Chapter 4. Integral resistance

A few thought experiments often form the beginning of my presentations and seminars, so as to loosen up the imagination required to fully consider the discursive turn we find ourselves in. I open with a well-known image: a red sun hovering neatly above the horizon, looking down on an immense sea. I then ask my audience a simple question: is this a sunrise or a sunset? After careful gazes, a lot of pointing and some deliberation, sunset tends to get the most votes. Perhaps some are swayed by the expression 'red sky at night, shepherd's delight'. Others adopt a more scientific approach: the low sun's light disperses, filtering out the red colour within the light spectrum. My answer is that neither option holds water. This is neither a sunset nor a sunrise. This answer is initially met with incredulous responses. Do you mean to say there is a third option? After adding that this has been the case at the very least since Galileo, everyone catches on: the sun does not rise or set, we revolve around the sun. What we see is not what it is. What we 'see' as a vertical movement – up and down, or shall we say: top-down and bottom-up – is in fact the result of a circular movement. It is just like the ants we see crawling around *Möbius Strip II* (1963), by Dutch artist M.C. Escher. All the ants are really doing is going straight on, but due to the twist in the Möbius loop they are on top at some times and on the bottom at others; first on the outside of the strip, then on the inside. Humans are entangled in the world in a similar way. There is no absolute 'outside', no fixed 'top'.

What does this discursive change from linear to circular entail from a political perspective? To explore this, I follow up the picture of the sun with a simple, factual question: in 1925, what was the largest Muslim nation in the world? Once again, the hum of voices in discussion. Eventually, there is always someone who hesitantly calls out 'Indonesia'. Most others agree. After my counter-question as to when Indonesia was formed – 1949 – the penny usually drops in a matter of seconds: the largest Muslim state in 1925 was the Netherlands. 'We' were once the largest Muslim nation. Why did we never 'perceive' ourselves as such? Didn't 'our' East Indies ever form an integral part of the Dutch identity? Apparently not. In a colonial and imperial world, the centre is served by the periphery. Our colonies and ports of call – the Dutch East Indies, Surinam and the Antilles – were only ever given weight economically, never politically, socially or culturally. Not until after a fight for independence – which broke out straight after the war and resulted in an independent Indonesia in 1949 – did 'our belt of emerald', as Dutch writer Multatuli once described this former colony, become culturally interesting through a sense of nostalgic yearning.

Nevertheless, our postcolonial memory has been periodically refreshed over the past decades. Not just by the multicultural peacefulness on show in The Hague during the yearly Pasar Malam or Tong Tong Fair, but also by less peaceful actions. In early December 1975, less than a week after the Surinamese had celebrated their independence, the Indonesian Consulate in Amsterdam was occupied by sons of Moluccan soldiers who had served in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. They had been brought over to the Netherlands from 1951, with the promise of a quick return to an autonomous Moluccan state. A second group then hijacked a train in the province of

Drenthe. These were local manifestations of a global postcolonial issue; violent acts of resistance against the marginalisation of Moluccans in a rebellious but futile gesture.

In her book, *White innocence: Paradoxes of colonialism and race* (2018), Gloria Wekker points towards 'a strong paradox that lies at the heart of the nation': the passion, vehemence and even aggression that race evokes amongst the white population, and the negation, denial and avoidance of this xenophobia (7). This brings us to the debate surrounding *Zwarte Piet*, or Black Pete, and all the radicalism it spawns. Wekker's systemic analysis, in which not people but a discourse is torn to shreds, shows us that and how colonialism is woven into our collective consciousness, into our subjectivity. Her analysis reveals a paradox that is comparable to those referred to in 2.1.1 as indicators of a discursive turn. The tension she thematises cuts through the various scales of politics that, so far, have been presented only in a scattered, unsystematic way: macropolitics, in relation to Dutch policy regarding former colonies; mesopolitics, in relation to the hassle and uncertainty that Black Pete's appearance at schools and other *Sinterklaas* celebrations provokes; and micropolitics, in relation to a dark undercurrent within our postcolonial soul. In our self-perception – as a world citizen, as Dutch, as a city dweller or as an individual – such ambiguities can be found in great numbers. Wekker only addresses a few aspects of the fictive norm that the modern disciplining of individuals has steered us towards. I once described it as follows: a human, Western, white, rational, adult, healthy, righteous, law-abiding, working, heterosexual, married, monogamous, child-producing man (Oosterling 1989, 139). It is this implicit norm that is still ever-present in contemporary debates on gender, ethnicity, faith and the climate, and which reactionary academics such as Canadian psychologist Jordan B. Peterson and populists such as Dutch politician Thierry Baudet, leader of the political party Forum for Democracy, are currently polishing up.

4.1 Being interested: scaled political reflaction

If we were to sound the separate elements of that norm, each one would give off a ring of dissonance at times. After all, what is life in the light of an exponentially accelerating extinction of species? What is animal welfare within a carnivorous culture? Is the West in a position to ecologically reprimand former developing countries? To what extent is our postcolonial thinking still black-and-white? How reasonable is the calculating citizen as a Homo economicus steered by algorithms? How rational can our current climate policies be if science, politics and economics do not adhere to the same reasons and rationality? What are we to think of the fact that schoolchildren are the ones calling out political leaders on their responsibility to meet climate goals? How healthy is our contemporary Western lifestyle, when it comes down to it? How righteous and how law-abiding are the top executives at Shell and ExxonMobil when it comes to paying their taxes, and the bankers at ABN AMRO and ING when it comes to looking after their clients' interests? Can we really speak in terms of work – and of free time – when it comes to the self-employed in a 24-hour economy? What does the introduction of a guaranteed basic income have to do with work? Should women stay at home, or will the glass ceilings of the cultural, health and educational sectors be shattered? How does heterosexuality relate to all those other

LGBTQ-persuasions currently demanding the universal right to their specific desires in the identity politics debate? What do the rise in divorces and the hype around polyamory tell us about the institution of marriage? How do the ageing of Europe and demographic shrinkage relate to our universal desire to have children? And just how masculine are men allowed to be these days?

It goes without saying that these questions differ in type, while fanning out over various domains, sectors and scales in their search for an answer. Once found, moreover, those answers would not translate seamlessly into a new norm that does adequately express our current sense of self. But what is easy to see, is that we can no longer coherently speak or think in terms of 'normality'. The fierce debate on identity politics is just one example among many. In their attempt to sweep together the leftovers of our modern frame of mind and mix them back together into a consistent mode of being, anything that fails to stick is simply brushed off by reactionary populists – like Thierry Baudet in *Oikophobia: The Fear of Home* (2013) – and labelled as fear (*phobia)* for where you belong (*oikos* = house). How does this attempt relate to the accomplished reality of our 'polis' or the metropolitan context in which – despite all the problems presented by the media – numerous national, ethnic, cultural, social and sexual identities predominantly live together in peace?

4.1.1 Politics: acting within power relations

To formulate an answer, we need to explore the notion of politics. I reject the idea that we live in a post-political world that has left all ideologies behind (Žižek 2011b, 170). Just like resistance, politics has simply become more complex and layered. The earliest origins of 'politics' refer to the Greek 'polis' or city-state. In fact, it concerned a civil community of a particular kind: one that is ruled (*kratein*) by the people (*demos*), a democracy. The original democracy was a complex system, ensuring that every free and grown man was involved in the ins and outs of the *polis*. Both Arendt and Foucault draw on this system, critically and genealogically. With the public assembly as their arena, the menfolk would decide whether to start or join wars, settle internal power struggles, and work out whose properties should be taxed. Modern-day politicians busy themselves with the same issues. Following a brief but envious glance towards a communal past, they all focus their attention linear-exclusively on the future: progressive or reactionary, left or right, revolutionary or conservative. Aristotle gave emphasis to the communal aspect of politics: *politiké koinonia*. To this day, community (*koinonia*) still rings through in the word 'commons'. Whereas the 'communal' used to refer to the produce of shared pastures and farmland, our present-day *global commons* are air, water and biodiversity. That which is 'harvested' from the new public arena – the internet – also needs to be added to this list: information that anyone can share, adapt or use. Aside from material commons, such as Transition Towns and the systems for sharing used in energy and housing cooperatives, there are also digital commons such as Wikipedia, which is built by 1 percent, edited by 9 percent, and used by the remaining 90 percent. The majority of servers in the world runs on the open-source Linux. Companies like Greenwheels, SnappCar and MyWheels enable us to 'share' our cars with others.

