

PIPELINES

A CONSTRUCTION

Performance project by Jan Ritsema and Bojana Cvejić
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editorial note

This publication is conceived as the reference matter for the performance *Pipelines, a construction*. It allies and entangles three areas of interest, to begin with the multifaceted situation of oil & gas geopolitical interdependencies in the Caspian region brought out in “Free Market Versus State Monopoly” by Jan Ritsema and further elaborated in an expert view “Pipelines? Pipelines!” by the British energy security specialist John M. Roberts.

In “The New Transnational Hegemony” Dieter Lesage discusses “democracy promotion” as the new disposition and process of organizing hegemony in the broader context of transnationalization.

How the different areas of interest, from the political outlook of the Caspian pipelines, through today’s political praxis of theory to the *poietic* principles of this theatre performance, intersect and interweave to form the topics of *Pipelines, a construction* – is unfolded in the text “Oil, money, body... intervals, interstices between theatre, theory and politics” by Bojana Cvejić.

In “Theatre *between* the active AND the passive, the actor AND the spectator” Jan Ritsema gives an account on the concept of theatre, relevant aims, methods and operations developed in *Pipelines, a construction* as the fourth project in the series with *April S.a.i.d.* (1999, by and with Sara De Bosschere), *Verwantschappen* (2000, by and with Inneke Van Waeyenberghe, Oscar van den Boogaard and Bojana Cvejić) and *TODAYulysse*s (2002, by and with Bojana Cvejić).

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Free Market Versus State Monopoly

Jan Ritsema



Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, much of the world's interest has shifted to the huge onshore and offshore oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Sea region. Much money from principally Western oil companies and development banks (the World Bank, the European Bank for Research and Development and the Asian Development Bank) has already been invested in the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves.

However, there are a number of obstacles to transporting the black gold to export markets, the most important of which are the following. First, Russia has a monopoly on the use of pipelines in the region. The obligatory use of the Russian pipeline grid means that in times of economic decline or political turbulence, oil producers run the risk of Russia closing the pipeline. Second, there is the fact that the oil and gas reserves are landlocked. Since there are no outlets to the sea, long and expensive pipelines are needed to bring the product to the seaports of the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean Sea, the Baltic Sea or the Indian Ocean. When oil prices were low, this was not economically feasible. The price of the pipelines plus the transit revenues owed for transport through neighbouring countries would have made Caspian oil very expensive.

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, however, things have changed. In the first place, the former Soviet states are now independent, which means that one is no longer required to do business with a strong Russia. Now business is possible with the many weaker and divided former Soviet republics. Plus, it became clear that the West's oil and gas reserves located close to home would be exhausted in the foreseeable future (those in the North Sea, the Gulf of Mexico and Texas). To prevent too great a level of dependence on

oil and gas from the Middle East, it was important to gain control of this region with the second largest oil reserves and the largest gas reserves in the world. This comes down to breaking the monopoly Russia has on this region. Finally, in the second half of the 1990s the oil price doubled and remained stable, suddenly making exploitation of the region and the building of the pipelines profitable.

The task of the West was threefold.

1. Secure oil and gas supplies for the future
2. Break the monopoly of Russia
3. Earn money

This task was made simpler by the split-up of the Soviet Union. The former Soviet states, like the West, also wanted to be rid of the Russian pipeline monopoly. (Not, however, because they wanted nothing to do with Russia. On the contrary, relations between the ex-communist leaders and the 'mother' of the Commonwealth of Independent States, formed after the fall, have not been strained. They need each other and after the fall, Russia has often lent them a hand with energy supplies when the former Soviet states and even Russia itself had economic problems.) The reason these states want their own pipelines is that they not only compete with each other but also with Russia for the same export markets, and dependence upon the transport system of your competitor is not a good prospect. The fact that they must cross each other's territory in order to export their reserves makes them dependent enough upon each other. This phenomenon of partners also being each other's competitors is characteristic for the region.

Thus, the West (read especially the US) and the former Soviet republics found common cause with each other in pursuit of the construction of an independent pipeline grid. Russia tried to frustrate this aim as long as possible, but it also sees that it cannot prevent it from happening. Some analysts are of the



opinion that the turmoil in the Caucasus has been fuelled by Russia in order to hamper the building of the planned independent pipelines through this region. The existing and very successful export route to the North and hence to Europe runs through Russia. Europe imports 40% of its gas from Russia. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan export gas and oil via this route to Europe, i.e. via Belarus and Ukraine to Poland and Germany among others.

The export route to the South is blocked by the American embargo of Iran and the American ban on investing more than 20 million dollars in the Iranian energy sector. The oil companies prefer this route because it is the shortest and thus the most economically feasible. However, just as the US does not want Russia to wield power in the region, it also does not want Iran to play this role either.

There remain the routes to the East and the West. There are many plans and contracts for pipelines to the East, to China and Japan, even to the Pacific (to be transported by tanker to the US), and to Pakistan and India, but until now the huge distance to be bridged has discouraged many investors from putting their money on the table. Then there are the routes to the West, i.e. via Turkey to the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas. Work is being done on this route. An oil and gas pipeline is now being constructed from Baku (the Azeri capital and oil port to the Caspian Sea) to Ceyhan in Turkey on the Mediterranean Sea, via the Georgian capital Tbilisi, which will transport oil from the Caspian Sea beginning in 2005. The intent is to construct a pipe-

line on the floor of the Caspian Sea, across the short side, from Turkmenbashi on the Turkmen side to Baku on the Azerbaijani side, the Trans Caspian Pipeline (TCP), that then will be connected to the Baku, Tbilisi, Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan will then have an independent outlet for their oil and gas destined for the West. However, the BTC is by no means ready. In his article *Pipelines? Pipelines!*, John Roberts indicates a number of obstacles that stand in the way of the building of the BTC pipeline. I will not repeat these here.

The construction of the TCP, the trans-Caspian pipeline on the floor of the Caspian Sea, will require much more work. The Caspian Sea houses many oil and gas fields, quite evenly divided over the entire floor of the sea. It is also home to 90% of the world's sturgeon. (A fish that can reach sizes of 6.5 metres, live up to 150 years and weigh 1,200 kg, 150 kilograms of which is caviar). The problem is the lack of legal status for the Caspian Sea. What belongs to whom and why ... little of this issue has been addressed. Until the time of the fall of the Soviet Union, Iran and the Soviet Union shared the Caspian Sea 50/50. The last contract dates from 1940. Allocation of the floor, mineral resources and environmental problems had not yet been addressed in this contract. Since 1991, the former Soviet republics have been asserting their rights to the stocks of the sea. Now there is a fierce dispute raging between the various states sharing the shoreline (Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan) concerning the distribution of the rights of ownership.

The key question that must be addressed first under international law is whether it here concerns a 'sea' or a 'lake'. If it is a lake, then the rules that apply to a condominium also apply here, i.e. everything is owned in common; if it is a sea, then it can be divided into compartments like the North Sea. The question of course is who gets what. In other words, which principle will be used to allocate and who then gets the most lucrative parts. This is what the conflicts are about.

Russia very much favours a so-called median line division: measure an equal distance from coast to coast and then take the middle. Concerning this, Russia has already concluded bilateral contracts with Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan have serious differences regarding the allocation of a number of fields. Iran is the unhappiest with this system of allocation as it retains only 12% of its original 50%. The most recent Iranian option on the table is to grant all five states the same 20% share. Iran forbids all countries from beginning to exploit the oil and gas fields in 'their' region until a legal solution to the allocation issue is in place. It has already boiled over into a shooting incident, with an Iranian warship firing on a BP exploration ship that was investigating an oil field under the authority of the Azerbaijani government.

Russia and Iran are each other's competitors regarding the allocation of the Caspian Sea, but they are allies in obstructing the construction of the pipeline (the TCP) over the sea floor. They say that they are against this for environmental reasons, but both are enormous polluters in their own right. Thus, this convenient argument hides the fact that they want to prevent construction in order to secure the export routes from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan via the North (Russia) and via the South (Iran). In addition to giving them a certain level of power over and control of the oil and gas exports of their competitors, they also receive transit revenue: for each barrel of oil and cubic metre of gas transported via another country, the exporting country must pay per running kilometre.

Political and trade relations throughout the entire region are a chain of these often conflicting political and economic interests. The region is not only volcanic, a sobering fact for pipeline consortia and a reason to fear an environmental disaster for environmental activists, it is also politically explosive. Freedom fighters, the term previously used for terrorists, have often attacked their heads of state and the local pipelines from Kyrgyzstan to Georgia via Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan for ethnic, religious, and political reasons. The level of democracy of the regimes of the corrupt and elite ex-communists, who primarily

distribute the profits from the oil and gas industry to their own clan, is certainly not very high. However, this is not the primary concern of Western investors, as can be seen from the fact that Eastern European dictators have long since been forced off the stage while the (enlightened) dictators of this region are still firmly in control.

Moving from a planned economy without unemployment to a free-market economy with unemployment in a few years time is a complicated operation



The Caspian Sturgeon

and a huge cultural change. The task of the political elite includes ensuring that especially their own pockets are filled and that they can temper the potential sources of unrest in the coming years by also controlling the media. It looks like they have been quite successful in this and for the time being the West will not make it difficult for them as long as they cooperate in dividing up the region, allowing neither Russia nor Iran to gain dominance. Their cooperation is needed in the establishment of a whole series of laws,

because before the oil companies and development banks will actually invest, a legal framework must first be created for the introduction of the free market. The opportunity must be created to acquire and freely trade private property, to privatize state oil companies and to acquire majority interest in joint ventures with local industries. Tax legislation favourable to investors must be introduced. Regulations must be put in place that allow them to export the profits out of the country. The countries must privatize their energy infrastructure to make profits possible within the country itself. The social status of employees must also be regulated. And so on. More so than the arrival of a number of

drilling rigs on the horizon, it is especially these legal changes that affect the daily lives of the people of these countries. The level of change is huge, the advantages probably few and the disadvantages many, disadvantages like high and protracted unemployment and a high level of social inequality.

The US President's special envoy for energy and the Caspian Sea said the following in a recent conference in Istanbul: There is a struggle out there, in the Caspian region, but this is not a struggle between two nations, between Russia and the US, it is a struggle between two principles: totalitarian control versus free market. It looks as if the free market will emerge the winner without too many local changes being required and without much military violence.

Translation Dan Frett

Pipelines? Pipelines!

John M. Roberts

Why All the Fuss?

