**IU/WE2**

**Monday 11th November 2019**

**Linguistic WE**

We not only as plural but the pluralities of we

Different grammatical iterations of “we” and languages where there isn’t a we

We should not suppose that WE is already defined

The WE that is constituted by people that are happy to meet and those that have to bear each other as WE.

**Can a dog be part of a WE?**

A story about a dog barking during Remembrance Day. Does that make the dog an active participant in the WE of Remembrance Day?

Criticism of placing a red poppy on the dog

1. poppy as symbol of imperialist war where people died in vain is counter to the effort to move beyond the anthropocene.

2. Incorporating the dog in a WE that it cannot choose to be a part of

Representation of dogs in paintings in churches. Dogs as allegories of fidelity.

“That’s the price dogs pay.”

“I’m not sure that they have any choice.”

“They are like plants in the anthropocene.”

Example of dogs in indigenous Australian territory just leading their own lives and not as that pet-owner relationship of the West.

**We of Jean-Luc Nancy - Being Singular Plural**

Staging of co-appearance. Always already there.

Distinction between “on” and “nous”.

“WE becomes important knowing that 53% of our members voted to strike. Knowing that for 8 days a number of people will try to be a WE whilst people are trying to cross the picket lines.”

Does a WE become through solidarity?

**The Individual (identities) in WE**

Thinking about how emergencies create a WE composed of individuals.

Is it a coercive we?

All singular we’s are disenfranchised from the outset.

We is context specific.

Rastafari “I and I” (Bob Marley) used as a way to invoke the self and others. [N.B. this does have religious undertones of “self” and “spiritual self”]

Placing the “I” in the text of press releases to display the narcissistic tone of artists.

“When identifying as a Jewish Art historian I use it specifically to designate that we are the only group of people that understood catholic art.”

“Jews were writing your (catholic/Christian) bible when you came out of the swamp”.

**Totalitarian/Ideological WE**

We as necessary fallacy. WE as a term that’s pragmatically useful but that’s necessarily going to be interrupted or will crumble away. Every WE is provisional and necessary at that moment of its inception. Every WE is exclusionary. Have to be aware of its totalitarian character.

There is an ultimate WE that destroys everything as the anthropocene. It destroys an acceptable we. WE are the Anthropocene. There is no imminent value in the anthropocene.

“Not in my name.” We as resistance to power.

“We want your good. You won’t have it.” – Exhibition in Belgium

**Global WE**

Biggest WE is the global concern.

Aboriginal culture of preservation is almost against progress as we understand it now. A western progress which is global capitalist.

The global WE has become the consciousness of younger generations. That makes the we of the human, plant, etc. Important opportunity for human to think/unthink

Opportunity for human to dissolve itself into a collective we. [What kind of subject can afford dissolution? This is an oppressive demand for those who are still disenfranchised as subjects.]

**Haraway**

“What about the shame of being a human?”

Western civilisation has forgotten the shame of being a human: mastery- Cartesian project, etc Human moving towards humility.

Shame is not used as a moral issue in this case.

[N.B. Anthropocene is the problem, not a solution. Haraway avoids the term and uses Capitalocene instead. Haraway’s proposes the term Cthulucene and all its (relational) chaos as a way to move beyond human exceptionalism and individualism, as a way to “stay with the trouble”.]

**We of the social?**

Theoretical apparatus of the more than one. The WE that we have to bear.

Social media has changed what we mean by the social. Global WE is putting pressure into changing what the social is especially when it’s related to locality or nationality. Reassertions of nationality that sound parodic, almost as a reaction to the dizzying response of the global.

The social as what would be opposed to the cultural. Global as a responsibility of duty.

Difference between relation and the social? Perhaps condition of relation as opposition to WE. [e.g. how lovers engaging in each other’s uniqueness cannot constitute a collective WE]

**The Dead WE**

Idea of We where we claim the dead in our WE. Can we claim the future people in our we. How the dead are part of the evoked companions and through bringing them up we can also change what they represent.

The dead are useless to the idea of progress and capitalism.

The dead and the death industry has already been capitalised on. E.g. Celebrating the Day of the Dead, Funeral services, Digital Afterlives.

**Thatcher & Community/Society**

Nothing more conformist/destructive than individualism.

Thatcher knows no shame in saying “there is no society, there are only families and children”. The left wasted their own agenda on resistance to that.

Nothing more destructive than idea of community. Unworking of community. A purposeless of community. Otherwise it’s always moving to totalitarian structure. Society is just as threatening to individualism.

“Rather than idea of resistance our community came from idea of defence. Defending the spaces where we were expressing our sexuality.”

**General thoughts**

Painting of Hogarth and his dog at Tate. Books at base are by Swift (Irish), Milton and Shakespeare (English). Hogarth’s dog is called Trump.

**Final thoughts**

When are we ever not a WE? Context-specific WE. Distinctions between the social, relational and community WE. WE as an inherently totalitarian and inevitably ideological WE. How do we un-WE?

**References:**

Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Duke University Press, 2016. Edited extract from chapter 2, “Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene.” <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/75/67125/tentacular-thinking-anthropocene-capitalocene-chthulucene/>

Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, Stanford University Press, 2000.

**Suggestions for next session – THEY**

**Monday 6th December 2019**