

Bof of Inability

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I began suspecting as I sat in the bathroom of a hotel in Lahore¹ that this strange space has the least in common with entities to which my person belongs – the state, which protects me, art, which gives me definition², the family, who provided my flight back. In order not to be left without a place, I have to accept this support.

It's not too hard to recognize the context's prison. Because the context is all around. It's a bed when you sleep; it's a room when you hang around, agonized by the heat; it's a city while you wander the strings of blocks. It fits with all your previous flashbacks and oncoming cultural dreams, together with smog filled with desperate inability. You cannot comprehend the force which leads you to retreat to where you are from, and strives to make your return all the more easy; you cannot explain to yourself – where does that ill-fated cognition comes from – that behind these doors there is at least one other; you can not forget the environment from which you evicted yourself and tried to restrain; you cannot forget the awful habits, closely related to your native land, which you wanted to disown again. But be watchful – when you generate some forms you are becoming a hostage to other forms³. In fact, a stronger space is created in their presence. That context's prison can be overcome only with the death of the forms that you chose, only when you give them definition or destroy them, and throw them out of the landscape.

I started to suspect that one had no other choice. And it doesn't matter that your every movement is observed by the tile-covered walls of the toilet. It seems to you that out there beyond that door there is somebody else. And when you go out guided by a simple wish to change the environment, you are stalked by the image of a white, sterile premises. Some people are writing something in the other room. They think that you spent all this time hiding and cooling yourself off. But you did not know that they were creating your context, your context of the cool premises, which needs more than a casual placement of furniture, casual spots on the carpet; which needs more, someone else who could manage to move and change his position in the air and not manage to establish a new state, new society, or create a new art. But for you one thing would be enough – to be able to act without preconditions and circumstances. Rather than finding the permanent answers to complex questions of existence, you could simply question how to remain yourself⁴. How to survive without being deranged by uncongenial sights, uncongenial meals, air and thoughts, from the freakish blend of these components, which erupt from you as horrible sweat, forcing you to spend hour after hour in a white booth⁵.

I think about the man of cause in the surroundings of cause. The man who does the same act in different places, the act which determines his further relations with us, sufferers of his insecurity. He was condemned to that insecurity by a fictitious state, a degrading society, utopian art – all these created by himself. The illusions about the collapse of the prison make him captive of another prison. He is trying to escape, but he entangles himself, and he simultaneously entangles us, as we put trust in his good will and resolution⁶. But it's true that he was pleased to be entangled because he knew that we are his co-conspirators, writing these lines in the other room. It doesn't matter what you think, reader, now, as you trot about among dusty towers, seeking hostels⁷, as you run between motorized rickshaws and banana sellers pushing wheels, who make up only a part of Lahore's cityscape. You think about what kind of box is most important for the breathless body of the interested tourist. The national bank, the deli, or McDonald's? The best box in the 45° context is the box with AC⁸. McDonald, in the context of the national culture it embodies, is in contrast with the universe, the last environment where the human race can take a rest from itself. You can touch it, lick it, take a seat on it. The universal box-nonbox of subculture⁹, „the yellow heart”¹⁰, where you can stay invisible, where you can be blessed. In this context nobody would dare confuse you with the yellow dummy¹¹. And that is what you need.

Post scriptum

I cannot fall asleep. Bleak lamp light jumps in and out of the window. Where is my private context? The only one, and inseparable from me. It's escaped from me and now is sick with typhoid fever in a faraway country. It's tormented by thoughts, longed for by him, germs eat him from the inside, threaten to spoil his captiv(ity) – inability.

Notes

1. Pakistani capital of culture.
2. No doubt – your works are designated for prison and give you definition. You came in to that prison by accident and in your own way you must demolish it.
3. When you become devoted to some artistic conceptions, you forsake recipes of other concepts and keep your distance from them. Postmodernism is no exception.
4. I suspect that all of you are getting to think of me as a captive of that room which torments us all to play this game.
5. Air temperature of the 20th of August, 1999 in Lahore was 45° Celsius.
6. Boris was elected for the second term of office.
7. Very cheap.
8. Air conditioning system.
9. For some reason cultural theorists avoid talking about subculture. They are more comfortable using a profound box of culture which is built for true and long-term values (well, in the context of the southern climate you choose the subculture. Because the subcultural box is not like the box full of drawers for movements, styles, and eras. It's like a balloon, filled with conditioned air. So it's more adjustable for private need).
10. In 1968 in Vienna Günter Zamp-Kelp, a German architect of Romanian background, realized an old European dream. He lodged his own liberty in a cellophane heart-shaped capsule. Meanwhile the freedom of imagination was left for passers-by to watch the shifting shapes of the heart of a European (because of people making love inside).
11. Mr. McDonald, that yellow dummy with airy bowels, is just another member of the Masonic lodge at first glance. However, some say that his power has grown in recent years.

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