CHAPTER 10
THE POLITICAL POETICS OF MYCELIUM

Mycelium

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the radical potentials of mycelic practice. Mycelium is the root network of mushrooms, consisting of spores, which seeks nourishment in their surroundings, constantly spreading, showing ability to interpret its environmental circumstances and distributing nourishment to the spores needing it the most. Each spore develops individual and flexible characteristics, but always in contact with the communal mycelic body. The chapter unpacks the four phases of mycelic life and death: expansion, cannibalism, heksering formation and communication. Mycelic practice, as expansive and cannibalistic, invites us to surpass our individuality, reject the ego and any given dominant order of, say, Western civilisation, such as individual ownership or capitalist logics of growth. Death is part of life. Death sustains life. Just as closeness or intimacy involves awareness of absence understood as that which is not visibly present. Each of the phases in the life and death of mycelium points towards particular strategies and ways of working: politics, organising, methods, writing and citing. Each phase contributes to the critique disrupting the hegemonic political orders.

Keywords: Mycelium; cannibalism; collective writing; collective ownership; counter-hegemonic practice; political poetics
INTRODUCTION SPORES

In 2016, a root network sprouted for the first time in Denmark: mycelium. It is nothing new and in a sense nothing anew. Yet, never the same. From thereon mycelium has grown, shot its tendrils in fertile grounds and manifested in several publications, performances, ritual practices and instances of spontaneous political activism. The mycelic practice is a collective and experimental endeavour that intervenes in the field of politics, writing, organising, activism and performance. Mycelium emerged from the biological phenomena of the same name. Mycelium as a biological construct embraces at least four phases of life and death: expansion, cannibalism, witches’ circle formation and communication. These phases are to some degree all present in the way mycelium works, in mycelic strategies of organising, critiquing and disrupting the hegemonic political order of late-modern capitalism and the current growth of populist nationalism and fascism. Mycelium is the only attribution of this collective activity.

Mycelium has explored the witch, the beggar, the leper, the last pig, the subversive pervert, the dance plague, gift giving and the sun, amongst other things. We have explored these as commentaries on the industrial scale of meat production, death and consumption; the supermarket as the purest image of capitalism; laws implemented in Denmark making begging illegal (mainly aimed at the so-called Romas); the dehumanisation of refugees; microplastics and planetary pollution; and in calls for a mycelic revolution, the undermining of capitalist, fascist, sexist, purist and racist orders. These explorations have taken form as published collective writings, political activism, ritualistic performances, and in each of them, the four phases of the life and death of mycelium is in some sense present.
The political poetics of Mycelium

Mycelium Performance, Summer Solstice 2017.

The Revolt of the Last Pig, Lyse Nætter Festival 2018.
What Is a Mycelium?

I [...] regard the mycelium as a heterogenous army of hyphal troops, variously equipped for different roles and in varying degrees of communication with one another. Without a commander, other than their environmental circumstances, these troops organize themselves into a beautifully open-ended or indeterminate dynamic structure that can continually respond to changing demands. (Rayner, 1991, p. 24–35)

Mycelium is the root network of mushrooms. It consists of spores, which seek nourishment in their surroundings. Spreading its tendrils radially in an expansive web below the ground. New shoots will sprout as the mycelium seeks new territory and weaves its web beyond the already established frontier. Seekers and explorers. Artists and discoverers. This process will go on until the spores of the frontier can no longer find nourishment. The expansion is a collective endeavour. Mycelium displays the sensibility and the ability to interpret its environmental circumstances and to redistribute the nourishment to whichever spore seems to need it the most, thus maintaining the overall constitution of the mycelic communal body. Information and nutrition are transmitted across its filaments allowing for metabolistic solidarity. However, the spores across the mycelium are not uniform. Each strand develops individual and flexible traits, which ensure the flow of nourishment and information. This includes flow of nourishment from the strongest to the weakest part of the network just as larger growths such as trees are prone to do between individuals. In this way, the collective endeavour depends on the development of each strand’s individual characteristics. Just as the tragic individual is both at home in the distinct personal apollonic sphere and the collective dionysiac sphere, the individual spores derive their respective characteristics in accord with the mycelic web and its communal body.

Who What Is Mycelium?

Mycelium has organised itself and its activities in the emerging image of the naturally occurring phenomenon mycelium. It was initiated by a small group of friends with a mutual interest in philosophy, art, fiction and politics. They sought to create a new expression, a political poetic. They sent out hyphal troops, looking for nourishment. New members were invited. Mycelium expanded, grew larger.