Why on earth is there all this fuss about pipelines, and about Caspian pipelines in particular? Well, if you run a car, take a plane, a ship or even a bus, the chances are that it will be fuelled with oil or, just possibly, gas. There are problems with this, including some big environmental problems, but the immediate issue is that while most of the world's oil and gas gets consumed in the rich industrialised world – not least in Western Europe and the USA – these regions are increasingly reliant on importing oil and gas. We can try to ease this problem in various ways, not least through high fuel taxes to discourage use, but while that's a common approach in Europe it remains anathema in the US.

Moreover, there's a whole set of almost psychological problems about oil. Even though we complain about the high cost of petrol or diesel in Europe, we still want it, and we still want more and more so that we can run our cars. One day, perhaps in around 10 or 15 years' time, we may be able to ease this problem by replacing the internal combustion engine with fuel cells, themselves fuelled by environmentally friendly hydrogen. But that's still some way off. As for gas, in the long run there are grand plans for renewables, notably wind power, to play an increasingly important role in providing our electricity supplies. But for the time being it may be worth just noting one forecast. The International Energy Agency expects use of both renewables and fossil fuels – essentially oil, gas and coal – to increase by two per cent between now and 2030. But what this means in practice is that our dependence on fossil fuels is actually set to grow, from 87% at present to 89% in 2030, while use of renewables, although doubling, will only rise from two to four per cent of the world's total energy mix.

Why Russia & the Caspian?

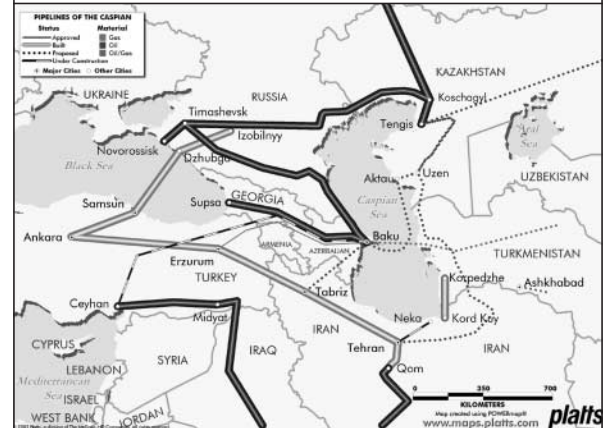
So oil and gas it is: oil for automotive transport and gas for industry, light and power.

From a European perspective, that means looking eastwards, towards Russia and the Caspian. These are big producing regions and they have significant advantages by comparison to the Middle East, even though the Middle East possesses some of the biggest advantages of all: possession of around two-thirds of the world's oil and one-third of the world's gas. But Russia has proximity. It is the world's biggest gas producer and the EU is set to become the world's biggest gas importer. That's why gas pipelines were built to bring Russian gas to Germany in the 1980s and that's why new lines are now being planned to carry Russian gas as far west as the UK.

But what of the Caspian? The most important element here is that not only does the Caspian possess useful volumes of oil and gas but that these resources are available for international companies to develop, with European companies such as BP, ENI, BG, Shell and Statoil all playing prominent roles. In the Middle East, oil development (and often gas development as well) essentially remains the preserve of the nationally-owned state oil companies. In Russia, developing joint ventures or alliances with Russian oil companies has proven a tricky business. This is partly because of lack of an effective regulatory structure but is largely due to political issues, not least of which is the failure of the Russian government – first Yeltsin, then Putin – and the Russian parliament to develop a consensus on how much foreign participation should be allowed and on what terms.

But in the Caspian, international oil companies can come in and, so long as they pay large royalties and taxes to the host governments, can secure exploration and productions rights. The bulk of the oil or gas revenues still go to the national governments and one issue of increasing international concern is working out just how to ensure that such revenues actually get used in ways that really do boost the country's overall economic, social and political development.

Caspian Pipelines – March 2003



- Baku-Novorossiysk. OIL PIPELINE – BUILT. Used by AIOC.
- Baku-Supsa. OIL PIPELINE – BUILT. "Early Oil" line for AIOC fully operational March 1999; former potential route for Azerbaijan's Main Export Pipeline (MEP). Subsequent expansions have taken capacity to around 160,000 b/d.
- Baku-Çeyhan. OIL PIPELINE – Under Construction. Construction and equipment contracts awarded August and September 2002. Physical pipe deliveries started in early 2003 with main pipelaying due to start 1H 2003 and completion scheduled for 1Q2005. The governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and United States designated BTC as Azerbaijan's main export pipeline in a series of agreements signed in Istanbul in November 1999.
- Baku-Iran. OIL PIPELINE – Proposed. Possible Azerbaijan oil export option, studied by Total in 1998.
- Atyrau-Novorossiysk. OIL PIPELINE – BUILT. Project developed by CPC pipe-

laying completed November 2000 and first tanker loading October 2001. Connecting line from Karachaganak due for completion in mid-2003. Main question in 2003 is whether or when expansions will take place to raise capacity to projected 1.37mb/d final capacity.

- Atyrau-Samara-Druzhba system. OIL PIPELINE-BUILT. Kazakhstan would like to see its capacity increased. Current proposals should take capacity to 360,000 b/d during 2003.
- Tengiz-China. OIL PIPELINE – Proposed. Oil line under study by China National Petroleum Corp. Not likely for several years.
- Chardzhou-Pakistan. OIL/GAS PIPELINES – Proposed. The governments of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan in December 2002 formally agreed to develop this project, building on separate proposals developed by Unocal/Delta and Argentina's Bidas in the 1990s. The Asian Development Bank has financed some preliminary studies but cash to develop the line and its viability if it cannot be extended to India, cast doubts on the scheme, as do major concerns concerning competition from Iran and other Gulf states for Indian gas market.
- Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran. OIL PIPELINE – Proposed. Preliminary oil line proposal to link Tengiz and Uzen fields with Gulf (Kharg Island) proposed by in 1998. Kazakh government held talks with Total and other companies in late 2000 on shorter line to link Kashagan oilfield with Neka.
- TransCaspian Oil (Tengiz-Uzen-Aktau-Baku). OIL PIPELINE – Proposed. Various proposals by the former Amoco, Texaco and Turkish government. Line would be a de facto extension of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan line. Would also serve Kashagan.
- TransCaspian Gas Pipeline. GAS PIPELINE – Proposed. PSG, later joined by Shell, sought to develop this project to carry gas from Turkmenistan to Erzurum in Turkey in 1999 and 1980 to fulfil 1996 Turkmen-Turkish accord for delivery of 16 bcm if Turkmen gas to Turkey and of 14 bcm to be forwarded to other European markets. Project thwarted by Turkmen tardiness and

Azerbaijan's gas discovery at Shakh Deniz. Concept enjoys continuing US & Turkish diplomatic support but requires major Turkmen-Azerbaijani détente.

- Blue Stream Russia-Turkey. GAS PIPELINE – Subsea pipelaying of first of twin 8 bcm/y lines completed in February 2002, first commercial deliveries currently under way.
- Neka-Tehran. OIL PIPELINE – Under Construction. Limited upgrading of existing line begun September 2000. Planned new line constitutes major element in proposed swaps/pipeline export system from Caspian to Gulf but construction work on new line remains incomplete.
- The KKK gasline. GAS PIPELINE – BUILT. Opened in 1997, this 10-12-bcm/y line is Turkmenistan's only current export line that does not transit Russia. It runs from the Korpedzhe gasfield to Kurt-Kui, a terminal on Iran's existing east-west pipeline system.
- Tabriz-Erzurum gas connector. GAS PIPELINE – BUILT. Iran completed Iranian section by end-1999, Turkey only completed its section in mid-2001; 'technical' problems delayed actual flow of gas through line until December 2001. Flow interrupted for several months in 2002 but resumed in October.
- South Caspian Pipeline. GAS PIPELINE – Approved. Formal approval for project given in February 2003 as part of Shakh Deniz gasfield development. Engineering studies completed. Line will enable BP, Statoil and other Shakh Deniz partners to implement Azerbaijan's 6.6 bcm/y take or pay deal with Turkey. Line will run parallel to BTC oil pipeline to Georgia/Turkey border, creating economies of scale with BTC. Planned completion date delayed to early 2006.
- Turkey's East-West gas trunkline. GAS PIPELINE – BUILT. Constructed 1997-2000 for both internal distribution and to facilitate imports from either Iran or the Caspian.

Source: Platts

How Much Oil & Gas?

With companies still finding fresh oil and gas fields, and still evaluating existing discoveries, it's still best to talk in general terms about the extent of the region's oil and gas reserves. But it does look as if the Caspian – the independent republics of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan together with the Caspian regions of Russia and Iran – will eventually be found to contain around 40-60 bn barrels of proven oil reserves (a phrase used to indicate the amount of oil that might actually be produced) and about 6.1 trillion cubic metres of gas. The first amounts to around 4 to 6% of world oil reserves (the North Sea accounts for around 2 -3 %); the latter for around 4% of world gas reserves.

Pipelines are needed to bring this all to market. In the best of all possible worlds we would continue to rely on old Soviet-era systems to bring both Russian and Caspian oil and gas to Europe.

But now that Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are independent countries, they are also competitors to Russia. So Russia, which for example can sell its gas to Turkey for around \$130 per thousand cubic metres, is only prepared to pay Turkmenistan \$44 per thousand cubic metres for gas to be shipped through Russian lines to Ukraine. In effect, Russia's near monopoly control of both oil and gas pipelines from the region is what has prompted interest, at least since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, in non-Russian pipeline systems. Moreover, while the other newly independent states of the Caspian remain dependent on Russian routes, Russia is not dependent on transit through its Caspian neighbours. This is an arrangement that naturally makes Russia inclined to oppose new non-Russian routes, and which prompts circumspection about new routes from existing exporters via the Russian pipeline systems until they are sure that new non-Russian lines will indeed be built.

What Routes?

In many ways, particularly for oil, the most obvious route for such lines would be south, through Iran. This is because the biggest expansion of oil and gas

usage in the next generation or so is expected to come from Asia and the Pacific. The economics for such lines are pretty attractive, too. But there is one big problem. Most of the big consortia developing Caspian hydrocarbons include American companies, and with the US government maintaining sanctions against Iran, and declaring its readiness to impose penalties against other international companies investing in Iran, in practice that route is out. So that leaves routes eastwards to China or westwards, through the Caucasus, to Turkey. The Chinese routes have been considered for a decade, but they are too long and too costly for any immediate investment. But the westwards routes? Ah, that's the conundrum. Do you dare build lines through the much-troubled Caucasus, within 15 kms of the front line of the supposedly-frozen conflict between Azerbaijan and the Armenians over Nagorno-Karabagh, or through mountainous regions of Georgia where government control might be a trifle tenuous?

