

# Overidentification and/or bust?

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In 1987, Laibach, the musical wing of the Slovenian art collective Neue Slowenische Kunst<sup>1</sup> (New Slovenian Art, or NSK), released a reworked version of the Queen song 'One Vision'. Whereas the original 1985 Queen song was inspired by the group's participation in Live Aid and espoused a seemingly somewhat vague leftist message of unity and world peace, it was vastly transformed in Laibach's reworking. While lyrics about there being one race, vision and solution might easily be passed over as innocuous or not even taken notice of in the context provided by a Queen performance, the lyrics' submerged obscene meaning becomes readily apparent as it is translated into German and played along in a droning, militaristic style. Laibach's version of the song, far from being a cover or simple copy, through its transformation draws out and amplifies the grotesque parallels between the pleasures of pop culture and fascist modulation of crowd emotion through propaganda and epic scale theatricality.<sup>2</sup> But why did Laibach do this; famous for always remaining in character, are they fascists or not? Laibach's performances (as well as the work of the rest of the projects within the NSK) are premised on undercutting

within cultural and social spheres? Or have the various phases of political and economic transition that have occurred since Laibach's founding in the context of the Slovenian/ex-Yugoslavian punk movement rendered such methods of subversion and deconstruction ineffective? Or is it perhaps possible to refound a critical politics and strategy of intervention drawn from the work of Laibach and the NSK, transforming their methods and ideas to the conditions of the present?

## "The explanation is the whip and you bleed"

– 'Apologia Laibach' (1987)

Since its inception, the NSK expanded to include other activities including philosophy, planning, architecture, and many other aspects that are part of its now proclaimed status as a "global state in time". In addition to the collective development of shared themes, the various collectives composing NSK emphasise the collaborative nature of the project, not crediting individual members for aspects of the work and frequently changing the composition of the members involved in any given production. As a musical project, Laibach is mainly associated with forms of industrial music (as well as neoclassical and martial styles), evolving from a very harsh and abrasive sound during the early recordings through to one at times involving multiple layers of electronics, heavy metal, compositions arranged in the form of national anthems, and most recently interpreting a series of Bach's fugues. But Laibach, and the NSK more generally, have achieved prominence, notoriety, and infamy perhaps less so for their particular aesthetic as much as the historical meanings and recontextualisations of the various properties of state ideology used in their performances and productions. 'Laibach' itself, for instance, is the German name still associated as the one used during the fascist occupation of Ljubljana.

The work of Laibach and the NSK frequently draws upon the aesthetics of totalitarian and nationalist movements, forging a kind of *totalitarian kitsch*<sup>4</sup> by fusing together elements from varying and completely incongruent political philosophies. For instance, the NSK logo is a combination of Laibach's cross logo (borrowed from Russian supremacist artist Kasimir Malevich and used as its primary public reference point during the years when using the name Laibach was banned in Yugoslavia), John Heartfield's anti-fascist axe swastika, an industrial cog, and a pair of antlers (with the base of the design featuring the names of the founding collectives). Even in this small example one can see an ambiguous and strange merging of elements; the way that the anti-fascist emblem becomes transformed within a composition where the relation of the elements to each other changes the meaning contained within each of them.

Laibach/NSK's usage of historical, political, and aesthetic *readymades* render audible their submerged and hidden codes and contexts that directed the modes of representation, or what Žižek refers to as the hidden underside of systems and regimes. This approach to the use of borrowed historical and political elements forms the basis of what Laibach/NSK refer to as *retroguardism*, or the formation of the monumental Retro-Avant-Garde.<sup>5</sup> The basic idea of this being the non-repression of troubling or undesirable elements of historical and social regimes in their work. Rather than repressing them, they are highlighted, as they

argue that the traumas affecting the present and the future can only be addressed by tracing them back to and through their sources, working through and processing them. As Alexei Monroe argues in his excellent analysis of their work, it is not an approach based on constructing a new future by negating the past (which in general is the usual relation to time found within avant-garde artistic practice), but rather "retroguardism attempts to free the present and change the future via the reworking of past utopianisms and historical wounds".<sup>6</sup> The impact and effect of Laibach/NSK's work is based on the effects produced by the disjunctive synthesis of troubling historical elements and the radical ambivalence contained within this.