The individual members, or spores, only reveal their belonging to mycelium upon inviting new members, distributing nourishment to new spores. The only criteria are that the members contribute to the plural manifestations of its activities, be it in writing, painting, drawing, dance, godless magic or whatever else may come to flourish from its spores, and that they are willing to disclaim individual ownership of that which is produced in the context of mycelium.

Mycelium is the continuous construction of an environment in which the individual spores of which it is comprised contribute, expose themselves, stagnate and pass away. Sometimes a spore engages intensively in mycelic activities, at other times it may be in a state of hibernation. Mycelium accepts the death of a spore.
But connections can always remerge, be consumed and reanimated. The metastability of the mycelic process requires this flexibility and flux. By which, of course, we mean expansion and cannibalism.

Mycelic spores gather sporadically to write, plan or perform as a coven. We work through and by what concerns us, what inspire and interests us. Each of us contribute by sometimes informed, sometimes erratic ideas, actions and inscriptions. Being shared, new ideas form and take form as performances, poems, interventions, prose, heavy drinking, laughter, creepy photos on the internet and unending lists of uncompletable projects. Mycelium writes collectively, but not monologically; the particular voices of individual spores, as they weave in and out of each other, are made to stutter as they resonate throughout. My name is Mycelium. We are many. We squeal like pigs.

**Phases in the Life and Death of a Mycelium**

As mentioned, the ever-changing movement of mycelium can roughly be divided in four phases: expansion, cannibalism, formation and communication. Each phase is unfolding the continued life and death of mycelium and in different ways inspire concrete mycelic activities and practices, such as collective writing and ritual performances.

![Distribution of Nourishment.](image)

**Expansion**

A *social structure of many souls* – a union of cacophony and paradox. A heterogeneous body with a thousand genders, expanding in circular formations below the soil. Expansion continues until the spores in the frontier are no longer able to find nourishment and eventually form a disc. The mycelium continually interprets and responds to its contextual and environmental circumstances. Flexible, invasive, creative, mycelium both adapts to and transforms its surroundings. Mycelium connects with and inscribes whatever it meets into its own logic of sylvan metabolism. Its expansion is its life and, subsequently, its death as well. Through its
sacrificial generosity it serves an ecological purpose higher than its own reproduction. ‘Conatus’ is an inadequate word for its life cycle. ‘Will to power’ is a more fitting label. The myriad of rummaging tentacles stretches out as an underground cloud of slow, steady inflation. Mycelium breathes and expands like chthonic lung tissue in ethereal white.

*Cannibalism*

Once the mycelium has grown too large to sustain itself, it starts cannibalising its own centre. Enzymes break down the old mycelium, turning it into compost which serves as nutrient for new spores and spore germination. This joyous feast of self-projection is a clear rejection of ego-formation or centralised control. The very logos of mycelic growth exclude these centralised strategies and ideologies.
The feast is a dionysian festival whose dancers dance to the manic beats of cannibalism. A flame fouling itself. Mycelic cannibalism is an expression of exuberance and generosity. Why generous? Because the mycelic limbs happily lend out their bodies to sustain the feast and carry the festival onward. The feast is precisely nothing but participation and it therefore involves some sort of loss and self-sacrifice. Through loss each new spore and spore germination regains the free movement of the universe itself. One could talk of ‘auto-inspiration’ if one did not know about Uexküll’s notion of ‘Umwelt’. The mycelic collective of extending limbs dances and swirls to the strangely harmonious tones of the full rapture of those great swarms of celestial bodies that populate the night sky. But we must, in the middle of the orgiastic expenditure of self, concede that what the quickened respiration of the dancer draws in is nothing short of the very mists of death itself. The inebriation of intense mycelic becoming entails a radical self-forgetfulness, which culminates in the sudden need of nourishment due to extended nutritional neglect. The mycelium therefore begins to feed on itself as a quick and intense source of energy renewal. In this chaotic menagerie of abundance, rapture and self-expenditure the resulting new mycelial limbs may decide to manifest themselves above the soil in strange circular formations.

