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# Sea, Sun, Sex … and Biopolitics

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## 1. The tourist as *homo sacer*

> Four in the morning… Beer bottles smash on to the pavement but the human swarm hears nothing over the music pounding from the bars. The doors of the Nightlife disco open and two young men barrel past the bouncers, vomit smeared on their bare chests. They embrace, then wrestle, then soil each other's hair. Five teenage girls watch and applaud until one is grabbed by a bouncer and carried on his shoulders up the steps. One of her friends lunges to try and pull down the exposed knickers. The bouncer whirls and his captive's knee-high white boots catch the lunger in the face. She howls… (Carroll 1998)

Welcome to Ibiza, "the loud, drunk, brash Gomorrah of the Med" (Barrett 1998), where, as a consequence of excessive activity, a journalist from the local paper Diario Ibiza branded its tourists "animals", while the UK's official representative on the island called them "degenerates, out of control" and a local hotel receptionist found it more appropriate to point out that the tourists "behave like pigs, they respect nothing" (quoted in Carroll 1998). In response, the clubbers say: "The island has a unique atmosphere. We have tried other places, such as Portugal and Cyprus. But nowhere else give you the freedom to misbehave" (quoted in Hopkins 1999). From the point of view of the clubbers, that is, Ibiza is a post-Oedipal social space in which there is no law (and thus no "misbehaviour") and in which the only prohibition is the "prohibition to prohibit" (see Virilio 2002: 2).

Ibiza has transformed from a “paradise island” of alternative holiday in the 1960’s first into a bastion of package tourism and then into a clubbers’ Mecca of unchallenged hedonism through the late 1980s and the 1990s. Its transformation is part of a global process and thus it is not alone in marketing excess. Already in the early 1990s other similar tourist destinations have flourished in competition with Ibiza. Faliraki, Rhodes, for instance, has become just another “Gomorrah of the Med”, where wild life comes out to play in a hedonistic cocktail of sun, sea, music, cheap alcohol and drugs, sex, and expectation of excess.

> The girl on the podium in Ziggy’s and Charlie’s bar is surrounded by half a dozen drunken lads and she is dancing for them. Suddenly, she lifts the bottom of her shorts away and shows them her crotch. She laughs, they laugh. Just another night in Faliraki…. Here, there are bars called Climax and Big Peckers and clubs called G-Spot and Sinners…. Here, girls bare their breasts and gangs of boys sometimes walk naked up the street. (Gillan 2002)

One should add to this picture a large amount of alcohol and drugs, reported and unreported rape incidents, and other forms of excessive violence such as street fights among people who claim “We’re on holiday and we want to have fun” (quoted in Velidakis & Harris 2002). Anything goes in Faliraki. It is, very much like Fitzgerald’s Riviera, a hedonistic zone of exception where “people do exactly what they [are] tempted to do and pay no penalty for it” (Fitzgerald quoted in Littlewood 2001: 205).

This is of course the secret behind the TV documentaries such as *Club Reps* that advertised non-places such as Faliraki, creating a demand and thus contributing decisively to their success, and behind the “voracious” tour industry that manipulates the “ordinary kids” visiting Ibiza (Carroll 1998) while non-Spanish detectives “have watched in bewilderment, trying to fathom how the drugs trade has flourished unchecked and why their Ibizan counterparts have had such miserable luck trying to identify the ringleaders of the £200 million industry” (Hopkins 1999).

With its orgiastic hedonism appealing to young tourists who “go crazy” away from home, and with its tour operators who take commission not only from the hotels but also from bars and discos while vouchers, excursions, flyers and discounts are being used to push the tourists into bars and keep them there, the party island Ibiza is a spectacle of excess. It is the clubbers’ idea of paradise (“great music, cheap drugs and high expectations of casual sex”). But also the effect of Mayhem, “the hedonistic hell” in which excess flourishes, fueled by unchecked drug trade, mostly ecstasy but also cocaine and speed (Hopkins 1999). Ritzer and Liska argue that tourism in general tends to become an ecstatic form today (see 1997: 108-9); this is indeed the case seen from our two islands of enjoyment.

> And that was what they all wanted, a drug: the slow water, a drug; the sun, a drug; jazz, a drug; cigarettes, cocktails, ices, vermouth. To be drugged! Enjoyment! Enjoyment!” (D.H. Lawrence; quoted in Littlewood 2001: 201)

While the body as an object of fascination (e.g. the tourist having sex in public) and as abject (e.g. the tourist vomiting in public) become indistinguishable, what Baudrillard (1990) termed “the obscene” turns total for there is no more any appeal to any value or depth. “The quality proper to any body that spins until all sense is lost, and then shines forth in its pure and empty form” (Baudrillard 1990: 9). In the Ibiza scenes described above the body is naked, metamorphosed into pure enjoyment and excess. Having left the social origin, stripped of former identities, the tourist occupies, or fantasises to occupy, a sort of state of nature, in which tourists “behave – literally – like escaped convicts” (Houellebecq 2001: 27). It is important, however, to bear in mind that this becoming naked and this “state of nature” does not exist prior to “civilization” but is radically internal to it:

