

K: Thanks for joining me. First question, and this might seem a bit obvious but was wondering if you could say a little bit about what you see as the relationship between climate change and patriarchy.

S: Of course. I guess there the whole dimension of gendering nature and the relation to it that we established to it as dominion over nature is a story that we tell ourselves over millennia and especially in a western culture it replicates between our species dominating other species, some in our society dominating others, and especially men dominating over women all follows the same pattern. I wouldn't be confident to say that one is the original sin that alters our following but we have that same approach that we tend to abuse and misuse the weaker ones or the ones who don't by default resist. And then there is of course the flipside that you can tell that your dominion falls apart when those who are oppressed strike back or simply stop to support you because the story of dominion just obscures how we are interrelated, how we depend on each other. Its as if you are this autonomous being that has extra powers to take over others while you are the weak one because you are entirely dependent on precisely, your mother, in this case the planet.

K: Thanks. You transitioned already into our second question of looking more specifically at EG and the QF finger. Why do you think direct action is important as a tactic? And what do you see as different about Queer feminist direct action organizing?

S: So there is this key thing about direct action that is to call people to go out of their comfort zones. We live in somewhat of a normalized crisis, its a diffused crisis, it doesn't necessarily demand from us on a daily basis to act heroically. And then we create these moments when we ask from each other to act accordingly, to act in response to this diffused crisis as if it is a condensed crisis because we target these locations that we analyze as the sources therefor our interventions there have impacts all over. The problem with it is that there is a certain way of glorifying and valuing some qualities - being brave, being almost reckless. And while it is a culture we celebrate and sympathize with it is true that it is not for everyone. Especially in a culture where, ya know, "little girls need to behave and little boys can be the little rebels" and those roles kind of keep following us all our lives. These actions and these spaces tend to become more natural playgrounds for those reckless boys and less so for decent girls. And that needs to be addressed because we need everyone to address this issue and if we are already wanting to establish the ways of living that we want to achieve and aspire to within our movements than we would like to make sure that our actions already embody those approaches. So creating a queer feminist space in a quite reckless action is a step in that process.

K: I think something very interesting you've touched on is this idea of comfort zones and stepping out of your comfort zones. I know one of the principles of ecofeminism is the politics of care and the prioritization of mutual support. I was wondering if you could say anything about that and how that perhaps that represented a way in which the QF finger enacted its politics. Could you say something about how you saw this idea of care embodied at Ende Gelände?

S: Concretely there were a few guidelines and principles that we strive to practice. First of all within the finger structure, within ourselves. We want to care for each other, listen to each other and instead of trying to dominate a discussion, debate or decision making process we try to be sort of *extra* inclusive and extra sensitive to divergent and not so vocal positions. Then we also extended this to the very tactics we wanted to deploy saying we would not leave anyone behind, we would go at the pace of the slowest ones among us so it doesn't become a bloc that sort of spreads and splits once some people who are more fit and abled start running and the weaker ones are left behind. Of course these are aspirations and sometimes it doesn't work. Our first days experience wasn't necessarily promising. We really took a break after perhaps an hour and it was a long half-hour break which really gave the cops time to position themselves so we couldn't even get further than 2km away from the camp. But we did not give up on our principles of course just because it failed to work once. Remarkably, what worked the second day was - we were quite close to the train tracks we were aiming at. There were three fingers independently trying to reach the tracks across a wild field, and we were kind of bracketed between two lines of cops. We were on the move but had a police line in front of us and a police line behind us. And what happened, and it was this really magical moment was that the fingertip very imperceptibly started to slow down and the rest of the finger picked that up and slowed their pace to such an unnoticeable difference that the police line in front of us didn't actually notice. So a space opened up, first 5 meters then 10 meters, but it was enough margin to just turn the whole finger unexpectedly into the carrot field and then next to the tracks. I would argue that another finger with other expectations, values or tactical habits would just have seen the outcome as "ok we are going to confront that police line sooner or later so "be strong, be brave and brace for impact" which is what the cops were expecting I suppose so we took them by surprise. And ultimately, we were the only finger that made it to the tracks as an entire finger and I think those tactical choices played a role. That said, I don't want to diminish the role that other fingers that weren't explicitly queer-feminist did in terms of self-sacrifice by precisely working as a magnet - attracting all the police, all the violence onto them so that others could make it. So in a sense I still see a value in having this diversity of tactics so there is a place for these reckless, brave "man"archists so to speak. That enable others to achieve our collective goals.

K: Thank you. Do you want to say anything else around this idea of "form and function" the process and the product and the coherence or discord between those two things, and anything else about the organizing process itself and how that related to what you were organizing around.

S: Maybe I'm a bit ambivalent not that point, because our goals the first day were still set as "we are going to go into the mine, we are going to stay two nights and nothing is going to stop us." Which, to me, sounds somewhat as the same testosterone fueled ambitions that we try to avoid and try to propose an alternative to. I'm glad that, in a way, it failed because it gave that space for us to experiment with radically different ways of seeing your role and your ambitions in a broader action. The same goes for, for example, there is a strong will to go anonymous that

comes from the organizers of the finger structure and yet they don't want to sound imposing to everyone that tactic. Therefore there is always this discourse that is expressed: there is always a will that is expressed but there is always the possibility or the opening to not obey it that is communicated sometimes even in the same sentence. But if there is anything that still echoes in my head it is, during the action, trying to reach the tracks just shouting "Queer finger stick together!" it is a funny metaphorical image that, when taken out of context, it really doesn't mean anything or it means something really weird. But I think it embodies that spirit of sticking together as, well, queer fingers.