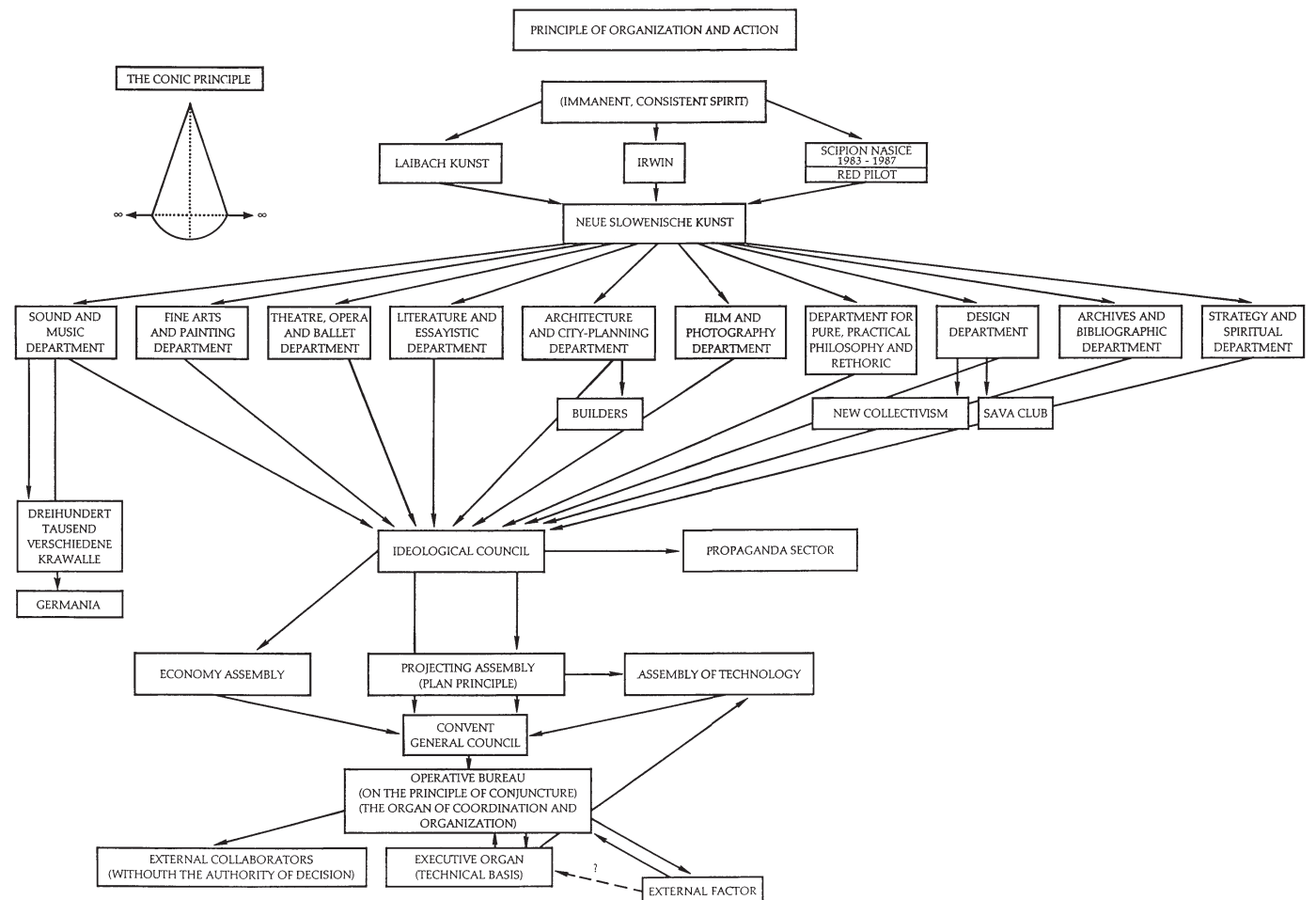
As has been argued by Žižek and others, socialist democracy was sustained by a set of implicit (obscene) injunctions and prohibitions and a process of socialising people into taking certain explicitly expressed norms. Tactics of overidentification, as employed by Laibach and the NSK – as well as more broadly within the Slovenia punk subculture of the 1980s that gave birth to the genre of "state rock", or punk music incorporating elements of the discourse of self-managed socialism as critique through overidentification – work precisely by taking the stated norms of a given system or arrangement of power more seriously than the system that proclaims them itself.<sup>7</sup> This operation occurs not through addressing the law itself, *per se*, or by breaking prohibitions (a more straightforward form of transgression), but rather by teasing out the obscene subtext that underpins the operation of the law and supporting social norms. A strategy of overidentification in order to be effective needs to appear total, and through that it "transcends and reactivates the terror of the social field... the spectral menace of totality gives the phenomenon sufficient 'credibility' to sow doubt and disquiet".<sup>8</sup> And this is precisely how Laibach/NSK's works function, through giving an impression of totality (by claiming the status of the nation, or the state, or of being a global state in itself) in a manner that lends a degree of credibility to the menacing and disconcerting nature of their aesthetic production.

