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The Use of Souls: Souriau and Political Spirituality

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Abstract. The body is at the heart of critical and phenomenological concerns, yet it is the soul that is increasingly under pressure. As we are being stripped of our structures of commonality, we need a renewed concept of political spirituality. My aim is to enrich Simondon's concept of spirituality as transindividuality through Souriau's transmodal architectonics. My argument proceeds in two steps: (i) I emphasize the precarious and communal modality of «having a soul», defining it as a *possession without ownership* and demonstrating its inseparability from the problems of intensive variation and discontinuity. (ii) I then argue that Souriau is inspired by Leibniz's disjunction between the ontic soul and the relational body, which holds the key to an account of spiritual commitment that exceeds the union of corporeal and psychical existences insofar as it invents a new common *use* for them.

Keywords: Transindividuality, Surexistence, Possession and use, Leibniz's account of substantiation, Form-of-life.

The various responses to the Covid-19 pandemic have only indirectly affected our bodies, their direct point of impact was the soul. As individual bodies were temporarily confined, suffered illness, and became the object of invasive monitoring and compensatory work-out schemes, we have been stripped bare of something much more precarious: our multiple implicit forms for living together. The virus marks a critical acceleration in the digital reduction of our capacities for affective resonance and its promise of happiness. What has really collapsed is neither the supply chains of our life support systems nor the functions of organic life as such (although these are also under mounting pressure), but the manifold syntheses in which our life in common acquires *form*.

«Let's keep in touch for further conspiracies»: the concluding line of an e-mail received from a prominent Berlin based critical theorist. «Looking for people to conspire with over the Summer»: an invitation from a dating profile. It is not by accident that the opaque intimacy of conspiracy has become such a compelling new

form of sociality. To conspire literally means to breathe together. In times of the state sanctioning, or withholding, of air, breathing becomes a fugitive form of belonging. In ancient Greek, *pneuma* means both breath and soul. In exhaling what they take in from others, conspirators inhabit bubbles: not only do these shared atmospheres filter the information that comes from the outside world, they are looped into existence as a set of mutual inspirations and aspirations that do not adhere to the molds of intersubjective recognition. To conspire is to expand our lives. It is to participate in a reciprocal animation that belongs to no transcendent organization and that does not depend on constitutional rights and duties. As we witness the withering of the state as well as of the traditional media and institutions of civil society, the bubble therefore signals quite a bit more than the libertarian dream of privately insured and immunized life. For better or for worse, it is the vital art of a shared *presence*, of an increased capacity to be affected. Involving a whole morphology of existence, to conspire is to take care of the soul.

Far from a remnant of Christian metaphysics, predicated on the idea of individual immortality and predestination, and nowhere near to the ever-shrinking domain of psychology, which understands the psyche as symbolic body, the soul is of the order of what Gilbert Simondon has called the *transindividual*: a psychosocial structure of individuation that already anticipates «collective individuation» (society and its institutions), although it is enacted and propagated reciprocally in and through individual subjects insofar as they continue to exist in, and communicate through, tense relations to their «pre-individual realities» (Simondon [2020]: 308-319, 243-244, 339-344, esp. 340). To understand spiritual life in terms of transindividuality involves a rethinking of causality, of the way our singular lives are determined and harmonized by relations. While our pre-individual relations extend to infinity and divide over a multiplicity of species and things, our souls exist as the metastable (relative and improvised) unities or forms of these relations beyond our biopsychical selves. Typical transindividual structures are

affects, desires, customs, values, and beliefs, as well as semiotic and technological schemas – commonalities which do not depend on a single agent or formal recognition, but rather on the constant informal exchange between several agents. What makes us feel alive, what *possesses* us, is the different ways in which we are incorporated in the larger clusters of mutuality (what Simondon calls «groups») through which we become who we are.