The answer is yes. At a cost of around €2.5 bn, BP and its partners in developing Azerbaijan's giant Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli offshore oil field are building a 1,760-km pipeline to carry up to 1.0 million barrels of oil a day from Baku to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, via the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. Construction of this line is roughly one-third complete and the whole line should be ready to deliver oil to Ceyhan in February or March 2005. Work has also started on a parallel gas line – not so long, because it can tap into Turkey's main east-west trunkline at Erzurum – and it should start delivering gas from Azerbaijan's new Shakh Deniz gasfield to Turkey in early 2006.

Why Should We Care?

But what has all this to do with Europe – or with humanity as a whole and its concern with the environment? So long as we keep using oil, we need to pipe it from places that have it to places that don't. And by piping it to Ceyhan it avoids the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, the narrow straits that connect the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Since much international oil trade is conducted by tanker, getting the oil to a deepwater port such as Ceyhan is important.

And with the Bosphorus, located in the heart of Istanbul and already heavily congested, the Turkish authorities are in no mood to see increased tanker traffic. They don't want to see a tanker disaster in the heart of a city of 15 million people.

The Ceyhan line is not a perfect environmental solution, not least since it passes through Georgia's Borjomi National Park and Borjomi mineral water is one of the country's few prominent exports, but a pretty strong case can be made that in environmental terms it's the least bad solution. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil line and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas line are also controversial in a political sense. The Russians don't like them, saying they are not commercially viable. This may be a quite natural reaction since, once they are open for use, they offer Caspian countries a competitive route for their exports to existing lines through Russia.

But as for the lines not being commercial, the bottom line here is very simple. BP and its partners in developing Azerbaijan's oil and gas reserves are sinking some \$14 bn into actual oil and gas field development. That investment requires outlets. Spending a further \$4bn on purpose-built pipelines may sound like a lot of cash – and, indeed, it is – but they are lines that carry the oil and gas to market and it is from the sales of that oil and gas, not from any revenues generated by the pipelines, that the companies and the producer governments secure their revenues. The same cannot be said for countries through which the lines pass, although in the critical case of Georgia, it's important to note that its annual revenues from the new pipelines, in the form of cash and low cost energy supplies, should reach around \$175m a year by 2008-9, a useful addition to a government budget now running at barely \$300m a year.

The Great Game

So that's the issue with pipelines. It's a question of balancing what we want – as consumers – with what is available and, in the Caspian context, bringing it to market. We'd like to think of it as an essentially economic problem, albeit one with significant environmental implications. But what we also have to take

into account is that it's a highly political issue as well. This is where persistent references to the "Great Game" come into play.

The Great Game was originally the struggle for influence and control in Central Asia waged between the old Tsarist and British Empires. In its new form, it is commonly regarded as the struggle for influence and control over the Caspian's energy resources. For the purposes of the Game, it's assumed

that US/western oil companies are extensions of broader US government policy, and that Russia's major energy companies likewise reflect Moscow's interests. The problem is that while in some cases this is true, in others, it isn't.

The US, with its penchant for guzzling energy and opposition to energy conservation measures, does indeed look to the Caspian as an important source of additional oil and gas. But so do European and Far Eastern companies, including companies whose governments are often at odds with Washington.



Russia's concerns are somewhat different. So long as Russia controls the bulk of the energy export routes from the Caspian, it ensures that before external purchasers turn to the Caspian for increased hydrocarbons, they first have to buy all the oil and gas that Russia is in a position to export. To this extent, Russian governmental and corporate interests are aligned. But some Russian companies have stakes in international consortia abroad, or have positions in eastern Europe that require them to be in good standing with the European Union at a time when the EU is rapidly expanding into eastern Europe. And were

Putin to break up Gazprom, as Russian authorities have sometimes pondered, then a new Russian pipeline company might emerge that would want to handle as much gas as possible, regardless of whether it was of Russian or Caspian origin, since its revenues would come from throughput. But so long as Gazprom, which owns around 70% of Russia's proven gas reserves, remains an integrated company, it will naturally wish to put its own resources ahead of any others.

It's not always easy to separate out the political and economic strands of the new Great Game, particularly at a time when both Washington and Moscow are using the Caspian region to wage what they both consider to be wars on terror. Russia wants to boost powers that crack down on Islamic fundamentalists in order to isolate Chechen separatists, whom it considers to be more motivated by religious fundamentalism than basic nationalism; the US wants to secure support for its global campaign against al-Qaida.

This common approach has led the US – and some European states – to play down the Russian repression in Chechnya and concern for human rights in much of the region. But it's still a very mixed picture. At one end of the spectrum a newly established US base sits alongside its old-established Russian counterpart in Tajikistan; at the other end, US and Russian diplomats spar over the true meaning of Georgia's "Rose Revolution" on 23 November 2003. Was it, as the US now says, a true revolt against the denial of democracy in crooked elections? Was it, as Moscow hints, a US coup? Or was it, as Georgia's new leaders have argued, at least in part a response to fears that Russia was securing control of the country's internal energy distribution systems, thus threatening its ability to develop closer relations with the west in General and the European Union in particular?

In the Caspian itself, Russia has jealously sought to ensure that the vexed problem of how to divide the Sea's offshore oil and gas resources remains a subject for the five littoral states themselves: Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. When US advisers have offered aid or advice to various countries, notably Azerbaijan, on boundary making, Moscow has

asserted that this is none of Washington's business. But, of course, with major US companies involved in multinational efforts to develop these substantial oil and gas reserves, the US does have an interest in regional relations in general and the settlement of current or prospective boundary disputes in particular. As do the host governments of other international oil companies.

The issue is perhaps less important than it first appears. To some, the core question is whether the Caspian is a sea or a lake, on the grounds that while seas might be divided in accordance with such international rules as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, this convention would not apply to lakes. But, regardless of this particular convention, lakes are often divided – as in the Great Lakes of North America and East Africa. Moreover, the issue has really been finessed by Russia itself, whose diplomats have ably argued the case for dividing the sea's sub-sea resources – in essence, its oil and gas reserves, while developing a common regime for the actual waters of the Caspian.

This common sense approach has resolved boundary issues in the northern Caspian and there are encouraging signs that most boundary problems in the south are now en route to resolution. However, the Russians still don't like the idea of big oil or gas pipelines running along the seabed from one country to another. They say it's environmentally unsafe, but ignore the fact that all offshore developments, including their own, require big pipes to be laid on the seabed. In any case, for some time to come it looks as if transCaspian oil traffic will continued to be carried by tanker, followed later perhaps, by barges. In the meantime, major offshore developments are going ahead off both Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan while significant offshore developments are taken place off Turkmenistan and are planned for Russia's Caspian coast.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan is that they need to establish their own export routes in order to end their dependence on routes through Russia. This affects the quantity of oil they can export and, for gas,

both the quantity of exports and the basic price. But Russia is sufficiently powerful that they do not want to antagonise Moscow unnecessarily. This is particularly important for Kazakhstan, which faces the further problem that it cannot be in charge of developing its own non-Russian export routes to hard cash markets, since new oil and gas lines will have to link up with other new or existing systems through other producing countries, notably Azerbaijan or, perhaps Iran. Eventually it may be able to develop a direct pipeline to China, but the economics of this are, at present, doubtful.

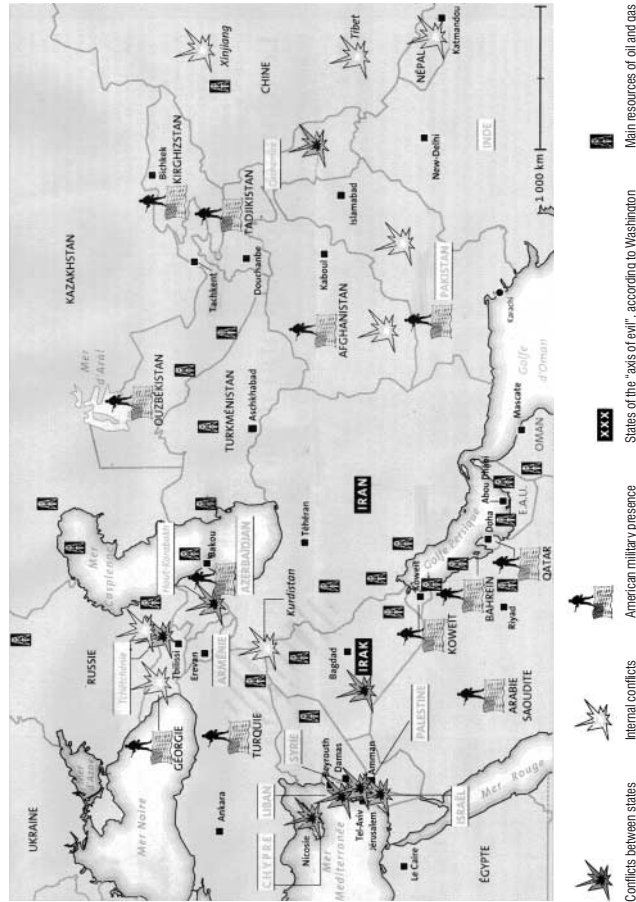
The Caspian states are already interdependent and this interdependence will grow steadily deeper as energy programmes expand. Kazakhstan will become increasingly dependent on good relations with Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Iran, and Azerbaijan will be even more dependent on good relations with Georgia or perhaps, to put it more bluntly, on continued stability in Georgia. For the newer Caspian republics, there will still continue to be a large measure of dependence on Russia, but the creation of new pipelines will at least offer a degree of competition that should reduce Russia's ability to impose monopolistic charges on its neighbours.

For the developed world, the bottom line concerning the Caspian looks much like this. We want oil and gas and for the next couple of decades and, until we move to into a post-fossil fuel world, we're going to continue to rely on them, particularly on oil to run our cars and basic transport systems. We'll need to import it and to get it we'll need to navigate the shoals between cooperation and competition, particularly where Russia is concerned. That means we'll be using pipelines through Russia, notably the 567,000 b/d Caspian Pipeline Company's line from Kazakhstan to the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, and lines that avoid Russia, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan line. There will continue to be competition between these systems – CPC wants to grow into a 1.4-mb/d system – and there will be competition between rival gas systems as well.

