

# 13 The Janus-border of the Monad and the Nomad

## An essay on the philosophy of b/ordering and othering<sup>1</sup>

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### **Waiting before the law**

Arguably one of the text that for me best expresses the ambiguity of what a border philosophically represents is the beautiful and famous parable of Franz Kafka, 'Before the Law'. For the purpose of this chapter, I will use this powerful text of Kafka to theorise on the art of b/ordering (Van Houtum, 2010a). Let me start, therefore, with citing this intriguing text in full:

*"Before the Law"*

Before the Law stands a gatekeeper. To this gatekeeper there comes a man from the country who asks for admittance to the Law. But the gatekeeper says that he cannot grant admittance at the moment. The man thinks it over and asks if he will be allowed in later. 'It is possible,' says the gatekeeper, 'but not at the moment.' Since the gate stands open as usual, and the gatekeeper steps to one side, the man can stoop to peer through the gateway into the interior. Seeing this, the gatekeeper laughs and says: 'If you like, just try to go in despite my veto. But be warned: I am powerful. And I am the meekest of the gatekeepers. From hall to hall there is one gatekeeper after another, each more powerful than the last. The third gatekeeper is already so terrible that even I cannot bear to look at him.' These are difficulties the man from the country has not expected; the Law, he thinks, should surely be accessible at all times and to everyone, but as he now takes a closer look at the gatekeeper in his fur coat, with his big sharp nose and long thin, black Tartar beard, he decides that it is better to wait until he gets permission to enter. The gatekeeper gives him a stool and lets him sit down at one side of the door. There he sits for days and even years. He makes many attempts to be admitted, and wearies the gatekeeper by his importunity. The gatekeeper frequently has little interviews with him, asking him questions about his home and many other things, but the questions are put indifferently, patronizingly, and always finish with the statement that he cannot be let in yet. The man, who has furnished himself with

many things for his journey, sacrifices all he has, however valuable, to the gatekeeper. The gatekeeper accepts everything, but always with the remark: 'I am only taking it to keep you from thinking you have omitted anything.' During these many years the man fixes his attention almost continuously on the gatekeeper. He forgets the other gatekeepers, and this first one seems to him the sole obstacle preventing access to the Law. He curses his bad luck, in his early years boldly and loudly; later, as he grows old, he only grumbles to himself. He becomes childish, and since in his year long contemplation of the gatekeeper he has come to know even the fleas in his fur collar, he begs the fleas to help him and to change the gatekeeper's mind. At length his eyesight begins to fail, and he does not know whether the world is darker or whether his eyes are only deceiving him. Yet in his darkness he is now aware of a radiance that streams inextinguishable from the gateway of the Law. Now he nears the end of his life. Before he dies, all his experiences in these long years gather themselves in his head to a point, a question he has not yet asked the gatekeeper. He waves him nearer since he can no longer raise his stiffening body. The gatekeeper has to bend low toward him, for the difference in height between them has altered much to the man's disadvantage. 'What do you want to know now?' asks the gatekeeper; 'you are insatiable.' 'Everyone strives to reach the Law,' says the man, 'so how does it happen that for all these many years no one but myself has ever begged for admittance?' The gatekeeper recognizes the man has reached his end, and, to let his failing senses catch the words, roars in his ear: 'No one else could ever be admitted here, since this gate was made only for you. And now, I am going to shut it.'

(Kafka, 1915/1998)

Maybe precisely because of its puzzling impenetrability, the containment of a secretive void yet with many possibilities, just like the Law in the story is, this parable, first published in 1915, has fascinated many readers in various disciplines (see e.g. Agamben, 1995/2002; Derrida, 1992, 1994/2001). The text acts like a puzzling mirror that fills itself with meaning by the reader, through a provoked reflection on the waiting of the man and a self-reflection on what the reader him- or herself would have done. So arguably, the text is foremost an introspective quest and a question, rather than an answer. Kafka's remarkable quest on why and how we wait before a subjecting Law that he has created with this beautiful parable allows me to make cross-references to the philosophical schools of thought of Nietzsche, Foucault and Deleuze, who, each in their own manner, have equally been absorbed with and have aimed to find ways to understand and/or escape the subjection to a (re)pressing b/order. In short, in this chapter, I will travel up to the border along with Kafka and some of his aforementioned previous and later fellow-travellers, and ask why and how in a regular democracy we metaphorically wait at the border, and why and how we thereby b/order

ourselves and thereby others. What is this desire that keeps us waiting for the gate to open? And what is this fear that prevents us from opening what is, as Kafka argues, principally our own gate?

