

Gianluca Belloni
Downgrade

Opening reception: Saturday 11 December, 2021, 3 - 8 pm

Procedure for a perjury

When maintenance work is required on low or medium voltage overhead power lines, the systems must be de-energized or made safe.

In order to put the section of the plant to be worked on out of service, it is necessary to ground it directly into the earth.

Isolating workers in the electricity distribution industry from electrical currents of any source and thereby protecting them from the risk of electrocution and death allows them to work on the lines. The very nature of work on power lines means that it is considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the world.

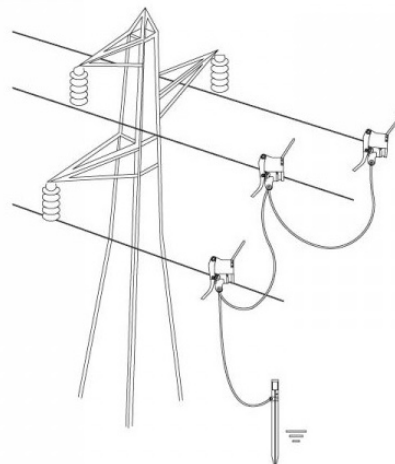
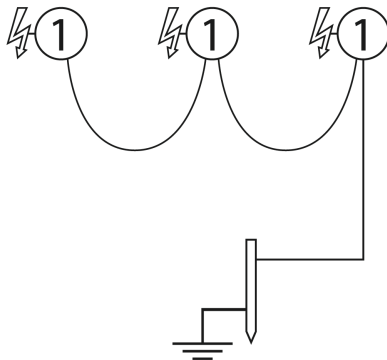
In order to carry out maintenance work, the operator is equipped with a grounding and short-circuit device which is installed in the area where the work has to take place.

The device is portable and can be carried in a metal box or stored directly on site in small underground cabins at the foot of the pylons. For intervention on low or medium voltage lines, the device consists of:

- 3 or 4 light alloy automatic spring-loaded contact clamps fixed onto insulating fibreglass handles that the operator grips when applying the clamps
- 2 or 3 electrolytic copper cables covered with transparent sheaths for the connection between the clamps
- 1 copper cable for connecting the first clamp to the earthing rod
- 1 earthing rod

The clamps are gripped by the handles which together with the fibreglass ensure the maximum insulation of the operator. These clamps are then attached one by one to the cables. In addition to being connected to the second (and in succession to the third and fourth cable) the first clamp is connected to an earth rod by means of a copper wire:

this is a galvanized steel stake with a pointed end that has previously been hammered into the ground. Using this method the voltage passing through the electric cables is discharged into the ground and having followed this procedure, the operator can touch the power lines in safety.



The main feature of the cables used for electrical distribution is their conductivity.

The condition of being a “conductor” is integral since it is based on the intrinsic physical characteristics, which are decisive in terms of what it is used for.

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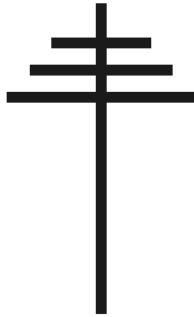
This is always a condition of subjecting the object's body to an outside or foreign power or agent which, thanks to its action, identifies it by giving it a role, a value and consequently a treatment, inserting it into a relationship of authority and belonging. However the tension that runs through the cables is invisible, thus they do not undergo any change in their appearance. If the tension was absent the cables' material nature would remain absolutely unchanged. Although they do not undergo visible changes, this flow makes these objects untouchable, removing them from the common use of things¹. The flow or charge is therefore responsible for changing the status of the body, since it changes the relationship it has with another object and with people².

The relationship maintained between a conductor (the instrument) and the person who uses it is always vicarious. In the case of electric cables, they "carry" current on behalf of companies to their users.

In the body of a conductor, therefore, two natures coexist: one which is properly its own, which corresponds to its natural body and one that does not belong to it but which is conferred on it, which corresponds to the charge that passes through it.

The action that the operator performs during the grounding procedure is one of liberation, it is the act of an instrument that frees another object from its same condition. This releases the instrument from its agent in the time required for maintenance.

The grounding device lays down and distinguishes what had been raised by the authoritative action and silenced by the superimposition that identified it not with its own body but with the body of that which took its place.



3



4

The act of laying down rather than conferring a charge may indicate an alternative form of creation.