Witches’ Circle Formation

Mycelium may decide to manifest itself as a circle of full bodied mushrooms with both stem and cap and all. In England these have been named ‘fairy rings’, and in the Nordic countries witches’ circles. In European folklore, these were perceived to be signs of elves or witches having danced in circles at night. They were understood to be indications of sacred manifestations, witchcraft and occult and demonic practices. Consequently, they were interpreted as signs of the presence of druids and witches in accomplice with the dark lord himself. Satanic powers unfolding. These testimonies of *magia naturalis* make it possible to think of the world as enchanted and of being enchanted oneself. From the point of view of powerful Christian clergymen, any engagement with *witches’ circles* was thought to happen at the expense of one’s personal salvation. From a non-religious point of view, this is still the case. However, the witches’ circle is but the circumference of a sacred sphere that connects the underground and the world above. It marks a sacred place born of mycelic activity understood as an expression of the pathos of an essentially communal body. A body consisting of individual participants joining the collective dance of the mycelium in singular ravishing fashion. The witches’ circle can thus be seen as the face of the world as experienced from within in all its immanent intimacy. That is, what in Nietzschean terms would be described as an ‘affirmative will’. The productive pathos of the mycelium constitutes what Bataille would call an ‘inner experience’. Inner experience is, according to Bataille (1972), a mode of experiential appreciation with dire, deconstructive implications for the implicit positivist ideology of much Western science: “‘Oneself’ is not the subject, insofar as it isolates itself from the world, but the place for communication, for a melting together of subject and object’ (p. 23). *The witches’ circle* is an opening, a wound and a passage.
Communication

The witches’ circle is to be understood as mycelic emergence. Its carpophores form a communicative space wherein one can enter an intimate connection with the mycelium as well as the trees whose roots connect with it. As has recently been documented, a lot of trees use mycelia as an ‘internet of fungus’ for communication and coordination of the distribution of nutrients in times of scarcity (cf. Flemming 2014; Wohlleben, 2016). Mycelia thus produce a platform for godless but sacred communion beyond the comprehension of modern humans detached common sense. Life there is very realistic. Because only he who is mycelial is realistic and vice versa. The intimate states of communication are not just oneness attained whilst melting in the act of dancing, loving and so on. They are rather the pathos, the tension and intensity, between the melting parties, like that of the bow and the lyre (to paraphrase Heraclitus). Therefore, they are not states of calm or Nirvana. They are musical states of rhythm and harmony at melodic tension, with its crescendos, chimes, noises, jitters and dissonance. What is communicated is not the partiture but the music itself. And the state of communication is that of the exposed, that of participation and of generous self-surrender. There is no meta level, so to speak.

This communication negates the ego. However, it maintains the individual, since the individual is constituted by the double knowledge of the mycelic body as intensity and representation, as a discontinuity which necessarily entails a share in the all-encompassing continuity of the mycelic whole. Otherwise it would merely be a monad, as Leibniz would have put it. Therefore, the individuals are by definition always already exposed, participating, involved and, ultimately, interconnected in more or less sustainable symbioses. Any kind of egotistically constituted and ideologically promoted individualism demonstratively seeks to deny this fundamental fact of life itself. Any talk of ‘mycelic individualism’ is a reductio ad absurdum, since it neglects the discontinuity of the individual which is but a
ripple on the ocean of continuity, that is, the mycelic whole and in its environment. The egotistically constituted individual thinks of itself as wholly belonging to itself, but the individual is both harbour and sea, it blooms only as a member of the swarm. That is, as a member of what Timothy Morton has recently named ‘the symbiotic real’ (Morton 2017).

Just as various religions have their temples and their churches, a mycelium has its carpophores, its sacred, but never homogeneous, body of visual self-exposure above the ground. The witches’ circle is the mycelia making itself known, however its appearance is, at the same time, an invitation into the established sacred realm of its cloudy army of hyphal troops. Therefore, it is more than mere appearance or enunciation. A witches’ circle marks the threshold of the sacred chthonic mass continually taking place. It marks a disruption of the established order and initiates a materially manifested push forward towards further becoming. It is, therefore, an invitation to transgression, not transcendence, since it does not invite you to rise above but to dive in. Transgression through immersion. Insight through dissolution. God is dead, magic is afoot.

The four phases described above all inspire constitutive traits of activities in mycelium. The phases are enacted in mycelic writing and citing practices, performative and ritual engagements as well as in political activism.
Mycelic Politics?

Mycelium is a collective inside/outside the established order, weaving through and between to form a sacred realm of possibility and risk. This realm has been rejected as evil or dangerous. It is the coven or a murder of crows. In this realm the aesthetics is political. On most of our publications we write a variation of the following on the back:

Mycelium is a gathering of literary, artistic and philosophical spores, who work with the concept stipulative truth and political poetics. Such truths are only applicable, when they are assumed and incorporated. They are in other words perspectival and activistic. As a result, political writings ought to be a poetics, and reject any notion of political and historical necessity. (Mycelium #1, #2, #3)

We actively pursue aesthetic truths by stipulating them and putting them to work. It’s a rather complicated story because it is made up of thoughts, not facts. What is the truth of a community but a stipulated souveraine value of its immanent interwoven coherence? What is the truth of a coven? A dance? Eroticism? A black sun?

