher-kings.

Aristotle's *Politics* about how a city (polis) is to be organized is a work of political philosophy and kind of models many of Plato's notions, sometimes with varying conclusions.

Virgil was a Roman poet (70-19 BC). Unlike the earlier writers who often described the Golden Age as outside time or virtual, Virgil's Eclogue suggests that human progress might lead to a more affluent and leisure filled world in the foreseeable future. His fourth Eclogue, the Messianic Eclogue, is the clearest example of the shift from a timeless to a more historical view of a perfect world. An eclogue is a 'pastoral' poem that idealizes rural life. In Telecleides 'The Deipnosophists' present a Golden Age of impossibly effortless plenty. He plays on his audience's understanding that this ideal era never truly existed and never would. By presenting one extreme satirically he implies a belief in the opposite idea - that prosperity is the result of hard work.

Utopia is the name for an ideal society, taken from the title of an allegorical and even satirical book written in 1516 by Sir Thomas More describing a fictional island and near perfect society in the At-



lantic Ocean. Utopia is a perfect but unreal place. A proper definition of a perfect and real place is eutopia. More's utopia is like a perfect version of Plato's Republic wherein equality and a general pacifist attitude reign, although its citizens are all ready to fight if need be. The evils of society, like poverty and misery, are all removed. It has few laws, no lawyers, rarely sends its citizens to war but hires mercenaries from among its war-prone neighbors. Utopia's society encourages tolerance of all religions. All of this can also be seen as More's critical comments on how England operated in those days. New Atlantis is an incomplete utopian novel by Sir Francis Bacon, published in 1627. It portrays a vision of the future of human discovery and knowledge, expressing his aspirations and ideals for humankind in a utopian land Bensalem. In this land "generosity and enlightenment, dignity and splendor, piety and public spirit" are the commonly held qualities of the inhabitants. The plan and organization of his ideal college, Salomon's House, envisioned the modern research university where science is a collaborative undertaking. It was to be conducted in a rational and impersonal way, for the material benefit of mankind. The New Atlantis precedes science fiction, a genre of utopian and dystopian writing which deals with the impact of actual or imagined science upon society or individuals. Bacon raises the question of the link between knowledge and power. Knowledge gives people power over others. Bacon's scientists were depicted as moral paragons but also ordinary humans, and so fallible and open to corruption. This raises questions about how society controls those citizens that have powerful and potentially dangerous knowledge.

Also of a satirical nature, *Gulliver's Travels*, a book by Jonathan Swift (1726), describes societies that show the deficiencies and paradoxes of the political and social constellations of his time. It is not utopian, but shows great insights in the shortcoming of the human ways.

Daniel Defoe's story of Robinson Crusoe (1719) explored the possibility of a solitary utopia, on a deserted island, pointing towards what we now would call self-sufficiency and the maker trend.

Tomasso Campanella describes a perfect society in which religion and reason work in total harmony. In *La città del sole* (City of the

Sun 1602) he relates imaginary discussions between a Grandmaster of the Knights Hospitallers (a religious military order) and a naval captain from Genoa. The sea captain describes the City of the Sun as a place where life is shaped by science and religion and all property is communal, while governed by men led by reason. Every man's work contributes to the good of the community. Wealth and poverty do not exist because no one is allowed more than is needed.

In *Modern Utopia* (1905), H. G. Wells described a parallel earth upon which the rational and scientific are perfectly balanced with spiritual discipline and belief. Wells set the scene for many modern, scientific utopias and dystopias. The Utopian Planet differs from earth in that the inhabitants have created a perfect society, a world in which the problems of humanity have been solved. Two men, the narrator and his colleague (a botanist), visit this parallel planet and argue over its merits and defects. People live healthy, happy lives in cities where all human needs are met. Science and technology frees people from toil and enables them to enjoy security and innovation. Wells' utopia is neither democratic nor equal. He advocates a scientific kind of socialism, rooted in the idea that the world is orderly, knowable and controllable. The state is ruled by the Samurai, a moral and spiritual ruling class. They lead an ascetic (disciplined and morally strict) life. Joining their class is open to anybody that proves themselves to be able to follow their strict Rule.

Aldous Huxley in *Island* (1962) paints an utopia where some kind of psychedelic or sedating drug (Soma) is used to keep the inhabitants happy and peaceful.

Limitations

There have been many utopist visions since those early days, in literature and movies. There are left wing socialist utopias, capitalist models, economic and political utopias, moneyless utopias, neo-Luddite, technological, ecological, egalitarian and of course actual physical religious utopias. From the Essenes to the Harmonites, the Amish to Osho ashrams. One does get the impression however, that the various utopist writers have usually projected some part of their own personality upon their utopian world view at the expense of a more balanced approach. Often important and practical aspects

are neglected and just stated as a given like where the material affluence and overcoming the need to worry about food comes from. Or in the ideal societies there are kings/philosophers or very gifted planner/executives who in fact establish a kind of totalitarian regime, like in Plato's or Skinner's (Walden 2) views. The questions of who is controlling the controllers and who is planning the planners are not answered. The feedback mechanism we assume (somewhat) works in democracy is missing. They assume an ideal state based on ideal people, the same as Rousseau who was realistic enough to admit that this is fictional and that real people have real human shortcomings.

Another aspect that is missing in many utopia's is the development of the individual, how to deal with frustrations, criminal intent, depressions etcetera. Again the ideal human doesn't have these problems so they are ignored or treated as a residue of the non-ideal past. But a real community does have to deal with this and organizing war games as in Callenbach's *Ecotopia* is a kind of drastic solution. The inner development of the partners and guest of the community is, in my view, the most important. It really should be school for life, a place for growth, not a kind of material paradise where everybody lives long, happily but without change or development. This is missing in most utopian concepts.

So these are relevant questions:

- Is utopia possible?
- Are utopian ideas meant to be acted on?
- If not, what other purposes do they serve?
- What practical lessons can we learn?
- Is there a theoretical model that classifies utopian concepts?
- Are we able to imagine ourselves living in these worlds? What about individual will and desire?
- Are totalitarian and even fascist societies utopian?

Not all these questions can be answered, but this shows which issues are to be discussed when looking at modern communities.

Utopia models

What are the essential parameters of an utopian (Greek: good place as opposed to dystopia – bad place) community? That has to do with the goals and ambitions, with commitment by the members. What do we seek, and more importantly, what are we willing to sacrifice in what is usually a new balance or compromise between the social and the individual? Is it a place we can escape the normal constraints and hardships of the daily reality where we live a harmonious and happy life in an ideal setting? Or do we seek spiritual fulfillment, a mystical state where higher goals and sacrifice rule? Do we want to show the world how wrong it is, be a warning, a signpost, an ecological sustainable alternative? This all sounds nice but we also have to realize that wherever you go, whatever you do, the ego and the physical reality of our body, our needs for food, safety, purposeful activities, and yes, respect, notoriety, etcetera are still there.

Tribalism

In a sense, Utopian or intentional communities are tribal projects, an in-group effort aiming at a meeting place for the community, protected from the outside. Cultivating the sense of belonging that arises with community, with shared security, exchange and common goals and activities. A traditional village feels most connected on Sunday mornings in church or when united in rituals of mourning or celebration.

People that are united by sharing a common ancestry, a place, an ideal, an intention, a totem, a way of living or just a dream can organize themselves in couples, families, extended families, but also in tribes, meaning a group with a common thread. Such groups have existed through the ages, based on ethnic, geographical or other common denominators. In our day and age there are many tribes, even urban tribes and virtual tribes. They share an interest, a hobby, a liking for this or that, and group together, seeking kindred spirits.

Tribes of magic

The special magic, that Hakim Bey discerned in Temporary Autonomous Zones and Emile Durkheim described as ‘effervescence’, needs more than a shared interest or being in a crowd at a big music

festival, at a World Fair or in Disneyland. It is more of a magical extra, a heightened experience of togetherness, of feeling united, part of the all. In this context there arises the 'loving' and 'tolerant' feeling many of us have concerning our fellow travelers on the spiritual path of self discovery and connectedness. This by sharing common interests, goals, attitude, accepting diversity, tolerant and yet united. The image of "tribes of magic" comes to mind, groups with a sense of contact with the other realities, with a pinch of ceremonial or ritual practice as a common ground. This should not be an empty notion. A common and even ritual practice, like some form of meditation once a week and at least one common meal, can help forge and maintain the level of commitment to the common cause.

Sustainable reality

One could start with stating that all people are essentially OK, and that a perfect community breeds perfect individuals. However, history teaches us that perfection is a great goal, but reality kicks in at a far more mundane level. Even the most optimistic approach should be based on a realistic assessment and preparation. Prepare for the worst is the best strategy, and the best protection too.

We all know how a certain situation, a certain event or environment can bring about the magical qualities of happiness and exaltation. We can go to a power spot in nature, a concert or festivals, experience the solemn beauty of a Gothic cathedral and feel this for a while. But we know this is short lived, and the feelings fade, normality returns. Yet there is this longing for this special state, and throughout history people have imagined places and conditions that would help sustain this, in literature, theater plays, but also in reality. Monasteries and ashrams were places to seek this 'holy' state of connectedness with the all and the others. The communities did not always sprung up voluntarily, often they were an escape, a desperate attempt to flee from oppression or danger. These days the religious motives have been replaced by the wish to escape from the stress, economic constraints or ego-materialism, create an ecological and spiritual safe-haven or enjoy freedom from oppressive law and order.

To go from a flash experience or even a communal effort lasting months and years towards a sustainable long term community is not easy. The difference between a temporary and a permanent autonomous zone is that one is aware of the human factors, like anger, anxiety, greed and ego that eventually end the magic of a festival or temporary event and designs ways and structures to contain them. Eliminating those human factors is impossible, the repression to do so will turn against the repressors at some time. This happens on the nation state level, in companies, religions, associations, but also in communities and families.

Us and them

Being different and being recognized as such is a basic drive. This goes for individuals but also for groups. The us and them motive is strong, the in-group social ideals are often compensated by an antagonistic stance towards the outside world. We seek safety and meaning in the superiority of our group or community (nation, party, religion). This is a danger that needs constant attention, for such an attitude will be mirrored and can lead to isolation or worse.

Energy is the key

Talking to many people inside and outside communities it becomes clear that really sustainable communities are rare, and these days even the (traditional) spiritual ones have serious problems, lose energy and have a hard time surviving. One can find many, many convents, monasteries and even dissolved new-age communities for sale.

The problems are often economic, but mostly the basic tenets, the roots of the community were less idealistic and more greedy after all, lustful, materialistic and less 'holy' than was written up in the creeds and history records. If the desire for 'good' was based on greed, it will eventually show not be good, but greed. There are levels to this, the integrity at different levels may be different, the top or the bottom of the power structure (that always emerges, despite the great models and tactics to prevent that) may have different ideas and morals, feel better or inferior and act different from what they

are supposed to do. This is the human condition, and history teaches it's hard to change.

Many communities which to the outside present a happy and successful face internally have serious problems. Now that might be part of the process. In essence any relationship or community is a growth process for all concerned. But the financial, hierarchical and relational problems often lead to the end of the community or force some members to leave with hard feelings, hurting the energy of all. All this doesn't mean building and living in a community is senseless. On the contrary, the path is what matters. Experiencing the communal struggles is a mirror of the psychological inner pathway, and participation in such endeavor is usually very enriching in the spiritual and psychological sense. It comes down to learning to walk the talk. Energy, spiritual cohesion, the commitment to face problems together. There are many words, but maybe love is the most simple one.

Pan of the Buddhahill/Nuvotopia commune in Dippertz (Fulda, BRD), one of the people who very honestly shared his insights, stressed the importance of a deep energy-cohesion as the basis of any community. His formula for a real spiritual commune is as simple as this:

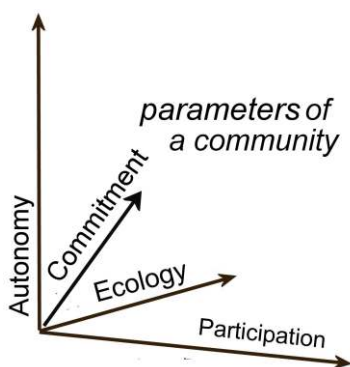
*A real spiritual commune
can only be out of love
which starts with
love-sharing-caring
This is the center
the heart
love only happens
through the surrender
of the mind
the I or the ego
without the complete
surrender of the I, the ego
there is no love no freedom
without love there can be no real or true
spiritual commune
which is just the freedom*

*to share the blessing of this life
with divine beings in the
now and here*

Such a place needs some organization, some outline, maybe even a constitution or root contract/document as a basis.

Sustainable in the face of scarcity

There are a number of problems associated with intentional communities or intentional tribal facilities, maybe a more appropriate term here, that do pop up. Most have to do with scarcity, in a material sense, but also in a psychological and even metaphysical sense. Material scarcity, the assumed basis of rational economic behavior, involves money, food, space, a safe and comfortable environment, but is obviously subject to individual ranking and psychological constraints. One person might be okay with an ascetic lifestyle, another want to explore all senses to the max. Even though money might be a yardstick for scarcity and economic behavior, it is not the only one and probably the least interesting. Things like rank, status (to have and save face), relationships, health and love are far more important.



In that sense, Maslow's Pyramid ranking is far too rigid. Priorities shift over time and therefore an economic (money) model is necessary, but not enough. We have to deal with the ethical side of matters too, like to establish what kind of legal framework we need and even more than that, how to deal not only with material matters, but the psychological as well. There are the practical questions about how to deal with drugs, alcohol, smoking, dogs, sexual relationships, deviant behavior and such. but also how we deal with old age, children, depressions, miscommunications, personal debts, criminality, and what happens when a wider crisis situation might arise. A general framework or communal contract to address these issues has to be set up and partners have to agree on this. Beyond being a kind of

constitution it has to be lived and implemented so it becomes a kind of natural bylaw for those joining later, not written words without meaning.

Conflict Resolution

Dealing with conflicts has been a crucial issue for mankind, as the group size grew beyond the basic Dunbar limits of some 150 individuals and a surplus economy developed. Conflict resolution models can be divided in digital (rules, borders) and analog (principles, values) models, but there are many options and compromises to bridge the dichotomy between individual and collective interests.

Each society has developed it's own ways to deal with this, and at



*Decision making and discussions in a circle
(Ruigoord in Christiania 2008)*

festivals we can see the age old patterns, the us-them thinking, the power games, but also ways to overcome conflicts by building trust, gifting, sharing, circle decision models, theocratic decision making and even lottery models to decide on issues or mobilize support.

Decision making

The decision making process (including conflict resolution) is most important. Democracy sounds great but often means the minority loses, the sociocratic (consensus) approach has evident benefits, but is not always appropriate, as when used for purely executive decisions. In some cases alternative methods are called for, and that might include divination, astrology, the I Ching and other esoteric ways of charting a course. If all is one, then at times we have to trust the universe!

Commitment

A community's success depends on many variables, like the level of participation, the autonomy and autarky, the ecological impact,

while things like identification lead to commitment. The factors work together and then there are the socio-psychological considerations. Community living requires a certain attitude, a willingness to share, a true tolerance, an understanding that it's about contributing to the whole, not about taking and only consuming. It means commitment, in some ways sacrifice of individual goals and wishes and not everybody interprets commitment in the same way. There are takers and givers, but we all operate on different levels and what may be lacking on a material, practical level, is compensated in other qualities, in emotional support, friendship or love. Cooperation and respect for others is essential, in small matters but also in an ecological sense, and towards the larger local community and authorities. Therefore a serious and thorough selection and intake procedure, followed by a permanent community building and maintenance process is necessary, involving a certain discipline, regular meetings, sociocratic procedures and a common understanding.

Commitment is essential, but even then crises might and probably will occur and a structure to deal with this needs to be set up before it happens. Entry and exit procedures need to be open, clear and effective. Leaving the partnership, either voluntary or involuntary, should be made easy, in financial as well as human terms as we don't want negative energy kicking back at the community. The legal structure should accommodate this, from the start, so everybody knows the consequences, including in the cases of people that pass on and inheritance questions arise. Maybe a life insurance policy to cover such events is necessary.

A charter of purpose and direction, even of mission of the community is essential. Not just to have it on paper, but as a living document, so it has to be established, underwritten and honored, maybe at times recited in a formal way. The contents of such a charter may vary, but as it will act as a kind of Bill of Rights and Constitution and therefore it needs careful phrasing. There are examples to be found, many intentional communities have inspiring charters or constitutional agreements.

Reality grounding: last stop for heaven

Utopian communities can be very rational, intended to serve the interest of the inhabitants, but many so called intentional communities don't want to acknowledge this. They ignore the realities of income and capital diversity, ownership issues, entry and exit conditions, don't specify the level of financial or physical participation; kind of betting on love being the great miracle cure, the magical equalizer and snake-oil. And to a certain extent this is true, good vibes can overcome many problems and the process of dealing with inner or outer resistance unites. But then, over time, reality kicks in, money runs out, people get sick or turn nasty, government regulation becomes an issue and the aging of people and the group as a process is not always a positive experience. The lack of reality and grounding in a world still running on economic and rational grounds eventually causes problems and causes the community to disband or regroup. Setting up a community because of selfish or let's say self-serving motives is of course okay, as long as that is clear. Society is based on such grouping and there are associations and groups for everything. We need to work together as humans to allow specialization, sharing of resources, mutual assistance and security. Civilization after all is living together in cities. And it will work, rational arguments and wise deliberation can create units that do share their resources and offer security purely on rational grounds.

The problems arise when a group or community claims to go for higher principles, but the ulterior motives of individuals or the group are different. Over time I have met and addressed many individuals and groups with plans or actually working towards setting up a community. There is a kind of similarity in the profiles of the people joining such a Group, either they are young and want to change the world, or they are older and sick of the World. Usually their stated intentions and ideals are great, their energy and group cohesion building up, but very often there is some ambiguity about their deeper motives. They will talk about ecology, about offering all kind of community and health services, therapy models and how to integrate in the community, but rarely do they admit their deeper motives. You will not usually hear people admit that a major attraction

of the Osho communities was the free sex. They will emphasize the spiritual incentive and maybe the community feeling.

In groups of older people it is not so much the sex, as well as the security, the wish to have a nice last stage of life, surrounded by friends and in a safe, supportive and spiritual environment. This ulterior motive, however, is seldom explicitly mentioned. One hides behind the humanitarian, the service to the world, the spiritual, but in fact one wants a secure last stop on the trip to heaven we all make, called life. Mirroring this to such a group often releases a lot of antagonism, accusation of projecting personal problems and needs. Therefore, facing this reality check goes against the grain. Yet, ignoring the individual or even group motives, their need for safe cocooning, security in emotional and practical sense, will eventually lead to serious problems. The balance between individual and communal interest, which is a compromise in any case, can only be tipped a little to deal with the circumstances. In the long run it needs to be stable and this requires maybe more than some members are willing to give.

26 Amsterdam Ruigoord

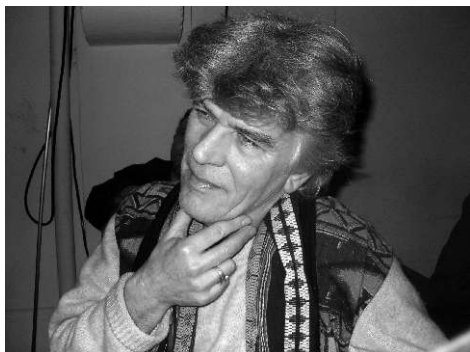
Community, urban tribe and feeling real

Another example of a cultural free space, but also a place where smaller and larger festivals happen is close to Amsterdam. Already for more than 40 years the alternative Amsterdam squatter-community and 'Vrijhaven' (Free Harbor) Ruigoord is a focal point for local and international alternative, artistic and creative freedom projects. It is clearly an autonomous zone, with a unique and somewhat 'smoky' atmosphere (marihuana is legal in Amsterdam). It is a friendly, colorful place, a green oasis now surrounded by port facilities, wind turbines and enormous storage tanks.

