

National Queer Conference 2017: Praxis, Politics & Possibilities

Lives in Disagreements: Acknowledging dissensus amongst the people of Kuraili.

*By Anushka Rose
(MPhil- Development Practice
Ambedkar University, Delhi)*

Introduction:

For long we have been trying to fit into the world- the hetero-normative developmental world. And for long we have been trying to live by shaping and reshaping ourselves to conform to the requirements of this world- one that promises opportunities of development, progress and well being. However these iterative attempts at fitting in have had inherent costs attached to it. This world where we have been trying to contort ourselves in order to be included is often the one that repudiates any other imagination of being imbued with creativity and eros. It rejects everything else that is not heterosexual. We began our fight for parity of women's role in the social-economic and cultural realm through WID and WAD frameworks. And with time we saw different gendered bodies join our hands, in this fight for parity (and not equality because asking for equality would be in the hegemonic language of the Man-kind, what Luce Irigaray would call the language of the One) for various genders. However as we formed a collective of our own to fight disparities across various spaces and realms of hetero-normativity, did we focus too much on our sameness to form these collectives that we wrote off any possibilities of differences that are historical and contingent. Through attempts to seek acknowledgement of how we distinctly differ from the the progressive hetero-normative world, did we form a collective of sameness- a bloc of non-hetero-normative(s)? By demanding for a world that allows for the existence of more than one, have we started forming collectives in the same logic of one that we have been resisting so far? The paper wishes to highlight the language of two but one, a queer understanding of collectives, where relationships are fore-grounded with an emphasis on differences that often get lost when we come together in solidarity. Does the cause get better of us where we start erasing or disavowing differences that emerge as dissonances and aberrations in order to maintain the sanctity of the group/collective so formed and what happens to our relationships when we are consumed in our acts of securing the solemnity of the group?

The paper draws from my experiences of working in Adivasi communities in a village-Kuraili in eastern Madhya Pradesh. The ethnically differentiated communities underwent an erasure of differences to maintain a harmonious homogeneous bloc, so as to progress under the aegis of development. The village now finds itself entrenched in performative acts to project a certain reality- a reality of a progressive model village. In their stylized repetition of acts it seems that they are beginning to lose a distinction between the (fore-grounded image of a progressive model village) which I feel is the mask that they wear for the outside and the Real¹ face; as if the mask of certainty forecloses the Real face or the Real of the face. This loss also gets reflected in ways that people relate with each other- where we witness apathy and antipathy that has begun to seep into the relationships shared by the people; the relationships that span across ethnicities, communities, families, and also within families in Kuraili. Interface with development has shaped the contours of relationships in a way that was not fore-seen or perceived before.

Further the totalizing need of the hegemonic development subjectivizes its people into harmonious and homogeneous subjects through an epistemic repudiation of certain essential signifiers which constitute their reality. Often such subjects are forced or coerced into disowning, denying and disavowing parts of their *real*-ity. This disavowal takes place through dropping of fundamental signifiers which would otherwise foreground various aspects of a complex reality which might produce inconsistencies in an otherwise homogeneous project of development. Such repudiation results in foreclosure of sensorial truths, truths which do not conform or stand contrary to the logic of development.

Foreclosure resulted in resentments formed as a result of the repudiation of the signifiers of dissonances, forcing an articulation of harmony and homogeneity. It seems in the logic of hetero-normative development today that a collective can be formed only through compliance and