### **Border waiters**

The man from the country is waiting before the gates of the Law. He is waiting all his life to have permission to enter what he apparently sees as an imagined world of possibilities. Waiting, as the man experiences, asks for a standstill, a fixation on a place and the subjection to the passing of time. A waiting creates an abduction of and an exclusive difference in time, and a distantiating stop in the fluidity of space. So to wait is an act of self-disciplining, it forces a realization that one cannot pursue, one cannot spend time otherwise in other places, one can possibly continue but like the gatekeeper says, *'not at the moment'*. The waiting has a double condition in this parable. For, not only is the man from the country waiting; also the gatekeeper, the border guard, stands there to wait. And contrary to the man from the country, a border guard is trained in the act of waiting. Border guards are professional border waiters. They serve the border. They keep the border and thereby construct, demarcate and appropriate it in time and space. Without the border keepers, there would not be a politically meaningful border. They are performing the Law by waiting at, watching over and guarding the territorial ends and beginnings of the lawful b/order. And as representatives of the Law, the border guards distinguish and filter out, illegalise the unwanted. As the Greek poet Konstantinos Petros Kaváfis famously wrote in his poem of 1904, and the writer John Michael Coetzee reminded us again in his beautiful book of 1980 with the same title, waiting at the border creates an order precisely also because of the waiting for the barbarians. Kaváfis's last lines in his poem powerfully expresses this double bind in the act of waiting, so significant for any border:

And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians? They were, those people, a kind of solution.

In other words, as long as there are borders and border guards, there will be barbarians. Also, the man from the country is being subjected to the judgement and control of the border guard who stands and waits before their gate. The man from the country is a foreigner, not from here, who has to ask for permission to enter and for hospitality. So, he is subjected to the Law that he at the same time is applying for to enter. He is subjected to the act of waiting for the decision of the guardians of that Law (Lugo, 2000; Salter, 2007a; Satzewich, 2014). And this imposed act of waiting can be a conscious and even deterring strategy in itself, as the man from the country clearly experiences. The waiting for the final decision even absorbs and paralyses him completely. So although the man from the country has to wait

outside, by waiting before the Law, waiting for the decision, he also belongs to the Law (cf. Agamben, 1995/2002). And such repressive subjection is, according to Jacques Derrida, an act of violence:

the foreigner is first of all foreign to the legal language in which the duty of hospitality is formulated, the right to asylum, its limits, norms, policing, etc. He has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc. This personage imposes on him translation into their own language, and that's the first act of violence.

(Derrida, 2000, 15).

At the border the application of the Law for the case of the traveller is suspended and exceptionalised, until the case can be made applicable to the normal situation, that is, until the sovereign decides about the legality of those who wish to enter. A border examination, a border check, is therefore, as Salter (2007a) argues, building on the work of Agamben, a state of exception (Agamben, 2005), through which the legal normality is purposively defined and (safe) guarded. In other words, a border is a test, a check for the legal fit of a foreigner to the own normality. In this test, the border guards subjectify, classify, categorize the foreigners at the gate according to their Law. The subject is expected, not he/she in particular, but he/she as a category, e.g. as a citizen, an immigrant, an irregular traveller, a refugee, a tourist, a cross-border worker or a business traveller. In so doing, border guards monopolise the inequality in access and the lawful means of movement (Amilhat Szary and Giraut, 2015; Mau et al., 2012; Neumayer, 2006; Torpey, 1998). Arguably one of the most important categories of the border test of the Law is the outlaw, a potentially unreliable trespasser who would be a direct threat to the legal order that they are guarding (Bauman, 2002). Hence, the subjects are the data for the border guards, the input for their state machinery. Increasingly, in our information society, a state border has literally become an uniformistic, digital machine, where the subject and his/her belongings are scanned, enumerated, objectified and processed. Particularly at airports, the border sites par excellence of our global age, this bio-metrical positivistic scanning has become automated, resulting in the scanning of faces, fingers, eyes and bodies of those waiting before the border (see also Salter, 2007b; Walters, 2006). The differences between the luggage that one carries that is controlled, scanned and processed, the document that testifies one's state identity and the human body has become blurred. For the border waiters at airports, the body has become a passport and the luggage in and of itself. If one's name, movements, body metrics or personal luggage does not belong to their pre-given categories or look suspect to the border guards, then one potentially will fail their reality and reliability test.