Ruigoord started out (1973) as a squatted place, but has evolved into a more or less stable and accepted artist community and venue for events and festivals. It is not formally a habitat or a place where people live, but it is actually a very much living community. Some 50 artist have their studios there, there is a church for meetings, some barns and houses, camping grounds, all amidst industrial complexes and harbor facilities. It's a paradoxical sight, large freighters look down upon this small alternative world. It is a hippie paradise where the ideas of the Amsterdam 'provos' from the sixties still live and a certain freedom of sex, drugs and rock&roll survived.



There are many smaller festivals and weekend parties, but there are two main events. One is always on December 28 in the famous pop-temple Paradiso in the city and the other is the Landjuweel festival around the August full moon, with some 3 to 4000 attendees.



Hans Plomp

Both events manifest what is clearly an urban tribe, The Amsterdam Balloon Company (Ballongezelschap), the fan community around the core artist and activist group.

Landjuweel festival

The atmosphere at the annual Landjuweel (the name refers to a literary and rhetorical competition festival tradition going back to the 16th century) can best be described as a sixties kind of scene, a hippie world where the time stood still at 1967, the summer of love. A similar crowd and scenery to what then happened in San Francisco, with kids and older people, dancing, playing, having fun, and what makes it special: very few phones around. Experience in the moment is what matters, not sharing that with Facebook friends elsewhere. Social networks play a role in the festivalization trend, but it's nice if smartphones are not constantly consulted during events or used to send pictures around. At tribal festivals like Landjuweel at Ruigoord there are hardly phones in sight, what a relief!

The place is still run by some old timers, notably Rudolph Stokvis, an octogenarian with lots of experience in staging events and tribal trips, who wields his power in an elastic and choreographic style. He used to be a dancer and this shows in his management style; the many volunteers, artist and small time sellers of the usual festivals foods and goods dance to his tune. It is trust based and fairly flat management, short lines to everybody and clusters of dedicated people taking charge of their sub-events. There is solid ground underneath, not in the least because artists, crew and participants all know

each other, the lead musicians like Fantuzzi, a Rainbow and Woodstock bard and MC, are like family.

The organizers and staff at all levels are very experienced. The dealing with some 30 to 40 stages, performance venues and tents and a very crowded lot is done by people often professionally involved in the worldwide festival boom, mostly volunteering. Ruigoord is a hotbed for festival and community evolution, has spawned other activities like the Boom festival and has good connections with other autonomous communities like Christiania. The cultural side of Ruigoord, with Hans Plomp as a key figure, has and had very global connections and is a main platform for poetry and alternative theater. The festival covers all kinds of music, poetry, performances, art exhibits, lots of poetry, a big nightly procession and much creative activities, from yoga to massage to mantra singing to rock and house. It is more cannabis than alcohol driven (both legal in Amsterdam) with quite some psychedelic tripping. The psychedelic flavor of the place is unmistakable, but there is so much experience and tolerance among the participants, that apart from a standard first aid post there is no specific support space, chilling out can happen everywhere, people know the routines, tripping is part of the culture. If there are any problems, this is usually because of alcohol and with outsiders isolated from the group mind. As Amsterdam is close by, late at night the influx of city party-ers who are drunk or high (stimulated but not empathic due to serotonin depletion) can cause problems. This is not the usual kind of now popular massive music-dance festivals with mostly 16-25 year olds, but offers a broad program of various activities, workshops and music, with a cross-generational mix of all walks of life as attendees and co-creators.



There is, quite common at alternative festivals, an overdose of half-professional stalls and concessions with food and drinks, cloths, crystals, herbs and paraphernalia. These vendors are a tribe by themselves, moving from festival to festival, half nomadic with their campers and

buses, often very specialized like with movable bread- and pizza-ovens, an interesting complex of competing and sharing.

The atmosphere at this mostly in-group event (even as some 50% are outsiders attracted by the reputation but adapting quickly) is much nicer, friendly and ‘gezellig’ (cozy) than at the mega-events with a limited age-group and less participation. A good age mix seems to help keep the peace, parents don’t want their children confronted with drunk or obnoxious people on to something. People are friendly and engaging, but there is not the hugging pressure of the more spiritual and transformational events.

Tribal but integrated

Ruigoord is a very tribal scene, the regulars that come there often. Landjuweel is, compared with the mega-event held in and around Amsterdam, a relatively small festival with maybe 3 to 4000 people in total and a core of regulars of maybe 500-1000 people, the tribe. Many are camping, tents all over the place and space maxed out, but all in a very friendly and permissive atmosphere, with a high tolerance level. Marihuana, legal in Amsterdam, is used widely and some use more psychedelic substances like mushroom tea, but this causes

very few problems, some people looking a bit hazy maybe, but here is, in general no aggression or violence as with alcohol and



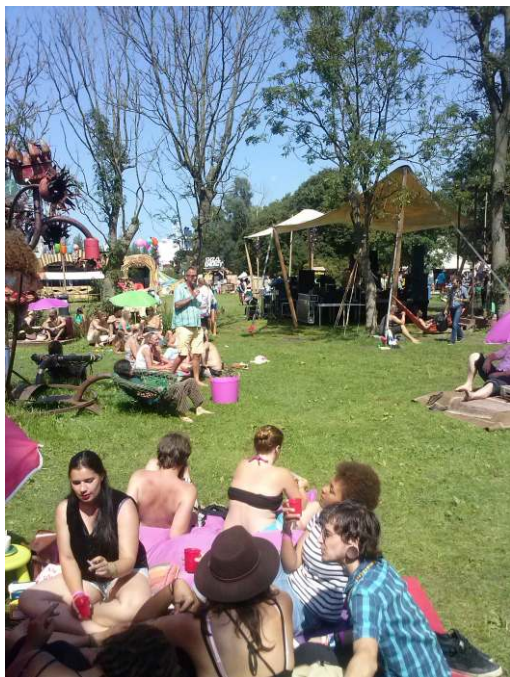
speedy drugs.

There is no denial as to the existence of a rather rich subculture using marihuana and psychedelic drugs at Ruigoord, and



Yggdrasil totem pole, crafted at the event in 2008

there have been clashes between the more artistic and the more 'high' crowds, but usually there is peaceful co-existence. The problem is that the reputation of Ruigoord does attract people who are exclusively interested in obtaining and using stuff, often also



cocaine and not really belonging or fitting in with the tribal atmosphere.

Tribal awareness is high, the visitors and regulars feels connected to a common culture, not so much to a common goal. The meaning one seeks is to be free, to be part of an autonomous tribe, but there are no overarching spiritual themes, apart from tolerance and letting it be. Being there is what matters, sharing, meeting, enjoying each other's company, but not necessarily having a common goal beyond that.

The tribal connections and exchange patterns makes

one remember the 'good old days' when social media like Facebook and Google were not there. You smile, nod, sit down at the tables and join in, there is little group-isolation In respecting the boundaries of others mutual respect builds, in contrast with the open communication on the net, where on instantaneous can have "friends" all over the world. In the Ruigoord community physical contact and 'feeling' each other is still important, the internet is used for some communication, but being there on a beautiful sunny day one realizes that feeling and touching is a very human need. Live music, being able not only to dance but to communicate with the musicians, exchange a joint or joining in the drumming makes for great fun and feeling good.

Tribal communities like this one have always existed, based on common goals, common enemies, common resources. The urban tribes of today of-



fer, and this is very clear in the case of Ruigoord, a way out from the rat-race, an alternative way of being and sharing. Society needs such places and communities, as a security valve for sentiments and drives that no longer fit the 'civil' models. Art, creativity, but also more negative impulses find expression and a safe haven. Hells Angels are as much an urban tribe as these flower-power post-hippies. The sentiments that bring these new tribes together are not the rational motives or ideals of the cyber-generation, even as they use internet to organize their meetings; all have mobile phones. There is a distinct difference with the tribes that emerge in cyberspace. It feels that the tolerance on many internet-forums is less, the communication is more edgy.

Sometimes, like in the case of the Burning Man tribe in the USA,

cyberspace and real events go hand in hand, and the physical and virtual communities overlap. The one spreads out to the other, the virtual becomes local and direct and vice versa. The main BM event in September, with some 70.000 people in a desert camp is accompanied by synergetic cyberspace activities and discussion and local activities among burners all through the year.



Landjuweel 2004

Feeling the connectedness

There develops a group mind at festivals, but this develops into a kind of 'Sunday afternoon at a wedding' atmosphere only in such a

tribal setting at places like Ruigoord. People let go of the ego and normal need to manifest, they become very social and communicative. I believe that the tribal awareness at such events is part of what I call our primal sensitivity.

The group mind unites the inner child qualities, we resonate at a deep level, where competition and fear are less prevalent. Togetherness, tolerance, and a shared vision are the building blocks of such a tribe.

In the past more or less religious rituals and festivals, in general the common platforms to meet, feel good and address the otherworld, were the cement of a tribal community. The purpose of a ritual isn't limited to one dimension. There is a psychological, a social and a magical dimension (and purpose) in a ritual. Growing and learning but also just having fun is important, as is making contact with the group, tribe or religion. It creates group mind but also establishes hierarchy and law (the rules) but it's important to acknowledge that the magical, the contact with the otherworld is often the true foundation of ritual.

Looking at how nice and nurturing such a physical festival like the Landjuweel at Ruigoord can be beyond the obvious availability of space, music, food etc. is what could help us understand the shortcomings of cyberspace and virtual community and their needs. The challenge is to nurture and develop the feeling of belonging that we are all longing for. Not by participating in stupid junk communication, but by energizing our contributions online (emails etc.). That brings maybe back the magic, the intangibles that we deny in science, but in fact rule our lives, as humans, as family, as a tribe and as part of the resonating consciousness we all call reality.

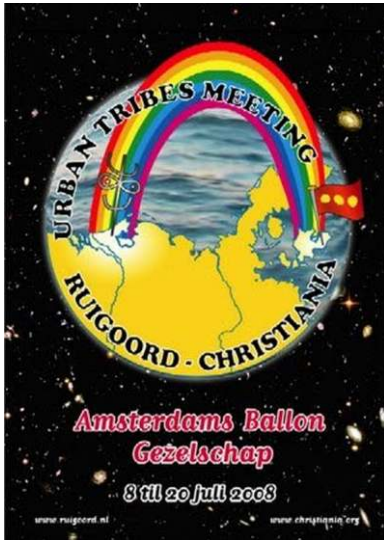
Tribal collaboration movements are in a sense both atavistic and prophetic. The past, sitting round a fire and drumming, and the future, a vision of peaceful togetherness, are present. It's an event out of time. We, together, feel a connection, maybe even an urge to manifest and express beyond the mediocre. Such a festive and uplifting mood isn't perceivable in cyberspace yet, but then maybe a new generation will be able to find ways to use the technology and resources there to make this happen.

The great Cyberspace Woodstock experience is maybe just around the corner?

2008 Two Urban Tribes Meeting, Christiania welcomes Ruigoord.

The discussion about how tribes can communicate internally and with other tribes, is not new. Take the 2008 meeting in Copenhagen, which led to::

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and space and yet very much connected to this place.



manifesto of celebration

njoying our union, our differences, our common ground, our haring. Ruigoord and Christiania, both urban tribes of people ho are different, slightly aberrant, conforming not to what the orld dictates, but to their inner oice, their spirit. We feel connected in many ways and would ke to express and explore that. onight we do this by shifting the xis of our world to this location, here the magical tree Yggdrasil ill be erected, emphasizing that e are here, now, beyond time

What and how

Urban tribes, as we are, share the following characteristics:

- We have our own style and way of living,
- We are organic, in the sense that problems are seen as opportunities, that we change as we go along.
- We are natural, in the sense of honoring the earth and what it has to give, of celebrating the seasons and making “natural” an inspiration rather than a label.
- We are a link in a chain passing on knowledge, wisdom and tolerance between generations, cultures and beliefs. That chain of hu-

man contact is basic and comes out in art, in festivals and in taking care of each other.

- Individualism and collectivism come together in the tribal spirit, which is beyond the political. It honors tradition and yet despises worn out ways, we are a bridge between the prehistoric and the future, between the shamanic vision and the age of Aquarius.
- We promote recycling of goods and materials, but also of ideas and ideals.
- We believe in a way of life that matters, that is worth fighting for, that fosters respect. A life where it doesn't matter what you are but what you do.
- We seek harmony, bringing out the best in people in their varying colors and tempos and yet making ourselves heard and seen in a peaceful way. Conflict can lead to harmony, new perspectives.
- Small is beautiful, so we aim at small scale initiatives, democratic circles, to enable the freeing of the inner child to play, to create, to share and to feel safe.
- We believe ideas come first, materialism, money and institutions are second.
- We honor the common ground, the physical as well as the virtual.

Why

Urban tribes have a much wider importance than just being a nice way of living, an escape for a happy few. As the world is in dire need of new directions, the tribal model that has survived many a crisis in the past, deserves attention.

- We show the world that there are alternative ways of living, working and being together.
- We have visions and dreams to share, that can be an inspiration to a much wider group.
- We can show the rational planners and politicians that there are people and groups that care, that still hoist the flag of love and raise the banner of the heart.
- The world needs experimental zones and laboratories, schools and places where the alternative models of interhuman relationship, government, decision making and social structure can be developed. They don't need to succeed but allow us learn about processes and possibilities.

- Now!
- We relate to change, by refinding ourselves, using what makes sense, taking the best and recombine or reshape it into a new form.

So this tree Yggdrasil we erect as much a symbol as an invitation to let others join our circle or to make their own, we wish to share our good intentions and our joy - let's celebrate life, let's make this planet sing!!

27 Christiania, the greatest victory of the squatting movement in the world

by Britta Lillesøe

of the Christiania Cultural Association, a speech to UZUPIS, May 2014

The fairy tale started in the early nineteen hundred and sixties, where many old houses in Copenhagen were ordered to be condemned by the municipality of Copenhagen.

The beginning

The very first big squat was in 1965 in the other side of Christianshavns Square. It was a whole block of 17'th century houses, which were condemned – unhealthy to live in, mostly because they were worn down by the proprietor. We called the place Sofiegården - means The Sofie Yard after the street, Sofiegade - the Sofie Street! We were around 100-150 people living there for 5 years. We made a lot of culture and got friends with the neighbors, mostly working class people.

The municipality of Copenhagen didn't like, that we lived there and the minister of buildings and the lord mayor of housing ordered 300 police men to get us out of the houses. First they took two of the houses in 1969 – then the rest in 1970.

The City Hall did offer us another house for a certain period in the neighborhood.



Britta

The Sofie Yard is thus the mother of the squatting movement in Denmark - and therefore also the mother of Christiania, and she got a very big daughter.

One day, in the autumn 1970, somebody knocked on our doors. It was some people from the early Christianshavns Citizen Council, who wanted us, from the Sofie Yard, to come and help the working class people in the other end of Christianshavn

to tear down the fence to The Boatsman Street Barracks, the later Christiania. The people wanted green areas and a playground for their children. They knew, that the barracks were condemned and soon had to be emptied by the military people.

These Christianshavner people had tried to write to the minister of defense about getting a playground for their children on the Barracks, so they could get some fresh air. They had made deputations to the minister and they had made colorful parades with their children and music on wagons driving to the minister of defense. On their banners was written something like:

RATHER CHILDREN WHO ARE SWINGING, THAN CANONS THAT ARE SINGING!

In Danish: HELLERE BØRN DER GYNGER, END KANONER DER SYNGER!

But nothing helped! Therefore they sat a whole night in their backyard making so called Molotov cocktails to break down the fence. When we, from The Sofie Yard, arrived to the Princess Street, we saw a lot of Christianshavner people trying to push their bodies against the fence surrounding The Boatsman Street Barracks...

We helped them and screamed and pushed and supported them the best, we could. They also threw the Molotov cocktails on the fence. And at last the fence broke down...

So that was the first time the fence was torn down. The fire fighters came and poured water on and the next day the authorities did put up a new fence...After that the fence was torn down two or three more times...

In the meantime some young Christianshavner boys and a few girls had made their own holes in the fence, where they could climb into the fairy tale land. They knew the area, because they went to school with some of the officers' children. So they had already partly settled down in some of the empty barracks. They caught fish there in the fortification canal and picked up apples and berries from the trees and the bushes.

People

One of those guys was Fisher Kim. In September 1971 Fisher Kim meet with his friend, Jacob Ludvigsen, a journalist, in Christians-

havn. He told Jacob, that there was laying "a whole country with a little village with a town hall and many houses - and everything - on the Boatsman Street Barracks in Princess Street. Victor says, that the name should be Christiania!" Victor was one of the young boys, who more or less already had settled down on the ground.

Jacob was the head of an alternative newspaper called The Main Paper – in Danish, Hovedbladet. The 26'th of September 1971, Jacob, his wife, two friends and a well-known photographer drove in his car – a Citroen 2 CV, the most used car in our hippie radical milieu in those days - to The Boatsman Streets Barracks. They were dressed in a kind of soldier clothes - what they could find - and brought with them a picnic basket, a peace flag and a bolt cutters. They took pictures of the apparently empty area and saw only the shadow of one watch man... They wrote the words, Free State, on the ground with chalk.

When they came home, Jacob wrote an article with the pictures of the area in the Main Paper, with the headline:"Emigrate with bus no. 8 to Christiania!". After that a lot of young people little by little came and settled down in the empty houses on the new land, Christiania!

The Christianshavn people got after a while their playground - and we got a much bigger playground.

The new minister of defense was much more smart than the former minister, so he made a small council, a troika, of the minister of culture, the minister of health and himself. And they got good advices from a social advisor - 'the good fairy' - connected to the Ministry of Health - and her advise was to call Christiania, 'A SOCIAL EXPERIMENT'! That came through and was realized early in 1972.

I am originally an actress, and on that time I was making theater in a little alternative theater in Jutland, but I was home in Christianshavn again in the summer of 1972, where I was living about a month with a friend here in Christiania. Early in 1973 I was moving out here for good.

So Christiania was only 'illegal' around half a year, because we have had agreements, so called 'treaties' with all the changing governments of Denmark since 1972.

Christiania - as a coherent ORGANIC neighborhood - has values that need to be further developed and expanded, but also ought to be implemented in many places around the world, in the intimate societies - as is right now happening in places as far away as China and Korea - this we have just learnt and read about...

Yes, Christiania once was called a social experiment, grown out of the reality of Danish democracy - and for that we are very grateful.

Experimental Zone

Now we are no longer just an experiment. We have been legalized! Therefore you now might call this big playground, a continually cultural site of exercise - an 'EXPERIMENTAL ZONE'.

We christianites have for a very long time been a threatened group of people - a kind of tribe. Therefore we feel a great cohesion with the indigenous peoples and their struggle to save their cultures.

You might call Christiania an urban tribe, part of a movement - together with for instance Uzupis in Lithuania, Ruigoord in Holland, Doel in Belgium, Boom Festival in Portugal, Umbrella House in New York, Huehucoyotl in Mexico - and a lot more free cultural places - besides all of you being present here - a circle consisting of both the world's indigenous peoples, eco villages, freetowns, squat-



ted areas - yes, of all free cultural spaces here on Mother Earth. Christiania is the ultimate victory of the squatting movement in Denmark, yeah, may be in the whole world?

“Live life artistically!” These are the words of one of Christiania’s many painters. And those words speak for the Freetown. Because Christiania is an artists’ town. Not only for ‘real artists’ - artists in the common understanding - but for people expressing themselves artistically in everyday life - in small and big things - and in ordinary things. If you see a hole in the asphalt on the road, maybe next day it will be filled with marble mosaic pieces or glazed tiles from another of our artists. And one of our scrap artists, makes the most



Entree (foto Bruno Jargot)

beautiful chairs, sofas and tables from recycled and scrap materials - iron and bicycle tires. Furnitures which is functional and at the same time artistic in shape. They are real sculptures, exposed for public use around in the Freetown, in many squares and places. Beauty is just as important as function!

Do you have to ask the municipality if you can exhibit your creative abilities? No, here it is the close environment that decides. Culture

binds us together. And with almost 800 grown-ups and 200 children we have a lot of different combinations. From here grow both artists and life-artists. In Christiania, if you have a good idea, then most of the time it is not the money which governs, but the strength of the idea and the spirit. It is a place where young people can make the-

ater, play music, paint, do work-shops - or maybe organize an event - and they only have to pay for the heating and electricity. They can do that in several of the beautiful common rooms and areas of the Freetown.

