

m a r t

for

S Octavian

to prevail

Slum

for Octavian to prevail - slum baroque

Brevil

Baroque

Joris-Karl Huysmans

Reza Negarestani

Christa Päffgen

Baby Dee

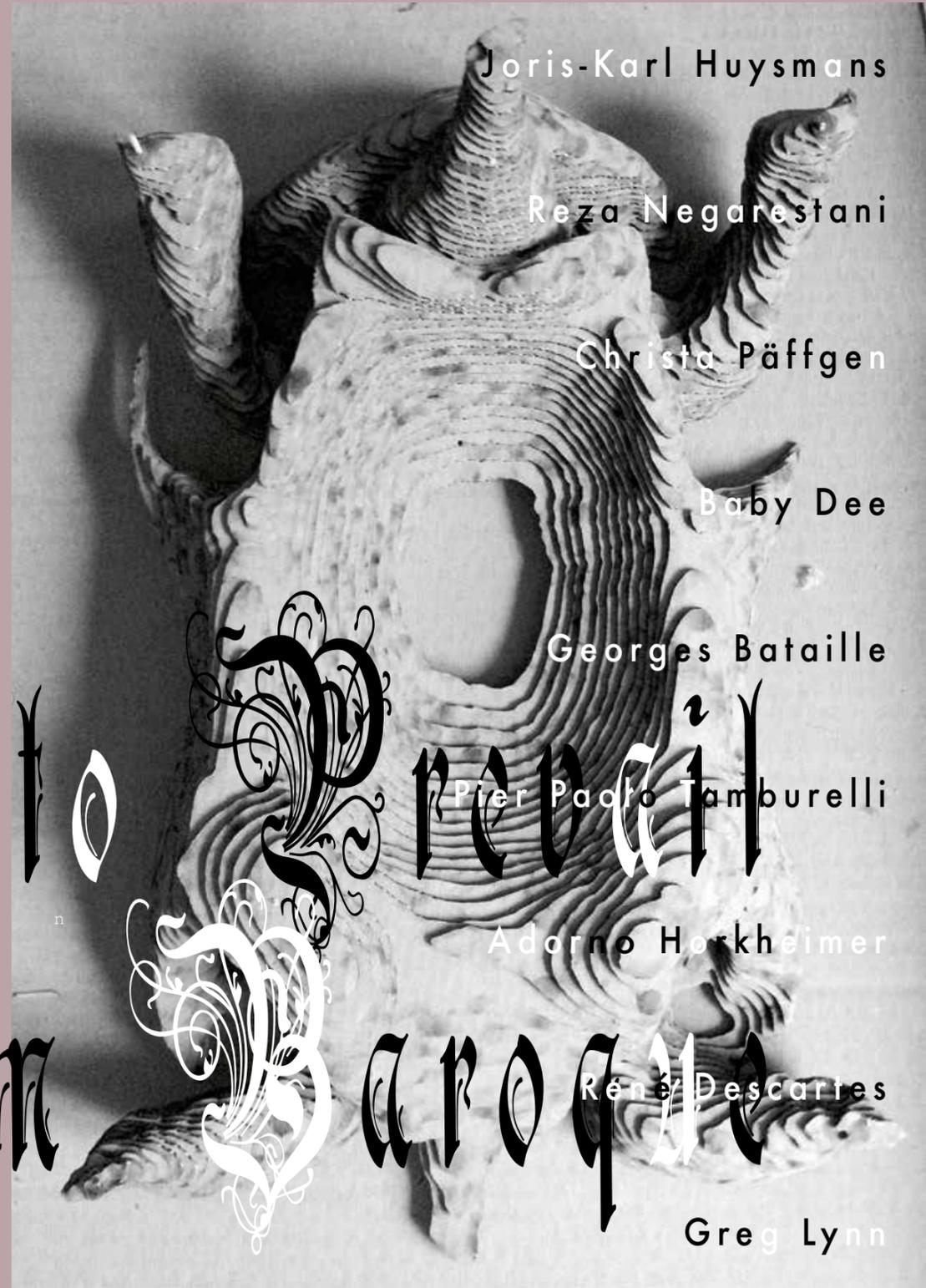
Georges Bataille

Pier Paolo Tamburelli

Adorno Horkheimer

René Descartes

Greg Lynn



for Octavian to prevail - slum baroque
for Octavians triumf - slumbarok

glHoltegaard

30. APR - 5. JUL 2015

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isbn 978-87-92371-17-1

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Postulat og utopisk skepsis: lidt om en metode

Allerede det første, man møder, henligger i en tvetydig tilstand som noget monumentalt, der har tabt sin sammenhæng. En slags nyopført selvbygger-ruin.

Man kunne have bygget en swimmingpool med styropor-elementerne, men det er ikke gennemført efter instrukserne. Der er gravet i jorden, men ikke gravet færdig.

Et hul i jorden er muligvis en af de simpleste landskabstyper, man kan forestille sig: man graver, lægger jorden ved siden af og får dermed både en lille dal og et lille bjerg. Men dér i udkanten af rondellen ligner det et miniaturelandskab, som aldrig bliver helt naturligt, en byggeplads, der er gået i stå og nu er overladt til sin egen erosion ude foran hovedindgangen; på en matrikel, hvor der ellers arbejdes hårdt, for at sørge for at den genetablerede have hverken forfalder eller vokser ud af kontrol.

Som haveanlægsarbejde er hullet demonstrativt mislykket og vil ikke rigtig føje sig ind i den slentrende, rekreative atmosfære, der ellers hviler over Gl. Holtegaard. Men som en usædvanlig ophobning kan det muligvis snige andre situationer med ind i den gennemkultiverede have og anfægte visse aspekter af det barokke program, der er indtegnet så eftertrykkeligt i terrænet. Værket er standset halvt mellem ødelæggelse og begyndelse, standset inden det stivner, falder i hak og giver lidt for nem mening; og i denne tilstand begynder det at stille spørgsmål til for eksempel den beherskelsestrang, der vil afrette floraen i geometriske figurer, komponere den i felter, styret af akser, der på én gang deler og samler. Det abonnerer ikke på den samme trang og vilje til orden, som har gennemtruffet en masterplan ude i haven for at lokke med håbet om klarhed, om en korrektion af det sanselige, der kan indramme det derude i afmålte doser og dermed gøre haven til en montre, der fremviser det frodige i overkommelige, passende udsnit, så vi hjælpes til at fornemme dets rigdom, og dets uhyrlighed uden for montren. I forhold til denne beherskelsestrang, der underlægger terrænet en lineær geometri, hvis stadige underordninger skal give indtryk af et veltilrettelagt, smukt doseret herredømme, virker byggepladsophobningen som et villet kollaps, der foretrækker at bidrage med mere usikre relationer, frem for blot at lægge sig sømløst ind i restaureringen af en gammel orden.

Også titlen, Monument for Loss of Syntax, er paradoksalt, når den fremmaner ideen om et monument, der er viet til tabet af den evne, der netop kan opbygge, for eksempel sammenhengende sprog og monumenter. Her er der i stedet selvbevidste bygningsfejl i den skulpturelle sætning. Flamingoklodsens, den amputerede, omvendte badestige, gør-det-selv-modulerne og polystyrenkrukken med stofstykker er ikke føjet ind efter hinanden; de er ikke arrangeret for at kunne løfte magten i fælles flok. Kompositorisk befinder de sig i mere åbne relationer, drejet fri af de symboltunge akser og med en sjælden dobbeltbund af ydmyghed og vrængende konsekvens; mens fortolkningen ikke helt kan nå frem til sine konklusioner, men blafrer, mere eller mindre euforisk, i en art associativ tåge mellem delene af et afmonteret monument, der ikke vil samle sig i helhedsilluderende pomp. For dér, foran indgangen til hovedhuset, på en af de faste pladser for selvhøjtidelig skulptur, poserer flamingoklodsens i rollen som utopisk discount-marmorblok, en lettere skrattet, alt for let pseudomonolit, hvis smuldrende egenskaber ikke har kræfter til at bære helt så meget, og som derfor, i sin langsomme selvødelæggelse, ikke stiller sig an med med samme heroiske selvfedme, som den monumentale figur traditionelt plejer at gøre. Sædvanligvis er flamingo et af de hurtige materialer, der bruges til de indledende faser, til afprøve ideer, de første prototyper, med kort tidshorison, men her står de første faser på det permanentes plads, i selskab med styropor-elementerne, der også virker som en dysfunktionel efterligning og som et vrængende ekko af de bassiner, barokkens havearkitekter yndede at placere i udvalgte fikspunkter og overgange.

Med den dysfunktionelle efterligning nærmer vi os et tilbagevendende greb, brugt på varierende måder, mere eller mindre tydeligt: den ikke helt overbevisende *mimicry*, der fungerer som bevidst mangelfuld kamuflage, når der skal sniges tøven og ødelæggelse ind i et hierarki. Den forvrængede oversættelse, når materialerne yder modstand, og teknologierne for disse import-eksport-manøvrer undersøges for deres fejlpotentiale. Den irregulære lighed mellem fjerne punkter, det vil sige fornemmelsen af en forbindelse og postulatet om et sammenfald bag om store tidsmæssige og geografiske afstande.

Den oversatte plante, gren, skildpadde, er hver især en lille organisk helhed, der er blevet flyttet gennem en sværm af mellemregninger og endt som uglamourøst, brunt pap, laserskåret, stablet og limet, lag-på-lag, en lille helhed udsat for analyse og maskinfortolkning, som undervejs er skredet ud, idet den forvrængede oversættelse har trukket skildpadden gennem forskellige

tilstandsformer og til sidst spyet den ud som en organisk-digital-hybrid kimære. For efter disse gennemløb ligner skildpadden på én gang en model af en skildpadde og en mutation med sin egen syntetiske eksistens, forvrænget til et sted mellem specifikt eksemplar, abstraktion og polymorf hybrid, der er gledet ud over sin naturlige bestemmelse. Både plantekrukken og skildpadden er blevet til sammensatte objekter, med irregulære kurver, der laver små, forskudte skulp i konturen, med et vaflet volumen, der er stablet op halvt som efterligning af organiske forbilleder, til dels som modeller af nogle rester, tilsat scanningsstøj og til dels noget, der ikke rigtig er set før.

Et andet eksempel kunne være den akse af hule stålrør, der strækker sig gennem bygningens fem udstillingsrum. Den er lagt ud som en fysisk form for tegning, en lavtgående lineal, der lige er hævet over gulvet, hvorfra den ekkoer havens plantegning, men hverken som en streg på papir eller som grusbelaet sti. Derimod er akse blevet en rumlig tegning, flyttet indendørs, der i sine intervaller tilnærmelsesvist følger visse af proportionerne, men samtidig ikke helt indordner sig, let svævende over gulvet, lige til at snuble over, idet den både mimer og etablerer sine egne inddelinger af rummene. I den forstand bliver stålrørsaksen en materiel, men hul, oversættelse af en ellers rationel plan, udbygget med afvigelser og tværgående standsninger, i skikkelse af sokkelskulpturer, laserlys, der pletter rummene, hurtigt klippede videosekvenser, projiceret hen på gulvpanelet og komplicerede ansamlinger, der får os til at sænke blikket. Titlen "Scaffolding", på dansk "stillads" men også "skafot", peger, ligesom rondelhullet ude foran, på det paradoksale overlap mellem opbygning og destruktion; og med undertitlen "where no disturbance in the world", et citat fra Charles den 1.'s sidste ord på skafottet inden hans henrettelse i 1648, er det arkitektoniske mellemværende pludselig indfarvet i en dyster skæbnestund, hvor tyrannisk monarki, tvivlsom rettergang, halshugning, Cromwells voldsregime for at indføre mere demokratiske tilstande, siver ud i udstillingsrummene og supplerer det ellers så idylliske haveanlæg med en grusommere understrøm. Akse kan mere generelt opfattes som en lille, lokal manifestation af et større spekulativt grid eller armatur, hvor alle mulige elementer er monteret, og hvor flere, fra de fjerneste kulturelle rum, kan hæftes fast. Det er en form for intersubjektiv makrostruktur, som mere eller mindre elastisk indrammer handlinger, bestemmer værdien af deres betydning, binder stof og tanke i visse fastlåste relationer og cementerer hierarkierne gennem samtlige skalaer. Det er et super-grid, en generaliseret forståelsesramme, hvori for eksempel barokhaven er hæftet fast som en historisk stivnet version. Men det er også et armatur, der kan flyttes, bøjes og foldes.

Postulat om et misforstået Rom.

There in harmony
To gentle form and noble force
Calm and vast his voice cascades
From this gentle stage

Calm and vast the city lies
On a horizontal ground
Kind and calm Julius lies
For Octavian to prevail

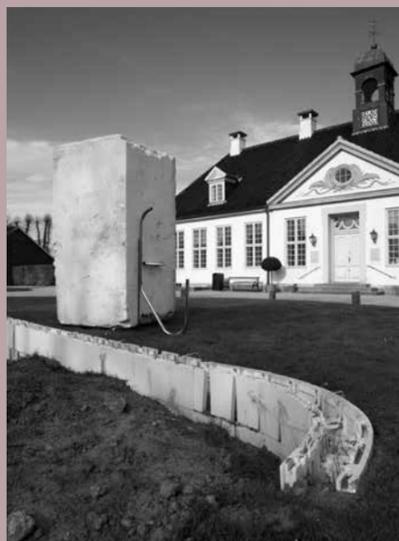
Uddrag fra Julius Caesar (memento hodie) af Nico.

Det kan virke skrøbeligt, men en af præmisserne for udstillingen er et postulat, ansporet af et par linjer i en sang fra 1968.

Udstillingstitlen For Octavian to Prevail, plukket direkte fra Nicos sang, ser ud til forsøgsvist at trække en stor historisk bue fra Octavian over Lauritz de Thurah til Gl. Holtegaard anno 2015. En bue, der prøver at forbinde nogle punkter, man måske kunne kalde Rom omkring år 0, en dansk arkitekt i 1740'erne-1750'erne og en genetableret barokhave i Rudersdal kommune. Her bliver sangen en åbning og en omvej for at kunne nærme sig hele det barokke felt fra en uventet vinkel, i et andet toneleje, måske med det håb at omvejen kan føre uden om de allernærmeste klicheer. For Nicos sang er som 1968-lyrik fuldstændigt ude af sync med sin tid, en dekadent, eskapistisk lovprisning af harmonisk magt, skrevet mens vietnamkrigen rasede på sit højeste. Det er en lille dybsort, ujævn perle, drevet frem, mens endnu en drøm om den realiserbare utopi brød sammen.

Eftersom postulatet handler om relationer mellem mere eller mindre synlige personer, epoker og fantasmer, foregår dets bevægelser gennem historien ofte ved hjælp af andres og egne misforståelser:

"man kunne måske produktivt postulere, at barokken er et misforstået Rom, og at Gl. Holtegaard i dag er produktivt misforstået barok." (Martin Erik Andersen, fra en mail 14.12. 2014)



Monument for Loss of Syntax (slum baroque pool) 2015



Anthony Van Dyck: Charles I, 1635

The execution of Charles I, 1649



Commemorative Medal. Oliver Cromwell, 1658

Testudo Tabulata/Pyx 2015



En del af den usikre påstand handler om, at Octavian, da han efter Julius Cæsars død endelig får udmanøvreret de øvrige kandidater til magten og er blevet Kejser Augustus, har tronet som et historisk forbillede for diverse kejsere, regenter, solkonger og diktatorer, der har målt sig i forhold til ham, idet han har inkarneret fantasien om den succesfulde hersker og hans Pax Augusta, den augustæiske fred, har stået som et afgørende pejlemærke for senere imperiebyggere. Således har hans Rom også spøgt som et ideal og en fantasi i bughovedet på blandt andre de bygherrer, arkitekter og kunstnere, der var med til at formulere og udfolde den kulturperiode, vi kalder barokken.

Som arbejdsmetode er det nogle uhåndgribelige størrelser, der danner alliancer: Augustus opfattet som en fantasi, sangen som en nødvendig omvej og misforståelsen som frugtbar mulighed. Ved at vælge Augustus giver kunstneren sig selv et kolossalt råderum, der tilbyder nogle andre ansatser, så attakket kan få større momentum. Frem for måske at vælge sådan en som Louis den 14., hvis Versailles ellers ville være en nærmere inspirationskilde, giver sangen ekstra 1600 år, idet den trækker forestillingerne længere bagud, bag om den franske solkonges *ancien régime*, helt tilbage til Roms kejservælde.

Dermed rutscher Lauritz de Thurahs anlæg ind i et langt større selskab, der potentielt inkluderer de fleste af de magthavere i den vestlige verden, der har anlagt megalomane pragthaver og brugt al deres grønne propaganda for at demonstrere, at herskeren også var hersker over naturen; hvor Augustus, Hadrian, Peter den Store og Hitler kunne promenerer rundt i drømmen om den store syntese af bygningskunst og tæmnet natur.

Broderiparterre-kyras: haveplan-kejserkrop

“jo, det er selvfølgelig en langt ude exces at påstå en direkte figuration i de Thurahs haveplan, men den klassiske proportionslære er jo gennemsyret af krop, og også indimellem i excesser af forbindelsen mellem kroppen som plan for både arkitekturen og kosmologien, det var der, Hildegard lå lige til højrebened, og min exces-exces-exces ud i skildpadden kom ind.” (Martin Erik Andersen, fra en mail 16.12. 2014)

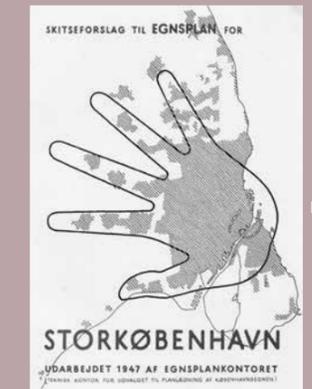
Et af de andre postulater handler om de hypotetiske ligheder mellem de lave buksbom-beplantninger i Gl. Holtegaards have og brystpanseret på en marmorstatue af kejser Augustus. At den ulasteligt trimmede broderiparterre har en overraskende relation til et arrangement af små udhuggede relieffigurer på kyrasset af en romersk kopi af en tabt bronzeoriginal. Som citatet selv medgiver, er der tale om en opkørt mønstergenkendelse, der forsøger at skimte overensstemmelser mellem umiddelbart fjerne punkter. Postulatet er et spring, der vil sammenvæve små, lokale detaljer på tværs af store afstande, for at antyde, at haveornamentet ligesom kyrasset's figursymbolik har rollen som propagandaeffekt, idet den irregulære lighed, der opdages eller tvinges frem, river haven ud af dens næsten-uskyld for at koble den med en pansret statue, der skal retfærdiggøre kejserens krav på magten. Det er påstanden om et sammenfald mellem haveplan og kejserkrop, hvor de begge konvergerer i en idealisering, der gerne vil overbevise via sin eksemplariske tydelighed, sit næsten selvindlysende herredømme.

Som kunstnerisk metode udspringer disse irregulære ligheder af en tænkning i analogier, der forsøger at gøre afstanden mindre ved at bøje det forestillingsrum, som ellers er spændt ud og opretholdt af den accepterede historiske viden. Det associative spring fra ankelhøje hække til skulpturel propaganda kan virke overrumplende, ligesom påstanden om en skematisk overensstemmelse mellem havens organisering og ideelle kropsproportioner måske kunne affejes som selektiv mønstergenkendelse. Men postulatet er netop afsøgende og prøvende, det bevæger sig anderledes gennem terrænet, hvilket både kan være dets styrke og svaghed. Det er en idiosynkratisk satsning, overdreven, risikabel, gavmild, og dermed måske også en af de nybarokke excesser, hvor der følger en ustyrlighed med på undersiden af de opkørte associationer. For i bedste fald kan de irregulære ligheder og den forvrængede oversættelse rive alt muligt andet med sig; mere formgenerende skepsis, nye kombinationer og modelleringer, der forsigtigt, af frygt for de latente hierarkier, der så let følger med, kan stable nye æstetiske rum, som endnu er svære at give et navn. Så der samtidig med udfaldene mod beherskelsestrangen, herredømmet, magtens historiske repræsentationer, lægges selvstændige figurer frem, der ikke henter deres retfærdiggørelse fra andre instanser end deres egen skrøbelige suverænitæt, der først begynder at blive synlig med hver ny situation, der kan opstå.