The largest scale of our *koinonia* is formed by the earth. Does the decline in biodiversity or the changing of our climate form a political issue? Indeed, the climate isn't something that stops at the end of your street; it concerns all of us. But it pales into insignificance when we consider the billions of years that the earth has already lived through. With respect to deep time, nothing seems to matter. As Multatuli put it, 'seen from the moon we are all the same size'. To the poet and painter Lucebert, we are no more than 'a breadcrumb on the skirt of the universe'. But in the historically recent Capitalocene era, we have indeed become a defining factor. And as a consequence, the climate and biodiversity have indeed become political problems. Looking towards an uncertain future is a lot more disconcerting than looking back on something that never was. I don't think much of nostalgia, personally. Whenever someone claims we were better off 'in the good old days', all that springs to my mind is the current state of my eyes and knees. I do not associate with any form of 'misanthropic environmentalism' either (Pinker 2018, 193-194). As far as I'm concerned, humans do not need to die out in order to make things right with the earth. I refuse to put on that Christian sackcloth. But despite not being indebted to the earth, we are still accountable in the here and now to emerging generations – who, as we have seen in recent years, are not allowing themselves to be written off. Taking our responsibility involves more than making excuses, however. It means actively contributing towards a liveable world. With Sartre in mind, all of us can decide at any moment to devote ourselves to this cause on a scale that's personally appropriate: through showing a true demonstration of protest, interacting with our children, neighbours, colleagues and – most of all – ourselves in a different way by changing our lifestyle. We can offer resistance, rebel and take a stand, however minimally. Not to restore a paradise that never existed, but to establish a liveable balance for the future.

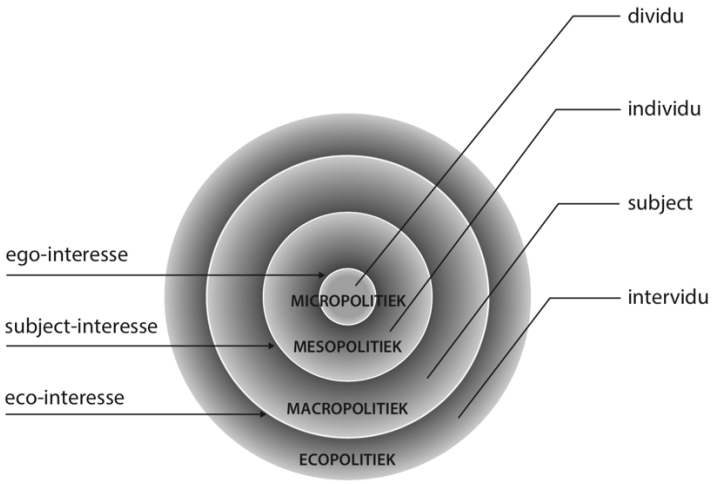
The summer of 2019 proved to be the hottest ever recorded. On the southern edges of the North Pole in Alaska and Siberia, a wooded area larger than Belgium burned down, causing a cloud of smoke the size of Europe to start drifting about. Whether these forests were purposely set on fire by criminally active smallholder farmers, landowners and logging companies, as is the case every year in Malaysia, Sumatra, Brazil and (on a smaller scale) Portugal, we do not know. But human intervention is to blame either way, if only due to negligence and indifference. These are incidents of a political nature. Whether the former forests are now used as grasslands or for the production of palm oil or soya beans, the mass destruction of 'our' tropical rainforests not only harms the ecosystems for plants, animals and people, it also undermines the resilience of the earth as a whole. When asked what we might be able to do about this, most people respond by saying: 'This is so big, what on earth could I ever do about it?' In their defence, they point upwards and outwards: God's providence is unchangeable, let the politicians sort it out, force multinationals to alter their production policy, or stimulate scientists and engineers to come up with technological solutions.

But the rationalities of religion, science, politics, culture and economics – with their differing timeframes that vary from eternity to multiannual funding rounds, four-year political cycles, culture programmes and quarterly figures – cannot be aligned strategically. Each individually persists in pursuit of its own distinct target: spiritual salvation, truth-finding, power-seeking, self-development and profit maximisation. However, to respond by

deflecting is a typical symptom of a pyramidal, linear-exclusive inferiority complex: they are big and I am small. After all, what could one person ever do to challenge 'the system'? All the same, these self-condemning individuals cheerfully resume their producing, distributing and consuming routines that, as a brief look into recent history will tell us, have gradually caused this seeming impossibility. But if we replace the pyramidal view of our involvement and start thinking in terms of networks and scales instead, there are plenty of actions we can take. Linear-exclusive doom and gloom can be converted into circular-inclusive reflaction.

4.1.2 Scaled political action: dividual, ego, individual, subject, nation state, EU, UN

Let me delve further into the terms I have used, thus far somewhat unsystematically, for political scales – macro, meso, micro – in order to gain a better understanding of agents and actions on those different scales. The notion of *interesse* will become differentiated and politically recharged along the way. On a macropolitical scale, the agent is the national political pyramid, with the sovereign nation state as its ultimate legal form, that also operates internationally through bilateral and multilateral treaties or in a federal context. In addition to states, multinational companies and globally-operating banks and investors also act on this political scale. It is here that the main problem lies when it comes to tackling the climate crisis. In part due to the entanglement of political and economic concerns (Vogl, 2016), and in part due to the absence of a supranational enforcer. After all, a UN report is only binding if all parties agree to it. And back home, that decision needs to be sold to the electorate. But voters are citizens and consumers too. They work for companies, institutions and organisations within civil society, that is, society's 'midfield': the mesopolitical scale. This is the scale on which citizenship develops. Lastly, as individuals, citizens always carry around their own ego. A constant battle is being fought within every ego, which is only ever resolved temporarily through decisive choices that 'individualise' the ego. In line with Foucault and Deleuze, I call this scale – on which individual people attempt to free themselves of their inner struggle that leaves the ego split by conflicting desires and troubled by addiction – the micropolitical scale.



Since politics navigates within power structures, it is always embedded in forces that unite and divide. Political action is continuously at risk of fragmentation. Furthermore, politics does not have a fixed state of being, but is in fact in a constant process of 'becoming'. What I want to look at are the transitions between the different scales. In those spaces in between, or interspaces, it is interesse that makes scale-shifts possible: from ego-consciousness, via an individual and collective consciousness – subjectivity – to eco-consciousness. There are three interspaces. In the space between micropolitics and mesopolitics, the micropolitical ego becomes a mesopolitical individual. We can call this ego-interesse. In between mesopolitics and macropolitics, individuals work together and become subjects who 'make society': subject-interesse. In tackling the climate crisis, the problem is the space between macropolitics and the scale we are inclined to call, in a literal sense, *geo*-politics. The Belgian philosopher Isabelle Stengers calls it 'cosmopolitics'. I am sticking with ecopolitics. What we must aim for is eco-interesse. The upscaling of the resistance follows the same route as this scaled politics: from the micropolitical dividual who needs to make choices and take decisions, via the mesopolitical individual who works with others to reset institutional boundaries, to a macropolitical subject that – in the words of Camus – revolts against pyramidal authority. This would be the ideal scenario for a participation society in which critical citizens actually participate. Within this scenario, interesse is not just an ontological notion – a mode of being where everything is interconnected – and a psychological notion – a stance of openness and willingness to get involved – but also, as we have seen, a differentiated political notion.