The Duchampian conception of art recognized (solely in the act of choice) the emanation of the authority of the artist capable of carrying out a change of status in an object by raising it to work without modifying either its material nature or its appearance. The grounding device allows us to imagine this action to the contrary. It is what frees and isolates the body from the charge imposed by the authoritative action and through its deposition it brings back what has been dedicated to the condition that is proper to it.

From this point of view, if the readymade is the practice that has most legitimized the person as creator, a downgrade is the exercise that legitimizes the creator as a person.

The term is borrowed from the finance vocabulary and indicates a negative change in the rating of a bond or security.

This situation occurs when analysts believe that the future outlook for the stock has weakened from the original recommendation, usually due to a material and fundamental change in the company's operations, future outlook or sector.

"Attributed to" as a proposition preceding the *artist's name* indicates this uncertainty that demonstrates the fragility of the *personal name*.

The value of the work characterized by this term corresponds to its value as an object.

¹ Technical operators in the electricity distribution industry are highly specialized. The certifications and qualifications they must have in order to be authorized to intervene in maintenance on the lines are extremely strict. The qualifications they must possess in order to act are evidence of the non-belonging of these objects to the sphere of common use. People without these qualifications, “ordinary” people, cannot and must not approach them, much less touch them.

² What “charge” indicates in a strictly physical context is the concretization in facts of a phenomenon that has characterized all Western ontological thought since its origins. As with other apparently neutral notions, what the meaning of “charge” denotes in other spheres reveals the sign of secularization which, drawing on the primitive use that was made of it in the theological sphere, then entered the political sphere and promptly exceeded it and entered modernity once and for all in a properly public sphere.

In the legal field, “charge” indicates a public office, an authority, a title, a *teacher* and within this vocabulary the concept of dignity is indicated as the last. The phenomenon whereby the action of an extraneous force which, if subjected to a matter is able to modify its status without however altering its materiality, is the pivotal idea on which the doctrine which first in the theological and then in the political sphere rests first legitimized and then permitted the creation of *autoritas*, the order and paradigm of the governance of societies as we know them, modeled around a strategic conception of being.

This has its roots in an idea typical of medieval Christian political theology which is exemplified in the formal concept of *gemina persona*, a double or twin person. It originated in the course of Christianity from the need to legitimize the exercise of the priestly function of priests who, despite their human nature, were considered the direct descendants of Christ on earth and his incarnation and therefore, bearers in a single person of the nature of men subject to sin but at the same time also the personification of the Grace of God.

The task of theologians was therefore to harmonize through a theoretical and symbolic system a very precise problem that Christianity has posed since its social establishment with regard to authority, namely by what title a man (of the people) commands another man (of the people). In fact, this hierarchisation is not ontologically present in human society. Social hierarchy, in the specific form of exercising *autoritas*, has required *external legitimisation* from the outset, precisely because no man has the right to rise above others. This is a particularly juridical problem, as on the other hand suggested by the etymology of the term “legitimacy” (etymologically *legitimus* denotes something as “in accordance with the law” and “legally valid”). As a consequence, its meaning varies along with variations in notions of rights and the law. With the monistic conception of juridical positivism, according to which there is no other right than the established law, “legitimate” becomes synonymous with “legal”). In fact, ecclesiastical authority was, and still is, sacramentally legitimized through the order. In order to manage the complicated coexistence between the intrinsic earthly human and sinful nature of the minister and the - supernatural grace of God which is capable only of doing good, it was necessary for theologians to create a paradigm of coherent governance in the eyes of the faithful and of the Christian community, and the introduction of the Latin expression *Ex Opere Operato* during the Council of Trent in 1547 was decisive. This term literally means “by the very fact of having performed the action”. It indicates that in the sacraments the sin of the minister cannot invalidate the result of the sacramental action. For example, the sacramental absolution imparted by a presbyter with regard to mortal sin retains all its validity, provided that the minister intends to do what the Church would do. In this way the action becomes indifferent or unconnected to the subject who performs it and likewise the subject indifferent to the ethical quality of his action. With this, the conception of the natural body of the person invested with ecclesiastical authority takes on a fully instrumental character. It is not so much a figure of juridical representation, but rather a constitutive vicariousness, which pertains to the nature of the priesthood and makes it indifferent to the qualities of the individual who exercises the office. It is this particular aspect of the priest as minister of the sacraments that allows us to understand the instrumental value of the body that Christianity has left in the logic of command, and how the priestly function can be defined as “taking the place of Christ”.