> the state of nature is not a real epoch chronologically prior to the foundation of the City but a principle internal to the City, which appears at the moment the City is considered *tanquam dissoluta*, ‘as if it were dissolved’ (in this sense, therefore, the state of nature is something like a state of exception). Accordingly, when Hobbes founds sovereignty by means of a reference to the state in which ‘man is a wolf to men’, *homo hominis lupus*, in the word ‘wolf’ (*lupus*) we ought to hear an echo of the *wargus* and the *caput lupinem* of the laws of Edward the Confessor: at issue is not simply *fera bestia* and natural life but rather a zone of indistinction between the human and the animal, a werewolf, a man who is transformed into a wolf and a wolf

> who is transformed into a man – in other words, a bandit, a *homo sacer*. (Agamben 1998: 105-106)

"A bandit". Being a*ban*doned by civilisation, the "exceptional" life of the tourist in Ibiza or Faliraki is not simply external to civilization. Rather, the tourist now occupies a threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, civilisation and state of nature become indistinct. The production of abandonment is bare life (*zoē*), merely biological life stripped of forms and thus located outside the polis. In this regard the "naked" tourist borders on Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* or his recent incarnations some of which are the "homo sacer" (Agamben 1998), "the man without content" (Agamben 1999), "the man without limits" (Virilio 2002: 10) and "the man with no bonds" (Bauman 2003: vii).

Let us, to clarify this metamorphosis of man and animal, nature and politics, mention *Bisclavret*, one of Marie de France's lays, which discloses the werewolf's particular location in the zone of indistinction between nature and politics, animal world and human world. It tells of a baron who once a week is transformed into a werewolf (bisclavret) and, after hiding his clothes, lives in the forest preying on other animals and stealing. His wife suspects something and persuades him to confess his secret and to reveal where he hides his clothes, even though he is aware that he would remain a wolf forever if he lost his clothes or were caught putting them on. With the help of her lover, the woman takes the clothes from the place where he hid them, and he remains a wolf forever:

> What is essential here is the detail … of the temporary character of the metamorphosis, which is tied to the possibility of setting aside and secretly putting on human clothes again. The transformation into a werewolf corresponds perfectly to the state of exception, during which (necessarily limited) time the city is dissolved and men enter into a zone in which they are no longer distinct from beasts. The story also shows the necessity of particular formalities marking the entry into – or the exit from – the zone of indistinction between the animal and the human (which corresponds to the clear proclamation of the state of exception as formally distinct from the rule). (Agamben 1998: 107)

It is significant in this context that "club-goers in Ibiza and Faliraki tend to be ordinary, well brought-up youngsters" (Barrett 1998). They become, metaphorically and literally, naked bodies, in Ibiza. When they are "caught" naked, e.g. arrested or fined by local authorities, they oppose being labeled infamous "holiday hooligans". Thus, "I am not a loud but a public school-educated university student", said Simon Topp, who was told by local authorities in Faliraki to pack his bags for exposing his bottom in the street five hours later he arrived on Rhodes, to which the *Daily Telegraph* responded by mocking him: "as if nobody could be a lout whose parents had paid for his schooling or who had been admitted to Leicester University to read geography" (quoted in *The Guardian* July 6 2002). What is really at issue here is of course the biopolitical relation between the citizen and his body, a relationship, in which the tourist borders on the *homo sacer*.

## 2. The tourist camp

> I no longer want to worship anything but the sun. Have you noticed the sun detests thought… (Oscar Wilde; quoted in Littlewood 2001: 190)

Going abroad purely for pleasure, bypassing other places in-between, and abandoning himself to sun, the tourist enters an enclosed, exceptional, and "duty-free" (Augé 1995: 101) zone "taken outside" home, everyday routine and familiar social/moral contexts. In the words of Club Med: "No constraint, no obligation. Barefoot, dressed in shorts, a sarong, bathing trunks if you like, you completely forget so-called civilised life" (quoted in Littlewood 2001: 210). As an "antidote to civilisation" Club Med sells places "where one could strip off not just clothes but everything that locked one into a public role" (Littlewood 2001: 211). Indeed, free from the constraints of place, the traveler's space is "the archetype of non-place", which, in the manner of a "parenthesis" (Augé 1995: 111), or an attractor, excludes and includes an increasing number of people.

> A person entering the space of non-place is relived of his usual determinants. He becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger,

> customer or … Perhaps he is still weighed down by the previous day's worries, the next day's concerns; but he is distanced from them temporarily by the environment of the moment. Subjected to a gentle form of possession, to which he surrenders himself with more or less talent or conviction, he tastes for a while – like anyone who is possessed – the passive joys of identity-loss, and the more active pleasure of role-playing. (Augé 1995: 103).

We call this "exceptional" non-place "camp". What they have in common is exterritoriality (they are "in" but not "of" the contexts in which they are located exceptionally), disposability of meanings, fluidity of identities and the permanence of transience; they share the constitutive tendencies of what Bauman (2000) calls "liquid modernity".

