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## Around C; Castoriadis: Imagination, art, co-creation, intervention, autonomy... Your hiking co-lab

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# TransFormative Adaptive Research Alliance

BOGOR, Indonesia, 2019, TARA Workshop

Group design on imaginaries and transformation, inspired by Cornelius Castoriadis work

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# Cornelius Castoriadis (1922-1997)

Philosopher, economist, psychoanalyst, critical marxist

Major thinker of autonomy in the XXth century – Built on the notion of « radical imaginary »

*“Imaginary or imagination [is] the capacity to posit something which is not there »*

« [T]he radical imagination : *phantasia* subjected to no given end but the creation of its ends, that the living body is the human living body in so far as **it represents and represents itself**, that it puts things and itself into 'images' far beyond what would be required or implied by its 'nature' as a living being. [...]

Distinguish [...] the ultimate or radical imaginary, that is the capacity to make arise as an image something which does not exist and has never existed, and the products of this imaginary, which could be designated as the imagined [...]

The subject can begin to sketch out the elements of the real, the object and the human other, only starting with and under the exclusive control of its own imaginary schemata. Scarcely has he grasped a bit of 'reality' when he must metamorphosize it to make it **agree with the irreality** which alone has meaning for him. [...]

Only the institution of society, proceeding from the social imaginary, can **limit the radical imagination** of the psyche and bring into being for it a reality by bringing into being a society. Only the institution of society can bring the psyche out of its originary **monadic madness**, and what could well exist and, at times, actually does as a madness of two, three, or more. [...]

”



The Imaginary  
Institution of Society

Creativity and Autonomy in the  
Social-historical World

# Cornelius Castoriadis (1922-1997)

« “[The project of individual and collective **autonomy** is] the project of a society in which all citizens have an equal, effectively actual possibility of participating in legislation, in government, in jurisdiction, and, finally, in the institution of society. This state of affairs presupposes radical changes in present-day institutions.”

“Autonomy is an ongoing process, whereby you always have contents that are given, borrowed—you are in the world, you are in society, you have inherited a language, you live in a certain history.”

“Autonomy does not mean i am totally separated from everything external. And, in relation to my own contents, which are 99 percent borrowed, have come from the outside, I have a **reflective, critical, deliberative activity**, and I *can* to a significant degree say yes and no. I can also allow my own radical imagination, my flux of representations and ideas — we are talking about thinking now—to well up, and there to choose again, because my radical imagination may produce nonsense, or absurdities, or things that do not work. It is this ongoing process that I call an autonomous subjectivity.”



The Imaginary  
Institution of Society

Creativity and Autonomy in the  
Social-historical World

Imagination, art, co-creation, intervention, autonomy...  
*your hiking co-lab*

→ Can we help co-creating a radical empowering and transformative imaginary (Castoriadis) about and for socio-environmental systems, using art, participatory modeling and other “alternative” pathways ?

*??? What does a reflection on / through art & creation bring here to the methodological and ethical challenges of "helping" with methods and tools, in front of the paradoxes of a research-intervention aiming at emancipation???*

*Your philosophical TARathon !*

# The TARathon rules

- Aim : walk around CIFOR from spot to spot, where you access ideas and can create responses, reactions, chefs d'oeuvre, shared by dialogue with others
1. Take 1 pen, timer (clock, phone...), maybe a rigid support. Launch chronometer at the "GO".
  2. Walk to the first / next spot given to you.
  3. Read the paper there (citations). Read also the comments already on the back (if any). Ruminare (alone).
  4. Write on the paper(s) back your personal comment.
  5. Discuss with the others here. Add other comments, citations, drawing.

!!! Please relate your add-ons to the common challenges of the TARA group !!!

1. Choose one next spot among the 2 ones proposed here (where you haven't been yet) – split with your current partner : choose different ways !
2. ALWAYS move to the next spot before 10 mins for this one.
3. After all spots (=50 mins), come back to the room.



