

ON BROTHERS AND SEGREGATION

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In loving memory of my brother

1. My identity and segregation

Lacan says that ‘everything that exists... is founded on segregation’ (S17: 149). If we understand segregations as separation, then we, humans, in order to exist have to be detached from the Other, from mOther. Not only in the biological sense but also in the proper human sense of being separated subjects. Such is an Oedipus demand – to be separated. That which comes into life as a single being must undergo separation, must be founded on segregation.

The beginning is always already a separation, which we find out in the aftereffect, *nachträglich*, if we are to use a Freudian word. To be separated means to be one, to be monadic. I speak of the beginning as a symbolic birth, birth into the cradle of culture.

If we speak about segregation in an ideological sense then it means that some humans are separated from the others. It seems to me, I encountered segregation from my childhood. It sounds strange of course because I was born in the country which officially was the cradle of internationalism.

Who am I? What am I? Not like the others, different. I am separated from the others, but also, I am segregated from the others together with my family. I am a Soviet boy, but not like other Soviet boys. I am different, and my family is different from the other families.

In school the teachers were telling us that everybody is equal in the Soviet Union, but I knew it was not true. The teachers were telling us about segregation in capitalist countries, especially in the US where the population is divided between rich and poor, between black and white. Listening to them I identified myself with the black people, at least partly.

My colour of skin was the same with the other Soviet boys and girls. And yet there was a difference in my appearance. My nose gave me away. My mother used to tell me that our noses – her and mine – were a telltale feature. This nose marked my Jewishness. And my mother was teaching me not to protrude it to get rid of danger. That was her main testament to me: to be good but not to protrude. Do not stick your nose out, do not show the line of segregation. I was like all the other Soviet kids, but different. I was like all the others and I was not like them. I was crossed by the dividing line. I was a small divided subject ready to become a psychoanalyst with its understanding of identity’s split.

What does it mean to be Jewish? The only answer I had – to not be like the others, to be in a more dangerous, vulnerable position. More than that in my childhood I have heard from the Soviet boys that Jewish people are divided in two: good ones (*evrei*/regular word Jews) and bad ones (*zhidy*/pejorative word). Thus, those who were segregated were divided, they were segregated one more time; they were twice segregated. In fact, even in my childhood I was in doubt about the idea that only Jewish people are divided into good ones and bad ones. My schoolmates were wrong: to be born Russian or Tatar does not mean to be good in advance, before being born. I did not believe this nationalistic logic of a priori being good or bad even in my childhood.

In my youth I found an answer to the question of my relation to my Jewishness that suited me. I had read somewhere that Kafka once was asked what he had in common with Jews, and his answer was: 'I don't have much in common with myself let alone with the Jews'. That was 'my' answer, and I would say now that this answer sounded psychoanalytic. To coincide with Jews first I have to coincide with myself which is, if I follow psychoanalytic logic, never possible. There is no such thing as pure identity for a split subject. Identity presupposes coincidence with oneself; I must always be myself; I must be equal to myself. The very idea of the unconsciousness as negativity does not imply any positive identity. I cannot be equal to myself. The psychoanalytic formula here is not 'I am I', 'I = I', but 'I am other', 'I≠I'.

2. Two cases. More questions – more confusion

In my analytic praxis there was a case of a woman whose father was Jewish, and she was asking herself over and again the question, 'What does it mean?' What does it mean to be Jewish? In the psychoanalytic dialogue with me she was giving some different answers and rejected all of them except one: to be a Jew means to be a subject of segregation and annihilation. She was wondering: 'Jewish people are the ones to be exterminated, but I cannot understand why that is'. The question was left open, and her father – who died many years ago – was left to segregation and annihilation. It was as if there was only one explanation in her mind, connected with anti-Semitism: Jews were chosen by the others as objects of segregation and annihilation.