We could all decide we want to move a bit faster towards the post-fossil fuel age, but that begs some very tough questions indeed. In the developed

world, it concerns the price that we, as consumers, are prepared to pay for energy – and for either the production of cleaner fuels or for the clean up, both on the ground and in terms of environmental pollution, of existing fossil fuels. In the developing world, it means asking India, China and South Africa to forsake coal, the backbone of their indigenous energy economies. This will happen one day, but not until there are renewable resources that can compete with coal on price.

In the meantime, unless we all decide we really will change our motoring habits or until we can find some other fuel than gas to heat our homes and provide the electricity that powers our computers and television sets, we're going to need Caspian energy and all these Caspian pipelines.



The New Transnational Hegemony

Dieter Lesage

According to Immanuel Wallerstein, the United States can no longer lay claim to hegemony. The United States dominated during the period 1945-1967, but since this time it has lost its hegemony.¹ According to André Gunder Frank, China is in line to succeed the United States in hegemonic history and a (new) 'Sino-centric' era can be expected.² Etienne Balibar, however, says it is the European Union that will function as the privileged mediator, a role that in principle carries with it a significant amount of power in a network society.³ However, all of these considerations do not square with the intuitive conviction of many that the United States, despite the protests of the sixties, the debacle of the Vietnam War and a greater level of economic competition from Europe and Japan, will continue to play a dominant role. In the tradition of world system analysis, William I. Robinson has formulated an exceptionally successful hypothesis about precisely how this extraordinary role of the United States in the Empire must be conceived, without at the same time falling into outdated anti-imperialist critique.

Several lines of reasoning implicitly or explicitly come together in the theory of William I. Robinson. The starting point for Robinson was the question of how specifically to understand the shift in American foreign policy from support of authoritarian regimes to 'democracy promotion'. According to Robinson, the politics of democracy promotion must be understood as a facet of the process of exercising hegemony within and between countries in the broader context of transnationalization. It would be quite naive to see the politics of democracy promotion as the purely political translation of the philosophical conviction that capitalist liberal democracy embodies the end of history. On the other hand,

it would be just as naive not to look for a connection between the recent American formulations of this conviction – of which Fukuyama's thesis of the end of the history is the best known example – and the formation of ideology around the American politics of democracy promotion.⁴

Robinson dates the beginning of the shift in American foreign policy to the register of democracy promotion from around 1983, during the first term of office of President Ronald Reagan, with the establishment of the *National Endowment for Democracy* (NED) – a name intended to sound as detached as the *National Endowment for the Arts* (NEA) – and numerous other organizations financed via the NED like the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and its Republican equivalent, the National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRI) that later changed its name to the International Republican Institute (IRI).⁵ Legally, the NED is a so-called NGO, but the fact that it is subsidized for almost 99% by the American Congress makes its characterization as such very dubious. The NED and all other organizations that work with resources obtained from the NED are de facto extensions of the American State Department and according to Robinson must be seen as sophisticated instruments for penetrating to the capillary ends of the political system and civil society of a broad range of countries. In fact, the NED embodies the political choice to organize a part of the former covert CIA operations in an overt and transparent way, in the conviction that this will make these operations less susceptible to critique. The NED is not a part of the CIA but it is a supplement to it.

According to Robinson, the politics of democracy promotion must be seen as a shift in the way in which the core of the capitalistic world system exercises its dominance with respect to the semi-peripheral and peripheral regions: no longer by exercising coercion but rather in the creation of consensus. The context of this shift was created by new transnational configurations that require a different model for North-South relationships in the 21st century.⁶ The globalization of the economy gradually brings about a global civil and political society. The role of the United States consists precisely in taking up a leader-

ship role on behalf of a transnational elite that has secured hegemony. According to Robinson, no new hegemonic nation or even hegemonic region will emerge. Hegemony will be transnational or there will be no hegemony at all.

Here Robinson is influenced by the thinking of the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci. Robinson says that one can transpose the Gramscian concept of hegemony as 'consensual domination' in civil and political society at the level of the nation state to the level of the global civil and political society, precisely because a global civil society is also coming into existence due, among others, to the globalization of the communication media. In this, Robinson uses another, more specific, concept of hegemony than that of Wallerstein. In the social sciences, the concept of 'hegemony' is generally not used in the Gramscian sense of the word, even though one could argue, together with Eric Hobsbawm, that the concept of hegemony is usually associated with Antonio Gramsci in the same way that the concept of the cogito is associated with René Descartes.⁷ For the time being, Gramsci has been unsuccessful in gaining hegemony in the reflection on hegemony. The first English translation of texts by Gramsci only appeared in 1957.⁸ However, with the multiplication of French, English and Japanese translations of his work and the publication of his collected works in Italian, posthumous interest in Gramsci appears to be on the increase worldwide.⁹

The question that occupied Gramsci was not so much "should there not still be resistance," but rather "*why is there no resistance?*" Why does resistance not occur when all the conditions are present that should necessarily give rise to such? Gramsci developed his concept of hegemony in exceptional circumstances. Antonio Gramsci was born on 22 January 1891, in Ales in the province of Cagliari on Sardinia.¹⁰ He was the fourth of seven children and thanks to a scholarship was able to study at the University of Turin where he met Angelo Tasca and others who would become prominent figures within the Italian Communist Party, which separated from the Italian Socialist Party in 1921. From May 1922 until November 1923, he lived in Moscow as Italian

delegate to the Communist International. It is there that he met his future wife, the Russian violinist Julia Schucht. In April 1924, he was elected Member of Parliament and later he became Secretary General of the Italian Communist Party. Considered a dangerous voice by Benito Mussolini, on 8 November 1926 Gramsci was arrested on the basis of the notorious exceptional laws and on 4 June 1928, together with other Italian communist leaders, was sentenced to prison for 20 years, 4 months and 5 days. He would spend the last eleven years of his life, 1926 to 1937, in prison. He died of a brain haemorrhage on 27 April 1937, just a few days after his release.

In the various prisons where he stayed, he filled 33 notebooks. After his death, these were smuggled to Moscow by his sister-in-law Tatiana Schucht and would be published only after the end of the Second World War: the so-called *Quaderni del carcere*, translated in English as the *Prison Notebooks*.¹¹ Gramsci devised his concept of 'hegemony' in order to understand what precisely was happening during this time. The end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s were very confusing times for an orthodox Marxist. The expectation of Marx that the oppressed working class would emerge as revolutionary class in an industrialised Europe undergoing a deep economic crisis did not happen. Instead, it had submitted to fascism. Hegemony is the name Gramsci gave to the alliance between the oppressors and the oppressed, between the dominant and the subordinate classes, an alliance consolidated by a shared ideology and a shared culture. Hegemony is the (often resigned) acceptance of a situation of dominance by one social class of other subordinate social classes. This acceptance is in principle not procured by physical intimidation. Gramsci makes a distinction between two types of domination: domination by coercion and domination by consensus. Only consensual domination is labelled by Gramsci as hegemony: hegemony is a relation between classes in which one class or a part of a class exercises leadership over another class by obtaining its active consent. In order to be able to speak of hegemony in the Gramscian sense of the word, it is necessary for the subordinate

classes to have interiorized the values, the behaviour and the worldview of the ruling classes. To summarize, William I. Robinson uses following Gramscian definition of hegemony:

"Hegemony is a social relation which binds together a 'bloc' of diverse classes and groups under circumstances of consensual domination, such that subordinate groups give their 'spontaneous consent' to the 'direction imposed on social life' by the dominant groups."¹²

One of the main instruments for consolidating a position of hegemony, or a hegemonic alliance, is the mass media. It circulates thoughts and values that are interiorized by a broad public, but which are not coincidentally also the thoughts and values upon which is based the dominant position of the ruling class. The hegemonic role of the mass media then consists in contributing to the lack of resistance. The great interest by dominant classes in gaining control of the mass media should not be surprising when seen from the Gramscian perspective and ironically it is precisely in Italy where one can see the insights of Gramsci so painfully demonstrated by the oh so ironic Silvio Berlusconi.

While Gramsci used the concept of hegemony in his study of the relation between different classes and groups within the same nation state, Robinson applies the concept to international relations. According to Robinson, the asymmetries in international socioeconomic relationships are consolidated by various forms of transnational social control. If one country exercises power with respect to another country, we do not speak of hegemony but of imperialism. Imperialism means the withdrawal of surplus value from a country or region by another country or region using military, political and ideological means. Belonging to the various forms that imperialism can take are colonial control, direct military intervention and the staging of a coup. All of these forms of domination by coercion usually attract fierce protest. Thus, it is no accident that subtler forms of domination exist, forms, however, which are no less pro-

blematic. If, following Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, the Empire must be understood as the end of imperialism then one could say that consensual domination marks the end of domination by coercion.¹³ The fiery plea of *Guardian* columnist George Monbiot in *The Age of Consent* – “an attempt to replace our Age of Coercion with an Age of Consent”¹⁴ – seems to have missed the fact of this transformation *within* the strategies of domination. With his attempt to replace coercion by consensus, Monbiot, though a radical democrat, unfortunately intends precisely that upon which the hegemony of the neo-liberal transnational elites is established.

Thus, hegemony is another way for nations or groups to dominate in a post-imperialist, transnational context. Mass movements that demand the democratization of socioeconomic life constitute a threat to the position of the transnational elites. By transnational elites, Robinson understands groups that are integrated into completely transnationalized production circuits, wherever they may be located in the world. Their behaviour and political choices are determined by global rather than local accumulation. Globalization, however, does not mean that all forms of asymmetry at the level of the transnational elites themselves might disappear. The transnational elite is a collective term for ‘junior partners’ in the South that are involved with local decisions and local management of the global capital, and ‘senior partners’ in the North that are involved with global decisions and global management. The members of the transnational elite in the semi-periphery and the periphery of the world system promote the interests of the hegemonic transnational capital. Unlike the semi-peripheral and peripheral elites that were often kept on friendly terms in a corrupt way during the period of decolonization, it now concerns technocratic elites that employ technical criteria for efficiency, both at the level of the state and within private companies and institutions.¹⁵

Authoritarian regimes are no longer able to keep protest movements demanding more socioeconomic democracy in check. With democracy promotion as new form of transnational social control, transnational elites have opted to

have the process of democratization ‘guided’. This task of guidance is entrusted to the departments of Foreign Affairs of the nation states from the core of the capitalist world system. The impact that the transnational elites have on the foreign policy of these central nation states, via the sponsoring of diverse think tanks, foundations, policy institutes and university research centres, means that foreign policy is anything but the expression of the ‘national interest’ properly felt by skilled politicians, but is rather the emanation of the interests of these transnational elites. In the democratic ‘guiding processes’ that the departments of Foreign Affairs of the core states – following the NED – take upon themselves, the focus is the formation of a ‘spontaneous consensus’ between dominant and subordinate groups in the Empire. The guiding processes must see to it that the above-mentioned local transnational elites in the semi-peripheral and peripheral countries of the capitalist world system obtain power in ‘a democratic way’ or that local politicians that come to power outside the bounds of any democratically guided process are provisionally co-opted by the networks of the transnational elite. Thus, Robinson points to the local transnational elites formed in the South as the ‘mediators’ par excellence in the capitalist world system.¹⁶

Organisations like the World Economic Forum, and to a much less degree also the Trilateral Commission, contribute to the formation of these local transnational elites in the South, which in turn are considered to ideologically incorporate the subordinate groups in the periphery and semi-periphery of the world system. Should this all fail in its purposes, there are still the old familiar methods of the CIA or the threat of military intervention on behalf of freedom.