Two environmental organisations, Urgenda and the Dutch branch of Friends of the Earth, are taking legal action against the State of the Netherlands, appealing that CO_2 emissions must be drastically reduced by 2030. Demonstrations, protests, campaigns and lawsuits against states all take place in the space between macro- and mesopolitics. Schoolchildren and students are taking to the streets to protest against insufficient climate policies. Farmers and construction workers are speaking up against their undifferentiated implementation. Grassroots movements, citizens' initiatives and cooperatives are attempting to reset boundaries on a mesopolitical scale through coordinated interventions. Local-physical resistance has a potential to connect that has grown exponentially due to digitalisation. Across the scales – from ecopolitics to micropolitics – there is a vector that runs from local-physical to global-virtual: yellow vests, a president who tweets, Cambridge Analytics, Russian trolls, they all operate on this vector. Campaign organisations such as Greenpeace and Avaaz also intervene through online petitions and crowdfunding. The global-virtual operations of commons take place on a mesopolitical scale, while on a micropolitical scale the use of memes is driving the wavering ego, with its disjointed desires, to make choices. Meso- and macropolitically, these choices can have both disastrous and generous effects. Discourses create focus and establish coherence between these three ever-overlapping scales. Still, in the discursive turn from ego-emancipation to eco-emancipation, paradoxes continue to emerge.

4.2 Macropolitical opposition: revolt and rebellion

What does this all mean, concretely? Until 1989, massive demonstrations took place in the Netherlands – particularly in the sixties (Vietnam War, feminist movement, student protests) and seventies (neutron bomb, nuclear disarmament, gay pride, squatters' rights). The Dutch squatters' movement explodes in Amsterdam and Nijmegen between 1979 and 1983, in response to Queen Beatrix's coronation: 'no housing, no crowning!' Environmental activists gather at the gates of nuclear power plants in Dodewaard and Kalkar (Germany) around the same time, while a year later around half a million citizens – with a slightly calmer disposition but an equal degree of concern – come together in residential The Hague to demonstrate against the installation of cruise missiles. By then, this multi-scaled resistance had become so contagious, it was coined 'Hollanditis'. Dutch activists known as Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action (RaRa) carry out attacks on wholesale traders Makro, as well as other establishments whose owners maintain ties with South Africa's apartheid regime.

In Eastern Bloc countries, resistance keeps growing stronger among dissidents whose goal is to give communism a human face. Aided by the bankruptcy of the Soviet Union, this leads to the fall of the Berlin Wall. An equally revolutionary, though less successful revolt takes place on Beijing's Tiananmen Square that same year. An estimated one million students and citizens assembled there to push for reforms. What happened in the summer of 2019 in Hong Kong pales in comparison. The image of 'Tank Man', arms spread out and carrying shopping bags as he attempts to stop advancing tanks, is etched in our collective memory. In the first half of the nineties, this mass resistance dies down. The Cold War having come to an end, the global community is warming to globalisation and digitalisation. Thanks to the South African ANC, whose resistance was backed internationally, 1990 sees the end of apartheid. Neoliberal thought and action – championed by the American president Reagan and the British prime minister Thatcher, and focusing on deregulation, privatisation and the concentration of capital – goes viral. Once digitalised, as already became clear from Mason, this neoliberal world order enables capitalism to enter a new phase: informational capitalism. By now, capital accumulation takes place solely through the dealing of information and data.

4.2.1 Spectrum of resistance: from extremist to participatory

To reach a differentiated concept of resistance, we must distinguish between its violent and peaceful strains – if only because one can evolve abruptly into the other. In view of the injuries and deaths that still occur during arrests and demonstrations, there is also an undefined space somewhere between law enforcement and abuse. A demonstration of a militant but peaceful nature can suddenly escalate through a chilling conflict with the police. The peaceful civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King started with a bus boycott and, after distinctly violent clashes in 1963, culminated in a massive protest: 250,000 Americans marching towards Washington. This organised resistance differs strategically and tactically from the iconic example of a post-war revolt: Paris in May of 1968, where labourers and students rebelled. But none of these forms of resistance can be reduced to the systematic terror that, to this very day, manifests itself on a political spectrum from the radical left to the extreme right: from the German Red Army Faction and other urban

guerrilla movements, the jihadist al-Qaeda and Islamic State, to the far-right *Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann* and the British Blood & Honour, in which xenophobia and ultranationalism are the predominant factors.

In addition, there are lone wolves such as Ted Kaczynski, the 'Unabomber' who, succumbing to his megalomaniacal thirst for action, sent letter bombs to public servants in a conscious effort to spread death and destruction. War veteran Timothy McVeigh has 168 deaths and 800 injuries to answer for. He blew up a government building in 1995, out of resentment towards government policy. Anders Behring Breivik, who murdered 69 members of the Norwegian Workers' Youth League on the island of Utøya in 2011, also falls into this category. After 9/11, the significant power of jihadist individuals linked to al-Qaeda – based on their networked counter-strategy – and other vengeful Muslims (USA, New Zealand, France) is brought to light by the conservative think tank RAND in *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy* (2001).

However, I will be concentrating on peaceful – but no less radical – forms of collective resistance that have literally passed us by in recent decades. These are examples of resistance that do not form a threat to constitutional democracy. Indeed, the goal is to strengthen the grassroots-democratic qualities of participation society. As I am ultimately focused on an ecosophical network-discourse, in which the letting go of fixed identities and the creation of *interesse* and ecopolitics are of central importance, we will not be looking into local protests against the establishment of a refugee centre, the blocking of a bus full of anti-Black Pete demonstrators, or reactive resistance by farmers and construction workers. My focus is not on exclusive, but inclusive resistance. How, then, can we understand this macropolitical resistance that is inherent to the system? The parliamentary opposition formed by parties of the left or right, progressive or conservative, has always been strengthened by non-parliamentary resistance. Aside from trade unions and interest groups, parliamentary politics has also played a vital role in the organisation of mass protests. Even so, memberships of political parties in the Netherlands are at a historic low (SCP 2017, 217). With the help of the fictive norm that I have formulated, we can delineate a substantial amount of resistance that took place before the nineties. The dialectical negation of every term fits into a spectrum of resistance movements. They each take a stand against specific aspects of our problematised normality. This concerns everything that, until the sixties, deviated from that disciplinary norm; everything that could not positively define itself, often being written off as 'mad', 'abnormal', 'long-haired', 'perverted', 'rebellious', 'primitive' or 'stupid': the non-human, non-Western, insane, coloured, infantile, sick, delinquent, unemployed, homosexual, unmarried or celibate, polygamous, childless and feminine. In the seventies and eighties, the following broad spectrum of resistance movements developed in various political subcultures: from the environmental movement and animal rights activists, via anti-psychiatry, ex-offender and ex-patient collectives, action committees for foreign employees, youth subcultures, squatters and the autonomists, to every variant of the Black Power, gay rights and women's rights movements. And without doubt, I have forgotten a few.

In the nineties, this situation changes. More than ever before, the geopolitical interests of globally operating, multinational companies are written into national-political policies. The left casts aside its ideological principles. Lobbying on a macropolitical scale

turns out to be far more efficient than advertising in the mesopolitical public arena. To this very day, the tobacco industry carefully examines the biographies of parliamentarians, in order to gain influence over them. Because of the exponentially increasing juridification of the discourse, and fuelled by the claim culture that blew over from the US, the moral responsibility of governors and managers transforms into 'accountability'. Ethics focused on responsibility are jurisprudentially stripped down through corporate accountability. Instead of proving someone's guilt within criminal law, prosecutors take their claim to a civil court. That is where you can get paid – which often has a more consoling effect.