Christiania is almost the last bastion of culture. Here we always have - quite naturally - managed to blend so-called resource-weak and resource-strong

inhabitants. Something which rarely happens in other places. It is therefore a very contradictory place. But the positive meeting of contradictions creates flowering and growth. This positive meeting can support artistic everyday life, the basis for many different expressions. We have a natural environment with many spaces where people can meet and exchange ideas. And it is in this way that new projects are born. You can also describe Christiania as one big cul-



The Common Law of Christiania (foto LeuJeu)

tural workshop, which helps to fill the cultural void of contemporary Denmark.

Yes, the Freetown has a very rich cultural life with a lot of associations, clubs, music venues, theaters, galleries, meeting places, a cinema, several sound studios, a radio and a TV station, many different art workshops, blacksmiths, carpenters, music and dance groups, indoor and outdoor skater ramp, night church and much, much more. A lot of working artists live in Christiania, more than 50 painters, sculptors and similar, actors, singers, DJs, dancers, choreographers, theater and film directors, light and sound artists, installation artists, designers, scenographers, architects, photographers, poets, writers, playwrights, composers and a lot of active musicians and bands who contribute to an overwhelming and colorful music scene. We are at the same time artists and organizers!

The Freetown is becoming a mix of Paris' Montmartre in the last part of the 19th century and a village in Bali - with a little drop of the golden age - and the Skagen painters in Jutland from around year 1900.

Christiania is a living work of art and an artistic place to live in. A BIOTOPE in the middle of the big city. A unity between humans, animals, plants, houses - life being lived. This artwork can be worked further on. But from the artworks soul itself.



28 FireDance, a modern ritual festival format

Fire festivals are of all times, but in modern times it has become harder and harder to have public open fires, due to ecological and safety regulations. Yet fire is so fundamental, such a source of inspiration, such a deeply felt connection with the otherworld, that fire finds its way to festivals and events. Since the eighties interest in fire circles in the USA has been growing, originating in New England mostly with Pagan groups. One of the more modern forms of a fire ritual in the context of a festival is FireDance, conceived in the eighties and nineties and becoming a mature format in the early millennium years. This mostly through the efforts by Jeff McBride and Abigail Spinner, musicians and artists of Las Vegas and the creative group of people around them.

In essence, FireDance is a festival created around a ritual fire circle that transforms and uplifts the participants. It follows a liturgical model that was inspired by the alchemical process and sculpted as not to emulate or imitate existing traditions like those of the Hindu or American native traditions but in the end amalgamating and blending them in a new and very powerful form. The FireDance format has undergone changes and the original organization has split off in various directions, but definitely marks a revival of interest in what fire rituals could mean in this day and age.

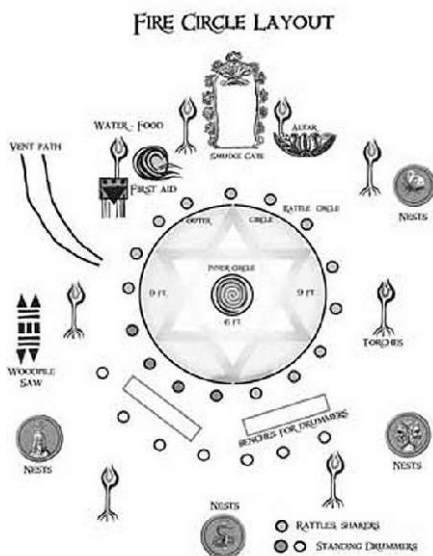
Among the many spiritual gatherings and festivals that are now part of the new age movement, FireDance (and its successors by different names, as it has become a root FireTribe tradition of its own) had a distinct flavor. It has been designed from the start as an experiential process, a way of creating that special energy, that extra that moves the heart and reaches the soul. It is something seemingly with a lot of outer-world pomp and ceremony, but in the end an inner world path and a way to get in touch with what is inside. One discovers the resonance between inner and outer worlds, in oneself, in others and

ultimately in everything. Participating in such an event can be, and for me was, a mystical experience.

The FireDance event for me personally was quite touching, even life-changing. This is the poem I wrote to describe what I experienced:

*Who got the fire in
who let the dance begin
a dance of transformation
a circle of inspiration
when I came they were
people
but as we danced
they became giants
giants of love
carrying me
living the inner truth
manifesting the grace
from above
I got the fire in
it made my dance begin
anew, anew, anew*

The FireDance mission was to be a non-denominational, multi-cultural spiritual gathering committed to personal development, global transformation and community creation through drumming, dancing, singing, theater and the arts.



Superficially, FireDance, is a gathering where people drum, dance, chant, sing and unite around a fire without sitting down. They are constantly moving or at least engaged, in rattling, drumming and singing. Moving round the fire, slow or fast, but not stopping, keeping the energy going, the dancing participants constantly circling around the central fire. FireDance is a night time practice, using sun-down, the darkness of the night, the sky above and the sunrise as el-

ements. The daytime is to sleep or engage in workshops or other activities. The dance starts as the sun goes down and everybody is supposed to keep going till morning light greets a new day. The kiss of sun at dawn is a great moment and the participants are reborn in that new light. The format uses music, voice, a fair degree of exhaustion, and a laid-out circular pattern within a sacred space to help the participant go through a cycle of transformation.

On a deeper level, FireDance is a full-fledged and intricate ritual, a mystery school in action. It is an opportunity for deep transformation, an experiential opportunity rare in our material and rational world.

Although there is a general outline, every dance is different and there is great freedom to change the pace of the dance, the music, the songs and individual initiatives. Special celebrations, like weddings are welcomed and integrated in the whole. Participants are invited to dress up, in sometimes outrageous costumes. One can engage in fire-spinning, perform ceremonies, healings or sacrifices, but there is no fire-walking, meaning walking over red hot embers and coals.





It's all about magic and ecstasy, about illusion and yet reality, inviting the miraculous to happen, in the now, in time and outside of time. The fire circle becomes a safe place, a sacred and holy container, a real sanctuary to explore

what is inside of us. It is creative expression, intensive meditation, focused awareness, spontaneous music or introspection, including and even inviting the emotions and drama that come with that. Participants usually undergo intense emotional cycles, and at times might need some support by assigned 'healers', but everybody can offer help. For many however, the process involves deep 'inner' work and all they need is some space.

A new blend

The FireDance format is, in many ways, modern and different and yet it draws on old traditions. Jeff McBride, who is also a world-renowned sleight of hand magician by profession, has been fascinated by "that other kind of magic" and has participated in many books and productions about both kinds of magic. In the FireDance format he has used the alchemical matrix known from mediaeval alchemists and magicians to stage an intriguing ritual. Combining the very personal, alchemical work with a community ritual is a brilliant move and it brought back the original energy of those long forgotten rituals and mysteries.

To that he added a cosmic dimension, bringing the notion of the central



sun and her planets to the game. In the physical layout circles are drawn permitting space and symbolizing the planets. The fast ones like Mercury and Venus close to the central fire of the sun, the slower ones more on the outside. The participant can choose what speed and thus what circle they like.

The basic idea of alchemy is to create a vessel, heat it with a bonfire, and turn base “metal” into Gold, but has a deeper meaning as it also represents the inner process of spiritual development. FireDance takes elements from both. It talks about transformation, facing the dark sides, the shadow in oneself, the fire as the spiritual sun and throws in a great deal of social interaction, of fun, expressions, creativity, feeling like part of a community, coming home, all into the melting pot of the fire circle. Re-enacting the Great Work of Alchemy, stimulating personal growth by accelerating the fire of nature, which transforms the lead of our lives into the gold of Spirit in a number of stages. One of the basic ideas behind many alchemical traditions is that of transmuting or purifying one thing from a “lower” form into a “higher” form.

The effects of a dance or similar rituals can be life-changing, therapeutically and create greater consciousness. These rituals sometimes bring more social awareness and a deeper connection with the forces of nature and our fellow humans.

Quoting Abigail Spinner:

“For me, a huge part of the magic is about becoming fully present in the Here and Now moment. When you’ve drummed and danced for many hours, and your body is tired - I’ve learned not to turn to the clock and check to see “how much longer till we get there?” I breathe deeply, find a way to engage and surrender to the Now. I advise leaving the watch in the tent .

FireDance empowers us to become our highest visions. We polish the mirrors of our hearts, listen to our inner wisdom, and become one cell in a body of a unified group of musicians and dancers. We share the beauty of an ever-evolving circle of friends, who come together to find their way to Spirit. FireDance helps us learn deep lessons about patien-

ce and balance; we are witnessed, and move through our ego needs to ecstasy, and Light. “

The FireDance alchemical fire circle format is powerful, has led many to a new level of consciousness, to which I can personally attest. For me it was an ecstatic way to connect deeply, to myself and others. A miracle of togetherness, a feeling of tribal belonging, being with friends you might never have met before, but with whom you connect, dancing next to them or seeing them across the circle. One talks about people who participate for the first time as home comers, and that is a very appropriate word. One feels welcome, the fire melts away our differences, the gold in us emerges as the night goes on and then, when the sun rises, everybody bathes in that golden light and feels he or she is no longer alone. That a doorway, a portal to a new connectedness has opened.

A number of seminal FireDance events were held in California in a beautiful location, among the redwood trees, in the mountains, just outside of Santa Cruz, CA. Later the format spread over the world, in many countries and with different names, like the MayFire or SpringFire events in the Netherlands. There are so-called fire tribes all over the globe such as the Fire Circle Tribe and Family of Fire, which include clans in Boston, Santa Cruz, Las Vegas, Washington DC, Vermont, Boulder and Hawaii. Jeff McBride has developed the FireDance format into what is now called Fires Rising, based on similar principles but with a bit more of a personal seven stage development model.

My personal contribution to FireDance - I attended twice - was a poem and later, inspired by Fantuzzi, the Rainbow bard, this song:

My FireDance song

I wrote this song in 2003:

*Who got the fire in
Who made the dance begin
Who was that liar
Who stole the fire*

*It was Prometheus
And he's in all of us*

*Who dared the mighty Zeus
And gave us fire to use
Who was that Titan
Who betrayed Gods for Man
It was Prometheus
And he's in all of us*

Fire circle architecture

The layout of the place where the fire was and the dancing and drumming took place had an astronomical resonance. The Planetary Rings and tracks used as a blueprint were according to what Jeff McBride recognized as a natural pattern in fire-events. He realized that how people move is a mirror of our solar system, and that in that way the dance is a recreation of the great cosmic dance of life. The fire is a symbol for the Sun at the center and the planets dance in elliptical orbits around it. Mercury is the planet closest to the Sun and at our fire circle, the mercurial energy is noticeable in the dancers closest to the fire, or those tending the fire. Venus as the second orbit of the fire circle is often where the sensuous and ecstatic dance takes place. Beyond Venus is Earth. At fire circles this represents the rattle track, where the Earth dancers move in a slower orbit. Mars at the fire circle is symbolized by the ring of standing people, who, like Mars, protect and fortify, and add their energy to those within the circle. Beyond Mars is Jupiter. At the fire circle this is a free movement zone, where people blend and move together in freestyle dance. Beyond Jupiter is Saturn. At the fire circle this planet is represented by the people sitting and resting. Beyond the orbit of Saturn are the planets Neptune and Pluto. At the fire circle these are the outlying areas where food and drink can be taken. On the outside of the fire circle perimeter is the "comet's trail," a path for walking meditation for those who wish to stay engaged and involved in the fire circle, yet seek some solitude or time for meditation.

The physical width of the orbits or tracks are different, but resonating with natural dimensions. The Mercury track would allow a single line of fast dancers, while Venus was three persons wide to allow for different movement speeds, passing and interaction between dancers. Meanwhile Jupiter was four persons wide to accommodate a variety of human traffic, drummers, the well and other large fixed installations

As the human body is comfortable walking within a three-foot girth this has been taken into consideration in the creation of the size of the overall circle and each individual planets orbit. Flour would mark the ground as to the edge of the tracks.

Installations and locations

There are a number of places and locations that have special meaning and illustrate how details are important for a good ritual setup. At one tip of the triangle is the Gate - the entrance into the container. The Gate will be wide enough for a dump truck to pass through. In front, outside the Comet Track will rest the Portal, moveable so as to allow for trucks to enter when delivering.

Located just East of the North altar is the Well. Here is an installation for healing to take place, comfort to be given and a safe space for trance. There would also be a supply of water bottles located in this area to be shared at the circle.

The drummer section would center around a torch that has been moved back out of the Mars track. This torch forms the tip of the Heart where dancers and others may move out of the orbits and communicate directly with the drummers. The front of the drum section would begin just out of the orbit of Earth but within the Mars track and extend back into Jupiter as necessary.

Altars should be set up at the four quarters and rest on the edge of the container within Saturn, forming The Grand Cross. The altar at the gate would be set about midway on the Jupiter track to give participants the ability to enter the gate and also to run the Jupiter track without bumping into the altar.

FireDance considers the ground in which the fire is to be placed a hearth. If a fire ring is currently in place then that would be used.

However, if one is not available the use of an above ground fire crucible is encouraged in honor of the Earth so we do not leave scars. There are a great number of FireDancers who prefer to go barefooted around the fire. Also, most areas are on uneven, rough ground or too dusty. In these cases where the ground is determined to be unsuitable for bare feet, FireDance would provide a pad of mulch or saw dust, at least one inch thick from the edge of the stone circle around the fire up to and including the Earth Track.

When Participants “pop” (go into a unusual or altered state like a trance or regression) and healers gather, a clog occurs in the movement and energy of the dance wheel. FireDance encourages the “healers” to scoop these “poppers” up and guide them out of the spinning orbits past the circle of standing stones (Mars track) to a safe zone - the Well. Here in comfort and safety they may continue their process.

Healers are encouraged to gently and appropriately re-introduce the newly “popped” individual back to the spinning orbits. They aid them in finding their place so that they are not lost and confused.

The drummers are together, preferable to the north of the fire, but close to the circle. The physical set-up emphasizes the relationship between drummers and dancers and the relationship of both to the fire. The music comes from many traditions, and within the polyrhythmic constraints of group drumming new songs are created and there is a body of special fire-songs.



Jeff McBride

The ritual elements of FireDance

A circle is round and thus the layout of the fire circle place is round, but has an orientation respecting the four quarters. The general outline is a sacred space around the fire, designated by some physical

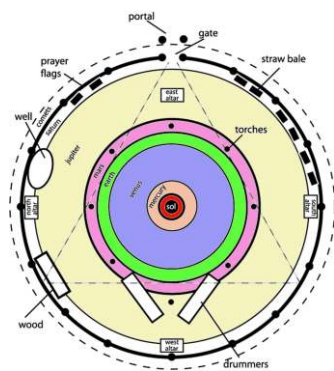
barrier, which needs to be honored. Entering or leaving that sacred space is only through the portal, a gate usually to the East, where one consciously steps into the magical realm. At the portal smudging takes place, cleansing of energy and there is also a moment of concentration when entering and becoming part of the community of the circle and a co-creator of what happens there.

There is a kind of etiquette concerning how to engage. People entering the dance circles are supposed to do so at the pace of those already dancing. The dance track closest to the fire moves the fastest. The next ring of dancers moves a little slower. The third ring is for rattles and trance dancing and moves even slower. If space and attendance permit, a larger number of circles is laid out, representing the solar system and the planets.

As the format has evolved, some elements borrowed from other traditions had to be taken out, as for instance native Americans objected to the use of certain elements or utensils of their heritage. Also new elements were tried and sometimes added to the liturgy, as is fitting for a living tradition.

Alchemical phases

As the event not only covers one night, but a number of nights, the different stages (of experience and tempo) had to be linked. The model here was the alchemical ‘Great Work’, in line with the idea that participants would go through different stages towards a ‘golden’ result. The alchemical setup is emphasized by a couple of distinct phases, and they can be compared but are not totally similar to the cleansing, sacrificing, uniting and communion phases in other rituals.



Ritual elements	Candle	Olympic flame	Vedic Hotra	Fire Dance	Burning Man
Intention attendants		12	22	88	67
Intention officiators	55	96	18	96	92
Spiritual Frequency attendants		80	105	110	46
Spiritual Frequency officiators	75	100	145	150	67
Bonding-social cohaesion		16	17	82	86
Intensity for attendants		70	19	80	68
intensity for officiator	55	40	60	94	91
inner child-mask balance	10	98	25	13	55
clock time - inner time balance	80	3	25	70	80
liminality (Turner)	40	2	31	55	40
set (psychological)	95	20	10	95	60
setting (environment)	5	80	90	94	96
form-content balance	25	92	60	25	90
Effect Psychological	40	2	45	90	70
Effect Social		4	26	99	98
Effect Magical	35	0	45	44	2
FSE (Fire subtle energy)	50	600	1600	35000	7400

The energy and role of fire and fire rituals at different events

- Nigredo - Burning away impurities, releasing ego and agendas.
- Peacock’s tail - Colours, stories, songs, offerings
- Albedo - Inner work, trance, ecstasy
- Rubedo - Dawn, Sunrise and beyond.

The first phase is called the Nigredo, or the blackening. It is the part where the “prima materia,” or first matter, is placed into a container and heated until there are only ashes left and then dissolved with liquid until there is a suspension. These first steps are called Calcination and Dissolution.

At the fire circle, this is the time when people arrive and settle in as the fire is lit and highly energized dancing starts. On a personal or transformational level, this is time to “burn away and dissolve” whatever stands between us and the Divine.

The final stage of the nigredo corresponds with the alchemical stage called separation. In the lab, the solution is broken up into its separate components. At the fire circle, people begin to let go of whatever lead they’ve been carrying into the fire to be transformed.

There is a stage in the alchemical process called the Peacock's tail, seen as rainbow colored streaks that appear on the inside of the vessel. At the fire circle, this is when people "show their colors," or step out and share a spontaneous moment of creative inspiration with the group. This stage can go on for hours.

The next part is the Albedo. This corresponds with the alchemist's whitening process, where the matter in the flask is softening and beginning to purify. At the fire circle, this is the time when there is a palpable shift in the energy. The drumming may grow quieter and there may be more quiet songs or chants. Somehow, there is a shift, and the atmosphere begins to feel lighter. Coincidentally, this is often the time when the sky begins to grow light. The stages of alchemy that correspond with this period are Conjunction, Fermentation, and Distillation. Purification is achieved.

The final stage of the fire circle alchemy is called the Rubedo, the reddening, the sunrise itself. The sunrise can be interpreted on many different individual levels. We imagine the sun's rays entering our bodies, and filling each cell with pure gold. Often at sunrise, a long sustained period of silence is encouraged.

Firetenders

The role of the fire-tenders is essential. They tend to the fire and in this way they control the energy of the whole ritual. By letting the fire go down or feeding it to make it higher, in a way they steer the mood of the whole scene. As the fire is driving the energy, it requires skill and consideration to tend to it and balance the energy of the fire and the crowd.





Water also plays a special role. Because of the intense physical exercise and the risk of dehydration the participants need a lot of water and dispensing water is one of the sacred services one can assume.

FireDance does not use electricity, it relies of the power of the fire, on the earth (Gaia) as the altar, on the air of the wind, the incense and the music, and on clean water and good food to help endure the strenuous dancing routine. There is no smoking of any substance or drinking alcohol in the circle.

Closing the FireDance

To illustrate the mindset, here the very touching closing FireDance prayer in the morning, written by Katlyn Breene, who creates sacred art, communities and rituals:

*the sun rises
we lift our hands unto it
to be re-born
like the day
golden rays pierce our hearts
like arrows of light
dispelling illusion
releasing night*

*solar alchemy
filling each cell of our body
transforming, transmuting
lead into purest gold*

*as above, so below
the sun sees itself in the fire*

*in each other
we see god*

Set, setting and magical

The whole FireDance project was (and is in later incarnations) a well thought out ritual festival, where the psychological, the social and the spiritual were given adequate space and attention.