We seek to establish an alternative order and another-way-of-knowing the world. Such truths and alternatives contain a critical potential which isn’t satisfied by acceptance and inclusion (a so-called dialectical approach). We are rather in the process of seeking outsidersness or the occulta excluded, an umwelt expanded, the beyond or perhaps the within within.

A mycelic approach to politics should work in the singing image of the mycelium itself. Creating open-ended dynamic, indeterminate, flexible and communicative structures. Reject any temptation of ego-formation or centralisation. Such stale structures should be eaten and cannibalised. Eat your ego. Deliver it and transform it. Redistribute the excess energy in a generous manner to uphold the collective affirmative body, which underlies the active exploration and expansion of mycelium. Mycelium is the river you cannot bathe in twice. If it stiffens, it dies. Let what dies drown. Being a river is an act of merciful cannibalism. Thereby do the politics of myelia embrace a politics of cannibalism. Negate your centre. Form a magic circle and manifest above ground: Witches’ circle. These manifestations are the sacred realms, the thresholds and passages towards intimacy and community. They are open invitations to transgression and participation. As summarised in Mycelium #6 ‘We are cannibals’:

I. Form a heterogeneous communicative open-ended structure.
II. Cannibalise your centre – eat your ego.
III. Distribute excess energy to wherever the spores seek to expand.
IV. Manifest a sacred circle, love.

ATTACK OF THE CORDYCEPS – NOTES ON PARASITIC STRATEGIES

New strategies might also be adopted. For instance, the strategy of the Cordyceps. An interesting breed of fungi that specialises in specific insects. One certain spore
seeks out an ant, taking root in its body and eventually its brain. Here it takes control of the insect. The mycelium invades the host’s tissue and eventually it replaces it. Infected and manipulated the ant starts to behave weirdly (perhaps not unlike the dancing plague described in Mycelium #5). In a violent frenzy, a rapture, an inner urge drives it towards the sun. The ant is reduced to a vehicle seeking out the sun. Such infected insects are often referred to as zombies. As the zombie is touched by beams of sunlight the fungi burst through the body and scull of the host. From here it will burst in exulted joy casting out its spores in the sunlight.

In a capitalist society a mycelic parasitic approach to political action might come in handy. Indeed, as noted: ‘parasites, in a phrase, are predators that eat prey in units less than one’. A parasitic approach would seek to zombify parts of the capitalist machinery, lead it towards the sun and there penetrate its scull in a frivolous burst of creative and fertile frenzy. Drawing on the lessons of the cordyceps we build exoskeletons to direct the movement of the machine, we replace its tissue and infect its mind. This could be done in a number of ways. The cordyceps could infect the structure of an institution, its values or its language – units less than one – thereby redirecting it, away from the presumed utility of the institution (it could for instance write a chapter in an academic book). We write presumed utility because it is quite unclear to what end capitalism actually is useful beyond maintaining itself, repeating and reconstructing its own logic. This might seem useful for those who benefit from the existing power structures, but it hardly lives up to the ideas of redistribution and communication promoted by mycelium. The parasite is therefore undermining and redirecting existing structures. Working within them. That’s why we do not live in forests alone.
We reside in buildings, condos, bungalows, houses, cars, sewers, sidewalks, power lines, bus-lines, kindergartens, schools, universities, clubs, bars, prisons, convenient stores, other stores, stairs, stars, cats, the internet, pop songs, chansons, noise, white, pink, black, noise, home-cooking, streets, cables, drum-machines, trains, planes, lines, dots, spots, spit, kisses and satellites, satellites orbiting other satellites orbiting other satellites orbiting other satellites … (Eugenie Piegnot, 1982, p. 44)

ATTACK OF THE MASSOSPORA CICADINA – NOTES ON PARASITIC STRATEGIES

Another interesting parasitic strategy can be inspired by the Massospora cicadina. Take for instance the Magicicada. It spends most of its life beneath the soil (13–17 years), before it magically appears above ground. As Platos Aristophanes noted in the symposion, the cicadas, like the original human divided (before the genitals were restructured making coitus as we know it possible), sprung from the earth as earthly immaculate conceptions. In Phaidros we learn that the cicadas originally were humans who died, without noticing it, from thirst and hunger when muses and music appeared. Delighted by the beauty they forgot to eat and drink whilst singing and dancing along. From death the cicadas arose, being immediately able to sing. So shouldn’t the cicadas be considered allies in the endeavour against capitalism? Not as pray for parasites? Like the birds they are primordial erotic beings.