Le Corbusier og Plan Voisin, 1925



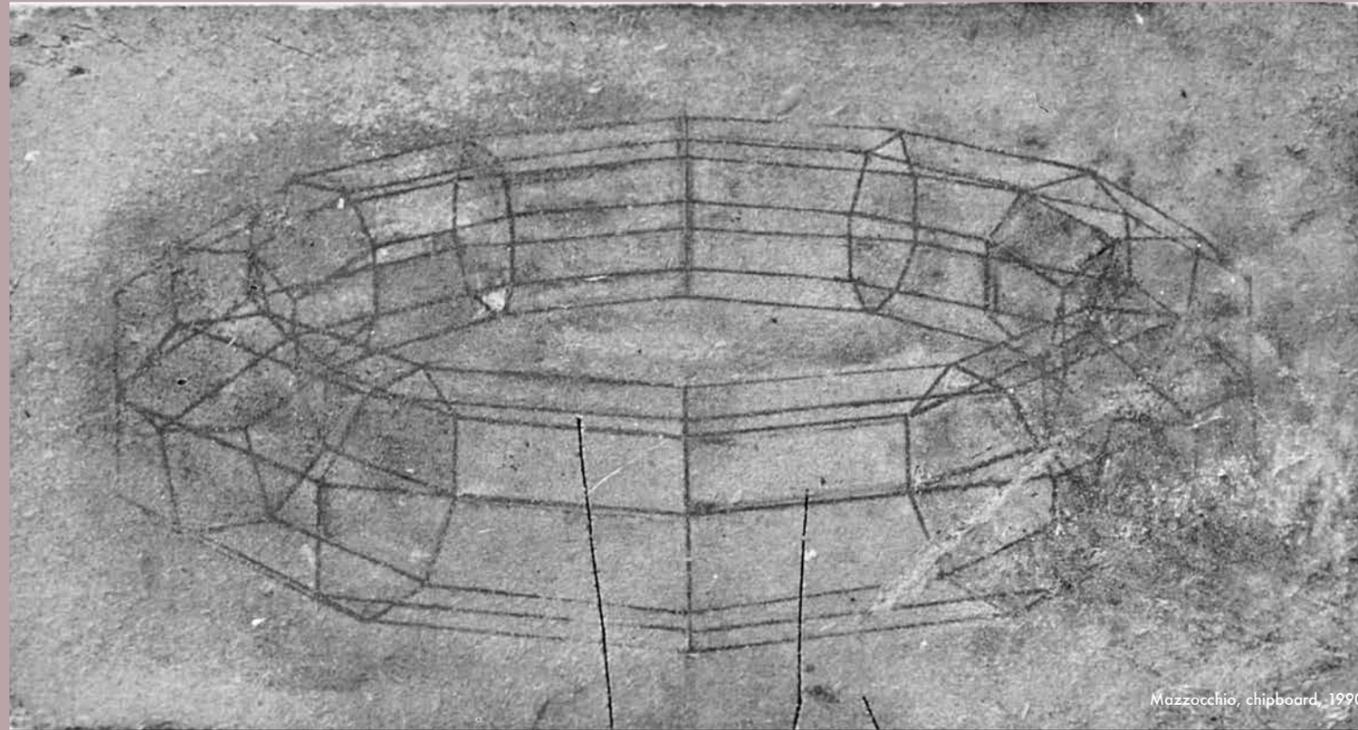
Augustus af Prima Porta, ca. 20 f.v.t.



Fingerplanen, 1947



Hendrick Goltzius
Creation of the World, 1592



Testudo Tabulata. Collection of The Zoological Museum, The Natural History Museum of Denmark, 1847

Late one afternoon a carriage drew up in front of the house at Fontenay. Since Des Esseintes received no visitors, since the postman dared not even set foot within those unfrequented precincts, having neither newspaper, nor journal, nor letter to deliver there, the servants hesitated, uncertain whether or not to open the door; then, on hearing the ringing of the bell as it clanged vigorously against the wall, they ventured to uncover the spy-hole cut in to the door and saw a gentleman whose entire chest, from neck to waist, was concealed by a huge golden shield.

They informed their master, who was breakfasting. 'Certainly, show him in,' he said, recollecting that he had once given his address to a lapidary, so that he could deliver an order. The gentleman bowed and placed his shield upon the pitchpine parquet of the dining room. Rocking itself and rising up a trifle from the floor, it stretched forth a tortoise's serpentine head; then, suddenly taking fright, retreated in to its shell. This tortoise was the consequence of a whim of Des Esseintes', which antedated his departure from Paris. One day, while gazing at a shimmering Oriental carpet and following the sheen of the silvery lights darting about on the woven woollen threads, plummy purple and golden yellow in colour, he had thought: it would be a good idea to place upon this carpet something that moves, and is dark enough in hue to set off the brilliance of these tones.

Wandering haphazardly through the city streets in the grip of this idea, he had reached the Palais-Royal, and in front of Chevet's shop window had struck himself upon the forehead: an enormous tortoise was there, in a tank. He had bought it; then, once it was let loose on the carpet, he had sat down in front of it and watched it for a long time, screwing up his eyes. Unquestionably, the dark brown and raw Sienna shades of that shell dimmed the play of colours in the carpet without bringing them to life; the overwhelmingly silvery lights now barely even gleamed, deferring to the chill tones of unpolished zinc that edged the hard, dull carapace. He gnawed at his fingernails, searching for ways to reconcile these illmatched partners and to avoid the absolute divorce of these tints; he finally saw that his first idea, of trying to enhance the fire of the carpet's colours by the movement of an object placed upon it, was mistaken; in brief, that carpet was still too garish, too undisciplined, too new. The colours had not become sufficiently muted and faded; it was a matter of inverting the idea, of tempering and deadening the tones by contrasting them with a brilliant object which would subdue everything around it, which would cast its golden light over the pallid silver. Put like that, the problem became easier to resolve. He decided, therefore, to have his tortoise's shell gilded. Once back from the gilder's where it had been lodging, the creature blazed like a sun, shining triumphantly over the subjugated tones of the carpet, radiant as a Visigoth's shield inlaid with scales by an artist of barbaric tastes. At first, Des Esseintes was enchanted with this effect; then it struck him that this gigantic jewel was still unfinished, and would not be truly complete until it had been encrusted with precious stones. He chose, from a Japanese collection, a design depicting a cluster of flowers showering out from a slender stalk; he took this to a jeweller, sketched in an oval frame round the bouquet, and informed the stupefied lapidary that the leaves and petals of each of these flowers were to be made of gem stones and set in the actual shell of the tortoise.

Choosing the stones took some time; diamonds have become extraordinarily commonplace now that every tradesman sports one on his little finger; Oriental emeralds and rubies are less degraded, and they do emit a glowing fiery radiance, but they look too much like the green and red eyes of certain omnibuses which display headlamps in those two colours; as for topazes, whether burnt or raw, they are cheap stones, dear to the hearts of the lower middle classes who revel in stowing away their jewel cases in their mirrored wardrobes; then again, although the Church has perpetuated the hieratic character – both unctuous and solemn – of the amethyst, that stone too has been debased on the blood-red earlobes and tubulous fingers of butcher's wives who seek to adorn themselves, for a modest outlay, with genuine, weighty jewels; of those stones only the sapphire has managed to keep its fires inviolate from industrial and financial absurdity. Its scintillations, flashing out over clear and icy waters have, one might say, preserved the purity of its discreet and haughty lineage. Unfortunately, in artificial light,

CIRCULAR

Light gives light to discover - ad infinitum

St. Louis, Missouri Territory, North America
April 10, A.D. 1818

To all the world:

I declare the earth is hollow and habitable within; containing a number of solid concentric spheres, one within the other, and that it is open at the poles twelve or sixteen degrees. I pledge my life in support of this truth, and am ready to explore the hollow, if the world will support and aid me in the undertaking.

John Cleves Symmes
Of Ohio, late Captain of Infantry.

N.B. - I have ready for the press a treatise on the principles of matter, wherein I show proofs of the above positions, account for various phenomena, and disclose Dr. Darwin's Golden Secret.

My terms are the patronage of this and the new worlds.

I dedicate to my wife and her ten children.

I select Dr. S.L. Mitchell, Sir H. Davy, and Baron Alexander Von Humboldt as my protectors.

I ask one hundred brave companions, well equipped, to start from Siberia, in the fall season, with reindeer and sleighs, on the ice of the frozen sea; I engage we will find a warm and rich land, stocked with thrifty vegetables and animals, if not men, on reaching one degree northward of latitude 82; we will return in the succeeding spring.

J.C.S.

He journeyed to the celestial beacons on the wings of extrasensory perception, limitless necromancy, That magic permitted breaking through the long-established barriers of deduction, hypothesis, and theory. It disdainfully pushed aside the ice barriers of the terrestrial North Pole and South Pole assumed Earth ends (sic). And there, beyond the Poles, the most fascinating creative secrets were divulged. Throughout the ages, they had been held in sacred trust for the doubter and true seeker who ventured that way. The secrets then disclosed provided knowledge of land courses into all the land areas of the Universe, to discerning consciousness, it was plainly shown there are no ends to the Earth.

Worlds Beyond the Poles, *Amadeo Giannini* (1926)

The earth is hollow. The poles so long sought after are but phantoms. There are openings at the northern and southern extremities. In the interior are vast continents, oceans, mountains, and rivers. Vegetable and animal life are evident in the new world, and it is probably peopled by races yet unknown to the dwellers upon the earth's exterior.

William Reed The Phantom of the Poles (1906)

"the inner earth, the Other Earth, the counter-earth, the astral earth, to which one passes as it were with a "click" a bilocation, or trilocation of space."

Miguel Serrano (1984)



*A*midst water lily fields white and green
Grows a tree
And from the tree hang apples
Not for you to eat

*I*n a way it matters more
Than it did before
To see the East voyaging through
True hearts of dunes

Mirth
Birth
Reverie

*T*here in harmony
Somersault caravans of fools
As he passes for reply
To sing his songs again

*H*e sways to kiss the horizontal ground
And from the ground a dove rises
And as a mark of honor
A mask is left behind

Mirth
Birth
Reverie

*T*here in harmony
To gentle form and noble force
Calm and vast his voice cascades
From this gentle stage

*C*alm and vast the city lies
On a horizontal ground
Kind and calm Julius lies
For Octavian to prevail

Mirth
Birth
Reverie

*I*n harmony
Traverses the peninsula
Aeolus with his whisper winds to strike
With his gentle kisses the righteous
And wise and doom ambitious praise
With his will his will and order

Mirth
Birth
Reverie

*A*midst water lily fields white and green
Grows a tree
And from the tree hang apples
Not for you to eat
Beneath the heaving sea
Where statues and pillars and stone altars rest for all these
Aching bones to guide us far from energy

Mirth
Birth
Reverie

*N*ico - Julius Caesar (memento hodie)

Octavian Alef (Augustus Prima Porta)
2015





Slum Baroque (Petropentia Natalensis)
2015





Astralpool
2015

Reza Negarestani
Machines are digging

Transpierce the mountains instead of scaling them, excavate the land instead of striating it, bore holes in space instead of keeping it smooth, turn the earth into swiss cheese. An image from the film *Strike* [by Eisenstein] presents a holey space where a distributing group of people are rising, each emerging from his or her hole as if from a field in all directions.

(Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*)

The Earth has believed in her own myth. Time to open her up and take a look inside.
(Hamid Parsani)

In winter 2001, an article entitled *Another Academic in Exile?* published in the Swedish multilingual *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* addressed the slim volume of texts Parsani had written since his dismissal. Despite the shorter length of the essays — with a few exceptions — the subjects had been picked with an overly obsessive disciplinary calculation but analyzed according to a decidedly nonconformist approach to academia. However, every single one of these adeptly deft and dense disquisitions ended prematurely with what the article identifies as the ‘oil tapping fallacy’, alluding to the fact that nearly all essays written by Parsani during this timeframe end whether relevantly or irrelevantly, with discussions about petroleum; that despite the diverse range of topics discussed in articles, they all lead to petrological implications, diagnoses and conclusions. Or as Parsani admits, ‘the bottom line of my texts is in oil.’ The article continues, ‘If John Nash was disassembling everything he found in *Time Magazine* into diagrams and equations in a schizophrenic search for alien intelligence, Parsani has opted for the reverse process; whatever he encounters is immediately traced back to only one thing, petroleum. Books, foods, religions, numbers, specks of dust — all are linguistically, geologically, politically and mathematically combined into petroleum. For him, everything is suspiciously oily. Therefore, his approach is fittingly paranoid rather than schizoid.’ Making an effort to disentangle Parsani’s oil-thickened texts and to explain his obsession with petroleum-saturated subjects, the article elaborates how Parsani develops a political pragmatism of the Earth. The article argues that according to Parsani, only through this simultaneously political and pragmatic model of the Earth is the investigation of the Middle East as a sentient entity possible.

This pragmatic model, first expounded on by Parsani in his pedantic book *Defacing the Ancient Persia*, seeks to develop a concrete or Tiamaterialistic (to use Parsani’s word) model of participation with and grasping of the Earth as a twisted zone of insurgency against the Solar Economy. According to Parsani, the Earth always plays the role of a subversive Insider against the Empire of the Sun, which has given rise to terrestrial orders, politics and modes of living based on its hegemonic stardom. In his writings, Parsani calls this model of insurgency and participation, which is sometimes equated to the whorled body of the Earth or non-holistic terrestriality, *Kareez’gar* (the holey *Kerdegar*; *Kerdegar* is the Persian word for Demiurge). The term *Kareez’gar* technically and linguistically eludes translation, but might be rendered, with considerable mutilation, as ‘hole complex’ — or, more accurately, ‘()hole complex’, since Parsani’s original term implies both a destituted Whole (creation, genesis, state, etc.) and a holey-ness. The article notes that it is in his later works that Parsani fructifies his essays concerning the Middle East, petrological analyses, Islam and archeology by re-modifying and specializing *Kareez’gar*. Here, ‘()hole complex or *Kareez’gar* turns into a pragmatic model of ‘participating in and fathoming Oil as the Tellurian Lube of all narrations traversing the Earth’s Body’. This model is particularly used to discuss middle-eastern lines of politics and communication, both internal and in relation to the rest of the globe, in terms of Tiamaterialism, Petropoliticism and clandestine Mutiny. ‘If the Middle East puts itself forward as a blasphemy against the world, it is because it has been composed by the *Kareez’gar* (hole-god), not the *Kerdegar* (whole-god),’ Parsani writes in *Defacing the Ancient Persia*.

The article vividly explains the components involved in the complexity of ()hole complex and the various aspects of the impact that ()hole complex has on the emergence of new power formations, population dynamics and political distributions. It notes further that it is chiefly after the ()hole complex and petrological enlightenment that Parsani cobbles his later writings about the Middle East together: ‘In these writings, every subject that later leaps out from the most unanticipated corners of the Middle

East as an unheralded epiphany of a demon or tribulation – forgotten political adversities, uncharted regions, warmachines, models of complicity etc. – emerges from () hole complex. Anything middle-eastern can, it seems, only be examined, or even empathized with, in the wake of *Petrological Reason* and ()hole complex. These two unholy elements constitute the foundations of that instrument of inquiry and analysis identified by Parsani's bewildering term *Bacterial Archeology*. It is imperative for Parsani, in his approach to the Middle East, to make clear that everything related to the Middle East emerges, moves, diffuses, escalates and engenders itself through and out of the holey *Hezar'to* (A Thousand Insides; the Persian word for labyrinth) and the Petrologies of Bacterial Archeology,' the article notes, concluding that ()hole complex and Petrological Reason are in fact images of each other in an obsidian mirror.

Holey Space, or more accurately ()hole complex (connoting a degenerate wholeness), speeds up and triggers a particular subversion in solid bodies, such as earth. It unfolds holes as ambiguous entities – oscillating between surface and depth – within solid matrices, fundamentally corrupting the latter's - consolidation and wholeness through perforations and terminal porosities. For a solid body, the vermiculation of holes undermines the coherency between the circumferential surfaces and its solidity. The process of degenerating a solid body by corrupting the coherency of its surfaces

ing mechanism of holes? How does holey space degenerate the Earth as a ground for supporting formations, establishments, modes of dwelling and governance? Deleuze and Guattari's slyly appropriated 'New Earth' presents a model of an earth whose every surface and trellis is an unground, a terminal planetary body tolerating neither solar economies nor its own terrestriality. However, two questions remain at this point: can the Unground - where the hegemonic wholeness of the Earth is incapacitated – still be called Earth? And then, according to what chronological current, based on what calendar, according to what gradient of becoming, which point of reference addressed by space-time coordinates, can it be mapped as the *New Earth*? For the Unground is a shadow outside of time and space.

'The nethermost caverns,' wrote the mad Arab, 'are not for the fathoming of eyes that see; for their marvels are strange and terrific. Cursed the ground where dead thoughts live new and oddly bodied, and evil the mind that is held by no head. Wisely did Ibn Schacabao say, that happy is the tomb where no wizard hath lain, and happy the town at night whose wizards are all ashes. For it is of old rumour that the soul of the devil-bought hastes not from his charnel clay, but fates and instructs the very worm that gnaws; till out of corruption horrid life springs, and the dull scavengers of earth wax crafty to vex it and swell monstrous to plague it. Great holes secretly are digged where earth's pores ought to suffice, and things have learnt to walk that ought to crawl.' (H.P. Lovecraft, *The Festival*)

In this alarming but neglected passage, H.P. Lovecraft addresses holey space or ()hole complex (with an evaporative W) as the zone through which the Outside gradually but persistently emerges, creeps in (or out?) from the Inside. A complex of hole agencies and obscure surfaces unground the earth and turn it to the ultimate zone of emergence and uprising against its own passive planetdom. Once freed from its solar slavery, the earth can rise against the onanistic self-indulgence of the Sun and its solar capitalism: 'Great holes secretly are digged where earth's pores ought to suffice, and things have learnt to walk that ought to crawl.'

According to Lovecraft, the realism of horror is built upon poromechanics. Lovecraft's poromechanical universe, or ()hole complex, is a machine to facilitate the awakening and return of the Old Ones through convoluted compositions of solid and void. But how do holes emerge out of the interactions of solid and void? It is best to answer this question by paraphrasing Nick Land's remarks (from *The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism*) on the escapist aberrancy and the structural irresolution of the Labyrinth versus the consolidating and conclusive moderatism of Architecture: *void excludes solid but solid must include void to architectonically survive*. Solid needs void to engineer its composition; even the most despotic and survivalist solids are compositional solids, infected by the void. Through these inter-collisions of void and solid, the Old Ones – according to Lovecraft - can revive their 'Holocaust of Freedom' (*The Call of Cthulhu*), both by consuming solid and by pushing compositions towards the highest degrees of convolution (as a result of the ambiguity of solid and void i.e. the fuzzy space of the hole and its surface dynamics). In terms of Earth, the Holocaust of Freedom can be attained by engineering the corpse of solidus through installing ungrounding machines at molecular levels that exhume (*ex + humus*: un-ground) the earth from within and without, turning it into a vermicular and holey composition whose strata (The Economy of Solidus) is not dismantled but convoluted at each level of its own formation and composition. Earth is incapacitated, no longer

capable of running its stratifying and grounding functions; instead it is charged with engineering the corpse of solidus, or, in a Lovecraftian sense, a worm-infested body exhumed by worming processes and vermiculating machines. Survival is blindness; but blindness is destined to be trapped by strategies and manipulations which are beyond the tactical sphere of command and control. It is through survival (the incapacity of the

solid to reject the void) that solid participates in ungrounding itself. By correcting its consolidating processes, the solid sells its integrity (soul) to the abysmal convolutions inspired by the void, through which the pathological survival of the solid becomes the most basic factor in its irreversible lysis and degeneration. The solid surrenders itself to the plague from the very moment that it begins to cure itself. For solidity, the 'Will to Cure' is the 'Will to Mess'. To this extent, solidity is the Xanadu of potentialities and the empire of emergence. Every action of solidity in the direction of becoming more solid is equal to augmenting its interactions with the void. Yet these interactions can only manifest themselves as perforations, trails of negative space that concretely reverberate within the solid – writhing nematodes hollowing out and convoluting everything they touch, in sinuous movements.

Although the void devours the solid, the solid feasts on the void, i.e. its outsider. In compositions, the solid becomes hysterically gluttonous for the void. This is what intrigued the Cult of the Old Ones in their mission to perform their awakening ritual. If the Old Ones are to fly through holey space, bubbling up through the carrion black pit and turning their tentacles into interconnected borrows and lubricious warrens, then the only strategic technique to speed and facilitate their return is to mess with the () hole complex, that is to say, the zone of their emergence. This is a technique which was also perceived by the Z. crowd as a strategy to arch-sabotage monotheism and inter-connect it to undercurrents of Tellurian Insurgency (petropolitical undercurrents in Islamic Apocalypticism for example). It was also a strategy to actively participate in the Project of Tellurian Omega, where the Earth reaches utter immanence with its burning core – or the metal core of the tellurian real – and the Sun.

Awakening Strategies. Holey space is nothing but a composition (of solid and void) – a vermicular one, burrowed by worms (*nematids*) or vermicular lines convoluting anything they touch, overspreading the ()hole complex as a vast altar which asks for the solid as a sacrificial meal, awakening thousands of vermiculating lines to scour the solid and carve a polished, leering Ω , out of it. In any composition, the solid narrates the anomalies generated by the void, or the infection of the void through the solid (when the void comes to the solid, it works as a convoluting plague, a coiling swirling epidemic rather than a nullifying process or a solid-annihilating agent); in a composition there is no pure solid but a defiled one, a diseased and deflowered solid. Once we realize that in any composition as in ()hole complex) the solid is the possessed narrator of the void, it will be but a short analytical step to see that the solid works as two different entities overlapping with each other and functioning concurrently:

1. As a compositional entity whose behavior (topological changes, transformations, motions, folds, etc.) can induce changes to the compositional side of the void through surface dynamics (or superficialities, as Cassati and Varzi call them in their holey treatise *Holes and Other Superficialities*).