In their hegemony of civil society, in the fact that they dominate the public debate, the transnational elite also succeed in controlling the political agenda even when they themselves do not exercise the political power. The hegemonic transnational elite can permit themselves to leave the exercise of political power to others because the ideology of the transnational elite has been so strongly interiorized by subordinate groups and classes that they too, when

entrusted with political mandates, will do precisely that which the transnational elite expects politics to do. Thus, to be delivered of all forms of domination, it is not enough to overthrow the machinery of state. Those who wish to directly overthrow the machinery of state without first waiting for or effecting the transformation of civil society will call into being state structures or create a situation that the masses will necessarily experience as violent. Those who want to deal quickly with the coercion that they see emanating from the machinery of state, without first achieving the consensus upon which the machinery of state is ultimately based, will only be able to govern thanks to another, still greater form of coercion. This is the lesson to be learned from, among others, the transformation of the despotic Russian tsardom into a totalitarian communist regime.

The machinery of state is only the emanation of the consensual domination present in civil society. Thus, the primary objective of anti-systematic resistance should not be the overthrow of the machinery of state as such – as some revolutionaries mistakenly think – but rather the formation of an alternative form of hegemony within civil society that might lead to the machinery of state, or rather a transnational mutation thereof, afterwards – based upon a newly secured consensus – being deployed for other than neo-liberal objectives. Contrary to that reflected in a certain revolutionary belief, capitalism will not collapse *of its own accord* as a logical consequence of its internal structural contradictions. Even Immanuel Wallerstein, who can be suspected in this of being anything but zealous, is too ‘optimistic’ when he thinks that the modern world system cannot sustain the tensions that it generates. According to him, in the coming fifty years, under the pressure of the enormous tensions between centre and periphery, the capitalist modern world system will explode to make room for chaos or another system.¹⁷ In this, he distinguishes himself from the orthodox Marxist, because according to Wallerstein, one cannot predict in advance whether this new system, if indeed it ever comes at all, will be better than the capitalist system. However, with the orthodox Marxist he is convin-

ced that there are systematic reasons why capitalism must collapse *of its own accord*.

In contrast to that propounded by Wallerstein, capitalism can only collapse if a new hegemonic alliance arises around the conviction that the system does not work and it must be changed. In order for capitalism to collapse, the belief of the masses in capitalism must wither. In the meantime, however, everything is being done to keep alive the belief in capitalism. Thus, the contemporary spirit of capitalism, as expressed in neo-management discourse, represents a thorough reform of capitalist ideology in response to the protests of the 1960s, with important values from the protest movements being recycled in a capitalist way.¹⁸

To use the words of Gramsci: for capitalism to collapse, an *organic crisis* is required and not merely a structural crisis. Only a political-ideological crisis resulting from the collapse of the hegemony of the dominant classes and the development of a form of counter-hegemony can make possible a system other than the capitalist system. As long as the primary reflex of workers dismissed by their transnational company consists in holding *their government* responsible for their dismissal, we are far from the emergence of a form of counter-hegemony.

The success and the efficiency of resistance must be measured by the institution of an alternative form of hegemony. If the masses wish to resist, they must first apply themselves to the task of achieving hegemony. This struggle for hegemony must be conducted within civil society and for this reason also presupposes a struggle within, about and via the media. In recent years, resistance focused upon the acquisition of counter-hegemony has been able to make use of the anarchistic development of new media. However, it is obvious that in the meantime the present transnational hegemony has realized this and that the use of the Internet for the purposes of protest will come under increasing pressure in the coming years. It is principally thanks to the Internet that in recent years the possibility of a transnational form of counter-hegemony has

become visible and tangible at critical moments, whether it concerned mobilization against the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle at the end of 1999 or the large demonstrations against the prospect of an American-British war against Iraq at the beginning of 2003. In these events, very diverse groups found each other around a common aspiration. Hegemony as a product of resistance assumes a broad alliance between different classes and groups, just as the present transnational hegemony is based on an alliance between various classes and groups. In this sense, the concept of the protesting masses as evoked by Negri and Hardt, not without pathos, can be embedded in the Gramscian concept of hegemony and resistance. Like the present hegemony, a form of counter-hegemony must also be transnational if it is to exist at all.

- ¹ See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Decline of American Power. The U.S. in a Chaotic World*, New York, The New Press, 2003.
- ² See André Gunder Frank, *ReOrient. Global Economy in the Asian Age*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1996.
- ³ See Etienne Balibar, *L'Europe, l'Amérique, la guerre. Réflexions sur la médiation européenne*, Paris, Editions La Découverte, 2003.
- ⁴ See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, London, Penguin Books, 1992.
- ⁵ See William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy. Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 95.
- ⁶ See William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, pp. 6-7.
- ⁷ "It may seem trivial that an Anglo-Saxon reference work can – I quote the entry in its entirety – reduce him to a single word: 'Antonio Gramsci (Italian political thinker, 1891-1937) see under HEGEMONY' (A. Bullock and O. Stallybrass (eds.), *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, London, 1977). [...] Yet the acceptance of a thinker as a permanent classic is often indicated just by such superficial references to him by people who patently know little more about him than that he is 'important'" [Eric J. Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', in: David Forgacs

(ed.), *The Antonio Gramsci Reader. Selected Writings 1916-1935*, New York, New York University Press, 2000, p. 13].

- ⁸ Notably: Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, (edited and translated by Louis Marks), New York, International Publishers, 1957. For an overview of the publication of Gramsci's work in Italian and English, see Joseph A. Buttigieg, 'Preface', in: Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks. Volume 1*, (Edited with Introduction by Joseph A. Buttigieg. Translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari), New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, pp. IX-XIX.
- ⁹ This according to the website of the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome: www.gramsci.it.
- ¹⁰ See, among others, John Button, *The Radicalism Handbook. A complete guide to the radical movement in the twentieth century*, London, Cassell, 1995, pp. 170-171.
- ¹¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks. Volume 1*, (Edited with Introduction by Joseph A. Buttigieg. Translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg and Antonio Callari), New York, Columbia University Press, 1992; Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks. Volume 2*, (Edited and translated by Joseph A. Buttigieg), New York, Columbia University Press, 1996. In total, five volumes would appear in this critical edition of the English translation of the *Quaderni del carcere*.
- ¹² William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, p. 22.
- ¹³ See Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 2000.
- ¹⁴ George Monbiot, *The Age of Consent. A Manifesto for a New World Order*, London, HarperCollins, 2003, p. 1.
- ¹⁵ See William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, p. 35.
- ¹⁶ "Emergent transnational pools in the South liaise in diverse ways, 'inwards', with national and local populations, and 'outwards', with their senior Northern counterparts. These pools are therefore transmission belts, located on the boundaries of the national and the transnational, for the penetration of global society and hegemonic incorporation of world majorities" [William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, pp. 39-40].
- ¹⁷ See, for example, Immanuel Wallerstein, *Utopistics. Or, Historical Choices of the Twenty-first Century*, New York, The New Press, 1998, p. 35.
- ¹⁸ See Luc Boltanski & Eve Chiapello, *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*, Paris, Gallimard, 1999.

M/M (Paris), "No Ghost Just A Shell" 2000, more info: www.noghostjustashell.com



OIL, MONEY, BODY...

Intervals, interstices between theatre, theory and politics

Bojana Cvejić

"We are in the pipelines," we said, and concluded a "contract" to create a performance with a subject focus. However, this contract contained no guarantee that investing in a given subject matter would generate a return. On the contrary, the agreement was driven by curiosity and the desire to investigate "pipelining" for use in multiple frames in the making of the theatre performance. Not in the manner of a technical metaphor, pipelines as a structure of transportation, but more metonymically, as an instrument that mobilizes fields of referents: from a geopolitical affair, through today's political praxis of theoretical discourses to the profane sacredness of the Western "good life."

Being passionate about rhizomatic ways, or the contagion of anti-hierarchical connectivity and heterogeneous mapping and multiplications, we mutated away from this idealizing lens to a more materialist viewpoint. What kinds of (political, economic, cultural) processes and relations do pipelines involve? What are the interdependencies and tacit assumptions supporting the double-binding disposition between the "over-here" and the "over-there," especially when one is reflecting one's own disposition for a coherent all-inclusive perspective? How to unfold the formula: the interest of Western money in Caspian oil for Western 'body', and consequently, for Caspian 'body' too, since it will have to adopt Western living-well ethic?

In questioning the ideological status quo, "how things are", we want to question the theatre's ability to be a medium of social consensus, the mechanism of the spectacular & sentimental that turns the concern for "what" and "why" within a political subject into an ethical cause and the search for "how" into a theatrical representation of that cause. The following text discusses some

key concepts of this theatre performance. They are situated in the interstices between the “aboutness” and the principles of doing *Pipelines, a construction*.

CONT(R)ACT

In the beginning, there were contracts. It began with negotiations to make proposals and draft contracts to route future oil pipelines across the rebellious region, on the presumption that economic cooperation could help bring peace to the Caspian region. The good will of this argument depends on the contractual basis of pipeline connections. Contracts suggest that this can *be had* all at once, as in the following image:

“On his desert island, Robinson could reconstruct an analogue of society only by giving himself, all at once, all the rules and laws which are reciprocally implicated even when they still have no objects.” (Deleuze LS: 49.)

However, having no existence in themselves, they require a reference in real life. If contract forms the basis of relationship in language and society, how does it account for the resistance present in the contact between words, concepts and things, between laws and people? It assigns rules and agreements to secure a type of encounter, a deal, a negotiation.