K: In the debrief, the day after, the successful taking of the tracks by the queer feminist finger. This question was asked around redefining power: Someone suggested "could this be the new way in which the climate movement understands power is through this queer feminist lens" but then there was also the pushback against that of "But is power really what we are trying to be taking?" I was wondering if you could say anything to this relationship between power and weakness and what that might portend for the rest of the direct action climate movement.

S: First of all, being in a movement that has already embraced this ecological lens of valuing interrelations more than dominion, **I think we are in a relatively better place than some other movements or structures that we differentiate ourselves from.** But the job is not done definitely, and we can go forward and I would like to see, as I joke to organizers "Next year there won't be a queer feminist finger because all fingers will be queer feminist by default". Except one specifically, a maybe very masculine oriented finger because we want to be inclusive and we want to create a space for everyone. And, you know, if they will feel more comfortable in that space they are welcome. There was this joke running during the action that, very typically, the queer finger was having a disco party while the red finger was writing a manifesto. So there is this undeniable attraction and almost jealousy towards the queer feminist finger of how much we had fun and still achieved our goals - I'm sure it is representing some sort of blueprint for further organizing. But concretely, about this question of power, that is what I meant by this ambiguity and ambivalence that I have I have about the ways we organize - in what sense and in what ways are we trying to prove we can do them equally well vs. We want to do it based on entirely different values. Is that we faced a few tactical choices: say, when we were setting off from the temporary camp. Since we weren't prepared for that terrain, and the blue finger was, we somewhat dependent on the blue fingers leadership (and the blue finger was said to be somewhat more male-dominated organizing). And therefore there were some tensions of: are we just going to follow their leadership and just trust them or are we going to do whatever we want. Are we going to support them? Are we going to expect their support for us? Can we just go and do a distraction tactic during the day while they are trying to reach the goal. No no no we aren't just a decoration while the men do the real thing, and it is ironic in the end that the very, sort of, "come and beat us" frontline of the blue finger kind of invites police aggression. If you see hard hats, you want to hit them with a baton. While the queer feminist finger had an entirely different look and so this whole staging of your perceived vulnerability is actually a position of power that makes you go through the police lines maybe much more easily.

K: Do you want to say anything else about this idea of vulnerability as power, or how that was reflected in the way in which you were organizing?

S: I can't necessarily speak on behalf of that fingers main values being embracing vulnerability vs. Avoiding power because I had the impression that there were these conflicting signals. Perhaps they aren't conflicting but trying to let a synthesis emerge: yes, we are not letting our ambitions of building power go while redefining this power in a more inclusive and flexible way. Which is why it feels so strange, and so queer in the end.

K: What do you see as the importance of queering the climate movement?

S: The most immediate thing I've had since Ende Gelände is it makes me tell the story much more easily to a broader audience which is slightly counter intuitive. You might think that not only is this radical climate activists but they are also queer feminist so they are the exception to the exception, the margins of a marginal group. But actually, it creates the opposite it means that "Well this climate movement isn't his heroic manly reckless thing", but we are especially aware of creating comfortable spaces for everyone. It is important to note that not everyone in the queer feminist finger were neither queer nor feminist by definition. But it was, by definition, a space where everyone would feel comfortable and that makes even the mobilization effort so much easier and broad that I am confident that next time round it will be possible to get many many queers onboard joining ende gelande because they know that it is not the kind of space they were expecting or maybe having prejudices on which means our multiplicity our diversity becomes an entry point for people who would not otherwise get involved because they would feel incompatible with either one or the other aspects of this organizing culture.

K: So my last question: What did you learn from this experience and what do you see as the hope or direction for the future of ecofeminist queer direct action organizing in the future.

S: I think this is not a first step but a process. Last year at Ende Gelände there was already a pink bloc that formed somewhat spontaneously that at least created visibility. This year it was already a much more inclusive, distributed way of organizing. So regardless of your themes so to speak, or your concerns, the organizing of the finger structure was outsourced so to speak. You could be a group in another country or in another already existing organization to come up with the ambitions the tactics, the logistics and everyone of a particular finger. That is already indicative of how we are reinventing our processes from a very centralized, closed-doors, and also male driven organizing to a more diffused process. But I guess our success as the queer feminist finger already also indicates some sort of blueprint of how we can gather around themes and concerns and struggles that are already intersecting the climate struggle. I just received the good news that the proposal to have a decolonial finger or bloc at the next Ende Gelände got accepted and well received. So the work is going on! If we can create spaces of visibility for our intersected struggles within our movement, we create this almost fractal movement where at each scale you reproduce the multiplicity, diversity and therefore the strength of our movement.

K: Wonderful! Is there anything else you would like to add?

S: Yes, I'd like to end with one of our slogans. It started out as "We are here we are queer the end of coal is near." But throughout the action it morphed into: "We are here, we are near, the end of coal is queer!"