1 Real: In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the Real is distinguished from 'reality'; where (everyday) reality is understood as a 'phantasy construction' (as against conventional realist/materialist readings of reality) and Real is that which is either marking (i) the inassimilable or (ii) the foreclosed. In the limited context of this paper, one can think of two understandings of the Lacanian Real: (i) Real as the leftover of the process of symbolization; the Real as the remainder of the process of symbolization. In this sense, a part of the world as remainder of the process of symbolization is Real, but this is a world (or a Real) that cannot be named: it only gestures toward an unnamed remainder or excess – an excess that cannot be assimilated/domesticated. Such an understanding of the Real also signals the limits-of-knowledge and (ii) Real as the byproduct (and not the leftover) of the process of symbolization: the Real as that which is secreted out of the Imaginary-infinity in the process of Symbolic-alization; the Real as that which is put outside; the Real as that which is repudiated in the process of the formation of the Symbolic; the Real as, hence, a reminder of repudiation. (Dhar, 2017, unpublished paper)

cohesion, often masked under resonances. Such enforced resonances, alienate the members of the communities (Agariyaa, Bhariyaa and Gonds)² and also the collectives and groups formed to further the project of development, and eventually contribute in generating emotions of apathy. The specter borne out of resentments comes to haunt the communities and the groups/ collective; threatening to undo the group from within. The repudiation of dissonances comes with great force as a response to such insecurities and threats that seem to dissolve the image they foreground. Thus through this paper I explore what would be a praxis of ethico-politics? Should the group be allowed to wither away under the pressure of insecurities or should the group be re-subjectivized; to reorient relationships so as to generate queer subjectivities? Subjectivities that are sometimes within the boundaries of kinship alliances and at times beyond. Such subjectivities could be invoked by way of introducing discussions and acknowledgements of disagreements, dissensions and dissonances. If the latter is to be attempted then the paper, drawing from the work with multi-ethnic communities in Kuraili, discusses possible ways where we imagine communities coming together in their queerness with their multi-various subjectivities rather than in (hetero-normative) homogeneity.

Therefore I begin the discussion with how we find lives in agreement in the manner in which the collectives are formed. Through Nancy I explore how the being in together often collapses into a common being thereby finding itself rooted in the principle of sameness and this fixity then gets reflected in the practice of the group, which is achieved only by erasure of differences and disagreements. From there I move on to discuss how the developmental groups in Kuraili find themselves haunted by the specter of foreclosed dissonances and years of disavowal of the differences, when the members of the collectives and groups in particular and the village in general find themselves in relationship matrices that are slowly receding into apathy. However through the process of engaging in critical discussions around differences of various kinds, an attempt is made to re-orient the space of the collective that can become hospitable to vulnerabilities of its members thereby doing away with the fixity and certainty; in other words an attempt to make way for queering of groups. Finally I reflect on how queering of groups can offer us possibilities of 'ever-becoming' and how this will then prepare grounds for ethics of coexistence.

2 Agariyaa- identify themselves as the sub-clan under Gonds.

Bhariyaa- identify themselves as off-shoot clan of the Baigas(indigenous adivasis of central India).

Gonds- identify themselves as the original inhabitants of the Gondwana land.

Before I move further, I need to acknowledge that since I draw from my experience of working with multiple ethnic communities that have long been exposed to development, I shall restrict myself largely to groups and collectives formed under the aegis of development and the ethico-politics of the praxis that is drawn from working with such groups.

Lives in Agreement:

Although not new, the question of communities, collectives or groups remain pertinent to our contemporary times. But let us begin with a few fundamental questions – what is a community? What is a collective? How are they different and why do people become part of communities, collectives or groups? We are already aware that the concept of community is notoriously fluid and capable of being understood in myriad of ways. On one hand it may mean a totalizing all embracing organic unit or unity which does not tolerate any differences ; while on the other end of the spectrum as Zygmunt Bauman notes, community may mean a much looser and evanescent form of association such as those of aesthetic communities – where communities seem like a ‘light cloak’ rather than a ‘steel casing’ (Bauman, 2001 in Schwarzmantel 2007).

Differing from these two understandings, French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy in his seminal work *Inoperative Communities* offers another conceptualization of community where he argues that community is ‘existence in as much as it is *in* common, but without letting itself be absorbed into a common substance. Being *in* common has nothing to do with communion, with fusion into a body’ (Nancy 1991, p.xxxviii). That is to say that being in common is not equivalent to a common being. He further adds that there is no communion of singularities in a totality superior to them and immanent to their common being’ (Nancy 1991, p.28). Thus for us if community is not a project of fusing ourselves in a body then can we make sense of the paradoxical assertion that Nancy makes in the following statement that ‘ in a certain sense, community acknowledges and ascribes- this is its peculiar gesture- the impossibility of community’ (Nancy 1991, p.15).