Also, the spatial layout of the border control is usually characterised as a *mise-en-scene* of a positivistic rite of *passage* with a spatio-temporal before, in and after. The lining up and waiting before crossing the imaginary line on the ground, the going through a consciously small examination-gate with watching eyes everywhere and the creation of a feeling of achievement when let through creates a dramatic script of power exertion and subjectification. Often the result of this power act is, as in a Foucaultian panopticon, that the people waiting to be let through internalise the constructed anxiety and vulnerability and willingly perform the obeying subject: he/she enters the confessionary complex (Foucault, 1977, 1991). In other words, the power of the border act becomes personated and playacted by the people passing through themselves; they enact to become *passengers*. The wannabe-border passers often perform, what Jestrovic calls, hyper-authenticity; they embody the categorised foreigners through the language and gaze of the host (Jestrovic, 2008). The subject fleeing and seeking a refuge performs the codified act of the asylum seeker, the same as some travellers perform the business traveller or the tourist in how they speak, act, dress or make small jokes with the border guards. So, in a way, therefore, in this micro-politics of the border-scene, one becomes one's own gatekeeper. One becomes one's own waiting act for his/her own border gate.

Similarly, the man from the country is not only prevented from entering ('not at the moment'), he is also preventing himself ('If you like, just try to go in'), and he is disciplining, policing and b/ordering himself. His hyper-authenticity has become the man from the country who waits. This internalization and subjectification to the waiting is further strengthened because of the suggested, yet unpredictable *violence* of the gatekeepers he is warned of by the first gatekeeper ('be warned: I am powerful. And I am the meekest of the gatekeepers. From hall to hall there is one gatekeeper after another, each more powerful than the last. The third gatekeeper is already so terrible that even I cannot bear to look at him') and the arbitrariness of the discretionary regime executed by the gatekeeper ('it is possible, . . . but not at the moment'). The looming threat of violence combined with the element of arbitrariness create an asymmetry in power and knowledge and as such subjectify and depower border passengers. This arbitrariness could be considered as a form of violence in itself, as a deterring and subjecting principle (see also Rijke and Minca, 2018). For the man of the country, it is not (made) clear why he has to wait and for how long he has to wait. For him it seems that the entrance is a matter of privileges, depending on the goodwill of the gatekeeper (hence his gifts to him) rather than rights and rules. The result of these depowering mechanisms is that he sees no other option than to totally submit himself to the regime, in terms of his time, his belongings and eventually even his life. He thus becomes a full embodiment and internalization of the suggested power of the law. There may be many possible doors in society, many possible routes to take in life. Yet the man from the country has entirely internalized the waiting for only this door, thereby turning it finally into his door ('this gate was made only for you').

## De-centred power

Implicitly building on Kafka's parable, it was Michel Foucault (1977, 1991) who freed us from the naive assumption that political power was a 'there' there, only visible at the borders or sitting on a throne in a castle somewhere in the centre (Brussels, Washington, Moscow, Beijing, etc.). Analysing a variety of power politics in and by various institutions (asylums, hospitals, academia, prison, school, family, sexuality, etc.), Foucault argues that with the building of democratic nation-states, we have left the centripetal power of the One Sovereign. And with this disappearance of the aristocracy, power has become less visible. It has become dispersed, diffused and scattered. For Foucault, the Law is a public domain, yet without any possibility of access, without a centre. The Law itself is de-centred, there is no centre behind the gate, or in terms of Kafka's parable: there are only more gates. The Law is beyond the reach of individual power, even for the gatekeeper, dislocated, receding in the outside, an intrinsic alienation. Its total powers are invisible for those standing before or guarding it. That the Law is de-centred does not mean that it is de-political or de-powered. What makes the parable fiercely clear is that to follow the Law, to 'wait before the Law', is to reproduce the Law and to make the Law powerful. The power of the Law thus has become what Adam Smith has described for the economic sphere: an invisible hand that guides, conducts, refrains and holds us. Hence, the internalisation of the Law, the power in force, is, in the case of a democracy, where the Law is indeed of our own making, not accomplished by force, but with our own minds and hearts. A democracy would not work if we were not complicit to the power we give to ourselves and in the names of ourselves. But that is not the same as saying that power is also actually in our hands. What Kafka's parable suggests is that the power of the Law is located in the waiting act itself. Like the man from the country, we are continuously trained, disciplined in the waiting for the final Truth, the final judgement to come to be let through by the border guards, to pass the citizenship and naturalization test, to pass the exams at school, to be let go again as prisoner, to be successful in life, to be ready for the labour market, to be tested sound and rational again in the case of the psychiatric institution, to be found sound and better again in the case of the hospital, etc. We continuously train and discipline ourselves and internalise and thereby reproduce the Law in the hope for liberation, in the hope to pass the test that lies before us.