In the set-up, one has tried not to infringe on what some might consider their intellectual property rights or cultural heritage. This has forced the use of more public domain formats like alchemical processes and astronomical trajectories in a new and innovative way.

The limitations were overcome by new visions and liturgy that still honored the effective forms from the past.

The whole setup allowed for both individual and group processes. Great care was given to make sure everybody was part of the process, not only participating in the dancing, drumming and singing throughout the night, but also in the preparation, the procession and the sharing.

Set individual processes, even if they were deep and unusual like what they called popping, were not only accepted but encouraged. The psychological buildup was very clever: the ups and downs to be expected and in fact intended, as dancing the whole night brings exhaustion and trance-like states. They were handled in a nice and empathic way. This had to do with the mindset of the participants and experienced Firedancers who took care of the newcomers, but also with the well thought out format, the physical layout and the preparation and teachings given before the event really started. Learning songs by hearth, being aware of the effect of musical instruments, the whole philosophy was shared in a nice way, involving everybody and making sure nobody fell out of the boat.

The magical purpose, creating a TAZ (temporary autonomous zone, Hakim Bey - Peter L. Wilson) and tribal awareness, did allow many people to let go of their 'normal' masks and be open to new contact, new experiences and a depth of feeling that was very special. This in turn allowed psychological breakthrough, but also inner healing. For



many, feeling welcome, at home and accepted opened inner doors never imagined. The set, setting and magical were not really separate, they were integrated. The physical layout and the physical acts, all with deep corresponding meaning, were so symbolic and yet real, that the resonance among the participants became a resonance with the place, with nature, with spirit on the inside and outside.

The fact that the people involved were quite familiar with theater, stage magic and working with emotion lines and psychological processes undoubtedly helped a lot. Using special effects, coyote type changes, synchronizing the music, the fire and the actions made it very special and effective. The leaders of FireDance, a close knit group of people who knew each other well, had worked together before in often professional situations. They operated as a team and yet allowed individual expression. There was an amazing softness in the way things were executed and even though there were certain in-group issues present, these were kept outside the circle. The care and love given to each individual participant was amazing, many participants spoke of these rituals as life-changing events. If we could value the therapeutic results of such events in monetary terms, I truly believe they are a better deal and more effective than what the medical system has to offer!

I personally felt the whole event as coming home to a tribe I never knew could exist, the atmosphere was so special, that it inspired me to organize a number of similar fire events in the Netherlands, called SpringFire. Jeff and some of his team came out to help us keep the original spirit. These events remain vividly burned in my memory as very special rituals, TAZ experiences that helped me and others on our path.

pictures in this chapter Kyer Wiltshire

29 Burning Man: ego-manifestation, communitas and transformational fun

Among modern festivals with a ritual character (perhaps better labeled as experiential transformation festivals) and a psy-trance accent, Burning Man is one of the best known. It is not even the largest festival in the US, the large Music events like Coachella are much larger, but it has made headlines as alternative, not commercial event. Even president Obama has admitted 'it sounds like a lot of fun'. It has received so much media attention and even scholarly interest so that it cannot be ignored in the context of this book. It is a temporary autonomous zone of

rights, but slowly the virtual (internet and local contacts) Burning Man has become more or less permanent and has spread all over the world, with local burns and a web-community.

There are many festivals of a similar kind. Boom in Portugal is a big one, Glastonbury, the Fusion Festival and the Rainbow festivals are also worth noting. However, Burning Man has this direct relationship with fire, at the center of both ritual and community focus. Burning Man in the Black Rock Desert of Nevada, held every year around Labor Day, is called a festival, but is also a ritual and a 'cirque d'exhibition'.

By any name, it is a world class event with some 70,000 participants, most of them regarding themselves as co-creators actively involved in building, sharing, facilitating, and exhibiting their dreams, masks, and grand ideas. The name comes from the ritual burning of a large wooden effigy, "the Man" on Saturday evening.



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The cybercongregation that has formed over the years, plays a big role in how the burners communicate.

The participants are usually very positive about their experience, calling it a life-changing experiment in community, art, radical self-expression, and self-reliance.

“I had the privilege of going to the playa in 2009. For me, at its core Burning Man is an atmosphere of positive energy which is so well cultivated that everybody falls in love with the community spirit. In our individual ego driven world, it’s an amazing escape from that.” (M. Sala)

It seems clear that Burning Man is an effective event for both individual personal transformation, and for social bonding - two of the three points in the three worlds triangle (set, setting, magic). The question of how far the third plane, the truly ritual and magical component (the sacrality as in contact with the spiritual and otherworld) is at play is harder to answer, but is important in the context of this book.

There are no doubt attendees who go there with a spiritual and magical attention, experience a psychological transformation and catharsis, and go home a changed person. Burning Man certainly is a paradox! One person can experience it as outrageous consumerism, see it as an event for drug use and overt sexuality, yet another can get engaged in more authentically magical or spiritual ways.

There are locations and events that are very spiritual, like the Temple, but there is also much would-be spiritualism, the New Age and New Edge embracing of whatever is different, exotic, new, or offers an opportunity to stand out in the abundance of forms and expressions one encounters on the “playa” (as the desert is called). Massage, tantra, meditation, Tai-Chi, nakedness, costumes, and unusual postures seem to indicate total detachment, but are actually often clever ways to get noticed and be a part of the subcul-



ture one wants to identify with. There are many and very different subcultures at the playa, each with their own sectors and camps. If one doesn't want to be confronted with a specific subculture, one doesn't have to go there.

So, describing Burning Man as a single ritual is nearly impossible; at best one can isolate specific moments or projects. There is definitely ritual celebration, ritual catharsis, ritual expression, but how much of it is truly magical? In the context of this book it is important to look at how one can let go of the ego and mask to attain the deeper state of consciousness that I call the "ritual" or "inner child" state. Most attendees will claim that this is the essence of Burning Man: You can be yourself, or anybody you like to impersonate!

But is dressing up and assuming a personality as weird and striking as possible in order to be noticed really letting go? It feels as if the majority of burners are just there to play with masks, subpersonalities, avatars, hidden desires, social strata- courting mysticism with the help of some pills and exotic music. Maybe as a prerequisite to enter the ritual state at some moment, and certainly by displaying strange or suppressed traits, one becomes a mirror for others and as such part of the psychological process.

Looking at the pictures and videos for me is a kind of re-enactment of the strange paintings of the fantastic underworld of Hieronymus Bosch. I would like to know what sounds Hieronymus imagined. Would they bear any resemblance to what 'burners' get served musically and unmusically?

Burning Man and cyberspace



In January 1997, Larry Harvey spoke about cyberspace at the 9th Annual Be-In, events organized by Mike Gosney and coinciding with the MacWorld shows. He was critical about the liberation cyberspace offers from the constraints of time and space. He believed many

of the problems which beset our modern convenience culture result from having been “liberated” all too well—displaced from the necessary axis that we as human beings require in time and space. He spoke about Burning Man as:

“a project dedicated to discovering those optimal forms of community which will produce human culture in the conditions of our post-modern mass society. It is formed in the image of the great ecumenical world that surrounds us; a teeming population of uprooted individuals. In other words, this intentional community that we create from nothing, and that returns to nothing when we leave, has been “liberated” from nearly every context of ordinary life. It is, like cyberspace, a frontier in which individuals can exercise remarkable freedoms. Our desert world and the blank expanse of its playa form a decontextualized arena of action. Here it is possible to reinvent oneself and one’s world aided only by a few modest props and an active imagination. Burning Man, then, is a compelling physical analog for cyberspace, and, unsurprisingly, we have attracted many people who regard the experience as the equivalent of cyber-based reality.”

He also noted that

“Burning Man is very different from the world of the Web and the Internet in certain crucial ways. It is neither vicarious nor anonymous. Cyberspace is a mediate realm, a disembodied sphere of information, whereas experience at Burning Man is relentlessly immediate in its demands.

Participants in our experiment must confront the pressing task of survival within a natural world that is subject to volatile and life-challenging change. Liberty, at Burning Man, is tempered by our primal needs as human beings, and this shared experience, symbolized by our species’ attraction to fire, forms a central and necessary basis for our community.”

He also spoke of the need to have a center of gravity, a powerful axis in time and space in order to found a cultural sphere. Of



how much such a transcendent center is most conspicuously supplied every year (a ritual repetition in time) by the Burning Man himself, as an ultimate landmark and navigation point upon the face of the featureless playa, offering a cosmic axis.

He also mentions the ritual aspect: "We have relied on these ceremonial elements, so reminiscent of the ritual religious practices that have shaped civilization since the inception of human culture, as a means of creating community in an anarchical liberated environment. With little but our shared humanity to guide us, we've sought to generate a primal context; an experience defined by the most basic and irreducible elements that are needed for the generation of culture. I believe that an immediately shared struggle for survival, combined with the perception of powerful unities in time and space, are chief among these necessary conditions."

Larry points out the need for models that reverse disintegration:

"As the world of cyberspace centrifugally expands, and as the greater realm of society continues to atomize into smaller, independent, and potentially unrelated units, we must begin to consciously craft such models. "

His understanding of meaning is noteworthy:

"The world of cyber technology and communication represents a wonderful tool, yet it comes value free. The exchange of information by itself cannot produce meaning, for meaning is a highly complex and organic product that is only propagated within the context of culture. Our mistake, as Americans, however, is to consistently mistake the tool for the task. If technology itself is left to dictate our ends, then I think we can look forward to an increasingly disassociated way of living. Real community can only be attained through the experience of certain primal unities in the physical world." and also "Both Burning Man and the Internet make it possible to re-gather the tribe of mankind, to talk to millions of dispersed individuals in the great diaspora of our mass society. Living as we do, without sustaining traditions in time and ungrounded in a shared experience of place, it is yet possible to transcend these deficiencies. We must use technology to create space stations here on planet Earth, islands of intense and living contact. It is time to come home. "

Interesting words, and I remember those Digital Be-Ins, where the worlds of computers, internet, psychedelics and spirituality came together. At that time, John Perry Barlow (EFF founder with Mitch Kapor) published his Cyberspace Declaration of Independence. I met and discussed the then emerging internet with people like R.U. Sirius, Matthew Fox, and Mark Pesce. Many, I would say most of the people at those events are burners, and the tribal atmosphere at these San Francisco parties and events feels similar to what is ascribed to Burning Man.

Burning Man as a pagan or cybergnostic event

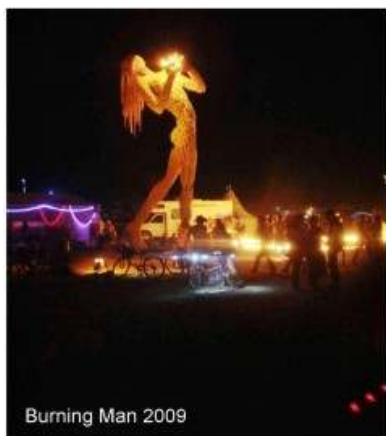
As its popularity grew and word got out that there is this desert thing where people were running around sky-clad, stoned and publicly involved in all kinds of weird activities including some kind of fire-worship, Burning Man became the target of criticism from the established right, notably the Christian community.

The stamp of paganism was easily applied, associated with forbidden forms of pre- or anti-Christian worship, including witchcraft, Satanism, animistic beliefs, magical acts, ritual orgies and secret gatherings. Articles appeared and the media picked up on this notion. Burning Man was depicted as a hellish event where the devil ruled.

At the same time another stamp was put on the event; it was supposed to be even beyond New Age, a psychedelic and tribal ritual of the techno-gnostic weirdos attracting anthropologists to study this outburst of tribalism so nicely limited in time and place: a laboratory of social psychology.

Now, there is a lot of pagan influence in the Burning Man format and there are many burners subscribing or affiliated to what loosely could be described as a modern pagan lifestyle: an inheritance of the counter-cultural movements of the 1960s but influenced by the New Edge mix of spirituality, psychedelics, and consumerism technogadgetry. Spirituality, in many forms, not conforming to traditional Christian ways, is part of the eclectic atmosphere and is mixed with a cyberspace and techno scientific orientation, but doesn't appeal to me as a Gnostic revival as Erik Davis (TechGnosis 1998) or Dorian Zandbergen (NewEdge CyberGnosis 2012) see it.

Modern Gnosticism, as seeking union of the self with the divine realm of information, spiced with bit of apocalyptic Maya 2012 lore, is more New Age than New Edge. Although on the surface Burning Man is about seeking natural authenticity and communal spirituality, the whole event looks more like a kindergarten space age attempt to be different and noticed whereby to see and be seen is what motivates many



burners. Undoubtedly the whole setup is a visual feast, an artistically crafted miraculous and epi-realistic Garden of Eden, where the fruits of the Tree of Knowledge are for free and the Tree of Good and Evil is turned upside down. The spiritual is there and for some real and moving, but it's far from the main focus.

A very general description of the attendees is that they moved, progressed maybe, from countercultural alternatives to cyberspace attuned "cultural creatives," meaning hedonistic middle class folks with an alternative and independent lifestyle looking for fun and games at the borderline of decency with a spiritual touch, the catch-up hippies. Many of them are white educated urbanites. The old gang looks at this development with some disgust; they don't want tourists (MacBurners) or dilution of the original spirit. Larry Harvey himself asserted that Burning Man was not a hippie festival, a subculture, or founded by pagans, and was never attached to any kind of supernatural dogma. He admits in the media myth section of the website that "the act of pilgrimage to a remote location and the ritual sacrifice of a ceremonial figure has real religious resonance for many people, and any spiritual faith, however arrived at, is certainly worthy of respect." He sees

"The ritual aspects of Burning Man have wholly evolved in the context of artistic endeavor, and their significance, as with any work of art, is explicitly left open to interpretation. It is undoubtedly true that modern pagans, along with fans of UFOs, yetis, and many other creeds or belief

constructs prevalent in popular culture have been attracted to Burning Man. It is also probable that an equal number have been repelled by our refusal to endorse esoteric notions.“

Between the lines one can sense here the internal antagonisms and paradoxes surrounding Burning Man.

The quintessential Temporary Autonomous Zone

At Burning Man time, the desert is completely transformed into an off-the-grid city-like and somewhat anarchistic place, in a way Hakim Bey (Peter Lamborn Wilson) called Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ) in his 1991 book, with its own laws, values, organization and culture (see chapter on TAZ). The dry and flat landscape



(a lakebed) is temporary transformed into Black Rock City, hosting 50,000 inhabitants for a week, but then this disappears again, leaving no trace whatsoever. It's organized following a fairly rigid central plan, with a semicircle layout, but with a spatial, vector-like sequence that allows a kind of travel along the hours of the day. It is open at one side, and as Larry Harvey has noted, is "open in the front, open to infinity".

Within the assigned segments, and with art in a prominent central place and the Man as the axis-mundi, there is an enormous variation in theme camps, ashrams, activities, art installations, multimedia extravaganzas, costumes, body ornamentation or lack thereof, sturdy shade structures, modified vehicles, sounds, foods and substances.

"Burning Man is not for the faint of heart"

Participating requires preparation, planning, and considerable cash, even as it is (on-site) a cash-free and gift/exchange based setup (the only goods sold are coffee and ice).

Most burners spend a lot of time, creativity, and money on this once-a-year gathering. For them it is a year-round focus, with internet and local gatherings as communication tools.

It's a gift community with a ban on commercial activity and thus lacks the vendors, concessions, and money issues of other festivals. Gifting and sharing, not trading or exchanging, a one-sided act of generosity is the core message. Everybody contributes, this is called radical inclusion, and the whole thing is a massive protest against the commodification of our lives.

The art works, theme camps, performances, and participatory events are contributed by the Black Rock City citizens. One even tries to hide the labels and brand names of clothes and cars (no-logo). Food and services are exchanged or free. The idea is to promote "non-consumerism", a step away from the money economy. Yet an event where between 50 and 100 million dollars is spent in fees, preparation, supplies, clothes, transport, rent of RV's and camping tools is more or less limited to the wealthy. It can hardly be called non-commercial, frugal or back to the primitive. The rich bring their support systems and servants (posing as just burners, but paid to work). There are complaints that the event is become a tourist attraction and play garden for the rich only, with their staff, drugs and other amenities. It is a festival of paradoxes, where reality is transformed, hacked, made into a spectacle.

A highly appropriate term to describe the attendees is Reality Hackers. It was coined, not in relation to Burning Man, by R.U. Sirius (Ken Goffman) with his magazine Reality Hackers, the predecessor to the Mondo 2000 publication where the New edge movement manifested in the early nineties. The burners are in fact reality hackers, combining technology, transformative spirituality and art to create a desert community that like a spider reaches into the daily life of many. The more recent idea of 'maker' culture resonates here. The relational networks emerging from and because of Burning Man are not limited to the event. They connect people in many ways, including economical, like in helping another burner with work, jobs, contacts, all part of the tribal deal.

Fire central

Burning Man is definitely a fire-event. It started as a bonfire ritual on the summer solstice of 1986 when Larry Harvey, Jerry James, and a few friends met on Baker Beach in San Francisco and burned a wooden man as well as a smaller wooden dog. They were not the real originators of the idea, but did took it to the desert after a similar event was organized there in 1990 by Kevin Evans and John Law of the Cacophony Society. They were using the notion of a TAZ, their events were called Trips to the Zone, or Zone Trips and they named the location Black Rock City. Larry and his friends decided to join

hem because the burn on he beach was forbidden. The idea of a burned effigy also was inspired by Cacophonist Gary Warne and the SF Suicide Club, and his Carnival Cosmology essay (1977). The burning of the effigy wicker man) or 'the Man' is still the high



point of the event. All the participants witness and celebrate the fire that consumes The Man, now a statue 12 meters high or more, placed at the center of the temporary autonomous zone (TAZ) that arises every year on the desert playa.

The burning is a spectacular mass event, with all kinds of theatrical performances, fire-jugglers, and pyrotechnic effects, as well as the interactive performances and participation of the attending crowd. They are dressed up and make or are their own side shows, turning this into a touching, even dramatic, experience. The mood of the crowd is very special; as many have taken some kind of substance there is a piggyback effect - everybody cheers and feels good. The burn is a mass event and very impressive, but less “holy” than some other projects, like the creation, adorning, and burning of the Temple.

The Temple, grown to impressive size over the years and usually of spectacular design, is a somewhat newer addition (since 2000) to the festival. It's a large construction used for more solemn, more subdued and demure performances, as well as a chill-out place for the burners. But at the end it is also ritually set on fire.



The Temple developed into a temporary place of worship and commemoration, where those that passed away over the previous year are honored and mourned. The atmosphere is mystical and emotional. Participants inscribe personal messages on the surface of the temple, recollections of the ones lost, expressions of grief about friends and family no longer there. There are altars and shrines and artistic expressions of all kinds. The messages left here are intended as a farewell, a way to separate from the deceased, and a communal funeral rite. As the Temple goes up in flames, these are seen as messages to the otherworld. Many visitors see this Temple as the main ritual place, as the center of worship of the festival, and having more ritual content than the burning of The Man.

In the vocabulary of this book, the otherworldly energy and focus of the Temple makes it more of a ritual place. The effigy burning is more of a ceremony, with obvious very strong personal and communal energy, but less magical. The burning of personal messages, souvenirs of people that passed away, is of course a common trait in many fire rituals.

The Burning Man temples, lately more community projects than individual or small group projects, have names like The Temple of the Mind (2000), The Temple of Dreams (2005), The Temple of Forgiveness (2007), Fire of Fires (2009) and The Temple of Juno (2012). It is seen (by John Mosbaugh a.k.a. Moze) as being:

"a place where our community goes to unburden itself is a representation of our maturity as a community as well as a natural manifestation of something sacred in the City of Black Rock."

He continues,

“For many Burners, the Temple is a vital place where those who build it possess a solemnity and a respect for that process. It is also a place for those who attend the event to use for grieving or celebration of life in an environment that is in contrast to a lot of the rollicking and outrageous things happening elsewhere on the playa that week in late summer.”