Due to increasing mobility, we live increasingly in a time in which populations' "ontological status as legal subjects is suspended" (Butler 2000: 81). Modernity creates zones of indistinction by penetrating the whole political/social field, transforming it into a dislocated biopolitical space in which the modern political categories (e.g. right/left, private/public, absolutism/democracy) are dissolving (Agamben 1998: 4). And this process takes place not only in the form of not only repression (e.g. detention centers) but also "liberation", which is the case in Ibiza and Faliraki. The tourist's life in Ibiza and Faliraki seems to us to be a "camp life" in this sense.

> Importantly in this respect, as is the case with the werewolf, there are important "formalities" regarding such camps based on a range of prescriptive, prohibitive and informative instructions. These formalities endeavor to keep the "city" at bay: urban gloom versus the holiday resort, the dark city versus the sun, *bios* versus *zoē*, citizen versus the naked body. In this sense, the tourist site is a camp, a world "in which the goal is to enjoy whatever is free" (sun, sea, bodies), a world, which is "anti-intellectual, physical, almost animal" (Littlewood 2001: 1999).

In Ibiza, in Faliraki, or in the Club Med, simple natural life (zoē) excluded from the polis is no longer confined to the *oikos*, the private sphere. Rather, the private and the public enter into a zone of indiscernibility in the "beauty" of which the tourist is metamorphosed from the citizen into "almost animal". Hence the references "dark skin", "simplicity", "primitive sexuality" and other racial assumptions as to the savage and the sensual, "amoral" and "permissive" aspects of enjoyment "outside' the polis, and so on, in the context of (sex) tourism must be reconsidered in the context of the liberation of *zoē*, bare life, from *bios*, the polis.

As we already mentioned, what is characteristic of modernity is not only capturing of zoē in the polis but also the fact that its coincidence with the polis in increasing velocity as exception everywhere tends to become the rule (Agamben 1998: 9). "In contrasting the 'beautiful day' (*euēmeria*) of simple life with the 'great difficulty' of political *bios*, Aristotle may have given the most beautiful formulation to the aporia that lies at the foundation of Western politics" (Ibid, 11). This aporia – the convergence between the biopolitics of totalitarianism (abandonment to violence and death) and mass hedonism (abandonment to sun, sea, sex and drugs) – is the hidden link between the concentration camp and the Club Med, a link, which is mentioned by Littlewood in *Sultry Climates* but, we believe, must be recontextualized in relation to the idea of camp:

> In the spring of 1950 Gérard Blitz put up an advertisement in the Paris metro which showed simply the sun, the sea and his telephone number. This was the start of the Club Méditerranée, which across the next four decades grew into the largest holiday resort company in the world. Blitz, a diamond-cutter from the Belgium in prewar days, had been running a rehabilitation centre for the survivors of concentration camps and was convinced that sport and relaxation in the sun help people to put behind them the experiences of the war. What he set out to do was to extend this prescription to population at large. The Club Méditerranée was in this sense, like so many impulses towards the sun, an outcome of war. (In more ways than one – the first Club Med village, on Majorca, consisted chiefly of army surplus tents furnished with military cots.) (Littlewood 2001: 208)

Club Med aimed to market an atmosphere of leisure and pleasure in its enclosed sites round the Mediterranean where sun and sea were assured and where it "established a reputation for excellent food, accompanied by unlimited wine". Inside these sites money was substituted with beads, and holidaymakers were expected to use first names or the informal and intimate

'*tu*' form in their interactions, and the commodified nature of the club sociality was veiled by a language-use referring to the staff as "gentils organisateurs" and the clients as "gentils members"; "more specifically, the Club adopted Polynesian-style thatched huts as its standard architecture and the sarong as its preferred form of dress" (Ibid, 209).

In short, the Club Med re-formulated the idea of the camp, tailoring it to the imaginary, symbolic and real enjoyment of the holidaymaker. In this, the identity of the tourist is stripped off its public connotations and his desire is moved by the promise of an eroticized, corporeal, "animal" world experienced as freedom from the "city": the dark, routinized, disciplinary "iron cage" of the citizen. If bare life is invented in colonies and came back to Europe in the form of concentration camps (see Bauman 2002: 109), it now enters the heart of the consumer society, which gives an interesting twist and content to the moral argument that tourism "must not be separated from its colonial legacy" (Kaplan 1996: 63). The camp as a (non)place of consumerism works as catharsis of the *homo sacer*'s desire and fantasies.

## 3. The Carnival

Considering spectacular tourist sites as holy places, cultural artifacts as religious fetish, and souvenirs as relics, there is something quasi-religious to tourism. On the other hand, says Ian Littlewood, tourism sets up, against the religion of the spirit, an "anti-religion of the senses" characterized by the supremacy of the senses and the primacy of enjoyment: a "coded promise of sexual adventure" (2001: 193, 210). However, this apparent contradiction dissolves and the double excess, that there are both quasi-religious and anti-religious aspects to tourism, makes sense once one considers tourism as a phenomenon located in a zone of indistinction between and thus beyond the religious and the profane. After all, the "sacred" dimension of the *homo sacer* is not located within the religious domain (Agamben 1998: 106). What confronts us in Ibiza and Faliraki is a life that as such is exposed in a profane and banal way. This brings us to Sade.