2

1

3

4

5

<Imaginaire comme> création incessante et essentiellement indéterminée (socialhistorique et psychique) de figures / formes / images à partir desquelles seulement il peut être question de quelque chose

<Imaginary as> incessant and essentially indeterminate (sociohistorical and psychological) creation of figures / forms / images from which only something can be derived (C Castoriadis)

*L'imaginaire n'est pas un simple reflet du réel. [...] Ce que nous appelons réalité et rationalité en sont des œuvres.*

*The imaginary is not a simple reflection of reality. [...] What we call reality and rationality are the works of it. (C Castoriadis)*

L'être-sujet pensé comme *pour-soi réflexif* présuppose la présence d'une imagination radicale, qui voit ce que le pour-soi ne peut jamais vraiment voir.  
<Il> constitue <...> la forme ultime du pour-soi où se trouve libéré l'imaginaire comme puissance de création explicite, aussi bien dans le domaine de l'art que dans celui de la politique.

The subject-being thought of as a reflexive for-oneself presupposes the presence of a radical imagination, which sees what the for-oneself can never really see. <It> constitutes <...> the ultimate form of the for-itself where the imaginary is liberated as an explicit creative power, both in the field of art and in that of politics.  
(N. Poirier)



# BoF

- Complexity inhibits imagination?
- Reality? (ies) Realities?

"Le chien aboie dans le vent" : "The dog barks in the belly"

- These words kill my imagination (indeed!).

I reject all these propositions as hegemonic shit from old male head, dead boring, white western experts. It says nothing to me about other forms of thinking and being in which imagination is quintessentially an expression of sense making about the world.

- Welcome to the matrix: red pill or blue pill

- "If you're going to perform inception, you need imagination"



Politics ~~are~~ rely on imagination.

Is Reality as the result of meaning injected in our perception? The meaning we inject in our perception relies on our imaginery?

The imaginery - being reflexive - means having internal conversations about desired futures. It can allow individuals and communities to adapt not only to the present but to future times, building cross- and intergenerational alliances.

Imagining needs being free from too many WORDS

The imaginery is stimulated in settings where the mind free itself from context and other. The imaginery can also come from others and make a collective decision

individual or collective imagineries?

Imagination without morality is propaganda and corruption



<p>&lt;Par l'instinct de jeu&gt; prend naissance dans l'âme humaine un état d'indétermination qui est possibilité d'être libre, c'est-à-dire pouvoir pour la pensée et la volonté de se manifester dans leur autonomie</p>	<p>&lt;By the instinct of play&gt; is born in human soul a state of indeterminacy that is the possibility of being free, that is, the power for thought and the willingness to manifest themselves in their autonomy (F.v. Schiller)</p>
<p>L'homme ne joue que lorsqu'il est pleinement homme et il n'est tout à fait homme que lorsqu'il joue</p>	<p>Man only plays when he is fully human and he is completely human only when he plays (F.v.Schiller <i>cité par C. Bolduc</i>)</p>
<p>Il pensait dans d'autres têtes et dans sa tête à lui d'autres pensaient aussi</p>	<p>He thought in other heads and in his own head others thought too (B. Brecht)</p>

Play to distance myself from reality, but play to master reality  
but not only human play!

Paradox: Play as step out reality, remove constraints but play is also  
constrained by the rules

Play is ephemeral

Puissance du jeu en ou malgré? règles, contraintes, contexte, groupe  
Liberty

Dans quelle mesure est-il possible de rassembler personnes & d'autres sans expérimenter? Ba  
claire? **Play is learning, learning is (or should be) play**

- We are multiple in our selves and our identities
- Empathy is fundamental to being able to realize transformation. **Life is a game**

- Are we really free? how my concept of freedom affect ~~the~~ other people's sense of freedom?  
c[Freedom vs anarchy]? **Learn** **Play**

learning through play opens your mind



Brecht — We all have a sense of responsibility to one another  
Nonmatter our differences, we agree on certain things.