In his 'Reflections on the Jewish Question' Jean-Paul Sartre says that anti-Semite dreams about the segregated society where he hates someone who is supposed to be worse than he himself, who helps him to be higher on the social ladder, who helps him to have vital necessity to have an enemy, to dedicate his life to endless paranoiac cleansing from the enemies. What is common between Jews? What unites them? Sartre's answer: situation. What situation? The one of the hostile suspicious attitudes of the surrounding people (Sartre 1999). It seems like the figure of a Jew was invented as a narcissistic other to project one's own hatred, even self-hatred. Jean-Luc Nancy speaks about a special drive to distinction (*pulsion de distinction*), which implies 'the exclusion of others, even other peoples' (Nancy 2018: 23)¹. We could call it a segregation drive. This drive might be connected with the Lacanian idea of internal exclusion referring to the Freudian *das Ding*. The segregation drive works for the expulsion of one's own negativity, of one's own Jew, who has nothing to do with national identity.

Another case of analysis is that of a young man, who does not know his father. His mother used to tell him that he was conceived 'accidentally'. The only thing she told her son about his father was that he was a Jew. However, this referred not to national identity but to his character traits: 'The man was smart, cunning and greedy, which meant he was a Jew'. The mother was highly ambivalent towards her son, a kid produced by the very special sperm of a Jew: she hated him, she beat him, she called him 'my greedy *zhidenok* (little Jew)', but she wanted him to be smart and cunning. Here we are faced with the belief in organicism, that the psychological traits of the father are transmitted along with his sperm; and it does not matter that father and son never met.

¹ Nancy writes about paranoia, in which a threat in oneself turns into a threat from another. He continues: 'The European subject behaved paranoid towards Israel who was one of his fathers or his older brother' (2018: 58). In this sense a Jew 'represents very exactly the reverse figure of the Subject' (2018: 60). In Lacanian terms we have a paranoiac *forclusion* of one of the Names-of-the-Father. Israel becomes the persecutive imaginary Forefather.

I often had to deal with just such a confusing mixture of national identity and character traits. My conclusion from this confusion is either all the Jews are smart, cunning and greedy, or all the people who are smart, cunning and greedy are Jews. In the end it is not about nationality at all. It is all about an imaginary figure of someone else, some other. And this figure represents a paradoxical mixture of admiration and disgust.

3. Back to roots

In the time of Perestroika, the repressed anti-Semitism of the Soviet time came out, returned together with diverse forms of nationalism. In the time of Perestroika, it was obvious that Sartre was not mistaken: anti-Semitism is not so much an idea, a worldview, as a passion. And this passion, this hatred works as a blind faith. This passion, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, speaks not of the figure of the Jew, but of that of anti-Semites: 'Their passion is exclusive possession, appropriation, power without boundaries at any cost' (Adorno and Horkheimer 1969 [1944]: 177), the passion to find the pure roots.

It was the time of the end of the Soviet Union when uprooted Soviet people started to search for their roots. People rushed to find themselves placed on genealogical trees. This tendency of rooting became even stronger in the 2020s, especially with the appearance at the internet market of advertisements of genetic expertise, like this:

DNA analysis for ethnic origin will help you find out your genetic roots, starting from distant ancestors, trace their migration, obtain information about the origin of your family and your race and nationality, and also create a family tree.

<https://saint-petersburg.dnk-otcovstvo.ru/dnk-test-na-etnicheskoe-proishozhdenie/>

Uprooted from the country, uprooted by the digital reality, people believe in the capitalistic science, in materiality of genes and chromosomes, in the possibility to be rooted at the family tree. It seems like people cannot live in the abstraction of language, in the symbolic reality, and especially in the new digital conditions without an imaginary tree with its distribution of inherited races and nationalities. Uprooted people cannot live in the rhizomatic world, they suffer to be rooted, to find some hooks to be attached to some imaginary territory. And it is much easier to do nowadays when capitalistic science come back to organicism.