From Nancy’s theorization we understand that a community does not seek to fuse individual or singular identities into a unified being, but rather acknowledges the plurality stemming from differences. Therefore the impossibility of a common-being while we strive for ‘being-in-common’. He argues that ‘a community is not a project of fusion, or in some general way a productive or operative project – nor is it a *project* at all’ (Nancy 1991, p.15, author’s emphasis). Rather the community or its members are always in a process of becoming a community, by way

of exposing their singular identities to each other. And it is this continuous exposition that makes community always in the becoming.

Collectives or rather collective action on the other hand can be understood through the economist Mancur Olsen's seminal book, *The Logic Of Collective Action*, where he puts forth principles³ essential for collective action, which have later been updated by Hardin (1982) and Sandler (1992) (Sandler 2004).

Generally, one would expect that if a group of people have a common interest they will come together and persevere for the common goal. Olson states, however, that this is generally not the case:

"But it is *not* in fact true that the idea that groups will act in their self-interest follows logically from the premise of rational and self-interested behavior. It does *not* follow, because all of the individuals in a group would gain if they achieved their group objective, that they would act to achieve that objective, even if they were all rational and self-interested. Indeed unless the number of individuals in a group is quite small, or unless there is coercion or some other special device to make individuals act in their common interest, *rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests.*"(Olsen 1971, p2).

Olsen makes a case for smaller groups, where social pressure and social incentives work more effectively. Groups so small in number, that the members can have face-to-face contact. On the contrary, in the larger latent group- each member is so small in relation to the total that his action will not matter one way or the other.

With the course of development, there has been an increasing emphasis on shifting towards collectivizing people into smaller groups. One such movement has been towards empowering women through micro-finance institutions in the form of Self Help Groups or *Samitis*. Self-help groups- as per Planning Commission Report of 2008, was to be a method of organizing the poor and the marginalized (people) to come together to solve their individual problems. The SHG method was and is still used by the government, NGOs and others worldwide. The poor collect

³ For Olsen, collective action finds itself pillared on at least six primary considerations – size of the group, composition of the group, rules governing the interaction, strategic nature of the action, the underlying information of the participants and the sequence of interactions(Sandler 2004).

their savings and save them in banks. In return they are to receive easy access to loans with a small rate of interest to start their micro unit enterprise⁴ (Planning Commission 2008).

A large number of scholars would inform us about the shifting trajectory of micro-finance institutions in India for last three decades⁵.

These scholar also inform us that as we moved increasingly towards mobilizing and collectivizing people, the development actors did not take into account how the communities have been formed in the context they were working in. Kabeer (2005), Kalpana (2005), Patel (2015), Sharma (2010) and Yeboah et al (2015) particularly discuss how the policy documentation never had a system where the feedback from the women –for whom the policy were drafted, could be accommodated. Instead what were formed were groups with members who focused on maximizing their utilities. As the definition of the groups, by Planning Commission informs us – that the attempt was to mobilize and collectivize poor and marginalized to solve their *individual* problems. Thus focus was placed on collectivizing women to create Self Help Groups where they were to collectively strive for their family’s economic security. Thus the very objective of the attempt was to create isolated market subjects who would collude to attain economic prosperity and well being.

