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The moose are protesting: the more-than-human politics of transport infrastructure development

The moose are protesting, the moose have had enough; the moose want security, here in their own forest...

We moose demand greater equality! And we need to get rid of the car traffic from the roads; Many of our comrades have fared ill on the roads!

Excerpt from the lyrics of Swedish childrens' song *Älgarna demonstrerar* by James Hollingworth & Karin Liungman, from the album *Barnlåtar* (1974), authors translation.

The electronic date stamping of the video reads the 7th of January, 2012. It is about a quarter to six in the morning in Tanadalen, on the road from Tromsø to Tana bru in Norway. The truck driver, Alf Eirik Aspås, sings to himself in Norwegian. He sings out loud, even though he is all by himself in the truck, perhaps to keep himself awake. There is snow on the road and he is driving fast, but within the speed limit. Suddenly he screams out, cursing. And we barely have time to see it caught by the trucks front video camera: a giant four legged body reflecting in the headlights, and soon gone again - thumped off the road and sent flying dozens of meters from the force of the collision with the truck. The thud of the 400 kilo moose crashing against the truck's bull bar at seventy kilometers per hour is immediately followed by the muted voice of the driver, mumbling to himself: "no, no, no".¹ As retold, the truck barely received a scratch but the moose immediately died from the impact. Particularly when travelling in smaller

¹ See further <http://www.nordlys.no/nyheter/article6350940.ece>

vehicles, many humans are not as fortunate as Alf Eirik Aspås, to come away unscathed from a high velocity collision with a moose. In Sweden alone there have been between four and twelve human mortalities and between forty and ninety serious injuries yearly throughout the 2000's resulting from motor vehicle-moose collisions. There exist no statistics on the equivalent death toll of moose resulting from such impacts during the same period - but it is with all certainty much, much higher - as it is usually the unarmored moose that takes the brunt of the impact in these recurrently bloody confrontations.

It would be difficult to argue against the claim that 'something happens' in moose-vehicle collisions, but few would define this as potentially constituting a *political* moment or event. Nevertheless, this is what I will attempt to do in this chapter, the broader purpose of which is to investigate a notion which to some may seem simply ridiculous and to others completely morally outrageous: that non-humans such as other-than-human animals² may also become politically active. As a correlate, we should not only learn to hear them as a legitimate voice in spatial planning and development processes, but also actually engage in concrete negotiations with them to the same extent that we would do with any concerned human party for instance in relation to a infrastructural development project. Even more outrageously, I am suggesting that we to some degree already do so in practice, but that we generally just lack the intellectual tooling to conceptualize the wider potentials for enacting the novel ecological ethico-politics of trans-species relations emergent in those practices.

The above argument, which I will try to develop and give shape to, in this paper builds upon three different strands of scholarship that I will attempt to weave together:

- The constantly growing insights about the shortcomings, pitfalls and dangers related to the unreflective philosophical assumptions underpinning practices of public consultation and engagement in planning practice in general, and Habermasian communicative planning theory in particular, when

² I here use the qualifier 'other-than-human' to signal an acceptance of the insight that 'humans' also fundamentally belong to the category of 'animal'. For reasons of readability and expediency I will in the rest of the text generally only use the term 'animal' without the qualifier, but keeping in mind that we should bear this thought with us.

operationalized as a foundation for planning practice (see e.g. Oosterlynck & Swnygedouw, 2011; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012).

- The political philosophy of Jacques Rancière, who defines the political moment as the moment of the appearance of that which splinters ingrained conceptions of society and introduces contentious (or perhaps ‘objecting’) objects into it, objects whose mode of presentation is not homogenous with the ordinary mode of existence of the objects thereby identified - which means that politics, to quote Rancière, can be seen as an “art of warped deductions and mixed identities” (Rancière, 1999:139, see further also e.g. Dikeç, 2005).
- The new political-ecological thinking that has taken form in close relation to the ANT-strand of Science and Technology Studies, which stresses the immanent need for developing relational more-than-human perspectives that may hopefully provide a new broadly ecological sensibility that set of existential practices that will be necessary for our species to have a chance for long-term survival in a universe that can really do without us (Whatmore, 2002; Latour, 2004; Haraway, 2008)

Bringing these three strands of scholarship together will enable me to offer some tentative answers to questions such as:

1. How can we think of political behavior beyond the human/non-human divide?
2. How can we find ways to develop participatory practices in planning processes across the human/non-human divide?

And:

3. Why on earth would we want to do so?

These are not only practical, but also highly political as well as ethical questions that go to the heart not only of how humans *perceive* the world, or make sense of it, but also how we *feel* about the world and its denizens - for as has been noted by philosopher Gilles Deleuze, *concepts* (forms for organizing thought), *percepts* (ways of apprehending the world) and *affects* (ways of feelings) always hang together - they are “inseparable forces” (Deleuze,

1995:137). So if we begin to pull in one of the corners of this triangle all the angles will inevitably become rearranged. As we find new ways of thinking through and apprehending our entangled conviviality with a host of other beings and species, all fundamentally influenced by our human activities, we may thus hopefully also “learn to be affected” in new ways by these beings - as so aptly formulated by Hache & Latour (2010).

The structure of the rest of the chapter will be as follows: the section following directly after this brief introduction will discuss some of the challenges and problems associated with public engagement and consultation in planning theory and practice. The third section of the chapter will present a discussion on Rancière’s conceptualization of the political subject and the political event and a fourth section will provide a brief introduction to more-than-human perspectives. The fifth and penultimate section provides a brief empirical vignette focusing on the conflict-ridden intersections between human and moose mobility patterns and attempts to bring together and put to work the conceptual apparatus sketched in the previous sections. The concluding final discussion primarily points towards some potentially interesting avenues for future research.

The voice of the public in planning processes

The merits of “community consultation” in planning processes or “participatory planning” have been discussed in planning theory for decades (see e.g. Bush et al, 1975; Damer & Hague, 1971; Etzioni, 1970). Nevertheless, the ideals and practices of public consultation and engagement particularly lay at the heart of the currently dominant Habermasian ‘communicative’ or ‘deliberative’ planning paradigm. Within this strand of planning theory, broad public engagement is generally viewed as both a necessity and a guarantee of a democratically legitimate planning process. Nevertheless, when translated into practice, these ideals time and again prove to be riddled with daunting fundamental challenges.

