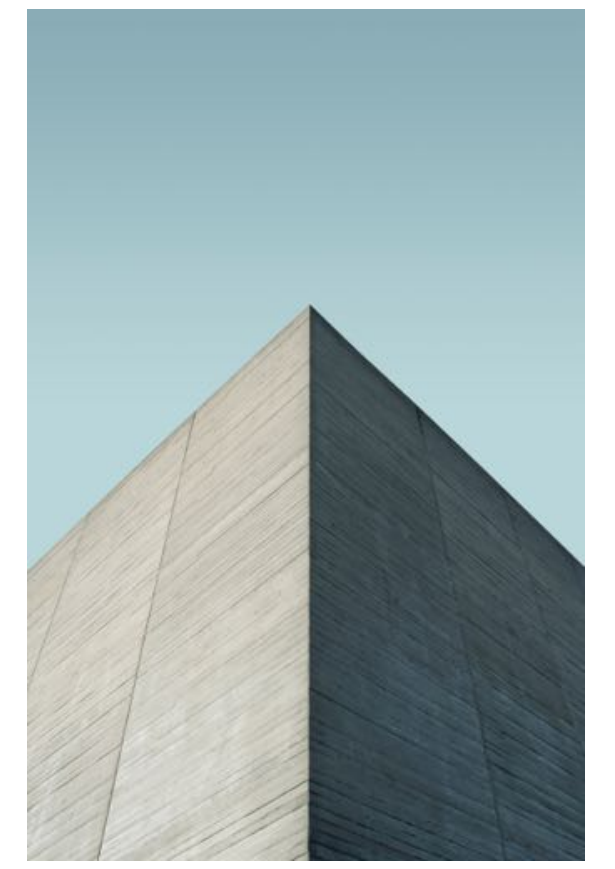


COLONIALISM

On knowledge and the notion that we are many

"If you tell grown-ups: "I saw a beautiful pink brick house, with geraniums on the windows and doves on the roof..."; they can't imagine this house. You have to tell them: "I saw a house worth a hundred thousand francs." Then they will shout, "How pretty!"
From *Le Petit prince*



C is for Colonialism.

Could have also been Culture, Capitalism, Control.
All go hand in hand (these days).

Colonialism is linked with history. The history of countries fighting for territories and their resources. The online oxford dictionary has this definition for Colonialism: the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. The Collin online dictionary has this definition: colonialism is the practice by which a powerful country directly controls less powerful countries and uses their resources to increase its own power and wealth.

To POSSESS

THE. PRACTICE. Of Power Wealth and Control

More Possessions To Fewer People. Possessions to people alike.

Norm, margin, individual, margins, collectivity, norms, individual, collectivities, collective margin, individual norm, marginal collectivity, collective individual, individual collectivity, marginal margins, normal margins, collective collectivities, normal individuals, marginal collectivity, collective norms, marginal individual...
dans l'ordre ou le désordre

What happens when that control goes deeper than frontiers and economic or social mechanisms? What happens when such a control becomes integrated by all the individuals of a community? For some strange reason, some people want to keep everything and control everything. Or, for some reason, they are afraid to lose. Money, territory, its natural resources and, knowledge. Because, as the famous quote goes: Knowledge is power. And so, an attire of messages and stratagem from the top members of a collectivity who possess too much for their own true needs (and the needs of too many future generations) run down to the bottom ones. These constructed messages and stratagems can be consciously applied but I believe, most of the time, it is a question of unconsciously internalized and manipulated ideas constructed on old ones. Ideas not questioned, not reactivated, not actualized. We are all trapped in human made constructions, be it physical or conceptual. If these constructions were possible, and made, it is possible to unmake them and build other structures. Yes structures. Other constructions. I believe in some sort of collective, open, adaptable organization. We are so many living together. We have to organize somehow.

I think of my own roots, my own French Canadian/Québécois history. A Québécoise history as being both colonized and colonizer.

Does organizing groups always have to follow the same hegemonic model of one group being superior to the other based on the only fact that they are a better fit to the system. Norm, margin. Individuals, collectivity. Just another dualistic way of organizing the world. What if we took it in another manner. A more inclusive one.

We are many. A manifest.

Margins. Marginal, marginalized, marginalize. A simple but complex word, a word with multiple uses.

It is used in economics when we talk about marginal benefits. In writing: the margins of a text. Margins as in contour, edge, frame. In mathematics, we use it when we talk about deviation, as we do in social contexts: the marginalized. Those who are not like the others, like the rest of the world, those who are on the periphery. "Being on the fringes of" means doing in parallel, with less importance. Marginal, then, also means negligible: that we can ignore, which is unimportant, insignificant.

But can we really extract the margins from the text? Are they really unimportant, superfluous, to be ignored? In the same vein, can we really ignore so-called marginal people?