As Susan Buck-Morris<sup>9</sup> explores in her work on transitions within collective imaginaries, dreamworlds become dangerous when they are used instrumentally by structures of power, which is to say as legitimisation devices and discourses. Buck-Morris argues that socialism failed because it mimicked capitalism too faithfully. Laibach and the NSK operate by turning this process of mimicry against itself, disarticulating the potency of the dreamworld and utopian promise of Communism that had become embedded within a discourse of legitimisation, mixed with the lingering presence of totalitarian and authoritarian elements. Indeed, it is often that the constituted forms of power existing with state structures are based upon the ability to draw from the energies and constituent power of social movements, of utopian dreamworlds, and render them into zombified forms of state.<sup>10</sup> NSK/Laibach's interventions were so powerful within the Yugoslav context precisely because of how they amplified and made visible this process of rendering dreamworlds into discourses of state legitimisation. The interventions' disconcerting effects provided ways of working through both the continued presence of authoritarianism and utopian energies, revealing how they are enmeshed in the workings of existing social imaginaries and political discourses.



straightforward distinctions through the use of totalitarian aesthetics and a bastardisation of nationalist themes. Laibach and the NSK operate by displaying the imagery, the codes of fascism and state power, pushing it to its limit, recombining it with other elements, other traditions, forging connections that "expose the 'hidden reverse' of a regime or ideology".<sup>3</sup> Laibach are, and claim to be, fascists as much as Hitler was a painter.

This approach of adopting a set of ideas, images, or politics and attacking them, not by a direct, open or straightforward critique, but rather through a rabid and obscenely exaggerated adoption of them, can be referred to as *overidentification*. While the concept was developed within the theoretical armory of Structuralist (Lacanian) psychoanalysis (and later further developed by thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek and various cultural and political activists), it was the NSK Collective that, through their work, forged it into a tool of cultural subversion and sabotage to be deployed within the ideologically charged context of post-Tito Yugoslavia. In this article, we examine the formation of overidentification as a strategy of cultural-political intervention uniquely formed from this context. Is overidentification useful as a strategy of political intervention for an age marked by the presence of cynical distance



Laibach's work incorporates a good deal of official Yugoslav discourse on self-management and social democracy, using at times sections of Tito's speeches and audio recordings, as well as particularly resonant forms of Slovenian history (such as the images and phrases of the anti-fascist partisans, which were quite important for the role they played in state legitimation). It is this reworking of Slovenian and Yugoslav history that invested their early works with such potency, through the way these familiar ideas were made strange and even uncomfortable to audiences through their compounding and juxtaposition with other elements (for instance by fusing them together with ultra-*völkisch* imagery and Germanic phrasing, which was taken to be anathema to nationalist groups). Laibach's response to this, particularly in relation to the continued controversy over its use of a name which was said to dishonor the 'hero city' of Ljubljana, was to continue to adopt a stance of complete identification with Slovenia and Slovene identity, and thus to frame controversy and rejection of Laibach as the rejection of Slovenia itself. This created a form of ambivalent identification in which Laibach both bastardised (in their critics' views) Slovene identity while at the same time engaging in a quite militant assertion of that very Slovene identity (at points even declaring the German to be a subset of the Slovene). Through the politics and practices of overidentification, Laibach and the NSK hint towards the possibility of breaking the very process of identification,<sup>11</sup> and this is why they were so disconcerting for many political actors in Slovenia in the 1980s.