As Agamben notes, the biopolitical element is explicit in Sade's work where the *theatrum politicum* is staged as "a theater of bare life", in which the physical body appears, through sexuality, as a pure political element, and the *maisons* where everybody can publicly summon any other body so as to force him to satisfy his own desires come to appear as "the political realm par excellence" (1998: 134).

> Sade's modernity does not consist of in his having foreseen the unpolitical primacy of sexuality in our unpolitical age. On the contrary, Sade is as contemporary as he is because of his incomparable presentation of the absolutely political (that is, 'biopolitical') meaning of sexuality and physiological life itself. Like the concentration camps of our century, the totalitarian character of the organization of life in Silling's castle – with its meticulous regulations that do not spare any aspect of physiological life (not even the digestive function, which is obsessively codified and publicized) – has its root in the fact that what is proposed here for the first time is a normal and collective (and hence political) organization of human life founded solely on bare life. (Agamben 1998: 135)

While the public and the private, bios and bare life, become interchangeable, the bed takes the place of the city. The significance of sex and party tourism lies in this swap. Further, when the city is transformed into a hedonistic consumer product (the tourist camp), assuming "the status of exotica" (Sassen & Roost; quoted in MacCannell 2000: 69), we encounter the Sadist face of marketing too. The Sadean maxim of unconstrained enjoyment ("I have the right to enjoy your body, and you have the equal right to enjoy mine") is adopted today by the tourism industry in its assertion that it gives people what they desire, a move in which it only takes one step from marketing excess "to 'marketing' as forced enjoyment" (MacCannell 2000: 69). The demand of unlimited enjoyment without the constraints of the Law depends upon the existence of a victim granting the pervert his license – "because s/he knows s/he isn't fully enjoying and wants to feel that someone, somewhere is" (Ibid. 70).

> Interviewed for a BBC series broadcast in 1996, the [Club Med's] Director of Development, 'Dudule', explained, 'The Club's philosophy is that everyone must find a way to be free in his mind, in his body and with other people. One can be natural and do things one would not do in everyday life.' In the vocabulary of tourism, any

> mention of freedom is likely to contain a coded promise of sexual adventure. Dudule's sub-Gidean philosophy of naturalness and personal freedom reflects the Club's image as a place of sexual liberation, where erotic adventure can be taken for granted. In a world given over to play rather than work, to the physical rather than the intellectual, to the natural rather than the socially conditioned, where the body, tended and displayed with narcissistic concern, is the focus of so much attention, sexual preoccupations are bound to be close to the surface…. Small wonder that, according to Ellen Furlough, 'Club Med villages came to have a reputation as places with 'an erotic morality' involving many 'brief encounters'. (Littlewood 2001: 210)

Bataille's festival, like Bakhtin's carnival, captures something essential about the holiday resort. The festival is a state of exception in which sacrifice, lawful crime and sovereignty emerge in a pure form (1993: 124). It is a kind of potlatch, an opportunity to become naked, that is, to get rid of one's markers of identity. "Stripping naked is the decisive action. Nakedness offers a contrast to self-possession, to discontinuous existence, in other words. It is a state of communication revealing a quest for a possible continuance of being beyond the confines of the self. Bodies open out to a state of continuity through secret channels that give us a feeling of obscenity. Obscenity is our name for the uneasiness which upsets the physical state associated with self-possession, with the possession of a recognized and stable individuality" (Bataille 2001: 17-18). This all takes place, however, in a strictly regulated way (Ibid. 65).

One of Bataille's examples is the Hawaiian islands where the death of the king meant a period in which all prohibitions were lifted: "No sooner is the event announced than men rush in from all quarters, killing everything in front of them, raping and pillage to beat the devil" (Bataille 1993: 89). It all lasted until the king's body turned into a hard and incorruptible skeleton. Then a new king was introduced and order restored (Bataille 1993: 89). The festival, in other words, did not threaten the royal power. On the contrary: "They break the rules that were in force yesterday and which will be restored tomorrow, sacred and inviolable" (Bataille 2001: 66). The festival served as an outlet, allowing people to take their parts in the royal power. As such, the festival performs a reactionary state of exception, an attempt to strengthen and legitimise the grip of the game rather than changing its rules. In this sense the "festival of the king's death" is perfectly legal, that is, authorized by the law itself through a regular self-suspension (Bataille 1993: 129).

Strictly speaking, the festival is not spontaneous. Neither is it the case in the holiday resort, in which "the pleasures of the Carnival, however extravagant, are enjoyed under the license and only for a defined period; the orgy of sun, sea and sex is an experience that implies both a revolt from and an affirmation of the norms of daily life" (Littlewood 2001: 213-4). In the holiday resort, the rules are suspended rather than destroyed. The transgressive behaviour of the holidaymaker does not, in this sense, perform a "back-to-nature movement"; transgression does not suppress but suspends the rule (Bataille 2001: 36). A transgression completes the rule by transcending it (Bataille 2001: 63).