For instance, in a paper on Environmental Impact Assessment procedures in Swedish road planning processes, Isaksson et al (2009), discern tendencies of a shift towards a more deliberative approach highlighting the need for consulting the public in these developments. At the same time, the authors note that all these techniques of public consultation leave unanswered the crucial, central question: “who precisely are ‘the public’?” (Isaksson et al, 2009:302). In her seminal doctoral thesis *No issue, No public* Marres (2005) draws upon ANT as well as classical pragmatist philosophy to explore this question. In her text Marres focuses on processes of issue formation and how the formation of contentious public issues engenders the emergence of publics that raise demands towards the settlements of such issues. According to Marres’ argument the formation of a public is always irrevocably bound up with the emergence of a specific issue or problem that the actors constituting the public find themselves entangled in, and hence seeking redress for. Marres argues that such publics arise when existing institutional frameworks prove unable or ineffective at settling the issue in question, thus generating a public controversy of some sort or form in which actors become caught up – in the process forming a public. Marres thus uses the concept of ‘the public’ to come to grasp with the heterogeneous and potentially geographically dispersed assemblages of actors that become attached or caught up with a specific public issue or problem. In her discussion of the concept Marres notes that the “prototypical” public is often thought of as consisting only of laypeople (Marres, 2005a: 99), but may according to her definition nevertheless be used as a designator for all the clusterings of actors carrying conflicting positions, interests and views that become articulated in relation to a specific issue, thus forming the nexus of an imbroglio.

In Marres’ conceptualization of the public, the idea of a public sitting around just waiting to be ‘consulted’ thus appears somewhat far-fetched to say the least. Rather, in her definition, publics take form as highly unruly and unwieldy entities that appear and make themselves heard precisely at the junctures where most decision-makers probably would prefer they did not. This conceptualization of publics as always untimely phenomena that disrupt existing institutional arrangements also resonates with one of the most novel and interesting political philosophies of recent years, that of Jacques Rancière.

The event of/and the political subject

Whether consensus-focused or more agonistic in their inclination, the theories of pluralist democracy that underpin deliberative and communicative approaches to planning generally take for given the existence of a range of ready-formed identities, interests and opinions and then focus on finding ways for either consensually reconciling or respectfully confronting these conflicting positions with each other so as to achieve some form of outcome or result.

In contrast to the assumption of identities, interests and opinions as being given, contemporary political philosophers are currently venturing to ask the question just how such identities, interests and opinions emerge and take form – i.e. investigating the constitution of *political subjectivity*. Among the foremost of these theorists is Jacques Rancière. To Rancière, the political subject is “not a group that ‘becomes aware’ of itself, finds its voice, imposes its weight on society”, but rather “an operator that connects and disconnects different areas, regions, identities, functions, and capacities existing in the configuration of a given experience” (Rancière, 1995: 40). Thus, to Rancière, political subjects/subjectivities emerges in and as a rupture of the existing societal order, and not only that – also as an event through which the whole perception of reality, the whole ontology, of the involved parties becomes rearranged in a new “partition of the sensible”, i.e. a new way of seeing and relating to the world and the inevitable shake-ups in institutions and values that must inevitably follow from such a fundamental shift.

Further, the political dispute – as conceptualized by Rancière – concerns precisely the question of who should be taken into consideration and considered an equal and rightful claimant in a specific societal context, making the political dispute “distinct from all conflicts of interest between constituted parties of the population, for it is a conflict over the very count of those parties” (Rancière, 1995: 100). Political claims, as defined by Rancière, thus fundamentally center around the question of who has the right to be legitimately concerned and in what ways, and the breaking of consensus-agreement on this

through the eruption of a voice speaking on behalf of “the part who have no part” (p 11) under the current established arrangements.

To Rancière, the properly political sequence proceeds from a visual (or sensual) encounter to linguistic engagement (see also Dikeç, 2005). Something appears on the scene and disturbs the existing order of things, and then begins to speak its right as a collective right that demands the renegotiation of the existing political order. Thus, to Rancière, “Political activity... makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was only heard as noise” (Rancière, 1999:30).

Here Rancière draws upon Aristotle’s distinction between the intelligent speech, the “voice”, of rational humans and the vocal abilities of animals, which according to Aristotle in contrast to human voices produced mere “noise”. Rancière elegantly demonstrates how the distribution of voice/noise, the dividing line between what has been seen as intelligent speech and mere animal gruntings, has shifted over the course of history and included or excluded different groups of the *homo sapiens sapiens* species through the eruption of politics and iterative re-composition of the *corpus politicus* through the inclusion and exclusion of different groups of humans considered to be capable of intelligible “voice” and thus qualified as belonging in the collective category of humanity, ‘the political animal’ - i.e. equal-as-human and thus worthy of being listened to and deliberated with. The capacity to produce ‘voice’ which breaks through the silencing exclusion in the established order of things but which is at least potentially recognizable as reasoned discourse, is then a key parameter for political recognition in Rancière’s philosophy and a fundamental prerequisite for the emergence of a political subject (Bennett, 2010:106). As thus, his political philosophy not only seems to carry tangible Habermasian residues (although this is disputed by Rancière, see also below), it also appears not only to reproduce subjectivity as a purely human affair - but also as being something unified, nuclear and autonomous - something “pure” and unadulterated arising from the sincere depths of ‘authentic’ experience, thus fusing two oft reiterated “modern” and “romantic” Western grand narratives of subjectivity (cf. Moser & Law, 2003).

Technologies of making-political: noise-to-voice apparatuses

If we follow Rancière and define the political event as constituted by the rupture of the established “partition of the sensible”, and if we agree with the conceptualization of political subjects and subjectivities as functions that collect and unite beings previously perceived as fundamentally different (i.e. previously having been divided up into different – hierarchically sorted – existential classes) but who through the political event come to be perceived or sensed as equal in their right to make demands and be taken into consideration; we may nevertheless still ask ourselves: how does this happen in practice? Explicitly arguing against Habermasian communicative ethics, Rancière is adamant that it is *not* linguistic capacity per se that is the crucial point of the political moment, rather, “it is first of all, the framing of the stage on which the argument may be heard as an argument, the objects of the argument as visible common objects, the speaker himself or herself as a visible speaking being, and so on” (Rancière, 2003). Elsewhere Rancière has similarly argued that politics proper is “about setting up a theatre and inventing an argument that can connect the unconnected and re-identify the political subject of the people” (Rancière, 1999: 88), or “[i]n politics, subjects act to create a stage on which problems can be made visible – a scene with subjects and objects” (Rancière, 2004: 7). The above quotes seem to imply that some form of set-up or arrangement is necessary for a political event to occur, an arrangement that will facilitate the re-partition of the sensible that brings on a shift or rupture in the established order. Nevertheless, Rancière does not delve deeper into what such an arrangement may consist of or how it may be constituted in practice. He is all about the effects, and seemingly not so interested in the details of the machineries that may produce them, so he leaves wanting the question of just how, in practice, a political subject may be constituted as a collective entity with a form and voice.