Seeing the world through others' eyes,  
Seeing others' eyes throughout the world

When we play is it possible to disconnect with ourselves?

- Play to distance oneself from reality, but play to master reality, but not only humans play
- Paradox : play a step out reality, remove constraints but play is also constrained by the rules
- Play is ephemeral
- Power / liberty of game by / beside rules, constraints, context, group
-

Egalité des intelligences et des capacités	Equality of intelligence and capabilities (J. Rancière)
Changeons de forme politique : comodélisons notre monde, nos liens, nos voies, nos lois, pour faire advenir ensemble un imaginaire inenvisageable	Let's change our political pattern : let us co- model our world, our links, our ways, our laws, to let emerge together an unthinkable imaginary (N. Ferrand)
La politique « profane » <comme> art des conjonctures propices et de la décision	"Lay politics" <as> the art of favorable conjunctures and of decision making (O. Neveux)
Ce n'est pas l'idée qui fait l'individu mais sa pratique.<...> au théâtre, sa pratique de spectateur	It is not the idea that makes the individual but his practice...<...> in the theatre, his practice as a spectator (O. Neveux)

1) In the hands of the abroad:  
 - equity & justice, radical change -  
 these are problematic - to  
 imagine the capacity &  
 capacity of all entitled  
 to have (and create) new ways,  
 rules and knowledge - for doing  
 - "big plans" can be counter-productive  
 what some countries (countries) the guide  
 toward desirable outcomes:

How do we then understand the  
 emergence of new political systems  
 or institutional imaginaries?  
 what's more the world view?

The "US"  
 is a romanticisation  
 of non-romantic  
 realities?

How does this avoid  
 the tendencies to  
 violence + grab of  
 power?

What is the imagination  
 to build an "US"  
 'the US is the multiplication of "I"'

2. Yes we can believe in capacity of intelligence but that's more on  
 that, in a world view. We of course of widely constructed -  
 social meaning to nations - we regarded as less advanced and  
 capable have even alpha with interventions have a degree of  
 that.

3. Co-constructing our world should also consider our possibilities, but  
 on present. Do we gain anything equally or being imagined in an  
 equal basis? How do we deal with such differences?

? 2011. 2017

Is easier to politic really to all? To what extent is politicization  
 emancipatory? To liberate or to limit of actions beyond individuals.

How to choose the good place & time for these meetings to be  
 equal? (neutral?)

Why do we have to think about politics as something separate?  
 It is everywhere all the time. Even going to the  
 toilet is a political act. Get over it!

~~US~~ US as a "romanticisation" of me/I/myself if it's not  
 constructed.

What implies the true construction of an us? What  
 imagination? what process? Internalizing the us?

1) Equality or Equity? Equality affirms that you might not be desirable but  
 equity yes -



<p>Une des spécificités de l'être de l'art est qu'en lui il y a toujours la préservation de « quelque chose » - d'un modèle, du sens et de la signification, de la forme, etc. - et ce, même dans le cas où la génialité d'une œuvre donne l'impression que cette dernière est en rupture totale avec les formes passées</p>	<p>One of the specificities of the being of art is that in it there is always the preservation of "something" - of a model, of sense and meaning, form, etc. - in it. - and this, even in the case where the genius of a work gives the impression that it is in total rupture with past forms (D. Plante)</p>
<p>Dévoilement du chaos parce que le grand art déchire les évidences quotidiennes, le « tenir ensemble » de ces évidences, et le cours normal de la vie</p>	<p>Unveiling chaos because great art tears up the daily evidence, the "holding it together" of that evidence, and the normal course of life (C. Castoriadis)</p>
<p>L'artiste s'adresse &lt;...&gt; à des esprits préparés et il choisit ce qui lui promet d'avoir effet. Ce faisant il se tient lui aussi dans les mêmes traditions que le public qu'il vise et réunit (H.-G. Gadamer)</p>	<p>The artist addresses himself &lt;....&gt; to prepared minds and chooses what promises to have an effect. In doing so, it also stands in the same traditions as the public it targets and brings together.</p>

The role of young people, not a performance in communicating climate change risks but also mobilizing communities to adapt.