Through its de-centralization, the Law produces a dis-placement, a dis-location of itself. It is omnipresent, yet not localisable, beyond grasp. But what is more, the emptying of the Law also produces a dis-location of those who are subjected by it. One has to wait *before* the Law, yet there is no entrance to it. Likewise, the man from the country is '*not yet*' allowed

entrance. This 'not yet' for the man from the country is a permanent status. Arguably, it is especially this, the waiting before the Law and the not yet, that installs the exertion of a power and defines the process of the internalization of control. The terms waiting before the Law and not yet include a destiny, a future, a promise, a life beyond the present reality, that can be reached only through training, devotion, honesty, working or even terrorist suicide, depending on whatever the promise consists of. Hence, we are constantly waiting before the Law, and constantly reproducing the time-spatial b/order. It is the promise of good behaviour, of good internalisation of the dominant order, the promise of final appreciation by the Other, that is constructing the social Self, the waiting Self. The consequence is that we find ourselves often living in a 'not yet' status, in a flux of a constant be-coming and longing to be, a Kafkaesque indefinite postponement.

### **The belief in the b/order**

In the light of the above, the act of b/ordering can best be understood as a continual space-fixing, subjectifying process which creates the imagination of a physically identifiable, essential entity with objective and unchangeable borders (see also Bauman, 1997). A border is therefore, as philosopher Peter Sloterdijk has argued in his book *Spheres* (2005), not a military defence alone: it is also a sacred desire for eternal truth. No border is built for the short term: it is built for eternity. Knowing at the same time that there is no border in history that has not disappeared, the creation of a border is hence, as Sloterdijk argues, precisely this: a big NO against the death of the nation. It is a testament of the desired eternal life. Hence, a border is an ideology that is believed in, with the walls acting as the fundament of the own temple, and the state as a permanently guarding providence. It may be illustrative for this border as a belief that the people in the state are usually promised thicker walls and higher fences than would be necessary when reasoning strictly in military terms.

Crucial then in the understanding of the seductive power of borders is that the constitution of a border, a shared truth, creates an immediate satisfaction for a short time, but the consequence is often a long-term desire for new appropriation and control of their own truth when this truth is perceived to be threatened (Van Houtum, 2010b). The desire, the wish for the (comm)unity of tomorrow, the dream of a national utopia, is never-ending. It is always in the making. This is why, rather than using only the noun, the border, we suggested to use the verb, b/ordering, to better verbalise the processual, permanent 'not-yet' status character of a border (Van Houtum, 2010c; Van Houtum and van Naerssen, 2002).

That this utopian desire has or can have dystopian consequences for those who are kept outside the b/order goes without saying in this day and age. The double bind of the b/ordering act is that the more one waits



before the Law, and hence the more one internalises oneself and locks oneself in, the more, then, that those who are kept outside the border are locked out. Most typically, in our time, this waiting outside the border has taken the form and shape of immigration procedures and segregated concentrations of waiting people, the camps of, what Derrida (2000) has called 'hostipality'.