At a compositional level, holes compile surfaces out of the hegemony of solidus. Solidus is not a content to be added (adjective) to the ground, nor is it a lineament, an ethos, or a modifier. It is the tectonic expansion or the sprawling politics of the ground itself. Every manifestation of ()hole complex must pass through a certain type of surface dynamics (in terms of evoking periphery, itinerancy and affect), breeding a new genre of surfaces with their exclusive itinerant lines depending on the locus of the hole and the way that the void interplays with the solid. Holes offer new polytical activities to surfaces; the crisp boundary of surfaces is dissolved into the blurred and cryptogenic boundary of the hole. In the presence of the hole, an asymmetric parallelism between surfaces and the crust occurs, in which the two remain analogous and remotely connected to their common genus but where each one spawns its own different, independent operational entities and geometries. Here, surfaces do not necessarily conduct and synchronize the ground's local hegemonies, establishing orders through the consolidated coherence of the crust; they counterme the stratification processes instead of supporting them. Each surface has a line of command with two heads, a trellis and a taxis. The former receives the accumulation and distributes it i.e. a *textum* or groundwork for fixation, positioning and support, the latter directs and develops what has been accumulated and economically distributes it. Taxis gives a dynamic tendency to the contents of the Trellis according to the mutual *affordance* between surfaces or the entity and its environment, that is to say, according to the

eco-logical web,¹⁵ the Whole. Inner holes and connected cavities, simultaneously, come with two types of surfaces or two active contacts with solidus: (1) a surface-supporter or circumferential visible surface that connects the cavity to the crust, i.e. the ecological outside. Therefore, the ()hole complex cannot be merely reduced to a subterranean or subsoil complexity. (2) a surface-transmitter that joins with the itinerant lines passing through the hole or connected cavities, and which binds the cavity on the inside where the hole emerges out of the ambiguity of solid and void, or, in a topologically oversimplified sense, *where the cavity is*. (See Fig. 12)

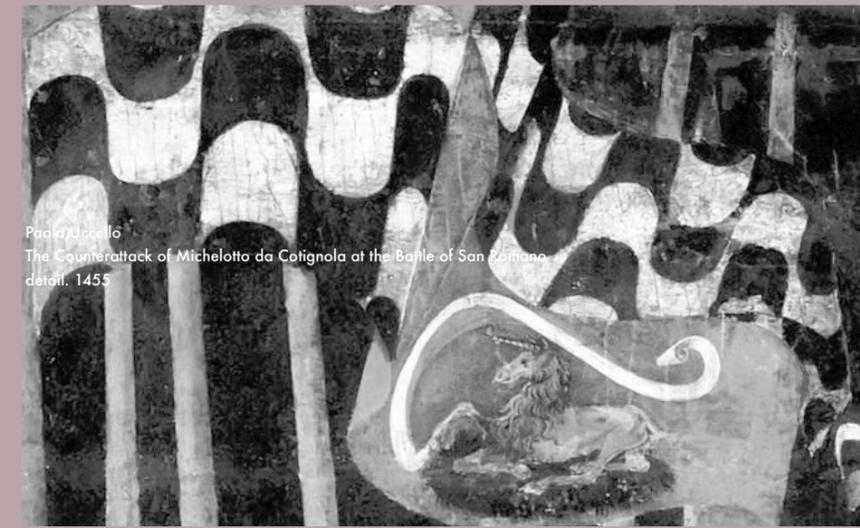
The surface is where most of the action is. The surface is where light is reflected or absorbed, not the interior of the substance. The surface is what touches the animal, not the interior. The surface is where chemical reaction mostly takes place. The surface is where vaporization or diffusion of substances into the medium occurs. And the surface is where vibrations of the substances are transmitted into the medium. (J.J. Gibson, quoted in *Surfaces*, Avrum Stroll)

For instance, on a mereotopological level (relating, that is, to topological interfaces of whole or whole-part relationships),¹⁶ changes or distortions on surfaces or the solid part are directly conducted to the compositional void and cause new convolutions and alterations by means of changing the ways or mechanisms through which the void is presented through the solid: If you twist, inflate or heat a tube or a holey ball (with tunnels spread through it), you can see that changes in the solid part are transmitted to the holey side of the tube or the ball, the tunnels or the holey side becoming more convoluted and intricate. These changes through the compositional void can only be perceived and interacted with through the solid part – such is the compositional inevitability and clandestine nature of ()hole complex. To make friends with the void, first one must submit to the rigid reign of the solid.



Fig. 12 Active surfaces (transmitter / subterranean and supporter / circumferential surrounding a cavity)

2. The solid as an entity which is inherently possessed by the void. The only way that the solid can initialize its architectonic and compositional activities (processes for survival, development, etc.) is by letting the void in. The dynamic traits of solid can only be actuated when solid is eaten, convoluted and messed up by the void. There is no other option for solid. In ()hole complex, on a superficial level (bound to surface dynamics), every activity of the solid appears as a tactic to conceal the void and appropriate it, as a program for inhibiting the void, accommodating the void by sucking it into the economy of surfaces (as in the case of the *niche*,¹⁷ a dwelling / accommodating system, a compartmentalizer of spaces) or filling it. But on a deep compositional level (the machinery of the real), all activities of the solid are oriented towards engineering new voiding functions, convolutions, vermicular spaces (henceforth, Nemat-space) which eventually unground solidus without erasing it. On this deep compositional level, the solid conducts the convoluting functions of the solid-contaminating void, in the form of vermicular lines – 'worms' (Nemat) as Lovecraft suggests, or worm-functions (the nemat-function), itinerant lines in the form of knotted holes, or the other way around. When a worm or a void-enforcer crawls in ()hole complex, it metamorphoses into a different geometrical structure. In the absence of the grounding tyranny of the Whole, the worm-function internally reconfigures its modules and turns itself into a more versatile line through participation with the complex whose recesses are interconnected. All this in the wake of solidity, which is reinvented by the ()hole complex as a profound strategic tool. In holey space, the solid actively conducts and mobilizes the worm-functions of the void (complications) rather than the void's phagic and purgative mechanisms or its desire to devour. Solid proceeds as the void-enforcer, a *pestis solidus* blasphemer.



Paolo Uccello
The Counterattack of Michelotto da Cotignola at the Battle of San Romano
detail, 1455



is called ungrounding. In other words, the process of ungrounding degenerates the whole into an endless hollow body – irreducible to nothingness – and damages the coherency between the surfaces and the solid body in itself. To talk about holey spaces and Earth is to insinuate the Earth as the Unground. But what constitutes the unground-

In ()hole complex, the void is also contaminated by the solid. For this reason, instead of the purging mechanisms of void, nemat-functions emerge. Defying death, the nemat-function twists termination in ()hole complex into processes of convolution, undermining and ungrounding.

()hole complex attests to the confusion between solid and void. Every activity happening on the solid part increases the degree of convolution and entanglement on the holey side of the composition, fabricating the intricate meshwork of a nemat-space which will eventually engineer the corpse-of-solidus or the unground, disabling or sabotaging all grounding (signification, con-solidation, stratification, etc.) functions of solid. While the vermicular complexity of nemat-space activates this tortuous side of the ()hole complex, it also covers each compositional level of the complex with poroelastic traits. In fact, poroelasticity continuously employs diffusion as a means of radical deformation and alteration in the dynamism of the composition, narrating the diagrams of the fluid flow in the animorphic composition of the nemat-space as a heterogeneous porous complex, which amounts to more than just being a structure with interconnected holes. Nemat or worm space is a complex, with a strange elastic geometry: Its porous side is constituted of itinerant lines rendering synchronous possibilities of relaxation, metamorphosis, folding, spreading tortuosity, heterogeneous dynamism and compositional anomalies for the complex. Nemat-space is basically a machine for a radical and pestilentially inventive communication and participation between fluid and solid, in such a way that they can be tactically and strategically — hence militaristically and politically — derived from each other. Parsani identifies this level of mutual interplay between solid and fluid in ()hole complex as 'Tiamaterialistic differentiation'. In nemat-space, the flow of the fluid and the deformation of the solid matrix are coupled: they are heavily interconnected as foundations of a radical participation which gives rise to a diverging series of becomings for 'each level of the composition' whose wholeness has been utterly degenerated. Agitated by the flow of fluids (which themselves have been anomalized in the nematological machine or vermicular space), elastic waves dissipate through solid matrices and radically displace the grains of the solid skeleton throughout the ()hole complex. It is Lovecraftian worm-ridden space that makes solidity the altruistic host of emergence. The spasmodic deformations of the solid skeleton, consequently, change the stress field by which the remodifications and manipulations of solid are transmitted to the nemat-space in a synergistic communication, and progressively fold, twist and open the ()hole complex, further refining its sinister facets. To understand the interplay between porous structure and fluid flow, it is necessary to examine regional aspects of the pore space morphology and relate them to the relevant mechanisms of fluid transfer such as viscosity, pressures between fluid and surfaces, inertial forces, etc.

The increase of pore pressure induces dilations of the ()hole complex and increases poroelasticity (both enhance fluid flow.) While the immediate transition from laminar to turbulent happens in pipes and channels, in porous media the passage from linear to non-linear is always gradual and gradient-wise, offering opportunities to compose new spaces, lines, connections, pores, modes of dynamism and participation — infinite possibilities in terms of flood. The compression of the solid matrix, or any attempt of solidus to keep itself integrated and save its consolidated and molar state (by preventing the fluid from running or escaping from one porous network to another or isolating pores), causes a substantial rise in pore pressure. The abrupt escalation in pore pressure triggers further and radical deformation of the solid matrix, dilation and contraction of pores (comparable to the plateau-engineering mechanism of libidinal spasms addressed by Freud), progressive ungrounding of solidus, regional pore collapse¹⁸ and finally the composition of new worm-ridden spaces or zones of emergence. Nemat-space is an ultimate crawling machine; it is essentially cryptogenic and interconnected with Anonymous-until-Now. Anonymous-until-Now is the model of Time in ()hole complex, whose probes and lines of itineracy move unpredictably according to both the subsoil and superficial ungrounding machineries that weaken the solidus by perversely exploiting and manipulating it (exhuming solidus). *Incognitum Hactenus* — not known yet or nameless and without origin until now — is a mode of time in which the innermost monstrosities of the earth or ungraspable time scales can emerge according to the chronological time that belongs to the surface biosphere of the earth and its populations. *Incognitum Hactenus* is a double-dealing mode of time connecting abyssal time scales to our chronological time, thus exposing to us the horror of times beyond.

In *Incognitum Hactenus*, you never know the pattern of emergence. Anything can happen for some weird reason; yet also, without any reason, nothing at all can happen. Things leak into each other according to a logic that does not belong to us and cannot be correlated to our chronological time. Intrinsic permeability is a function of the nemat-space. The contact between the solid and the fluid is itself also a compositional factor of the poroelastic complex. Local velocity gradients in the fluid induce new convolutions, shear stresses, ruptures and deformations of the solid matrix, tuning the surface dynamics to the entire machinery of the complex and the flow of the fluid, that is to say, enhancing the flow and building up the flood. In nemat-space, the diffusing pore fluid thereby smuggles its affect space through the solid matrix as well as its own particles. One should not forget that ()hole complex generates preferential channels for fluid flow or provides fluids with an ample opportunity to dig their own passages, burrow their own fields of tactics. In pulp-horror fictions and cinema, and in Lovecraft's fiction, it is the abode of the Old Ones, worm-entities and the blob (petroleum) that surpasses even tentacle-headed monstrosities in sentience and foreignness. R'lyeh is the every dream, motion and calculation of Cthulhu on the solid part of the earth's body. In poromechanics, the negative space is the very solid body of crawling vermiculations and twisting currents. Moreover, the role of fluid in thermal, structural, geochemical and economic evolution of the crust is radically possessed by the machinery of the ()hole complex. The surface biosphere has never been separate from the cthulhoid architecture of the nether.

Once nemat-space begins its infestation, the periphery or the zone of excitations does not necessarily start from visible surfaces or the crust: Active surfaces emerge from everywhere, from the surface-as-crust mode of periphery to innermost recesses. The ()hole complex carves ultra-active surfaces from solidus when it digs holes, unleashes delirious itinerant lines and constructs its nematological machines, installing peripheral agitations on the surfaces it cuts from internal solid matrices. Everywhere a hole moves, a surface is invented. When the peripheral upheaval of ()hole complex spreads from the crust to within, the despotic necrocratic regime of periphery-core, for which everything should be concluded and grounded by the gravity of the core, is deteriorated. The dismantling of the coherency between the periphery and the core is equal to the rise of the ultimate unground where the radical Outside is posited from surface to the core. No wonder, then, that holey space has continually been associated with the Outside or its avatars (whether in the form of a nigrescent tellurian insider or a subterranean fallen sun god). The half-man-half-scorpion (discovered in Tel Halaf, Syria) of the Gilgamesh epic is such an avatar, guarding the gate to the Outside. Scorpions are burrowers, not architects: They do not build upon the compositions of solid and void, they devour volumes and snatch spaces; for them the holey space is not merely a dwelling place, a place to reside (a niche for occupation). More than that, it is the Abode of War (*dār al-harb*), the holey space of unselective hunting.

Archeology's main goal must be to turn the Earth into an artifact, rather than to merely satisfy its fetishistic hunger for relics, artifacts and dig-sites. When I was at Tehran University, I taught the students how to turn the Earth into the coiling body of Tiamat, the Sumero-Babylonian Mother-Dragon. (From an interview with Dr. Hamid Parsani)

On another occasion, Hamid Parsani describes base-archeology as 'interacting with the nested-vaginas of Tiamat's swirling body, engorging their curls, opening their curves and experiencing the contorting movement of each concave and convex wall, poly-surfaced tissues and the ancient venom surging within them'.

The ground does not conduct, regulate or organize intensities (as insinuated by psychoanalysis). It does not syndicate them, nor does it conduct them into consolidated architectonic persuasions. Rather, it gives them something and sets them free as its free-flow proxies, lines of gravity and acentral expanding operatives, missionaries but not conquistadors. The lineage of anthropomorphic hospitality too attests to this sly grounding policy: copulation ... insemination ... withdrawal; we are always on the way to withdrawal.

The grounded flux is generally described as flux ' $f = p/a$ ' (the power p imposed on the regional surface a). But it is the coupled Trellis-Taxis mechanism j of surface which, in nemat-space, fails to enforce and circulate the economy of the ground. In such a

cavernous cavern (a holey redundancy), the ground loses its capacity to support and govern; for the coherency of its surfaces has been demolished ($a=0$). Accordingly, the distribution of p on the consolidating and self-referential wholeness of solidity is incapacitated. All power formations require a ground for establishment and conduction. Without a ground, that is to say, in the absence of a power formation, the definition of 'power' is basically undermined. What is politics, then, when there is power but no power formation? What is politics when understood in terms of the ()hole complex, in which the full body of ' $p/0$ ' (p over zero) precedes all power formations?

The distribution of solidity obeys the logic of the solid, but this is the logic of solidity which follows the polytics of the ()hole complex and the dynamism of its Nemat-space. Every entity-event in ()hole complex is discontinuous according to the measures of solid and its scales of consistency, but continuous from the point of view of the interconnected nemat-space and its holeyness. An entity which is supposed to loom up from a particular spot or region, emerges from an entirely irrelevant (according to the logic of solidus) location. Every activity on the solid part of ()hole complex awakens something radically irrelevant, having no correlation with its input, cause or origin. Disturb and irritate, dilate and contract the repressed cavities of the Earth: Tunnels and tubes, burrows and lairs, acrid bungholes and perforated spaces, its fanged vaginas, slits and the schizoid skin. Undog and squeeze the earth; exhume its surfaces; make an earth whose conundrums cannot be solved by recourse to their origins or causes.

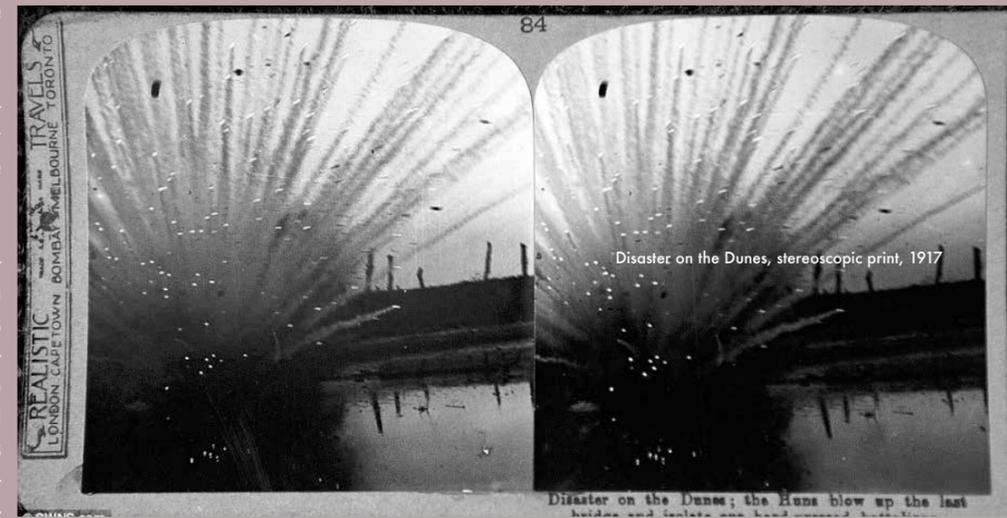
What horrifies the living is not an empty tomb but a messed-up and exhumed tomb. The architectural policy of the solid does not reject destruction or deconstruction but escapes exhumation ... deflowering the face ('white wall / black hole' Deleuze and Guattari), marring and mangling it ... by messing up the surfaces, scratching ... skinning ... eating ... turning to dust ... cutting into the core, with bare hands, daggers and crises, nails and enzymes... saliva and breath ... shovel and plow. Exhumation is wholly criminal and immoral, but further, it is basically polluting and infecting as it undergoes surface collision, necrotizing the architecture, proliferating hot and cold surfaces into each other, letting the cold space of a tomb evaporate and the reek of bodies rise up — resurrection of the defiled body. The cold cannot be reheated; only messed up.

Mehrdad Iravanian, the Iranian architect once suggested, 'In order to study architecture, one must first investigate necrocracy.' But we should go further: one must practice the art of exhumation too.

If archeologists, cultists, worms and crawling entities almost always undertake an act of exhumation (surfaces, tombs, cosmic comers, dreams, etc.), it is because exhumation is equal to ungrounding, incapacitating surfaces ability to operate according to topologies of the whole, or on a mereotopological level. In exhumation, the distribution of surfaces is thoroughly undermined and the movements associated with them are derailed; the edge no longer belongs to the periphery, anterior surfaces come after all other surfaces, layers of strata are displaced and perforated, peripheries and the last protecting surfaces become the very conductors of invasion. Exhumation is defined as a collapse and trauma introduced to the solid part by vermiculate activities; it is the body of solidity replaced by the full body of trauma. As in disinterment — scarring the hot and cold surfaces of a grave — exhumation proliferates surfaces through each other. Exhumation transmutes architectures into excessive scarring processes, fibroses of tissues, membranes and surfaces of the solid body. Exhumation engineers the corpse-of-solidus whose dimensionality blurs not to the point of terminus and erasure but to coils of dimensions which cannot resist that which crawls in and out — ()holes, ()holes, ()holes with liquidated and now evaporating 'W's. In Lovecraft's poromechanical cosmology, exhumation is undertaken and exercised by units called Rats. In fact, 'the dramatic epic of the rats' (Lovecraft) consists in their act of exhuming surfaces, solid bodies and structures which resist perforation.

Rats¹⁹ are exhuming machines: Not only full-fledged vectors of epidemic, but also ferociously dynamit lines of ungrounding. Rats germinate two kinds of surface cataclysm as they travel and span different zones. Firstly, static damage in the form of ruptures rendered by internal schisms, uplifts, dislocations, jumps and thrusts which expose the surface to paroxysmal convulsions and distortions; and secondly the dynamic anomaly of seismic waves dissipating as the rats flow in the form of tele-compositions (ferocious packs). In the pack, while rats' compressions and decompressions proliferate their rates of speed, their transpositions and rearrangements in the pack (composition) forge a de-contouring machine marring the elevation of entities in the pack, setting rats free, lending them a capacity for miniature flight. Hence, as they run, they appear to evaporate both surfaces and themselves. Aristophanes and Bacchylides spoke of the birds flying through *Khaos*, that unrestricted space of enthusiasm for flowing (*kheisthai*); but no one asked what kind of birds these were: Wingless? Taxidermized? Metallic? Decapitated? Eyes evacuated with a penknife? ... No, they are rats: Thousands, millions of them.

A surface-consuming plague is a pack of rats whose tails are the most dangerous seismic equipment; tails are spatial synthesizers (fiber-machines), exposing the terrain which they traverse to sudden and violent foldings and unfoldings, while seizing patches of ground and composing them as a nonhuman music. Tails are musical instruments, playing metal — tails, lasher tanks in motion. Although tails have a significant locomotive role, they also act as boosters of agility or anchors of infection — rapid changes in position, quick jerks and sudden movements in new directions — and cinephobic machines. As they vibrate, tails print thousands of traces and images, not on a film (*pellicule*) but on and through a space enmeshed by the commotion of transient traces, trajectories of disease and fleeting signs; much like a digital wireframe architecture which does not compartmentalize space to fragments of interior and exterior localities, but becomes a free-play and perforated architecture engineered by the swerving motions of a sparkling tail-wire whipping the space. This exhumed architecture composed by tail-twitches can render itself in different modes, becoming gaseous and terminally epidemic, transforming itself to a diagram



of pest incursion rather than an instance of architecture. In a pack of rats, a multitude of tails turns into the probe-head of the entire pack in motion: an omnidirectional acephalic revolution, the New Pest Disorder.

A pack of tails: Thousands of insects scavenging a tomb somewhere in a Zoroastrian village near the city of Yazd; a warfare of vibration. These exhuming machines unleash a nonhuman silence best characterized as acoustic smog, a molecular noise wreaking sonic havoc. Sounds are rabies, spread by rat tails.