As the nymphs emerge from the ground the M. cicadina spores infects the cicada, taking hold of its abdomen. Eventually they will cause the abdomen to fall off, but cicada will continue displaying sexual behaviour. It will seek to copulate with other cicadas, in the process releasing spores that in turn results in a secondary cycle of the infection. Moreover, the fungi will alter the sexual behaviour of the infected male cicada. He will call out to females, but he will also respond to the call of other males, thereby making himself attractive to both members of the sexes. In this way the infected male cicada disturbs the patriarchal and heteronormative order.

It is also interesting to note how the melodic motif of both male and female cicadas is woven into the theme of the M. cicadina mycelic umwelt. The infected cicada continues to mate but is itself sterile. In a copulating frenzy they spread the spores of the fungi whilst missing the abdomen and rear. Eventually, in the final state of the infection, the fungi will produce spores with thick ornamented walls. These will lie dormant in the soil until new nymphs appear.

Is this a strategy worth pursuing? Should we consider cicadas our allies? Erotic beings who arise from the earth to sing hymns to Eros? Yes. Perhaps we should consider this infection in a different light. Isn’t it the strategy of the subversive pervert (as described in Mycelium #1)? An alliance between the erotic cicada and the subversive strategy of fungi to attack the reproductive organs of the machine? Whereby we:

thrust the universe out of [our] anus, in enormous explosions, Big Bang, gigantic prolapsing stars, who turns the inside out of being and sends [our] interstellar gas clouds out in the very galaxy to condense and merge into new solar systems, galaxies and worlds. (Mycelium #1)
Could such alliances produce new suns to long for? To strive for? In order to give birth to a dancing star, chaos must reside in oneself.

However, this strategy is also dangerous. Which sun should we aim for? Which suns should we birth and nurture? Some suns shine with a deadly pale light, inspiring slave-morality or führer-mentality. These undermine the communicative body and redirects it towards an end external to itself, thus attaining an imaginative revenge whereby the mycelic community negates its own activity, resulting in a will to nothing. As you see, mycelic parasites are not the only parasites. Capitalism itself appropriates creative and joyous outbursts to its own ends, making everything a commodity. Directing behaviour towards the sun of consumption. ‘I’ll buy that for a dollar.’

But what does that mean!? Does the rejection of ‘an end external to itself” imply that the end is found somewhere within? Shouldn’t we have external goals in a world where the threat of climate change and mass extinction of species is immediate. Doesn’t the very idea of mycelic activity transgress any notion of fixed ideas within? That depends: is it within me/us? Or within the within? Mycelium makes portals, passages, openings from one within to another within. Nightly wind-eggs in the bosom of darkness. The mycelic sun is the communicative dance of the birds of the autumn sky, it is the activity and intensity of mycelium, the sums of the suns within within.

**MYCELIC WRITING**

Mycelic practice, as expansive and cannibalistic, invites us to surpass our individuality, reject the ego and any given dominant order of, say, Western civilisation,
such as individual ownership or capitalist logics of growth. Death is part of life. Death sustains life. Just as closeness or intimacy involves awareness of absence understood as that which is not visibly present. In mycelium, this manifests itself in a rejection of the ‘I’ as well as of any potential ownership of mycelic writings. In an age dominated by cognitive capitalism and the psychic pressures of intellectual property rights, mycelium refuses to submit to the degenerate order of copyright. Mycelium’s anti-property approach to collaboration also comes to the fore in performances during which no one reveals their face. Faces of mycelic individuals are to remain hidden, undisclosed and chthonic. Anyone who sympathise with the mycelic outlook may draw on mycelium’s work and claim the name, but never out of economic or commercial self-interest. That is crucial.

In contrast to most published writings today, mycelic writing enacts what might be called ‘the beauty of true community’. Neither the writing process nor the writings themselves are motivated by career ambitions, commercial interests or narcissistic self-promotion. Engaging in mycelic writing is to transgress one’s normal, average and everyday boundaries of ego and self, and to step into a holy communion with all that is, taking it upon one’s post-individual being to co-produce and collectively author texts that in various ways reflect a profound and intense will to deconstruct the ecologically malignant ontology of individuals so essential to and constitutive of the modern world. As post-individual writers the hyphal troops of mycelium constitute a perforated whole that affects itself through its myriad of actively participating parts. In that regard it makes sense to talk about ‘creatively sustainable auto-affection through the holistic persistence of parts’. Within the tradition of collaborative writing research Lowry, Curtis, and Lowry (2004) have suggested the name of ‘reactive writing’ for this specific kind of collaborative writing where ‘the work is not preplanned and does not involve explicit coordination’ (p. 79). They further highlight the advantages and the downsides to this specific approach to collaborative writing:

Advantages of reactive writing include the possibility of building consensus through free expression and the development of creativity. The primary downside of this strategy is that it makes coordination difficult and can cause difficulties with version control [...] – these difficulties likely limit greatly the size of teams that can use this approach effectively. (Lowry et al., 2004, p. 79)