My view

I have many friends (including my son Michael, quoted above) who over the years attended Burning Man, have been to events organized by the Burning Man tribe, and even helped build constructions for the event, but never went to the playa. I stand in the middle - half tribe, half outsider. My experience with many rituals and festivals does give me an idea of what the Burning Man atmosphere is, but I still remain an outsider. I have talked to many burners about their experience and nearly all of them are positive, sometimes a bit over-the-top impressed, with what happens there.

The whole thing has a kind of hypnotic influence. Everybody mentions how great they felt, how they appreciated the warm bath of community, how impressed they were. This despite some unfavorable trends, such as it becoming semi-commercial, that only well-to-do people participate (ticket price in 2013 is \$380), the lack of vagrants so prominently part of Rainbow festivals, the skewed attendance in terms of political, racial and sexual preferences, and the sometimes excessive use of drugs, attracting too much police activity.

The attendees mostly seem to see that as part of the formula, the shadow side we need to see the light. When telling about the terrible conditions, the heat, the sand, the dust, they interpret these as challenges, as essential to the transformation and bonding process. Of course Burning Man is not a religion; it's supposed to be open to all religions, but this openness and tolerance has become a religion of its own, with one of the rules being “be positive about Burning man.”

Some insiders don't agree with this view (of me as an outsider but having spoken with many burners). They did not feel a religious pressure to be positive and point at dissenting views and criticism of many former participants. Some claim the attitude of Burning Man

is not new age or hippy, but trickster-like and honest, if not vulgar. They admit recent new comers have upset that balance slightly, but the essence still prevails, no matter how poorly people tend to describe the event and no matter how stupid they sound when they talk it up as the greatest thing that ever happened to them.

Of course there are rules, practical but also about the way to deal with others, the *playa*. There are, as indicated by the Ten Principles mentioned below, closer to beliefs, or logical consequences of the set and setting. They feel natural and decent. This non-religious religion also surfaces in many TAZ alternative events and autonomous communities. I experienced it at many festivals like the Rainbow festivals, Boom, at Christiania, Damanhur, and in the Theosophical Society, but also noticed that below the permissive and tolerant surface, there are very hard and intolerant layers.

Being different is only accepted in a specific direction. The participants are in a way brainwashed or seduced not to notice this; the feeling of homecoming, community and tribal embracement feels so good (and is lacking so much in the world outside) that one tends to overlook or accept the constraints. Burning Man in this sense is a very safe place, an environment where one can experiment with letting go of one's mask, assuming other societal roles, allowing the transformation that might come with the immersion in this addictive "communal" atmosphere. The other side is that it allows escape from the "normal" world with its rat race and stress, a psychological relief, a holiday event that has little to do with a "holy" day.

From the outside, the whole thing is very much like a cult around a culture that is so different you have to let go of many notions, that frees you from being normal, separates you from the 'them'. However, there is the danger that you have to be a believer to be "in" on the thing. You are not forced, but it feels good to join the crowd and feel one when the 'Man' goes up in flames. Group mind phenomena plays a role here, but are they so different from what happens at other such events and festivals? The inside/outside phenomenon, being part of an in-group, is very much empirical and has nothing to do with belief whatsoever, except with the belief in the singularity and uniqueness of the experience.

On the other hand:

“Trying to explain what Burning Man is to someone who has never been to the event is a bit like trying to explain what a particular color looks like to someone who is blind.”

- is what the Burning Man website proclaims. It says ‘we are different’ and don’t try to profile us. This sounds a bit like the us-them separation that also colors Apple’s presence. It’s a way of creating a virtual demarcation between the congregation and those “squares” outside.

But again, insiders defy any labeling. As Mitch/Raven Mignano says:

‘The playa is an immediate experience and the phenomenology of Burning Man is singular, no matter how many comparisons, analogs, influences etcetera that one can make.’

Is there an underlying pattern here? Is it possible to label at all? Can we classify burners, typecast them as a group? Of course not as individuals, but the 70.000 burners do have a kind of personality, some mask they all wear. Let me try. It’s about form, about emotion covered with exuberance and expressive overdose, but at the same time some denial : leave your problems at home, party, the playa is heaven, paradise, worry about the rent or your relationship later!

The focus on form over content is somewhat related to the enneagram 3 style (the emotionally denying but efficient personality type), which applies to Burning Man. America as a whole is a nr. 3 nation, and companies like Apple play into this type. Nearly 33% of Americans act (not all the time) as enneagram 3 types, but at Burning Man this is around 50%. The iCulture of Apple is everywhere.

The ‘Gestalt’ resulting from this feels mostly as artsy, expression, posing, mask, exterior, but cleverly using the psychedelic, esoteric and exhibitionist symbolism to pass as alternative, hip, cool, new, edgy. It is a spectacle and obviously a transformative experience, but also a mask, a layer and imago that covers the neediness, the isolation and emptiness of America today, the alienation.

I believe that the French situationist Guy Debord (Society of the Spectacle) would have seen Burning Man (in its present incarnations) in that context, as an escapist spectacle, “a social relation between people that is mediated by images” with full support of the mass media culture. The spectacle as a self-fulfilling control mecha-

nism for a society that has lost touch with itself, a map, an image of the moon (the unconscious) that we value more than the moon. Here the social effectiveness of a ritual, as a safety valve for an over pressured crowd and a way to let off steam, is



visible. The burners don't really go back to change the world, they accept it as unfair, unecological and unsafe, but have found something worthwhile to keep them busy and content.

Even as the motto of the motto amongst Cacophony, the real originators of the event, was to "make your own show", by now the media have typecasted and in a way framed Burning Man. But it is up to the individual to go along or as Mitch Mignano (one of the Black Rock scholars) says:

'There is now a paradox in the way that first-timers or upper class tourists might visit the event as spectators, but the essence of burning man is very decidedly a revolt against the spectacle and the early burners were explicitly conscious of this. That's what the event is- a play space for people who have been spoon-fed consumer entertainment to make their OWN show. The results of that experiment vary, and counterproductive trends have seeped into the larger event, but that is the essence.'

Burners don't like criticism of what they regard as nearly a holy pilgrimage. For them, trekking to the "playa" is participating in the most experimental, modern, outrageous, hip, and mind-boggling event of the year, an experiential dive into another reality. You can change your personality, looks, and beliefs as suits you, behave in an absurd and exhibitionistic manner. Many participants will tell you that this is who they really want to be. So at one hand the inner child can come out to play, but on the other hand one can hide behind a new mask of often grotesque proportions. One can be part of an experimental community for a week in face-to-face reality, for the rest of the year as a virtual participant in the fan-congregation. The chal-

lenge for the burners is to express themselves and rely on themselves to a degree that is not normally encountered in one's day-to-day life. There are no rules about how one must behave or express oneself, save the rules that serve to protect the health, safety, and experience of the community at large. Each participant can decide how and what they will contribute. Philosophic anarchism, according to Larry, does have a long intellectual pedigree that relates to certain aspects of Burning Man.

"The essential anarchist idea is that cooperation and mutual aid are the natural state of man. All that is necessary for harmonious living, it is held, are certain useful customs that have no need of law to insure respect - and, largely, we have found this to be true. Our Black Rock Rangers practice non-confrontational techniques that work quite effectively."

Art and musical expressions of all kinds are an unavoidable part of this experience, the music and the drums never stop, the eyes never rest upon something familiar. One tries to channel the expressive energy. Each year a common theme is given to help tie individual contributions together in a meaningful way and provide a focus for the installations, theme-camps, the costumes and art work. For 2013, it was "Cargo Cult".

The local police interpreted that as a sign to hand out many tickets for marihuana etcetera, collecting big time from the burners. The police retaliated, maybe because the organization went to court about increases of what the county wanted as payment.

The event makes headlines. By now Burning Man has produced and initiated not only the festival itself, but has become like a volcano of creative projects related to the event. Maps, journals of our city being built, the Black Rock Gazette (a daily news publication), art in many forms, reports, individual impressions in print and on websites, blog, vlogs, scholarly articles, book; it has spawned a whole subculture. Not only the media, but academia comes to see what's happening. There are many scholarly publications and dissertations produced covering Burning Man and trying to identify what makes it so unique and compelling .

The main attraction, which has to do with the lack of connectedness in our present society, is the magic feeling of being safe and yet free. This is something that only being part of an intentional community

can provide and Burning Man is the pressure cooker variety. Community, participation, self-expression, self-reliance; these tenets of Burning Man are called the lifeblood of the Burning Man experience. Working together, partying together, tripping together, creating home-made and yet impressive reality hacks, this is in a way a luxurious and yet challenging boot camp of transformation, where one can experience and maybe even start a new life.

Ten Principles of Burning Man

Burning Man Founder Larry Harvey wrote the Ten Principles in 2004 as guidelines, also for regional BM events. They are a reflection of the community's ethos and culture as it had organically developed.

Radical Inclusion

Anyone may be a part of Burning Man. We welcome and respect the stranger. No prerequisites exist for participation in our community.

Gifting

Burning Man is devoted to acts of gift giving. The value of a gift is unconditional. Gifting does not contemplate a return or an exchange for something of equal value.

Decommodification

In order to preserve the spirit of gifting, our community seeks to create social environments that are unmediated by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising. We stand ready to protect our culture from such exploitation. We resist the substitution of consumption for participatory experience.

Radical Self-reliance

Burning Man encourages the individual to discover, exercise and rely on his or her inner resources.

Radical Self-expression

Radical self-expression arises from the unique gifts of the individual. No one other than the individual or a collaborating group can determine its content. It is offered as a gift to others. In this spirit, the giver should respect the rights and liberties of the recipient.

Communal Effort

Our community values creative cooperation and collaboration. We strive to produce, promote and protect social networks, public spaces, works of art and methods of communication that support such interaction.

Civic Responsibility

We value civil society. Community members who organize events should assume responsibility for public welfare and endeavor to communicate civic responsibilities to participants. They must also assume responsibility for conducting events in accordance with local, state and federal laws.

Leaving No Trace

Our community respects the environment. We are committed to leaving no physical trace of our activities wherever we gather. We clean up after ourselves and endeavor, whenever possible, to leave such places in a better state than when we found them.

Participation

Our community is committed to a radically participatory ethic. We believe that transformative change, whether in the individual or in society, can occur only through the medium of deeply personal participation. We achieve being through doing. Everyone is invited to work. Everyone is invited to play. We make the world real through actions that open the heart.

Immediacy

Immediate experience is, in many ways, the most important touchstone of value in our culture. We seek to overcome barriers that stand between us and a recognition of our inner selves, the reality of those around us, participation in society, and contact with a natural world exceeding human powers. No idea can substitute for this experience.

These principles are not stated as rules, but are in effect a charter, outlining the order of the whole thing. They are discussed, newly interpreted, and not written in stone, but are certainly central to the community belief system one voluntarily subscribes by going to the playa.

The energy on the playa

The subtle energy (related to the spiritual plane) or sacredness of the various locations within the semicircle is not the same everywhere. Some points have more energy and on some days or moments there is a concentration of subtle energy. To give an idea of the distribution: using a map of the 2012 situation, an average over the burn day is given. At the moment of the ignition and burning of the Man, the energy there goes up to 400. These are subjective numbers, acquired by dowsing, but give an idea of how the energy varies, not surprisingly with an event so big and with so many different camps and activities. Individual people can experience more or less of this energy, they can go along with the crowd or follow their own inclinations, there is no program one has to follow, just a smorgasbord of possibilities.

Spiritual side

There are serious spiritual people involved in the whole project, Lee Gilmore being one of them. She describes the paganism (with a small p to differentiate it from the religion with P) of Burners as a “root religion” in which they share “constituted-primal religious tendencies.” She says

“Like Pagans, Burners embrace practices such as ritual - ritual celebration, ritual catharsis, ritual expression. Like Pagans, Burners share a deep respect and love for nature and preservation is paramount (preservation in the “do no harm” sense of the word). Like Pagans (Pagans who identify with a particular denomination), Burners strive to adhere to a set of values both determined by and upheld by the community.”

She also sees strong parallels:

“Just as Pagans gather seasonally to consecrate the rhythms of life, Burners annually create their event in order to celebrate catharsis and ecstasy.”

(Lee Gilmore in ‘Burning Man, Paganism, and the Study of Religion’)

But then she encourages people to reconsider the concepts of “religion” and “spirituality” as defined less by matters of institution, doctrine, and belief, and more by questions of ritual, practice, and experience. She asks questions like:

“Why does Burning Man (sometimes) smell like religion? And then, what does that say about some of the directions that religion seems to be evolving these days?”

Christopher Michel is a pagan who comments about the deeper symbolism of the burning. :

“The burning of the effigy (and other art installations) at Burning Man is not an assertion of dominance or power over the thing (man) the effigy symbolizes. Nor is it an attempt to banish the thing the effigy symbolizes or to banish evil. It appears to be an exercise in radical self-expression — one of the basic tenets of the festival.”

In California, one often gets the feeling that spirituality revolves mostly around self-centered transformation and less around the bhakti (devotional). You are spiritual as in human potential, as in working on yourself, transformation, eating healthy, achieving all you can be. The cultural creatives go for Yoga, Biodanza, guided meditations, all kinds of massage, and Tantric practices, and so these are the keywords on the playa. Even the temple focuses on personal transformation, dealing with one's own inner world memories and grief, and less with reaching out to the divine. Magic and spirituality are more seen as a way to better your conditions, relationships, and health than as a way to connect to the unspeakable, the divine, the immaterial. The gift-giving is more of an exchange, a way to create and help the community, to appreciate contact and relations than a true offering, a sacrifice to the divine.

There are now Burning Man events in many other countries, the concept is commercialised to some extent, it's becoming a franchise. The increased commercialisation of the event, the rich folks that create 'closed camps' with hired personnel and only for jet-setters, has attracted opposition. In 2016 the 'White Ocean' camp was even attacked by angry protesters.

Summing up: “Burning Man as a ritual” offers very much in terms of inner transformation and personal growth, connecting with like-minded folks and experiencing community spirit, but is less a true magical event. Some will use the unique atmosphere to connect with the otherworld, but this is a personal choice.



30 Analog and digital: a fundamental dichotomy

There is a trend in festivals to stay away from commercial influence (the no-logo approach) and even from modern ready made technology. The maker-trend, creating decoration and structures on the spot, using waste and debris, reusing materials, but with modern tools and even 3D-printing, illustrates the need to step away from the manufactured and soulless modern reality and reach for some level of autarky, of self-sufficiency. The 'bricolage' approach, creating on the spot with available materials, with often amazing results, is different from what happens at Burning Man, where most of the structures and temporary buildings are planned and prefabricated.

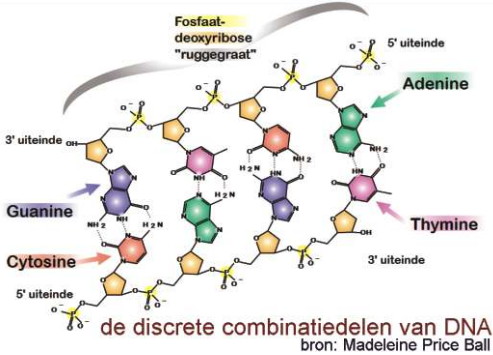
In an increasingly digital world, where discrete sets of data and measurable phenomena rule, preferable turned into digital files of computers, festivals are also a counter-movement. Not a counter culture, since without the help of internet services, social media and modern technology modern festivals would be hard to organize and market. But certainly festivals are a counterweight against modern life with its virtuality, always on and non –physical contacts.

It may sound as a somewhat artificial dichotomy, but festivals are essentially analog in an increasingly digital world. Not only live music, but the live atmosphere, experiencing real people, real conditions and real contacts are analog.

These days most people think that digital means 0/1 binary coding, but the notion applies to all coding with a discrete and limited set and the difference between analog and digital is very fundamental, also in a philosophical context.

The digital age started when God commissioned Adam to name all animals and birds (Genesis 2:19) and the process of 'Naming is Framing' started. Applying a limited set of symbols like the names of species is essential digital, a good way to organize things, but also restricts. Analog refers to continuous, non discrete phenomena, things like love and beauty; most things in nature are essentially analog. The word digital comes from digitus (Latin for finger), as fin-

gers are often used for discrete counting. Numbers, letters, and names are symbolic systems of representation, with discrete and limited sets. Using them requires following certain rules and poses restrictions. Writing is thus digital, while speaking analog.



There are clear advantages for using digital. In technology the error reduction quality of digital signals, while allowing compression, made modern computers and communication possible. It's not all man-made. Nature also uses digital, DNA/RNA is essentially a digital copy system with 4 base-pairs and self-repairing colons, leading to just 20 amino-acids. Error reduction and elimination of noise is where digital excels. Note that our gene-pool survived countless generations using this digital backbone of life.

Deconstruction of a whole into standardized parts and discrete sets of attributes, like building with standard blocks, has obvious advantages. Neil Gershenfeld of MIT's Center for Bits and Atoms, who champions digital production (FabLab, 3D printing) as an extension of digital computation and communication, uses the example of Lego to illustrate how discrete and limited set components are effective, fast and error reducing. In fact at festivals like Burnng Man many structures are prefabricated,



Neil Gershenfeld

these days also with 3D techniques, and are assembled on the playa. The Lego example also shows that while one can construct very complex structures, achieving beauty remains problematic, due to the 'digital' limitations in sizes, colors and angles.



The distinction in analog and digital is fundamental. As one of the essential dichotomies in philosophical terms the first division of the monad (absolute) can be termed as good or bad, or love and truth. However, analog/digital makes a lot of sense. In our increasing digital age the distinction can help to understand the direction of human and societal evolution. The digital creeps upon us.

Slowly all our media are digital, and the most used drug these days to escape the analog reality by shifting time and place to retreat in childlike state behind a safe screen is the smartphone. Texting is obviously digital. For many, clicking on their digital pocket-secretary replaces the analog medium of speech.

Digital asserts that with the limited set of symbols and the threshold property of exponential reduction in error, we can clean up communication, making it faster and more reliable. Today we take these functions for granted in our digital world of internet, computers and media. Abandoning ambiguity, the truth reduced to yes or no answers, Wikipedia as the entropic, mediocre standard of human knowledge.

Time is analog, but clocktime defaults to more digital, sequential time. Sending a message and reading, for instance, takes a little time, while beauty is timeless. Clocktime ties us down, limits us. It is the timeless state of the soul, the higher self where we can get in touch with union, the absolute that supersedes all dichotomy. Manifestation is essentially the process where consciousness uses time (which

space follows instantaneously) to create something tangible. The quantum physicist talks about this as the collapse of the probability curve. One could say that God uses time to create the opportunity to experience the distinction between love and truth, which can be seen as the lesson we have to learn in life.

However, by equating digital to truth, analog to love comes to mind. Digital uses rules and discrete sets, where something is true or not; while analog remains more continuous, unlimited, unsynchronized, like love or beauty.

While the Law is digital, Justice reflects analog. Here we touch on the importance of understanding the difference and the implications of the difference. Instead of thinking in terms of good or bad, social or liberal, left or right, the distinction between analog and digital approaches can be used to understand many fundamental issues in culture, religion and society.

Digital is about borders, distinction between you and me, your land, my land. Don't enter my territory! It is about kingdoms, vested interests, truth in science and being right, justified. Analog is about sharing, about common interest, about timeless sustenance, responsibility for values, rather than exploiting the borders. It is slower, takes more time, more feeling with more mistakes likely as there is less effective error reduction. Digital is more about measuring, feedback, fast response and effectiveness. Neither is better. Both have their points, but sometimes the balance leans towards a side enabling recognition of a shift.

Take the legal system, something that grew out of games and ritual into a code! The Anglo-Saxon approach is very much based on rules; American contracts stipulate each and every eventuality. What is not included in a clause is not part of the deal. This system is more digital than the Roman/Rhineland Law approach, where principles, fair play, a sense of due diligence are more prevalent.

In religion we see a similar division. There are rule based and thus more digital religions. The Jewish, Sunni Muslim and reformatory Christian religions tend to stick to the book; the set of rules is fixed, no bending allowed. You are with us or against us! Truth cannot be compromised! Then there are the more lenient religions, where rules

are less strict, forgiveness and love are more prevalent, like the Catholic Church.