After Perestroika the country started to move back to feudalism or, to be more precise, to the border of feudalism and capitalism. Gangster capitalism conjoined with territorial claims of feudalism. Segregation works perfectly at this border. Lacan has marked this border as the site of the origin of the symptom. He confidently says that psychoanalytic symptom was invented not by Hippocrates but by Marx. The psychoanalytic symptom has always already originated in the social field. The whole country might be marked with the symptom of the root search. One of the names of this symptom is identity. The word 'identity' in the 1980-1990s appeared in the dying Soviet Union as if from nowhere and became one of the most popular. Everybody was speaking about identity and the necessity to get one.

What is identity? A symptom in the social field. There are three principal identities for a human being to be rooted in the social structure: national, professional, and sexual. People ask each other: who are you? And this question has three possible answers: I am Russian (Jewish, Ukrainian, etc.). I am a psychoanalyst (professor, writer, etc.). I am a man (hetero/homo, etc.). None of these marks are easy for me. Even the second identity is very difficult, so far as Freud named psychoanalysis an impossible profession. Even the third identity is not an easy one,

insofar as in terms of psychoanalysis sexual identity is always already divided, or speaking bluntly it is a question of bisexuality, of being split inside.

Also, I could consider psychoanalysis not as a profession but as a nationality. In *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and then in his book on *Man Moses* (1939) Freud argues that nationality is based not on *Blut und Boden* but on symbolic identifications, which are not in blood and not at a territory but in a de-territorialized totem. Moses has created Jews, Freud has created psychoanalysts, and I belong to this discourse, to this people, to this rhizomatic 'nationality'. It is important here to emphasize that elementary structures of kinship are also based not on blood but on symbolic identifications. My mother, father and brother take their places in symbolic positions. Who is my brother? A man who takes the symbolic position of my brother in the social network.

More than that in his book on Moses Freud promotes the idea of the national identity as always already split. Who is Moses? He is partly Egyptian, partly Jewish. The idea of the split nationality might be found in a Russian proverb: 'Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tatar'. More than that in the first paragraph of his book Freud calls national identity *vermeintlich*, that is wrongly assumed, conjectural, imaginary. Identity is always imaginary because it is based on anthropometric parameters of the body. I, for example, as I was told, have a Jewish nose.

Identity creates lines of segregation between us and them. We are Russians, they are not. National identity might work in all situations. One of the most popular phraseological units 'Aren't you Russian or what?' can be used in a variety of situations, such as when someone does not understand something, or when someone does something in a wrong way. For example, in the film *Brother* (by Aleksei Balabanov, 1997), which will be discussed further, Chechens on a tram mockingly throw this phrase at the Russian controller. They have no tickets; they do not want to pay for the ticket, and the controller allegedly does not understand this. Here we see an inverted segregation of us (Russians)/them (Chechens).

The line between us and them is not necessarily national. It might be corporate-professional: we are taxi-drivers, they are not. It might be sexual: we are normal, natural (heterosexuals), they (homosexuals) are not. It might seem weird but the whole country might construct its politics on a 'segregative' use of the sexual identity.

The split of between and them was fundamental in the Soviet Union. This split was paranoiac-economic: the world was divided between us (communist) and them (capitalist). In the time of Perestroika this ideological split disappeared. However, the division between us and them has not gone away. It was fragmented into an infinite number of internal situations. The external enemies were internalized. Us and them maintain a state of paranoia, even if in 1990s there was no state paranoia which was still to come in the twenty-first century.

Paranoiac segregation, dividing people on us and them, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1983), blocks any revolutionary actions. Instead of inclusion, instead of establishing new connections, instead of creating new social assemblages we have the maintenance of a repressive order and the everlasting annihilation of 'them'. Paranoiac segregation is a meeting point of *nazismus* and *narzissmus*.

Narzißmus – as Freud preferred to call narcissism – is a precise fundament for any paranoia. Between myself and another there is always misrecognition (*méconnaissance*). Another is my unconscious projection, and I am never ready to recognize it. Another of *narzissmus* is a *Doppelgänger*, the one who cannot help but pursue. In the narcissistic register, it is impossible to get rid of persecution.

