

In her book *Mysticism and Resistance*, Dorothee Sölle argues that in the current economic hierarchy, our attachment to the ego has become the foundation of our lives. **(15)**

The individual is not seen as a free agent but instead as infinitely exploitable. In her book, the word “resistance” is not concerned with the fire of revolution but with endeavouring to shape a different way of life.

Resistance refers to any ordinary aspect of life that does not seek to conform. Secular mysticism does not conform with staged individuality. It combines contemplation with action. This form of mysticism recognises the ego as the ultimate prison warden (p.291).

The perception of mysticism as an excuse to avoid reality owes much to the notion that religion is a private matter.

Asceticism is really an interruption, a withdrawal, a different relationship to things and so does not mean breaking the body over the wheel (p.304).

It is the motion that goes from faster, bigger and more productive to slower, smaller and more aware (p. 306).

“The supremacy of the truth of now compared to all of planned history is the result of the fact that one uses the compass of being rather than having.” (p.351)

“Understanding mysticism as the jailbreak of the ego from self-exploitation is radically opposed to the basic tenets of capitalism and is the key to freedom in the true sense of the word.” (p.299)

The wide use of images and languages can be recoded.

“A view with room” has nothing to do with wanting a new car and “Be anything” is a mindset that doesn’t need anything to accomplish itself.

When the city is reread as potentially mystical then its citizens cannot be reduced to a state of permanent poverty and neediness.

My original reason for visiting Iran was to investigate the political situation of the Sufis there and to analyse the public space. This led to a temporary construct, or thought experiment, for which I would refuse to see the other as a separate and “other” being.

In one way or another, images will present a dichotomy. I employ the method of juxtaposing photographs (here/there and earlier/now) in order to expose meanings that would not otherwise be there. This meaning is literally created by the interface and not by the pictures themselves. I am now fully aware that this method – which plays with autonomy and narrative – is based on a hierarchy between image and spacing. I am also cognisant of the fact that each image will be viewed as the product of a photographer who is offering her perspective on a pre-existing, objective outside world, namely Iran and Antwerp, and that each viewer will see the images as not their own.

This is why images are inevitably misleading. They are the visual extension

of the daily trap of thinking in terms of difference, of the dichotomy between subjective and objective: a dichotomy that a mystical perspective wipes out.

Photography is a tool I use to orientate myself. Photography is an exercise in contributing to the shaping of life. Photography, sound and words are resources that – when composed in certain ways – can function briefly as a thread through a labyrinth. For me personally, learning to live can seem like a form of spiritual politics that has the capacity – should some sort of dogmatism arise – to rearrange the thread at any moment.

Mastering the Curtains has become an analysis of a coreless being.

Mysticism cannot be a method as it questions all methods.

I am intrigued by the radical nature of the mystical perspective.

It is ideologies full stop. It is an exercise in blasting holes in imaginary prisons.

15.
Dorothee Sölle, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance*, (Fortress Press, 2001)