This distinction has deep roots. In essence we talk about magical and anti-magical religions. The more analog ones cherish and honor the mystical, with ritual access to the intangible and timeless over sticking to the rules. People like Buddha, Mohammed, and Luther are typically digital reformers, doing away with the hierarchical pomp and circumstance, the ritual abundance, the saints and the freedom. They steered back to the rules, the essence, the barebones. One cannot deny that the difference between the digital and the analog approach has been the root of many wars. Even today the difference between Sunni and Shia continues to cause much struggle and violence.

Understanding the difference between rule based and discrete digital and more continuous, flowing and timeless analog applies to many fields. In the medical field, the digital, modern way is to use chemicals, surgery and 'hard' methods, while the ritual and spiritual approach to healing heralds more analog, holistic, restorative balance. Progress seems digital. By way of our emergent human self-consciousness we became obsessed with truth, inventions, individual recognition and what we now call science, trading in love and connectedness. We started to live in larger groups, developed individuality. Needing symbols to communicate, language developed beyond the merely indicative. World culture moves toward a digital approach, with more rules and 'hard' truths while being less guided by principles, moral values, intuitions and undefined feelings.

For example, the oriental law of karma reflects the force of change in the universe, seen as a fundamental balance mechanism in the wider reality that includes the intangible spiritual realm. It is analog, so counting one's actions as in scoring or points is thus senseless. What matters encompasses totality. The time-arrow of cause and effect is a digital one. Normal causality remains time bound and can be falsified as true or false, again very discrete with error reduction. Inverting (or escaping) the cause and effect relation offers one way of defining magic, the analog opposite of rational truth. For many, the most vivid experience of the analog and digital realms merging results from psychedelic tripping. In an LSD or ayahuasca journey

there are no distinct truths, rules, times or even errors, everything flows, the symbolic merges with the presence.

Digital is discrete, fast, rational, noise-resistant, left-brain, male, but lacks the beauty, the gradual, the love and wisdom of analog, right brain, female, holistic.

In the context of festivals, honoring the analog character of such events means that many of the digital indicators like profit, turnover, the stuff measured in hard digital truth, are less important, less indicative of success, while identification, opportunities for transformation and participation score.

31 Cybertribes, Goa and Psytrance: the Subversive Underground

by Wolfgang Sterneck

The vision of cybertribes links the understanding of old cultures with the knowledge of today. It links the experiences of witches, resistance fighters and reality hackers to use them for our age now and develop them for the future. Personal development and social change merge into a new unity. The visionary cybertribe concepts are trying to achieve a linking of life-forms in a community, creative development and political engagement. However, what is also emerging is a certain de-politicization in favor of a concealed spiritual or an unreflected psychedelic attitude.

The cybertribe vision neither stands for a determined principle of organization, nor for dogmatic ideologies. And the projects even don't have to call themselves cybertribe to realize certain elements of their vision. It is more about tribes in the sense of gatherings, projects and communities, using contemporary technologies for interaction, symbolized and summarized in the "cyber" concept.

These post-modern tribes, in all their different focuses, set flexible networks, based on self-determination and equality, against the predominant authoritarian structures. They emerge wherever there is a new consciousness against manipulation, solidarity against competition and a politics of resistance against the process of destruction.

Techno & Goa

The cybertribe vision finds analogy in some underground culture projects such as Techno or in the Goa Psytrance culture. They per-

Germany based Wolfgang Sterneck is an activist and thinker focused on political and counter-cultural activism. He wrote about different Cybertribe-Visions, cofounded projects like the Sonics-Network and built up different cultural projects as a kind of free space

form traditional rituals but use electronic music and modern media. As an ideal, Techno or Goa parties are consistent with these original trance rituals where today's electronic instruments are being played instead of



wooden drums. They do use psycho-active technology and substances; psychonauts of today use both plant entheogens and relatively new synthesized psychedelic substances for their trips into the inner cosmos.

The individual cybertribes in their many shapes are an outcry and an uprising against the omnipresent exploitation of man and nature. They can also be regarded as a kind of escape or the proverbial dance on the volcano with regard to the current ecological and social developments. One finds elements of the cybertribe vision in many fields. For example, urban political activists in the Australian out-back joining groups of Aborigines to fight against the destruction of the environment through the mining of uranium.

Many projects that act in the spirit of the cybertribe vision show the necessity and concrete possibilities to react and develop free spaces, where at least a rudimentary but different life is possible. These are islands in an ocean of consumerism and ecological waste, but islands with a mission, even as it seems very unlikely to be able to achieve sustainable changes, in the current structures of power. But every single person is responsible for making change possible, by throwing a monkey wrench in the works and not being the grease that keeps the destructive process alive.

Music, Mind and Politics

In the 90s for a huge part of the younger generation the attitude towards life was reflected in those scenes and parties. New musical

forms of expression and a certain feeling of community shaped the cultural evolution in those days as did the Trance experience, dancing for hours and using psychoactive substances.

Like in many other underground scenes, at the beginning of the Goa- and Psytrance scene there was a strong expression of a subliminal desire for a life stretching above and beyond simple civic duties.

What played a big role here were such values as self-determination and a sense of community as well as the zest to actively partake in one's own creative development, albeit, by do-it-yourself means.

Similar positions were also found at the beginning of the techno cultures when the hope existed that the original ideals of "Peace, Love, Unity and Respect" would end up changing society in a flowing process from within. However, comparable developments remained without any actual impact due to commercialization and the subliminal take-over of society. The capitalist system always succeeds in marketing its own antithesis, which has already been seen to happen with the hippie and punk cultures. If you take Rock'n'Roll, Punk or Techno, all those movements started in the underground as a counterculture, as a separation to the mainstream culture. It was always about social free spaces, about the possibility of self-development, of being creative, of realizing common projects and basically about a self-determined life. And always when the counter-culture ceased to respect certain pre-determined limits, the State and the Establishment hit back.

Tranceformations

The location turns into a field of energy when a Goa party reaches its peak. This field is not visible in an optical sense, but is, nevertheless, perceptible for all. Freely moving bodies with perception concentrated on the moment. Within the dancers there is a positive emptiness spreading out to be filled by the rhythm. All around, there is ecstatic dancing; the borders between the dance-floor and the rest of the world continuously disintegrating.

At this point, these events look just like big trance rituals. Hours of dancing along to a monotonous rhythm, perhaps accompanied by the use of psychoactive substances, trigger a psychedelic transition to a

trance-like state. Within the bodies endorphins are being released leading to a euphoric state. It eventually becomes possible, to let go of everything, release the inner blockades and just go with the flow. Such parties are in a line of tradition from shamanistic drum rituals to secret Dionysus feasts and the bedevilments of witches and onto contemporary underground cultures. Outsiders are not able to comprehend these experiences. When the paths of trancers and strollers cross after a trancy night the following Sunday afternoon, you get what seems to be an encounter of worlds in total opposition. But these two worlds and all their differences soon quickly disappear at the next food stall.

The Psytrance scene opened up an even wider understanding of partying based on a holistic concept. The scene contributed important impetuses for alternative cultural developments and personal self-fulfillment.

Unfortunately, the Goa scene, after some inspiring years, has meanwhile passed its peak and is now entangled in a mesh of clichés, consumerism, misunderstood Hindu imagery and fun-oriented commerce. A lack of knowledge obviously ignores the fact that these symbols, often used as brands, ultimately stand for the extremely repressive cast system and the discrimination of women. If we look at the fuzzy descriptions of Techno-Shamanism, people often refer to the intensity of the release of positive energy at a mass trance experience. The wrong conclusion, often made here, is that this would lead to a personal change in consciousness that would subtly become manifest and make a long term impact in social processes.

With this background in mind, reflective discussions about these developments are necessary. One option is to intensify the development of networks so as to promote exchange and a synergetic concentration of energy. An example of this in the trance scene is the “Sonic Cybertribe Network”, putting alternative and idealistic pro-

ISLANDS

Some people think that dance-movement is like an island, but most of them forget that every island is surrounded by an ocean.

jects that originate in the party culture into practice. The crucial essence is the constant development of an understanding that combines cultural and political aspects.

The political challenge

When people got together for a party to celebrate together as a community and break free from the bonds of daily life, what it achieved was at most a moment of socio-cultural free space or a “temporary autonomous zone” (TAZ). The political character, thereby, is not just formed by banners or flyers. It’s an inherent and important question the to see whether trancers deal with each other as if in a community or in an egocentric way. There are political issues, like whether there are only men up on the stage or also women participating in their emancipation. Similarly whether only a single person ends up getting money out of the event or whether it’s a really great party for all or if the ecology and environment is treated. Not to forget resistance against control, commerce and consumerism as other important political aspects.

A trance night, free of control and reason, may turn into a politics of body. If this experience is only limited to a short moment of individual escape from the bonds of daily life, then comparing it to simply “escape” seems evident. It is however essential to look at one’s own personal experiences during a party and put them into a social context. It then quickly becomes clear that personal experiences are not simply products of coincidence but in their very core show the impact of certain ‘limiting’ life conditions and social structures.

The ‘normal’ de-facto social systems require a blocked human being who will function without contradiction and who will join the constant quest for success, even though they basically just desire an inner and outer flow. It is necessary, therefore, to honor the need for broader action and go beyond these short and liberating transcendent experiences and look for ways to force personal and social structures to break. may turn into a politics of body.

If this experience is only limited to a short moment of individual escape from the bonds of daily life, then comparing it to simply “escape” seems evident. It is however essential to look at one’s own

Cybertribe

by Wolfgang Sterneck

The Cybertribe is a distant utopia and a living practice at the same time. It's a fantasy but also concrete reality. It can be felt as a pulsating rhythm, can be lived as a changing energy, which connects countless small, often loose, communities, groups and projects. As a modern tribe the Cybertribe knows no limits. Its home is the whole earth, its everywhere and nowhere. Everyone who opens his or her eyes will see the signs, will understand the languages.

The Cybertribe connects the wisdom of ancient cultures with the understanding of today's developments. It combines the experiences and perceptions of witches and shamans, of resistance fighters and revolutionaries, of hippies and communards, of hackers and cybernauts to use them for the present and to evolve them for the future. In doing so individual and social change, inner and outer development will become a new unity.

The Cybertribe arises where manipulation is opposed by a new consciousness and reduction by new dimensions. It arises where the principle of competition is confronted with the principle of solidarity, the process of destruction with the process of healing the politics of repression with the politics of resistance. Sometimes it develops absolutely unexpectedly, to disappear in the same manner. In some places it grows continuous step by step, in others it has existed for ages.

The Cybertribe doesn't have a membership in the normal sense. It's not possible and not necessary to join it in a formal way.

Sometimes it's not even necessary to know the term or the ideas behind it at all. The belonging comes of itself, manifested in the energies and acts of the person.

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stant quest for success, even though they basically just desire an inner and outer flow. It is necessary, therefore, to honor the need for broader action and go beyond these short and liberating transcendent experiences and look for ways to force personal and social structures to break.

Some history, Connecta

This understanding can be found in the “Connecta” concept which is based on the linkage of music, mind and politics. Besides the music programming, many more elements are incorporated in this concept such as workshops, sessions, discussions and cinema shows and also political information and actions. This concept breaks the predominant consumerist attitude by offering chances for active participation. It fosters reflective disputes and critical engagement and offers a wide space for hedonist and creative development.

The Connecta concept is reflected in the “Gathering of the Tribes” festival that started in Frankfurt in 2005 and later was joined into “Join the Cybertribe”. It looked back on a manifold tradition. With regard to its development, this is exemplary for the innovative perspective of the Psytrance scene. more than the more fun- and ego-oriented Goa.

The idea of the gathering of tribes is like a red line in history – from the gatherings of indigenous tribes to the psychedelic gatherings of the Hippies to the counter-cultural events of the cybertribes.

Integral parts of those gatherings were panel discussions about the roots of the psychedelic culture and the relation between party and politics. People were led to become involved in important discussions that usually only very rarely happens in alternative party scenes. Other crucial elements that broke with the usual focus on the DJs were the children’s parties in the afternoon and the presentation of different cybertribe projects.

The music program, mostly designed by Space Frogz, was put together to include not only Psytrance DJs and Electro acts but also political Rock bands and experimental Ambient projects. The playground offered the chance to participate in open drum as well as juggling sessions under the motto be-your-own-live-act. Exhibitions

showed pictures of the reclaim-the-streets actions. Video documentaries gave information on squats and the resistance movement against neo-liberal globalization. You could have attended workshops for Trance-dance and meditation. What is more, the Alice Project led coordinated sessions on mature use of drugs.

The concept of music, mind and politics was completed with a spontaneous night-dance demonstration parade with mobile sound systems in Frankfurt's inner city area. By using the motto "Free Tibet - No Gods, No Masters!" the action was just as equally against dicta-

Rhythms of change

Manifesto on Music, Mind and Politics

Far away from the soft-rinsed TV-Shows one can still hear rare rhythms and breaks, which cannot be silenced. It's nearly all the same no matter which music culture one examines, or in which city one moves. Anyone who looks beneath the surface will find underground projects, which oppose the cultural conformity and try to forge new directions.

The rhythms differ sometimes and the lyrics vary in their symbols, but their fundamental messages are similar. It's always about free spaces in which the first steps of another life can be realized. Free spaces based on self-determined creativity and communal responsibility.

Ideally a party or a session, a concert or a festival can be such free spaces. Therefore it is necessary, time and again, to break open the structures of consumption and commercialization. Not conforming to stars and trends, but common development in the flow of a night.

But it's not enough to search for the experience of the alternative reality on the dance floor and the concert alone. In this age of ecological destruction, globalized exploitation and religious fanaticism, nobody can withdraw into their own worlds. In the long run the social conditions must be forced to dance. The energy of danced-through nights open their real strength only if they are unfolded in the reality-remix of the everyday life as a commitment for consequent change.

Hack Reality - Dance for Change!

by Wolfgang Sterneck - www.sterneck.net - 2007

torial regimes and feudal-religious views of the world. The “reclaim-the-streets” actions showed in an impressive way that it is possible to link politics and party in a more closely defined sense.

The “Gathering of the Tribes” events make clear what is possible when free spaces are created that are not only restricted to a single scene but see themselves as an expression of a multifarious culture of change. The symbol-like stars will become reality when we manage to live the visions of a different world in the reality of the present.

Remit from previously articles published in:

Tom Rom and Pascal Querner (Ed.): GOA - 20 Years of Psychedelic Trance - www.nachtschatten.ch

and Wolfgang Sterneck (Ed.): Cybertribe-Visionen - www.sterneck.net/komista/cybertribe

Complete versions and more articles at www.sterneck.net

32 OpenUp, an alternative festival and community

by Ferry Maatman

There are so many festivals these days, that picking one runs the risk of not seeing the forest for the tree, but some festival formats show an exceptional focus on contact, participation and transformation.



The Dutch OpenUP is such a format. It was initiated by Hylke Bonnema and friends and is running for 10 years now. There is a major 5 day event with some 700 attendees in the summer and a couple of smaller, more commu-

nity oriented events throughout the year. The format is not original, as it combines ideas from other festivals, but offers an interesting example. OpenUp is drugsfree, smokefree, vegetarian and family-friendly, there are programs for kids in different age-groups, including a special disco-place for teenagers. This and the general setup of concentrating on contact and transformation attracts an audience of many single parents with their kids, looking for the openness the name suggest. The festival is inspired by No-Mind festival in Sweden in Angsbacke with some 1200 participants each year.

"I don't want to be part of your revolution, if I can't dance in it."

Isadora Duncan

The core principles of OpenUp are:

CoCreation, using the talents of attendees and the community, involve them to help stage the event, assist in setting up, running, take down and clearing away. This participation ensures commitment and engagement. Everybody is a (potential) CoCreator, is asked to assist in collective activities. This is more than volunteering, the more active and committed CoCreators arrive earlier and leave later, they still pay (for food and shelter, but form the workforce that also allows to keep the expenses down. The general atmosphere of cooper-

ation, involving CoCreators and delegating tasks and projects to them also means less traditional hierarchy and management, and more focus on the community goals of sharing, gifting and contact. Sharing, allowing daily individual (and undisturbed) expression in small groups (max. 6) is an essential part of the format. Everybody has equal time to say whatever. Such sharing of emotions, impressions, worries and ideas has therapeutic, transformational and contact value, small in-groups evolve with a high level of trust and mutual support. This approach, by many of the attendees experienced as the high point of the day, differs from the usual sharing at festivals or workshops with larger groups, where not everybody can have a say.

Contact opportunities are seen as essential for the OpenUp experience and communal eating, singing, opening and closing rituals are used to facilitate contact. OpenUp is not a music festival, but of course there are musical performances, DJ's, etc. but during the day the program consist of workshops, mostly given by CoCreators. There is the opportunity to pitch one's own workshop or activity in the morning, so apart from preprogrammed acts and sessions one can bring new ideas and personal expertise to the floor.

Open 'Play and Clear' means not only taking physical care of the place, leaving it better than it was, but is about allowing the people to experiment, to share, to look for new possibilities and capabilities, and accepting that failing is part of the game. Freedom to look for alternatives, in oneself and others, in relations and forms of interaction. Such play, and here approaches like tantra, body work, mirroring and a certain confrontation are accepted, again offers new contact and transformation opportunities. Clearing also means that personal problems can be addressed and if possible cleared, by interac-



tion, self reflection and a general attitude of permissiveness and appreciation of diversity.

Individual and collective awareness about one's potential and limitations is stimulated by sharing and collective activities like rituals. To enhance the vitality and playfulness acts are left open for improvisation and interaction with the audience. The coyote energy, breaking old and worn patterns and expectations, confronting and mirroring, is appreciated.

Becoming conscious of what needs to be done, is expressed in the motto: 'If you see a task or a problem, you own it' thus stimulating people to take action.

'Open your heart' is another motto that allows to make a connection with the other, the place, the activities, the problems inside and the deeper self. Not a cognitive focus, but a feeling connection with all, in the moment, here and now! Not judging, but embracing the difference, honoring the borders and yet not be afraid to push them a bit. Diversity and connection are offered as a totality. The differences between people are, in the OpenUp vision, not leading to separation, but to connection. Authenticity is important here, the freedom to act, speak or be silent, abstain or engage needs to be connected to the true self, here a certain 'non-duality' and 'advaita' approaches shines through in the OpenUp philosophy.

The transformational focus of the OpenUp festival is clear, people come to be inspired and experiment, meet new people, accepting that both the festival and their participation is a process, and not necessarily always aligned.

MUSU, organizational model

The core model is Mutual Sustainability, a relational approach to use the differences and similarities in a way that benefits all the stakeholders, not only now but also in the future. Functionality and efficiency is increased by the relationships you have. The festival organizations divided in three clusters (Goods, Foods&Beverages, Concept&Facilities). Each cluster has five to eight teams. Responsibility lays within the teams, based on communications and the focus to be of service to each other.

'Welcome to the magical reality'

The banner at the entry to the OpenUp festival grounds.

33 Creativity Café

A Venue to Nurture Creativity in everyone; a Mechanism for Social Change

By Peter H. Rosen

To show how the idea of an autonomous zone doesn't need to be a massive event, but can be as small as a café environment this appendix contains the vision of an early creative experience entrepreneur and visionary

Creativity Café developed as a Temporary Autonomous Zone with a purpose in 1980. The purpose; to build a venue for creative people and those who think they are Not. A real, not a virtual venue; a place that will exist in space-time, for just one time or for a while, using an existing place where people can meet. This can be a building, but also a tent or a At Creativity Café™ the venue, its denizens practice PRONOIA [<http://creativity.net/pronoia.html>] and nurture creativity. Community created programs & services assist with personal and community growth and

transformation. Interactive new games are used to “massage” audience members in order to melt boundaries, so that a room full of strangers becomes a room full of friends “who haven’t yet met!” to quote a line from Creativity Café’s brochure.

If we can help liberate a persons “authentic self” from that of their conditioned Self, the divine inspiration that has created our present world can continue to gift us with new ways of seeing and being.

Especially when Creativity Café Mentors and Tour Guides help patrons discover clubhouse resources; people and services designed to enliven, liberate, relax, learn



Peter H. Rosen, founder of Creativity Café and steward of creativity.com

and heal us from the ravages of our lives. Isn't that why people go out to events and festivals?