Following Sloterdijk, it may be clear, then, that a border is a manifestation of the desire to demarcate, to represent and to communicate an eternal truth, but it is not, thereby, truth itself. For to b/order is essentially to create a national self-portrait, a self-glorifying window on the world, which includes a self-selected canon of the past and a promise of the fulfilment of self-constructed future ideals. This produces a contingent reality and contingent rituals of truth-keeping of those who wish to maintain the constructed b/order. What is seen as truth in one domain can be a lie in the space and/or eyes of an Other (van Houtum, 2010b). Yet the truth fabrication that a b/ordering entails would not be functional, if this would not be fantasy and ideal for many. To monadically b/order oneself in many ways is a comfortable enactment. For, to border oneself is to create oneself, to create a social self, it 'dividualises' the uncertainties of the individual. It produces the necessary illusion that what is lacking in one's identity is filled, that one's (personal) order is unified and coherent. It fills the 'holes', it makes a whole (Van Houtum, 2010b). As such, it helps to gain some control over the complexities of life. The truthfulness of such a self-devised orderly scheme of reality, be it a neighbourhood, a city, a political or a religious authority, a nation, the European Union, the revolution, an after-world, a heaven or, as in the case of Kafka's parable, the Law, is imagined to reduce some of the vulnerability and doubts that one lives with. It renders a space to retreat in, a familiar surrogate-house, an imaginary roof over one's head, that sometimes illustratively is called fatherland or motherland. Borders must therefore be seen as a strategic effort of fixing, distanciation, and gaining control in order to achieve ease (Van Houtum and Van Naerssen, 2002).

Yet this ease is never fully achieved. For, the longing for the 'true' b/order has no end, for realisations of wholeness never align with the fantasy perfectly. In the words of the guard standing before the Law in Kafka's parable: 'you are insatiable'. The perfect identity is always there, beyond the threshold, beyond the gates of the Law. It implies that the lack of fulfilment is perpetual and the final truth of the b/ordered self is unattainable. The man from the country is waiting before the Law, and by internalizing and believing in the fantasy of the Law, he has found a pseudo-home, an in-the-meantime-home at the gate, in the form and shape of a stool; yet his desire to unmask the void, to have access, to know the promised truth, to finally become, to truly come home, is insatiable. This feeling of endlessness is also constructed by the gatekeeper who warned him already at the beginning of his life, when he first sought permission to enter, that there is no end indeed in searching for the truth, for after the first gatekeeper there are



only more gatekeepers, even more powerful and harder to get past than him. And thus he remains an outsider to his own life, his whole life without a final homecoming, living in the meantime, waiting before the Law.

## Escape

Needless to say, this waiting, this eternal internal disciplining is not accepted all the time or by all of us in the same way. There is a continuum that varies from hard-line believing to hard-line resisting, one could say. The true believers at a given time, they who have fully internalized a given order, consider themselves as the pure and authentic people of the dominant territorial order. In the case of a nation, for instance, they are the ‘true’ nationalists or, in the case of neo-liberalism, as the dominant paradigm, the ‘true capitalists’ in which others, usually scapegoated as *the elite* or *the media*, are then seen as weak and foolish, or even traitors and fake. At the other end, there are, at any given time, actants of resistance against the dominant order, be it against the nation, or e.g. against oppressive neo-liberalism or communism. The actants of resistance usually argue that society is the evil-doer and that the subject is downplayed and aggressively and unwillingly manipulated and/or that outsiders are unjustifiably kept outside the Law. For these resisters, uncritically internalising the b/ordered society is like living a lie, implicating a constant struggle and personal warfare. Exemplary in this respect are the words of the critical thinker Chantal Mouffe: ‘society is the illusion . . . that hides the struggle and antagonism “behind the scenes”, putting the “harsh reality” of antagonism behind a “protective veil”’ (Mouffe, 1993, 51, 53).

Perhaps most powerfully, it was Nietzsche who expressed his discontent with, and critically articulated the omnipresence of absence and feared the false truth of emptiness of his time as a *horror vacui*. Nietzsche reserved the word ‘nihilism’ for this nothingness, the emptiness that he saw around him. For Nietzsche, with the ‘death of God’, and with him the One Sovereign, the Universal Law, people in his society had come to live in a nihilistic time. For him the emptiness created after the death of God was so powerful that it resulted in lethargy towards life and a suffocation of the human spirit. Nietzsche’s analysis of the emptiness and devaluation of life has much in common with the thought of scholars in other times, like Rousseau, Marx and Foucault. Although in many ways starting from a different perspective, what these scholars arguably share is that for them, freedom is the natural condition; yet that we are alienated, disciplined, fixated and subjectified by the emptiness of the truth that society commonly offers us (see also Carens, 1987). Hence, their plea is to end the alienation, to end the phantom-pain of our life not lived, to truly free ourselves from the truth that is offered to us by a disciplining societal order.