Luckily, other scholars have paid more attention to issues concerning the materials and techniques through which political subjectivity is produced, approaching this as an always-also *technical* issue (see e.g. Whatmore & Braun, 2010). For instance philosopher Peter Sloterdijk (2005) has beautifully demonstrated the fundamental role played by the invention of a device mundane and

simple, yet revolutionary in the development of ancient Athenian democracy: the speakers' list. Such simple (and much more advanced) devices and stabilized practices come together into the mediating heterogeneously composed but also-always technical arrangements and apparatuses that transverse categories such as 'the intellectual', 'the biological', 'the electronic', 'the cultural' to constitute the 'tooling' or equipment with which we meet the world and each other. And further also recognizing, that 'ideas' or 'concepts' also may play a role as crucial components that can make a radical difference in the functioning of such arrangements.

Proceeding by way of an interest in the technical side of the production of political subjectivity, we may for instance home in on the phenomenon of the emergence of "voice" - the moment of transformation of "noise" to "voice", which - his critique of Habermas aside - nevertheless appears as central to Rancière's political philosophy to the degree that he himself has stated that the foundation to politics, from his view, is the "equal capacity of speaking beings in general" (Rancière, 1999:42), i.e. the equality of "all men [sic!] *qua* speaking beings" (Žižek, 2000:188, emphasis in original but annotation added), thus center-staging, if not communicative reason, then at least *vocality* as a cornerstone to his political philosophy.

But how do beings become capable of "speech"? How does speech, political or not, emerge? Based on meticulous ethnographic work on voice synthesizing for disabled persons, Moser & Law (2003) have argued that 'voices' do not exist in and of themselves, but must always be produced or *articulated* through "material arrangements which include social, technological and corporeal relations", and as such are "cultural products and political constructions". By this, they do not imply that voices are 'fake', that they cannot or should not be made, but rather that we must pay attention to the practices and material/technical arrangements that voices are produced and mediated, and the variable affordances offered by differing such arrangements. From Moser & Law's perspective, the production of "voice" is thus always broadly speaking a technical affair of generating articulations, but always also implying that every specific such arrangement sets limits to the 'sayable' in a specific context.

So to understand how vociferous political subjects emerge in practice, we cannot just discuss the transformation of “noise” to “voice” as some form of general philosophical universal, but must rather take care to investigate the specific and situated sociotechnical arrangements, the *collective assemblages of enunciation* in which heterogeneous elements, the “social, technological and corporeal relations” (as well as ‘cultural’, ‘natural’, what have you), come together to produce political, that is - order-challenging, statements (cf. also Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 75ff).

Perhaps, it is in this case even misleading to focus too much on “enunciation” and “voice”, for “to talk of giving ‘voices’ is to take the risk of limiting articulation to that which is verbal, textual or linguistic... it is to take the risk that ‘voices’ that happen to be non-verbal are simply not recognized or are disqualified”, which is why they instead prefer to talk about “articulation”, since “[t]alk is a mode of articulation, but only one... there are many other ways of acting, signifying, articulating or resisting”, further stating that “Articulation... is not simply about speaking or language - it is also about performances and expression in other media” (Moser & Law, 2003). Finding inspiration with Moser & Law, we may perhaps instead then talk about acts of articulation and *assemblages of communication*, implying the coming-together of emittance and reception, code and decoding. For instance, the rudimentary human technical apparatus for spoken communication involves not only embodied technologies such as vocal chords, lungs, the brain, the intricate architecture of the ear but also cultural infrastructure that can be more or less synced between sender and receiver, but nevertheless must at least to some faint degree be made to attune for communication to be possible. So communication is always more or less *equipped* and *technically mediated* - never pure or ‘authentic’, and as soon as we move on from the most rudimentary forms of human interaction we see a towering array of further apparatuses utilized to enhance, convey and/or stabilize communication such as writing utensils, recording devices, mnemonic devices and broadcasting devices.

This makes sense since it helps highlight a previously undiscussed aspect of the Rancièrian political moment where noise is transformed into voice by way of a new technical arrangement, namely that the technical production of intelligible

speech implies not only a capacity of the sender to transmit and code messages – but that intelligibility rests just as much with the *receivers* ability to successfully detect and decode a message. So the successful production of a statement demands not just speech or the production of “voice” on behalf of the deliverer, but also implies that the receiver has a capacity for *hearing* and is *attuned* to be able to receive the transmitted message (cf. Desprets, 2008a). So it turns out, the translation of “noise” to “voice” depends not only on the speaker, but as Rancière intimates in multiple passages, on the whole set up of the apparatus for communication, or as Latour has put, it about ‘learning to be affected’” (Latour, 2004). Thus, from such a perspective, “being or becoming political” becomes “a matter of folds and twists – of things being brought into relation with each other, and indeed with themselves, in particular ways” (Soneryd & Szerzynski, forthcoming), a question of capacities for *mutual affectation* or *becoming-with* (Haraway, 2008). From such a perspective, assemblages of communication include both senders and receivers, which may also switch positions, and share a propensity or capacity for *mutual affectation*. So communication always entails a technical apparatus for code-decoding and emitting/receiving which generates capacities for mutual affectation, for connecting and becoming response-able (Haraway, 2008).