Who are these marginal people? We are marginal in the face of a standard, of what is usual, of what corresponds to the greatest number, of general use. General, costumery, common, standard. The standard is a number related to a context. It is not an unalterable state, reserved for an elite distributed in a fair and equitable way. Common means shared by a group. It also means banal. What if we were all both extraordinary and banal. Indispensable and insufficient, distinct and insignificant. Vulgar and sophisticated. Clear and ambiguous.

Margins are part of the text. They make it readable and understandable. Frames enhance artwork, silences are part of the musical piece. Why categorize people, ideas, disciplines? What if it was just categorizing to better understand each other, to put words to communicate our ideas. But no. We categorize and then we hierarchize. This being better than that. This person being worth more than this one.

Because it is time to see margins as an integral part of the whole.

Because it is time to stop this way of working in silos and think in opposition.

Because we are all someone's marginal on at least one aspect of our lives.

Because we are many to wish and work for a fairer, more open society, respectful of people and the environment.

Because we are many to find ourselves lost, losing out even in the current social/political/economic context. And this, regardless of our annual income, social status, level of education, or health status.

Because we are many wanting something else without really knowing how to go about creating it or how to agree on a model of society that holds its own and adapts.

Because we are many making art, saving lives, finding solutions. Many to live, work, love, laugh, cry, getting tired and wanting to realize ourselves. We are many to have children, or not. To make mistakes, try and start again. We are many to succeed AND fail.

We are many wanting to do better, be better, to mobilize, come together while respecting our individual realities and dealing as well as possible with the context in which we live. We are many, but not all at the same time, by the same path. How can we synchronize the common in the multiplicity of these singulars?

Because it is time to focus on our common denominators.

Because it is time to focus on the thresholds of what distinguishes and the intersections of what brings together.

Because it is time to embrace ambiguity. Inherent in our lives and inevitable.

Because to embrace this ambiguity, it is necessary to be vigilant. Constantly. Let go of that reflex to go on cruise control: finding once and for all THE solution to a situation so that one does not have to think about it anymore. The movement is perpetual and permanent. Even the most cheerful or saddest situations are declined in an infinitude of nuances and multiple perspectives.

Because respecting the traditions is not an argument for the status quo.

Because the "it's always been like this" are completely false. And because the "I've never seen this" are not a valid excuse not to try.

Because it's time to prepare without knowing. Prepare to be ready for anything, for nothing. Prepare for what we can predict. For what we can't even imagine.

Because we are all someone else's outsider at some point. And because even if we are many, we are not all the same.

Because it's time to sharpen up until you get lost.

Because it is time to accept the fragility and strength of our lives.

Because it's time to get to know each other, to recognize each other. To accept the other.

Because the other, is us.

Because it is time to stop with the: "Ah you know young people these days...", or the "ha, you know, all artists are..." or the "Ah! all doctors..."

Because art and science are only two languages, two approaches that seek to question and understand the world around us.

Because whether we are from the arts, medicine, academia or the street, we all have our contribution to make. Living on the street, having a chance encounter, being in a mental or physical health situation, enjoying a privilege, being the victim of a malicious person, finding the love of your life, all this is possible for everyone, at any time.

There will always be systems in place to organize groups. There will always be people on the margins regardless of the system. How do we establish this system? On what basis, what criteria? Furthermore, why do those who better meet the criteria of this system become, as a result, better than the others? We have to be aware of our constructions and make sure everyone is acknowledged in their being. If the margins are part of the text and enhance it, shouldn't it be the same for people, ideas, disciplines?

A RECIPE FOR COLONIALISM



Ingredients:

3 thick slices of French bio first grade baguette

Blue Cheese. Le bleu d'Elizabeth

Riopelle Cheese

Duck foie gras mousse à l'hydromel

Prosciutto di parma

Mini chorizo

Batistou au cèpes

fig and onion chutney

edible flocons d'or

All natural peruvian peppers

Olives

Multigrain and dates crackers

Cheez whiz

Ritz-like Crackers (house brand)

Premier Plus like crackers (house brand) in crumbs

Place one slice of baguette at the top, the other two below to form a pyramid.

Place the multigrain and dates crackers under the row of the two slices of baguette to continue the pyramid, adding 2-3 crackers with each row.

Make 2 rows of multigrain and dates crackers.

Do the same for the Ritz-like crackers for 3-4 rows.

Finish the pyramid with the Premier Plus-like crumbs.

On the slice of baguette at the top, generously spread some chutney, the cheeses, olives, prosciutto, foie gras, bastitou, and mini chorizo until the baguette is completely covered with food. Overflowing. Just because you can. Sprinkle with flocon d'or.

For the other 2 slices of baguettes make any combination of 3 ingredients. Because you can but not as much

For the multigrain and dates crackers, add one of the ingredients from the rows above. Here, you think you can but you can't.