It is well known that Nietzsche advocated to escape from this emptiness, this destructive void in the transcendence to *Übermensch* (Nietzsche,

1966/1987). The *Übermensch* is characterized as someone who possesses the 'will to power', who affirms life, acts out of passion, creates spirit and ecstatic love. The *Übermensch* acts above and beyond oneself. Becoming an *Übermensch* is an act of self-overcoming. In the eyes of Nietzsche, this *Übermensch* is best compared with the Greek God Dionysus, the God of liberation from one's normal self (Nietzsche, 1966/1987). This Dionysus for him is then to be contrasted with the weak-willed human, who seeks only order, comfort and security. This b/orderly man, for Nietzsche, is represented by the Greek God of Apollo, the God of order, and rational rhythm and rhyme. Whereas the Dionysian presents fluidity, formlessness, streams, flows, the Apollonian will in life represents form, borders, contours and determinacy.

According to Nietzsche, it is the weak-willed human who borders, suppresses and disciplines himself through fantasies of hierarchical order instead of creating himself. Nietzsche calls this passive Apollonian 'the last man'. His argument, then, is that Western civilization is moving in the direction of the last man, for whom nothing matters, who has no great passion or commitment, who is unable to dream and create, who lives in a sphere of value-less comfort, the time-space of nihilism. Famously, Nietzsche attacked the purified, fearful, conservative, religious and orderly time-space of his time because of the element of self-denial. The death of the belief in a world of God that transcends man should be replaced by a rebirth of man himself. Hence, the plea for a creative liberation from truth, for the use of the energy of primitive impulses, for non-reflection, for non-ordering, for dance, ecstasy, a trance that would lead to the transcendence of man himself. It is the movement from the emptiness of a time-space in which God is declared dead, the time-space of zero, the nihil, the abyss, the void, to the state of being one with oneself, to become an *Übermensch*. In a way, therefore, Nietzsche's project is about the self-enlightenment of the enlightenment, about pointing at the borders of enlightenment, the borders of truth, the ratio, the Law (Safranski, 2000).

This desire for transcendence, to transcend the borders set out by the Law, to enter the gate, is lucidly present in Kafka's parable 'Before the Law'. In Kafka's story, the man is and keeps on waiting; he does not transcend or liberate himself, he does not escape. Seen in this light, Kafka's parable arguably is a testament of the subject. The man from the country denies life by waiting his entire life before the Law. Also Michel Foucault focused on analyzing the various subjectification and internalisation politics of institutions, thereby implicitly declaring the death of the individual. Implicitly following Nietzsche's Dionysian desire, in his later works Foucault tried to theorise the practices and strategies of rethinking oneself, of liberation and desubjectification, the ethical self, or what he labelled the 'aesthetics of existence', expressing the need and the power to free oneself from the internalisation of the silencing and suffocating emptiness.

Perhaps equally provocative as Foucault, but using a different wording and style, Nietzsche's theorisation of the Dionysian will to power that moves

above and beyond the Apollonian will was analysed by Deleuze and Guattari. Using a powerful new vocabulary, they have made it their theoretical goal in life to theorise on this Nietzschean aspiration for the non-fascist nomadic, the escape from desiring our own repressive order (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972/2004, 1980/2004). Also for Deleuze and Guattari, there is an internal struggle between order and flight, like the Nietzschean Apollonian and Dionysian will in human life mentioned earlier. For them, each human moves, then, on a continuum between these two poles, what they label as the schizoid desire, and the paranoid desire. And crucially, these desires do not stem from a natural lack, as Freud and Lacan had argued, but are principally socially produced. Society in their eyes is a desire-machine.

On the one hand, there is the productive schizoid desire of becoming and transcendence, to be 'far-sick', to desperately long to be somewhere else, to experience and live the personal freedom despite or thanks to the fear of the unknown, the nonroutine. This is the desire to long for emptiness at the Other side, to de-border oneself, to turn to the Other, to a longing for the Other in oneself, to become a stranger oneself. This desire is what Deleuze and Guattari also refer to as the figure of the Nomad.

On the other hand, there is the paranoid desire, to be homesick, to desire for order, easiness, nihilism, control, security, comfort, hence the desperate desire for the truth here, the desire for self-repression and disciplining. It is this desire that Deleuze and Guattari also refer to as the figure of the Monad, meaning an impenetrable indivisibility, an universal essence.