In the spirit of Simondon's refusal to concede ontological priority to already individuated reality, and reflecting his use of the term «mode of existence» as a strategy of philosophical problematization, my aim here is to explore the transindividual structuring of the soul through the work of Étienne Souriau. Modes of existence are networked structures of affective harmonization (one of the etymological roots of *mode* is the Latin *modificare*, modulation) which lack essence and exist only in and through their effects. In works such as *Avoir une âme* (1938), followed by *Les différents modes d'existence* five years later, Souriau sketches out many such modes, including the three that concern us here: the body, the soul, and the virtual existences. My aim is to complement the concept of transindividuality with Souriau's concept of the transmodal composition of the soul, which he calls *surexistence*, and develop some of the philosophical and political implications. Like Marx's vivid description of life in communist society – «to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner» – but in a less historically restricted and centralized way, we individuate as a superposition of diverging and converging modes. In the absence of a unified, world historical subject, it is only by expanding our horizon of possible attachments and by taking care of the interplay at work between them that we can fully concretize our potentials.

Moreover, while Marx's concept of mode of production is often traced back to Spinoza's concept of substance as immanent cause, I provide a different genealogy for the concept of transmodality, following a lead from Souriau to Leibniz's notions of the communication of perspectives and

the composition of substances. In contrast to the «bathos» of monism, Souriau singles out Leibniz because of his swaying between an «ontic pluralism» (posing a multiplicity of ultimate realities (monads)) and an «existential pluralism» (posing the multiplicity of interrelating modes of existence [striving possibles]) (Souriau [2015]: 99). As we will see, Leibniz's double commitment, which articulates in the disjunction between the individual soul (form) and the relational body (matter), is essential to Souriau's own elementary distinction between being and (sur)existence, as well as to his account of spiritual instauration as an individuation that exceeds the union of corporeal and psychological existences insofar as it invents a new common *use* for them.

THE INSTAURATION OF THE SOUL

Following Heidegger's interpretation of modern metaphysics, identified first of all with Leibniz, we can determine modern ontology as a transformation of being into *operativity* (desire, will, *Drang*) and of representational truth into effective certainty (belief, perception, *Vorstellung*). To be is to be effective. The central concept, from Spinoza and Schelling to Nietzsche and Whitehead, is not substance but the demand to exist and to universalize oneself. Only what is set to work in one or several modes is substantial or real, and thereby possible. Existence precedes essence. To know a thing or idea in all its singularity is to know the schematism of its inner strivings.

When Souriau writes that «to exist, it is necessary to act, but to act, it is necessary to exist», (Souriau [2015]: 130) he too calls attention to this «poignant aspect of the world». The «universal, philosophical approach to all of reality» is:

to discern, in all that is presented to us in the present or the past as fully made, a movement toward existence with the appearance of a work, which involves instaurative forces down below, and appeals and iridescences – in short, an assistance of which the apparently inert object is evidence – up above (Souriau [2015]: 156-157).

However, contrary to Heidegger, who defined modernity by its premodern attempt to predicate all striving on the will to power of a single, foundational mode of existence, that of Cartesian subjectivity, Souriau emphasizes the plurality of the modes of existence. The laboring subject is an essential force in, and outcome of, the work of instauration, but so are the virtual (*virtus*, force) existences – the «appeals and iridescences» – that play their role without themselves ever becoming fully actual.

The problem is that the virtual existences are vulnerable to the judgment of Souriau's implied adversary, the skeptic who resists the desire for creation that these ephemeral swarms incite and require (Lapoujade [2021]: 10-11, 21). In fact, there is nothing particularly obscure or esoteric about their mode of existence, especially not when contrasted with the profane image of work. One way to conceive of them is as the background noise or cloud out of which a figure will emerge. «We live in the midst of a forest of virtuals that are unknown to us», a «kaleidoscopic interplay» of a «multitude of absences» that, like Leibniz's minute perceptions, «have no other reality than that of being conditioned hypothetically or in advance» (Souriau [2015]: 156-157). Although conditioned by the eventual figure that will change their modality, these sketchy existences are also the conditions of the figure that is to-be-made, since without them, the transmodal passages involved in its realization remain unthinkable. In short, the restless pressures and counterpressures of the virtuals, the communication between all sorts of evocatory existences, differentiates what can and what cannot be accomplished, and as such is implied in any creative act.