For the Ritz-like crackers, spread some cheez whiz. Be grateful you can eat.

Place the crumbs in order to finish the form of the pyramid. Because you just had to be born another gender, skin colour, religion, country, sexual orientation, whatever. But with hard work, or if you are willing to change maybe you could to the "top". Maybe.

N IS FOR NOSTALGIA

On moments past present and futur

"Speaking as a child of the 90's"
-Pearljam



In 2018, the University of Gdańsk (Poland) organized, in collaboration with the University of Sao Paulo (Brazil) and the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (Colombia) a conference on memory, melancholy and nostalgia. The call for paper suggested an impressive list of topics. Here are a few[1]:

1-About memory and affect

Nostalgia or melancholy?, non-melancholic nostalgia, the healing power of nostalgia..

2-About Common experience...

Nostalgic epochs, nations, generations, nostalgia and the myth of eternal return, nostalgia and war, patriotism, genre, language, post memory..

3-About Individual experiences

Return to childhood, nostalgia and old age, mourning, death, love and imagination..

4-About the arts

Nostalgia and melancholy as a theme in literature, film and theatre, nostalgia and the arts as a vehicle of memory, nostalgic literary genres..

5-About Society

Nostalgia and political movement, incentives, migration, leadership, policy, incentives, nostalgia and the drive to change and community development..

Although the list is extensive, there is nothing on the relation between nostalgia and knowledge.

Knowstalgalia?

How does memory of the past, collective or individual, shape our knowledge(S)?

Nostalgia is experience. It is Experienced. Experienced in the past and relived in the present moment. Knowstalgalia. Experience as knowledge.

Even though I never experienced it, I feel nostalgia for the time where all knowledge was philosophy, before positivism came and separated the domains. Nostalgia for the time where masters walked and talked and taught their pupils. Was this time better than today? Perfection. Truth. Truths. The existence of. The pursuit of. The remembering of moments as such. The fabrication in memory of a better time. That time being in the past relived now.

Nostalgia for the future? Is that a thing?

There are no antonyms for nostalgia.

Found on time.com:

"Of course, what counts as comfort food is different person to person. When Troisi has asked people to write about an experience they've had with comfort food, essays have ranged from soup to kimchi. "It's not just that ice cream, for instance, is really tasty. It's that someone has developed a really significant meaning behind the idea of ice cream due to their relationships with others, and that's what is triggering this effect," he says. (...) the evocation of nostalgia as one way people can obtain a sense of belonging even when the people they are close to are not close[2] by.

Food and nostalgia. Everybody has a past that they long for, they remember, they make better or worse. Nostalgia is a mix of comfort, sadness, longing, pleasure, love. Everybody has food that takes them back somewhere in the past. Somewhere where they were well, or not. Good memories are not just about happiness. Food associated with memories. The past revisited in the present moment. There and not there. Constitutive yet displaced, or deformed. For better or not. Nourishing the future maybe, in hopes of keeping the memory alive and growing.

Can we be satisfied, fulfilled with just a memory?

Personal nostalgia. My past, my souvenirs, my moments.

Social nostalgia. Collectively longing for a time imagined was better.

Personal or social, nostalgia as a common mechanism for organizing past moments and make them relevant in the present. Nostalgia common to all but extremely personal in its incarnation.

[1] <https://memorynostalgia.ug.edu.pl>

[2] <http://time.com/3975676/comfort-food-cravings/>



A RECIPE FOR NOSTALGIA

Ingredient (equipment):

A chair

A sound devise

Headphone (if in social settings)

Steps:

Find a comfortable spot.

Put the headphones on and press play on the device.

Listen to the recording (see text below).

Take 3 nice breaths.

This recording is meant to take you back to a place, a moment in your past, where food was involved. This place, this moment can be close or far in time or in space.

A moment you remember fondly for your own singular personal reasons. A place of warmth, and security. Indoors or outdoors.

You may be alone, or with people you are comfortable with. Laughing, crying, travelling or at home. It could be one of your homes. Imagine the place, the people, hear the noises, the silence, the sounds.

Wherever you are and with whomever, there is food.

On a table, on the ground, a couch, a plane.

Is there a particular smell?

Look at the food, see its colours and how it is placed in space.

Reach for the food, with your hands, a spoon, some other tool. Bring the food to your mouth. Take a bite of the food in front of you. What does it taste like? What is the texture, the temperature of your food. Is it a recipe, an elaborate meal or a snack? Something homemade or not.

Savour.

Take as many bites as you please, each time adding more details about the food, its history.

Is this the first time you eat that food? Or is it part of a tradition, a ritual?

How does it relate to your own history. Do you still eat that food often? How long has it been since you've last eaten it?

You can now gently come back to the surrounding setting, the place and the people you are with right now.

How do you feel? Remember there are no right or wrong answers.

Take 3 nice breaths and take as long as you need before returning to your activities.