Nonetheless, mycelium has found ways of circumventing these so-called downsides. Even though it might vary from writing project to writing project, there is always someone or a few of the participating mycelic writers that decide to finish the writing project and arrange for it to be published. A total of 12 people cannot (easily) call the publishers simultaneously without wasting everyone’s time, so for sheer practical reasons a certain person takes it upon him-/her-/itself and send the manuscript to the publishers. That being said, consensus is highly overrated as a thelos of writing. What mycelium’s reactive and radically open and non-coordinated writing practice is about is the generation of heterogeneously productive spaces of spiritual subversion and visions of alterity in the element of a political poetics. So even though there is just one hyphal troop making the call or sending the e-mail to the publishers, there is, ultimately, not a fixed and predetermined
limit to the number of potential participants. And, actually, the participants of mycelic writing practices are not just the mycelic writers themselves, considered as a group, but also, and perhaps equally importantly, the readers of the mycelically produced texts.

There are passages in some or most mycelic writings that are left struck-through. The semantic, hermeneutic status of such passages are highly undeterminable and solicits original and singular interpretive moves of the reader. Struck through text is not to be relied upon, and the mycelic authors ‘behind’ or ‘underneath’ it would probably not like to justify its ‘inner’ meaning in court. Mycelic authors are not committed to defend the claims and exclamations of their collectively brought about text. Anyone can use and rewrite whatever has been written in mycelic solidarity. There are no bounds to the circulation of possible meanings with mycelic texts – besides, that is, the attempt to economically profit of the distribution of texts brought about in the spirit of Mycelium. Mycelium collectives understand themselves to be repeating the essence of what can be called ‘the symbiotic real’ on a higher, Nay! often lower, artistic level, thus mimicking the nature of nature itself. Therefore, reading and engaging in meaning-making interpretations of mycelic writings is to enter into a generative symbiosis with the Mycelium that have produced the text in question. You cannot avoid it, and there is no way around it. The individual either enters, or doesn’t. Welcome! Everything as invitation, imitation, consumption, death=life.

The mycelic writer can be perceived as a spore: each holds individual characteristics but act in union and sometimes in tension with other spores. The collective engagement does not seek to eliminate particularities and distinct voices, but rather seeks to make them work together, continually responding to each other, distributing nourishment throughout the mycelic body. Mycelium allow for associations, rewriting and commentary. Mycelium even encourage them. Chthonic cacophonic copulation, with its dissonances, resonances and occasional harmony. It involves mutual trust, vulnerability and care, learning through the text corpus in ways that necessarily leaves each member exposed. Thus, with this mode of writing a particular ethic unfolds, one of care for self and other understood as self in other.

Simultaneous and parallel initiatives across time and space. Someone writing something here, and some writing something over there. Not ‘me’ and ‘you’, and especially not ‘I’, but always ‘we’, ‘we’ as a semi-stable group of (post-)individuals. Emerging synergies and gropings in the dark. No preset limits to creative self-transgression.

Warm up. Don’t accept being cold. The bodily assertion of the collective is based on individual striving of beings past egoical constitution. It is important for the various phases of mycelic creation that the participating parts of the mycelic whole conceive of and perceive themselves to be limbs of a larger body that is essentially of a muscular nature. Fibres, veins, blood pressure, perspiration, exaltation, exertion, stretching. Muscles need to be warmed up. Minds need to be warmed up. Minds=Muscles. Writing to others that are also oneself is, to begin with, a practice and implies a kind of warming up of the total corpus of the mycelic unit(s). Unit operations. An unstable totality. If a circle was to
serve the purpose of metaphorically describing the doings of the mycelium, the circle had to be imagined as perforated and full of holes. The outside seeping in. ‘I’ seeping out. Muscular intimations. Push it to the limit – and then beyond!

Two concrete ways to warm up one’s body and mind for mycelic writing is (1) to engage in non-stop free-writing without adhering to usual standards of correct formulations and (2) collective reading aloud of drafts already co-written. Write together without looking back, and edit the drafted passages already edited by others in order for the writing process to get momentum and accelerate towards the virtual end point of mycelic self-realisation. Read and re-read already written passages of a mycelically co-authored text and, perhaps, read it aloud to yourself in order to sensually engage with the words and sentences. Mycelic writing depends on a sensual engagement with language, and senses are only awakened through actively stimulating them. Again, auto-affection is key for successfully participating in mycelic co-authorship. Affecting your no longer so individual self through generously patient free-writing and reading aloud it is possible to enter into a linguistic communion with alternative discourses that subvert the idioms and ways of talking and writing of everyday common sense language use. If free-writing and reading aloud is done mycelically more participating hyphal troops will be writing and reading simultaneously, thus generating a productive, inspiring and, ultimately, auto-affective polyphony that will enable voices and expressions of ecological solidarity and ontological holism to come forth. Beside these two specific ways of warming up one’s body and mind a host of other physical exercises might be recommended such as collective Zen Buddhist ‘zazen’ meditation, Taoist or Confucian ‘tai chi’ or ‘asana’-exercises of Yoga. Having tea and talking in the woods might also be a good idea to consider. But then again, every mycelium and every hyphal troop will be different, however slightly, hence local or individual considerations must be taken in order for the more organic warm up processes of the whole to succeed.