When Souriau describes the work of instauration as a surexistential «drama», this is because the point of view intrinsic to the work excludes any form of sovereignty on the side of the creator or worker. For example, there is no writer without a virtual readership, for which the currently existing readership is no more than the «evocatory formula». Whatever form the work to-be-written will take, it will only come about as the «reverberating

effect» (Souriau [1938]: 114, 25) of this informal readership. The soul of the author itself will find its realization as the place where this reverberation takes place, but only insofar as it has let itself be expanded by collaborating with it. Something similar can be said of the reader: their task is not to represent a work from their own standpoint but to generously participate in the completion of the work up to the «acme» of its presence, where it appears precisely as its own point of view, its «highest degree of perfection» (Souriau [1938]: 24). As with the conquering of somebody's heart, our soul cannot really exist except by making common cause with those metamorphic forces that we help become effective and that make us more real in turn.

Like Simondon one generation later, Souriau defines the soul as an overflowing of the actual psyche into the richness of its relations. By calling this relational wealth «virtual» he shifts the emphasis to the precarity of its mode of existence:

To have a soul is to possess riches not actually in your possession; it is truly to live certain unreal lives; it is to be greater than yourself [...]; it is to constitute a substantial universe and to be that universe yourself, though it be made only of insubstantial events, transitive operations, and labile phenomenalities (Souriau [1938]: 3).

If spiritual existence is not actual but virtual, this is because we are dealing with a life that we do not own. Souriau repeatedly contrasts Giordano Bruno with Descartes in this regard. The continuity of the clear and distinct cogito passes through a premonitory and penumbral «demi-existence» in which what Descartes calls the *res cogitans* does not yet exist (Souriau [1938]: 28; Souriau [2015]: 120-121). The representational consciousness of the psyche contains no information about the consistency of the soul, no matter whether that of itself or that of others. Rather, for the soul to exist it must «conquer» the noise of the «lesser existences» (Souriau [1938]: 31) that surround the individuality of self-consciousness. The reality of the soul is measured by its virtual belongings, but the soul itself is only one factor in

the architectonic of this belonging: «The soul that we do not have, but that we could have, is formed, in its virtuality, from the harmony that arranges whatever it may be, whose interrupted contours were momentarily traced by the sketch of an interior melody, into chords» (Souriau [2015]: 157). The point is that, for a soul (*un peu d'harmonie*) to be realized, it must be supported by a spiritual form, the formal cause of the work to-be-made that grounds all other modes insofar as they participate in its realization.

This intermittent existence between real existence and a lack of reality means that happy are those souls for whom life conforms to the fullest extent to a single mode of existence. Builders build walls and athletes train their bodies, just as hunters hunt, fishers fish, farmers farm and thinkers think (Souriau [2015]: 26-27). However, it is given only to very few of us to live a life that almost entirely coincides with a single stable form. For the rest, and especially for those with many «talents», it is riddled with leaps and translations between modes in which we only participate more or less. Here the synaptic mode of existence of the soul is inseparable from the question of intensive variation: «how *is* the saint the man of action, how *is* the man of letters the lover, how *is* the soul the body?» (Souriau [2015]: 204). Even if, in the work of instauration, we are carried by virtualities, it therefore does not follow that the transmodal passages involved in the instauration of our lives are unproblematic. On the contrary, the soul usually appears in the problematic form of a virtual work to-be-made. We know ourselves to be implicated among the forces that condition the realization of this work but without knowing what is required from us, except that all these forces must be put in some kind of relation to one another.