The theoretical apparatus and symbols of this doctrine of a double person and its instrumental character were not lost but were adopted by the English Crown jurists of the Tudor period into the mystical fiction of The King’s Two Bodies in order to develop and articulate a creed of royalty and sovereignty.

The doctrine of the two bodies was substantiated in the affirmation of the existence in the figure of the sovereign of two distinct bodies, the *natural body* and the *body politic*. The distinction between the two bodies is not an end in itself, but is capable of concrete political and legal consequences. These consequences derive from the different nature of the two bodies. The natural body of the king participates in all the physical and moral infirmities of humanity and is therefore subject to its relative limits. The king’s political body does not participate in such infirmities, consequently it does not meet natural or moral limits.

The Reports by the well-known English lawyer Edmund Plowden precisely outline this double nature: “according to common law, no act that the king performs as king can be annulled due to his lack of age. Because the king has two bodies in him, namely the natural body and the political body. The natural body is a mortal body, subject to all natural and accidental infirmities, the weakness of childhood and old age and all the similar inconveniences that the natural bodies of other people encounter. But his political body is a body that cannot be seen or touched, consisting of political conduct and government and constituted for the leadership of the people and the preservation of the public good, and this body is patently devoid of childhood and old age ...”. The distinction between the two bodies shows how this was used for the resolution of genuine judicial cases: in the case referred to in the Reports, it was a question of solving the problem of the capacity to act of the underage king. It was an authentic juridical doctrine capable both of judicial practice and of having repercussions in the sphere of public life. This conception of a different nature that passes through the human one in the representatives of Christian authority first and then of the political one established from then until the present day the constant need for an *ab externo* legal legitimisation of the hierarchical superiority on the part of the institutions. All this seems to be the possible reason and cause of the *geminatio* of the person invested by the *autoritas*. Advancing the hypothesis that this is one of the fundamental characteristics that still today determines and organizes the hierarchy in social life and government activity has been demonstrated and appears to be more than well founded.

The emergence of the *geminatio* in a civil context has entailed its interference in all social strata of life and with citizenship, the investiture of all those born into the office of citizens. This is implicit in the ambiguity of the name itself of the 1789 declaration: *Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen*, where it is not clear whether the two terms name two autonomous realities or instead form a combined single system.

The declaration of 1789 shows, in fact, that it is precisely the natural body, that is, the condition of a newborn (not a free and conscious subject), that presents itself as the source and bearer of such a right. Having inscribed the native element in the very heart of the political community, the declaration can at this point attribute sovereignty to the nation, decreeing it as the body that guarantees legal legitimacy. The declarations of rights must therefore be seen as the place where the passage from royal sovereignty of divine origin to national sovereignty takes place. Through them, the “subject” is transformed into a “citizen”, which means that birth - that is, the natural body as such - becomes the immediate bearer of sovereignty. Thus birth and authority unite irrevocably to constitute the primary unity on which the state is founded. The fiction implied here is that *birth* immediately becomes a nation, so that there can be no gap between the two terms.

Rights are attributed to man but only to the extent that he is a citizen and therefore a representative of the nation. The refugee who should have embodied *par excellence* the man of rights represents the radical crisis of this concept, in the State’s legal system. By breaking the continuity between man and citizen, between birth and nationality, this undermines the original fiction of (modern) sovereignty, demonstrating the gap between the natural body and the political body, appearing as a man without title - except the mere fact of being human.

The central reason for the crisis that current politics is going through seems to be in fact the collapse, both in the understanding of the governed and in the self-understanding of the rulers, of the “diaphragm” of the office, of the evident distinction between the physical person and the charge covered by this. Anti-establishment movements are the proof, the technical governments the muscular answer to the problem.