It is, as already stated, important that the individuals participating in mycelic writing processes understand themselves to be muscular and corporeal. From this self-understanding it follows that the transgressing of one’s everyday ‘I-identity’ and set of personas can only be achieved through a ‘ruinous expenditure’ (cf. Bataille) of energy similar to the moment of climax during copulation in the animal kingdom, where the individual organism temporarily loses its firm belief in itself as a non-negotiable and ontologically fundamental phenomenon. The individual surpasses itself through mycelic writing, through creative copulation, through collaborative work, performance and growth. All of these activities involve a radical submission to the demands of the politics of Eros. Eros is not to be understood in the Freudian sense as a form of narcissism, that is, of wanting the world to revolve around one’s egocentric longings and interests. On the contrary, Eros is to be understood in a Loewaldian sense, in an Aristophanian sense, in a Sapphoian sense, in a Bataillian sense as the longing to (re)connect with the world(without-us), to surpass the loneliness of the ego, to transgress the societally imposed limitations to a truly creative existence. In other words: mycelium understands Eros to be the road to post-individual participation, to become one with the world and with others. To be generous, promiscuous and willing
Now, what does all of this mean if we translate it into the realm of concrete action? For one it entails that you as a group or collection of individuals together set up what might be called ‘affinity spaces’ (Gee, 2015). Affinity spaces are characterised by...

What?! Wait, what is this? By referring to James Paul Gee and his book *Literacy and Education* we have just mycelified him. We have latched on to Gee and turned him into a sprouting and groping spore in the expanding corpus of mycelium. Unaware of this underground activity, Gee and his novel chthonic existence unfolds to the semi-stable rhythm of the mycelically authored text you are currently reading and thus yourself engaging with in an implicitly or explicitly mycelic fashion, depending on your own self-understanding relative to the text. You have just ‘met’ James Paul Gee, perhaps for the first time, so please be kind to his generously mycelic presence.

Now, back to where we came from.
Affinity spaces are, for the most part, online fora or writing spaces where a smaller or larger group of people – human and/or non-human – gather and interact in order to create content that surpass the cognitive, psychological and bodily capacities of any of the participating people involved. It can revolve around practical matters related to, for instance, beekeeping or woodcarving, but it can also deal with more/other artistic issues. The favoured affinity spaces of mycelium are online, shareable and collectively editable documents where a swarm of mycelic individuals can simultaneously navigate, operate, contribute and co-create the emerging contents of whatever project they might be up to. As we quoted Rayner for saying in the beginning section on what a mycelium is: ‘… a heterogenous army of hyphal troops, variously equipped for different roles and in varying degrees of communication with one another’.

Often times spores of mycelium meet up physically and sit together in the same room with beer, wine, tea or coffee, and Indian take-away. Alternately they talk and write, and as the day progresses the mode of communication becomes more and more esoteric and based on beings ‘in the know’ with one another. You hear of lot of sentences being finished by another individual than the one who took the initiative to begin it. Again, generosity is a central mycelic virtue.

**MYCELIC PERFORMANCE AND RITUAL**

The witches’ circle represents the expression: an expression that may be sought violently disrupted or violently sustained by surrounding society. Mycelium knows, however, that the expression is only an entrance, a passage. It hides that which happened before and will happen after it. The root network alive beneath the surface of the soil, and the nutrients that the death of mycelic spores provide
The roots of the trees that grow tall above us. We explore and experiment with this poetically, philosophically and theoretically through our critique of dominant institutions, identity categories and politics.

Furthermore, it manifests through our ritualisation of the texts, performance and the masking individual faces. We seek the naked expression, as opposed to the nude, the fixed, predetermined, objectified. Within within. The expression offers an opening to communication and ultimately intimacy between withins. This involves understanding how each being seeks continuity by surpassing themselves and the categories that constrain them. In seeking this expression we attempt to establish a sacral space where transgression and union may be experienced.