OVERCOMING DUALISM THE LEIBNIZIAN WAY

At first sight, what Souriau calls an architectonic appears to be the same as what we traditionally call the body. Isn't it generally the case that

a soul cannot exist separate from its incarnation save by way of miracle? Isn't embodiment the a priori mode of being-in-the-world of the soul? The problem with this interpretation, however, is that it downplays almost everything that we have problematized qua the mode of existence of the soul so far. For it assumes that there is a kind of internal relation or pre-established harmony between the soul and its body, which tends to reduce the soul to the psyche. We must therefore correct a misunderstanding that pertains to both the body and the soul.

For too long philosophers have been fixated on the body. For phenomenologists the precedence of being a body over having a body constitutes a solipsistic enclosure from which no fleshy togetherness can save us. Even Michel Foucault's analytic of the microphysics of power serves only to demonstrate that the soul is the «effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body» (Foucault [1977]: 30). In reality, our organisms are relatively indifferent to power grabs. The soul, by contrast, is the affectability animating the body (Lyotard [1997]: 243). Its opaque presence constantly oscillates between growth and remission. The soul is thus the open field in which potentials and tendencies meet, in which the (re-)composition of the body takes place (Berardi [2009]). It is the soul, precisely insofar as it does not coincide with its body and knows much more interdependency, that is the object of power.

For Souriau, the question of power is that of spiritual possession. If existence itself is a hope or possibility, the realization of one or several modes is a question of possession. Yet we must insist that possession is a double-edged sword. To possess is simultaneously to dominate and to be enslaved. While the philosophical tradition approaches this duality dialectically – by way of an endless redistribution of essence and existence, or soul and body, or potentiality and actuality, or cause and effect – this obfuscates that the problem of incorporation need not be that of re-establishing their unity. Rather, Souriau is speaking of a possession without ownership. The soul neither possesses a body nor is it possessed by it (Lapoujade [2021]:

61, 46-47). Rather, to possess oneself is to devote oneself to emergent potentialities one does not simply own. What one has does not coincide with what one is, because the very richness of these «properties» lies in their autonomous existence. In fact, it is not the soul but these potentialities that must be given a «body», in the instaurative process that gives them the completion they lack without us.

The enlargement of the soul has less to do with ownership or embodiment than with efficacy or grace. The very distance between the soul and its existences is also the need for a more real existence of everything it requires. For all these existences to acquire presence, a body beyond the individual psyche has to be made that celebrates a new type of interiority to which we as its co-creator must adapt in turn. Perhaps this conquest of one's virtualities is best compared to the process of transubstantiation. As the soul of Christ demands to be made effective in the bread and the wine and does not exist outside it, the authority of the priest is entirely based on the extent to which the speech act «this is my body» is answered by the community of other souls who feel equally obliged by the presence of Christ. In the theurgy (the «work of God») that makes beings pass from one mode of existence into another there is no separation between cause and effect, possessor and possessed, or medium and message. The soul does not represent the body or vice versa. Rather their transindividual relation is one of expression or substantiation. It is only in this operative sense of a *presentia realis* that the architectonic of the soul equals a body. The soul only exists if it can lean towards something that leans towards it – that is, if it can believe.

Contrary to the body that we make / do / give, the empirical body we have or the organic body that we are offer no model for this kind of individuation. Approached from a different angle, this is also implied by Spinoza's famous dictum, illustrated with the examples of sleepwalking and drunkenness, that «no one yet has been taught by experience what the body can accomplish»? We do not know what the architecture of the body consists

of – that is, which modes of existence converge in it, and according to what ratio – because the work of its composition is precisely what, in terms of Souriau, remains «to be done»: it requires the commitment of a soul, which is the rational part of our lives.