The law of the territorial border, then, is the constantly moving navigational route that is the result of moving between, on the one hand, the Scylla of the free but Law-outbreaking, anti-social, and, on the other, the Charybdis of the social but self-repressed self. In other words, b/ordering and hence othering, principally, is a Janus-continuum. Janus was the Roman God of the end and the beginning, of the passage, of the guard between the world above and the nether-land. Janus has two faces, the centripetal, inward-oriented monadic face and the centrifugal, the outward-oriented nomadic face. The crucial question, then, to answer is, which face of Janus are we showing today, when and why?

## **No end**

The border that stands in between the man from the country in Kafka's parable and the space across the border which he dares not cross is principally a question. It questions the truth in himself, the truth of the internalization of power. The border questions the desire to internalize the Law, to internalise the b/order, to be subjected, to be-long to this side of the gate, to be a subject made to wait for the promise that is implicit in the bordering of any space: to wait for tomorrow, the near future, the fulfilment of the dream that is the b/order. This waiting is liberating; it gives one a task, a meaning, a social function and a

potential identity. At the same time, the identification of oneself as a subject is also a form of containment, an imprisonment of one's multiplicity in a spatially ordered box set out by others, which is the act of waiting. The sentence of imprisonment is precisely this: waiting for the Law to be merciful, waiting for the gates to be opened. The man from the country grows roots in waiting.

Crucially, then, mankind navigates on this Janusface continuum with at its end two poles of desire. The paranoid desire at one end is the desire for the fulfilment with total(itarian), purifying order. This desire is at the same time a fear. It is the fear of the Dionysian Overman, the NoMad, the NoMan, the noWhere. The fear here is to be overwhelmed by a barbaric madness of total freedom, the fear not to have and be without a b/order, to become a stranger (to) oneself, and to be non-existent, to be, as Giorgio Agamben puts it, profane, to become like the Law itself, pure but empty, a human without content (Agamben, 1999). It is a fear that seems particularly dominant in our time and is often resulting in illiberalisation policies such as stricter border controls and deterrence measurements, which brought Safranski (2003) to ask the question: how much globalisation can we actually bear?

At the other end, there is schizoid desire, a longing to estrange oneself, to distance oneself, to free oneself from the surrounding silencing walls, to be outside the Law, an out-Law, to be without the repressive social mask, to be a civically naked human. The fear here is to be suffocated by a repressive total monadic love, the fear for the lie of the border, to be caged by a communal b/order, the fear to become an endlessly waiting Subject, the fear to alienate oneself from the transcendent self, to deny life. It is a desire that dwells on the question, paraphrasing the words of Safranski (1990), how much truth do we need and can we bear?

What makes the act of b/ordering and thereby othering crucially contingent is that both ends, the totalitarian, pure monadic order as well as the totally nomadic schizoid, cannot be reached, as this in both cases would lead to the destruction of the self. Radical paranoia, the home of the omnipresent ever-watching, and inescapable order, would result in the neurotic destruction of the individual self; and radical psychosis, the endless unbounded escape, would lead to a maniacal destruction of the social self. Hence, necessarily, if one does not wish to lose or destroy oneself, there must be a balance between the two poles of desires/fears. The desire for the self-defining subjective order and liberating disorder are generally operating at the same time. Desiring, therefore, has no end, no final fulfilment, as there will always be that other contrasting desire which lurks and pulls us back. And as there is no end in desiring, equally there is no end in fearing. On this waiting continuum, the delineation of the border is, then, ongoing and dynamic, crucially contingent on our own co-production of our fears and desires. The border, the threshold that stands in between oneself and

one's own other, is an endless desire for fulfilment. It implies that man is nowhere finally at home. And hence, there is no end in fearing and desiring.

And so I end without an end. I end with a question. In order to understand why we b/order ourselves and others in a regular democracy, and thereby define who we desire to be, it is crucially important to understand where we are, where we stand before the Law. The border is not a beginning, nor an end, but a continuous introspective question. That question is, what is it that we fear? And what do we desire? Where are we located on the continuum of waiting before the Law and transcending it? Where do we draw the line? So, before our own gate is finally shut for us, the question constantly begs our attention: what we are waiting for? And at what price for ourselves and others? And whether in the end that justifies the waiting.

## Note

1 This is an adapted, updated and reworked version of an article that earlier was published in *Social and Legal Studies*.

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