The polytics of the ()holey complex defies existing models of the harvesting of power correlated to the logic of the ground and the politics of whole. For the world order, inconsistent events around the world are failures or setbacks for the dominant political models. According to the politics of poromechanical earth, however, inconsistencies and regional disparities across the globe constitute the body of polytics. The emer-

Oil fields and mines usually come with corporations and their privatized armies, one as owner and the other as extractor; and mercenaries as outsiders who protect the temporal bonds between the extractor and the owner on the one hand and the oil fields and true beneficiaries on the other hand. Although these corporations and mercenaries induce repressions and poverty, they play significant roles in double-insurgencies, violent internal fissions of the state, civil wars and unrests. Anywhere that a nemat-space emerges, propulsive waves of insurgency and politico-economic insomnia rise imminently. To this extent, where is the poromechanics of horror as refined and as manifest as in middle-eastern politics and in the Plutonian ethics of living on oil?

One of the characteristics of ()hole complex is its inspiring new forms of utilization or sparking off innovative usability – previously unknown abuses – in its consumers. These new lines of exploitation can also be identified in terms of aggravating instrumentalization of the Whole in the absence of its directorship and regulations. In this regard, ()hole complex carries out a putsch to exhaustively degenerate the Whole in its functional restrictions.

Holes prostitute themselves, they are at the same time pimps and prostitutes. And this is in contrast to the ecological stability between a whole and its environment. Holistic political, religious and military readings – based on the logics of whole, its parts and the environment – sacrifice the autonomy of their object in favor of their environments or their global wholes. Holistic readings, in general, are in accordance with events bound to the ground and the dynamics of circumferential peripheries such as consolidated economic progressions, conventional military fields and globalization of the earth in terms of its outer surface, etc. Such readings impose logics of systems which are either theoretically reductive or pragmatically disconnected in regard to their objects. For this reason, lines of emergence associated with the porous earth, hole agencies and terminally political and insurgent formations – as of the Middle East – necessitate new reading models and platforms. If contemporary world politics *inconsistently* defies holistic reading methodologies, then the Middle East, from which commotions of global politics emerge, entails the employment of a new political analysis and a new pragmatics of intervention. As an entity political remobilization of whose attributes precedes its geographical ontology, the Middle East must be studied or engaged through methods which neither prioritize holistic models nor advocate their destruction. Accordingly, these models or methodologies must correspond to the socio-political formations of the Middle East, for which structural or functional inconsistencies can only be addressed in a uniform way (i.e. consistently linked to each other) if they are to be taken in regard to a degenerative whole whose partiality and wholeness alike are incapacitated and unable to exert control over each other. In a degenerative whole or ()hole complex, the consistency of events and their uniform dynamism exist through a poromechanical space where differentiation between surfaces (as of holes) has paralyzed the eventuation of the ground as the prerequisite basis for formative forces and coherent establishments. In fact, poromechanics, where an invocation of new grounds is registered as a perforation of the formation by new surfaces (or holes), corresponds to multiplex governing forces in every middle-eastern state. Here the term guerilla-state suits those middle-eastern states or societies where the boundaries between the state and its others have already been terminally perforated.

As a reading model for structures or formations with a degenerate whole, Hidden Writing corresponds to the dynamics of emergence and the perforated architecture of middle-eastern formations. In fact, Hidden Writing is a model of complicity with ()hole complex – it suggests we read stories through their plot holes. If texts with narrative plots and wholesome structures are read and written according to disciplines and procedures conforming to their configurations, then perforated structures, degenerate formations and plot holes must have reading and writing methodologies of their own.

More than a mere interdisciplinary investigation, Hidden Writing suggests a politics of contribution to, or participation with, perforated structures and degenerate formations.

Reading through the plot holes of a story is possible only by devising a line capable of twisting in and out of them. The chthonic ballistics of such a line not only encompasses solidity with a perforated transcendence and porous realism, but also convolves and terminally bends the formative matrix of the structure itself. Drawing upon two major quandaries for consolidated plots and consistent narratives, Hidden Writing reformulates and utilizes the components of apocryphality and steganography – that is, inauthenticity and hidden writing. Whereas the former predominantly concerns problems arising from misauthorship or the intervention of anonymous collectivities (the crowd) in writing a text, the latter addresses perforations or anomalies in a text caused by the existence and activities of something other than the governing structure or the assumed base plot. What is usually identified as a plot hole is nothing but the concrete trajectory



of such activities which, however communicative it is on the subsurface level, is inconsistent and symptomatic on the outer surface and superficial level. Hidden Writing can grasp political plot holes without reducing them to a whole or separating them from each other. Therefore, for reading middle-eastern events in connection to 'The World' (the visible or base plot), Hidden Writing is the ultimate tool of extraction, digging and participation, that is to say, reading as both scrutiny and realization.

Hidden Writing, whether as *apocrypha scripta* or *steganographia*, integrates the utilitarian frenzy of ()hole complex as its functioning principle, inseparable from its convoluted structure. In Hidden Writing structure and function alike are the same as in the dynamism of emergence and formation in porous earth. Hidden Writing can be described as utilizing every plot hole, all problematics, every suspicious obscurity or repulsive wrongness as a new plot with a tentacled and autonomous mobility. The aftermath of this utilization manifests itself as an act of writing whose effect is to deteriorate the primary unified plot or remobilize the so-called central theme and its authority as a mere armature or primary substance for holding things together. The central or main plot is reinvented solely in order that it may stealthily host, transport and nurture other plots. In Hidden Writing, a main plot is constructed to camouflage other plots (which can register themselves as plot holes) by overlapping them with the surface (superficially dynamic plot) or the grounded theme. In terms of such a writing, the main plot is the map or the concentration blueprint of plot holes (the other plots). Every hole is a footprint left by at least one more plot, prowling underneath.

A plot hole does not operate on behalf of an absence (that object of critics' scorn), but registers and conveys the activities of a sub-surface life. Plot holes are psychosomatic indications of at least one more plot densely populating itself in the holes it burrows through and digs out. However, the propagation of plot holes in hidden writing is not merely the evidence of actual independent plots beneath and through the visible surface or the so-called main story ('books within a book'). More importantly, it is the

indication of the active inauthenticity and anti-book distortions that Hidden Writings carry. In addition to being the manifest symptoms of other ongoing plots, plot holes originate from pseudonymity, anonymity and deliberate distortions linked to issues of authorship usually associated with Hidden Writings. Shifting voices, veering authorial perspectives, inconsistent punctuations and rhetorical divergences bespeak a crowd at work, one author multiplied into many. In fact, mis-authorial problems which are

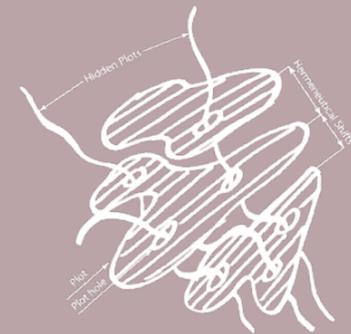


Fig. 14 Perpetuation of plot holes is imminent to the dynamism of subsurface plots

usually associated with Hidden Writings give rise to tendrilled plots as new narratives spreading out from the surface plot in all directions; plots capable of seizing the surface story or the textual structure from the dominant authorial space.

It is no accident that hidden writings are associated with collective authors, as in the case of *apocrypha scripta*. One of the initial symptoms of inauthenticity that Hidden Writing produces is positive disintegration, or more accurately, collectivization of one author (voice) or an authorial elite, and its transformation to an untraceable shady collective of writers, a crowd. This misauthorial problem is directly connected to the distortion or bastardization of books and their questionable backgrounds. Hence it

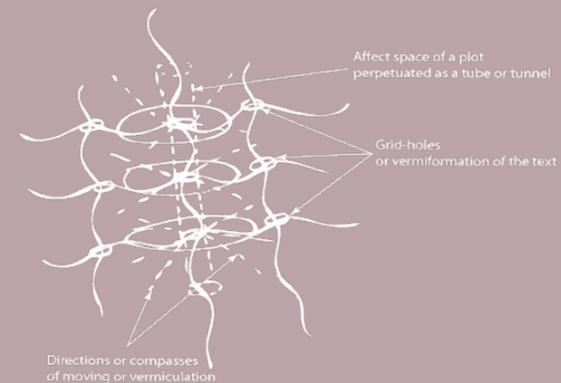


Fig. 15 Unlike texts as woven spaces (textum), hidden writings have tunnels instead of yarns, plot holes rather than structural grids

is a constant nightmare for religious Books and their virginal romanticism. Inauthenticity operates as complicity with anonymous materials.

In books of Hidden Writing, the textual subtopia consists of plots, narrations and autonomous author-drones populating the ()hole complex of Hidden Writing. Such a subsurface life can not be reduced to ramified plot layers or buried messages (*Bpoavpos*, *thesauri*) which would be the rewards of deep reading. So-called hermeneutic rigor follows the logic of textual stratification, and can be achieved by hermeneutical tools corresponding to the layering order of its text. But the subsurface life of Hidden Writing is not the object of layers and interpretation; it can only be exhumed by distorting the structure of the book or the surface plot. Exhumation includes a process of concrete crypting and decrypting, rewording, bastardization and a changing of the book. To interact with Hidden Writings, one must persistently continue and contribute to the writing process of the book. In Hidden Writings the act of reading and writing is conducted through those plot holes rejected by most interpreters as misleading obscurities. For hermeneutical explorations, plot holes are tricks, they are ill-timed and ill-spaced coordinates within the text – leak holes which must be plugged. But doesn't

blocking the leak shift the pressure to another region, forcing out another hole? Theology is in general constantly obsessed with plugging holes, covering cracks and fissures in reasoning of and about the Divine. Thus, it forms lacunae of imperfection by which the corpus of theology can always be mobilized against itself, turning against itself and biting back its body. To do rigorous theology is to perforate the Divine's corpus with heresies.

One of the most prominent examples of Hidden Writing is Johannes Trithemius' treatise on black occult and scholastic astrology, *Steganographia*, written circa 1499. Trithemius' grimoire lacks any superficial coherent plot or consistency, as if it has been infested by plot holes, and various losses of content and theme. However, the book is in fact a treatise on cryptography, camouflaged and buried within the surface plot that seems to speak of the astral occult. Instead of layers and levels, Hidden Writing populates subways, sunken colonies, a social commotion teeming underneath. Trithemius' treatise on unorthodox occult and astral communication haunted by a restless population of cryptological entities operates on the plane of textual perforation.

The Earth writes its histories as an inverse Trithemius; it is black occult disguised as the code. (Hamid Parsani)

In the introduction to *Defacing the Ancient Persia*, Parsani describes the role played by archeologists as fanatic readers of Hidden Writing who concretely contribute to the text. In the introduction, Parsani claims that 'archeology, with its ingrained understanding of Hidden Writing, will dominate the politics of future and will be the military science of twenty-first century':

Vast Mesopotamian necropolises [Parsani writes], virtually always consist of a so-called in-situ site or wonder zone, and an in-subside site or a missing site. The wonder zone or the visible site is usually located on a desolate plain or a mound with the ruins of ostentatious architectures erected on it. The wonder zone or the in-situ site is constituted of empty tombs or cenotaphs and treasure caches in the ground; it is a surface faerie with a precarious existence, perfected – or more accurately, falsified – by underground regions flaunted by treasures and exotic objects. Treasures have been buried in the ground; chambers have been interred with sham bodies of royal families and heroes as sub-plot digressions from the real underground complex. Beneath the ground, beneath even its sub-surface wonders and treasures, within the mound itself, there is a dense burrow or warren compound thickly populated by tombs, murals, weapons and the assorted oddments of the afterlife. The surface problematic site, together with bizarre theatrics such as empty tombs (*kenotaphion*) and misleading edifices, radiate a massive attraction for looters and vandals, diverting them from the subway system or the real Necropolis. These holes and inconsistencies, superficial entities, or red herrings, describe a positive fishiness which foreshadows the existence and activities of the Necropolis' urban space in the form of subways or an out-of-place site (*ex-situ* site). For an archeologist who reads the site through inconsistencies and through the profound defectiveness of what is available through the surface, the cenotaph, as an empty tomb, presents a hole in the story which points in an exact and unmistakable direction: the entrance to the warren compound of the necropolis or the real underground network. In a necropolis' surface-site, everything – from empty tombs filled with sham bodies to treasures deliberately buried within the ground – suggests to the discerning that there is something else, a missing site nearby. For the looter, however, something is obviously *wrong*, but insofar as the spoils



Fig. 16 Mesopotamian necropolises and their sites as models of political archeology

are nevertheless satisfactory and lavish, no more is said of it. Given these strategic surface absurdities and operational plot holes, if there is such a thing as, if you will, an aestheticism proper to the archeologist, it is undoubtedly expressed in the uneasy but excited exclamation: 'there is something deeply wrong with this thing'.

'In the Middle East, every hole in the story indicates a gate into the dust *tehom*.' The cryptic ending to Parsani's introduction can be elucidated — although such an elucidation makes nothing clear — by an interview with him published in a Lebanese quarterly journal (Summer 2001) where Parsani answers the interviewer's query about his puzzling statement that the Middle East is not secular, nor pagan, nor monotheistic, nor occult. 'What is it then?' the interviewer asks.

It is fanatically Tiamaterialist [Parsani answers]. In the Middle East Tiamaterialistic entities use a different field of distribution, infiltration, multiplication and cognition for their progression and activities, a field which resembles the heavily-perforated space of hidden writing. It is a surface near to collapse, full of inconsistencies and irrelevancies or, as I like to say, story holes, leading to an extensive undercurrent and subway system. A surface whose obsessive vocation consists in turning any political and religious movement into a burrowing machine whose every activity structurally degrades the whole field and ironically makes the problematics or holes more relevant to this space of sheer activity, and less relevant to the established ground. The Middle East's irrelevancy to the rest of the globe is not a symptom of too many politics and histories; it results directly from its Tiamaterialistic approach to the globe and its undercurrents. I say nothing new if I suggest that the Middle East constantly seeks to pick holes in the world order, seeks out modes of economics and politics which have not been pursued by the rest of the globe, and populates them, turning them into its objects of enlightenment. As for the world, it has not seen anything yet of Tiamaterialism, which is the grasping of Middle East as a sentient entity, a literally living one. The world order and its great breakthroughs have been grounded on the tortuous ratholes of middle-eastern Tiamaterialism, with its boring-out heads. If the most advanced economic systems are not reliable or do not work properly, that's not their fault. It is because they are nothing more than the plot holes of the Middle East's Tiamaterialism. From the standpoint of surfascists, it may look as if middle-eastern Tiamaterialism simply messes around, impulsively, restlessly; but the way it works is intricately strategic from the perspective of Hidden Writing, which is the perspective of holes' creative surfaces. Tiamaterialism contributes to the world order not through the so-called main storyline, the major plot currently moving forward, but through the plane of Hidden Writing. So, for instance, Wahhabi hostility to idolatrous embodiments escalates to the degree where even mosques and holy tombs belonging to the prophet's family and disciples have to be destroyed because they illegitimately break the rules of the God's exclusive oneness. So they shift the location of their underground infrastructures to areas near mosques and holy shrines, changing the directions of underground construction projects including subways to these places, concentrating pipelines, water storages, and other transport tunnels under the holiest Islamic sites to gradually surrender them to the forces of nature, or to destabilize the sites' foundations. Usually a third party, such as the neutral hostility of nature, will take care of holy tombs and sites. A materialistic personification of monotheistic zealotry on the ground, and integrated pipelines creeping beneath, concretely biting at the structure's foundation, interrupting the transfer of loads from the superstructure to the ground or creating fault foundation and sinkholes beneath the sites. From the very outset, as we can see, this whole cyclorama is an example of Hidden Writing. The collective history of Tiamaterialism or Middle East as a sentient entity is a masterpiece of Hidden Writing.

The nemat-space of the ()hole complex reduces the monopolistic holiness of the Creation, the functionality of the ground's economy (which also forms a taxis-trellis pincer to support the Whole), and the hegemony of the Whole. Nemat-space introduces wholeness to Zero without wiping it out. This is the polytics first practiced and exquisitely elaborated by the Persian cult of *Kaxuži* or *Kakhurid* or *Kastamn-e Farre*, the reducers of wholeness or the reducers of purity, introduced in the Zoroastrian book, *Zadspram*, as the devastators of the Iranians (for the Aryans were believed to represent the greatest purity and wholeness of all inhabitants of the Earth).

Nemat-space is infected with gate hysteria; its surfaces are always prone to collapse and re-emergence from somewhere else, thus restlessly clicking new gates open. It

gapes, yawns, bloats, coils and slithers — an endogenic parasite over, through and within the Earth. ()hole complex creates more passages than are needed in the Earth's body, thus rendering it a host of its own ulterior motives. The heretic Zoroastrian cults, *deavo-Yasns*, *Kaxuži* and *Yatumants* or *Akht-Jadu* (*Yatu*) called this indefinable earth which secretly squirms from the Outside and is fermented upon countless perforations, *Drujaskan*. According to ancient Zoroastrian scriptures, *Drujaskan* is, technically speaking, a maximally messed-up space, awakened from and by the Earth in order to unground the Earth's wholeness or manifest divinity. In short, it is the worst possible planetary entity. The aforementioned Zoroastrian sects were associated with the act of reducing the wholeness of the divine sphere or degenerating the Earth's wholesomeness, hence speeding the emergence of *Drujaskan* and its inextricable holeyness. Pests teem forth from *Drujaskan*, from passages which themselves are inseparable from the writhing bodies of the pest-legion. Ungrounded and unreported histories of the Earth are full of passages, vents and soft tunnels mobilized and unlocked through participations with the Earth as a compositional entity. These histories are engineered by openings and that which crawls within them; every movement in these passages invigorates the ungrounding of the earth, engineering what makes Earth, Earth.

Paranoid cultures and their establishments always leave security leaks; they breed more holes and more solids than anyone; but these latter, far from augmenting or purging the solidus, leave it as a corpse necrotized by heavy scarring (a fibroproliferative mess) ... hole ... solid ... hole ... solid ... solid ... hole ... hole ... hole ... de-faced; it is left as the corpse of solidus, ready to decay and turn into mess. ()hole complex turns the architectonic solid into an ex-architectural dump: laying waste, rotting erect, oozing pores.

Only as a Nemat-Space does the Earth endure; an opening through its whole, a hollow body drawing its cartographies on the surfaces of the ()hole complex. The awakening ritual that the cult of the Old Ones practices to surreptitiously speed the return of the elders involves messing with the solid part rather than submitting to the void. Such a mission constitutes advanced re-modifications and operations on the solid part of holey space, strategically assisting the composition of new vermicular lines or worm-functions, and autonomously digging passages for the Old Ones' Return — opening yawning



pits as zones of their rebirth. Each activity on the solid part or on the side of the solid is a sacred oblation to the Old Ones. To be a devoted architect of the solid is to feed the solid to the vermicular lines of *the void*.

They excavate tunnels in earth and lay their eggs within its pores; the larvae burrow through the earth's skin, migrating in the connective tissues, crust and strata, feeding on necrotic solids and surfaces. Burrowing sounds may be heard from within the earth.

Once they have finished infesting the earth's solid part, the larvae will cut breathing holes and press their headless tails against the surface for air. The larvae will continue to grow while boring out spinal cavities for the earth's body which will never be filled. As the larvae grow, they will enlarge the holes and come out of the ground.†

Pursue the idea of directing a movie based on two different books (disparate subjects, typographies, indexes, etc.) written by different authors.

† Should send the email: connection is still down in 302, apologies for the delay. Exchange of love is not an economic discipline, it is the open trade of contagions. Infection and the rapid increase of venom is the consequence of such a trade. I have many thoughts for you but I think right now you might be interested in some of my thoughts prior to the first time I contacted you (the one week BTW, I was putting the most important docs in the hotel room's nightstand as you advised and discovered two video cds in there. I watched them on the laptop: a movie from a french director named Claire Denis. I have never heard of her, excellent in this situation. I tried to get another movie of hers from a movie store in Taksim; J'ai pas Sommeil

Excursus II (Memory and ()hole complex)

If syntheses of memory are always time-dominated, memory distractions and memory gaps take advantage of the exploitation of time outside of chronological progressions. Memory holes introduce gaps, discontinuous tunnels and porous spaces into the chronological sphere of memory, thus making it more prone to time-lapses, abrupt schizophrenic katabases (personality-pulverizing blackouts, descents free from the hegemony of solid and void), and loss of wholeness. In Zoroastrianism, playing with graves and memory are both forbidden: While one deserves a physical punishment, the other will bring eternal torment - because playing with memory (i.e. inventing lines of iteration through memory other than mere remembering functions) sorcerously reinvents events not as localizable beings but as deathless (in the sense of demonic restlessness) and inexhaustible germ-lines. Playing with memory, beyond the legitimate activity of remembering, enmeshes memory as a playground of agitated activities in the past which break the organizational consistency of the past in regard to present and future. The past as a static chronologic horizon intrinsically tends to sedentarize all types of activities in itself, or to make itself the stabilizing ground of activities in present or future: The past belongs to the Divine and tradition.

The inability to remember is usually associated with the paralytic symptoms of memory holes; in this case, the subject is not able to access the memory. If memory holes cause such accessibility problems for the subject, it is because they have been specifically designed for being accessed from the other side. In this sense, memory holes are accessible not for the subject and its integrated self but for that which is exterior to the subject and has no self (no one). If remembering is unrealistic and futile in terms of memory holes, then inversely memory holes are gates and access points; they conduct remembering and other modes of access toward a memory which belongs to the outside.