In problematizing the consistency of our lives in terms of having or lacking a soul, Souriau agrees with Spinoza that we are dealing not with a metaphysical but a practical problem (Souriau [1938]: 3). But then why does he retain the old dualism of body and soul at all? Because instead of substantial union, which carries the risk of possessive individualism, there are «collaborations (I am able to make *use* of my body, that instrument, and it is also able to make *use* of me), transitions, correspondences, and a certain habit of being together» (Souriau [2015]: 190, my emphases). In fact, we must resist at all costs the risks of monism: the conflation of the ontic and the existential, or of totality and unity, as well as the nullification of the distance between body and soul. For how are we to conceive of creation when the multiple modes are still predicated of a single substance, or at least adhering to the Great Chain of Being, in which their intra-active solidarity is totalized following a preexisting order?

The real question is not how to achieve the union of body and soul but something quite different: «Soul is what we are. Is it mad to want to be the body that we have, to want to be it, as well?» (Souriau [2015]: 189). What is at stake in spiritual life is the realization of a mutual «use» of bodies and souls that gathers the different ontic and transitory modes of existence not in an identity but in a way that exceeds its constituents. «What interests us is a totalization, which, beyond the plurality of the kinds of existence, brings about something that not only embraces them, but distinguishes itself from them and surpasses them» (Souriau [2015]: 197). In order to overcome any hierarchy between body and soul, in other words, *we must learn to count beyond two*. Surexistence cannot be understood in terms of either an ontic monism or an ontic dualism but demands an ontic pluralism that matches an existential pluralism.

It is here that Souriau turns to Leibniz, who had already redefined the soul as a force of realization (*vis viva*) that is being modified and dispersed under the influence of a multiplicity of other forces even as it gathers and harmonizes them in the unity of its own «body» or point of view. If the body constitutes the individual soul's point of view, the mode of existence of the soul is the capacity to own a body. It is a claim on, or demand for, the modes of existence of other souls as so many dimensions of oneself. To capture their vibrations is to incorporate them, yet in *giving* them a body, we *acquire* a spiritual life beyond ourselves. For Leibniz, the pursuit of individual power is therefore not opposed to collective harmony and freedom, but the condition for it, and vice versa.

If everything that is real has a soul, it therefore does not follow that Leibniz or Souriau are «idealists» who reduce everything to a single mode of existence. Elsewhere I have given a Leibnizian account of the relatively and relationally individuated nature of bodies in terms of transindividuality, that is, not in terms of embodiment but in terms of a *com-positioning* through which monads get a grip on one another (van Tuinen [2021]). On the one hand, it is obvious that, for Leibniz, the intersubjective haunts the transindividual. Simondon calls it «the interindividual»: the moment when the metastability of spiritual life collapses into identity, that is, the narcissistic structure of monadic egos «that remain in their same level of individuation and that seek in other individuals an image of their own existence parallel to this existence» (Simondon [2020]: 180).¹ In Leibniz the stability of this mirroring is warranted by a strict domination of form over matter, that is, a strict separation between the monadic closure of the soul and the relational nature of embodied social life. The soul is a moment of disindividuation of the social (a regression to the purely individual) and social life is a disindividuation of the soul (the

¹ Simondon echoes Souriau when he speaks of the «false aseity» of those who retreat into substantial individuality (Simondon [2020]: 278, 313).

group regresses to something merely social). On the other hand, what remains unthought in this vulgarized Leibnizianism is what Simondon calls the «obscure zone» of the operation of individuation itself, which cannot be explained on the basis of what is already individuated (Simondon [2020]: 350-355). As I have argued, the transindividual must be understood as this transformative weaving between the monadic and the corporeal. It is precisely the impossibility of truly separating the orders of the individual and the social, coming to the fore in the fascination with the confusion of the hierarchy between souls (and the ensuing solipsistic fear that we will not recognize ourselves in our own kind) and in the need for mediating «bonds (*vincoli*)», that situates Leibniz squarely within the spiritual life of mannerism and the baroque.