The liberalism of today’s society today is measured by how differentiated and singularized the procedures are in treating every subject differently: the procedures to protect life and property, to address and promise care of the individual in the singular (“no matter who you are, we can help you”), to buy and expand the private space at the expense of the public, the inclusive untying of a person from the communal sphere. This requires ever-more sophisticated procedures and as much money as one can afford. Contracts defer or eliminate contact; they serve to mediate, formalize and regulate relationships. Their value is measured by the amount of risk taken in experimenting with the real.

Every day, dozens of contracts are signed for the exploration and exploitation of Caspian hydrocarbon resources. Most of these will change before their implementation, but some will nevertheless manage to realize pipeline pro-

jects. The background of the political interest in such a turbulent region puts into practice the motto “cooperation versus confrontation”: pipelines serve to simplify all of the complicated interrelations (political, religious, ethnic conflicts) into mutual economic interests, reduce them to absolute trade figures. The purpose of this kind of contract is to prevent *contagion*, the undesired contact of being at war or radical difference with one another. They are erected to temper the disturbance of violent relatedness.

DOUBLE-BINDING

Inasmuch as it no longer applies, the binary logic that always splits one into two subsists in another type of relation, double-binding relations or relations of interdependency. These are the double-articulation of oppositions such as individual and subject, bare life (*zoÁ*) and way of life (*bios*). To do away with the moral judgment of the Caspian pipelines situation is to necessarily view it through the entanglement of the geopolitical and biopolitical aspects of the Caspian affair. “We” need “their” oil & gas for our increased expenditure of energy and reliance on energy imports. Their “body,” whose epitome is the body-shape of the Caspian Sea, must open its raw materials and “human potential” as cheap labor to the investment of Western capital. Pipelines will not only serve to transport hydrocarbons but they will mediate global networks of information and power that will eventually transmute the life characterized by the naked struggle against natural pressure into a way of life in regard of goodness and well-being.

Expanding the world market to a new local zone not only saves our products by realizing their value, but in addition to new consumers, it produces new producers. Here lies the double-binding nature of the pipeline contract: “they”, who are still governed by the dictatorial regimes of ex-communist leaders, will be subdued by the new relations of performance, free trade beyond the limits of the state. The discipline instituted by the ideological apparatuses of the new Caspian nation-states will grow weaker the more their poli-

tics are prioritized by economic interests. The more the producing and consuming agent appears to liberate himself from subjection to despotic rule, the more he or she will affirm the axiomatic logic of capital.

This mechanism could be seen as a parallel to the processes of subjectivization in European modernity: the individual binds himself to his own identity and consciousness and at the same time to an external power (Cf. technologies of the self in Foucault: 223-249, Agamben HS: 119). Hence, the classical perspective of colonization, master and slave, needs to be replaced by the instruction to become master of oneself and not master of others. In the Caspian, this means transforming what is common into private property (oil & gas reserves into the hands of corporate capital) and realizing propriety-as-the-self in productivity.

Apart from other violent demands of capital in free trade development, this mechanism involves the problematic shift in status of the Caspian states. They are treated as an exception to the liberal democracy whose example is represented by the governments protecting the multinationals. "Our" example maintains itself through the moralist campaign with which we facilitate the transaction: "Our money in exchange for their oil for the purposes of our way of life."

The ideology celebrating human rights, tolerance and respect for differences, operates by creating and exporting a new identity strongly opposed to any sustained difference. The Caspian countries will be integrated into the international community on the condition that they respect what we respect (parliamentary democracy, free market economics, environmentalism, etc.). The integration will coerce new social stratifications, impose new hierarchies upon the new rich and the new poor, bring forth many new cities and even more satellite shantytowns around the new cities, mixing the First, Second and Third World all into one.

ECONOMISM

If you can make something that others value, you should be able to sell it to them. If others can make something that you value, you should be able to buy it. This is real freedom, the freedom for a person – or a nation – to make a living.

Extracted from the National Security Strategy of the US drafted by Condoleezza Rice, the national security advisor to George W. Bush, this reasoning not only shows how capitalism tries to transform every relation into a commercial exchange and negotiation, but it unfolds the materialization of the imaginary relations of the individual to the "real" relations of his or her existence. What could be called the logic of corporate capital today is the ideology of economic objectivity, common-sense value, self-evidence in promoting the possibility-opportunity formula, an open and frictionless space for capital and benefit in win-win negotiations.

The public consensus around the failure of communism, "because it didn't respect its own people – their creativity, their genius, and their rights" (G. W. Bush, from *Remarks by the President at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy*), takes its inspiration from liberal individualism, where the social unit of the individual is manifested in the project of self-realization under the wings of the welfare state. The preservation of the good life hollows the economic argument of any content other than what presents itself as natural, normal and neutral: health care, education and economic prosperity. The fact that the West is economically superior to the other two thirds of the hungry world is immediately transformed into law, so that the only path to economic growth is represented by free trade.

The violence by which capital intrudes into the Caspian region consists in the fact that it does not permit these countries to develop at their own pace, using their own preferred alliances, institutions or programs. The more literally violent side of the intrusion arises from the orientation to short-term profit. That is, multinationals are open to investing capital in private business insofar as they can withdraw it from the country. For the capital they invest, they

demand from the Caspian governments fiscal security. However, in return, they bring about an increase in social inequality and insecurity among the classes within the developing countries as manifested in both the slow growth of average income and a greater level of wage differentiation between the upper classes of business management and the workers.

GOODNESS

When public opinion turns to apathetic acceptance of “the real as it is,” “this ‘real as it is’ is precisely what the higher values have made of reality” (Deleuze PI: 71). The negation of higher values attributed to the transcendental power of a god or ruler is replaced by human, “all too human,” values like morals, utility, progress and history. Instead of affirming possibility, the new consolidation of moral beliefs under the common denominator of “goodness,” the conditions for the good life, the right to Goodness, summed up in “feeling, being and doing good”, of necessity act by regulating, by disguising imperial power as global responsibility.

The celebrated end of the ideologies after the collapse of USSR impelled the recognition of freedom, democracy and free enterprise as immediately apprehended values, as a “concrete universal” (Hardt & Negri: 3-41) that overdetermines each movement of capital, every military intervention, in a unitary way. At the same time, they baffle and disarm intellectual thought away from resistance. These values are established insofar as they can confirm their effectiveness, their goodness, only to the extent that they aspire to render the world good.

“In the war against global terrorism, we will never forget that we are ultimately fighting for our democratic values and way of life.” (G.W. Bush, *The State of the Union Address*). Democratic values (the rule of law, limits on the absolute power of the state, free speech, freedom of worship, equal justice, respect for women, religious and ethnic tolerance and respect for private property) are enabled in the service of rights and peace.

“People everywhere want to be able to speak freely; choose who will govern them; worship as they please; educate their children-male and female; own property; and enjoy the benefits of their labor. These values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society-and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.” Presented as universal, “the non-negotiable demands of human dignity” can only live off the exception, that is, by re-producing themselves in the societies where they are installed by force.

“The United States should be realistic about its ability to help those who are unwilling or unready to help themselves. Where and when people are ready to do their part, we will be willing to move decisively.” (All quotes from *The US National Security Advisor*)

The question is whether the protection of values does not twist and turn, in the corrupt sense of “bodyguarding,” i.e. by producing the need for protection and thus being the cause for the need and effecting protection at the same time. The investment of capital in the hydrocarbon exploitation of the Caspian is validated by a cluster of “good” reasons such as to boost local economies, introduce democratic reform into society and protect the environment. Its ideological arrogance is masked by the fact that it will act not by satisfying existing needs but by producing new needs, social relations, bodies and minds, by forcing the performance of new producers.

IMMANENCE

is a buzzword that rattles frequently in one’s ear today. It could easily appear in a leftist political review, a romantic apology for music or a theological discourse. It is the condition or quality of being immanent, remaining within, inherent, indwelling, internal or subjective. Immanence was the concept that marked the beginning of modernity, the breakdown of the Christian dualist conception and “the affirmation of the powers of *this* world.” (Hardt & Negri: 71). It is the framework within which every entity has singular essence or is imma-

nent in itself; it is that which is not in something, to something, which does not depend on an object or belong to a subject.

We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life. ... a life, no longer dependent on a Being or submitted to an Act – it is an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is ceaselessly posed in a life. (Deleuze PI: 27)

By “a life,” Deleuze insists on the verb, activity, process, becoming instead of being, becoming that does not transcend into the infinite and eternal, but that is situated in the interval, in movement between possibilities. Immanence, according to Deleuze, should not be mistaken for the Absolute that resides in things, the essence in God, but as movement, activity, possibility and multiplicity. The indefinite article in “a (life)” corresponds to the indefinite infinitive of the verb capable of hosting virtual singularities.

The condition of immanence could be determined as a doing. It is seeing things not from above or below or beside, not from a safe distance, but from the middle: hearing the sound by going into the middle of it with one’s body, into the libidinal corporeality where perception and affective response merge. Have I turned this philosophical concept into consumerist jargon like “experience” and “energy”? The temptation to make this transformation stems from the concept’s double-sided nature. Yes, energy is immanent to our lifestyle, not only in the examples of electronic music and virtual reality that are symbolic for arousing the experience of internalizing the outside into a subjective reality. It is also immanent in every sense in mobility and transportation. From the perspective of today’s political economy, pipelines are relays of oil, money and information.

We are in the pipelines, we cannot escape from relying on their provisions over here and their mediation of our political and economical interests over there. Pipelines are not economically indispensable or sensationally mysterious in their omnipresence – they simply act as illustrative vehicles of circulation, mobility, diversity, hybridity and mixture, the values of free world mar-

ket ideology and the weapons of potential resistance to those values at the same time. Pipeline projects and stock-exchange markets, oil and money, both operate by means of a general equivalence that brings all elements together in quantifiable, commensurable relations. In effect, an open, frictionless space for un-encoded flows, flexibility, continual modulation, is not the utopian place of the quest for unfixed and hybrid identities, but the real implication of free trade capital. The only difference is that the immanence of capital is not solely defined in terms of open expansion, renewal and recreation. Its circulation subordinates productivity to the external criteria of profitability and efficiency.

NEOCONS,

the collective name given to neoconservatives in the US, is the only political formation to be mentioned here. Not, however, with the intent of targeting the key-player in the Caspian oil & power game. The neoconservatives consolidated as a movement during the same decade that interest in Caspian oil evolved, owing to their goal of promoting America’s leading role in the world after the fall of Soviet Union, and is interesting as a contemporary and radical case of advancing ideology into political practice.