> It is the festival, it is of course, for a moment the cessation of work, the unrestrained consumption of its products and the deliberate violation of the most hallowed laws, but the excess consecrates and completes an order of things based on rules; it goes against that order only temporarily. Moreover, we should not be misled by the appearance of a return by man to nature. It is such a return, no doubt, but only in one sense. Since man has uprooted himself from nature, that being who returns to it is still uprooted, he is an uprooted being who suddenly goes back toward that from which he is uprooted, from which he has not ceased to uproot himself. The first uprooting is not obliterated: when men, in the course of the festival, give free play to the impulses they refuse in profane times, these impulses have a meaning in the context of the human world: they are meaningful only in that context. In any case, these impulses cannot be mistaken for those of animals (Bataille 1993: 90)

So how do we interpret this strange desire acted out in festival? How can "becoming animal" be interpreted if it is always mediated by human "law"? Human beings are, under the influence of two simultaneous emotions, both fascinated and terrified, by naature. "Taboo and transgression reflect these tow contradictory urges. The taboo would forbid the transgression but the fascination compels it (Bataille 2001: 68). Indeed, this strange double economy of desire and disgust, of object and abject, or of transgression and confirmation, is the

underlying matrix of the tourist camp. Oscillating between the two poles, the tourist becomes a "party animal" at the holiday camp. Bataille was well aware of the limited emancipatory potential of this oscillation and, we want to argue, we should be equally suspicious of contemporary valorisation of transgression.

## 4. (Bio)politics of transgression

"What distinguishes the tourist," claimed Fussell (1980), "is the motives, few of which are openly revealed: to raise social status at home …; to realize fantasies of erotic freedom; and most important, to derive secret pleasure from posing momentarily as a member of a social class superior to one's own, to play the role of a 'shopper' and spender whose life becomes significant and exciting…" (quoted in Kaplan 1996: 54). The first and the third "distinguishing" features involve "distinctions" while the second one directly involves the body and an "indistinction", the point at which the tourist borders on the figure of the *homo sacer*.

As Littlewood shows, even though official narrations of tourism has excluded "sex tourism" as a differentiated, intolerable deviance from mainstream tourism and have adopted it "as a lightning conductor for guilt that might otherwise taint the rest of society", and even though the tourists themselves have, as a rule, "presented their travels as a cultural narrative rather than a sexual one", since the first half of the twentieth century the sexual dimension has come on open display through consumer hedonism. Tourist life has been depicted as a life seductively free of normal constraints (2001: 4-6, 205). Indeed, it is as if sex tourism is there to create the illusion that the rest of tourism is sex-free. If erotic desire is part and parcel of processes that have installed tourism as a carnivalesque practice, this is precisely where the camp, proving a perfect device for both expressing and containing people's discontents with the contemporary world, comes into play.

Thus, no wonder that most contemporary tourist sites can, at once, be considered both as spaces of "McDisneyization" built upon the principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability and de-humanization through technology (Ritzer & Liska 1997: 97-8) and as post-Fordist spaces characterized by the decline of standardized tours and by increased commodification and diversification (Urry 1990). What the concept of camp can do in this context is, avoiding a dichotomy between these two approaches – Weberian rationalization and post-Fordist flexibilization – to illuminate the fact that contemporary tourism creates a hybrid, de-differentiated zone in-between Weberian rationalization and the forms of aesthetic critique it has received.

Contemporary tourism justifies itself with reference to the "new spirit of capitalism" based on a compromise between hitherto separated regimes of justification, between the aesthetic regime of inspiration, of industrial effectiveness, and of the market initiative (see Boltanski & Chiapello 1999). Aesthetic creativity, which is related to the idea of transgressing oneself, rationality, related to industrialist produductivity, and the market's grandeur, willingness to take initiative and risks, are no longer exclusive worlds in a post-Weberian world.

Boltanski and Chiapello call this new compromise "project regime", a new regime of justification, which has adjusted itself to the network society whose grandeur is connectionism, always being on the move towards a new project, new ideas, living a life of simultaneous and successive projects. In this reticular world, in which a pre-established habitus is not desirable, one should be able to respond to the call of "a moving world": the "grand person is mobile. Nothing must disturb his displacements" (Boltanski & Chiapello 1999: 168, 183). As tourism is gradually becoming the largest industry today (Lash & Urry 1994: 194) and as the citizen increasingly becomes a tourist, the aesthetic critique (e.g. based on the concept of "nomadism") tends to dissolve into a post-Fordist normativity, the notion of creativity is re-coded in terms of flexibility, and difference is commercialised through the logic of the camp.