‘We’ is a narcissistic assemblage, but without ‘we’ there is no way to establish a society, and no way to become a subject, to be ‘I’. A subject is always already belonging to a different ‘we’. I do not believe in the notion of narcissistic disorders. I do believe in the disorder of narcissism. What do we have as a result of its disorder? According to Bernard Stiegler, ‘the liquidation of primordial narcissism authorizes all transgressions to the extent that it is also the liquidation of the *we* as such, becoming the herd *it*’ (Steigler 2003: 43). How is it possible to escape the disorder of narcissism? How not to become an ‘it’ instead of ‘I’? How to find lines of flight from paranoia? Stiegler gives a psychoanalytic answer: to take into consideration that there is the third in relation of me and other in narcissism, and this third element, an incommensurable one, which is the Lacanian Big Other. This symbolic Other is intended to eliminate the narcissistic misrecognition between self and other, to tame the disorder.

4. We are...

What makes us become ‘we’? This happens to be a principal question in one of my analytic cases. A young woman came to analysis with an idea to rearrange the notion of ‘we’. That was her demand. She decided to deal with the ‘we’ of her large family. She was not satisfied with the eternal justification that her mother gave: ‘Yes, it was violence, but it was committed by our uncle, and he is part of our “we”, so you cannot blame him’. The programme that the analysand outlined and began to carry out was cutting off monstrous genealogical branches of the family tree, branches of the family complex. Questioning ‘we’, unlike her mother, she realized that ‘we’ is not a blood-related or national category. It is a symbolic notion, and sometimes even non-humans become part of ‘we’, for example, as this analysand said, a cat is a part of ‘we’, and uncle is not. Once again, we have to remind ourselves that the category of ‘we’ has appeared as a narcissistic pair.

Who are we in terms of identity? Identities come from the others, from outside. They come from the others. The national identity is not something inherited, it is not in blood, it is not in the brain. As Jean-Paul Sartre says, if you want to know who a Jew is, ask a Christian; a Jew is a person whom other people consider a Jew. Even sexual identity comes from the outside: people tell us who we are, girls or boys. They told us who we are, and we have to behave like girls or boys. It might seem weird but professional identity also comes from outside. The funny example is ‘my’ professional identity. On the internet they call me a philosopher and psychoanalyst. Once I started seriously objecting to one man who calls me a philosopher. But this man continued to insist that he knows better who I do, because the Big Other named Wikipedia says that I am a philosopher.

Identity can exist if it is constant, if it does not change. And others, including the media try to make it fixed, but in fact it is not. What if I feel my identity is changing, let us say, from psychoanalyst to writer or musician (if I follow my identification with my brother who was a professional musician)? When Jean-Luc Nancy claims that identities ‘are never purely fixed, nor simply plastic’, I do agree, but I’m not sure that ‘they are always metastable’, especially when we speak about professional identity (Nancy 2003: 23). This partly concerns sexual identity and national identity. However, Nancy speaks not about stability, but about metastability, that is about the tendency. Identity is in general a police concept. In my mind the notion of identity, identification is strictly connected with the name of Alphonse Bertillon and his practice of anthropometric bertillonage. If identity comes from outside, subjectivity comes from inside. Even if a human subject is the Moebius band where it is not possible to discern inside from outside, the difference between identity and subjectivity is crucial, for example for Felix Guattari. Subjectivity for him is an existential category, ‘whereas identity is a concept of referentiality, of the limiting of reality to frames of reference, frames that may be imaginary’

(Guattari and Rolnik 2008: 94). That is to say identity is a social construct channelling subjectivity in a certain direction, closing off other possible paths of singularization. The subject might have no fixed identity. In *Anti-Oedipus* Guattari together with Deleuze address themselves to the question of subject, identity, as well as to Lacan and segregation.

5. Segregative use by Deleuze and Guattari

Deleuze and Guattari pay attention to Lacan's establishment of a deep connection between Oedipus and segregation; they note that 'Lacan goes on to say, the sole foundation for the society of brothers, for fraternity, is "segregation" (what does he mean here?)' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 83). Segregation means separating us, brothers, from them, enemies. The individual finds himself on one side or the other of the line. In this sense Oedipus becomes part of the paranoiac game.