Mycelium experiments with various expressions and actively makes use of visuals, distorted voices, music, maskings, theatre and communion. The point of these is to give those who enter the sacred space of mycelium a bodily experience, to be moved as one body. Through the use of more than written expressions we seek to give the audience an experience of communion, of surpassing their ego and belonging to something larger than themselves. A sacred space without religion. Magic without spirits. Without the supernatural, meaning ‘above nature, transcending nature, belonging to a higher realm’ (dictionary.com), but rather within nature, a immanent magia naturalis or the natura naturans of natura naturata.

Mycelium in Silent Demonstration against Beggar Law, Stroget, Central Copenhagen.
Mycelium seeks to adapt to the context and space in which the performance takes place and the kinds of people expected to participate. Mycelium seeks to move and hopefully engage new spores, but it also reflects actively on how it can avoid scaring potential spores with such rituals, or just scaring them the right amount. Small gestures may suffice.

Mycelic performances and rituals, like mycelic textual productions, tend to focus on concrete issues, which are explored and critiqued through a political poetic. We, in a sense, seek to mythologise these issues, so as to prepare for the initiation, incantation or eventual stepping over the threshold, at the liminal stage of the ritual. This mythologisation and our theoretical works (such as this) also serves the purpose of rooting the attained knowledge at the post-liminal stage and further preparation at pre-liminal stage. In different ways we move through mythologisation, preparation, incantation, incarnation. Mythology is real. Reality is but a myth.

CONCLUSION CONTINUATION

Mycelic exploration in an ongoing practice. In the elaboration and experimentation above we have sought new ground and developed new uncharted territory. Thus, mycelium now, is not what it was before this chapter was written. New strategies evolved and should be put to use (so get to it!). Mycelium is nothing but the ongoing exploration of rituals, politics, expressions and forms of writing that seek to surpass the ego and undermine oppressive orders of centralised leadership and quasi-totalitarian command. Therefore, there can be no conclusion(s) – only open ends of further possible exploration. Not even death is a conclusion. Death
is the prerequisite for new life. And so it all continually begins. Again and again and again and ….

As you have read this, our spores have been distributed. You are now infected. Listen closely. The coven is calling: gobble gobble gobble gobble. We have taken root in the soil of your body and mind. From here we will form, expand and communicate. Sending signals through beams of light in the image of the sun. Nourishment will be distributed and shared in reciprocal solidarity. In union we will sprout, and manifest witches’ circle. We will blossom and die. For we are many.

**TEN EASY STEPS TO MYCELIFY YOURSELF**

Congratulations! You are now ready to mycelify yourself. How do you get started? Here are 10 easy steps for you to follow:

1. Form a small coven of mycelic-minded friends.
2. Re-read and discuss this article and other mycelic works.
3. Identify totalitarian, centralist, fascist and egoist orders in your environment.
4. Develop strategies to undermine them without succumbing to their logic.
5. Manifest anonymously as ‘witches’ circle’ (text, performance and ritual).
6. Claim the name: stamp the collaboratively co-authored work.
7. Distribute the mycelic writing(s), insights and artefacts.
8. Recruit new hyphal troop participants for your growing mycelic communion.
9. Contact or do not contact other collective limbs of the already established mycelium.
10. Feed mycelium and sustain its growth: be generous!

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

*Books by Mycelium:*

Mycelium #1: Endnu en anstrengelse, afvigere, hvis I vil være frie (Yet another effort, deviants, if you would become free), 2016 (DK).

An essay on the subversive and revolutionary potential of perversion.
Mycelium #2: MYCELIUM, 2017 (DK/UK).
A theoretical work on the political poetics of mycelium. This publication is in Danish, but we are working on an English translation that will be available soon.
Mycelium #3: HEKS, 2017 (Witch) (DK).

A meditation on the figure of the witch, the dance plaque as a reaction against capitalism, the abject and so on.

Mycelium #5: Befrielsen af Elleore (The liberation of Elleore), 2018 (DK).

A documentation of the liberation of the world’s oldest existing micronation Elleore. The liberation took place in 2018. Mycelium is merely curating the documents and photos they anonymously received from the liberators themselves.
Mycelium #6: We are Cannibals, 2018 (UK).

A reworked interview that the bookstore ark books did with mycelium surrounding mycelic politics, cannibalism, the individual against the ego and so on.

Mycelium #2: MYCELIUM, 2019 (UK).

A theoretical work on the political poetics of mycelium. A translation, elaboration and development of Mycelium #2. Mycelium evolves and therefore it would be very un-mycelic simply to translate a mycelic work without reworking it and develop its ideas.
**OTHER MYCELIC WRITERS**


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**Mycelified Quotations/Enhanced Poetic Readymades**