Significantly in this context, Henning Bech (1999) shows in his book *Leisure Pursuit* how the life-styles of homosexuals are today spreading to the wider society. Basically, modern life conditions – such as urbanism, lack of norms, unsafety and insecurity related to identities, the problematization of gender, aesthetisation of identities, surveillance and discipline, and so on – form the background of homosexuals' lifeworld (Beck 1999: 62). In a sense, therefore, the "homosexual" is a real abstraction. In the realization of certain erotic preferences "one cannot

avoid becoming involved in this form of existence to some extent, irrespective of one's background and affiliations in terms of class, race, etc. This is partly because such a realization brings one into close contact with the very same conditions of which the homosexual form of life is a result and to which it is an answer" (Beck 1999: 63).

Sex and party tourism can along these lines be seen as a leisure pursuit. Beck's understanding of homosexuality as *avant garde* (Beck 1999: 64), however, fails in three important respects. First, the concept of *avant garde* is itself flawed. If the life-style of the *avant garde* is generalized then the *avant garde* cannot remain an exception. Thus the argument cannot be that the homosexuals have entered the condition of modernity "before others and more than others" (Beck 1999: 64). The concept of the *avant garde* is meaningful only if it can establish a qualitative, not quantitative, distinction between the *avant garde* and others. Second, the idea of a generalized transgression is impossible to sustain. If there is no work, then the idea of leisure cannot be sustained. Everybody engaging in the pursuit of leisure needs an idea of the dullness of their own or others' everyday life, at least at the level of fantasy. The pleasure of eroticism, homosexual or other, consists in breaking a taboo, which is acknowledged in breaking; the rule works because it is broken. And third, breaking or transgressing the norm is not necessarily an emancipatory move. Ideology always has an obscene supplement. This supplement, *small object a* as the sublime object of ideology, must be understood not as an obstacle in relation to the functioning of power but as its condition of possibility. The supplement "necessarily accompanies, as its shady double, the 'public' Law" (Žižek 1997: 73).

Classical social theory maintains that sociality is founded on prohibition (incest, cannibalism and murder). Whether the law is human or natural, of exchange or of taboos and religions, or related to sovereignty, the origin of the social is posited as a "distinction" between the law and what remains outside its realm (Schmidt 1993: 3, 5). In line with this, "[m]odern sovereignty has generally been conceived in terms of a (real or imagined) territory and the relation of that territory to its outside" (Hardt & Negri 2000: 187). Thus the primordial scene of classical social theory presupposes that, thanks to the law, humans leave the state of nature to enter society, a transition the precise shape of which one can disagree only to agree on the fundamental distinction between the law and its outside.

When Freud (1985: 284), for instance, wrote that the "liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization", what he had in mind was a conflict between the law qua a set of prohibitive norms, as the socio-symbolic order, on the one hand and freedom on the other. Which is also the framework in which tourism, in its different versions, has come to represent liberation from society. The "discontent" of social life was thus grounded in the tension between the pleasure principle and the prohibitions and commands of the law, that is, the reality principle, and this very tension required the denunciation of natural instincts. In other words, one trades off freedom to enter the symbolic order (castration) that mediates inter-subjective communication and generates alienation and repression of desire as the price of the entering its circuit.

As such, the law is the background against which desire is defined; desire is the desire to transgress. The law marks a limit between interiority and the outside, that is, unlaw. Transgression involves this distinction, the limit, in that it "incessantly crosses and recrosses a line that closes up behind it" (Foucault 1997: 73). Enclosure and transgression are opposed to each other, but without any limit or distinction there can be nothing to transgress. For the same reason, transgression requires a law: "without a transgression there is no access to *jouissance*, and that is precisely the function of the Law. Transgression in the direction of *jouissance* only takes place if it is supported by the oppositional principle, by the forms of the Law" (Lacan 1992: 177). So the relationship between power and desire cannot be enclosed in a clear-cut dichotomy between "repression" (power, the law) and "emancipation" (desire, mobility). Power itself is productive and, by naming and delimiting, it makes possible the proliferation of the very transgressive desire. Since power is everywhere, emancipation or transgression cannot consist in escaping into an impossible "power-free discourse" (Butler 1999: 218-9).

> Transgression, then, is not related to the limit as black to white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces…. Transgression does not seek to oppose one thing to another…. Transgression is neither violence in a divided world (in an ethical world) nor a victory over limits (in a dialectical or revolutionary world)…. (Foucault 1997: 73-4)

The emerging question is how, then, transgression is possible if there is no outside of the socio-symbolic order (Lacan) or of power/knowledge (Foucault) (Zizek 1999: 251ff). Let's begin with the Lacanian perspective, which decomposes the distinction between the law and transgression by asserting that the law itself is supported by fantasies of transgression and enjoyment, that is, of the illusion of filling the fundamental lack. The enigma of the law is that, since desire is grounded in a lack which is impossible to fill, what the law prohibits is "something already in itself impossible" (Žižek 1991: 9, 204). If the law can still function, it is only because its external prohibition creates for those subjected to the law the fantasy that the object of desire would be attainable if it were not prohibited.