A Creativity Café provides an ongoing environment where those both in and out of this "community clubhouse" create a friendly and familiar place for global nomads, for conscious creatives, cultural creatives, world servers and inspired others... their desire it is to steer you to what you need to succeed! Over 500 prototype venues, productions and educational entertainments; commonly referred to as "Edutainments" have been produced by members of the organization that sprang up from seeds planted in the V.A.R.I.O.U.S. Media Ink: The Visionary Artists Showcase and Networking Events. This especially in the later years when the assistance of V.A.R.I.O.U.S. members produced the most ambitious temporary Creativity Café New School and Edutainment Center for Multimedia Expo at San Francisco's Moscone Convention Center [<http://creativity.net/fwe/>]. We stole the show with innovative, interactive art performances, a video conference to a submarine off the coast of Hawaii, image creation stations, performances, and more. The idea for an interactive edutainment venue ignited and inspired the collaboration and cooperation of people only weeks before I didn't know. Together, in six weeks with the support of local sponsors and supporters, we kicked butt!

V.A.R.I.O.U.S. Media Ink

The Visionary Artists Showcase and Networking Events struck a chord with the local Los Angeles community. What started in the Department of Water and Power's Theater to an audience of 30, soon doubled, then tripled in size. After a couple of years of regular presentations by local artists in the interactive 'living Gallery' fashion, our event blossomed into a 200-plus-membership in the non-profit; V.A.R.I.O.U.S.. Over the course of three years of about 36 showcases per year, we maintained our first come, first served policy (we did not want to curate or turn anyone away or judge their ability or talent). The idea was to give an opportunity to from 5-8 artists, to share their work at what ever point they were at, in their creative evolution. Their images we projected on a large theater screen, to an audience of peers and interested public encouraged to

participate by asking questions, offering thoughts, responses, reactions.

The result was a community forum on the arts with an impromptu group of new friends, exploring creativity. People networked afterwards and discovered more in depth about whatever, whomever interested them. The event and experiment was a grand success. The event also served to present to the audience an inspiring vision of Creativity Café; a new school and community networking, broadcast and resource center; utilizing the latest, Web, video, sound and wireless technologies in addition to state of the art computer graphics facilities, Maker space FabLab and similar resources at the intersection of Art and Technology.

Audience members joined in to manifest a venue to nurture creativity, market our talents and share humanities latest innovations in the course of educating audience members for their betterment. The audience was always “warmed up by new games” first, before the show...so that when the artists were presented, and they were encouraged, they were ok to shout out feelings, impressions and enter into discussion - seeded by the art and featured artist, unlike in “normalized school” they didn’t have to raise their hands and be recognized. It turns out artists love the spotlight as much as performers (of a musical nature for instance). No surprise there! The artistic ego hungers for recognition, acknowledgment good or bad and the focused attention IN THEIR PRESENCE...of a live and interacting audience - unlike the highly selective, sterile and money driven world of most art galleries.

A consistent “house” of 100 people attended the V.A.R.I.O.U.S. Media Ink Visionary Artists Showcase and Networking Events from 1980 thru 2001 when the live event was televised on Public Access channels. What began as performances at Equity Waiver Theaters (I negotiated theater rental arrangements that were mostly split-the-gate or free); has blossomed beyond my wildest dreams and validated my intuition and “focus group” experiments questioning if audiences would enjoy experiencing art in this new way, and if artists liked the spotlight as much as performers.

We presented V.I. at community venues (Los Angeles Dept. Water and Power’s Theater, Felicia Mahood Community Center - as part of

Celebrate Life Events, and many Equity Waiver (100 seat or less) Theaters over the three year Los Angeles run. A five year run of Creativity Café Edutainment Events in San Francisco included Creativity Café for A Day events Joe's Digital Diner and VARIOUS Media Ink at the Next Stage Theater - among other venues. Although a permanent Creativity Café did not manifest at that time, We originated and produced a totally new and pioneering first ever Multipoint Internet video conference by and for Children

Creativity Café; A New School for the New Millennium

The idea behind Creativity Café, originally called 'Artists Resource Center Prototype' started already in 1980, but developed over time. In actuality, Creativity Café is more like a community town hall where people vote, sign petitions, and co-create the edutainments presented on and off the stage. Given the creativity and collaboration potential directed toward problem solving, Creativity Café will truly be of service to almost everyone, in many different ways. From art marketing to technology mentoring, from personal growth expansion and collective co-creation, collaborative projects and presentations will be designed to educate while entertaining to help liberate our authentic selves and our suppressed creativity. Many productions targeted at providing solutions to personal, corporate, community and global problems/challenges will be the result of capitalizing on a community's creative force. The Creativity Café, manifesting at different places and different times, the becomes a place where people/products and services are marketed in innovative ways, where audiences can and do collaborate on meaningful projects to benefit not only creative people, but the local community and general public-at-large.

There's a need for people to physically be together that is satisfied by Creativity Café Edutainment designed to melt barriers to intimacy and new friendships which are stimulated in innovative ways. Now more so now than ever before, with fear crippling and isolating us in many ways, with Internet communication replacing many interpersonal relations in the flesh. We don't need more ordinary Events and Festivals where music, dance, drugs, escapism, sex and com-

merce are the bill of fare, what we really need are gathering places to exchange information, ideas, forge alliances and participate in unfolding our future world via collaborations, shared vision and manifesting new systems that address the potential of creative consciousness.

Creative people, I would say for the most part, find it difficult if not impossible to have their art become their livelihood. I asked why within myself. The answer I got was **MARKETING** is not their strong suit. The solutions to the problems of our times, need out of the box approaches, why not tap the creativity of any given neighborhood/city/country via its creative citizens (public and private sectors) and provide a special venue for those who care to make (are making) a difference in themselves (into personal growth and healing), world servers, visionaries, intuitives, people who have new, great ideas, the “fed up masses” dissatisfied with how slowly government answer’s their needs.

If we could gather the most creative and brilliant people together to approach alternative ways of living, being with each other and especially for mutual support (Pronoia) in a world where ‘the system’ divides, controls and suppresses true creative problem solving because it might mean an end to their jobs, livelihood, glorified position, etc. We need to turn to the “proletariat” and especially those who are most inspired and creative to collaborate, brainstorm, develop, plan and implement new social systems and solutions to personal and interpersonal challenges, and to future infrastructure that truly serves to unite the peoples of the earth.

V.A.R.I.O.U.S. members Peter H. Rosen and Reid Fossy created a Creativity Cafe-For-A-Day Multimedia environment at the Children’s World Peace Festival; birthing for the first time Creativity Cafe’s award winning “KidCast for Peace: Solutions for a Better World” tele-activity (used in college curriculum to illustrate early interactivity and positive use of the Internet) in various university curriculum. The project was supported by Apple Computer, Bell Telephone and Pathways to Peace - the Festival organizers.
[<http://creativity.net/KidCast/kc12/press/>]

This pioneering multipoint video conference invited children (focusing on those in challenged countries) to make art and share it... in-

teractively with their “peers-for-peace” far and wide - literally in a series of video conferences. Kids - thanks to their teachers, were able to connect with up other kids, each sharing drawings they made, reflecting what a peace filled world would look like - with up to 12 geographic locations at once. They could all see and hear each other as each locale was invited to have its “children peace representatives” receive the focus attention to share their art interactively, with people on the Net, invited to comment along with of all of those gathered in physical venues and virtually on the Internet. Places that participated in the event included Ireland, Japan, California, New York, Maui Hawaii and elsewhere. I produced KidCast for Peace over 18 times in the next 10 years using CU-SeeMe software developed by Cornell University.

The organization was mostly made up of artists who were in the audience during experimental productions that were fine tuned as time went on and always interactive beyond the norm. I wanted to see if what I thought artists and creative people need, was valid. and what those who think they are not creative are lacking...was valid. We can unleash their potential, by capitalizing on the psychic need for connection, and the starved ego of the creative personality, we can, as a society of humans on planet earth, without attachment to national pride, political or religious prejudice, status, economic standing, or any of the other separatist strategies for control. People are fed up with traditional governmental “ethics” and crave real connection and authentic interactions not based on manipulation for a profitable end, in the traditional sense.

Creativity Café becomes a cooperative where members control operations. Community members have chosen to team up and make a difference in a time scale that can not be matched by the slow machinations of government. People leave their homes for entertainment, escape, acquisition of resource and making new friends and business connections. They leave their home to find places that inspire, educate, entertain or to celebrate. Normally their lives are based on working a 40 hour (or so) work week. They have bars to escape in, Netflix to get lost in, restaurants to indulge in. Then they sleep and go to work.

Creative people on the other hand have different needs and a different lifestyle as varied as their creativity. But they all have one thing in common. Once they leave school, very few of them receive nurturing, compensation for their talents or acknowledgment of their peers and no less the public. These are all driving reasons for Creativity Café, bigger than a bread box and able to serve young, old, rich, poor, creative (or those who don't think they are) with resources they need to help them succeed.

Creativity Café is both a venue and an interactive experience that has been purveyed at trade shows, neighborhood theater venues and community centers. Creativity Café edutainment experiences are designed to bring people together in ways they would not normally experience in traditional expositions of the arts. In this case the art becomes a catalyst for the interaction of the audience members who are instructed (after some warm up experiences that help to melt the boundaries in a room full of strangers, and help them understand they are in for something completely different.

Creativity Café is a visioning place to share one's images and ideas about sustainability, participate in expansive creativity enhancing games, develop strategies for establishing interpersonal harmonies in the diverse cultural crossover environment, especially in places like Amsterdam and New York where there is a condensed international public.

Creativity Café Venues as Networking places

There is an untapped of creative potential for artist collaborations and public support. To develop effective and timely solutions to community and personal challenges, Creativity Café's established "playing rule" is one of PRONOIA: the unsettling suspicion that people are out to serve you and you them! Creativity Café edutainment events are designed to "harmonize the audience and artists alike" in a way that relaxes, melts interpersonal boundaries, and establishes the event as a 'Happening' where the audience does not know what to expect next, but every step they are taken thru is designed for an affect.


Artists love the spotlight and having a live discourse with the audience. The only requirement is that the "artist of life" who dares to

present to an interactive audience encouraged to respond with questions, ideas, reactions, etc, is ready to be dissected. The audience comes away with new friends and an inspiring experience.

Creativity Café is a venue and social mechanism designed to harness the creativity of any given community, and apply the vision, talents, skills, resources and planning needed to build a better future world that arises from the collective consciousness of that community.

Creativity Café; as a Networking Center, via various tools, becomes a place where people support each other's needs by providing recourses, education, mentoring, products and services in a barter system. Creativity Café the Edutainment venue becomes an attractive location based forum where creative people and their works are shared interactively with an audience giving them an inside look at the creative process and igniting their creativity.

Contact Peter H. Rosen for more information: peter@creativity.net.



34 The future: extended identification, immersion, VR, pervasive games, flash mobs & cyberspace escape

There remains an important question to be answered: What kind of a future is there for transformational festivals of the ritual and TAZ category and for more permanent places aiming at cultural independence, change, innovation and sustainability?

Let's start with festivals in general, which includes events with a merely commercial and entertainment character. The current festivalization trend will increase, more and more people will turn to 'real' events, to experience the magical extra that 'live' meeting can bring. In our digital age we need opportunities and events to meet and have physical contact, to find meaning and identity if not identification to counteract the loss of privacy.

Eventification is not a trend that will vanish, there will be more festivals of all kinds and some will become more permanent venues.

They will change, like the carnival, kermis and village fair have changed from traditional gatherings into commercial events, have grown to sometimes enormous sizes like the large music festivals. Venues like stadiums, music halls, exhibition grounds and amusement parks now offer the escape from normality people are looking for.

The large music events, public festivals and amusement parks of the future will be more interactive, more engaging, catering to broad and niche markets. They will be more festival-like in the sense that they will offer a variety, not only the ecstatic but also the relaxed, the lounging, the contact opportunities. Technology will impact the scene, marketing will change, social media impact will grow, costly security and risk-elimination will be major factors in the business models. The facilities and resources required by the authorities and the consumers will probably lead to more or less permanent festival locations, operated by a single organizer or rented out to various fes-

tival operators and becoming part of the infrastructure, in a similar way as the large exhibition and fairs facilities today. This not only in the urban or metropolitan context, but the need to reconnect to nature will probably lead to artificial 'natural' festival grounds, or to assigning parts of nature reserves or national parks for festival use. Modern technology and especially internet and the internet of things (IoT) will of course influence the festivals and meetings of the future. It's obvious that real-time video connections can bring new options, the online appearance of speakers and performers is already quite common and the connection goes both ways, from and to the event, the talent and the audience both can tele-participate. The immediacy of the feedback can bring extra energy, the reactions of remote participants or audiences can be integrated in the whole, large screens are now everywhere. Amplification of video and sound can help to boost the energy and the new generation of body-sensors, smart watches and mixing options to create a whole new experience offers endless possibilities. The DJ already has become or is assisted by a VJ and with 3D and hologram technology this will reach even more fascinating levels. His talent for crowd reading will be enhanced if data from the audience's wearables and sensors become available. Then things like heartbeats can be used to gauge the mood Profiling based on body language and facial expression is already a reality in security applications, so why not to read the audience? Digital on-site production will allow to participate in building structures remotely, the 3D printers will make the parts and robots can do the assembly. Constructing scenery, stages, décors and constructions on the spot will become easier. At many festivals very impressive and innovative constructions are already part of the formula, this will increase with more 'maker trend' technology.

Micro-payments & reality mining

The technology facilitates and simplifies all kind of actions, for the organizers as well as the visitors. Identification, tracking, payments, ubiquitous computing, everything will happen more or less automatically. The technology will penetrate ever more, via Internet of Things (all equipment connected and remotely controlled) and wearable computing, using sensors that are able to immediately re-create

the actual world on and around the visitors, micropayments through NFC, gamification of activities, using digital transmitted credit to manipulate the crowd, drones, all of course invading the privacy but imposed because of the efficiency. The reality mining (data analysis), including the tracking of emotional identifiers like heart-beat, the location of everybody, sales at concessions, profiling for commercial and security purposes, will increase and the festival reality will move and develop. Many traditional aspect of festivals will change, like paying with cash money or tokens for food, services etc., the whole public announcement infrastructure, the contact modalities (matchmaking) but other traditions may come back, like more space for ritual and meditation, participation in building and staging the whole event, and identification will expand beyond the time and location.

It's all a matter of using all options, combining them, not turning to a neo-Luddite kind of refusal of what technology offers. Being aware of the dangers of dephysicalization in using the new technologies to prepare, do marketing and involve more parties is necessary, but would these great events like Burning Man be possible without the glue of internet and online communication. Building virtual communities is a great way to keep the group mind and identification alive, create smaller local events and communities, which will help the main event, where then everybody meets and can enjoy the extra energy of physical togetherness.

Security and safety

As the fear of terrorism grows (realistically or as a political tool) security will be a growing issue, this will limit privacy, will be a growing cost factor and may grind away at the basic condition and character of a festival, offering a magic circle or autonomous zone. More frisking, more identity control at the entrance and at the digital gate (internet ticket sales), more security personnel, more profiling with ever increasing loss of privacy. One of the attractions of present-day festivals, the use of all kinds of drugs including alcohol and tobacco, may come under siege. New testing technology, new ways to locate drugs on or in the body, it happens. At large festivals the entrance

security equals or surpassed that on airports. Security costs and all kinds of top-down regulations, imposed by the authorities and insurers, will raise the ticket prices and actually kill many smaller alternatives, leading to concentrations and monopolies in the festival business.

Immersion

Being part of the event, the participation and identification, will be helped by technology. The trend towards reality emulation, with 3D, virtual reality and augmented reality is of course a technology-push and not always successful in the market, but also plays into a need to being part of something else, something exciting, engaging and thrilling. This immersion is also what festivals offer and why not use the technology to enhance the experience. Walking around with an augmented reality headset, overlaying imagery from the stage or from separate VJ sources on what you physically can see and touch, using quantified self data from your own and other sensors to manifest your body state, there is much of such immersive fun on the horizon.

Services like e-dating, based on profiling, could be turned to in-the-moment link-up services, you are guided towards like-minded people based on what your sensors and online profile suggest. New contact opportunities emerge, you can meet your soul mate or just sex date even in the midst of a huge crowd, guided by the latest technology.

Transformational

The events aiming at chance and transformation, where festival culture is really developing, may even grow more dramatically. The stifling digital reality and materialistic demands of modern life, the lack of meaning in work and virtual relationships will drive people to look for alternatives, for the possibilities of participation, identification and realization. These will be offered by for-profit and not-for-profit organizers, by the government realizing that public discontent is a risk factor, and by self-organizing groups of activists. One of the key festival-trend observers, Jeet-Kei Leung of the Blooms series (thebloom.tv/public) points at the emergence and evo-

lution of festival communities and the impact these events are making in our world. He predicts that more and more festival-based collectives (or communities) will purchase land for the purpose of becoming permanent venues with a or year-round programming. He expects the 'transformational festival' milieu, with usually a strong socially-conscious drive, to leverage the opportunity to combine the power of the festival experience with more far-reaching experiments in regenerative culture, like eco-villages, permaculture gardens, organic farms, various forms of invention/maker labs, and artist studios and residencies.

A common factor will be that temporary or permanent autonomous zones, offering a certain freedom from normality are the fundament of such events, places or communities. The same constraints and costs factors encountered in the general festivals will also lead to more permanent festival locations with an 'alternative' identity. Temporary and more permanent places where transformation is possible will emerge, maybe in unexpected places. Exotic islands, abandoned oil rigs, cruise ships, how long will it take for the first festival in outer space to happen? Commercial or even criminal exploitation of spaces outside normal jurisdiction or less controlled by the authorities is commonplace. The whole cruise industry, catering for the graying affluent, the swingers and the gamblers, is based on making a profit by evading taxes (the sale of alcohol is their big money maker, the high seas are tax-free) and ducking employment regulations.

The religious or spiritual side of things will become more manifest. The need to address and contact the otherworld is clearly part of the search for meaning, now that religious traditions are vanishing in the West. Festivals of this kind offer a way to experience ritual, to identify with values beyond the mere material and seek the transformational self-knowledge we need to grow. As I believe ritual has roots in deeper layers of consciousness and the nervous system, appreciation of the ritual aspect will probably grow. It is the most common way to access the extradimensional realm and offers sociological and psychological advantages. I believe ritual is distributed

cultural intelligence; very essential in how a society, company or even family functions.

We cannot do without ritual and meetings to celebrate and feel united. As soon as one ritual disappears, another pops up. The communists for instance loved parades and pomp as much as the Nazis, royalty and the Church before them. Much of today's sports events are ritualistic and if you ask the supporters about their belief in the efficiency of mascots and the effect of their singing and cheering, most of them will agree it works. Doesn't the home team win more often?

The next question could be: 'Will the cultural and political importance of such festivals and free cultural spaces grow?' Will social change, cultural innovation and maybe political awareness and involvement of the people grow due to such events and places, where new ideas and insights can emerge? I am inclined to answer in the positive, but this requires a more elaborate answer. In the chapter about innovation I point at the mechanisms at play, and I expect that understanding how change happens will lead to more appreciation of events like festivals or places like free cultural spaces or alternative and intentional communities.

Diversity is the key

Change only results from differences. These days there is much debate about diversity, not only in a cultural and ethnic way. People like Thomas Piketty point at increased diversity in income and capital and warn for a crisis.

The authorities and political leaders do not often appreciate the positive aspects of diversity, only look at extreme situation where a crisis could happen (and maybe bring the transformation needed). A festival or community where all are and act alike, where there is no variation and not a little bit of creative chaos, is dead. Without a certain amount of chaos things get stale, we need some diversity, some differences to get things going. Things then emerge out of what seems just blurry, but then leads to new and different forms and innovations. We need the coyote energy, the willingness to be different to escape the boredom of routine. The whole deal of diversity is

that it is not just a danger, but it drives us, we need polarity to get moving, that is the essence of life. Diversity management is the core task of government and leaders.