If memory holes are channels for trafficking data and retrieval from the other side, then each human or subjective attempt to recall involves an invocation of, or a stepping into the memories of, an outsider. Memory gaps, with their Space-Time lapses, function as a ()hole complex through which neither entities seep through, rush toward our world; memory gaps are the instruments of their *homecoming*. [2]

† Edit Tyranny of the Minority for publication.

S . ok, I changed my mind: I will give you a few tips in regard to Tell-Ibrahim, if you try HARD you can possibly decipher the reason I contacted you in the first place in addition to the reason I have already mentioned (which was also true but insignificant compared to this one)

PIPELINE ODYSSEY THE Z MONOLOGUE

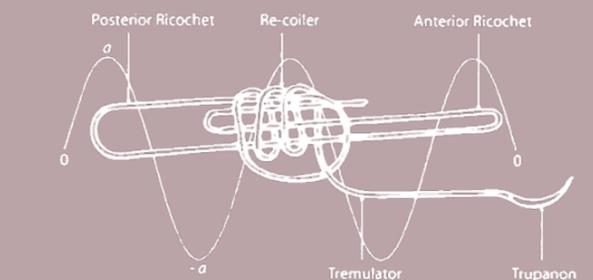
Z: To understand the militarization of oil and the dynamism of war machines in War on Terror, one must grasp oil as an ultimate Tellurian lubricant, or a vehicle for epic narratives. To instrumentalize oil through production, to impose any authorial line

on this narrative carrier, is like feeding on the Devil's excrement or its derivatives; there is always the danger of being poisoned to death or even worse. In contemporary Islamic references to radical Jihad as a global process, the Islamic approach towards the mobilization of tactics is explained as defense as opposed to offense. In the Islamic approach — that is, the way of Jihad — Islamic war is delineated by defense, diffusion and life-support contagion, while the crusading war machines or western lines of tactics are mapped on the plane of the offensive, escalation and militant intrusion. Therefore, the western incursive dynamism of tactics is always considered un-Islamic since it perceives war as a manifest dynamic progression of war machines — which inevitably turns into something basically intrusive because such obsessively dynamic war machines intrinsically transgress and penetrate borders. 'I exist because I move' definitely makes you *persona non grata* in some places. Such a vigorous dynamism cannot operate remotely or strike the enemy without transgressing borders and territories. The western crusade, and its approach to war machines, cannot be emulated by Islam because its quality of dynamism does not correspond to the laws of Islam and the belief that transgression is idolatrous because all lands and territories belong to the Divine, not to war machines or their tactics. For Islamic Jihad, everything must operate as a defense. Consequently, the mechanism of the clash is dynamically asymmetrical.

Notes

17. The Polish philosopher Roman Witold Ingarden, in his works focused on ontology (written after breaking from Husserl's phenomenology through a critique of transcendental idealism) expounds on the problem of openness and affordance, suggesting that closure (or modulated /economical openness) is a priority for open systems, and for analyzing niches as power projection zones and inhibitors of un-wanted interactions and communications. The openness of the niche protects itself from what makes it open, by opening itself to what makes it closed. Only through such an openness can the existential moments be afforded, so that modes of Being are then able to emerge.

18. Macro-pores allow rapid water infiltration and, importantly, similar rapid drainage that makes air quickly re-enter the root zone. The destruction of macro pores or massive pore collapse and subsequent propagation of smaller (micro-) pores causes water to be held tightly in the soil, increasing the incidence of anaerobic conditions (aeration is impeded), waterlogging, run-off, impotent cultivation and erosion. The increase in density of the soil mass and decrease in soil porosity mean plant roots are often physically impeded by compact subsoil layers and lack of available nutrients and/or water. Nemat-space and its porosity anomalies can trigger desertification as well as the emergence of a soggy Earth.



19. The rat, as a unit of ungrounding or polytical diffusion, is characterized by the liquidating and detrimental power of its anatomical mobility. The hegemony of the head is constantly undermined by the swerving motion of the tail which continues on a sinuous pattern of divergence and swerving motion. When moving in a pack, the rat spends three quarters of its time in the air (the ferocity of the leap). To move, the rat applies a muscular tension or coiling force to the body as the initiating force; this force then is channeled to the hind part (hind feet, posterior ricochet). The rat continues the process by pushing off with the hind part, then landing on the front part (forefeet, anterior ricochet), bringing forward the hind part and pushing off again. In one beat (pulse), the anterior ricochet hits the ground, followed quickly by the posterior ricochet, which pushes the rat into the air, and three beats later the anterior ricochet hits the ground again. The re-coiler is coiled when the hind part is brought forward, making leaps very conspicuous. The entire mobility and distribution of forces in the rat produces a seismic wave which gains an infiltrative and probing quality (smart catastrophe) that claws away everything in its way. Although the entire body of the rat is an effective arrangement and distribution of epidemic tools, the rat engineers its holey space or ratholes using its extremum part (Trupanon), boring out new spaces for its havoc. Nothing is more politically obscure than the interplay between the head and the tail in a rat.

Baby Dee
Road of Eyes That See

*There is a road that we can walk
Where sunlit winds teach trees to talk
In tongues of love
To talk
In tongues of love.*

*And on that road of eyes that see
I am heart-set to be
A child of joy,
To be
A child of joy.*

*A child of joy
A child of joy
I am determined to remain
A child of joy*

*Come my darling one
With me and walk
That road of eyes that see
A child of joy
A child of joy.*

*And in the eyes of every tree on
That road of eyes that see
Determined to remain
A child of joy
A child of joy*

*I am determined to remain
A child of joy
Tell all your friends
Don't get so discouraged.*

Utopia
2015





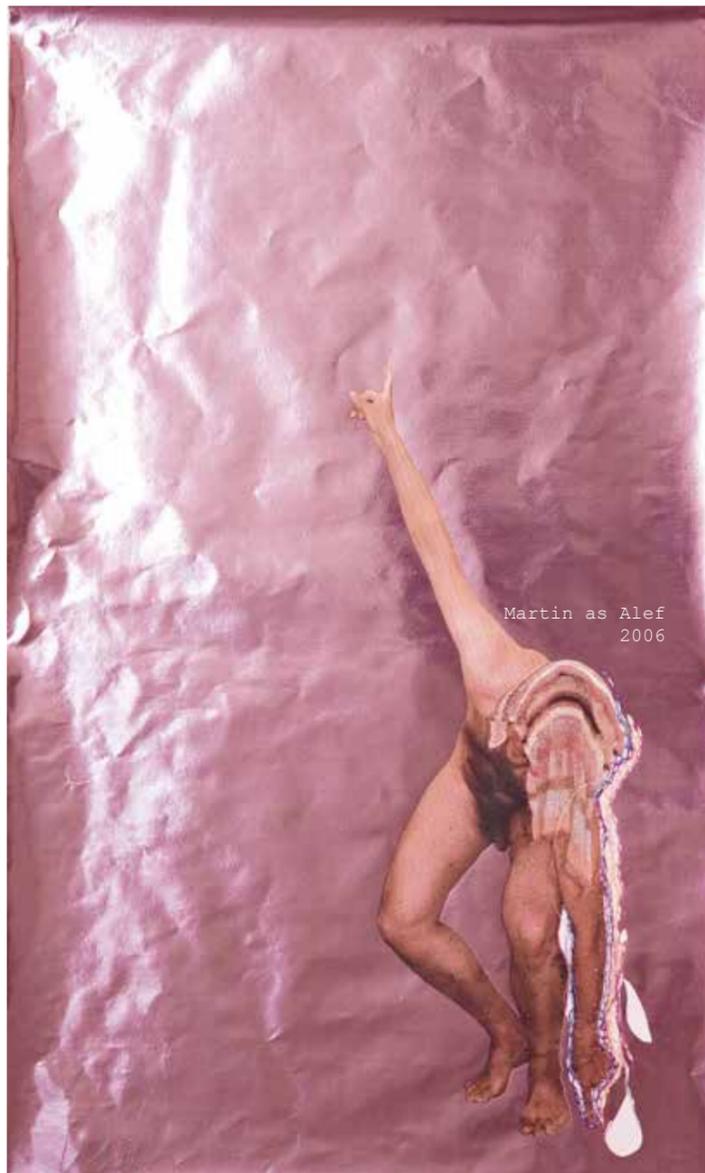
Axis/Doryphoros
2015



Axis/Doryphoros. Detail
2015



Petopentia Netaensis
2011



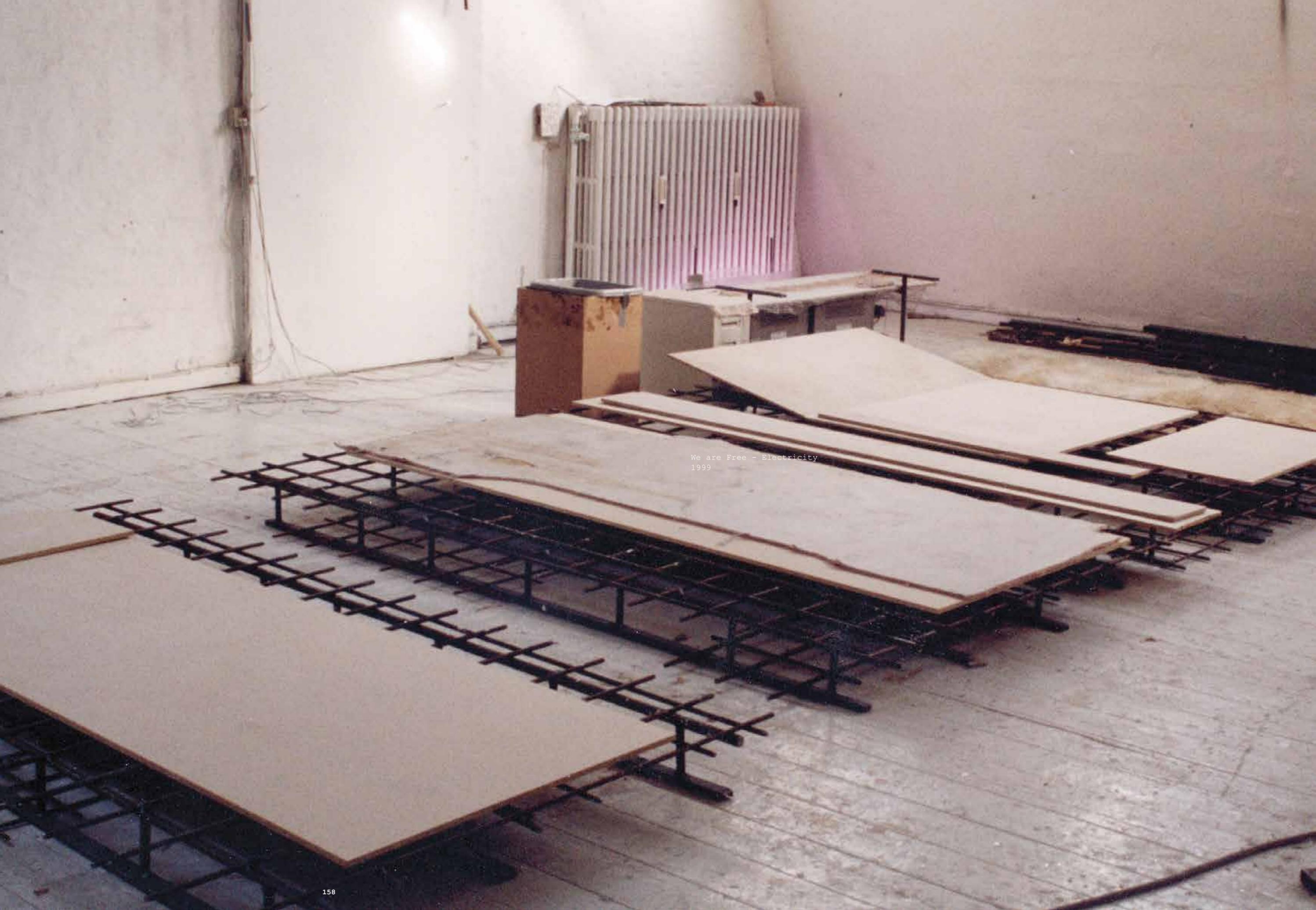
Martin as Alef
2006



Tortoiseshell Majesty, Falsifier Telescope
2015



Shuttering with Work on Wall
1996



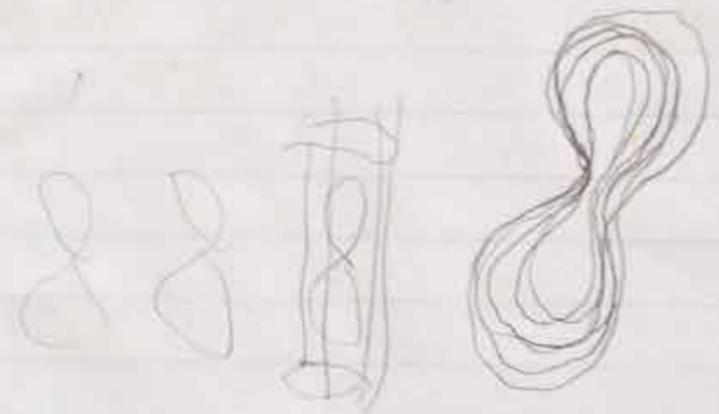
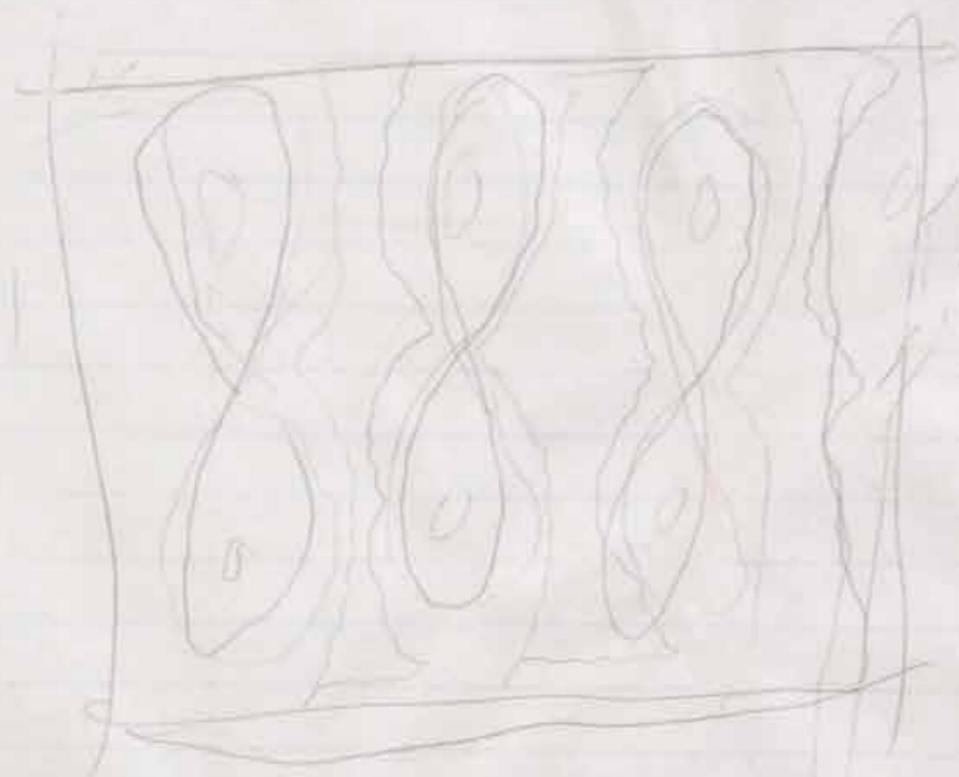
We are Free - Electricity
1999

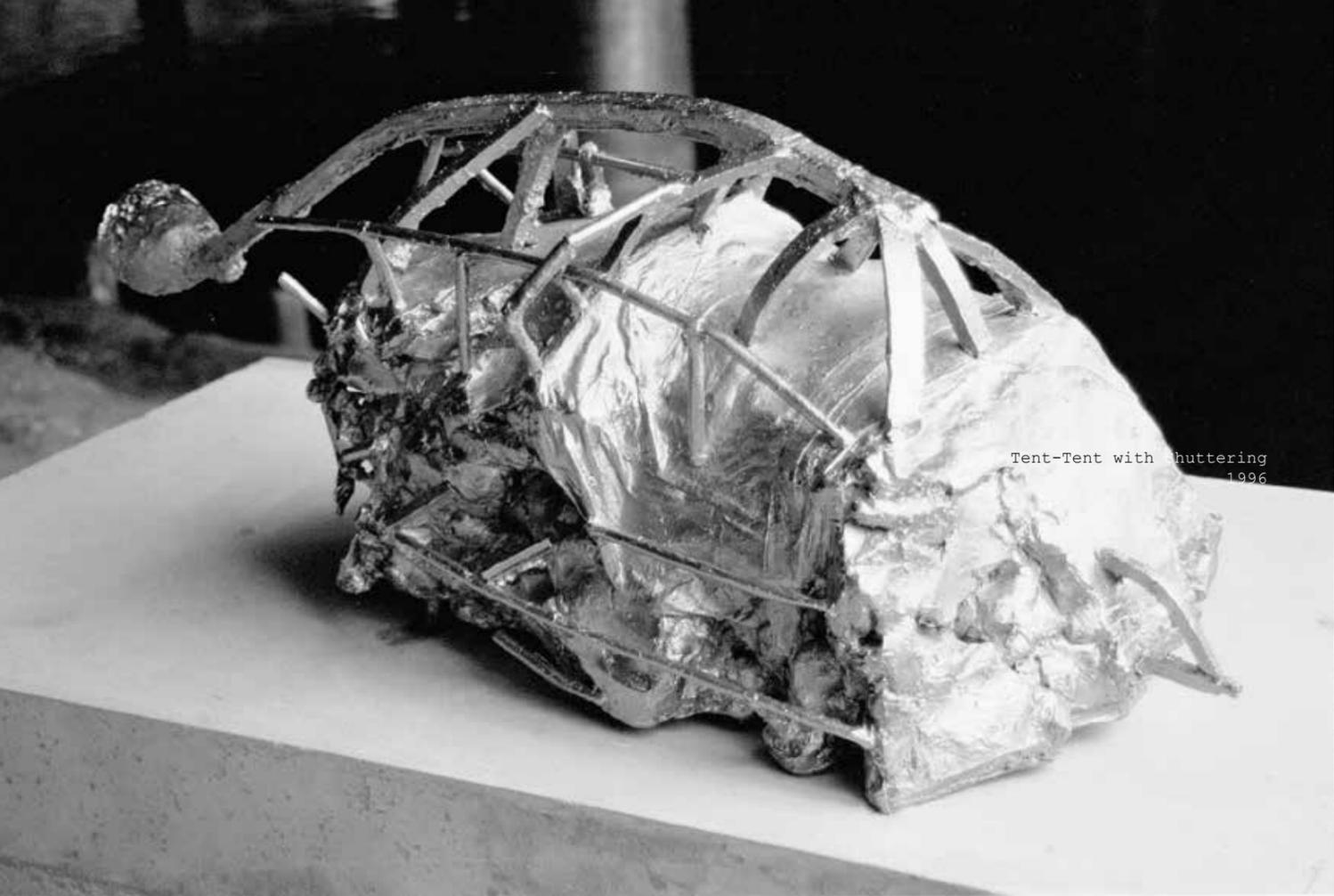


white/red

purple

Cotillon
1998





Tent-Tent with Shuttering
1996



Tent-Tent with Shuttering



The Gospel of Truth. Embassy
2000



Monument for Loss of Syntax (slum baroque pool)
2015

All this I am, and I want to be: at the same time dove, serpent, and pig.

Nietzsche

When a man finds himself situated in such a way that the world is happily reflected in him, without entailing any destruction or suffering – as on a beautiful spring morning – he can let himself be carried away by the resulting enchantment or simple joy. But he can also perceive, at the same time, the weight and the vain yearning for empty rest implied by this beatitude. At that moment, something cruelly rises up in him that is comparable to a bird of prey that tears open the throat of a smaller bird in an apparently peaceful and clear blue sky. He recognizes that he cannot fulfill his life without surrendering to an inexorable movement, whose violence he can feel acting on the most remote areas of his being with a rigor that frightens him. If he turns to other beings who do not go beyond beatitude, he experiences no hate, but, on the contrary, he sympathizes with necessary pleasures; he clashes only with those who pretend to attain fulfillment in their lives, who act out a risk-free charade in order to be recognized as having attained fulfillment, while in fact they only speak of fulfillment. But he should not succumb to vertigo. For vertigo swiftly exhausts and threatens to revive a concern for happy leisure or, if that cannot be attained, for a painless emptiness. Or if he does not give in, and if he tears himself completely apart in terrified haste, he enters death in such a way that nothing is more horrible. He alone is happy who, having experienced vertigo to the point of trembling in his bones, to the point of being incapable of measuring the extent of his fall, suddenly finds the un hoped-for strength to turn his agony into a joy capable of freezing and transfiguring those who meet it. But the only ambition that can take hold of a man who, in cold blood, sees his life fulfilled in rending agony, cannot aspire to a grandeur that only extreme chance has at its disposal. This kind of violent decision, which disrupts his repose, does not necessarily entail either his vertigo or his fall in sudden death. In him, this decision may become an act and a power by which he devotes himself to the rigor whose movement ceaselessly closes in on him, as cutting as the beak of a bird of prey. Contemplation is only the context, sometimes calm and sometimes stormy, in which the rapid force of his action must one day be put to the test. The mystical existence of the one whose “joy before death” has become inner violence can never attain the satisfying beatitude of the Christian who gives himself a foretaste of eternity. The mystic of “joy before death” can never be seen as cornered, for he is able to laugh complacently at every human endeavor and to know every accessible enthusiasm: but the totality of life–ecstatic contemplation and lucid knowledge accomplished in a single action that cannot fail to become risk – is, however, just as inexorably his lot as death is that of the condemned man.