With the advent of collectives, women who were already members of various communities in their villages and across their villages, therefore also stepped into the circle of samitis with the matrices that they shared with their fellow members before the formation of the samitis. Thus as we moved from communities to (creating) collectives, these collectives often carried with them the hierarchy and the power structures found within the fabric of communities. The collectives were carved out in spaces where people were already members of various communities rooted in clan based memberships. Even though members like the women of Kuraili were part of progressive collectives such as samitis, poultry cooperatives and block federations, they did not cease being members of their communities, one in particular is the adivasi *samaj*⁶. It is here that it becomes imperative to understand what therefore constitutes a community to arrive at an understanding of a collective. Since the members would often walk in with their subjectivities

⁴ (A report on Success and Failure of SHGs in India, 2008, Report submitted to Planning Commission of India, Government of India)(Planning Commission of India 2008)

⁵ Fisher, Thomas and M S Sriram 2002, Mayoux 2003, Narendranath 2001, Kabeer 2005, Kalpana 2005, Patel 2013, Yeboah, et al. 2015 inform us the trajectory of SHGs over three decades in India since the conception of such developmental collectives.

⁶ *samaj*: are communes formed on the basis of *Adivasi Jaati* identities.

still rooted in the law and codes of their respective samaj, besides other communes, and with them also came the prejudices and norms around purity and pollution. It will be worthwhile to remember that the stratified terms of relations that the respective samaj share with each other often find themselves replicated within the sanitized developmental spaces of samitis. With these already constituted webs of relationships, women in the case of samitis – also often find themselves with fellow members who due to a certain historicity might be more of adversaries than friends. Thus the space of samiti becomes a highly complicated space rife with relationships formed outside, and where newer terms of relationships are being forged. Where now the women are now supposed to be a group of viable and credit worthy entrepreneurs. In order to re-orient a space it becomes essential to understand how that space is constituted.

Having said this, we often find collectives who view themselves as a unified singular bloc- a body fused together as One. Communes borne out of singular thought and practice . Where members can often be found to always be in agreement, bounded by a code and a fixed terms of reference with respect to their fellow members. This fixity, which Nancy himself suggests that a community should resist, then takes shape of a bloc that cannot be moved. This fixity roots itself in certainties- certainty in politics and thought and therefore in their action. As we discuss Nancy and his understanding of community, let us be wary of the cultural context that he is drawing from. Nancy's experience is rooted in the disillusion and resignation of the 1970's in France and across Europe. But for us he offers an alternative reading of communities. But before we move on, let us understand how communities formed under the aegis of Development present themselves today.

Collectives fashioned in the architecture of communities- retained calls of obligation and adherence to an oedipal figure or an organization – a coherent , consistent consolidated fused being.

It is here perhaps that we encounter lives in agreement, an agreement of a totalizing nature, of a binding nature (on its members). The kind I encountered in the small village of Kuraili nestled in the comforts of the Vindhyas and Satpuras of Madhya Pradesh. It was here that I encountered unity in all its singularity manifested in the collectives or communities present in the village. Where the members of the collective described themselves as one in unity. One in thought, one in action and one in politics. Everyone works collectively towards a (singular) goal of (economic security and) prosperity. It seemed that they were always in agreement on every thing. Yet when I was invited to attend their samiti meetings, their uniform cohesion made me uncomfortable.

There seemingly harmonious collective being appeared disharmonious to me. The samiti was reported to be a collective space sanitized of prejudices and biases rooted in differences of opinions or origins by its members. As Anita Sayyam would say, when we come for our samitis we come as one – *hum sab (yaha) ek hai* – we all are One (here). And I could experience this uncanny one-ness in meetings week after week. I could experience this totalizing one-ness when my every attempt to unearth individual experiences of the journey of *vikaas*⁷ in Kuraili was met by a uniform consolidated meta-narrative⁸. It was strange how everyone recounted the same narrative. It was remarkable how everyone resounded the unshakable unity among the members of the samitis in particular and the village in general.