The reason why any separation between the domain of private spirituality and publicly life is impossible, is that there exists no such thing as a common outside world in general. Instead, the cosmos is «under construction», being composed as an infinitely scaled clustering. Even in the idealist reading, Leibniz does not bracket the world but renders it internal to the different points of view and thereby multiplies it (Leibniz [1989]: 42). Perspectives are not added on the world like mental representations; rather, they are immanent modifications of the world. A comprehensive or self-reflexive Leibnizianism shows that they are manners of having, not manners of being. To possess being is to possess a body, but to possess a body is to be entangled with other souls in a mode of perspectival overlap that remains external to each of them considered individually. It is these other souls considered in separation from their bodies that, for Leibniz, have a mode of existence resembling the virtual forces of metamorphosis in Souriau. They are implied by the representations and appetitions of the soul, just as they pervade our organic bodies in the form of fluctuating matter, all the while remaining irreducible to either mode of existence. Thus, there exists the monadic soul that demands for its own realization body parts, selecting and linking them through itself,

but also the polyphony of other monads that meet this demand but without giving up on their own demands. Beyond the pre-established harmony of monads, the architectonic challenge is to realize all these existences by giving them transindividual (spiritual) bodies that exceed the (idealist) unity of soul and organic body that they each seek to actualize on their own.

It is in these threefold terms that Souriau gives his most concise description of spiritual life. He does not outright dismiss the Leibnizian notion of a pre-established harmony but emphasizes the problematic nature of the work involved in the realization of such an integral «hypothesis»²:

Immanent justice: to exist in the manner of a body, is to be a body; in the manner of a soul, to be a soul. You will be a soul if, in the mathematical ratios of their architecture and the array of their sororities, your interior harmonies outline virtual riches and make you greater, and also more indestructible and fulfilled, than you yourself are. But you will only also be a spiritual being if you can manage to live while bearing witness for the *surexistent* that would be the unique being, master of all three of these voices in concert, of these three modes of existence [of body, soul, and virtuals – svt]. This being does not exist, but you bear witness for its reality, which is higher and richer than that of any of those polyphonic voices, if your life is modified and modulated in accordance with this *surexistence*: the substantial union of the three (Souriau [2015]: 212).

Instead of the unity between body and soul, the substantial union of three consists of a conformity or correspondence. Body, soul, and the virtuals do not mirror or resemble one another immediately, i.e., to the point of the total identity. Rather, their surexistential unity remains exterior to their ontic determinations even though it transforms them. Each responds to the responses of

² Souriau resists the notion that harmony is pre-established for the same reason that he dismisses monism, namely insofar as it risks effacing the modal differences in the falsity of a unified totality, but he does not reject it as the challenge to maximize integral reality (Souriau [2015]: 202-203).

the other two in an «echo»³ (Souriau [2015]: 210, 106, 223, 233, 238; Leibniz [2007]: 336-338; cf. Simondon [2020]: 279), a communication across an incompressible difference, such that in their mutual aid a new, transformative mode of existence appears. A surexistential mode is «a common reality having dominion over ... the modes that correspond to one another». It surpasses the diversity of the modes that participate in it, not by undoing specific existences, but by becoming the new «reason or law» of their response at the existential crossroads. Just as, in art, one does not have genius but pays attention to the call of genius in the works to be done, in a spiritual conversion the soul becomes obliged to a new right of existence. Immanent justice means that the surexistential reality that you bear witness to is what judges you (e.g. God). This is what spiritual life consists of: I lend existence to something that is bigger than me, I «use» or «repeat» it in some way, with a passion «that modifies me without changing me» (Souriau [2015]: 210) entirely.

Instead of a question of domination – or total union, which would come down to the same thing – the political challenge that issues from this transmodal understanding of spiritual life is that of a pragmatic of existential transformation. How can we remain an open place for the surexistential modes that cannot exist without us? Through what infrastructures of proximity do we protect the virtual nature of the soul from the institutional forces that actualize us only as bureaucratically situated psyches? In short: how do we strengthen our imagination beyond the ongoing reproduction of possessive individualism?