From 1999 to 2005, resistance against the neoliberal world order reignites with great vehemence. As climatologists and ecologists present their alarming findings to politicians and policymakers at climate summits, anti-globalists and alter-globalists gather in the meeting places of the G8 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the US), the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization in Seattle (1999), Genoa (2001) and Gleneagles (2005), respectively. With global justice in mind, militant activists speak out against the unequal distribution of power and wealth that is rooted in the nineteenth-century imperialism that the pyramidally operating G8 embodies.

In the wake of 9/11, the world changed again. Soon after the terrorist attacks in the US, politically distressed Dutch citizens once again make their way – en masse – to Amsterdam's Dam Square to express their horror and indignation. But macropolitical resistance adapts quickly to these global times. The introduction of the iPhone in 2007 facilitates modes of resistance that until then were unheard of. After the 2008 financial crisis, large-scale resistance re-emerges in the West. In the Spanish anti-austerity or '15-M' movement, disadvantaged youths known as the *Indignados* (the 'outraged') demonstrate against the perverted methods of banks and investors. The Occupy movement rises up in 2011, but eventually collapses due to its own grassroots-democratic deliberations – just like what happened at the gates of Dodewaard's nuclear power plant in 1980. 'How' suppresses 'why'. Talks get bogged down in the logistics of who is allowed to say what, in whose presence, and when. Seemingly, the opposite is the case during the Arab Spring in 2011. In Cairo, civilians rise up against decades of oppression, unfair elections, infrastructural corruption, periodic prise-rises, a lack of political freedom, and unemployment. The term 'spring' is derived from resistance that took place in Czechoslovakia in 1968, during which protesting student Jan Palach set fire to himself as the revolt was strangled at birth by Russian tanks. The Arab Spring's immediate cause was equally physical in nature: following ill-treatment by a police officer on 17 December 2010, Tunisian street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi set himself alight.

4.2.2 Connective, transversal and collective resistance: from interface back to face-to-face

Due to the virtualisation of the public domain, mobilisation strategies change after the first decade of the twenty-first century. In which space-time do you find yourself when texting, facetiming or browsing? You are making connections, indeed, but they are not linear. This is not a place you can walk out of, or climb up from. In the virtual world that you are passing through as you browse and text, in this infoscape where everything is instantly connected

and reconnected by feedback loops, in this circular connectivity, one's orientation is neither horizontal nor vertical, but – in the words of Deleuze and Guattari – transversal. Transversal contact at an interface 'disrupts' institutional power structures. In a positive sense by exposing them to well-documented criticism, and in a negative sense through the loutish tirades in frustrated tweets. Digitalisation allows discontented citizens to air their unfiltered grievances 'incorporeally' through Facebook and Twitter spam. In 2018, frustrated French demonstrators take this one step further. They group together under the banner of 'yellow vests', which all drivers in France are obliged to keep in their car in case of emergency. An angry post on Facebook motivates motorists to take action locally, and these actions are coordinated nationally through social media. This culminates in a true rebellion against the neoliberal policies of French president Macron. Weekend after weekend, the yellow vests use Facebook to call people out to hold local protests. At the end of 2018, these become so threatening that the government draws comparisons to the revolutionary years of 1789, 1871 and 1968. Incidentally, this rebellion also has a further physical impact: until the summer of 2019, 315 people sustained head injuries, 24 people lost an eye, and five lost a hand. But it is not the street that is 'standing up' to the pyramidal state in this case, it is the network. The fact that, until the end of 2018, nobody from within the yellow vests is willing to act as their representative in discussions with Macron – at least without deciding to retract at the very last minute – says everything about the absence of a clear focus and substantive coherence.

In Cairo, there was just as little pyramidal direction from political parties or trade unions. Throughout the Arab world, videos of the self-immolation and of street protests go viral through Facebook's digital platforms. But the Egyptian uprising, which brings together over a million people around Tahrir Square, eventually still meets its end. Unlike Paris, Prague and Beijing, this is not the result of military supremacy from outside or from above. Though criminal gangs are deployed to break up the protest, just like what happened in Hong Kong in July of 2019, what silences the resistance in Egypt is the same social media that summoned it. What initially has a binding effect soon becomes divisive: through the use of fake news, the rebellious demonstrators are played off against one another. In their euphoria, protestors taking part in the revolt at Tahrir Square are driven by shared affects that are rooted in ego-interesse and working towards subject-interesse. The protestors are infuriated, indignant, hopeful and enthusiastic. But their image of the future is being fed by a misguided sense of freedom. That sublime experience requires a discourse in order to create the subject-interesse that can add coherence and focus to the resistance. To this end, the revolt is declared a revolution. The rebellion is inscribed into prevailing political discourses. Though the resistance gains coherence and focus as a result, it also becomes exposed to internal fragmentation, parties that oppose each other. As soon as the well-known Grand Narratives – Marxism, Liberalism or Salafism – attempt to write their revolutionary enthusiasm into history, that is when the internal power struggle begins and the movement falls apart. The tragedy of a revolt is a revolution that, in the terror of its own creation, devours its children. Each separate faction lays claim to the resistance and wants all the credit, thereby allowing the army – and with it, the powers that be – to take advantage of the confusion and seize back control.

Pyramidal, reactionary top-down structures will eventually smother any network-based resistance that lacks a sustainable, physical basis to facilitate strategic negotiation and tactical preparation – particularly in absence of the capacity to carry out well thought-out problem analysis. That explains why operational solidarity is uncommon. Since its establishment in 1971, the actions of Greenpeace – despite overshooting the mark on occasion – have demonstrated that well-planned, physically embedded campaigns gain credibility in the long run. To start with, funding from benefactors is used to conduct thorough research and develop a strategy aimed at relevant political and economic players – world leaders and multinationals – with whom a dialogue is opened. If they fail to respond, action is taken. This can be done through direct communication, by handing out flyers on location, or by uploading eyewitness video footage of wrongdoers caught in the act. Ships or trains can be blocked off non-violently. Aided by online campaigns, demonstrations can be held, and if these local efforts are coordinated internationally and manage to gain enough virtual support, this enables them to scale up, becoming global. Through crowdfunding and petitions, the legal mega-departments of multinationals – which have a tendency to keep on suing until the accusing activist runs out of cash – can be fended off. Such tactics were successfully deployed by Avaaz, an online network for campaigning, in bringing multinational biotech corporation Monsanto to its knees. In the build-up to European Parliament elections, Avaaz methodically exposed the attempts of populist disinformation networks to demotivate European voters through photoshopped images.

It appears, then, that protests can only become radical – in other words 'rooted' (Latin: *radix* = root) – through physical solidarity. Purely virtual participation and communication does not suffice. It requires people to join in physically, share socially, and convey mentally. These things need not always happen on the same scale. Through the mesopolitical sharing of ideas, and by taking part consciously, collective macropolitical resistance becomes rooted. If contact between different battlegrounds only runs through interfaces, however, the absence of face-to-face relations prevents a sense of shared corporeality. An event facilitated by social media might be a connective action, but it is not a collective action (Rovers 2018, 74). A large network does not yet make a tight network, as the attachment of ideas is strengthened through physical activities in which individuals become subjects and ego-interesse changes to subject-interesse. In existentialist terms: you are not (yet) something, you become something. Inspired by a shared narrative, through deliberation and action within a discursively charged network, a resilient subjectivity comes into being.