Yet during conversations women and men would often confide their discontent among the members regarding deliverances of various developmental programmes. Their dissatisfaction at being coerced to comply with the politics of the (powerful) few which often would translate into

7 *Vikaas*- development

8 Chandrakali is perhaps one of the front-runner of the consolidated unified narrative which she recounts as follows: *Before we joined samiti, there was intense poverty (deprivation). Before we would sustain ourselves only on paich bhaji but now we have rice, pulses and vegetables. Now we eat paich bhaji only when we crave for it. Our lives have become better after joining samitis. Men and women in Aajeevika Mission and PRADAN helped us in understanding how we and our village will gain by joining the samitis. Development that one can see today in the village was possible only because men and women of the village worked together to usher in development. Together we brought water from the Ama Paani spring at the top of the adjoin hill in the form of DBI pump (diversion based irrigation pump). It was a collective decision about those women who have less landholdings should get poultry farms first. Here women have received gender trainings and also go out to train women (in other villages) as well. The men also have an understanding of gender roles and stereotypes. Although initially men resisted against women joining SHGs and the Federation, but after we explained to them why it is integral for women to become members of both these institutions and how their households would benefit from such membership, they agreed to it as well. Today men of the village declare how proud they are of the women of their households in front outsiders.)*

Paich bhaji- Paich is a fairly thick corn kernel soup boiled with water and seasoned only with salt and is consumed with sautéed leafy vegetables (*bhaji*). Although in Kuraili people do not consume *paich bhaji* as much as they used before, but for many villages like Harsingri and Lalpur (Amarpur Block) *paich bhaji* forms an essential part of their everyday food regimen.

politics (the hegemony) of the majority. However when in samitis- which is to be a platform where the women's collective strives to address various grievances of its members , I observed eerie silences about such discontent. And often these silences would be filled with statements like – *Yaha sab theek hai, yaha sab pehle se achcha hai*⁹- which is then followed by a narrative about the glorious transition that Kuraili underwent under the aegis of progress and development in the past decade. Again I was told a unified and an uncannily uniform narrative. The narrative is so consistent that it becomes unnerving.

I began seeking why this un-daunting cohesion made me uncomfortable. I began to reflect as to what about this collective gave me discomfort. I began looking for counter narratives or narratives which gave a glimpse of individual experiences of struggle in the larger narrative of success. Narratives that would make the journey more real and enriched when infused with the vignettes of personal struggles. Yet when in the group I was again narrated the glorious journey, but in the private conversations people would disclose their discontent about their everyday life and the stagnancy in the politics of their group.

I began to imagine what would it mean to have disagreements in such a cohesive group- can there be harmony amongst members in disagreements? How would the group resolve or address when members disagreed on the matters of say money and credit? Then I take a step back and ask, can such a group – known for its cohesion – ever allow disagreements within the ceremonious group boundaries?

From agreements to disagreements: acknowledging dissensus in Kuraili.

With groups that ensured secured lives for its members, this security was accompanied by codified behavior, with structured norms and fixed expectations from the members of the group. And these collectives- the samitis in Kuraili, were indeed able to ensure secured lives for its members by access to financial credit which assisted the women to attain economically secured lives for their families and themselves. Which is echoed in Chandrakali's testimony about her journey of the last decade (footnote 8).

9 *Yaha sab theek hai*- everything is alright here; *yaha sab pehle se achcha hai*- everything is better here than before.

However, besides the promise of secured and certain liveability as opposed to precarity, the samitis were the spaces for members to share expositions and vulnerabilities, as understood by Jean Luc Nancy (Nancy 1991), to form solidarities. Instead this space often collapses into a space ridden with performativity. For instance in Kuraili the members became so consumed with their roles as exemplary members of their samitis and to present themselves as a viable and profitable enterprise for the banks (Narendranath 2003), they have begun to become apathetic to the needs of those who could be termed as financially unworthy. From a space that was to be an emancipatory space for its members who can come forward to share their experiences of vulnerabilities, the collective space of samiti takes a form of political correctness. What happens to the experiences of the individuals that places them into precarity? Can there be a space that could be carved out in the collectives that seek to secure their members from such uncertainties?

Our attempt in Kuraili was to create such a space in the narratives, in the institutional space of SHGs and in the everyday of such a model village, where people can come forth to talk about a life full of precarity.