The new utopia; from work to festival and hedonism

We can assume that technology will advance even more and that a future will happen with more robotics, more embedded computer power, an internet of things and cloud technology as container for big and small data. We organize and in fact robotize daily life so intensely, that we ourselves start to act as robots, as slaves of Facebook, internet and routines like traveling to work for hours in overfull buses or trains. Festivals offer a way out, an escape we need to still feel human, special, worthwhile and valuable. Governments, looking at long term development, must realize that an alternative to traditional work and the meaning it offers to most people, must be provided.

It will not take long, before robots, embedded circuitry or automated devices have taken over most menial work. Not only in manufacturing, but in logistics, care, agriculture and even in teaching and the medical field machines can take over a lot of human work. Modern robot science is developing fast, by using distributed intelligence, linking perception to immediate (reflex) action, artificial intelligence, big data and such. Autonomous robots, making intelligent decisions, will take over our lives and work. Autonomous operating vehicles, trains, cars, boats, planes, they are a reality, in normal life as well as in war (drones). Computers and autonomously acting robots or AI-devices are taking over many jobs, there is no work for many of us, so what is there as an alternative to keep us busy, and prevent Luddite revolution?

The government cannot ignore this and has to look for ways to keep us happy, busy, and in line. The advent of robotics and cyberspace externalization of memory (storage) has philosophical aspects, but it will also have an enormous impact on our daily lives. It will make many things easier and of course save money. This comes at a price, there will be less work, at all levels except the creative and the top level. But is that not what will stimulate people to look for alternatives, for events, festivals and communities where maybe work has a

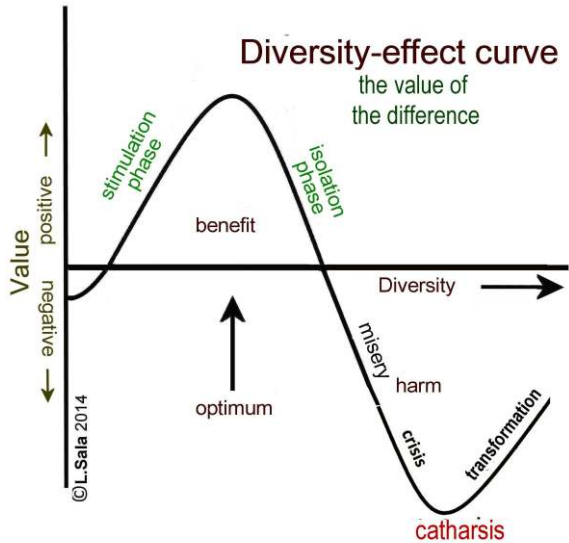
different flavor, where volunteering is the way to enjoy and feel part of what happens?

Alternate reality games, pervasive games,

The development of themed festivals, like the ones around historic themes, (chivalry, ethnic, renaissance), technology, ecology, etc.

and crossover festivals (between exhibition or fair and festival like a fashion festival or film festival) will probably move toward more immersion. Technology is helpful here, the potential of imaging technology with screens and holograms is evolving, but also soundscapes, smellscape are becoming more pregnant. This not only as provided by the festival organization, the participants will bring their own enhancements, in dresses and personal wearables, which offer new possibilities for tracking and crowd control, but also new forms of entertainment and even on-site learning and transformation. The integration of games and subsequent data mining of where the people are and what they do, being played by all or just part of the audience will and can change the whole festival setup, bring new contact opportunities and can add a whole new layer of activity to the festival grounds.

Alternate Reality Games (ARGs) are interactive narrative experiences which use the real world as the platform of the game. By bringing play out into the real world, ARGs provide players with an opportunity to enjoy both the gameplay and benefit from richer social experiences and physical activity, using the festival space like a game-board, but with the people moving.



Pervasive gaming is where the fictive world in which the game takes place blends with the physical world. Pervasive games blur the lines between the virtual world of the game and the real world of the player to bring a more immersive and realistic game experience. Facilitated by the ubiquity of mobile communications and wireless technologies, pervasive games take gaming back to the three-dimensional world, to nature resorts and public spaces like shopping malls, museums and festivals. One technique is location tracking, using the physical location of the player and their subsequent movement as a means of interaction with the game, such games are also called mobile games. An example is that something, a treasure or a person, is hidden and the audience, guided by clues on their mobile phones, has to locate this.

Modern public ritual: Flash Mobs & Coyote Mind

Modern media and notably the ubiquity of camera and recording devices like smartphones has already led to new ritual and performance forms, like the flash mob.

These flash-mobs are unexpected, unannounced, semi-spontaneous performances or happenings, sometimes by professional musicians, theater people or PR people (smart mobs), in public places. A group of people assemble suddenly in a more or less public place, perform an unusual and surprising act for a brief time, then quickly disperse.

This can be seen as a practical joke, but essentially it means trickster energy, coyote mind manifested. The notion of such coyote, disturbing actions is known in many traditions, it adds an element of chaos, of imperfection. Don't assume a ritual is perfect, allow for imperfection and thereby bow to the divine perfection. In some cultures specific mistakes in for instance buildings are an expression of this senti-

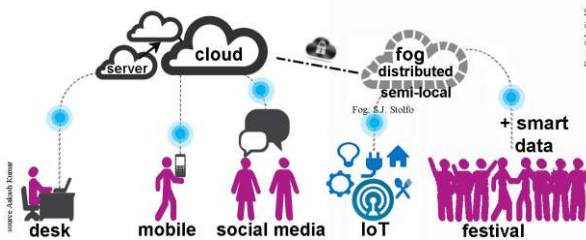


ment. They don't assume to be perfect.

The general idea of the flash mobs resembles the happenings of the sixties, but they are faster, unexpected and given a new vigor through modern media coverage by the public and media distribution. The first flash mob was organized by Bill Wasik, senior editor of Harper's Magazine in 2003 in Manhattan.

The participants use places like a big railway station, a large market, a public place and locations where a lot of people are around. The performers are initially not recognizable as such. When the performance starts, it usually is with only a few people, and then the surprised audience, the passers-by, turn toward them. Then more and more performers join, from different corners or they use staircases or different levels in the building to add their part. The surprise and often the message of the musical piece or performance make for growing enthusiasm and the flash mob becomes a highly emotional and moving performance. The group mind or group energy of both performers and audience skyrockets, there is effervescence and the interaction between audience and performers can be enormous. The TAZ happens, and the magic enters, people will let go of their masks, enjoy and share their emotions.

As there are always people with cameras, such flash mob performances will hit YouTube or Facebook in minutes and the message will quickly reach the world. This has turned out to work very well when there is a deeper message, a magical intention. Like when in March 2015 the European Anthem (Beethoven's 9th, Ode to Joy) was played in an Odessa market in Ukraine. Starting with just a few musicians, the whole place was then filled with musicians and singers, seemingly appearing out of thin air, bursting out in total commitment to the underlying message; we want to be part of Europe.



The magical energy of such events can be impressive. As I have been part of some happenings, organized by the mage Robert Jasper

Grootveld, at the Spui square location central in Amsterdam. I know how effective this can be. Seemingly silly acts can have an enormous effect, on the media, the police and the general audience and achieve clear jumps in awareness. As such, they are rituals and in the case of Grootveld's happenings, they were designed as such.

Different kind of events

Now there are also events and rituals of a different kind on the horizon. Combinations of internet and physical meetings, like using remote presence are used for meetings and expanding the participation of events. This can be in the context of creative processes and rational communications, real time or by way of a platform, like in mailstorming. New ways of interaction, with immersive presence via VR make new forms of performances possible. Many congresses already use this kind of remote presentations and discussions.

But looking further, cyberspace is slowly being recognized as another spiritual platform. Starting with Pagan groups it is increasingly used in what one could call magical ways. Asking for otherworld support when starting a new website or cyberspace venture is a logical development, the cyberpagans have already done this and developed formats for it.

Participation or at least remote presence is fairly easy these days, but could be used for different events too.

As an example: there are certain ritual events that have survived the onslaught of rationalism like funerals. But as the medical knowledge and capability to predict the outcome of certain diseases grows there is a growing tendency to willfully end one's life if the pain or general situation become too much. Euthanasia is an actuality, there's no denying this is a growing practice. In many countries there are legal constructions allowing it, safeguarding against abuse and protecting the doctors involved.

Now as this increases, many people will realize that if the moment of death can more or less be chosen, one may want close friends and relatives around. Sharing such a moment is now seen as very private, but why not use internet to allow remote presence. This could be a good way to say goodbye and share some precious last moments. Now maybe the notion of an exit-event with friends or family may

seem absurd. But think again. Saying goodbye, exit and maybe even funeral in whatever form combined, this calls for new ritual formats and why not use internet and online presence there.

There is certainly an evolution in festival formats, with online events and online participation we break through time and place limits. We can have festivals on cruise ships, in 'Second Life' worlds, why not stage such an event on the moon, and have participants use VR-technology to get there? New technology, the cloud, expanded data collection and IoT control will make festivals into ever more complex events with new possibilities to incorporate other media into the experience and the management. Security and privacy concern are growing and will increase costs and limit freedom. Profiling is a logical step, but might bring a need for fog processing (Salvatore J. Stolfo), in order to protect the notion (or illusion of an autonomous zone). Internet, new technologies and contact modalities expand the notions of presence, experience of participation, of contact possibilities, and no doubt creative people will use this to stage even more engaging, more immersive events in the future.



Utopia; dreams, inspiration, wakeup-call

Is there a better world, a better way to relate to each other, beyond the chaotic and polarized state we find ourselves in? What can we do to change the course of history, that now so threatening points at doom and crisis, unrest and misery.

People are and always were fascinated by the idea, that there could be a society or community, where everything is perfect or nearing perfection, where everybody is happy and fear and insecurity are absent. One has speculated about possibilities, hoped for and imagined societies where problems like war, disease, poverty, oppression, discrimination, inequality would not exist. This may include a safe and sustainable environment, peaceful and accessible government, no income gap, access to all resources, free education, healthcare, meaningful employment, etc. Idealistic, sometimes with a practical twist, but mostly pipe-dreams coming forth from a less benevolent actual reality.

There have been many attempts to write (or film) about about such a society, and develop a social utopia model, but many of these turned out to describe an dystopian one. To actually develop of found such an utopian ideal as a physical community is an age-old endeavor. Not only as a physical place, but as an organization like in freemasonry or as a virtual space. The notion of cyberspace, a technological utopia imagined by Sci-fi writers and realized with digital technology was an utopia, which turned out to bring many goods, but also may threats to humanity.

In thinking about communities that at least in some respect would be better, more humane, more ecological we can therefore learn from the utopists, those who made intellectual or artistic constructs and those who actually tried to create an utopian or eutopian (mini-)society or community.

Why is the concept of utopia not only relevant to community living or intentional communities for a few idealist, but should be considered and studied by all who are looking for a new perspective on society, in a global way? One could easily discard the whole notion of an utopian society as a unrealistic, non dynamic dream of some writers, do-gooders or religious leaders, who believe that an ideal state or society could work but assume ideal people.

The actual communities that emerged, based on the various social utopian models turn out to become an exclusionary space, a space that is ideal for an elite and privileged section of society, the ones that “deserve”being part of it. Conform or leave, no middle way and don’t think for yourselves, that’s a sin or a crime.

Some communities did survive and prosper, most didn’t. It is easy to point out how the human limitations like ego and material greed could make such an aspiring utopian society or community a pipe-dream, a fata-morgana, an illusion that could never work. And yet, most of us strive to improve our lives and our part of the world, from a selfish or social point of view, we vote for those who promise us those improvements,

We like to believe in a solution, a promising perspective, especially when in dire straits, when problems arise that go beyond individual competence and agency. In most political movements and even in the narrative concerning Corona there was this utopian perspective of science,of progress and the vaccines that would save us all. There is a distinct utopian flavor in scientific thinking, most scientists believe in progress, in some kind of teleological perspective that we can manage this world and society towards a better future.

We all have dreams about a world that would be more perfect, better organized, less greedy, more humane that what we experience in our daily life. And even those who believe that there is sense and direction in what we perceive as reality, that our world is a great school with a perfect curriculum at times are tempted to change that a bit, make it a better place for all of us. These dreams, all through history, have been laid down in books or verse, painted or sculpted in art and

appear in the various interpretations of heaven, paradise. Many times these ideas or dreams were tested in reality, in communities, ashrams, monasteries, cults, in whole countries but alas, without much lasting success. Only monasteries and religious communities seem to have staying power and a sustainable model, but even there many were short-lived.

For those who are planning an intentional work/live/create community it does make sense to study the historical and conceptual aspects of the virtual and real utopia's. One has to consider the limitations, no community will ever be a real and perfect utopia, as we cannot and don't intend to separate from the rest of the world (even planetary relocation plans don't discard their origin on earth). Even a very spiritual endeavor will have no ambition to be more than a little seed in the sea of awareness.

The Utopian concepts do have value for us, as they usually deal with one or more of the aspects of scarcity, be it material or the less defined needs for happiness or security.

One gets the impression, that the various utopist writers have usually projected some part of their own personality into their utopian worldview at the expense of a more balanced approach. Often practical aspects are neglected or just assumed like where the material affluence, overcoming the need to worry about food etc, Or like in Plato's or Skinner's (Walden 2) ideal societies there are kings/philosophers or very gifted planner/executives who in fact establish a kind of totalitarian regime. The question is always who is controlling the controllers, who is planning the planners, and monitoring the feedback mechanisms. We know by now, that what we hoped for and assumed works (like in democracy) often fails or is missing. They assume an ideal state based on ideal people and a social understanding among them, but already Rousseau was realistic enough to admit that this is fictional, real people have real human shortcomings.

So the discourse about utopia is relevant, as we can ask if utopia is even possible?

- Are there utopian ideas and ideals that are achievable, and should be acted on and in what practical ways? Do utopias value social goals above individual development and achievements, and what does this mean for innovation, progress, ambition, and even free will and personal desires? Can we recognize the totalitarian and even fascist background in what is presented as progress towards a near-perfect society, like in the reset pushed by the World Economic Forum?
-

What is missing in many utopias is the development of the individual, how to deal with frustrations, criminal intent, depressions etc. Again the ideal human doesn't have these problems so they are ignored or treated as a residue of the non-ideal past. But a real community does have to deal with this and organizing war games as in Ecotopia is a kind of drastic solution. The inner development of the partners and guests of a community is, in my view, the most important, it really should be a school for life, a place for growth, not a kind of material paradise where everybody lives long, happily but without change or development.

History

- Utopian ideas and images of perfection and imagined places and societies are everywhere in classical and biblical literature. Many of these worlds are set outside history, in the future or before time began, in a mythical time with its own rules. The idea of a Paradise, a Garden of Eden is already a kind of utopian concept, where the tension between the ideal (the good) and the real (evil) comes out. The whole of the Genesis story of creation can be seen as an utopia, the pure events before human history kicked in.
-
- The utopian literature includes:
-

Plato, mostly in "The Republic" (ca.360 B.C.) saw wisdom based on truth and reason at the heart of the just person and the just society and proposed a classification of the society into a three-tier and

fairly elitist rigid structure of “gold”, “silver” and “bronze” people according to their socio-economic status and rules by ruled by philosopher-kings. His image of prisoners trapped in a cave, watching shadows of life outside cast on the wall by the light of a fire and believing the shadows are reality is very relevant in thinking about group-mind, mass hypnosis and reverberates with how the public was led to believe the Corona narrative (and many illusionary narratives before that).

Aristotle’s *Politics* describes how a city (polis) should be organized and kind of models many of Plato’s notions.

Manu (a religious leader in the millennium BC) as can be derived from *Manusmriti* (The Laws of Manu), provided various ‘laws’ and a four-tier hierarchy for the proper functioning of the society.

Utopia (Thomas More, 1516) gave the name to the genre of describing a perfect imaginary world and defines a city, on a fictional island in the Atlantic Ocean, by its title (Utopia) and sees it as totally run by its government. Moore made it a perfect version of Republic, with total equality and pacifistic, without poverty or misery, no lawyers but using mercenaries to defend itself. Utopia is a perfect but unreal place. A proper definition of a perfect and real place is eutopia.

In “The City and the Machine: (Lewis Mumford, 1965) and “The Story of Utopias (1922) more practical guidelines are outlined.

There are many, many utopian visions like *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels, 1847) aiming at equality and ending class-distinctions.

Eric Frank Russell’s book *The Great Explosion* (1963) details an economic and social utopia with money replaced with Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS).

Categories

One could categorize utopias as political, moral, philosophical, socio-economical, ecological, religious/spiritual, in most books, movies, TV-series and actual communities there is an amalgam of

these themes. Many are more dystopian and portray situations where the good intentions fell prey to totalitarianism, censorship, propaganda and suppression. The dystopian genre remained popular in modern times, like in “The Matrix” (1999), the Handmaid’s Tale (1985) and “The Hunger Games” (2008) and their sequels.

There are island utopias, as situating such a place on a more or less isolated location made it easier to convince the reader that such a place could exist. Francis Bacon’s utopia, ‘The New Atlantis’ describes a remote utopian island governed entirely by reason and science. Aldous Huxley describes in “Island” a dystopian society where a sedating drug (Soma) is used to keep the inhabitants happy and peaceful.

The romantic utopias like Henri David Thoreau’s “Walden” (1854) were an inspiration for many communities in the 19th century that were mostly politically conservative. Daniel Defoe’s story Robinson Crusoe (1719) is about the possibility of a solitary utopia and in line with Rousseau’s “Noble Savage”. Shangri-La, in James Hilton’s “Lost Horizon” (1933), is about a mystical harmonious valley, The movie “Avatar” (2009) pictures a romantic virtual world.

Satirical utopias are kind of mocking the ideals of egalitarianism and perfect happiness. Aristophanes in The Birds and Jonathan Swift in Gulliver’s Travels are good examples.

Science fiction writers and filmmakers have portrayed many futuristic utopias, like Robert. Heinlein’s *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* (1988), an individualistic and libertarian utopia, “We” by Yevgeny Zamyatin (1924) and H. G. Wells’s *A Modern Utopia* (1905), There are positive views and very dystopian ones like The Matrix. Cyberspace (William Gibson in *Burning Chrome* (1982) and *Neuromancer*) was based on an utopian technology, that is more or less omnipresent in our modern internet world. John Perry Barlow described it as; “the present-day nexus of computer and telecommunications networks.”

Religious utopias are less a literature subgenre, but have manifested as real physical communities, in many forms, all through the ages. Many radical religious groups formed eutopian societies like the

“Shakers” and the “Mennonites” (Amish), some have survived till today.

Actual communities

- More or less spiritually inclined communities have existed in all times, like the Gnostic communities in Israel and Osho communes in the late 20th century. These were not always different from the dominant religion, but believed that living together in more modest and equal setting would intensify their practice and belief, like in monasteries and ashrams or like the "Amish" in the USA.
- Medieval rural communes arose from a need to collaborate to defend oneself in turbulent times when the normal “protectors”, the nobility and gentry, were unable to do so. Also the “commons”, a shared place, and the markers to enable commerce needed some form of organization.
- Later, in the 19th century, intentional communities were attempting to create an economic utopia, in response to the harsh economic conditions of the early industrial age. The “utopian socialist” movement was egalitarian and sharing but most didn’t survive in a competitive world.
- The **Paris Commune** was a local government that briefly ruled Paris in 1871, it was at first a seizure of power by the working class but developed in a brutal revolution. It was, however, a seminal political break with the “ancien regime”.

The word commune now indicates an intentional community or free cultural space of people living together in equality, with some or more of characteristics and principles like sharing an ideology, resources, property and work, have common interests, some consensus decision-making, non-hierarchical structures and ecological sustainability.

In the sixties the idea of such communities became very popular, but not many did survive and the motivations have changed, many are not much more than a way to share housing (squatting) and resources, although intentional communities concentrating on ecology have become popular, like Findhorn, Movements with a spiritual inclination have always been there like monasteries, but did evolve with times, like the anthroposophical collectives. Eastern philoso-

phies, with the Osho-movement as a prime example, have sprouted many communities and ashrams, some have survived and developed, in what could be called “new-age” directions.

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