Laibach/NSK's politics and practices of overidentification are displayed in unique and quite fascinating ways in their organisational practices, or at least the claims they have made about them. This shows through in their alleged structure offered by the NSK *organigram* from 1986, which takes the logic of alternative forms of institutionalisation to an almost absurd extreme. In the organigram, at least ten different departments in addition to a number of assemblies, councils, and organs, are all paired with or ruled over by the statement of "immanent consistent spirit" that covers and directs all the activity of NSK. This claiming of and overidentification with overly complex, arcane, and nearly incomprehensible state-like structures was observed by the 'Rough Guide to Yugoslavia' to bear a striking resemblance to the diagrams used within school textbooks to explain the country's bafflingly complex political system and structures.<sup>12</sup> It is through this that the spectral menace of totality is activated, for in the case of the NSK it clearly is spectral because the NSK is composed of many more organisational components than it has ever possessed as members. This becomes more so in the case of projects such as the 'State in Time', in which the claiming of a state structure existing purely in time is enacted through overidentification with the organisational form and structure of states. In all of Laibach and NSK's work there is never a clear-cut statement on organisation but rather an exploration of its ambivalences and possibilities; this is an approach that "does not support a utopian or dystopian organisation, but the fantasies of audiences that need to imagine that such possibilities still exist".<sup>13</sup>

The first phase of Laibach's work is based around the usage and working through of elements and histories that are particularly resonant and provocative within a Yugoslav, and specifically

Slovenian context, but often have little to no meaning outside of it. This perhaps comes to its highest point of concentration in the 1986 NSK joint production *Krst pod Triglavorn* (Baptism Under Triglav), which was a monumental drama roughly based around the history of the forced Christianisation of the Slovenes, interspersed in NSK fashion within many other layers of history and processed through the imagery of the avant-garde (for instance the recreation of Vladimir Tatlin's proposed monument to the Third International as part of the set design). This production, which took place in a large state-sponsored theater, is interesting not just for the merits of its internal aesthetics, but also in how it illustrates the changing status of Laibach and the NSK within their social context (particularly given the greater importance of state-backing and commissions within socialist systems). That is to say that it marks the transition of Laibach/NSK's work from its emergence within alternative and subcultural milieus to an acceptance, even if tentative and grudging, by state authorities. It characterises what Monroe refers to as the "Laibachization of Ljubljana"<sup>14</sup>, or the process of confronting and reworking cultural boundaries and norms that occurred during the 1980s; from the point of the banning of Laibach appearing under its chosen name, to their international success with which Laibach's fanatical identification with Slovenia came to be realised in their being recognised as the most successful of Slovenia artists.

Laibach's rise to prominence in the international mass media occurred at a point in time where attempts were being made to shift the image of Yugoslavia closer to one of a western 'humanist' democracy. Laibach's presentation of itself in terms of a cold neo-totalitarian front (although admittedly one that had softened its self-presentation somewhat from its earliest works, adopting more of a playful approach in some ways) functioned both to invoke forms of authoritarian legacies and images that the Yugoslav government wanted to reject, while at the same time becoming the most prominent and aggressive assertion of Yugoslav (and particularly Slovene) culture on a global stage (although the fusion of Germanic elements within Laibach's aesthetic meant that they were often taken to be German by casual music fans, even more so during the 1990s with the rising popularity of German industrial bands). Laibach's success showed that it was "actively connected to the zeitgeist, but specifically to those subterranean, unforeseen elements repressed by mainstream consciousness",<sup>15</sup> specifically the lingering presence of authoritarian, totalitarian, fascistic elements and militarism in the self-management system itself.

If the early phase of Laibach's work was oriented around interventions which drew heavily upon local histories and references that only resonated within that context, then it shifted to one much more oriented to broader audiences reaching beyond the local or regional context and operating within global cultural and imaginary flows. It is this logic that underlies Laibach's reinterpretation of the Queen song, as well as all the other covers and reinterpretations that Laibach have engaged in, such as their versions of the work of the Beatles (1989), Europe (1994), Opus (1987), and more recently Laibach, extending the 'global state in time' project, have taken to reinterpreting the form of the national anthem itself (2006). In their reinterpretation and reworking of 'One Vision', Laibach are not attributing any particular political agenda to Queen *per se*, but, rather, are engaged in a process of amplifying the ambivalences and tensions that are already contained within Queen's performance. It is not that Laibach brings a fascist aesthetic to bear on it, but that there is a similarity and underlying dynamic between totalitarian mass mobilisation and capitalist mass consumption. Laibach present this strangeness back to an audience as a reflection and fracturing of the structures and imaginaries through which that crowd has been constructed and constructs itself.