³ Papal cross

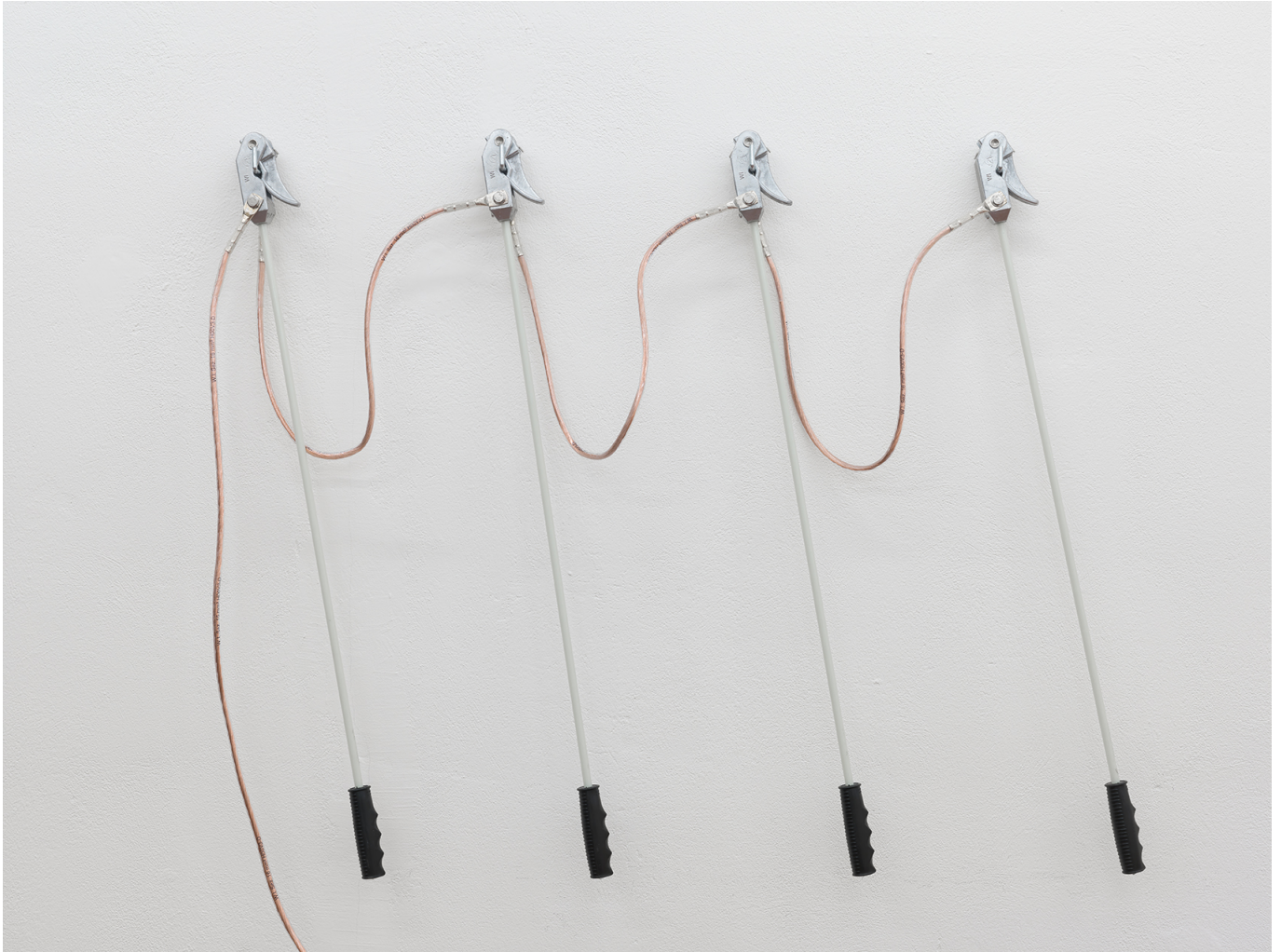
⁴ Earthing or grounding symbol

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Gianluca Belloni
Earth Set Series, 2021
Earthing and short-circuiting device for LV overhead lines in bare conductors
Variable dimensions or 20 x 25 x 110 cm (in the metal box)

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Gianluca Belloni
Earth Set Series, 2021
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Attributed to Gianluca Belloni
Insulating footboard
55 x 55 x 27 cm

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Gianluca Belloni
Dignitas, 2021
Pellet fuel, platform scale
Variable dimensions

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Attributed to Gianluca Belloni
Wedding ring
Ø 2.2 cm

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Gianluca Belloni
Calendar, 2021
Wine carboys, wine corks, socks, hose clamps
from largest to smallest:
46 x 46 x 66.5 cm
46 x 46 x 64 cm
34 x 34 x 52 cm
24 x 24 x 39.5 cm
20 x 20 x 34.5 cm