On a macropolitical scale, then, resistance is about groups of people who take to the streets in order to demonstrate against something. In 2018, at least 34 demonstrations were held every week in the Netherlands. The cause was usually an international conflict such as Ukraine or the Palestinian territories, animal suffering due to fur trade or fishing, or religious matters. Aside from national issues, such as conflicts regarding collective labour agreements, local affairs also trigger demonstrations: the shift of healthcare to municipalities, the closure of a community centre, the construction of a mosque. Many macropolitical protests are rooted in mesopolitical frustration and micropolitical desperation. This certainly applies to the yellow vests, but equally to Dutch farmers and

construction workers. From 2018, after decades of resistance by NGO's like Greenpeace and action committees such as Urgenda and Friends of the Earth, individual citizens start demanding attention for the effects of the climate crisis with increasing emphasis. Following the example set by the Swedish Greta Thunberg, pupils and students take to the streets in huge numbers. And their parents and grandparents are speaking out as well. *Wakker Dier* (Animal Wake-Up Call), a Dutch organisation that has been campaigning for years against the uncritical consumption of cut-price meat and fattened chickens, may present themselves differently than their activist colleagues at Meat the Victims, who are known for occupying high-tech pig farms, but their strategic goals converge all the same. Taking inspiration from the work of Polly Higgins, the autumn of 2018 sees the launch of Extinction Rebellion, a network that calls on citizens to 'rebel for life'. By now, tinkering with international legislation, like Higgins did in order to incorporate ecocide into international criminal law, as well as the legal steps taken by Urgenda and the Dutch branch of Friends of the Earth in forcing the state of the Netherlands to reduce CO_2 emissions to the level agreed on in Paris by 2030, have become tried-and-tested forms of macropolitical action. At the other end of the macropolitical spectrum, in the shape of her actions prompted by eco-interesse, Greta Thunberg is lighting the fuse of the powder keg of youthful rebellion.

4.3 Mesopolitical resistance: circular valorisation

At a certain stage of life, physically participating in demonstrations or protest campaigns can be a lifestyle in itself. Travelling back and forth between demonstrations, planning protests and organising occupations was once a day job for 'professional' activists. It seems that those times are returning. Campaigning is a scaled phenomenon. The internet enables you to do so around the globe. To most, however, this way of life is neither desirable nor fulfilling. Despite being sympathetic towards their goals, many people reject the means that 'fanatical' activists employ. We have the so-called Nimbys – "not in my backyard" – who are not prepared to take action until something affects them locally. There are also those who refuse to take action altogether, out of principle. This too is a type of resistance, as is the casting of a protest vote. In *Social State of the Netherlands* (2017), the societal and political participation and engagement of the Dutch is compared with other European countries, and turns out to be above average. Even with the emergence of regional parties focused on 'liveability' and the 'local', the Dutch still devote more attention to national topics than to regional affairs. Whilst there were fluctuations over the past twenty-five years, the propensity for protest (or to support the protests of others) has been on the rise again since 2008. Though people in the Netherlands are more willing than most to enter a protest, they participate less in strictly political contexts. They get involved more frequently with the networks of grassroots groups that represent the exemplary embodiment of rhizomatic radicality or 'rootedness'. A good example of this is the Transition Town movement, a concept adopted by Oxfam Novib as the basis for all its operations around the world.

A variety of new ways of taking action have presented themselves in recent decades. Regular consumer boycott campaigns – no more fuel from Shell, no more cut-

price meat from our favourite supermarket Albert Heijn, no more clothing from discount shop Action – have evolved into the active 'buycott'. In the last ten years, shelves were stocked with a more differentiated selection of products, enabling consumers to make positive choices and opt for a different lifestyle.

The same cannot be said of financial incentives, which are often still notably absent. A fat, sugar or meat tax remains overly contentious. Society is bulging with green initiatives all the same, though these still lack cohesion and focus. They await a new discourse; one that focuses their actions. The education system, as contended by Raworth, must redress its curricula. The process of mapping out initiatives of this kind, and linking them discursively, has only just begun. In *Practivism: A Handbook For Aspiring Rebels* (2018), Eva Rovers playfully brings into view the immense spectrum of mesopolitical rebelliousness: 'How, exactly, do you do so – rebel?' (12). She too emphasises the thought that you need to 'scale up' your personal resistance. She lends eight pieces of advice on how to do so: from 'Dare to think' to 'Dare to do'. Along the way, she unfolds a whole range of 'practivistic' recommendations that reveal a mixture of macro-, meso- and micropolitical interests: get angry (and have fun), make a plan, make an effort, do it together, stand out, and – last but not least – choose non-violence. But for any individual rebellion to become effective, it needs to be scaled up mesopolitically.

Saying no to something, through demonstration and protest, is but one side of the coin of resistance. 'Walk the talk', 'Practise what you preach', 'Put your money where your mouth is' – that's the other side. This happens in the societal midfield that is civil society, the institutional domain of voluntary associations outside the macropolitical sphere of the government (politics) and the market (economics). Activities in this domain used to be covered almost exclusively by churches, left-wing political parties and trade unions. But from the sixties on, citizens' initiatives and grassroots collectives became agents in their own right on this mesopolitical scale. Absorbing macropolitical criticism into how you act in society is the first major feedback loop that serves to boost circular-inclusive reflaction. Around the year 2000, this was known as 'Think global, act local', but in the meantime we have learned how to act globally and make sure the consequences can still be felt locally. That is how subject-interesse and ego-interesse become interlinked.

These days, working for a company, organisation or institution is much more intertwined with our lifestyle than it once was. On a mesopolitical scale, you and other like-minded individuals turn from an individual into a subject, playing an active role in the transition. Solidary 'networking' can have a more motivating impact than going solo, fighting your way to the top. By collaborating, you can now become part of the solution. The roar of protest evolves into critical dialogue. The raised fist becomes a helping hand. This is how macropolitical resistance becomes interlaced and interlinked with the type of institutional, critical acts that aim to reset boundaries. At the end of the sixties, systematically breaking open and transforming an institutional infrastructure from within was known in the discourse of Critical Theory as 'the long march through the institutions' – an expression borrowed from the German student leader Rudi Dutschke. In the long run, this march has since been replaced by a flood of long and short parades, walks, hit and runs, and collective explorations into new directions.

To the process of 'subjectification' – becoming a subject – education is crucial. Just as it did 150 years ago, this process – which Foucault sees as one of being 'disciplined' – falls under the header of 'citizenship'. If there is one area in which emancipation takes place in modern times, it is education. Could education facilitate an eco-emancipation, in which the process of disciplining can be positively and interactively transformed into a subjectification that puts flesh on – and gives a head and a heart to – the required eco-interesse? No wonder Raworth emphasises the importance of good education in economics. She proposes a critical approach to the prevailing neoliberal discourse: 'Students deserve the most enlightened economic education' (2017, 271). In the same way that she is an advocate for a different type of education in her field, I have been intensely involved in society's midfield since 1972, attempting to implement an ecological body of thought in the curriculum. Discontented with education at that time, I teamed up with friends and colleagues to initiate projects aimed at an eco-emancipation through an integral form of education. What was first hinted at in 1975, at a primary school in the south of Rotterdam, culminated in a method for primary education on 'alternative energy', commissioned by the city's municipal government and published in 1983. It provided lessons and projects for primary school pupils, each of which revolved around an energy transition to a fossil-free society. It ended up being used for just over ten years – only sporadically in schools, but systematically at educational children's farms. Not until 2007 did I get the opportunity to carry out more broadly elaborated educational innovations for primary and secondary education, through the project Rotterdam Skillcity (Oosterling 2009; 2012; 2013).