Thus, the distinction between the law (inside) and transgression (outside) must be replaced with another distinction internal to the socio-symbolic order itself: the distinction between the two figures of the father (of law). In this, another, the obscene father that embodies the impossible enjoyment in Totem and Taboo, supplements the figure of the father in the Oedipus myth. Which is also to say that the distinction between the law and transgression repeats itself inside the law as its obscene supplement. The subject internalizes social norms through a superego, but this superego itself is split in two distinct but interrelated figures of the law: firstly, the father of the law castrating the subject through the law and language, and secondly, the obscene father that commands transgression and enjoyment. Whereas the first authority prohibits ("Don't!"), the latter says: "You May!" (Žižek 2000: 132). *Perversion* is, therefore, nothing else than *père-version*, the version of the father:

In the era of the "decline of Oedipus" the dominant mode of subjectivity is "no longer the subject integrated into the parternal Law through symbolic castration, but the 'polymorphously perverse' subject following the superego injunction to enjoy" (Zizek 1999: 248). If the anti-Oedipus is the obscene reverse of Oedipus itself, then the relationship between law and transgression ceases to be that of a chronological succession (Žižek 1991: 31; 1992: 24). We do not start with the law, which is then transgressed. Rather, "at the beginning of the law" there is transgression, which the fiction of originary law, e.g. "social contract", presupposes in advance as its outcome (Žižek 1991: 204, 205). The origin of the law is a self-referential transgression, which must be unconditionally repressed if the law is to function in its "normal" form (Žižek 1991: 208).

Here, we come back to the body and the search for pure pleasure. Does the "naked body" of the party tourism, as it is so often supposed, disturb the social order? As Foucault remarks, and it is often misunderstood, what makes a sexuality "disturbing" is not the sexual act itself but the "mode of life" related to it (Foucault 2001: 298).

> one doesn't enter a relationship simply in order to be able to consummate it sexually, which happens very easily. But towards friendship people are very polarized. How can a relational system be reached through sexual practices? Is it possible to create a homosexual mode of life? This notion of a mode of life seems important to me…. It seems to me that a way of life can yield a culture and an ethics (Foucault 2001: 300).

What is at stake in the camp is precisely the "mode of life", which the tourist so eagerly escapes from. Foucault, on the other hand, distancing itself from sex and sexuality, alludes to "a different economy of bodies and pleasures"; however:

> Like the concepts of sex and sexuality, the concept of the 'body' too is always already a biopolitical body and bare life, and nothing in it or the economy of its pleasure seems to allow us to find solid ground on which to oppose the demands of sovereign power (Agamben 1998: 187).

Sex is not "outside" power, and neither is the naked body. Thus the attempt to locate liberation in the liberation of the naked body from the "mode of life", and from the polis, is ineffective. The "liberty" of the tourist opens up for the inscription of life within power yet in one more domain, founding the very power from which the tourist tries to liberate himself, hence extending the range of the biopolitical paradigm. If "contemporary societies are developing less on the basis of surveillance and the normalization of individuals, and more on the basis of the democratisation of the tourist gaze and the spectacle-isation of place" (Urry 1990: 156), relations of power concerning travelling and the opposing process of democratisation "converge insofar as both concern the bare life of the citizen, the new biopolitical body of humanity" (1998: 9). When bare life becomes both the object of power and

the subject of emancipation, transgression understood as the liberation of *zoē* from the *polis* (e.g. Reichian sexual liberation) becomes meaningless (see Agamben 1998: 10).

> What is undermined today, on our post-Oedipal 'permissive' societies, is sexual jouissance as the foundational 'passionate attachment' as the desired/prohibited focal point around which our life revolves. […] Once again the superego has accomplished its task successfully: the direct injunction 'Enjoy!' is a much more effective way to hinder the subject's access to enjoyment than the explicit Prohibition which sustains the space for its transgression. The lesson is that narcissistic 'car of the Self', not the 'repressiv' network of social prohibitions, is the ultimate enemy of intense sexual experiences. (Žižek 1999: 367)

How about the post-tourist, then? According to John Urry (1990), the distinctiveness of the "tourist gaze" is increasingly disappearing today as gazes become parts of a postmodern popular culture. Here it is no longer authenticity, but playfulness that counts while tourists increasingly become aware of the multitude of possible changes and choices and know "that they are a tourist and that tourism is a game, or rather a whole series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience" (Urry 1990: 100). The post-tourist knows how "forced camaraderie" emerges as despotism of intimacy in the tourist resort. Such is, for instance, Michel Houllebecq's sex-tourist hero in *Platform*: "The guide, Sôn, called each of the group members by their first names; it made me sick. We were *adults*, for fuck's sake" (2002: 40).

What we have here is a tourist who knows that he is a tourist – but does that mean that he does not participate in the processes we have mentioned so far? Definitely no, because the post-tourist's sometimes ironic sometimes cynical self-distance effectively makes it possible for him or her to enjoy something in practice while renouncing it at a discursive level. We would go so far to suggest that holidaymakers in Ibiza or Faliraki are post-tourists in the sense that they know what they are doing, they have a critical/cynical distance to what they are doing (how could one otherwise explain the success of best sellers such as *Is Harry on the Boat?* or TV documentaries on holiday resorts?).