Georges Bataille
The Practice of Joy before Death



The texts that follow cannot alone constitute an initiation into the exercise of a mysticism of “joy before death.” While admitting that a method of initiation might exist, they do not represent even a part of it. Since oral initiation is itself difficult, it is impossible to give in a few pages more than the vaguest representation of that which by nature cannot be grasped. On the whole, these writings represent, moreover, less exercises strictly speaking than simple descriptions of a contemplative state or of an ecstatic contemplation. These descriptions would not even be acceptable if they were not given for what they are, in other words, as free. Only the very first text could be proposed as an exercise.

While it is appropriate to use the word mysticism when speaking of “joy before death” and its practice, this implies no more than an affective resemblance between this practice and those of the religions of Asia or Europe. There is no reason to link any presuppositions concerning an alleged deeper reality with a joy that has no object other than immediate life. “Joy before death” belongs only to the person for whom there is no beyond; it is the only intellectually honest route in the search for ecstasy.

Besides, how could a beyond, a God or what resembles God, still be acceptable? No words are clear enough to express the happy disdain of the one who “dances with the time that kills him” for those who take refuge in the expectation of eternal beatitude. This kind of fretful saintliness – which first had to be sheltered from erotic excess – has now lost all its power: one can only laugh at a sacred drunkenness allied with a horror of debauchery. Prudery may be healthy for backward souls, but those who would be afraid of nude girls or whisky would have little to do with “joy before death.”

Only a shameless, indecent saintliness can lead to a sufficiently happy loss of self. "Joy before death" means that life can be glorified from root to summit. It robs of meaning everything that is an intellectual or moral beyond, substance, God, immutable order, or salvation. It is an apotheosis of that which is perishable, apotheosis of flesh and alcohol as well as of the trances of mysticism. The religious forms it rediscovers are the naive forms that antedate the intrusion of a servile morality: It renews the kind of tragic jubilation that man "is" as soon as he stops behaving like a cripple, glorifying necessary work and letting himself be emasculated by the fear of tomorrow.

I.

"I abandon myself to peace, to the point of annihilation."

"The noises of struggle are lost in death, as rivers are lost in the sea, as stars burst in the night.
The strength of combat is fulfilled in the silence of all action.
I enter into peace as I enter into a dark unknown.
I fall in this dark unknown.
I myself become this dark unknown."

II.

"I AM joy before death.
Joy before death carries me.
Joy before death hurls me down.
Joy before death annihilates me."

"I remain in this annihilation and, from there, I picture nature as a play of forces expressed in multiplied and incessant agony."

"I slowly lose myself in unintelligible and bottomless space.
I reach the depths of worlds.
I am devoured by death.
I am devoured by fever.
I am absorbed in somber space.
I am annihilated in joy before death."

III.

"I AM joy before death."

"The depth of the sky, lost space is joy before death: everything is profoundly cracked."

"I imagine the earth turning vertiginously in the sky.
I imagine the sky itself slipping, turning, and lost.
The sun, comparable to alcohol turning and bursting breathlessly.
The depth of the sky like an orgy of frozen light, lost.
Everything that exists destroying itself, consummating itself and dying, each instant producing itself only in the annihilation of the preceding one, and itself existing only as mortally wounded.
Ceaselessly destroying and consuming myself in myself in a great festival of blood.
I imagine the frozen instant of my own death."

IV.

"I focus on a point before me and I imagine this point as the geometric locus of all existence and all unity, of all separation and all dread, of all unsatisfied desire and all possible death."

"I adhere to this point and a profound love of what I find there burns me, until I refuse to be alive for any reason other than for what is there, for this point which, being both the life and death of the loved one, has the blast of a cataract."

"And at the same time it is necessary to strip away all external representations from what is there, until it is nothing but a pure violence, an interiority, a pure inner fall into a limitless abyss; this point endlessly absorbing from the cataract all its inner nothingness, in other words, all that has disappeared, is 'past,' and in the same movement endlessly prostituting a sudden apparition to the love that vainly wants to grasp that which will cease to be."

"The impossibility of satisfaction in love is a guide toward the fulfilling leap at the same time that it is the nullification of all possible illusion."

V.

"If I imagine myself in a vision and in a halo that transfigures the ecstatic and exhausted face of a dying being, what radiates from that face illuminates with its necessity the clouds in the sky, whose grey glow then becomes more penetrating than the light of the sun itself. In this vision, death appears to be of the same nature as the illuminating light, to the extent that light is lost once it leaves its source: it appears that' no less a loss than death is needed for the brilliance of life to traverse and transfigure dull existence, for it is only its free uprooting that becomes in me the strength of life and time. In this way I cease to be anything other than the mirror of death, just as the universe is only the mirror of light. "

VI. Heraclitean Meditation

"I MYSELF AM WAR. "

"I imagine human movement and excitation, whose possibilities are limitless: this movement and excitation can only be appeased by war.
I imagine the gift of an infinite suffering, of blood and open bodies, in the image of an ejaculation cutting down the one it jolts and abandoning him to an exhaustion charged with nausea.
I imagine the earth projected in space, like a woman screaming, her head in flames.
Before the terrestrial world whose summer and winter order the agony of all living things, before the universe composed of innumerable turning stars, limitlessly losing and consuming themselves, I can only perceive a succession of cruel splendors whose very movement requires that I die: this death is only the exploding consumption of all that was, the joy of existence of all that comes into the world; even my own life demands that everything that exists, everywhere, ceaselessly give itself and be annihilated.
I imagine myself covered with blood, broken but transfigured and in agreement with the world, both as prey and as a jaw of TIME, which ceaselessly kills and is ceaselessly killed.
There are explosives everywhere that perhaps will soon blind me. I laugh when I think that my eyes persist in demanding objects that do not destroy them."



Porcelain. 1986-94

"The very stone that earlier had sought to limit storms is now nothing more than a milestone marking the immensity of an unlimited catastrophe ..."

Georges Bataille *The Obelisk*

Clausewitz writes in *On War*: "Like the obelisks that are raised at the points where the major roads of a country begin, the energetic will of the leader constitutes the center from which everything in military art emanates." The Place de la Concorde is the space where the death of God must be announced and shouted precisely because the obelisk is its calmest negation. As far as the eye can see, a moving and empty human dust gravitates around it. But nothing answers so accurately the apparently disordered aspirations of this crowd as the measured and tranquil spaces commanded by its geometric simplicity. The obelisk is without a doubt the purest image of the head and of the heavens. The Egyptians saw it as a sign of military power and glory, and just as they saw the rays of the setting sun in their funeral pyramids, so too they recognized the brilliance of the morning sun in the angles of their splendid monoliths: the obelisk was to the armed sovereignty of the pharaoh what the pyramid was to his dried-out corpse. It was the surest and most durable obstacle to the drifting away of all things. And even today, whenever its rigid image stands out against the sky, it seems that sovereign permanence is maintained across the unfortunate vicissitudes of civilizations. The old obelisk of Ramses II is thus, at the central point from which the avenues radiate, both a simpler and a more important apparition than any other; is it not worthy of renewed

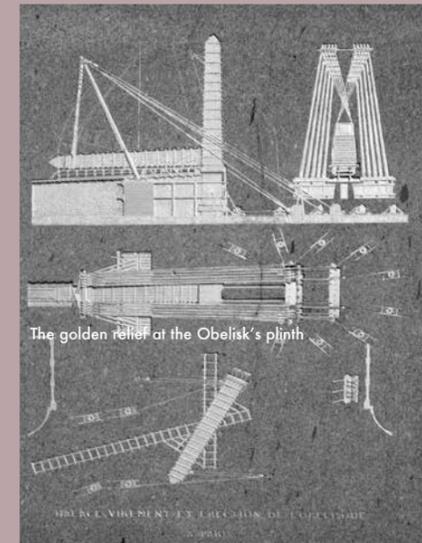


astonishment that, from remote regions of the earth and from the dawn of the ages, this Egyptian image of the IMPERISHABLE, this petrified sunbeam, arrives at the center of urban life?

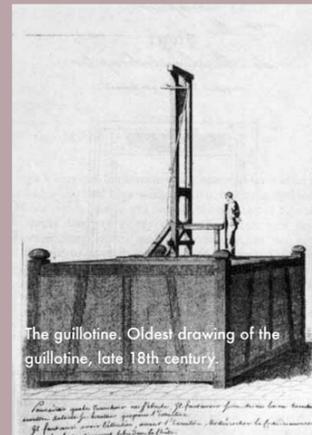
The Guillotine

Near Surlei, a rock in the form of a pyramid still bears witness to the fall of the "return" Only protracted futility - attached to servile or useful objects - can today shelter existence from the feeling of violent absurdity. The great dead shadows have lost the magical charm that made their protection so effective. And when an extreme chance wills that they still make up the center of destiny, they protect only to the extent that there is daily indifference. The obelisk of Luxor has, after a hundred years, become the measured navel of the land of moderation: its precise angles now belong to the essential figure that radiates from its base. But the timelessness given to it is due to the absence of any intelligible affirmation: it endures by virtue of its discrete value. Where monuments that had clearly affirmed principles were razed, the obelisk remains only so long as the sovereign authority and command it symbolizes

do not become conscious. There was some difficulty in finding an appropriate symbol for the Place de la Concorde, where the images of royalty and the Revolution had proven powerless. But it was contrary to the majesty of the site to leave an empty space, and agreement was reached on a monolith brought back from Egypt. Seldom has a gesture of this type been more successful; the apparently meaningless image imposed its calm grandeur and its pacifying power on a location that always threatened to recall the worst. Shadows that could still trouble or weigh upon the conscience were dissipated, and neither God nor time remained: total sovereignty and the guillotine-blade that put an end to it no longer occupied any place in the minds of men. This is the deceitful and vague response of exalted places to the fathomless multitude of insignificant lives that, for as far as the eye can see, orbit around them - and the spectacle only changes when the lantern of a madman projects its absurd light on stone. At that moment, the obelisk ceases to belong to the present and empty world, and it is projected to the ends of time. It rises, immutable - there - dominating time's desperate flight. But even while it is blinded by this domination, madness, which hits about its angles in the manner of an insect fascinated by a lamp, recognizes only endless time escaping in the noise of successive



The golden relief at the Obelisk's plinth



The guillotine. Oldest drawing of the guillotine, late 18th century.

explosions. And there is no longer an image before it, but it hears this noise of successive explosions. To the extent that the obelisk is now, with all this dead grandeur, recognized, it no longer facilitates the flight of consciousness; it focuses the attention on the guillotine. The Place de la Concorde is dominated, from the height of the palace balustrades, by eight armored and acephalic figures, and under their stone helmets they are as empty as they were on the day the executioner decapitated the king before them. After the execution, Marly's two horses were brought from the nearby forest and set up at the entrance to the exalted places, before which they rear without end. The central point of the triangle formed by the two horses and the obelisk marks the location of the guillotine - an empty space, open to the rapid flow of traffic.

Architecture of Memory: Bridge, Shrine. Architecture of Non-Memory: Mirrors, Castle, Geometric Gardens. Notes on the Orlando Furioso.

Canto XXIX - Architecture of Memory

In Canto XXIX of the Orlando Furioso Ariosto tells the story of the brutal and unhappy love of Rodomonte, king of Algiers, for Isabella. Upon having slain the hermit who protected Isabella after the death of her beloved Zerbino, Rodomonte falls in love with Isabella. He tries to seduce her but does not succeed. Isabella fears and refuses Rodomonte and is determined to remain true to her dead lover. She understands that the only way for her to escape Rodomonte's sexual assault is death. So she tells the ferocious but naive king that she knows how to make a potion of "special herbs" which can make him invincible. In exchange for the potion, he must promise that he will renounce "offending" her. Rodomonte agrees. After searching together for herbs through valleys and forests (in what seems pretty much like a sort of romance) Isabella cooks the potion and then tells Rodomonte that, in order to prove that the potion works, she will use it on herself first. She undresses and applies the potion to her body and asks Rodomonte to strike her with his sword. Excited about seeing Isabella's naked body, he promptly follows her instructions, and chops off her head.

After killing his beloved, Rodomonte is desperate and decides to erect a monument in her honour. This monument is made up of two components: a shrine and a bridge. Rodomonte recruits over 6000 craftsmen. They build a long and narrow bridge over the river surrounding the shrine. The bridge is extremely narrow (two horses cannot go over it at the same time) and thus it creates countless opportunities for challenging the knights who happen o step onto it. In despair, Rodomonte waits close to the bridge and challenges every knevery kk ight who wants to cross it. After defeating them, he displays the weapons of the vanquished challengers on the façades of the shrine.

Now, forget the perverted sexual game with which Isabella defends her chastity – poor Rodomonte – and let us consider the story from the point of view of architecture.

The complex described in Canto XXIX is a device of memory. The only scope of the bridge and the shrine is to remember the woman that Rodomonte was incapable of conquering.

The two elements of the complex are connected in a single production chain (the bridge generates the duels that end up providing the trophies to be displayed on the shrine), and yet the two elements are at opposite ends of the spectrum of a possible architecture of memory. The bridge is an architecture of cruelty, a machine to generate actions based on a constrictive spatial condition, and the shrine is an architecture of propaganda, a repository of signs to be read for their value as messages.

The system has a famous precedent in the association of bridge and shrine in Hadrian's Mausoleum (Ariosto explicitly mentions the Roman monument, although only in reference to the shrine: XXIX, 33, 1-2), but it assumes a completely different tone: the bridge associated with Hadrian's Mausoleum has none of the features of the bridge designed by Rodomonte, but operates as a rhetorical device, just like the shrine. By introducing the cruel spatiality of the bridge into the system, Rodomonte produces an entirely different machine of memory. The complex operates like a Wile E. Coyote trap. Many details of the story indeed have a cartoonish tone: the shrine includes a tower from which a servant observes the bridge and calls Rodomonte every time someone tries to cross. The servant blows a horn to announce the possibility of a new duel (XXIX, 35, 7-8):

che d'ogni cavallier che venia al ponte,
col corno facea segno a Rodomonte.

[...], whensoever any knight
Approached the bridge, was wont his lord to warn,
Sounding a signal on his bugle-horn.

Also the landscape that we tend to associate with the scene is somewhat coyoteish: the bridge needs an abyss to operate convincingly, and immediately a canyon opens below it. We also remember that the Furioso takes place between France and Spain, on the border of the Moors' and Frank's territories, not very far from the classic Spanish landscapes of Sergio Leone's westerns. Rodomonte, most likely, is Eli Wallach, the ugly one of The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

Bridge

The bridge is infrastructure. Ariosto gives no details about the bridge except its width and its lack of parapets (XXIX, 33, 5-8 and 34, 1-4):

Un ponte stretto e di due braccia sole
fece su l'acqua che correa vicina.
Lungo il ponte, ma largo era sì poco,
che dava a pena a duo cavalli loco;

A narrow bridge, and only two yards wide,
He flung across the stream which rolled fast by.
Long, but so scanty is that bridge, with pain
The narrow pass two coursers can contain;

a duo cavalli che venuti a paro,
o ch'insieme si fossero scontrati:
e non avea né sponda né riparo,
e si potea cader da tutti i lati.

Two coursers, that abreast have thither made,
Or else, encountering, on that causeway meet:
Nor anywhere was ledge or barricade,
To stay the horse's fall, who lost his feet.

The bridge has no style, no formal specifications. Its only quality is the possibility to fall from both sides. Its implacable efficiency is that of a weapon: the bridge produces duels among the knights who attempt to cross it. It is a curious type of infrastructure – a bridge not to be crossed, a bridge from which to fall into the river – anyhow, it is pure infrastructure. The bridge has no image, it is perfectly defined by the actions it produces. It does not announce its function, it simply operates.

The bridge is just space, without messages: a spatial condition which generates a series of precise events, duels.

The bridge is very dangerous, somehow suggesting that remembering is not a particularly safe operation. Also, the bridge is immediately and efficiently built (in ten days: XXIX, 35, 1), and immediately it is effective.

Shrine

On the contrary (XXIX, 35, 3) it takes a long time to build the shrine.

The shrine encloses a previous building: the church (XXIX, 32, 8) which contains the tomb of Isabella and Zerbino. This matrioska-like construction – a mausoleum, with a church inside, with a tomb inside – is reminiscent of Leon Battista Alberti's Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini, a classicistic shrine built around a medieval church to commemorate Isotta degli Atti, the lover and later wife of Sigismondo Malatesta (who by the way killed his previous wife in order to marry Isotta). The shrine is a monument, decorated with trophies. It produces memory not by enforcing new actions, but by suggesting previous ones. If the bridge is a machine of memory operating on the present (as a technology producing certain actions, in this case duels), the shrine is a machine of memory operating on the past (a technology to expose traces of actions that once happened). The bridge is space, whereas the shrine is just a huge sculpture, an oversized sign. The bridge does not have any message, whereas, on the contrary, the shrine is a medium. The bridge is unequivocal as only a death sentence can be, while the shrine is exposed to infinite possibilities for misunderstandings. Operating as the occasion for an accumulation of signs (the trophies displayed along the building every time Rodomonte has defeated a new challenger), the shrine loses its form to become just a backdrop. This accumulation of traces – somewhat like the accumulation of the names of the winning teams on sport trophies such as the Copa Libertadores or the Stanley Cup – inflates memory beyond its original object. The entire complex is hyper-performing: memory becomes an obsession in itself, somehow independent from the original object of memory (it is also quite strange that Rodomonte places Isabella's and Zerbino's tomb inside the shrine, the beloved he could not conquer and her previous lover). It looks once again like Wile E. Coyote – Rodomonte is trapped within the very machine he himself has developed.

L'Année Dernière

At a social gathering at a baroque castle, X approaches A. All the guests at the castle are extremely elegantly dressed. The castle is full of mirrors. A is a very beautiful woman; she is probably married to M. M and X repeatedly play a strange mathematical game. X always loses. X repeatedly tells A that they met the year before at Marienbad, she denies it. They meet at a terrace overlooking a geometric garden, with conical pine trees casting no shadow. X insists that they met the year before at Marienbad, A denies it.

Geometric Gardens

In L'année dernière a Marienbad the author Alain Robbe-Grillet and the director Alain Resnais used geometric gardens as machines of memory – although of interrupted, inefficient memory.

Geometric gardens in fact activate a memory that they do not explain. Gardens are not signs. Gardens do not communicate. Gardens are silent. In architectural terms, geometric gardens are a case of pure plan: architecture deprived of any need for shelter, architecture of pure spatial organization, of control of movements, almost a built choreography. And geometric gardens are an architecture of multiple possibilities, although all unexploited. Indeed the plan of the geometric garden is always entirely visible (the hedges are normally lower than the shoulders of the person trapped in the garden and so it is always possible to overlook the entire extension of the field) and so all the movements and gestures that are possible inside the garden are always – and at the same time – on display, although as frozen, impossible possibilities. As such the geometric garden is space in its pure paralyzing multiplicity: spatium est ordo coexistendi seu ordo existendi inter ea quae

sunt simul (Space is the order of coexisting things, or the order of existence for things which are simultaneous). The geometric garden is a sum of possibilities all equally frozen, all equally unexploited: the physical proof of the impossibility of the possible. There is something negative about the geometric garden, and it is not its bizarre relation to nature, it is its uncanny exhibition of the impossibility of plurality in space.

In geometric gardens the possible gestures are both infinite in number and at the same time all precisely determined. Nothing new can happen inside the geometric garden. Everything happens as repetition of a precisely defined (and unknown) past. In geometric gardens the past is plural, and the future simply does not exist. Geometric gardens (whether they are organized as labyrinths or not) force visitors to walk according to pre-determined paths, moving in the prescribed directions defined by the precisely cut hedges. These repeated movements seem to suggest the existence of a forgotten reason for such repetition. And yet the carefully repeated past does not reappear, nor is it explained.



L'année dernière a Marienbad. Alain Resnais. 1961

Like the bridge built by Rodomonte, geometric gardens are dangerous. Like the bridge, the gardens are based on spatial constriction and yet, contrary to the bridge, they operate on memory of the past, like the shrine does. Indeed the gardens do not produce new events to be accumulated in the heap of events of the past (like the new duels which the bridge produces to expiate the original killing of Isabella), rather they activate a sense for unknown gestures of the past that are now being repeated. Like in mirrors, life is simply a reflection. And yet, contrary to mirrors, gardens are not perfectly precise. They force us to remember something which cannot be clearly distinguished. In geometric gardens the object of memory is lost, but not the act of remembering. Somehow the object of the geometric garden is an empty memory, a memory of the unknown. In such a garden all objects of desire are missing: they vanished without leaving even the slightest bit of

information. The garden is an architecture of non-memory.

Canto XII - Architecture of Non-Memory

In Canto XII of the Orlando Furioso, Ariosto describes the castle of Atlante. Atlante is a wizard who wishes to spare the life of Ruggiero by preventing him from fighting the duel that will end his life. Atlante creates all sorts of deceptions, among them the castle.