It is the **interplay** between places/ways which are "common" and very new elements (knowledge, persons, ~~orig of~~ the discussion) to co-construct.

**Tragic** - Can all heretofore cultural control or just replicate? Historical break through? Later below mentioned.

The first one is beautiful but **skid**, because it signals an insurmountable limitation of oneself, but also the finity nature of one's life...

**Art to overcome finity and the EGO.**

**Others** think that they are in relation to ③: the artist may or may not address himself or herself to prepared minds, but the proof of making an imagination shared comes from the <sup>relation</sup> connection with commonality of meaning in the art.

**Incremental Art - Finesse Relationship** vs. **Transformative Art - Soaring Camaraderie!**

Art brings together the cognitive and the sensitive, sets plan in motion and allows you to realize as you see fit.





<p>Demandez toujours: où allons-nous ? Avec qui? Que ferons-nous? Chacun a un devoir de responsabilité, si jeune soit-il.</p>	<p>Always ask : where are we going, with whom; what will we do ? Everyone has a duty of responsibility, no matter how young. (Y Lundy / Matt)</p>
<p>Une façon d'ouvrir les yeux sur une beauté ignorée est de se demander : "Et si je n'avais jamais vu cela auparavant ? Et si je savais que je ne le reverrais jamais ?"</p>	<p>One way to open your eyes to unnoticed beauty is to ask yourself, "What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?" (R Carson / Bruno)</p>
<p>Quand on change son regard sur les choses, ces choses changent.</p>	<p>When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change (W Dyer / Lorrae)</p>
<p>Fleurs sauvages, chacune d'elle, un autre moi</p>	<p>Wild flowers, each one of them, a different me (Houria)</p>
<p>Poulet / Collaboration / Amis / chocolat / systèmes alimentaires / les gens / volcans / Hati hati / Beno / Avenir</p>	<p>Chicken / Collaboration / Friends / chocolate / food systems / people / volcanoes / Hati hati / Beno / Future (Claudia)</p>
<p>Vous ne pouvez dépendre de votre jugement quand votre imagination est hors de propos</p>	<p>You can't depend on your judgment when your imagination is out of focus (M Twain / Bronwyn)</p>

Can beauty be unnoticed?

(Yes, most of it because we see only the beauty we know)  
Learn to respect and appreciate the other person perception on what is beautiful or important

"Lolalalgia" is a so beautiful and poetic word + ~~can~~ it help?

When you change the way you look at things the things you look at change, and therefore we should not waste time trying to define everything but instead search for elements of common meaning.

My beauty was asleep until it met yours now they dream together  
Being aware of others people contexts, ~~and~~ ~~we~~ rethink our own notions or adaptation

The world is complex, disasters are uncertain, so sometimes you do not get the chance to ask where am I going. You just go because it's a matter of life and death. Pausing to ask may actually mean your demise. So maybe you go, and then ask later how did I get here and why. That can inform your decision to stay here or go back.

Life is made of fortuitous encounters and unexpected events that shape our paths define our pathways in the end, no matter whether / how we lay carefully plan.

We see things not as they are - but as being  
Transformation  
You need to know to see the wildest flowers for them to become a part of you

①: You can never be sure of where you are going. You can try to go somewhere, but life will decide of something else. This is for adaptation: if you are not sure of the conditions, how would you say I want to do that? Just try something and see how it's going, and then adjust.

Is the purpose of life is asking questions about everything like a child?

If we choose to construct our worlds we must be asking "for whom", "for what" what is my responsibility for others...