Laibach's reworking and transformation of other artists' materials render it into, seemingly, almost totally different compositions in terms of their feel and nature through relatively minor changes in tone, orchestration, and lyrics. This approach is somewhat along the lines of what Deleuze and Guattari discuss as the formation of a minor literature<sup>16</sup>, one based not on the development of a new representative form of language but, rather, working within the existing major languages and turning them against themselves to create strange new forms. Laibach and the NSK's artistic productions, as they take part and intervene in the Yugoslav and regional social political context (and beyond that), create the basis for the formation of what could be described as a minor politics<sup>17</sup> and the minor composition of social movement<sup>18</sup>. Laibach's reworking and fusing together of widely differing pre-given aesthetic and ideological elements, sources they treat as readymades be to transformed through recombination, can be understood as a particular form of what the Situationist International referred to as *détournement*. *Détournement*, or, literally translated, "embezzling", involves the combination of pre-existing aesthetic elements and ideas. But while *détournement* has often been understood in a rather watered down way in terms of forms of culture jamming based on witty recombination and mixing of elements that work based on a



fairly easily recuperable form of critique (for instance *Adbusters*), the work of Laibach and the NSK is much harder to make palatable. Most détournement-based culture jamming relies upon maintaining a kind of critical distance from the elements used, while Laibach's work functions through a total and fanatical identification with obscene subtexts of the elements they employ. In this sense, Laibach return to a much deeper sense of détournement as the fundamental questioning of worth and communicability in any system of meaning, and the developing of tactics for monkeywrenching the fundamental structures of the production of meaning. Laibach's amalgamations of ideas, images, and politics does not simply recombine them, but acts to transform the potential of the elements used to create meaning in relation to each other, and through that acts as a form of semiotic sabotage in the public sphere, at times critically damaging the ability of these symbols to operate.

### Strategies of Overidentification

"He who has material power, has spiritual power, and all art is subject to political manipulation, except that which speaks the language of this same manipulation."

– Laibach, 1982<sup>19</sup>

But let us consider the role and practice of overidentification in a broader scope. Overidentification as a practice of political intervention might indeed function as the unifying nodal point of a Lacanian left<sup>20</sup>, if indeed such a thing actually existed.<sup>21</sup> Since that period of Laibach's rise to international attention in the late 1980s, this approach to cultural intervention has been adopted more broadly within political organising, and can be identified in the activities of groups such as the Yes Men, Christoph Schlingensiefel, Reverend Billy, the Billionaires for Bush, and many others. The argument for such strategies is that in the current functioning of capitalism, the critical function of governance is to be more critical than the critics of governance itself. Functionaries in a system of power, by presenting themselves as their worst critic, thus deprive critique of its ammunition and substance, thereby turning the tables on it. This is to go beyond both the arguments put forward by Boltanski and Chiapello; that critique has been subsumed within capitalism<sup>22</sup> and that, within autonomist politics, reactive forms of social resistance and insurgency still remain a driving motor of capitalist development. This hints at the possibility that strategies for the neutralisation of the energies of social insurgency are anticipated even before they emerge. It is in this context that a strategy of overidentification is argued to be of particular value, throwing a monkeywrench in the expected binaries of opposition and response.

The most worked-out conceptualisation of overidentification as a strategy of intervention has been articulated by BAVO, an independent research project focused on the political dimensions of art and architecture, primarily based on co-operation between Gideon Boie and Matthias Pauwels.<sup>23</sup> Although their take on these matters is far ranging (as can be seen by the varied contributions they gathered together for their edited collection *Cultural Activism Today*), there are a few key points that illustrate well their take on overidentification. First, that we live in post-political times where it is possible for artists and political actors to say anything, but what is said does not matter. Today, it is argued, artists are expected, and even demanded, to play something of a critical function, as long as one does not go too far in that function. In other words, so far as to question the fundamental ideological

co-ordinates underpinning social relations, as by doing so "one is immediately disqualified as a legitimate discussion partner, treated like an incompetent, ignorant imbecile who stepped out of line and should better stick to his own field of experience".<sup>24</sup> From this BAVO argue, following Karl Kraus, that when forced between two evils, one should take the worst option. That is, to abandon the role of pragmatic idealists and to work to force an arrangement of contradictions to their logical end. In their words:

"Instead of fleeing from the suffocating closure of the system, one is now incited to fully immerse oneself in it, even contributing to the closure. To choose the worst option, in other words, means no longer trying to make the best of the current order, but precisely to *make the worst of it*, to turn it into the worst possible version of itself. It would thus entail a refusal of the current blackmail in which artists are offered all kinds of opportunities to make a difference, on the condition that they give up on their desire for radical change."<sup>25</sup>

BAVO adopts such an approach as they argue that other possible strategies, such as working on the grounds of marginal positions or creating forms of exodus, have already been anticipated and accommodated by systems of capitalist governance, and are therefore no longer useful as disruptive strategies.<sup>26</sup> It is within this context that the work of groups such as the Yes Men becomes more interesting, precisely because, rather than putting forth forms of critique that can easily be brushed aside, their tactics of fanatically identifying with the neoliberal agenda thus pushes them further along to obscene yet logical developments of such ideologies. This is the stance Laibach and the NSK employed, one based not on critical distance but erasure of such distance. And it is through this erasure of distance that the Yes Men's opponents are thrown off guard, precisely because, as BAVO describe it, this form of intervention forces such opponents to betray their articles of faith and passionate attachment to a neoliberal agenda just as its obscene subtext is made clear, and thus "makes it [in this case, the WTO] – rather than its critics – appear weak"<sup>27</sup>.

BAVO summarise the most salient features of a strategy of overidentification as being based on these elements:

1. Owes its effectiveness to sabotaging dialectics of alarm and reassurance, drawing out the extreme and obscene subtext of a social system, eliminating the subject's reflex to make excuses for the current order to inventing new ways to manage it better.
2. Quickly shifts between different positions, overstating, mocking critique, and producing internal contradictions and points of tension that cannot hold together.
3. Sabotages easy interpretations of unproblematic identification either with or against the intervention, making it difficult to be recuperated in any direction.
4. Aimed precisely against the reflex to do the right thing.
5. Creates a suffocating closure within a system of meaning or relations, preventing escapes from the immanent laws and relations of that system.<sup>28</sup>

A strategy of overidentification thus provides one possible antidote to what Peter Sloterdijk refers to as "cynical reason"<sup>29</sup>, or a condition where people know that there is something fundamentally wrong but continue to act as if this is not the case. It is this cynical distance that Jeffrey Goldfarb diagnosed as so prevalent in the US, creating a sort of "legitimation through disbelief,"<sup>30</sup> although one could easily argue that this is much more widespread and just the condition that a strategy of overidentification aims to address and intervene within. One can certainly contest the desirability and effectiveness of such an approach, and such strategies have

and continue to create a great deal of debate within political, artistic, and academic circles. Nevertheless, even if the conclusion is eventually reached that such is not an acceptable choice of interventionist strategy in most cases, it nonetheless seems valuable to learn from, especially in making a transition out of a time frame or frame of mind that is paralysed to find any method of intervention because all strategies are already caught in varying webs of power and therefore argued to be compromised. A strategy of overidentification operates precisely by turning this already-caughtness into an advantage by deploying and redirecting energies of capture and constituted power against themselves.

Žižek, in an essay on Laibach and the NSK<sup>31</sup>, comments that the reactions of the left to them has first been to take their work as an ironic satire of totalitarian rituals, followed by an uneasy feeling based on not knowing whether they really mean it or not. This is usually followed by varying iterations along these lines, wondering if they really do mean it, or whether they overestimate the public's ability to interpret their multiple layers of allusion and reference and thus end up reinforcing totalitarian currents. For Žižek these are the wrong questions to ask and angle to take. Instead, it is a question of how Laibach and the NSK, as well a strategy of overidentification, more broadly intervene in a social context marked by cynical distance. From this perspective Žižek asks:

"What if this distance, far from posing any threat to the system, designates the supreme form of conformism, since the normal function of the system requires cynical distance? In this sense the strategy of Laibach appears in a new light: it 'frustrates' the system (the ruling ideology) precisely insofar as it is not its ironic imitation, but overidentification with it – by bringing to light the obscene superego underside of the system, overidentification suspends its efficiency."<sup>32</sup>

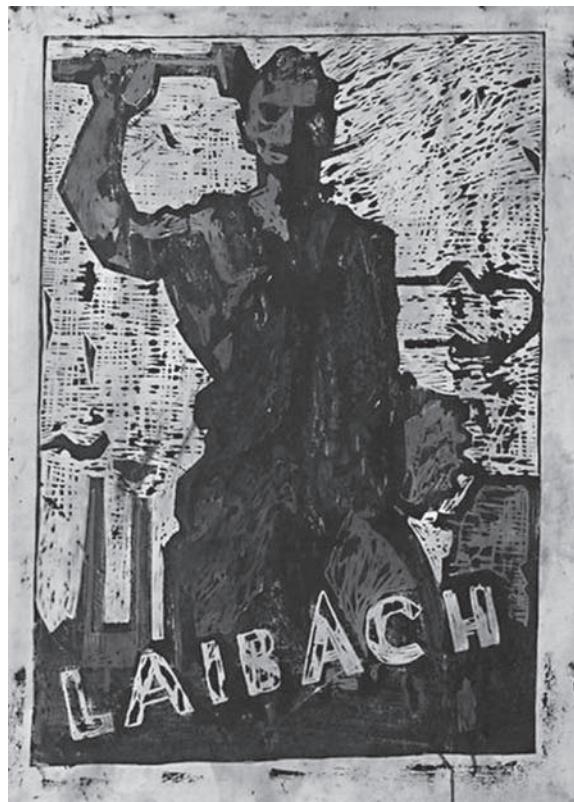
But the question remains to what degree a strategy of overidentification is marked by the conditions that led to its emergence? If overidentification was effective in its ability to disrupt circuits of meaning and the social imaginary within a particular social and historical context, it does not necessarily follow that it will operate similarly in other, possibly significantly different situations. Might then a transition within the imaginary of a politics formed around aesthetic interventions premised upon overidentification be necessary? This is perhaps what one sees in the development of Laibach's work, which moves from operating as a disruptive mechanism in and against the Yugoslavian national imaginary during the 1980s, but then changes direction following the disintegration of the country. For instance, during the 1990s the NSK launched its 'State in Time' project, where it claims to have created a global state and system of governance that is not based in physical space but only in time. This is at one and the same time a movement away from a strategy of disruption of one imaginary, towards a new form of imaginary disarticulation, and can in some ways be seen more to be based on a nostalgic identification with the state form that has been torn apart than an act of overidentification. In other words, it had become possible for Laibach and the NSK to mutate away from disarticulating the Yugoslav imaginary through overidentification and to begin a more positive assessment of the state dynamics it had fused itself too. This is perhaps not so surprising when one takes into account Sharon Zukin's argument that it is only really possible to fully aestheticise a system or relations of production once it has passed its moment as the hegemonic form of production.<sup>33</sup>

The question of transition and intervention

within the social imaginary is transformed if one engages an argument such as the one made by Guy Debord<sup>34</sup>, that rather than there existing a sharp and total distinction between Western capitalism and Communism in Eastern Europe, it was, instead, a question of the difference between the workings of a diffuse and a concentrated spectacle. In other words, not of totally different forms but rather of particular compositions of a similar underlying dynamic of power and exploitation. The question then becomes of how a strategy of overidentification either creates or restrains the possibility of intervening within the creation of collective imaginaries within the present. One can perhaps stumble towards the position that overidentification provides another tool in the conceptual toolbox for refounding and reformulating critique. It provides a possible answer to the dynamics analysed by Peter Starr in his exploration of the failed revolt in post-'68 political thought.<sup>35</sup> Starr argues that modern revolutionary thought is premised upon radical breaks and departures from the past, one that suppresses previous notions of return and reappearance of social forms. And it is this dynamic of reappearance that gives way to fanatical obsessions with a dynamics of recuperation, as they run counter to the narrative structure of revolutionary politics. Starr argues that the ultimate direction laid out in post-'68 thought moves toward a notion of, impossible, total revolution, and thus, failing there, moves towards forms of cultural politics based on subtle subversion. A strategy of overidentification, as well as of the Retro-Avant-Garde, working through the remaining utopian energies and the traumas of the past rather than repressing them, opens up other avenues for reformulating critique and intervention. A strategy of overidentification enacts a transition away from considering the dynamics of recuperation as problems to be avoided, to considering them as possibilities to be exploited and worked through, in, and against; but only *against* by working in them rather than seeking escape by recourse to an unproblematic outside. It is at this juncture where the question of transition is transformed into one of composition and recomposition, working from within the disarticulation and re-articulation of collective imaginaries.