This is where we begin to create a space to discuss our narratives of experiences that are counter to the meta-narrative that is kept afloat in the development circles of the vicinity. This counter narrative emerges out of a culture of critical thought and reflection and most importantly by discussing these narratives out loud in a space carved out within the secured lives provided by collectives. Where voicing these experiences that stand in contradiction to the meta-narrative becomes a site of resistance. Where we begin by acknowledging differences that are rooted in our origins and in opinions. Where we start carving out a space for dissensus. In contradiction to the will of the discourse that demands its subjects to be homogenized and hegemonized by sanitizing them of their subjectivities, the counter-hegemonic praxis lies in our collective attempts to voice out these aberrations in our circles, big and small. To bring forth experiences embedded in the everyday subjectivities. To talk about the experiences that are contradictory to the discursive narratives.

For Chaiti- an Agariyaa woman from Kuraili – it is counter hegemonic when she states that development practitioners need to understand that not All women should be collectivized. Not All women from various ethnic clans can be collectivized together. At times precarity needs to take prominence over the need for certainty promised in secured collectives. That she does not always find it empowering and liberating when she walks miles around Baiga Chak to collectivise women who do not want to be collectivized. And this stands contradictory to the beliefs of the

local development practitioner that the certainty and security promised through collectives as protective as the samitis. It is counter-hegemonic for Bhaghirathi when she voices her opinion on how at times she feels as if the promises of companionship in the space of SHGs remain unfulfilled. That she still yearns for a space where she can open her heart out to her fellow members of the village. Where she disapproves of the decision taken by the elders of the village to compromise on an issue originating in jaati discrimination. Dropti feels that it is time to acknowledge the hostility women often feel from their husbands due to their associations with the samitis. When Chaiti remarks that she does not feel equal and united with other men and women, in the aftermath of a series of incidents based on purity and pollution in food habits which visibly causes a rift in the multi-ethnic village. These women form the few who have critically reflected on their experiences of their membership in protective collectives such as their SHGs to speak about how they feel suffocated and repressed by the dominant will of the (discourse that flows through) influential few. That the membership itself becomes a burden, which then makes the space of the samitis a mechanical and an administrative space. Where this space ceases to be what it promised to be – but instead takes a form of a protective space without the space for human experiences and voices of dissent.

Therefore the attempt in Kuraili was made to bring forth such instances and experiences of members that stand against the normative narrative prevailing in and around Kuraili. The narrative of model women and men, of a model village, who have no differences amongst themselves, in spite of a series of recent events rooted in ethnic differences. The pressure of homogenizing totalizing agreements that have partly been forced upon them by the discourse and partly which the people in Kuraili have taken upon themselves due to benefits rooted in being members of a village of an ideal type- have lead them into a performativity.

Judith Butler helps me in extending and re-enforcing Goffman's articulation of everyday presentation of the self, to constitution of subjectivities through her discussion of gender identity through performative acts in the everyday. Through her discussions of how gender identities get constituted in time through stylized repetition of acts (Butler, 1988), I feel the argument can be extended to other socially located identities and subjectivities such as the Adivasi *jaati* identity. Butler's formulation of gender moves it (gender) off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of constituted *social temporality* (author's emphasis). Significantly if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity , a performative accomplishment

which mundane audience, including actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief.

To re-enforce the ideal-ness of Kuraili, the people are required to continuously put forth a narrative and actions that speak for this narrative, that would ensure various discords (that occur amongst people across tribes, families, power centers and individuals) which are kept under wraps in the construction of a uniform narrative of a unified harmonious village in the face presented to the outsiders although such hostilities continue to fester and manifest themselves in the absence of such outsiders, where it is assumed that there will be no outsiders/observer to question and judge the harmonious nature of Kuraili.

Lives in disagreements:

Having discussed the above, one question perhaps still remains unaddressed- how do we think or imagine queer collectives?