Towards a more-than-human politics with the help of material semiotics

If we now return to Rancière’s notion of political action as the “setting up” of a “theatre” where the political subject can emerge, I have hopefully been able to convince you that the setting of this stage where the political event is to unfold by necessity also involves the setting up, under always specific circumstances, of an apparatus *rendering-capable* communication (cf. Haraway, 2012), or rather – more broadly – mutual affectation – where technologies of speech and listening function to generate the capacity for making-perceptible, making-hearable, and thus for becoming affective/affectable in a Deleuzian/Spinozan sense (see Thrift, 2004) – that is, arrangements for effectuating *material semiotic* practices (Haraway, 1988: Law, 2009).³

³ Also contemporary symbolic interactionist methodology such as that of Francois Coreen (2010), de-privilidiges the faculty of human language, placing it as but one more affective

But if such Rancièrian politics thus always appears to amount to an always-also technical affair, we may do well to reiterate the question Isabelle Stengers has asked herself in a different context (Stengers, 2005): “how to design the political scene in a way that actively protects it from the fiction that ‘humans of good will decide in the name of the general interest’? How to turn the virus or the river into a cause for thinking? But also how to design it in such a way that collective thinking has to proceed ‘in the presence of’ those who would otherwise be likely to be disqualified as having idiotically nothing to propose” (Stengers, 2005). For when Rancièrè writes about the “political subject”, “people” and ‘noise-to-voice’ processes, he always takes it for self-evident that the domain of ‘politics proper’ is an exclusively and exclusionary *human* affair (see also Bennett, 2010:106; and similarly see Marres, 2010:197 regarding Dewey). But with the definition of political communication loosely sketched above, as always mediated capacity for mutual affectation, political affairs by definition always also become *more-than-human* affairs of distributed (political) agency, always involving devices and elements other-than-human (Whatmore, 2002).

This insight about the more-than-humanness of political action and agency opens the door towards a whole new world of political action, previously generally ignored or undetected. For if we previously have denied certain groups of humans the privilege of intelligible voice, and have denigrated their speech to mere noises, but now learned to listen to those voices and be affected by them – what is it that says that there is some form of automatic stop at the human/non-human divide in the transformation of noise to voices? What is it that logically hinders us from learning to listen to voices also across the human/non-human divide in the same way that we have done in the iterative re-composition of the human political collective?

Relatedly, a number of (more-than-) human geographers have explored the becoming-political of animals for more than a century now (for prominent examples see e.g. Whatmore, 2002; Hobson, 2007; Holmberg, 2013). In the spirit of these scholars,

component in the complex and non-linear sociomaterial networks of causality and mutual affectation that we in everyday language call the social world.

and philosophers such as Michel Serres (2006), Donna Haraway (2008) and Vinciane Despret (eg. 2005, 2008a, 2008b) who engage with the troubling question of how we become human always in relation to other existences and species of being, one could conclude that on the one hand the problem of learning to be affected by non-human voices is two pronged, on the one hand it is technical - developing the methods and devices whereby we can allow non-humans to come to expression, taking for given that non-humans articulate themselves in ways that to a greater or lesser extent differ from spoken or written human discourse (see also Haraway, 2008; Despret 2008a,b). On the other hand it is moral-ontological, as many humans are hindered to committing to listening to these voices, or drawing particular types of conclusions from them either because of a conviction about the categorical difference of being between humans and other existences in the world, founded in the belief that humans are reasonable and rational subjects which differentiates them fundamentally from other things in the world - or the conviction that humans must always a priori be ethically privileged over non-humans (see also Hache & Latour, 2010).

But if we for a moment would allow ourselves, in the safe space of academic discourse, to leave these potential moral-ontological qualms behind us - we might ask ourselves what a new type of ecological sensibility which privileges neither humans imagined as existentially superior to other forms of life, neither some mystical idea of pristine, harmonic nature disturbed by human intervention - could look like (see further also Latour, 2004). Rather, this is a perspective that proceeds from the insight that humans and non-humans are always-already irrevocably intertwined. This even goes to the heart of what it means to be 'human', the problematic bundle of tangled cultural and biological relations that in various ways have come to be categorized as the essence of mankind. Freud's famous dictum "the ego is not master in its own house", does take on entirely new meaning when taking into account the fact that the human genome is found in no more than ten per cent of the cells constituting a human body, while the remaining ninety per cent are made up of bacteria, fungi, protists, etc. As Haraway says, this implies that humans are "vastly outnumbered" in relation to their "tiny companions" (Haraway, 2008:2). Or perhaps more accurately, "to be one is always to become with many", leading Anna Tsing to relate that "human nature is an interspecies relationship" where the human psyche during a short period of

time is a guest in, and a result of, the tangle of relations between heterogeneous materials and organisms within and outside of our bodies, forming what we chose to label "human beings" (Tsing quoted in Haraway, 2008:19). So not only have we, with Latour, "never been Modern", we have further "Never been human", if we insist on defining humanity as a mode of being hermetically sealed-off from and standing above other forms of life and existence (Haraway, 2008: 305).

Thus, far from what Donna Haraway has called the idiom and apparatus of "Saving the endangered [fill in the blank]" (Haraway, 2008:256) the questioning and probing analysis of the more-than-humanist philosophers is therefore rooted in Darwin's fundamental insight that all life on earth may well be knitted together in an "inextricable web of affinities" as well as a commitment to engaging with what Haraway (2008) calls "the moral mundane", working with the "knots" in which actual animals and people look back at each other, "sticky with all their muddled histories" and where the main issue becomes learning to act with mutual response and respectfulness in relation to always asymmetrical living and dying, nurturing and killing. More-than-humanism thus explores the potentials of care-in-practice (see also de la Bellacasa, 2012) in geographies of intimacy, and as Whatmore has written: "expanding the corpus of 'beings that count'" (Whatmore, 2002: 155) and whose fate and faring we are sensitized to.

Good academic examples of generating this "expansive present" (cf. Nowotny, 2002) extending the range of beings whose well-faring, wishes and desires can be taken into account here-and-now, given that they are provided the affordances necessary to assist in their articulation, are for instance Vinciane Despret studies on the opinions of sheep (Desprets, 2005) and Jane Bennett's (2010) thinking on the potentials of a politics beyond the human which is closely related to the argumentation being put forth here. But as pointed out above, the question of affordances for articulation is always-also a technical affair, thus front-staging apparatuses for mutual affectation, that is: the heterogenous arrangements that can detect signals from non-humans and mediate these as political action across the commonly imagined nature/cultural or human/non-human ontological divide.