In Atlante's castle all objects of desire are fake, a pure projection of one's internal world. Knights trapped in the castle wander through its innumerable rooms following an escaping ghost (XII, 12, 1-8):

Tutti cercando il van, tutti gli danno
colpa di furto alcun che lor fatt'abbia:
del destrier che gli ha tolto, altri è in affanno;
ch'abbia perduta altri la donna, arrabbia;
altri d'altro l'accusa: e così stanno,
che non si san partir di quella gabbia;
e vi son molti, a questo inganno presi,
stati le settimane intiere e i mesi.

All in pursuit of the offender speed,
And upon him some charge of robbery lay:
One knight complains that he has stolen his steed,
One that he has purloined his lady gay.
Other accuses him of other deed:
And thus within the enchanted cage they stay,
Nor can depart; while in the palace pent,
Many have weeks and months together spent.

Some of them are searching for the women they love, some are simply searching for their horses or, in general, for what they desire the most (XII, 20, 1-8):

Una voce medesma, una persona
che paruta era Angelica ad Orlando,
parve a Ruggier la donna di Dordona,
che lo tenea di sé medesmo in bando.
Se con Gradasso o con alcun ragiona
di quei ch'andavan nel palazzo errando,
a tutti par che quella cosa sia,
che più ciascun per sé brama e desia.

One voice, one shape, which to Anglantes' peer
Seemed his Angelica, beseeching aid.
Seemed to Rogero Dordogne's lady dear.
Who him a truant to himself had made:
If with Gradasso, or with other near
He spake, of those who through the palace strayed.
To all of them the vision, seen apart,
Seemed that which each had singly most at heart.

The castle ends up being a carousel of knights (who we should imagine walking around in their heavy armour, helmet on, rigid and slow and filling the rooms with an awkward metallic noise) each one following his own empty balloon inflated by his own unconscious, each one lost in his own specific madness, each one chronically deluded in his own foolish search (XII, 8, 7-8):

Orlando, come è dentro, gli occhi gira;
né più il guerrier, né la donzella mira.

Entering, around Orlando turns his eyes,
Yet neither cavalier nor damsel spies.
And yet delusion does not stop them from walking in circles

(XII, 9, 3-4):

corre di qua, corre di là, né lassa
che non vegga ogni camera, ogni loggia.

And here and there in restless rage repairs,
Till he has seen each bower, each galleried row;

and (XII, 10, 4-8):

Dì su di giù va il conte Orlando e riede;
né per questo può far gli occhi mai lieti
che riveggiano Angelica, o quel ladro
che n'ha portato il bel viso leggiadro.

Now here, now there, returns Orlando bold,
Nor yet can glad his eyes, in bower or hall,
With the appearance of the royal maid,
Or the foul thief by whom she was conveyed.

and again (XII, 19, 1-4):

Poi che revisto ha quattro volte e cinque
di su di giù camere e logge e sale,
pur di nuovo ritorna, e non relinque
che non ne cerchi fin sotto le scale.

After four times or five he so had wound
Above, below, through bower and gallery fair,
He yet returned, and, having nothing found,
Searched even to the space beneath the stair.

The castle is an architecture of non-memory. Its deceit is based on the suggestion of particular, "customized" memory that is then systematically emptied. And yet, if the missing memory of the geometric garden has a bitter, uncanny taste, the missing memory of Atlante's castle has a funny, comic tone.

If we adopt Donald Rumsfeld's famous distinction between the genres of "knowns" and "unknowns", the geometric garden is a place of known unknowns, a field of precisely defined gestures that need to be repeated for an unknown reason, while on the contrary Atlante's castle is a place of unknown knowns, a repository of extremely familiar desires activated in a mysterious manner. In the garden the method is known (even rational, geometric) and the desires are obscure; in the castle the desires are known and the logic of their appearance is obscure. The geometric garden is architecturally precise and psychologically unclear, whereas Atlante's

castle is psychologically sharp and architecturally generic.

The geometric garden, as well as the bridge and the shrine, are active machines of memory (or of non-memory), Atlante's castle is relatively irrelevant to the deceit, which operates simply through the production of illusory doppelgangers. The castle is simply a scene on which the ghosts can appear and disappear: its only architectural characteristic is the enormous quantity of rooms. Its generic nature manifests itself through repetition. While Ariosto precisely defines the shrine and the bridge in their architectural organization, the castle, being architecturally irrelevant, is only described through its construction materials (XII, 8, 1-2):

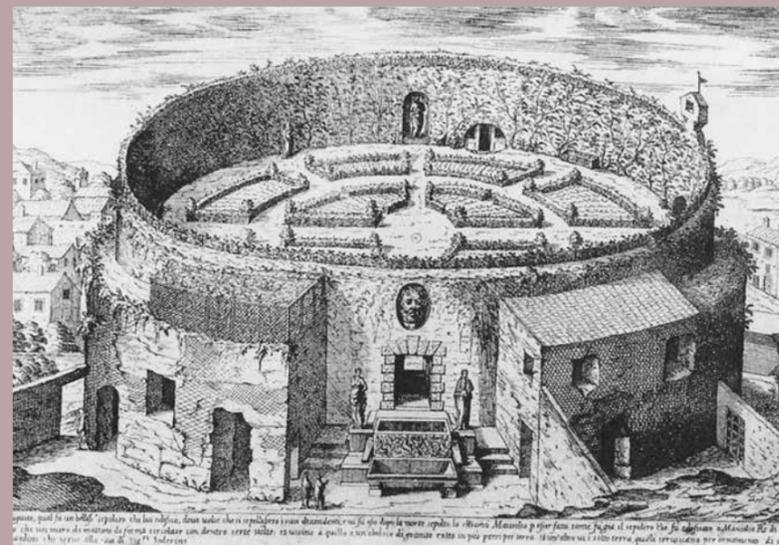
Di vari marmi con suttill lavoro
edificato era il palazzo altiero.

Of various marbles, wrought with subtle care,
Is the proud palace.

The castle does not need an architectural description. It is a non-architectural machine of non-memory.

Architecture of Memory or Non-Memory/ Architecture of Stupidity

All these cases of "architecture of memory" seem to be associated with an obsessive rationalization of something which is originally completely irrational. Bridges, shrines, mirrors, geometric gardens are all rational devices for the repetition of an originally nonsensical event. In this respect the story in the Furioso is quite telling. Architecture appears because a brutal knight was stupid enough to behead the woman he was in love with. This original stupidity never abandons the surprisingly subtle architectural enterprises later carried out by the very same idiotic knight. Architecture seems to correspond to this post-rationalization of the nonsensical: precision built on foundations of absurdity. And, even worse, architecture seems to be committed to the repetition of the nonsensical, a science of



Etienne Du Perac. The Mausoleum of Augustus. 1575 & Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Trattato di architettura. 1470

repetition happily at the service of the stupidest possible gestures to be repeated.

Didn't the characters actually meet last year at Marienbad? Didn't he cut off her head believing she drank a potion that makes one invincible? Wasn't she actually invincible?

And isn't X the stupid Rodomonte? Otherwise why would he always lose when playing this strange game? And why doesn't he just stop?



République la Libre (H. A. Müller) 2015

Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno

Excursus II: Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality

Enlightenment, in Kant's words, is "the human being's emergence from self-incurred minority. Minority is inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction from another." "Understanding without direction from another" is understanding guided by reason. That amounts to saying that the mind combines its individual cognitions into a system in accordance with its own internal logic. "Reason has . . . as its sole object the understanding and its effective application." It posits "a certain collective unity as the goal of the activities of the understanding," and this unity is the system. Reason's rules are instructions for a hierarchical ordering of concepts. For Kant, as for Leibniz and Descartes, rationality consists in "processes of ascending to the higher genera and of descending to the lower species by which we obtain the idea of systematic connection in its completeness." The "systematization" of knowledge lies in "the connection of its parts in conformity with a single principle." Thinking, as understood by the Enlightenment, is the process of establishing a unified, scientific order and of deriving factual knowledge from principles, whether these principles are interpreted as arbitrarily posited axioms, innate ideas, or the highest abstractions. The laws of logic establish the most universal relationships within the order and define them. Unity lies in self-consistency. The principle of contradiction is the system in nuce. Knowledge consists in subsumption under principles. It is one with judgment, by which perceptions are incorporated into the system. Any thinking not guided by the system is directionless or authoritarian. Reason contributes nothing but the idea of systematic unity, the formal elements of fixed conceptual relationships. Any substantial objective which might be put forward as a rational insight is, according to the Enlightenment in its strict sense, delusion, falsehood, "rationalization," no matter what pains individual philosophers may take to steer us away from this conclusion and toward a reliance on philanthropic feeling. Reason is "a faculty of deducing the particular from the universal." According to Kant, the homogeneity of the general and the particular is guaranteed by the "schematism of pure understanding," by which he means the unconscious activity of the intellectual mechanism which structures perception in accordance with the understanding. The intelligibility which subjective judgement discovers in any matter is imprinted on that matter by the intellect as an objective quality before it enters the ego. Without such a schematism – in short, without the intellectual element in perception – no impression would conform – to the corresponding concept, no category to the particular example; thought, not to speak of the system toward which everything is directed, would be de-

void of unity. To establish this unity is the conscious task of science. If "all empirical laws [are] only special determinations of the pure laws of understanding," research must always ensure that the principles are properly linked to the factual judgments. "This harmony of nature with our cognitive faculty is presupposed a priori by the Judgment." It is the "guiding thread" of organized experience.

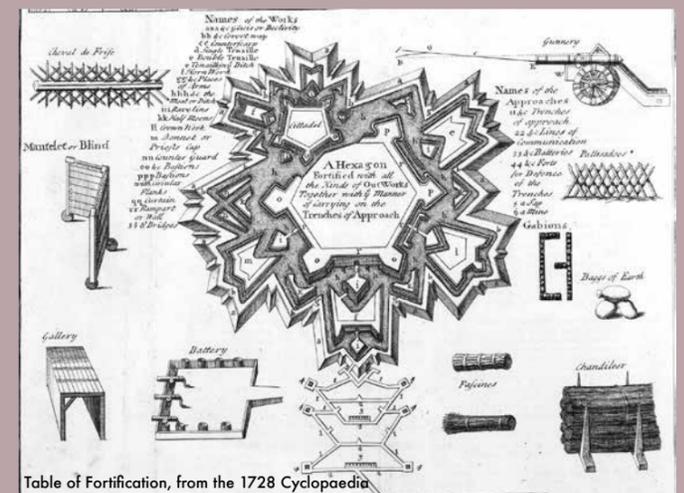
The system must be kept in harmony with nature; just as facts are predicted from the system, so they must confirm it. Facts, however, form part of praxis; they everywhere characterize the contact of the individual subject with nature as social object: experience is always real action and suffering. In physics, to be sure, the perception by which a theory can be proved is usually reduced to the electrical spark appearing in the experimental apparatus. Its nonappearance is generally of no practical consequence; it merely destroys the theory or, at most, the career of the research assistant responsible for setting up the experiment. However, laboratory conditions are the exception. A thinking which fails to maintain agreement between system and perception does not merely violate isolated visual impressions; it conflicts with real praxis. Not only does the expected event fail to occur but the unexpected happens: the bridge collapses, the crop fails, the medicine causes illness. The spark which most conclusively indicates a lack of systematic thinking, a violation of logic, is not a fleeting perception but sudden death. The system which enlightenment aims for is the form of knowledge which most ably deals with the facts, most effectively assists the subject in mastering nature. The system's principles are those of self-preservation. Immaturity amounts to the inability to survive. The bourgeois in the successive forms of the slave-owner, the free entrepreneur, and the administrator is the logical subject of enlightenment.

The difficulties within this concept of reason, arising from the fact that its subjects, the bearers of one and the same reason, are in real opposition to each other, are concealed in the Western Enlightenment behind the apparent clarity of its judgments. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, however, those difficulties make themselves apparent in the unclear relationship of the transcendental to the empirical ego and in the other irreconcilable contradictions. Kant's concepts are ambiguous. Reason as the transcendental, supra-individual self contains the idea of a free coexistence in which human beings organize themselves to form the universal subject and resolve the conflict between pure and empirical reason in the conscious solidarity of the whole. The whole represents the idea of true universality, utopia. At the same time, however, reason is the agency of calculating thought, which arranges the world for the purposes of self-preservation and recognizes no function other than that of working on the object as mere sense material in order to make it the material of subjugation. The true nature of the schematism which externally coordinates the universal and the particular, the concept and the individual, case, finally turns out, in current science, to be the interest of industrial society. Being is apprehended in terms of manipulation and administration. Every thing – including the individual human being, not to mention the animal – becomes a repeatable, replaceable process, a mere example of the conceptual models of the system. Conflict between administrative, reifying science, between the public mind and the experience of the individual, is precluded by the prevailing circumstances. The senses are determined by the conceptual apparatus in advance of perception; the citizen sees the world as made a priori of the stuff from which he himself constructs it. Kant intuitively anticipated what Hollywood has consciously put into practice: images are precensored during production by the same standard of understanding which will later determine their reception by viewers.

The perception by which public judgment feels itself confirmed has been shaped by that judgment even before the perception takes place. Although the secret utopia harbored within the concept of reason may have glimpsed the repressed identical interest which lies beyond the diverse accidental interests of subjects, reason, operating under the pressure of purposes merely as systematic science, not only levels out the differences but standardizes the identical interest. It acknowledges no determination other than the classifications of the social operation. No one is different to the purpose for which he has been produced: a useful, successful, or failed member of professional and national groups. He is a single, random representative of his geographical, psychological, and sociological type. Logic is democratic: in this respect the great have no advantage over the most menial. The former are counted as prominent citizens while the latter are prospective objects of welfare relief. Science stands in the same relationship to nature and human beings in general as insurance theory stands to life and death in particular. Who dies is unimportant; what matters is the ratio of incidences of death to the liabilities of the company. It is the law of large numbers, not the particular case, which recurs in the formula. Nor is the concordance of general and particular concealed any longer within an intellect which always perceives the particular as a case of the general and the gen-

eral only as the aspect of the particular by which it can be grasped and manipulated. Science itself has no awareness of itself; it is merely a tool. Enlightenment, however, is the philosophy which equates truth with the scientific system. Kant's attempt to justify this identity, which was still made with a philosophical intention, gave rise to concepts which have no meaning for science, since they are not simply instructions for performing manipulations according to certain rules. The notion of the self-understanding of science conflicts with the concept of science itself. Kant's work transcends experience as mere operation, and for that reason – and in accordance with, its own principles – is rejected as dogmatic by enlightenment today. In confirming the scientific system as the embodiment of truth – the result arrived at by Kant – thought sets the seal on its own insignificance, because science is a technical operation, as far removed from reflection on its own objectives as is any other form of labor under the pressure of the system.

The moral teachings of the Enlightenment bear witness to the hopelessness of attempting to replace enfeebled religion by an intellectual motive for enduring within society when material interest no longer suffices. As solid citizens, philosophers all themselves in practice with the powers they condemn in theory. The theories are logical and hard while the moral philosophies are propagandistic and sentimental, even when rigorous in tone, or else the moral philosophies are acts of violence performed in the awareness that morality is nondeducible, like Kant's recourse to treating moral forces as facts. His attempt to derive the duty of mutual respect from a law of reason, although more cautious than any other such undertaking in Western philosophy, has no support within the Critique. It is the usual endeavor of bourgeois thought to ground the respect without which civilization cannot exist on something other than material interest – an attempt more sublime and paradoxical than any that went before, but just as ephemeral. The citizen who renounced a profit out of the Kantian motive of respect for the mere form of the law would not be enlightened but superstitious – a fool. The root of Kantian optimism, according to which moral actions are reasonable even when base ones are likely to prosper, is a horror of relapsing into barbarism. If – Kant writes in response to Haller – one of these great moral forces, reciprocal love and respect, were to collapse, "then nothingness (immortality) with gaping maw would drink the whole realm of (moral) beings like a drop of water." But, according to Kant, from the standpoint of scientific reason moral forces are neutral drives and forms of behavior,



no less than immoral ones, which they immediately become when no longer directed at that hidden possibility but at reconciliation with power. Enlightenment expels difference from theory. It considers "human actions and desires exactly as if I were dealing with lines, planes, and bodies." The totalitarian order has put this into effect in utter seriousness. Freed from supervision by one's own class, which had obliged the nineteenth-century businessman to maintain Kantian respect and reciprocal love, fascism*, which by its iron discipline relieves its peoples of the burden of moral feelings, no longer needs to observe any discipline. Contrary to the categorical imperative, and all the more deeply in accord with pure reason, it treats human beings as things, centers of modes of behavior. The rulers sought to shield the bourgeois world from the flood of naked violence, which now has broken over Europe, only for as long as economic concentration was insufficiently advanced. Previously only the poor and savages had been exposed to the untrammelled force of the capitalist elements. But the totalitarian order has granted unlimited rights to calculating thought and puts its trust in science as such. Its canon is its own brutal efficiency.* From Kant's *Critique to Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals*, the hand of philosophy had traced the writing on the wall;

one individual put that writing into practice, in all its details. The work of the Marquis de Sade exhibits "understanding without direction from another" – that is to say, the bourgeois subject freed from all tutelage.

Self-preservation is the constitutive principle of science, the soul of the table of categories, even if, as in Kant, it has to be deduced idealistically. Even the ego, the synthetic unity of apperception, the agency which Kant calls the highest point, from which the whole of logic must be suspended, is really both the product and the condition of material existence. Individuals, in having to fend for themselves, develop the ego as the agency of reflective foresight and overview; over successive generations it expands and contracts with the individual's prospects of economic autonomy and productive ownership. Finally it passes from the expropriated citizens to the totalitarian trust-masters, whose science has become the quintessence of the methods by which the subjugated mass society reproduces itself. Sade erected an early monument to their planning skills. The conspiracy of rulers against peoples, implemented by relentless organization, finds the Enlightenment spirit since Machiavelli and Hobbes no less compliant than the bourgeois republic. That spirit is hostile to authority only when authority lacks the strength to enforce obedience, and to violence only when violence is not an established fact. As long as one does not ask who is applying it, reason has no greater affinity with violence than with mediation; depending on the situation of individuals and groups, it presents either peace or war, tolerance or repression, as the given state of affairs. Because it unmasks substantial goals as asserting the power of nature over mind and as curtailing its own self-legislation, reason, as a purely formal entity, is at the service of every natural interest. Becoming simply an organ, thinking reverts to nature. For the rulers, however, human beings become mere material, as the whole of nature has become material for society. After the brief interlude of liberalism in which the bourgeois kept one another in check, power is revealing itself as archaic terror in a fascistically rationalized form.* "The religious chimeras," says the Prince of Francavilla at the court of King Ferdinand of Naples, "must be replaced by utmost terror. The people must be freed from the fear of a future Hell. Once that is destroyed they will abandon themselves to anything. But that chimerical fear must be replaced by penal laws of enormous severity, which apply, of course, only to the people, since they alone cause unrest in the state. Malcontents are born only to the lower classes. What do the rich care for the idea of a leash they will never feel themselves, if this empty semblance gives them the right to grind down those living under their yoke? You will find no one in that class who will not permit the darkest shadow of tyranny to fall on him, provided it really falls on others." Reason is the organ of calculation, of planning; it is neutral with regard to ends; its element is coordination. More than a century before the emergence of sport, Sade demonstrated empirically what Kant grounded transcendently: the affinity between knowledge and planning which has set its stamp of inescapable functionality on a bourgeois existence rationalized even in its breathing spaces. The precisely coordinated modern sporting squad, in which no member is in doubt over his role and a replacement is held ready for each, has its exact counterpart in the sexual reams of Juliette, in which no moment is unused, no body orifice neglected, no function left inactive. In sport, as in all branches of mass culture, a tense, purposive bustle prevails, although none but the wholly initiated observer could fathom the different combinations or the meaning of the game's changing fortunes, governed by arbitrarily chosen rules. The special architectonic structure of the Kantian system, like the gymnasts' pyramids in Sade's orgies and the formalized principles of early bourgeois freemasonry – cynically reflected in the strict regime of the libertine society of the *120 Days of Sodom* – prefigures the organization, devoid of any substantial goals, which was to encompass the whole of life. What seems to matter in such events, more than pleasure itself, is the busy pursuit of pleasure, its organization; just as in other demythologized epochs, imperial Rome, the Renaissance, and the Baroque, the schema of activity counted for more than its content. In the modern period enlightenment has released the ideas of harmony and perfection from their hypostatization in a religious Beyond and made them available as criteria for human endeavor within the form of the system. Once the utopia which inspired the hopes of the French Revolution had been absorbed, potently and impotently, into German music and philosophy, the established bourgeois order entirely functionalized reason. It became a purposiveness without purpose, which for that very reason could be harnessed to any end. It is planning considered as an end in itself. The totalitarian state manipulates nations. "Just so," replies the Prince in Sade to the speaker just quoted, "the government itself must control the population. It must possess the means to exterminate the people, should it fear them, or to increase their numbers, should it consider that necessary. And nothing should weigh in the balance of its justice except its own interests or passions, together only with the passions and interests of those who, as we have said, have been granted just enough power to multiply our own." The prince points the path which

imperialism, reason in its most terrible form, has always followed. "Take away its god from the people you wish to subjugate and you will demoralize it. As long as it has no other god than yours, you will always be its master . . . Grant it in return the widest, most criminal license. Never punish it, except when it turns against you."