## 5. "Communities of occasion"

What happens when the "werewolf" becomes "human" again, and at what cost? Here is an account of how a love story finishes after people return home from Ibiza.

> It 'appens all the time. It's obvious if you think about it. Because we work 'ere we get blasé about the place. But to the majority of the Brits it's a million miles away from their real world. Sure, while they're 'ere it seems as if love will find a way, but at the end of the day they go 'ome, back to their normal lives. When some of 'em think of what they've done or the people they've turned into on holiday it scares the fuckin' shit out of 'em. All they want to do is scurry back to their comfort zones, and if that includes an old boyfriend then tough titty.' (Butts 1997: 106)

What is surprising here is of course that it should be surprising that the bonds developed on holiday are short-lived. In that sense, Ibiza is not atypical (outside) but rather typical (inside) of the wider society. Thus, the denizens of liquid modernity, says Bauman, are unbound – they are the "men with no bonds". For the same reason they must connect. "None of the connections … are, however, guaranteed to last. Anyway, they need to be loosely tied, so that they can be untied again" (Bauman 2003: vii). In a liquid social space one feels compelled to keep one's distance as one "relates", without making commitments; relations thus incarnate both instantaneity and disposability (Ibid. 21). One needs to be able to fall out of love as quickly as one falls in love. Which is all symptomatic of "networking", the predominant logic of the contemporary society.

> Unlike 'relations', 'kinships', 'partnerships', and similar notions that make salient the mutual engagement while excluding or passing over in silence its opposite, the disengagement, 'network' stands for a matrix for simultaneous connecting and disconnecting…. In a network, connecting and disconnecting are equally legitimate choices, enjoy the same status and carry the same importance (Bauman 2003: xii).

It is no coincidence that in Ibiza, a setting in which people tend to meet one another as “naked bodies”, the possibility of what Giddens (1992) called “pure relationship” – relations without bonding - is infinitely increased in that relations are maintained only in so far those who “relate” derive enough satisfaction from the relation and can be terminated at will – they are, in Bauman’s words, “communities of occasion” (2003: 34, 91). To be sure, today, the type of the naked body to be found in Ibiza and Faliraki is the very archetype of “pure relationship” that both fascinates and frightens the holiday makers when they “think of what they’ve done or the people they’ve turned into on holiday it scares the fuckin’ shit out of ’em”.

Remarkably though, all this is experienced as freedom in Ibiza and Faliraki, for instance as a becoming-Don-Juan of the ordinary person. Who was Don Juan, if not the libertine who denigrated the tradition, ignored the social bond and insulted the religion? Don Juan did not even wave his seductions into lies that he knew the women he targeted would like to hear; he did not hide the fact that he was immoral and he did not make a secret out of his disloyalty – he knew not only how to seduce but also how to dispose himself of the women he seduced, always following the call of the next opportunity. And, above all, he did not take the law seriously, which is what more than anything else made him a seductive figure. However, seen from another angle, Don Juan’s inability to bond was fundamentally a sign of his impotency (Žižek 1991: 114). And from this perspective Don Juan does not seem to be a libertine but a victim, a slave of his list of “victories” who are reduced to names in a book his servant was writing. Indeed, in Ibiza today the “chaos” which Don Juan’s (once) stand in for seems to have been “normalized” as transgression has become a rule, a social demand.

When everybody becomes a Don Juan, however, waste, not only of objects but also of subjects, pile up. “Single-serving friendships” (Palahniuk 1997) are as much about disposal as bonding, as much about the production of anxiety as of enjoyment; or, they are like Derrida’s pharmakon: as much poison as antidote. If human waste is the other name of the *homo sacer,* Ibiza and Faliraki are indeed as much dumping grounds as settings of the late modern youth’s “sentimental education”.

The image we would like to finish with is one of Italo Calvino’s “Invisible Cities”, Leonia, which “refashions itself every day”. Every morning the Leonians walk in fresh streets, wear new clothing, take from the refrigerator unopened tins, listening to most up-to-date music. But:

> On the sidewalks, encased in spotless plastic bags, the remains of yesterday’s Leonia await the garbage truck…. So you begin to wonder if Leonia’s true passion is really, as they say, the enjoyment of new and different things, and not, instead, the joy of expelling, discarding, cleansing itself of a recurrent impurity. The fact is that street cleaners are welcomed as angels, and their task of removing the residue of yesterday’s existence is surrounded by a respectful silence, like a ritual that inspires devotion… (Calvino 1997: 114)

So, is Leonia’s true passion the enjoyment of the new or the disposal of the old? And

> Are not the residents of our liquid modern world, just like the residents of Leonia, worrying about one thing while speaking of another? They say that their wish, passion, aim or dream is “to relate”. But are they not in fact mostly concerned with how to prevent their relations from curdling and clotting? … There is no easy answer to that question, though the question needs to be asked and will go on being asked, as the denizens of the liquid modern world go on smarting under the crushing burden of the most ambivalent of the many ambivalent tasks they daily confront. (Bauman 2003: xi)

In between “Ibiza” and “Leonia” we find the human waste. And with human waste, we meet *homo sacer*.

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