I belong to ours, to my brothers – this is the formula of segregation. Deleuze and Guattari also speak about 'segregative use' as a precondition of Oedipus, but not as its effect. It is 'a precondition of Oedipus, to the extent that the social field is not reduced to the familial tie' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 103). Oedipus comes with his framework to restrict infantile sexuality, to teach how to desire. It is this segregative use that gives the feeling that it is good to be one of us. You are not alone; you belong to the family, to brotherhood. Segregative use works in the unconscious. The Oedipus of Deleuze and Guattari is Anti-Oedipus also because it is not a source of father-figures. On the contrary a father-figure retrospectively became such a figure after other father-like figures. The segregative use together with familialism is an incredible weapon of the master discourse. And again 'the family finds itself countersected by the order of classes. (In this sense, indeed, segregation is the only origin of equality)' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 263). The principal thing is the desire that people invest in the social field. This field is constructed by desires and interests. And it is exactly the desire that transports segregation into the social field.

According to schizoanalysis, there are two poles in the psyche – paranoiac and schizophrenic. In other words, there are nomadic schizo-pole and segregation paranoia-pole, and there are two usages possible on these two poles: one pole is the nomadic and polyvocal; the other one is segregative and bi-univocal. One pole is a revolutionary one, and the other one is reactionary. The reactionary desire works 'through the segregative use of the conjunctive syntheses from which Oedipus is derived: I am of the superior race' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 105). Of course, there are lots of intermediate positions, 'where the unconscious itself oscillates between its reactionary charge and its revolutionary potential. Even Schreber finds himself to be the Great Mongol when he breaks through the Aryan segregation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 105).

Daniel Paul Schreber moves to the nomadic pole of schizophrenic creative potential to identify himself with a Mongolian Prince. Let us make two commentaries on this passage. First, on the way Schreber passes through other points of identification to reach 'the final' (Schreber's word) identification with a Mongolian Prince. The succession goes like this: a 'Hyperborean woman', a 'Jesuit Novice in Ossegg', a 'Burgomaster of Klattau', 'an Alsatian girl who had to defend her honour against a victorious French officer'. Second, becoming a Mongolian Prince, Schreber takes it 'as a sign that all Aryan peoples had proved themselves unsuitable to defend the realms of God, and that a last refuge would now have to be taken with non-Aryan peoples' (Schreber 2000: 89). Schreber moves from one identity to another one and thereby proves the Freudian idea that 'I' as a first-person singular pronoun consists of a multitude of identifications. Schreber's identification with a Mongolian Prince helps him to overcome

Aryan segregation. Let us now come to what exactly Lacan says about Oedipus and segregation.

6. Lacan establishes segregation as brotherhood's reason

On March 11, 1970 Lacan spoke about the Oedipus complex, about mother and her crocodile-like desire, about father as a paternal metaphor. In the framework of the familial context Lacan articulates three killings – 1) Oedipus who killed Laius; 2) Forefather who was murdered by the brothers, according to the *Totem and Taboo* myth; and 3) Moses who was slain by the Jews.

Our special attention is the myth which might be considered as a myth about the foundations of human society. Lacan argued that the only fundament of the brother's society is segregation. Let us follow his argumentation.

First he says that it seems like we live in such a time when there is 'no longer any segregation anywhere. It is unheard of when you read the newspapers' (S17: 149). But for Lacan if there is no segregation, there is no foundation for the fraternity. He continues: 'I know of only a single origin for fraternity – I mean human, always *humus* – it is segregation' (S17: 149).

Lacan also adds that he is not left in the political sense; as for segregation it is necessary to arrange brotherhood. Who are the brothers establishing a brotherhood? First of all, they were not brothers before the act of killing. It is only after that 'they discover that they are brothers (*ils se découvrent frères!*)' (S17: 149). They became brothers after they committed *passage à l'acte*, that is after they committed their crime. Brotherhood is a discovery, an after-effect (Freudian *Nachträglichkeit*). Lacan argues: 'The energy that we have from all being brothers very clearly proves that we are not so' (S17: 149).