Not only is the US the world’s largest importer of energy and its market forced to feed on other economic systems like the non-capitalist hybrids of the Caspian states, but the present US administration has developed a policy whose features make efficient management the dominant perspective in politics as well as in business. The main characteristic distinguishing what has come to be known as the “Bush doctrine” is an entrepreneurial, result-oriented strategic vision. It functions as something of an engine of opportunity, taking this moment of opportunity after 9-11 to improve active American global leadership. US national interests have always extended beyond the nation itself, but now the motto has progressed to “*Our Nation’s cause has always been larger than our Nation’s defense*” (*The National Security Strategy*, G. W. Bush).

Putting forward, more decisively than ever, the objectives of regime change and exporting liberal democratic principles to the countries that after 9-11 are accused of threatening America's national security, neoconservatives elaborated a double-binding strategy of:

Applying the principles of American democratic "big governments," such as the welfare state, the politics of differences and tolerance, internationalism, to the conservative causes in order to reshape a more widely acceptable conservative program than that of the Old Right. The success of the new doctrine lies in creating an ideological blend of indistinguishable democratic principles, liberal in their emotional Gestalt and conservative in their concern for homeland safety and free competition. Pre-emption, abolishing the risk of inaction and taking anticipatory action in defense against an "imminent threat," is a dubious concept that allows for uncertainty as to the time and place of the enemy's attack and thus proceeds by the proverb "our best defense is a good offense."

With the support of ideas from neoconservative think tanks like the Heritage Foundation, the American Enterprise Institute, the White House newspaper *The Weekly Standard* etc., a new strategic model for progress in economical and political development is advocated: "A diverse, modern society has inherent, ambitious, entrepreneurial energy. Our strength comes from what we do with that energy. That is where our national security begins." (*The National Security Strategy*, Condoleezza Rice)

POTENTIALITY

When the Caspian Region is estimated to be good for 40-60 billion barrels of oil and 6.1 trillion cubic meters of gas reserves, its potential is considered rich with respect to the amount of oil and gas that could possibly be extracted and converted into energy supplies. The hydrocarbons have been accumulating in

the ground for a long time, long before the West declared the value of the extraordinary resources of the Caspian. Their importance to the world was recognized once they acquired the condition of possibility-opportunity on the world market, at the moment that the actualization of bringing oil and gas from the deep-buried sources to the pipelines on the surface came to be regarded as necessary, urgent and feasible (Western needs for energy imports increased insofar as that they could not be covered by exhausted domestic sources; the threat of oil-price blackmail due to political instability in the Middle-East; the rise of new Caspian states unleashed from USSR, etc.).

However, this account of potential is exactly the opposite of potentiality as mode of existence. Potential is the reverse of the possible; it is that which does not pass into actuality. The potential of the Caspian, in other words, would increase if it would suspend the demand of Western capital and political pressure to actualize its hydrocarbon richness, which in turn would ruin the prospect of international business and political affairs over there.

Potentiality, as Agamben seeks to bring this philosophical concept closer to a political interest, has to do with sovereignty and resistance. The potential that renounces action as actualization, the potential not to be, is what distinguishes human beings as animals capable of their own impotentiality, of being in relation to their own incapacity.

"To be free is to be capable of one's own impotentiality, to be in relation to one's own privation...What is truly potential is this what has exhausted all its impotentiality in bringing it wholly into the act as such." (Agamben P: 183)

The negative and passive are for the sake of purposefulness, the terminal realization of the possible, and the active and positive shifts to the virtual mode of ability, activity for nothing. To think on one's own is not to think about something, to be exhausted by that thing one is trying to grasp, but to be exhausted by nothing other than everything, the various combinations of many and/or possibilities. The same goes for sensibility, for to sense one's senses is to experience their incapacity.

“In the dark, the eye does not see anything but is, as it were, affected by its own incapacity to see; in the same way, perception is not the experience of something – a formless being – but rather perception of its own formlessness, the self-affection of potentiality...What is experienced in this self-affection is the event of matter.” (Agamben P: 217)

When Alain Badiou is accused of a kind of totalitarianism when he claims access to “hitherto unknown possibilities,” then the concept of potentiality must be sharply defended from any presumption of total grasp such as “everything is possible.” It is there to urge consistency of desiring, to be able to imagine and propose possibilities other than what we are told are possible (Badiou: 115). This is to detach one’s faith in the self-evident, right and good ways, the only possible ways the Caspian region needs to pursue in the future, or the opinion that fossil fuels are indispensable. The space of the possible should be made larger than what is practical or easy to believe.

THEM

Did we forget to speak about *them*? Why did we refrain from representing strictly *their* position from our perspective *over here*? Because we were disgusted by the media spectacle that exposes *them* in poverty, atrocity and curiosity before the Western camera, provoking our sympathy and, moreover, manufacturing our consent to intervention, financial or military. The feel-good feeling before TV, a self-satisfaction about living well and even about being able to aid the needy other people, presupposes not only compassion for the victim but also a judgment of how bad it is over there compared to the social reality over here, contempt of the incompetence of Third World to manage the “good life” on its own.

That is why in saying “them” we are unable to fill the gap with anything but the arrogant knowledge of how things are, and naming *them* in a conjoint third-person-plural would reduce to stereotypes the virtual possibilities of being over there as being-many. It would be as problematic as saying “we” or “I” over

here, where the first person cannot belong to any singularity other than being *beside* one’s own, and, therefore, being-one-with-another and being-many. “We don’t have meaning anymore, because we ourselves are meaning..., the element in which signification can be produced and circulate.” (Nancy: 1-5)

Theatre is a place most hostile to this kind of impersonal anonymity that favors passage, temporary hosting or the taking-up of different positions. That is, allowing that behind the articulation of “I” there moves and appears unrecognized that which makes one act, feel and think.



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Theatre *between* the active AND the passive, the actor AND the spectator

Jan Ritsema

I

A border zone

The ideal spectator does not come to the theatre in order to assess the theatrical content but rather to arrive at unexpected thoughts, to call into doubt one's own stereotypical views and ways of thinking: not to be confirmed, to have his or her views about theatre, life and the world substantiated, but precisely to question them.

Now that the theatre is the only remaining place where we gather 'live', like the church of old, it should not be the place where one is treated. One does not come to be cured but expects to be challenged: challenged with propositions, questions and hypotheses. One does not expect to be given answers, confirmation or opinions, but rather to be confronted with a border zone, still undefined, whimsical and full of opacity. Not to be provided with conclusions or directions, but shown a field, a table of sometimes-contradictory propositions that are the results of the thought processes of its makers. In other words, the stage is a surface upon which to inscribe and to erase, to add and to take away, to place and to replace. The stage is a "propo-site," a notebook in which to jot down propositions, a worktable full of unfinished attempts and leftovers.

What is this AND in our title? The AND is neither the one nor the other. It is always *between* the two, it is the border zone. There is always a border zone, a vanishing trace or flow, only we do not see it because it is barely visible. Yet, it is along this vanishing trace that things happen, events come into being and revolutions are sketched out.

What is this *between*? Strength does not lie in occupying one camp or the other. Power resides in the border zone, and the border zone is never a massive wall or an impregnable fortress but is always an area filled with holes. We are interested not in the position on either side of the border zone but in the potentiality of the holes it contains.

The border zone is a no-man's-land of potentialities. There, things and opinions are not yet set in stone, they are able to become, to become many things.

How do we think we can achieve this?

By establishing this *in-between* situation, this borderline situation, at all conceivable levels of the performance

We create a performance that itself is a border zone in the possible and conceivable range of imaginable performances. We see theatre itself as a border zone, the unknown place, a place of anonymity, a place adrift and incapable of being situated. The displaced place where things can be thought anew. To this end, we must blur the known properties of a theatre performance as much as possible. We destabilize them, as it were, by thinking differently about how they are used. We mean here the use of acting techniques, narration, representation, presentation and decoration, the use of new media and light, the use of disposition as such (the separation of stage and spectators), the use of the illusory, the use of beauty, the poignant, the disarming, the provocative and the hilarious. We mean the use of the spectacular and the sentimental, the production methods used, the way things are financed and sold, and above all, the choice of subject matter and the addictive need to impress.

By destabilizing the means, we also deprive them of a hierarchy. It no longer concerns how beautiful or how ugly, how virtuosic, moving or human the set, the play, an actor, or the story was, but how effective their use was in creating the border zone that the performance intends to be.

By creating for *Pipelines*, a *construction* a situation in which an audience of at most 150 persons sits around a small area of between 20-25 m², a peculiar way of acting is developed that is barely "presentative" because it deprives the players of a firm sense of direction. They can only be. As actors, they are lost. They are in a border zone and the best they can do is limit themselves to the presentation of their proposition. They have been deprived of control of the stage and control of the consequences of their actions. There is no stage and thus no frame, or better, barely a frame. This leads to a peculiar, displaced way of acting because the actors are robbed of the tools to overwhelm and to astound.

They are not only robbed of a stage but also of a body. Their texts are not an expression (whether acting or not) of a personal feeling or a personal point of view, neither an expression of a good or bad character. Just as the actors are detached from location, these texts are also detached from a fixed position. In this production, enlargements and intensifications are always alien bodies, explicit choices for the duration of the moment, of which it is not clear whether they are relevant or not.

Like the actors themselves, their technique is also displaced. The result is that at each moment the relationships *between* the actor and the application of his or her technique, *between* the actor and the spectator, *between* the actor and his or her act or utterance ask to be understood in multiple ways.

There is also no place for formalization. The form is the lack or scarcity of form. After all, the form must also be a border zone of form, must remain accessible to various possible forms. It may not overwhelm or astound. It must remain imaginable, manageable, as a mouldable element among all other mouldable elements.

Thus, it more or less comes down to the following code words: destabilization, displacement and decentralization.

This also applies to the way in which the subject matter (the "territorialization" of the Caspian region by investment) is treated. First, it itself concerns a

border situation, a region in transition. Second, it concerns the border zone between our way of life *here* and theirs *over there*, how these two are related, what the interests and the influences are. This is complex. A complexity that we do not reduce to conveniently arranged main lines, a complexity that we prefer to preserve. We do not draw up borders; we describe the border zone, the in-between zone, where the positions and the entanglement of interests and the contrasting interests are often contradictory and two-faced. This is not to say that we ourselves do not take up a position; however, we simply refuse to guide the spectator in the choice of a position, even if they would like us to. In order to achieve this, the information is also displaced and stripped of any possible hierarchy. By placing insights, information, positions, judgements and ways of thinking next to and against each other in an ever-changing arrangement, we attempt to develop a disposition in which situations and views can be re-thought or at least be stripped of their stereotypes.