To enhance a transition towards a sustainable global society, I believe that a new type of citizenship and craftsmanship is called for. Given the untenable footprint – and foodprint – of the Western world, such a transition not only requires a transformation of our lifestyle, but also a new 'body of knowledge and skills'. Focusing on the required energy transition, I have set my sights on sustainable craftsmanship, alongside an intercultural team of graduates, artists, architects and policymakers. As our point of departure, we chose UNESCO's 21st Century Skills: the Four Cs (communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creative innovation), two new literacies (media literacy, eco-literacy) and 'lifelong learning'. These generic skills are needed to develop a form of citizenship that, on the outer edges of the UNESCO-scale, is described as ethical, engaged and entrepreneurial. In 5.4.1, I will revisit this in more detail.

By 2006, the macropolitical context was beneficial: departments, municipal services, housing corporations, and institutions for healthcare and education were all forced to collaborate and invest for ten years under the banner of *Pact op Zuid* (Southern Pact), in order to bridge the socio-economic and sociocultural gap between South Rotterdam and the rest of the city. In working with these metropolitan 'stakeholders', it soon became clear to me that an integral strategy cannot take root without binding together the disparate interests of the parties involved, while at the same time transcending these interests in favour of an eco-interest. 'Networking' at this interface between meso- and macropolitics became more effective due to the use of an articulated discourse strategy for the ecosocial reorientation of existing policies. 2007 saw the launch of these ecosocial, educational innovations, with the help of a number of primary schools in Rotterdam. With funding from *Pact op Zuid* for an extra six lessons per week, Rotterdam Skillcity installed an ecosocial circle within the primary school curriculum between 2008 and 2011, in an attempt to embed a circular form of reflection and action. On a weekly basis, pupils started to practise judo and aikido, engage in cooking and gardening, actively use computers, and take part in dialogues on ecophilosophy. A local educational centre for the arts added drama, music and dance lessons into the mix. The participation of parents was a systematic requirement, in the knowledge that this reflaction would not effectively sink in without parental assistance.

For such ecosocial, educational innovations to be durable, they had to be scaled up to higher types of education. For this reason, trainees from Erasmus University Rotterdam as well as schools for vocational education were involved in the project from the start. These students provided assistance during the lessons. As of 2011 – now, following the financial crisis, with the help of private funding – the programme was scaled up to a preparatory vocational school in the same neighbourhood. A so-called 'Craft

House' was established there, with four workshops: health, sports, culture and media. Between 2012 and 2015, this skilling was scaled up further still, to include vocational education. Those in training to become construction workers at Rotterdam's technical college Albeda could take on additional ecosocial modules in a 'Craft Wharf'. From as early as 2008, students of pedagogy and social work at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (UAS) had been assisting with ecosocial lessons and 'homework classes' at the primary schools. In 2011, the underlying philosophy of Rotterdam Skillcity was incorporated by the Institute for Social Studies at Rotterdam UAS in the development of a new educational trajectory, Social Work. Importance is given to network thinking, a relational approach and diagnosing in terms of 'social sustainability', in order to refocus the minds and habitats of clients. The goal was to enable them to enhance their 'relational autonomy'. Students at the Erasmus University also took part in the project from day one: assisting with homework classes, teaching philosophy classes, and coordinating subprojects. By this time, an ongoing trajectory had developed within the educational column, running through it like a skewer. To finalise this ecosocial strategy, a double degree programme on Ecophilosophy was launched at the university and made available to all students from 2013, along with an honours course on Sustainability that was developed in collaboration with Jan Rotmans and the Dutch Research Institute for Transition (DRIFT). Aside from shaping ecosocial individuals, another main target was to realise a transformation of the associated schools into learning organisations. After all, the innovative power can only be fed back if the knowledge and skills being taught also apply to everyone else within the institution – teachers, parents, administrators – and these people open themselves up to criticism, allowing new insights to circulate throughout their organisations. Without this consolidation, 'circular valorisation' cannot be realised.

4.4 Micropolitical subversion: to differ from one's self

The credibility and effectiveness of macropolitical opposition grows as the ideas that serve as inspiration to demonstrators rhizomatically take root in networks within civil society. Emancipatory, macropolitical resistance that is both radical and non-violent can only be effective on this mesopolitical scale through causing pyramidal organisations to become self-critical, transforming them into learning organisations. These feedback loops are necessary, but not sufficient. In order to go from doom-and-gloom to think-and-do, i.e. reflaction, more is needed than just opposition, rebellion or implicit resistance. Macropolitically, it entails a deconstruction of the prevailing politico-economic discourse of the powers that be, in its incredible claim that the free market, of its own accord, will work out well for everyone. To really be effective, however, it has to sink into the micropolitical sphere of the ego. In their criticism of failing government policies, discriminatory market interventions and fixed sectorial hierarchies, mesopolitically operating network organisations not only call upon scientific insights and cultural practices, but also appeal to a set of ethical values. If these are borrowed from the same modernist discourse that their opponents use, then a 'revolution' will involve nothing more than an inverted reproduction of the old discourse. In that case, revolution lives up its name: things merely

turn around. How can resistance be redefined, through a new and positive discourse, in such a way that it ceases to fall back on the linear-exclusive tactics of the old discourse?

Elements of this new discourse are becoming visible in a variety of narratives, but they fail to converge upon a new Grand Narrative. In no small part, this is because meanwhile we have caught on to the fact that there is no credible, overarching story available to us. The scales that are influenced by our daily routines have simply become to diverse. What is feasible, for the time being, is a transition in which a critical stance towards the pyramidal structures of old creates space for new ways to think and act. For eco-interesse, the aim is a different world, and a different kind of humanity. That can only be credible if, in times of eco-panic, we anticipate it in terms of our own lifestyle. And for that we need to understand how, in the space between the mesopolitical and micropolitical scales, the self-consciousness of individuals – their ego – is produced.

In *Re-volution: Of People, Organisations and Society* (2017), Jan Rotmans describes the necessary conditions for an integral transition. He too makes use of the distinction between micro, meso and macro, albeit in a slightly different relation to one another. The term 'bottom-up' is crucial to Rotmans's discourse: initiatives are developed from ground level in an attempt to counter the political and economic top-down vector of pyramidal hierarchies. In the 'third industrial revolution', everything seems to be literally turned around: vertical-central becomes horizontal-decentral. Rotmans also points out that we are going 'from ownership to use and from linear to circular' (2017, 44). What that means, exactly, does not become clear. I would put it like this: the linear-exclusive, top-down focus of pyramidal hierarchies is redirected, via feedback loops, by the circular-inclusive impact of networks. When pyramidal networks and circularly valorising networks intertwine, the acquired insights start to circulate. Participants become serious interlocutors. From this perspective, it turns out that 'bottom-up' is just a prelude to an entirely different orientation: the linear focus still needs to bite its own tail before it can become circular.

The subtitle of Rotmans's book refers to the political scales through key words: people, organisations and society. The bottom line, then, is 'people'. Rotmans is not concerned with what Foucault calls the 'empirical-transcendental double', nor therefore with this creature's split nature. Nevertheless, his book ends with the paragraph 'It is within ourself': 'To proceed with your personal transformation as a human being, you must dig deeper into yourself, connect with your essential self.' That is easier said than done, but if this is a 'process of reflexivity' in which we 'must first break away from our ego that concerns itself with power, status, possessions, etcetera', 'without hoping for immediate answers', then Rotmans – on a micropolitical scale – is also embarking on the transition from ego-emancipation to eco-emancipation (2017, 151; 52).

Just as political unwillingness and economic indifference are countered on a macropolitical scale, and institutional rigidity is replaced by flexibility on a mesopolitical scale, the networked individual appears as a porous ego at the interface between mesopolitics and micropolitics. Margaret Wertheim calls this 'the leaky self' (1999), as opposed to the 'branded self' or public image that people use to present themselves at their absolute best for a relationship or a job. To Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, this 'porous self' is at odds with the modern 'fixated self' that is inclined towards a certain

disengagement. Yet he sees it as a premodern mode of being (2010, 91). To go from a fixating ego-emancipation to a circulating eco-emancipation, however, requires a new type of porosity that is a precondition for a major transformation of our individual self-will. In *You Must Change Your Life* (2011), German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk gives an impression of the ways in which, over the centuries, people have let themselves be trained by gurus, craftsmen, teachers and coaches. It seems obvious that the transformation of the ego is a relational process: how else can the split ego get over this internal divide? In the same way that we cannot expect addicts to pull themselves up out of the swamp by their own tail, we cannot expect modern people to give up their modern lifestyle without transitional techniques that involve others.