THE COMPOSITION OF SUBJECTIVITY

In this more political key Giorgio Agamben has recently emphasized that the metaphysical mystery of the conjunction of body and soul is

³ In my *The Philosophy of Mannerism. From Aesthetics to Modal Metaphysics* (van Tuinen [2022]: 83-104), I discuss this transition from mirroring to echoing as the trademark of Leibniz's pragmatism.

less interesting than the practical mystery of their *disjunction* (Agamben [2016]: 272). For only a disjunction can replace the relation between already individuated terms with a direct, pre-individual contact. Just as, in the eucharist, the normal mediation of dominance and servitude through ownership is replaced with a more immediate form of intimacy, Elias Canetti famously observed that in the crowd the fear of being touched disappears and gets replaced with a feeling of absolute equality. Like an intermonadic capture, a crowd marks a «destitution» of juridical and social property relations. Destitution is not about destroying the relation that provides the unity of composition of bodies but about liberating other modes of unification that have remained inactive. At stake are those modalities of having a body that do not adhere to the forms of individual ownership and embodiment. Instead of actualizing having as being, these are the modalities in which the body can incorporate something like a collective soul. Or in terms of Agamben, at stake is not a negation of our bodies but a «deposition»: a different «use (*chresis*) of bodies», that is, a disaggregation that is at the same time a new freedom of forming and dissolving bonds (Agamben [2016]: 12-13).

The autonomy of use is not that of a new form of sovereignty but of a sovereignty rendered inoperative. To conceive of use without appropriation is to think common life as that which effectuates itself according to its own rule or form instead of an already established form. Always admitting of variations, it is precisely through their non-coincidence that soul and body, form and life, dominator and dominated can enter a threshold of indistinction. Masochism, for example, consists of a neutralization of the juridical order and the contract through parodical exaggerations of master-slave domination. Of course, it matters still whether one is a master or a slave, but what changes is that masters and slaves now become integral parts of a more playful relation that exceeds them and potentially modifies their composition according to a new, inappropriable capacity to affect and be affected. When «expropriated», use is not about the relationships between subjects or between sub-

jects and objects, but about communal life itself in relation to own way of relating / manifesting itself. (The function of the hyphens in Agamben's concept of «form-of-life», in turn borrowed from Wittgenstein (*Lebensform*), is to indicate that the genitive is both objective and subjective.) With every new «use of bodies», life, in its habitual sequence, makes itself a new consistency, a new mode of individuation, indeed, a new mode of having a soul. This communal autonomy is what makes a form-of-life resemble a spiritual bubble. What's exciting is not that the body is still unknown, but that new forms of spirituality arise among the deactivated property relations. Form or modality is no longer a property but a use, just as the unity of the body is restored to its vibrating potentiality. Since spirituality is the taking care of the transindividual form of our life, what Agamben calls the use of bodies equals the expansion of our souls (Agamben [2016]: 31-37).

To speak more concretely, let us conclude with an example provided by Susan Sontag when she describes her feeling of discontinuity as a person in transmodal terms:

Feeling of discontinuity as a person. My various selves – woman, mother, teacher, lover, ... – how do they all come together? And anxiety at moments of transition from one “role” to another. Will I make it fifteen minutes from now? Be able to step into, inhabit the person I'm supposed to be? This is felt as an infinitely hazardous leap, no matter how often it's successfully executed (Sontag [2012]: 209).