A consequence of the above line of reasoning is that our understanding of the emergence of e.g. animal publics conducting politics in a Rancièrian meaning, i.e. protesting a sensed wrong against them and there-through demanding the recomposition of ‘the people’, i.e. the political collective – can never be discovered as some form of pure and unadulterated event. Rather, it always has as its prerequisite the generation of affordances for articulation and for making-political, and perhaps even some degree of the “warped deduction” mentioned by Rancière as the essence of the art of the political. It thus points in the direction of defining the political collective across the human/non-human divide as a *material public* in the sense discussed by Marres (2010, 2012) “a special combination of material effects, intimate affectedness, and mediatization” (Marres, 2010: 197) which always also entails a technological arrangement, for in the absence of attempts to trace indirect and harmful consequences with the aid of information technologies, the formation of a public is likely to go unobserved” (Marres 2010, 196). We must therefore “investigate the distribution of... problems among the whole range of actors and agencies with a stake in participatory arrangement: institutions, infrastructures, settings, technologies, and so on” (Marres, 2012: 27), as it is in these heterogeneous arrangements – these motley coming-togethers (Massey, 2005) that political agency takes form and force.

The important point of political work from such a perspective becomes not the nurturing of some imagined unadulterated purity of political subjectivity, which nevertheless never was. Rather, what becomes adamant is the production of the Rancièrian “stage” where more-than-human politics may unfold, the creation of “situations in which humans and animals accomplish things together” (Despret, 2008a:128) in and through novel affordances of mutual affectation. Following the suggestions of Jane Bennett (2010:108) we should therefore work towards devising “new procedures, technologies, and regimes of perception that enable us to consult nonhumans more closely, or listen and respond more carefully to their outbreaks, objections, testimonies, and propositions, thus contributing to a more-than-human polity “with more channels of communication between members” (Bennett, 2010:104). For, as she goes on, “these offerings are profoundly important to the health of the political ecologies to which *we* belong” (emphasis in original). For instance in relation to animals, this in no way amounts to

appointing certain species as ‘honorary humans’, in the manner suggested by for instance Peter Singer or Wil Kymlicka, and can rather pertain to the creation of arrangements that allow for the expression of political subjectivities that do not proceed from what Despret (2008b) calls “analogical thinking”, i.e. a “like us” kind of thinking, but which instead attempts to generate affordances for mutual affectation and political coming-togethers steeped in and in recognition of, but nevertheless across, fundamental differences.

Approaching politics across the human/non-human divide from this angle also inevitable therefore leads us towards a renewed interest in *negotiations*, albeit in a radically expanded material semiotic meaning of the term (see also Massey, 2005). This rehabilitation of diplomacy, as practices interrogating and negotiating how we all can adjust and the changes we can live with to get along a little better together through compromise (in all the tainted meanings of that term), has also been discussed extensively by e.g. Latour (2004) and Stengers (2005). Thus, such a conceptualization of negotiation would not work towards the suppression or obliteration of difference, as so many consensus-focused planning approaches appear to do, but neither aims at reifying difference through the “partisan mutual adjustment” of pluralism. Rather, it aims towards what we tentatively perhaps may call affective *non-partisan mutual attunement* across difference, in the name of the collective that may yet become (cf. Stengers, 2005).

Politics of the moose

But we have for a while now been travelling the somewhat friction-less realms of philosophy and theory, and it is time to hit Wittgenstein’s empirical “rough ground” where ideas on the one hand encounter friction, but on the other hand also achieve traction (Wittgenstein, 1958:47). Into the woods to reassociate with the moose.

Alces alces, the moose - or *Eurasian Elk* in British English - is the largest extant species in the deer family, also known as the “king of the forest” in Swedish popular discourse. It is a rather non-fussy herbivore, and quite shy. The normal weight is between 270 and 540 kilos, varying by age, sex and season. In

Europe, moose are currently found in large numbers throughout Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, and the Baltic States, with more modest population sizes in the southern Czech Republic, Belarus and northern Ukraine. They are also widespread in Russia, with habitats extending from the border with Finland southwards towards the borders with Estonia, Belarus and Ukraine - and stretching far away eastwards to the Yenisei River in Siberia. The Swedish summer population of moose is 300,000-400,000. After their grazing period, approximately 100,000 are shot by hunters every autumn.

In transport infrastructure development, our human structures of mobility and habits of life almost inevitably collide with the structures of mobility and habits of life of other living beings (see also Koelle, 2012). In relation to moose, being the largest extant species of the deer family, these collisions often turn out quite physically and violently, sometimes with repeatedly deadly outcomes for both humans and moose in the roughly six to seven thousand collisions between moose and cars that occur yearly in Sweden.

With Rancière's conceptualization of politics, the appearance of a towering moose on a car road could - if we stretch definitions - probably be defined as a political event in itself at the human/non-human interface, the breaking of the "partition of the sensible" of exclusively human society, the undeniable appearance of a body in a space where it had "no business being seen" and which thus disturbs the given order, demanding - quite physically - to be taken into account. Relating this to the realm of human politics, it is well known that such a physical appearance, also of a silent body, can constitute a very effective political intervention - but, mind us, only in combination with many other heterogeneous components of such a political coming-together, such as for instance the intellectual tooling of a deeply seated ethics concerning the sanctity of human life, without which the bodies do not constitute a perceived "silent voice", and could just be obliterated without any further ado - a point I will find reason to return to further below.

From such a perspective, seeing political events as distributed coming-togethers of heterogeneous components, the expression of a desire on behalf of the moose to - for some reason - cross the road, and the resulting event, can hardly be argued

to be political in or of itself if approached in analytical isolation. Rather, for it to become *made political* requires the addition of further components to the situation which translates the issue into a political issue and in the process often sends it travelling through new sites and contexts in which it begins to transform – to shed some aspects and pick up new entanglements (Marres 2013, 2005). In the case of moose collisions for instance, the Swedish Hunting Ordinance (1987:905) §40 requires that every such incident is promptly reported to the police, notwithstanding if the animal involved appears to have gone unharmed. The involved humans are then required to mark the location of the accident with a special marker or a visible object (a scarf or plastic bag is suggested as a possible makeshift replacements). The local police will then contact the local designated wildlife search organization (generally the local chapter of the hunting association) which will dispatch a trained wildlife tracker (most-often a local licensed hunter) to attempt to track down any potentially injured animal, and/or to take down a report regarding the outcomes of the collision.