The only reason for the brotherhood is segregation. We repeat the quote which opens this text, this time without an omission. Lacan says: 'everything that exists, and in the first-place fraternity, is founded on segregation' (S17 149). We also repeat once again: 'they *discover* that they were brothers'. And this time Lacan questions: 'Yes, but in the name of what segregation principle?' The answer is: 'no one will touch the little mummies' (S17: 149). If this is so, then we have here another approach to prohibition of incest. Lacan used to correlate law (the prohibition of incest) with desire. This time law is on the other side of segregation. Lacan continues his thought about mummies: 'Because, besides, there is more than one of them. They were interchangeable, since the old father had them all. They could sleep with the brother's mother, precisely, since they are brothers only through their father' (S17 149-50). This is a question of prohibition of *jouissance*. Killing gives no access to the *jouissance*. Truth is a sister of *jouissance*. Truth is not a brother, but as Lacan points out is a sister. *Jouissance* is embodied in *das Ding*. And this is how it is connected to the trauma. Slavoj Žižek writes that 'the traumatic encounter with the abyss of the desiring Other' is 'the intimate link between Judaism and psychoanalysis' (Žižek 2001: 54-5).

Foundational for the society myth of the killing necessary to establish the law of the father, the paternal metaphor of the dead father brings with itself is constructed in the end by Lacan around five fundamental notions of this part of the seminar: Killing – Brotherhood – Segregation – *Jouissance* – Truth.

7. Bro

Thus, according to Lacan, killing and brotherhood are connected. Strange but this connection was clearly manifested in the contemporary Russian language. The regular word for 'brother' is *brat*. This word together with its derivatives such as *bratello* and *bratan* since the 1990s has

been widespread as a part of the ubiquitous criminal slang. And the word for a gang in contemporary Russian is *bratva*, *bratki*. In the 2020s another slang word became very popular with the same root of *brat* is '*bratushka*'. The whole nation might be '*bratushki*'. It is interesting that this word appeared in the time of Russian-Turkey war of the end of nineteenth century as an ironic expression of Slavic-brothers. Today Serbs are *bratushki*, and this word lost its irony in the 2020s.

The word *brat* might mean a close family relative, or a friend, or a member of a gang. Lacan points out that even with a brother as relative, with a so-called blood-brother everything is not so simple: 'Even with your blood brother nothing proves that we are his brother – we can have a completely opposite batch of chromosomes' (S17: 149). Lacan denies any scientific foundation for the brotherhood: 'No fraternity is even conceivable, has the slightest foundation, as I have said, the slightest scientific foundation, except through the fact that people are isolated together, isolated from the rest by something' (S17: 149).

Lacan speaks about the brotherhood. Does he also mention two other words from the national motto of France, liberty and equality? Yes, he says: 'This passion for fraternity, not to mind the rest, liberty and equality, is something that is outrageous and we would do well to see what it is covering over' (S17: 149). Once again, Lacan denies any kind of reason behind the brotherhood except segregation. Genetics does not give any foundation for the brotherhood; but there is such a notion as segregation in genetics. It means the separation of a pair of chromosomes during mitosis and meiosis. One could see a totally different genetic segregation in the film *Gattaca* (1997) by Andrew Niccol. Society in this film is divided between Valid and In-Valid. Eugenics in the not-too-far future is back; invented by Francis Galton, it gained its practical significance in Nazi hygiene program. Thus, *Gattaca* represents societal segregation, racist organicism and futuristic fascism. One of the brothers is Valid, he has first-class identity based on genetics; and another one is In-Valid, the second-class human with not scientifically corrected chromosomes.