For now, it suffices to note that, in opening up this micropolitical sphere, we have set foot in the psychological and psychopathological domain. Our rational mind is directed at autonomy and control, and therefore wishes to undo the passionate intertwinement of our senses and our body with the world, but we are simply too caught up in bad habits and devastating routines. Can we understand a divided individual beyond the DSM-5 complex of pathological symptoms, such as dissociative identity disorders? Psychotherapeutically speaking: how do we shake off bad habits like showering for too long, eating too much meat, driving too fast, and flying too often? How can we determine the degree to which we are addicted to our comforts? This tension cannot be released through the cynicism of 'it will see me out' or 'let tomorrow take care of itself'. How can we accept and bridge the fundamental split that inherently resides in us, and attain a sustainable lifestyle?

4.4.1 Change the world, start with yourself – but the personal is political!

Clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst Paul Verhaeghe makes an interesting observation in *Intimacy* (2018): 'And is it a coincidence that a holistic view signals a new social reality in which authority is not exerted top-down, but functions through networks?' Given the fact that 'in a holistic view everything is connected to everything, the most-used metaphor is that of a network structure in which the separate parts continuously interact with each other'. He is no longer interested in power relations: 'that sort of question still belongs with dualism' (Verhaeghe 2018, 88). Not top-down and dualistic, but holistic and network-based. In turning against dualistic thinking, Verhaeghe also resists the temptation to counter the top-down approach of authority with a bottom-up resistance. For him too, top-down and bottom-up are aspects of the same linear discourse. In a holistic view, authority circulates. Sometimes you are listened to, other times you do the listening. At one moment you are the teacher and the master, at another you are the student and the servant.

'Change the world, start with yourself.' This slogan remains as seductive as it is simplistic. After all, as soon as we follow it up with the catchphrase 'the personal is political', it becomes apparent that the 'self' already forms a political arena of its own. The master and the servant – and by implication, potential opposition, rebellion and resistance – already reside within our soul. This is exactly what Nietzsche demonstrates in his genealogical analysis of morality. One part of us defies another. ('Do you really need to eat meat every day? Whatever, it won't make a difference (now) anyway!') Mesopolitical

forms of resistance are always connected, through larger or smaller feedback loops, to this 'inner' divide. You bring your troubles with you when you go to work, and you take the pressures of your job back home again. In Maslow's first, non-pyramidally represented categorisation of needs, he mentions the ability to deal with paradoxes, counting this among the qualities that contribute towards self-actualisation. This active affirmation is a crucial political skill, which on a micropolitical scale exists in the ability to accept and style supplementary tensions: I am both this and that, I belong both here and there. Sometimes choices need to be made, that much is clear. But these are strategic in nature, as opposed to ontological: we are not something, we become something.

Drawing on slogans from the sixties, it is tempting to associate micropolitics with heroic individuals or even prophetic martyrs such as Martin Luther King, Gandhi and Dutschke. But that would be too easy, if you ask me. For if these slogans were targeted on individuals at all, it will particularly have been those who themselves felt discriminated and excluded: suppressed women, stigmatised homosexuals, locked-up lunatics, long-haired scum, exploited workers and uncivilised blacks; all those marginal 'non-subjects' of modernity who, in their misunderstood resistance against normalisation, chose a subversive lifestyle. Initially this could not be recognised as a form of resistance at all, because the prevailing discourse did not offer any relevant positive categories. For the longest time, homosexuality was a disease and hysterical women were seen to be failing in their marital duties. The disciplining described by Foucault, however, acted as a guarantee for systemic normalisation. Those who refused to be normalised did not become subjects, but abjects – literally, the 'discarded' – that continued to experience the 'normal' desires that were imposed upon them as alien. They were unable to express their 'own' feelings, or to possess their 'own' desires. This problem was dealt with by Simone de Beauvoir with reference to the feminine. It took a radical turn during the second wave of feminism, in the work of philosophers such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler and Rosi Braidotti.

Changing one's self is a battle. You might compare it to standing on your own hands and lifting yourself up, jumping over your own shadow, or pulling yourself out of a swamp by your own ponytail, like Baron Munchausen. In another orientational metaphor: you are 'doing the splits'. In a macropolitical sense, you have one foot in a pyramidal, nationally demarcated territory, and the other in the middle of a networked globe. In a mesopolitical sense, you have one foot in pyramidal hierarchies and the other in virtual networks. And in a micropolitical sense, you and your discursively demarcated identity find yourselves in a field of fiercely competitive affects: 'I' want this, *and* that, *and* that as well. Our freedom lies in what makes us dependent: our media, or means. Our autonomy lies in our 'automobility', our use of cars. Freedom is, primarily, freedom of movement. From the perspective of resistance as it has been described thus far, an integral focus of this split ego implies that interesse binds itself to the various scales: micropolitical subversion is translated, via mesopolitical resistance, into macropolitical opposition, with a focus on eco-interesse. This presents us with choices regarding a consistent lifestyle, social engagement, and political opposition. If I talk to myself, in my head, a discourse that is no longer self-evident still resonates: 'Why would you still do this in the way you always have done?' Through feedback loops, the problematised discourse circulates within me.

In all political interspaces, intentions, actions and goals are increasingly mirrored in each other. The art of living is to behave, within these changes of perspective, in a way that remains coherent and focused. The focus does not lie solely on reaching an exclusive goal, but on an integral connection with similar goals that, just like networks, intertwine. There is no Grand Narrative. The strengthening of connectivity strengthens our collective existence, causing networks to become more resilient. In order to embed macropolitical resistance in physical practices, a radicalisation or 'rooting' on the mesopolitical and micropolitical scales is indispensable. Through operating alongside like-minded people in civil society, ideas and behaviours become rhizomatically rooted. Rather than an altogether different world, what is being fought for is a redistribution of wealth and health in a safer world. In a politico-institutional sense, this requires the resetting of boundaries. In a politico-existential sense, it calls for the transformation of patterns of behaviour and expectation. 'Walk the talk!' By letting ideas take root in shared lifestyles, the mesopolitical resistance is existentially safeguarded. In that discursive turn, doom and gloom turns into reflaction.

Implicitly, macropolitical opposition and mesopolitical resistance indicate that groups and individuals want to live differently. On a micropolitical scale, however, we are stuck in our routine of the everyday. It starts when we get up early in the morning, and ends when we return to our beds at night. One of the causes of the climate crisis – and thereby one of the entry points for its adaptive approach – literally ends up on our plate, every day. What do you put on your bread? And what do you have to drink? The methane emitted by defecating, belching livestock is in part caused by our excessive consumption of meat and dairy. When we step into the shower, close the front door behind us, ready to transport our body to its daily activity; with each action the climate crisis feeds back into our behaviour that is infrastructurally driven by bad habits. Modern individualisation (eco-interest) and subjectification (subject-interest) give cohesion and focus, through day-to-day drills, to the essential fragmentation that we are. Once these routines are questioned by the paradoxes and frictions that they themselves evoke, we are opened up to an eco-interest that needs to be scaled up politically.