The report from the wildlife tracker is corroborated with the police report and then filed in the database of the National Wildlife Accident Council (*Nationella viltolycksrådet*) an umbrella organization charged with preventing and monitoring the occurrence of wildlife collisions in Sweden, a cooperation between fifteen public agencies and organizations managed and coordinated by The Swedish National Police Board. The council then presents real-time statistics, as well as a yearly report summarizing all the wildlife collisions nationally as well as regionally. These wildlife collision statistics are then confronted with the Swedish deep humanist cultural ethics that profess the sanctity of human life – which for instance finds an expression in the Swedish ‘Vision Zero’ of human traffic deaths, passed by the Swedish parliament in 1997. The Swedish Transport Administration is the public agency responsible for the implementation of the zero-tolerance vision, and from their webpage we can learn that the ‘Vision Zero’ is “an ethical approach, but also a strategy for developing a safe road transport system” and further that the vision establishes it to be “unacceptable that road traffic reaps *human lives*”, which means that “roads, streets and vehicles need to be adjusted to *human requirements*” and that “every possible means will be employed to prevent *humans* from being killed and seriously injured” (emphasis

added). So suddenly the collision between moose and humans are not just the problem of the parties directly involved, but a problem of society, framed - with the help of humanist ethics - as a problem of humans dying (never mind the moose).⁴

With the moose being framed merely as a passive problem factor ('obstacle in the road causing human deaths') in the context of wildlife accidents, the standard preventive method of course focuses on removing this problem source: that is, taking the moose to task. Which in the case of Sweden, and the developed world in general, has consistently implied the programmatic erection of wildlife fences. The history of wildlife fencing appears yet to be written, but at least for the past fifty years or so it has been the standard solution for attempting to prevent wildlife collisions. According to the regulations of the Swedish National Transport Authority, effective in 2004, a wildlife fence directed at hoofed wildlife should - among other specifications - be at the least 2,2 meters tall and have a mesh structure of approximately 0,15 meters and a wire dimension of 3,5 mm for the edge wires and 2,5 mm for the inner wires. The height restrictions for the fences are based on numerous tests where different heights have been tried out with the aim to minimize the animals will and propensity to attempt to jump the fence. Also the mesh dimensions have been evaluated so as to prevent animals to get stuck in the mesh with their horns or limbs, as well as to maximize the visibility of the fence as an obstacle to the animal and minimize the risk of wire-inflicted cut-injuries on the animals.⁵ In 2010 there was more than 3000 km of wildlife fenced road in Sweden. And even though new research has

⁴ The legally codified requirement from 1987 to track down potentially injured wildlife does displays traces of a different kind of ethics, focused on animal welfare, which is nevertheless not reflected, but neither directly contested, in later Swedish regulations and information materials concerning wildlife accidents, whose general message is instead rather well summed up in the headline of a brochure from the National Wildlife Accident Council: "Be vigilant - for your own sake".

⁵ As also discussed in note 4, this also evinces of a more nuanced ethics of animal welfare than in the materials concerning 'Vision Zero'. It further posits wildlife fencing not as a tool to blockade animal mobilities, but rather as a technology for formatted and managed access - see further below.

put the efficiency of road fencing into doubt, at least in relation to major regularly trafficked roads, information from the Swedish National Transport Authority from 2004 makes the claim that wildlife fencing is believed to reduce the number of wildlife collisions by 75-80% if correctly designed and placed.

In Rancièrian terms the erection of wildlife fencing could be seen as a very anti-political measure, as it constitutes a technical solution which quite physically preemptively forecloses the potential space for a political occurrence through altogether blocking moose access to the potential 'stage of the political' and thus removing the 'body that had no business being seen' from the space where it could potentially have generated a political affair. The projected result is thus - no moose on the road (because they are shut out) and safe human transport. Everybody, well - at least every human - should be happy, at least if we take the 'Vision Zero' of human traffic casualties as our guiding star, as the removal of the 'obstacle' of moose bodies from human transport corridors now means that humans can travel smoothly without having to worry themselves about the lethal risks of having a half tonne moose stepping into their way at any given moment. Or can they? A reduction of 75-80% in wildlife collisions means that wildlife passages - and hence, collisions - still occur quite regularly also on fenced stretches of road, implying that they are even more common in fenced locations where design or placement has been less successful. For instance, in the northern parts of Sweden, snow piles up and compresses large parts of the year which means the moose are often able to simply step over the fences and cross the road as they please anyway. All this implying that, even on fenced roads, quite a lot of moose still manage to 'slip through the mesh', so to say, and potentially end up in front of human-operated vehicles.

Nevertheless, contrary to widespread popular belief, the generally stated purpose of wildlife fencing along roads today is not to simply block out animal access to human transport routes, but rather to direct their movement to alternative routes and corridors that do not directly cross human transport infrastructures (see also further below). Still, with the construction of new major fenced roads in, particularly in Northern Sweden in the 1990's and 2000's, many moose hunters began to worry that the roads and the associated fences impeded moose mobility as they splintered moose habitats, potentially impinging on genetic variety and

disturbing cyclical patterns of migration, potentially leading to a threat to moose reproduction, which in turn would mean less moose to hunt for the hunters (see e.g. Helldin et al, 2006). And in Sweden, a country with a population of 9 million, out of which more than 235.000 are members of one of the two big national hunting associations (excluding many more non-organized or illegal hunters), this is not a worry that is easily ignored.

As the moose wandering into the human roads get caught up in the complex entanglements that become woven around national wildlife collision statistics, road management practice, mass media and hunting lobby worries, it quickly appears to take on form as a distinctly 'political' issue in the conventional sense of the term - a heated and highly contested subject of controversy. Nonetheless, from a Rancièrian perspective it might still not qualify as 'properly political', for it very much unfolds within the bounds of the existing "partition of the sensible" provided by an exclusively humanistic ethics which takes for given that the only desires and wishes we need to take into account politically are those of different groups of humans.

But it is precisely at this point that the introduction of a component of more-than-humanist thinking into the emergent political assemblage could function as a 'noise-to-voice' translationary machinery, thus generating politics in a Rancièrian sense, by providing a new lens on the events and there-through disrupting the ingrained partition of the sensible, making a new 'wronged subject' appear on the stage in addition to car passengers and hunters: that of the moose. A more-than-humanist sensibility thus generates an affordance to take the moose into account, not just as the *object* of a political controversy, but also as a *subject* in/of a political controversy, with wishes and desires that we can also learn to 'listen' to.