Neither Souriau nor Sontag would deny that souls are ontic or thing-like in that their mode of existence involves a certain permanence or what Souriau calls «monumentality». Sontag's soul, the mode of existence called «Sontag-ity», is, as it were, precisely this experience of «self-possession in the indivisibility of a personal identity» (Souriau [2015]: 148). But this experience of self-possession is made possible by the stability of the environment to which the soul in turn belongs. The subjectivities that correspond to womanhood, motherhood, teacherhood, and loverhood not only demand correlates such as children, stu-

dents, and lovers but, as the scare quotes around the word «role» suggest, a whole ecosystem of conspiring factors without which the correlative realization of their drama is bound to stall – a transmodal architectonic that was already rapidly disappearing in the time and place where Sontag was writing.

We are used to work on ourselves as a work of art, but this amounts to kitsch as long as we are not able to handle a spiritual distension between the individual psyche and its virtualities. It is not difficult to interpret Sontag's description of the modal vertigo of the soul in terms of a narcissistic longing for the integrity of individual identity beyond the fixity of social roles. Does it not express precisely the kind of paranoia about ourselves that contemporary psychotainment taps into with its promise of «equilibrium» and «harmony»? And is it not precisely this paranoia that saps our potentials?

Both for Souriau and for Sontag, however, the problem of the existence of the soul does not get defined at the level of the private individual but in terms of the structural conditions of our capacity to «be greater than ourselves». While continuity has never been a given, today it is not so much the institutional division of roles but the architectonic coherence of modes that is under pressure. Just as «social» networks and artificial intelligence cheapen and foreshorten our experience of the other, it becomes increasingly hard to imagine a transindividual constellation that still «outlines the me in which it can be incorporated» (Souriau [1938]: 116-117). Reduced to the empty form of a profile page, the I of digital networks is no longer the index of some in-/anterior property. We do not know whether we can still rely on our collective harmonies, precisely because their operation does not need the robinsonades of ghostly subjectivity that it continues to generate like post-industrial waste. Doesn't Sontag describe the permanent crisis of presence of the zombie self under the conditions of a recombinant capitalism, in which we are reduced to transitory functions in the socio-judicial management and regulation of «human potential»? Do we not live in a world in which the sys-

tematic forces of operativity constantly appeal to the capacities of our psychic life but without offering us the means to realize them in any meaningful form?

It is here that Souriau's account of surexistential instauration reveals not only its heuristic value, but also its practical purpose. What needs to be restored is not the integrity of the body or the ego, but our attachment to the world. In order to become more present, we need to re-anchor ourselves by reclaiming the potentials of a shared point of view and defend this form-of-life from that which denies its possibility. To realize our existence is to metastabilize new circuits of transindividuation in which we bind and influence one another by making ourselves tools for others who are to be used in turn. And as the verbs 'to bind and influence' suggest, we need to be particularly aware of the risk of confusing solidarity with social control.

In his description of the «fortunate poverty» (Souriau [2015]: 213) of life in having to find its own form, Souriau's account of spirituality comes remarkably close to Agamben's free use of bodies. It is knowing:

how to isolate that which really is plenitude and richness, what is most capable of approaching surexistence. That reality relates to us like a chord's harmony with the distinct voices that perform it. It is through *use* that we play the polyphonic voices of existence, which are its various modes, and on the plane of which we find ourselves through our practice of the art of existing – It is through *use* that we can give back to that polyphony, as if from another world, the accents and chords that are our contribution to, as well as our participation in, the realities of *surexistence* (Souriau [1938]: 214, my emphases).

Use is the domain of partial agreements and differences. The insistence on use rather than possession makes it clear that the achievement implied is not solitary, unlinked, or isolated but something that works through circulation, transformation, and alchemy. Moreover, it is not based on the hierarchic functions of social and institutional life but on the weaker yet more direct

links such as the road we make as we walk, or the rhythmic convergences of love within overdetermined interests and contradictory attachments. In use possession itself becomes a co-belonging in potential. Forms-of-life circulate among us not as totalities but as tonalities, not as positions but as resonances. All incomplete are those who refuse the closure of the self as much as the functional division of totality. It is those who maintain a certain opacity of existence, typically in the mode of conspiracy or complicity.

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