Brothers have nothing in common, except sibling rivalry. The main character, Gerome, in this film is In-Valid, because he was born in love but not in a genetic laboratory, he is a so-called 'godchild'. Gerome has a dream – to fly to the stars; but this dream is impossible to realize for the In-Valid, only Valids are selected for space missions. Gerome forms a couple not with his brother, but with a man who gives him his identity, with a man who himself lost the ability to move, but is ready to donate his genetic material (Eugene). Gerome takes on his own identity from Eugene. Even his name is taken from Eugene; and symbolic and first of all biological data allow him to take place in the symbolic matrix of the first-class humans. In the end of the film Eugene says to Gerome: 'I just lent you my body, you lent me your dream'.

8. *Brat*

In the same 1997 year, when Andrew Niccol made his *Gattaca*, a Russian film-director Alexei Balabanov made the film *Brat* (Brother), which was destined to become a cult classic, a Russian people's film. One of the most charming and dreary features of this film is Dostoevsky's St. Petersburg. The city and its inhabitants look as if nothing has changed in a hundred years.

The plot goes like this: a young man, Danila, is discharged from the army to his home-town. His mother is afraid that he will follow in the footsteps of his father, a criminal who spent years in prison and died. She wants him to go to St. Petersburg, where his older blood-brother, Victor, is in a decent business. The business happens to be killing people. First of all, Victor asks to commit murder in his place – to remove a head of the Chechen gang, whose name is simply

Chechen. The reason is to give control over a market to Russians. Child-like, naïve, ignorant of life, Danila kills Chechen without any question. He finds his way in life – to become a gangster and to kill gangsters. His path is not to create something, but to cleanse the world of bandits. He cleanses evil with evil.

After the film was released, Sergei Bodrov (Danila) became a real people's hero. Critics claimed that Danila was the first real hero in the post-Soviet cinema, who created his own mythology and value system. Is this hero not an anti-hero? Why did a killer for whom killing is easier than understanding life, become a cult object? Why is *Brat* a cult object?

First of all, *Brat* is a dark Russian gangster movie reflecting life in St. Petersburg in the 1990s, and there are no characters to identify with; perhaps, with the exception of Danila. Why could spectators identify with a killer? He is young and handsome. He loves music (just one Russian rock-band though), and he never parted with his CD-player. He always speaks calmly. He says to his brother that he served in the army as a scribe at headquarters, but when we see how perfectly he handles guns and killings, we understand that he was at war, the Chechen war. He kills not only because of his older brother's demands. He also kills out of a sense of justice. He is a kind of Robin Hood. He is strong and he is on the side of the ones who are weak. The law of the superego allows him to kill in the name of the law of justice acquired in the war and brings him perverse sadistic surplus-enjoyment. The notion of '*brat*' is of course crucial in this film. Not only because two principal characters are brothers. Here is a conversation in the tram, where two Chechens refuse to pay the fare and behave arrogantly:

Danila (walks up to them with a revolver in his hand): 'Pay the fine'

Chechen: 'Brother... Don't kill me, brother... Take the money. Take everything. Listen, don't kill me, brother'.

Danila: 'You're not my brother, black-assed scum'².

Brat for Danila has only one meaning, blood ties with his brother are of unshakable value to him. When Danila finds out that his brother double-crossed him, it does not change anything at all. The only thing that happens is that brothers change places: Danila is now the older brother, who takes care of the younger one, Victor. But Danila still looks like a kid-killer. Why is it easier for him to kill than to understand people? Why does he kill workaday? Is it the only job he knows how to do according to his family (father and brother) and his participation in the war? Is he psychotic? At least one thing is obvious: he does not see any difference between war and civil life. Civilian life for him is a continuation, expansion, extension of war. He did his duty in the war, he did his job there, and he continues to do it in civilian life. Killing people is a job like any other. The only connection with 'peaceful life' for Danila is his brother, who is a killer.

Why is the idea of brother so important to him? Are they brothers in arms? Or does his brother really serve as a link to the peaceful life, to life as such? This is very doubtful. But they are brothers forever. They are blood-brothers.