But if we try to listen to the moose, what are they really telling us? What kind of wills and desires are they expressing? The cynical humanist would scoff and say 'how could we know, they can't speak!' whereas the material-semiotician might shrug her shoulders and say that one thing is at least being expressed obviously for certain by the moose: they want to be able to make their way. Of course, we might inquire, with the help of numerous knowledges such as behavioral ethology

and population genetics and various technologies, ranging from satellite tracking to automated networked IR-cameras, into the reasons behind their expressed desire to move – sometimes also across human roads – but would this be the *polite* thing to do (see Haraway, 2008)? We do not ask human travelers to always report or motivate the purposes of their journeys, why demand this of the moose?

The point I am trying to make here is not that we should abandon our attempts at better understanding human and animal desires and drivers for mobility. This is truly an important challenge if we are to be able to generate new affordances for articulating political subjectivities across the human/non-human divide, and just as there exist good reasons for wanting to change the mobility patterns of humans, there are just as good reasons for trying to influence the mobility patterns of e.g. moose. Rather, what I am trying to get across is that the detected mobility patterns, when adding a more-than-human sensibility into the assemblage, already speak strongly enough of a moose subject position in the existing controversy which can perhaps be summed up as the desire to *make their way*.

Still, the question remains: what to make of this? Should we assume some 'deep ecology' inspired position, accepting the interests of the non-human living as a given ethical superior imperative, thus submitting ourselves to the will and as a consequence, abandoning our own desires for mobility and giving 'right of way' exclusively to the moose? Not necessarily if we are serious about more-than-humanism as the difficult philosophy of tangling with the knots of "species co-shaping one another in layers of reciprocating complexity all the way down" (Haraway, 2008:42). For not only does the 'deep ecology' position reproduce the dichotomies between 'culture' and 'nature' or 'human' and 'animal', merely exchanging the positions of the terms, enacting the latter as always morally superior (see further Latour, 2004), it also takes the *human* out of more-than-humanism, which is all about the irrevocable entanglements of humans and non-humans, it is about finding ways to live together in an entangled world, characterized by difficult situated ethical choices for which general and vague moral principles offer little guidance or practical support.

So the question thus comes to focus not so much on how we can find new ways of again short-circuiting political events, now through an a priori privileging of the 'natural' world and its desires and processes. Instead, a more distinctly more-than-human approach would perhaps be to approach human and non-human wills and desires *symmetrically* (cf. Callon, 1986), bringing them all down to par and on so to say a 'level playing field', articulated as equally politically sensitive and relevant questions regarding how, and with what legitimacy, our human activity affects for instance moose mobility desires – and treating this with as much delicacy and concern as we would ask the same questions concerning actions that affect the mobility desires of various groups of humans. This inevitably leads towards the necessity to weight different wishes and desires against each other, but without having as a self-evident point of departure the primacy of human wills and desires and instead also taking other beings and entities into account into these processes.

As related above, such a more-than-human take on political entanglements points the way towards an interest in a radical reconceptualization of *negotiation* and *diplomacy*. But how can we negotiate with entities that only communicate in ways other-than-human? How can we think negotiations materially-semiotically and develop diplomatic protocols beyond the limitations of human spoken/written discourse? This is a crucial emerging challenge which must be experimentally but always also response-ably approached, keeping in mind that a negotiated compromise always entails the relative shifting of the ways of being of all the parts to the solution, a collective effect of becoming-different. This proposition may seem abstract, strange and scary. But I would like to make the claim that it rather relates to practices quite concrete and mundane, which nevertheless often go unrecognized precisely because of this. Therefore I wish to propose as an example of an already-existing but unrecognized material-semiotic diplomatic solution: the *ecoduct*, or wildlife overpass.

Wildlife crossings are material structures specifically designed to allow the safe passage of animals across human-made barriers such as roads. According to anecdotal claims they were first constructed in continental Europe in the 1950s and then spread to the rest of the world. Numerable passage designs, aiming at the mobility of different types of species, are today in existence around the

world. Some of the most common, and financially less taxing designs employed in road construction projects entail viaducts and underpasses. The only problem is that large ungulates such as deer and moose appear to be very selective about where they choose to cross the road, sometimes even preferring submitting to the risk of attempting to gain access to cross the pavement rather than agreeing to use an underpass or viaduct to cross (see e.g. Seiler et al 2003). The specific design of not only the crossings themselves, but also the immediate surroundings, will influence a large mammal's willingness to accept the proposal of using the facility to cross the landscape (see e.g. Mata et al, 2005; Olsson et al, 2008). Wildlife overpasses, or ecoducts, specifically designed to attract e.g. moose to use these as a preferred option to cross human roads have been experimented with - with varying results - since the mid 1990's. There is no space to go into the details of these experiments here, but suffice to say in this context is that they do not only constitute quite extensive construction projects, and expenses, but also, at least for some time, demand continuous monitoring and tinkering - in short: *care* - to ensure their effectiveness (cf. Mol et al, 2009). Which means that both money and continuous attention is required if there is to be any chance to find out whether these proposed crossings will be accepted by the moose as attractive options to live out their desires for mobility.

Towards a more-than-human planning

Castree (2003:207) has argued that if we begin to approach the world along more-than-human lines, "what is at stake is considerable" and at the least forces us to:

- "(i) abandon the traditional idea that political rights, entitlements and deserts only apply to people;
- (ii) confront the very real problem of defining political subjects in a world where the boundaries between humans and non-humans are hard to discern;
- and (iii) expand political reasoning to include non-humans, yet without resorting to the idea that the latter exist 'in themselves"

I fully agree with Castree's conclusions, and in this chapter I have been trying to tentatively begin to explore what these insights might bring to planning theory and methodology. My specific focus has been to argue for that these perspectives can open up new ways for thinking about concepts and practices concerning for instance 'participation' and 'consultation' in planning processes. Thus, a rethinking of what *engagement* may entail. Milling on in the same tracks at least since the late 1960s, currently established ways of thinking about these aspects of planning processes may produce a lot of publications and a demand for academic positions to fill, as well as consultancy services to purchase, but currently offer very little in the way of meaningful guidance for action in a more-than-human world that with increasing urgency appears to be demanding to be taken into account both on the grandest of global scales as well as in seemingly very local goings-on.