Psychologically, we like to position ourselves robustly, as someone made of one piece. But what does it mean for something in me to rebel against something in me? Who is listening to who, and who is playing deaf? A discourse can be heard as it resonates within individuals, constantly addressing them: do this, don't do that. Through each imperative that urges them to do something – live eco-consciously! – or causes them to give something up – thou shalt not fly! – it becomes evident that our desire is a site of power relations, in which 'choices' are made by forces other than our rational 'I'. Power relations are also at play on the micropolitical scale of the soul. Full of tension, we are in constant conversation with ourselves, or more adequately formulated: our selves. Some form of conversation has always been ongoing. According to the Greeks, mythical gods whispered in the ears of the Homeric heroes, telling them what to do. Their enthusiasm – literally 'being in (*en*) god (*theos*)' – was something that, for Socrates, was summoned by a *daimon*. As for the Romans, they were inspired by a *genius*. This conversation is gradually externalised, through discussion with an adviser or confidant. When Christianity deploys the Devil, connecting temptation with evil, the spirit must learn to resist all these

temptations of the flesh, or to compensate them with indulgence in confession. The local priest was the Pope's mediator. After Protestantism rejected the external authority of the Pope and his priests, God still checked every action, but now as an inner conscience. The 'death of God' prompted philosophy to situate the conversation *in* the subject. This shift is conceptualised by Kant and Hegel. However, the masters of suspicion – Marx, Nietzsche, Freud – are the ones who explicitly situate the subject in a secular discourse that overrules the supposed autonomy of the subject. This split subject is continually at odds with itself. By releasing or externalising unbearable tensions through social media such as Twitter, we are able to maintain the illusion that we are undivided beings, or individuals.

4.4.2 From a dividual, via the individual, to interviduals

In a short elaboration, it might be helpful to clarify the crucial concept of the 'individual'. We are inclined to see this as a universal notion: individuals have always existed, everywhere. Neanderthals were individuals too. But this is a misconception. The Neanderthal is no Homo sapiens. Members of tribal communities are no individuals either. Spirits and gods still continue to speak through them. They are part of a whole to which they are unable to relate critically. They are porous, in Taylor's sense of the word. They do not necessarily experience their self-conscience as an independently functioning capacity, let alone as the source of their knowledge about the world. In order to be an individual, then, flesh and blood alone do not suffice. Head, torso and limbs cannot define an individual's mode of being, even though their every appearance is unique. Thanks to Foucault's discourse analysis, we now know that the term 'individual' requires a specific discursive bedding. The critical notion 'individual' is featured in eighteenth-century texts, though it would take another hundred years to surface in dictionaries. At the exact same juncture, politics and education are going through structural changes. In the emergent nation states, individualisation becomes the focus of a collective ego-emancipation.

Looking back further, however, it turns out that the term *individuum* appeared a lot earlier; in the writings of Roman philosopher Cicero, for instance. He uses the term as a translation of the Greek *atomos*: something that has no (*a*) parts (*tomos*), an in-divisible whole. The individual will become the atom of human sciences. In modernity's political discourse, it becomes the primary building block of human society. That does provoke a first critical question: if natural science has given up on the notion of the atom in favour of subatomic particles such as electrons, neutrons and protons, then why does psychology still hold on to the individual as its core concept? It is true that psychoanalysts such as Verhaeghe dive beneath it to catch a glimpse of the undercurrent, of those subversive forces that constantly undermine their clients' 'self-regulation', be it in psychopathological terms. The ego's supplementary 'dark' side is a breeding ground for 'abnormal' behaviours that need to be cured, prevented or repressed. And yet, in the battle against these dark forces, the humanities preserve the 'individual' as one of their fundamental concepts. In the nineteenth century, medical research inevitably transforms the individual into an 'instance', a case. Scientists tend to think of the individual statistically, in terms of averages and tendencies. When they put an individual under the microscope, it turns out to be fundamentally divisible, just like the *a-tomos*. Upon closer inspection, the in-divisible

(*dividere* = to share, to separate) proves to be a divisible being: dividual. In turn, 'di-vidual' consists of *di(s)* – meaning 'apart' or 'in two' – and *videre*, which refers to the French *vide* or 'emptiness', and the Latin *viduus* meaning 'widower' as well as 'robbed of', 'flawed' or 'empty'. Have we just taken an immense detour, only to return to Sartre's *néant*? To a nothing, which can only take on a coherent form as a performance that lends its focus from a power-invested discourse? Yet, ontologically this 'nothing' is a fundamentally split being, a difference, a field of tension in which behaviour reaches coherence and focus in the scale-up to ego-interesse and subject-interesse.

'Philosophers of difference', such as Deleuze and Guattari, label this process as subjectification (French: *assujettissement* or *agencement*). Instead of an individual, however, the *agens* – or 'agent' – is a node within a network. At the interface between the micropolitical and mesopolitical scales, the ego situates itself within networks, forming a point of intersection – a node or 'knot' – that functions mesopolitically as an individual. The individual does not tie itself in knots – it *is* the knot. No wonder *agencement* is often translated as 'assemblage'. A daily battle takes place at each of the intersections between the scales. The outcome of the micropolitical battle within the soul determines how the individual in question acts on the mesopolitical and macropolitical scales. Hence, the porosity of the 'individual' runs in two directions: 'outwardly', since you are always connected to others in order to give your actions meaning – even in your resistance and rebellion. A discourse provides this orientation, enabling an individual to become part of a collective subject. 'Inwardly', the individual is constantly exposed to resisting forces: affects run straight through him, in battle with one another. We are both touched and troubled by what affects us. Ego-interesse situates the individual in the space between the micropolitical and the mesopolitical. In developing their subjectivity as macropolitical agency individuals are connected in the space between the mesopolitical and the macropolitical: subject-interesse. This is where Hannah Arendt would situate her grassroots-democratic interesse.

Policy issues regarding the implementation of subject-interesse are front-page news, virtually every day. In times of eco-panic, however, the big question is how we are going to shape the scale-up from macropolitics to the ecopolitical sphere of the earth itself. How will nation states, the business world and civil society conjointly get the job done of installing eco-interest? The complexity of the transition to a sustainable society becomes visible at the interface between macropolitics and ecopolitics. In this interspace, an individual becomes an intervidual. Within this interspace, an eco-emancipation can unfold. In this sphere, we conform to living ecosystems in which we participate. Bruno Latour simply calls this the Earthly: 'Space has become a restless history, which we take part in alongside other participants, who react to other reactions. We seem to be landing in the middle of *geohistory*' (2018, 54). In that ecopolitical interspace, the climate crisis is deepening exponentially, because we are not (yet) able (or willing) to intervene there. What we – humanity – must do, is give shape to this eco-interesse.

As soon as we follow in the footsteps of the atom by placing the individual under the microscope, and allow for the observations about the dividual-individual-intervidual and a threefold interest, it turns out that indivisibility and autonomy are more likely to be the result of sub-individual or dividual processes than their foundation. In emphasising the

rational self, modern Enlightenment and individualisation have discursively concealed this complex dynamic of opposing forces. But within us, an eternal battle rages on between the power of reason and affective forces, between *logos* and *pathos*. In order to pacify this subversion, science offers all sorts of categorial systems that explain the ins and outs of the world and humans. But generally speaking, life does not take much notice of this. Philosophers have insistently reconfigured this battle. What Descartes calls cogito (*res cogitans*) and matter (*res extensa*), what Kant presents as subject and object, and what Hegel, Marx and Sartre tailor to the waltz of world history as 'in-itself' and 'for-itself' – this relational tension has always been embedded in a field of forces and differences. Logos is undermined by pathos, reason by passion, by that which logos cannot control. The ego attempts to keep its passions under control, or to overpower them, in order to prevent itself from getting 'addicted'. In a macropolitical sense, in her plea to shift 'from growth addiction to growth agnosticism', Raworth takes addiction to be our economy's core problem. But can we still speak of addiction in an economy that produces scarcity in abundance?