First what does it mean to be queer? Would queer theory mean to reflect on what it means to be queer, or does the concept of queerness change the manner in which we theorize (Colebrook, 2009)? Can queer-ness help us in imagining a coming together that is not woven into the fine fibers of hetero-normativity?

As I engaged with the men and women of Kuraili, and their harmonious One-ness – which was applauded by many development agencies in the district- it was the queer theory that helped me look at the hetero-normative within this harmonious Unity. It was a space guided by fixed and certain norms, with codified behavior and expectations from its members. Where conformity besides coercion and compliance become the modalities through which the fused body of the collective works.

My attempt therefore can be seen as re-orienting these spaces of collectives by shaking these very modalities. And this break in modalities comes when individual members begin to disagree, first by not agreeing with the agenda of the influential few -by acknowledging differences, dissonances and voices of dissent that we have so far disavowed. This disavowal which came as a result of the homogenization of the members in the collectives - founded themselves on the principle of equality. Everyone must be equal when they enter the circle of samitis. Yet this equality, as we know through Irigaray (1985), is inherently articulated in the

language of One. The heteronormative One. The hegemonic One. The phallogocentric One. Thus what would be an Other understanding of coming together?

What if we start acknowledging that men and women do not or rather cannot sanitize themselves of their experiences which are rooted in their everyday subjectivities? What if we start acknowledging (and I mean development professionals and activists here) that a Gond person cannot shrug the stratified lens they carry within themselves when they encounter a Bhariyaa or an Agariyaa? Just as we have long struggled to make spaces gendered, can we hope for a similar struggle to queering of spaces, to queering of collectives?

What if we start imagining coming together of people in groups where a new ethic of relationship can be formed. Where our politics will not be the one of sameness but rather of difference. Differences derived from our subjective beings. Where such differences are not collapsed or erased, but perhaps constitute a place where expositions can happen, where vulnerabilities can be shared without the burden of the codified terms of relationships the group often places upon us. We can then perhaps hope that this imagination of collective can become the counter hegemonic practice of coming together. Where we just not come for ourselves but also for the Other. The significant Other. Where the space of the collective is not hostile but becomes hospitable for the exposition of vulnerabilities of and to the Other.

A space where we do not become fixed in our politics but allow our politics to be contingently constituted. Where the law which would govern the group will be constituted by the group and not be taken as given from the outside. And where the group will always be reflecting, critically reflecting on their actions, their practice and their thought. Where their praxis will be driven not by totalizing sameness or agreement or need to remain united; but rather by a constant reflective practice of why they want to be part of the group, what makes their group queered which is to be in a space with the possibilities of becoming! Ensuring conditions that are conducive for the community and its members to always be in a process of becoming a community, by way of exposing their singular identities to each other. And it is this continuous exposition that makes community always in the becoming.

If we can (re)imagine a collective space, where the tyranny of the majority does not take over the voices of the dissident few. A space where people are not cornered for having opinions, that stand contrary to the perceived goal of the collective or group. Where the group can reflect and question its own instituted law (Guattari 2015). Where the rights few are not attained by infringing on the rights of others – where a radical idea of democracy can prevail (Mouffe 2000).

Zygmunt Bauman in an interview with Al-Jazeera on the state of politics with the rise of popular politicians and how Trump was able to amass such popularity- 2016- states that:

There are two crucial values without which human life is simply inconceivable. One is security, a measure of security, feeling safe. The other is freedom, ability to self assert, to do what you would really like to do and so on. They are both necessary. Security without freedom is slavery. Freedom without security is complete chaos, where you are lost, abandoned, you don't know what to do¹⁰.

Our struggle therefore is to find a difficult balance between the two values. Where the members find security but not at the cost of their freedom to expressions and expositions. Where collectives are not only protective but also open to vulnerabilities and differences of its members. While we have ensured that the precarious members can have the security of live-ability, can we also ensure that our collectives become queered, that collectives can become precarious!

¹⁰ <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2016/07/zygmunt-bauman-world-crisis-humanity-160722085342260.html>

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