As we have seen, Chechens cannot be brothers for Danila. For him Chechens – as well as all Caucasians and Middle Asians – are 'black-ass scum'. In the 1990s all of them happened to be black people for many Russians. National identity is of great importance for Danila. When he meets one homeless man whose family name is Hoffman, he immediately asks:

² It is interesting that in December 2024 the film was shown at the Russian cable TV-channel 'Pobeda' (Victory) but this phrase was silenced.

‘A Jew?’

Hoffman: ‘No, German.’

Danila: ‘I don’t really like Jews’.

Hoffman: ‘What [is] the difference?’

Danila does not answer. It is a very difficult question for him. Anti-Semitism is obviously an effect – or more precisely an affect – without a cause; it is very possible that Danila has never met a Jew in his life. He, as Žižek would say, ‘falls into the ideological trap precisely by succumbing to the illusion that anti-Semitism really *is* about Jews’ (Žižek 1997: 77).

Anyway, he names his new acquaintance ‘German’. His first victim was a guy named ‘Chechen’. And his brother’s name among the criminals is ‘Tatar’. Does this mean, in his nationalistic logic, that he himself is not Russian, but Tatar? One way or another, his values are determined by the national identity. And the gangs in the 1990s were rather often based on it: Chechens, Tatars. One more important moment. Once Danila met a Frenchman at a party, and he was trying to explain to him – in Russian, of course – that soon Americans will find their end. And again, no explanation, why Americans, who are these Americans, etc.

In the year of 2000 Balabanov made a sequel, *Brat 2*. Danila goes to America to kill there. This film looks much more propagandistic, anti-American and anti-Ukrainian. Danila is even more stupid, childish loaded with not-reflexive nationalistic ideology. I would not mention this film at all if not for one phrase: ‘Russians don’t abandon their own’. This whole phrase and its part ‘their own’ will be the core of the official ideology from 2022.

9. Lacan is back with the question of segregation

Lacan returned to the question of segregation at the end of the seminar 10th June 1970. How does Lacan come back to the question of segregation? Through object *a*. This time in the theory of discourses this object is the object of surplus jouissance. The concept of jouissance is principal for Lacan’s understanding of narcissism, Nazism, and racism. In Seminar XVIII he claims that object *a*, as an object of surplus jouissance, it is possible to see at Freud’s schema of identifications in *Massenpsychologie and Ich-Analyse*. Lacan speaks of ‘tiny little surplus enjoying of Hitler’ (S18: 43-4). This surplus jouissance creates conditions for identification, horizontally with narcissistic others and vertically with the Führer, as if he is an imaginary Other, an endlessly enjoying Forefather. And Lacan adds that ‘it is amusing simply that this should have taken the form of an idealization of the race’ (S18: 44).

Let us come back to the session of 10th June 1970 in Seminar XVII. Lacan speaks of the moment in history when two different events happen, even if both of them are connected to the transformations of the master’s discourse. The first transformation of it is the one into the discourse of capitalism (accumulation of the capital via the calculations of the object of surplus jouissance) and the second with the transformation of master’s discourse into the university discourse.

What is it, the object *a*? It has several meanings. This time Lacan says:

The object *a* is what makes it possible to introduce a little bit of air into the function of surplus enjoying. The object *a* is what you all are in your serried ranks – so many miscarriages of what has been, for those who engendered you, the cause of desire. And this is where you have to resituate yourselves in it, as psychoanalysis teaches you.

Lacan S17: 262

More than that. Implying the transformation of the master's discourse into capitalist discourse, Lacan says that 'there is a world of difference between the miscarriage of the upper bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat' (S17: 262. And then he adds:

We will never entirely finish with segregation. I can tell you that it will only start up again even stronger. Nothing can function without it – what is happening here, the *a* in a living form, miscarriage that it is, manifests that it is the effect of.

Lacan S17: 263

Abbreviations

- S17 Lacan J. *The Seminar. Book XVII. Psychoanalysis upside down/ The reverse side of psychoanalysis 1969-1970* (trans.) C. Gallagher.
- S18 Lacan J. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book XVIII. On a discourse that might not be a semblance* (trans.) C. Gallagher.

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