Unfortunately, in this respect, even more radical alternatives to established Habermasian communicative planning methods appear to generally stand caught out. For instance Oosterlynck & Swyngedouw (2010) make a passionate and well-founded call for spaces in planning processes "in which demands for different socioenvironments from those currently in place can be voiced, articulated, and discussed, whereby antagonistic positions are translated into agonistic encounter", further arguing that this "implies starting from a situation in which neither the contested urban environmental 'issue', nor the relevant actors, their role or position and what they can or cannot say, is predefined or circumscribed", concluding that "[t]his approach does not at all preclude stakeholder-based arrangements to negotiate the distributional configurations of environmental bads, but asserts the importance of democracy, understood as disruptive disagreement in which each and everyone is considered equal qua speaking beings" (Oosterlynck & Swyngedouw, 2010: 1591-1592). I strongly agree with the broad outlines of Oosterlynck & Swyngedouw's proposal (see for instance Metzger, 2011), but find it troubling that following the lead of their Rancièrian inspiration, environmental planning politics to them appears to be framed as an exclusively human affair. But, if we following Tryggestad et al (2013) ask ourselves: what if one of the affected 'stakeholders' in the distribution of 'environmental bads' is a frog? Or a moose? How can we generate spaces in which they are also invited into arenas to "negotiate the distributional

configurations”? And how can such negotiations proceed democratically if we do not rest assured that those producing the ‘disruptive disagreement’ are always easily considered ‘equal qua speaking being’? More broadly: with radical alterity in mind, how could planning practice proceed so as to – with the words of Rancière – set the ‘stage’ in a way that allows for a democratically legitimate politics across the human/non-human divide to unfold?

I have here suggested that one crucial point of departure would be to shed any fetishization of an integrated, nuclear human subject as the only subject worthy of engagement and consultation in planning processes. I therefore suggest that an alternative, potentially productive route, may be to try to approach the politics of planning as generated through assemblages of enunciation and communication: systems of relays that connect heterogeneous materials and beings through always-also technical (in the broadest sense) mediated and mediating apparatuses of collective becoming-affected and the concomitant production of ‘voice’ and ‘hearing’. Seen from such a perspective, the labor to articulate and establish a ‘will’, ‘preference’ or ‘interest’ is always a quite concrete material-semiotic, trial-and-error, hit-and-miss affair (see also Despret, 2008b; Callon, 1986), an insight that also may resonate with the practical experiences of any human who has ever had the opportunity to deal with and care for the wills, preferences and interests of for instance a human child, a dog or an unruly group of upset citizens. In such relations it becomes apparent that willing, wishing and becoming interested is all about continuous processes of offerings and rejections – alignments and compromises.

Compromises always comes at a price and raise questions about what we are prepared to give up in the name of the desires and rights of an-other. When it comes to the efficiency of wildlife overpasses, these for most people do not demand more than the willingness to separate with part of their taxpayers’ dues. But in other contexts, there might be more difficult things that we might be asked to give up in the ways of our lives so as to be able to negotiate some workable compromise between the wishes and ways of living of humans and other-than-humans, and these terms of negotiation may not always weight equally on the shoulders of all parts to the covenant either. For instance, humans and moose do not meet as ‘equals’ in their roadside collisions, and neither in the ecoduct-

solution – as a proposed settlement figured out and implemented solely on the part of humans. The ecoduct is simply, with the words of Haraway, a more ‘polite’ or even respectful way of meeting the other-than-human animal, than some of the other thinkable and unthinkable responses to the annoyance and discomfort caused us by them in various situations.

Of course, the ethico-political challenges and conundrums resulting from such a shift in conceptualizations and practices are daunting and will have to be worked through as they emerge and take clearer form. It can for instance be claimed that the focus on human-moose relations in connection with road infrastructure development is laughably myopic given the wider context that many of these animals sooner or later will suffer a grim fate as targets for leisure killing by human hunters anyway, and that any serious discussion of human-moose relations would have to proceed from this ‘bigger picture’. But, to be clear, my ambition here is not to propose a general solution to the problem of human/non-human relations, but rather more modestly to point out that any such solutions will be hard to come by in the form of sweeping constitutional gestures – and that a more careful focus on the concrete ‘knots’ of friction-ridden coexistence will evince the vast complexity of seemingly quite mundane and simple situations.

Nevertheless, it is in relation to such specific and down-to-earth seemingly straightforward ‘technical’ issues, which the everyday dealings of planning and territorial governance practice are abound with – rather than in lofty but ungrounded moral imperatives – that we may find the seeds of hope for a more response-ible way of confronting the ubiquity of asymmetric relations of living and dying. A way of getting along together that recognizes as its foundation the “incessantly adjusting the intentionalities between animals and humans” (Desprets, 2008a:134) (and to add to that: a whole host of other existences), rather than a care-less or unreflected unilateral imposition of human primacy upon the desires and habits of other beings and creatures.

A final brief remark. In this paper I have worked around a quite concrete but very limited empirical case concerning moose and transport planning in Sweden. Does this have any bearing outside of the case? I would like to hope so, for even

if it could be argued that what I am saying here in effect amounts to nothing, that it simply is the emperor's new clothes, because the solution I am proposing - the ecoduct - is already put in place as an established practice. It could for sure be argued that I'm just putting a gloss on it and it won't solve the fundamental problem for the moose who will nevertheless have their liberty of migration strictly formatted and curtailed as the result of human wants and desires. But I would like to ask you then, as a reader: if I seem to be making at least the faintest degree of sense discussing the interests of the moose walking across roads in terms that have for at least 2000 years have been strictly reserved for conflicts among groups of humans in the Western philosophical tradition; is that not in itself, in a way, a sign of an emerging new "partition of the sensible", which could potentially contribute to an expansion of the political franchise across the human/non-human divide?

Thus, I will admit that the writing of this chapter has been an attempt not only to write a text about politics, but also a political text - and not just a text about intellectual technologies that sensitize us to other-than-humans, but a text that pertains to functions precisely as such a technology. I have tried to work with Deleuze's insight that ways of feeling, thinking and perceiving - or making-sense - are always irrevocably entangled, in an attempt on my behalf, as an author, to performatively demonstrate that our intellectual tooling is a crucial component in the collective array of equipment that generate affective assemblages of communication. Thus, I have been trying to interpellate you, the reader, as a political subject, i.e. address you "not simply as a particular individual with a particular social identity and interests, but as a member of a wider polity or historical movement" and to make you see your "interests as caught up with its interests" (Soneryd & Szerszynski, forthcoming). For sure, an attempt to write affectively but nevertheless hopefully also stimulating you to *think*.

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