We also want to rid ourselves of that easy and comfortable feel-good feeling that goes with the shared indignation regarding how bad it all is everywhere and nowhere, with ourselves or with others. This is a churchy pattern into which the theatre often allows itself to be seduced. After all, if the theatre is again to become the place where we are able to refresh our thinking, it must not appeal to comfortable, mindless conditioning.

Does this now mean that we offer anarchically chaotic signifiers from which it would be impossible to establish a position? Something value-free? No. The meaning of the production is located in the re-questioning and re-thinking of both the disposition of theatre and the motives behind the re-territorialization of their region by our capital. Why should one and not the other (theatre and/or region) change, and in which direction, or in what way and to what extent and at what speed ... This is what *Pipelines*, a *construction* is about.

The performance itself is a possible answer to these questions.

II

An intermezzo. Pause for a moment.

III

A pamphlet

The territorialization by capital (money) and why today it is better called capitalization. The region around the Caspian Sea is being capitalized. It has such a large, irresistible and seductive power that it *appears* that those being capitalized desire nothing else than to submit to it.

We need them, their fossil fuels, and they our capital, our investment and know-how. It appears to be an almost ideal win-win situation. Were it not for the fact that the love primarily emanates from their side. If their request does not suit us, we will not spend one penny. Our request for permission to explore their oil is in any case irresistible to them.

Their need is our opportunity. This inequality can only be neutralized by a contract.

In fact, a contract is always an anchoring of differing interests. Each contract is an assault. It constitutes an artificial form of contact because the point of departure of the contact is a situation of inequality. The parties need each other, but to different degrees.

Why not shift, defer, transpose this unequal need for each other to an 'it is possible that we need each other', meaning that it is also possible for us not to need each other.

However, you will object that then nothing will happen. This is by no means certain. All is in movement to such a degree that it is impossible that nothing would happen. Only the game of exploitation will not happen.

Take this performance.

It long ago ceased being about whether you like theatre, but is rather about whether theatre likes you. The same goes for this performance. It is not important whether you like the performance, but rather whether the performance likes you.

What indicates whether the performance likes you?

The extent to which it demands something of you.

Or still better, the extent to which it demands nothing of you.

(If it does demand something from you, it primarily likes itself but trusts itself so little that it needs constant affirmation.)

What then indicates whether it demands nothing of you?

The extent to which it primarily wants to explain itself. It exists by the grace of the enjoyment that it derives from itself.

In other words, how high does it score on the Calimero-indicator "I am me and you are you"?

The performance that likes you does not need you.

As an aside: the performance that needs you does not like you, but primarily itself. It wants to please you and to be appreciated for this. It then appears as if the performance is there for you (it does everything to please you) but all the energy, creativity and intelligence that it displays is driven by the need to be praised.

Does the performance that likes you then not give a shit about you?

The answer is of course, no. Because if it would not give a shit about you, it would need you not to give a shit about, and we had already arrived at the point where it would *not* need you.

What then is it to be *not needed*? This is of course the opposite of a master-servant relation. The master is master by the grace of the existence of the servant. The master is not a master next to another master: this would be two masters, who would not be masters if there were only masters in the world. Equality neutralizes distinctions.

Equality. Equivalence. Égalité.

In our example if the performance does not need you, it is then necessary that you also do not need it.

We are in this situation, in the situation that both parties do not need each other and are not inclined to undertake anything. We prefer to take action in situations of inequality, in situations where I have something you do not and you are prepared to give something to obtain it. The world of differences is interesting to us because there is something that can be acquired. In such a world, you can protect or be protected. I am inclined to compare this situation with that of a world of potentates. Everywhere the commands resound: 'protect me' or 'let me protect you'.

Not so with us. We do not need your protection and you do not need ours.

We operate within potentiality. We are those who 'could just as well get along without each other'.

Why?

Because it contains all possibilities within itself. A world of potentialities.

Potentiality is sovereignly capable of its own incapacity; it remains involved with realization in the form of its deferment.

However, you will object that then nothing will happen; you are describing a superfluous and unnecessary situation.

Answer: incorrect. All the pieces are present.

There is the performance and there is you. Unlimited possibilities. America itself.

We do not need you and you do not need us, but that does not prevent us from spending time together. I would say quite the reverse. We do not need to mean something to each other, but that does not exclude the fact that we could mean something to each other. We will see.

All the rest is exploitation.

That is the political pamphlet *Pipelines, a construction*.

The whole concept of 'needing' is a construction that excludes the possibility of gift. In fact, it is a monstrous construct. For good reason the culture with the most contracts, although unwritten, is that of the mafia, capitalism in excess.

The culture directly opposed to this is that of 'it is possible'. It is possible that we do 'x' but also that we do 'z' or 'y' or 'a' or finally something very different. However, we will do something because we always do something even if we call this 'something' 'nothing'.

From the culture of Alliance to the culture of Change.

From the culture of reliability to that of unreliability.

(Because what is the price of this so-called reliability. Or, what is wrong with unreliability.)

In the last few years and in the coming years the political and social development of the Central Asian region and our region has been and will be determined – anchored is a better word – for the coming decades in the violence of the contract. Many possibilities will be ruled out for a long time. And the (financial) violence, however much it is also masked by a veil of goodness, can continue unbridled on both sides because once taken up, the positions must at least be defended and at best consolidated. With this, other possibilities, other solutions for the same problems are excluded for good.

Exclusion and exploitation, related concepts, disguised and given legal status in the form of a contract.

Even though it appears that we exclude each other when we say we do not need each other, the opposite is closer to the truth. Precisely by not asserting rights against each other, all possibilities for all types of contacts remain open. When we say that we do not need each other, this is not the same as saying that we could not mean something to each other. On the contrary. The possibilities are innumerable. In this case, the relationship is itself a border zone.

IV

A monologue

Did I misunderstand something? In part I, you describe a performance and its dispositive, which was intended to be a tool. Does this not mean that someone is needed to use this tool? In your description, you even say that you made the performance to be used in a specific way. You say that you create a border zone in the hope that it would be entered. This border zone is nothing without its visitors. Well, that is an empty border zone, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

However, you should not imagine such a border zone too concretely. Border zones are everywhere: between you and yourself, you and your computer, you and your child ... infinitely many. It is this undefined region, which people prefer to skip over, that nevertheless occupies, say, 95% of the space. We are talking about that in-between zone, a zone that could just as well do without you as you could do without it. The performance is located there, in this 95% non-space. If we were talking about time, we would call it spare time. This is time that you do not need but could use or waste, however you want. What I now would like is to be aware of this zone, this enormous non-space, so that I do not lurch from thing to thing, or from thing to subject and from thing to task to still another task. To put it differently, so that I do not jump from one task that

I give myself to the other, until the final command of the day, 'now go to sleep'. Similar to how I travel: from A to B and nothing in between. However, let the transitions be present, similar to me writing this article. There is an ocean of other texts and an ocean of thoughts between this article and me, which means that this article does not stand on its own but has to do with my personal circumstances, with my history, with the theatre that I make and would like to make, with the influence that I have and would like to have and with all the performances that I have seen. But it also includes that fact that I could write something very different, or would like to write something that has much more impact, something people would call disgraceful, but that I do not do this and then why not. It includes what I might be able to write or would like to write. This is what it is about for me, about the awareness that I am writing this and why precisely I am writing this, but also about the awareness that I could write something very different.

In the border zone, things spring into action. There it happens, almost of its own accord. The border zone is an opportunity, but usually a lost opportunity.

The agglomerate of border zones that the performance intends to be, is such an opportunity. You can use it or not use it. It does not need you and likewise you could do without it.

It is precisely this position that makes it possible for you to think something but also something else, or to do something but also something else. The border zone cheats you out of your means of navigation and your compass, questioning the possibility to determine other ways for yourself.

Translation Dan Frett

Notes on the Contributors

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Dieter Lesage (1966) is doctor in philosophy and docent teacher at the Department for Audiovisual and Drama Arts RITS of Erasmushogeschool Brussel. His publications among others include: *Namen als gezichten. Essay over de faam* (1996), *Onzuivere gedachten. Over het Vlaanderen van de Minister-President* (1996) and *Zwarte gedachten. Over België* (1998). In spring 2004 comes out his new book: *Vertoog over verzet. Politiek in tijden van globalisering* (Meulenhoff/Manteau).

Jan Ritsema (1945) is theatre director, who directed a wide range of classical and contemporary theatre plays as well as texts he adapted for theatre. He collaborated with many Dutch and Flemish theatre companies (a.o. Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Het Werkteater, Kaaaitheater), directed contemporary music theatre performances, and is the founder of “International Theatre and Film Books” publishing firm and bookshop in Amsterdam. He teaches at many visual art and performing arts schools in Europe. Since 1995, he also performs as actor and dancer in research-based small-scale productions.

John Roberts is Energy Security Specialist for Platts, the world’s largest provider of information on energy. He is the author of *Caspian Pipelines* (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996) and of various other reports and publications on the Caspian, the Middle East and the geopolitics of energy. To some, he remains best known for his five-minute presentation in Ulan Bator on Chinggis Khan and Central Asian Pipeline Strategy.

Pipelines, a construction

concept	Jan Ritsema and Bojana Cvejić
created and performed by	Mette Ingvarsen, Dirk Roofthoof, Bojana Cvejić and Jan Ritsema
set and light design	Herman Sorgeloos
costume design	Pynoo
technical support (Brussels)	Luc Schaltin, Piet De Koster
production	vzw Avec Jan Jib Co /Lukas Soels
co-production	Kaaithheater, Brussels, Wiener Festwochen, Vienna
thanks	Marianne Van Kerkhoven, Joachim Gerstmeier, KVS/De Bottelarij
authors cited:	Bigbeatland, Depeche Mode, Jean-Luc Godard, Stanley Kubrick, Alan Price, Raqs Media Collective, Condoleezza Rice, Lars von Trier, Derek Walcott
performances	Brussels – Kaaithheaterstudio’s / premiere January 16, performances 17, 20, 22, 24 Rotterdam – Schouwburg / February 18, 19 Frankfurt – TAT/Bockenheimer Depot pre-performances March 13, 14 Vienna – Wiener Festwochen / premiere May 22, performances 23, 24, 25 Estonia – Baltoscandal/within June 16-19

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