#### Notes

1. Laibach is a Slovenian avant-garde musical performance group that was founded in 1980. They were one of the founding members of Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) in 1984, along with IRWIN (painting) and Scipion Nasice Sisters Theater (subsequently changed their name to Noordung). Although this article focuses primarily on Laibach's work, motifs, ideas, and images are frequently shared, developed, and elaborated by the various branches of the NSK, whether independently or as part of joint ventures.
2. For a good analysis of fascist aesthetics in relation to the



avant-garde, see: Hewitt, A. (1993) *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

3. The NSK TIMES. The blog of NSKSTATE.COM
4. Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, (1984). Kundera wrote, "Whenever a single political movement corners power we find ourselves in the realm of totalitarian kitsch." For Kundera, "Kitsch causes two tears to flow in quick succession. The first tear says: *How nice to see children running on the grass!* The second tear says: *How nice to be moved, together with all mankind, by children running on the grass!* It is the second tear that makes kitsch kitsch."
5. For more on Laibach and NSK's work in relation to this history and development of the avant-garde, see: Djuric, D. and M. Suvakovic, Eds. (2003) *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991*. Cambridge: MIT University Press; IRWIN, Eds. (2006) *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: MIT University Press.; Badovinac, Zdenka, Ed. (1999) *Body and the East: From the 1960s to Present*. Cambridge: MIT University Press.
6. Monroe, A. (2005) *Interrogation Machine: Laibach and the NSK*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (p.120).
7. One can see a parallel between the development of state rock in Yugoslavia (bands such as O! Kult and Panktri) and developments in the British post-punk scene, such as Public Image Limited claiming to be a communications and production company, or artists moving towards an adoption and overidentification with yuppie aspirations as technique of critiquing them. A number of artists, particularly Joy Division, Human League, and Magazine, drew from state socialist and totalitarian imagery their work, employing a tactic creating ambivalent effects, although perhaps nowhere nearly as disconcerting at Laibach and the NSK's work. Reynolds, S. (2005) *Rip It Up and Start Again*. Post-punk 1978-1984. London: Faber and Faber.
8. Monroe, A. (2005) *Interrogation Machine: Laibach and the NSK*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (p.79).
9. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe* (MIT, 2000), Susan Buck-Morris
10. Shukaitis, S. (2007) "Plan 9 from the Capitalist Workplace: Insurgency, Originary Accumulation, Rupture" (2007) *Situations: A Project of the Radical Imagination* Volume 2 Number 2: 95-116.
11. There is a wide-ranging field of literature on politics and practices of identification, identity, and the politics of organisation. For a good overview see Pullen, A. and S. Linstead, Eds. (2005) *Organisation and Identity*. London: Routledge. For an exploration of the politics of disidentities, see Harney, S. and N.Q. Nyathi (2007) "Disidentity," *Exploring Identity: Concepts and Methods*. Ed. Alison Pullen, Nic Beach, and David Sims. London: Palgrave: 185-197.
12. Dunford, M., et al, Eds. (1990) *Yugoslavia: The Rough Guide*. London: Harrap Columbus. (p244)
13. Monroe, A. (2005) *Interrogation Machine: Laibach and the NSK*. Cambridge: MIT Press. (p113)
14. Ibid. (p155)
15. Ibid. (p75)
16. Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1986) *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
17. Thoburn, N. (2003) *Deleuze, Marx, and Politics*. London: Routledge.
18. Shukaitis, S. (2008) "Dancing Amidst the Flames: Imagination and Self-Organization in a Minor Key" *Organization* Volume 15 Number 5: 743-764.
19. Djuric, D. and M. Suvakovic, Eds. (2003) *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991*. Cambridge: MIT University Press. (p574)
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