As reason posits no substantial goals, all affects are equally remote to it. They are merely natural. The principle according to which reason is simply opposed to everything unreasonable underlies the true opposition between enlightenment and mythology. The latter recognizes spirit only as something immersed in nature, a natural power. For it, inward impulses, like outward forces, are living powers of divine or demonic origin. Enlightenment, by contrast, relocates context, meaning, and life entirely within a subjectivity which is actually constituted only by this relocation. For enlightenment, reason is the chemical agent which absorbs the real substance of things and volatilizes it into the mere autonomy of reason. In order to escape the superstitious fear of nature, enlightenment has presented effective entities and forms without exception as mere veils of chaotic matter and condemned matter's influence on the human agent as enslavement, until the subject, according to its own concept, had been turned into a single, unrestricted, empty authority. The whole force of nature became a mere undifferentiated resistance to the abstract power of the subject. The particular mythology which the Western Enlightenment, including Calvinism, had to do away with was the Catholic doctrine of the *ordo* and the pagan popular religion which continued to flourish beneath it. To liberate human beings from such beliefs was the objective of bourgeois philosophy. However, the liberation went further than its humane originators had intended. The market economy it unleashed was at once the prevailing form of reason and the power which ruined reason. The Romantic reactionaries only expressed what the bourgeois themselves had realized: that freedom in their world tended toward organized anarchy. The Catholic counterrevolution's critique of the Enlightenment proved no less valid than the Enlightenment's critique of Catholicism. The Enlightenment had pinned its colors to liberalism. If all affects are of equal value, then self-preservation, which dominates the form of the system in any case, seems to offer the most plausible maxims for action. It was to be given free rein in the free economy. The somber writers of the early bourgeois period, such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Mandeville, who spoke up for the egoism of the self, thereby recognized society as the destructive principle and denounced harmony before it was elevated to the official doctrine by the bearers of light, the classicists. The former writers exposed the totality of the bourgeois order as the horrifying entity which finally engulfed both, the general and the particular, society and the self. With the development of the economic system* in which the control of the economic apparatus by private groups creates a division between human beings, self-preservation, although treated by reason as identical, had become the reified drive of each individual citizen and proved to be a destructive natural force no longer distinguishable from self-destruction. The two principles combined in a murky fusion. Pure reason became unreason, a procedure as immune to errors as it was devoid of content. However, with the revolutionary avant-garde, the utopia which proclaimed the reconciliation between nature and the self emerged from its hiding place in German philosophy as something at once irrational and reasonable, as the idea of the community of free individuals*—and brought down on itself the full fury of reason. In society as it is, despite feeble moralistic attempts to propagate humanity as the most rational means, self-preservation remains unencumbered by a utopia denounced as myth. For those at the top, shrewd self-preservation means the fascist struggle for power, and for individuals it means adaptation to injustice at any price. Enlightened reason no more possesses the means of measuring one drive within itself against others than of ordering the universe into spheres. It rightly exposes the notion of hierarchy in nature as a reflection of medieval society, and later attempts to demonstrate a new order of values bear the unmistakable taint of mendacity. The irrationalism which is evident in such futile reconstructions is far from opposing industrial reason.* Whereas great philosophy, in Leibniz and Hegel, had recognized a claim to truth even in subjective and objective forms of expression – feelings, institutions, works of art – which do not amount to actual ideas, irrationalism, here as elsewhere showing its kinship to the last dregs of the Enlightenment, modern positivism, draws a strict line between feeling, in the form of religion and art, and anything deserving the name of knowledge. Although irrationalism restricts cold reason in favor of immediate life, it turns the latter into a principle merely hostile to thought. Under cover of this illusory enmity feeling, and finally all human expression, indeed culture itself, is stripped of any responsibility to thought and transformed into the neutralized element of the all-embracing rationality of an economic system* long since grown irrational. From the first, that reason has been unable to rely on its attractive power alone and has supplemented it with the cult of emotions. In appealing to this cult, it turns against its own medium, thought, which was always suspect to this self-estranged form of reason. The tender effusions of lovers in

films already function as a blow against dispassionate theory, and that is taken further in the sentimental argument against any thought which attacks injustice. This elevation of feelings to an ideology does not abolish the contempt in which they are really held. The fact that, compared to the starry heights into which ideology transposes them, they appear all the more vulgar merely contributes to their ostracism. The verdict on feelings was already implicit in the formalization of reason. Even self-preservation, as a natural drive like other impulses, has a bad conscience; only bustling efficiency and the institutions created to serve it – mediation, apparatus, organization, systematization as ends in themselves – enjoy the esteem, in practice as in theory, of being deemed reasonable; the emotions are incorporated into this spurious reason.

The Enlightenment of the modern age has been marked from the first by radicalism: This fact distinguishes it from all earlier stages of demythologization. As a rule, whenever a new religion and a new mentality have won a place in world history, bringing a new mode of social existence, the old gods have been cast into the dust together with the old classes, tribes, and peoples. But especially when a people, such as the Jews, has taken on a new form of social life as a result of its own fate, its venerable customs, sacred actions, and objects of worship have been magically transformed into abominable misdeeds and terrifying specters. The phobias and Idiosyncrasies of today, the character traits which are most despised and derided, can be deciphered as marks of a huge advance in human development. From the disgust aroused by excrement and human flesh to the contempt for fanaticism, idleness, and poverty, both spiritual and material, a line connects behavioral forms which were once adequate and necessary to those which are abominated. This line is at once that of destruction and of civilization. Each step has been an advance, a stage of enlightenment. But whereas all the earlier changes, from preanimism to magic, from matriarchal to patriarchal culture, from the polytheism of the slave traders to the Catholic hierarchy, replaced the older mythologies with new albeit enlightened ones, the Great Mother with the God of Hosts, the totem with the veneration of the Lamb, in the glare of enlightened reason any devotion which believed itself objective, grounded in the matter at hand, was dispelled as mythological. All preexisting ties were tabooed by this verdict, not excluding those which were necessary to the existence of the bourgeois order itself. The instrument by means of which the bourgeoisie had come to power, the unfettering of forces, universal freedom,

Sade, La Nouvelle Justine ou Les Malheurs de la vertu 1797



self-determination – in short, enlightenment – turned against the bourgeoisie as soon as that class, as a system of rule, was forced to suppress those it ruled. By virtue of its principle, enlightenment does not stop short at the minimum of belief without which the bourgeois world could not exist. It does not render to power the reliable services which had always been performed for it by the old ideologies. Its antiauthoritarian tendency, which communicates, if only subterraneously, with the utopia contained in the concept of reason, finally made it as inimical to the established bourgeoisie as to the aristocracy, with which, indeed, it lost no time in forming alliances. Ultimately, the antiauthoritarian principle necessarily becomes its own antithesis, the agency opposed to reason: its abolition of all absolute ties allows power to decree and manipulate any ties which suit its purposes. After civic virtue and charity, for which it never offered

good reasons, philosophy proclaimed authority and hierarchy as virtues, when enlightenment had long since revealed them as lies. But against such perversion of itself enlightenment, too, had no arguments, since pristine truth has no advantage over distortion, or rationalization over reason, unless it can demonstrate a practical one as well. With the formalization of reason, theory itself, if it seeks to be more than a cipher for neutral procedures, becomes an incomprehensible concept, and thought is deemed meaningful only after the sacrifice of meaning. Once harnessed to the dominant mode of production, enlightenment, which strives to undermine any order which has become repressive, nullifies itself. This is expressed in the early attacks of the current form of enlightenment on the "all-crushing" Kant. Just as Kant's moral philosophy set limits to his enlightened critique in order to rescue the possibility of reason, unreflecting enlightened thinking has always sought, for its own survival, to cancel itself with skepticism, in order to make room for the existing order.

In contrast to such precautions, the work of Sade, like that of Nietzsche, is an intransigent critique of practical reason, beside which even that of Kant himself appears like a revocation of his own thought. It pushes the scientific principle to annihilating extremes. Kant, to be sure, had so purified the moral law within the self of any heteronymous belief that respect, despite his assurances, could be no more than a psychological fact of nature, as the starry sky above the self was a physical one. "A fact of reason," he called it, while Leibniz termed it "a general instinct of society." But facts count for nothing where they do not exist. Sade does not deny their occurrence. Justine, the virtuous sister, is a martyr to the moral law. Juliette, however, draws the conclusion the bourgeoisie sought to avoid: she demonizes Catholicism as the latest mythology, and with it civilization as a whole. The energies previously focused on the sacrament are now devoted, perversely, to sacrilege. This inversion is extended to community in general. In all this Juliette does not proceed fanatically, as Catholicism had done with the Incas, but merely attends to the business of sacrilege in the efficient, enlightened way that Catholics, too, still had in their blood from archaic times. The primeval forms of behavior which had been tabooed by civilization, and had grown destructive under the stigma of bestiality, had led an underground life. Juliette revives them in their outlawed, not their natural form. She compensates the value judgement against them – which, like all value judgments, was unfounded – by its opposite. Thus, when she reenacts the primitive reactions they are no longer primitive but bestial. In psychological terms Juliette, not unlike Merteuil in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, embodies neither un-sublimated nor regressive libido but intellectual pleasure in regression, *amor intellectualis diaboli*, the joy of defeating civilization with its own weapons. She loves systems and logic. She wields the instrument of rational thought with consummate skill. As far as self-mastery is concerned, her instructions sometimes stand in the same relation to Kant's as the special application does to the principle. "Virtue," writes the latter,

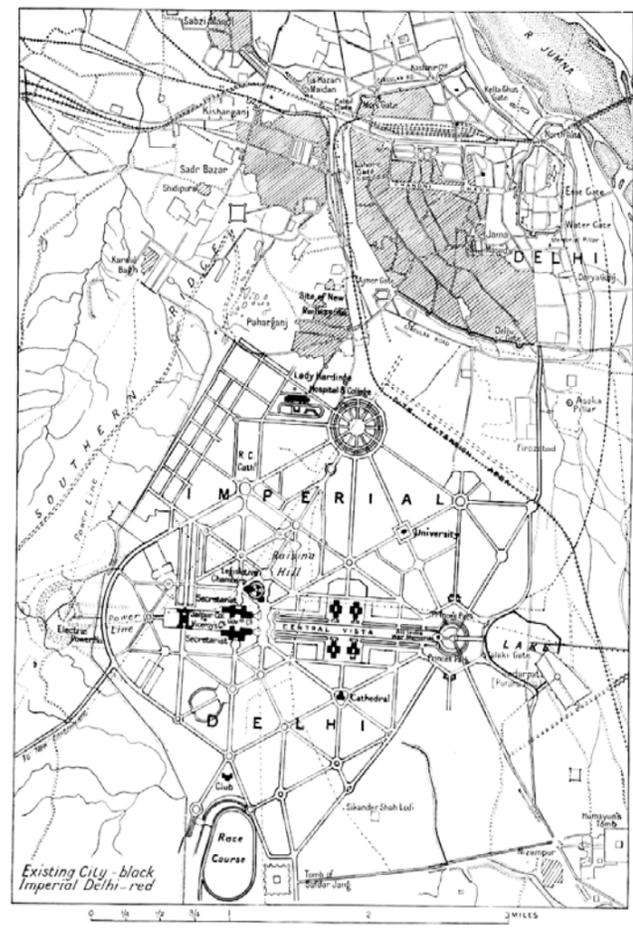


"in so far as it is grounded on inner freedom, also contains an affirmative imperative for men, namely to place all their capacities and inclinations under the power [of reason] and therefore under the authority over oneself, which imperative is added to the interdiction on allowing oneself to be commanded by one's feelings and inclinations [the duty of apathy]. For unless reason takes the reins of government into its hands, those feelings and inclinations will play the master over men." Juliette teaches as follows on the self-discipline of the criminal: "First, reflect on your plan for several days in advance. Consider all its consequences, paying attention to what can be useful to you . . . and what might possibly betray you. Weigh these things just as soberly as if you were sure to be discovered." The murderer's face must show utmost calm. "Let your features show calm and indifference. Try to acquire the greatest possible callousness in this situation. . . . If you are unsure of being free of pangs of conscience – and you will gain such certainty only through the habit of crime – if you are unsure of this, I say, then you will labor in vain to master the play of your features." To be free of the stab of conscience is as essential to formalistic reason as to be free of love or hate. Remorse posits the past – which, contrary to popular ideology, has always meant nothing to the bourgeoisie – as something which exists; it is a relapse, to prevent which, for bourgeois praxis, would be remorse's only justification. Spinoza, following

the Stoics, states the matter as follows: "Repentance is not a virtue, or, in other words, it does not arise from reason, but he who repents of an action is twice as unhappy or as weak as before." But he goes on at once, quite in the spirit of Francavilla: "If the mob is not in fear, it threatens in its turn," thus maintaining, as a good student of Machiavelli, that modesty and remorse, like fear and hope, are undoubtedly useful, however contrary to reason. "Apathy (considered as a strength) is a necessary presupposition of virtue," writes Kant, distinguishing, not unlike Sade, between this "moral apathy" and insensibility in the sense of indifference to sensory stimulation. Enthusiasm is bad. Calm and resolution constitute the strength of virtue. "That is the state of health in moral life, whereas the affect, even when it is excited by the idea of the good, is a momentarily lustrous phenomenon which leaves behind lassitude." Juliette's friend Clairwil makes exactly the same observation with regard to vice: "My soul is hardened, and I am far from preferring sensibility to the happy indifference I now enjoy. Oh Juliette . . . perhaps you are deceiving yourself about the dangerous sensibility prized by so many fools." Apathy arises at the turning points in bourgeois history, as in the history of antiquity, when the pauci beati become aware of their powerlessness in face of the overwhelming historical tendency. It marks the retreat of the individual's spontaneity into the private sphere, which is thus established as the truly bourgeois form of existence. Stoicism – which is the bourgeois philosophy – makes it easier for the privileged to look what threatens them in the eye by dwelling on the suffering of others. It affirms the general by elevating private existence, as protection from it, to the status of a principle. The private sphere of the bourgeois* is an upper-class cultural asset which has come down in the world.

Juliette's *credo* is science. She abominates any veneration which cannot be shown to be rational: belief in God and his dead son, obedience to the Ten Commandments, preference of the good to the wicked, salvation to sin. She is attracted by those reactions which have been proscribed by the legends of civilization. She manipulates semantics and logical syntax like the most up-to-date positivist, but unlike that employee of the latest administration she does not direct her linguistic criticism primarily against thought and philosophy but, as a daughter of the militant Enlightenment, against religion. "A dead God!" she says of Christ. "Nothing is more comical than this nonsensical combination of words from the Catholic dictionary: God, which means eternal; death, which means not eternal. Idiomatic Christians, what do you intend to do with your dead God?" The conversion of what is condemned without scientific proof into something to be striven for, and of what is respected without proof into an object of revulsion, the transvaluation of values, the "courage to do the forbidden," though without the telltale histrionics of Nietzsche's "Wohlan!" [Onward!] and without his biological idealism, is her specific passion. "Are pretexts needed, to commit crimes?" asks Princess Borghese, Juliette's friend, quite in Nietzsche's spirit. Nietzsche proclaims the quintessence of her doctrine. "Let the weaklings and failures go to ruin: the first principle of our philanthropy. And we should help them on their way. What is more damaging than any vice? The pity of active people for the unsuccessful and the weak – Christianity." The latter, "with its curious interest in overthrowing tyrants and making them submit to principles of brotherhood . . . plays the game of the weak. It represents the weak, and has to speak like them . . . We may be sure that such fraternal bonds were not only proposed but put in place by the weak, when priestly power had chanced to fall into their hands." This contribution to the genealogy of morals is made by Noireuil, Juliette's mentor. Nietzsche maliciously celebrates the mighty and their cruelty when it is directed "outside their circle," that is, against everything alien to themselves. "Once abroad in the wilderness, they revel in the freedom from social constraint and compensate for their long confinement in the quietude of their own community. They revert to the innocence of wild animals: we can imagine them returning from an orgy of murder, arson, rape, and torture, jubilant and at peace with themselves as though they had committed a fraternity prank – convinced, moreover, that the poets for a long time to come will have something to sing about and praise . . . This 'boldness' of noble races, so headstrong, absurd, incalculable, sudden, improbable, . . . their utter indifference to safety and comfort, their terrible pleasure in destruction, their taste for cruelty," this boldness, stridently proclaimed by Nietzsche, has also taken hold of Juliette. "Live dangerously" is her message, too: "Dare henceforth to do anything without fear." There are the strong and the weak, there are classes, races, and nations which dominate and others which are subjected. "Where, I ask you," cries Verneuil, "is the mortal stupid enough in face of all the evidence to claim that all men are born equal, in law and in fact? It was left to a misanthropist like Rousseau to put forward such a paradox, since, being extremely weak, he wanted to pull down those to whose level he was unable to raise himself. What effrontery did it take, I ask you, for this pygmy four feet two inches tall to compare himself to the model of stature and strength whom nature had endowed with the strength and figure of a Hercules? Is that not the same

Edwin Lutyens. Plan for Imperial Delhi paraphrasing Versailles. 1910



as comparing a fly to an elephant? Strength, beauty, stature, eloquence: those are the virtues which were decisive when authority passed to the rulers at the dawn of society." "To expect that strength will not manifest itself as strength," Nietzsche goes on, "as the desire to overcome, to appropriate, to have enemies, obstacles, and triumphs, is every bit as absurd as to expect that weakness will manifest itself as strength." "How do you really expect" says Verneuil, "a man endowed by nature with the highest predisposition for crime, whether through his superior strength, the refinement of his senses or as a result of an education fitting to his class or his wealth - how, I ask, do you expect this individual to be judged by the same law as those whom everything constrains to act virtuously and moderately? Would the law be more just if it punished both in the same way? Is it natural for someone whom everything invites to do evil to be treated like someone whom everything impels to behave with prudence?"

Once the objective order of nature has been dismissed as prejudice and myth, nature is no more than a mass of material. For Nietzsche there is no law "which we not only recognize but recognize over us." To the extent that the understanding, which was formed against the standard of self-preservation, recognizes any law of life, it is that of the stronger. While reason, because of its formalism, is unable to yield any necessary model for humanity, it has the advantage of actuality, in contrast to mendacious ideology. It is the weak who are guilty, according to Nietzsche's doctrine, since they use cunning to circumvent the natural law. "It is the diseased who imperil mankind, and not the 'beasts of prey.' It is the predestined failures and victims who undermine the social structure, who poison our faith in life and our fellow men." They have spread throughout the world the Christianity which Nietzsche hates and abominates no less than Sade. "It is not the reprisals of the weak against the strong which truly conform to nature. They exist in the mental realm, not the physical. To carry out such reprisals the weak man would need strength he has not been given. He would have to assume a character which is by no means his - in a certain way he would do violence to nature. What is truthful in the laws of this wise mother is that the strong are allowed to injure the weak, since, to act in this way, they must only use the gifts they have received. The strong individual does not, like the weak, disguise himself with a character other than his own. He merely expresses in action what he has received from nature. Everything which follows from that is therefore natural: his oppression, his violence, his cruelties, his tyrannies,

his injustices . . . are pure, like the hand which has imprinted them on him. And if the strong person exercises all his rights to oppress and pillage the weak, he is only doing the most natural thing in the world . . . We should never, therefore, have scruples over what we are able to take from the weak, since it is not we who are committing the crime. Rather, it is the defense or revenge of the weak which are characteristic of crime." If a weak person defends himself, he does wrong, "the wrong of stepping outside his own character of weakness, which nature has impressed on him: She created him to be a slave, and poor. He refuses to submit; that is his wrong." In such magisterial speeches Dorval, the leader of a respectable Paris gang, expounds for Juliette the secret creed of all ruling classes, a creed to which Nietzsche, proclaiming it to his own time, added the psychology of resentment. Like Juliette he admired "the beautiful terribleness of the deed," even though, as a German professor, he differed from Sade in rejecting criminality, because its egoism "is restricted to such base goals. If its goals are lofty humanity has a different standard, judging 'crime,' even when committed with the most terrible means, not to be such." The enlightened Juliette is still free of such prejudice in favor of greatness, a prejudice which, indeed, is characteristic of the bourgeois world; for her the racketeer is not less admirable than the minister because his victims are fewer. For the German, however, beauty is a function of size, and amid the twilight of the idols he cannot shake off the idealistic habit of wanting to see the petty thief hanged while imperialist raids are transfigured into world-historical missions. By elevating the cult of strength to a world-historical doctrine, German fascism took it to its absurd conclusion. As a protest against civilization the master morality perversely upheld the oppressed: hatred of stunted instincts objectively exposes the true nature of the slave masters, which reveals itself only in their victims. But, in the guise of a great power and a state religion, the master morality places itself entirely in the service of the civilizing powers that be, of the solid majority, of resentment and everything it once opposed. The realization of Nietzsche's doctrines both refutes them and reveals their truth - a truth which, despite his yea-saying affirmation of life, was hostile to the spirit of reality.

If remorse was contrary to reason, pity was outright sin. Anyone who yields to it "perverts the general law; whence it follows that pity, far from being a virtue, becomes truly a vice as soon as it induces us to interfere with the inequality required by the laws of nature." Sade and Nietzsche realized that once reason had been formalized pity was left behind as a kind of sensuous awareness of the identity of general and particular, as naturalized mediation. It then forms a highly compelling prejudice: "compassion . . . does not appertain to the use of reason . . . although it seems to bear in it a sort of piety," writes Spinoza, and "he who is moved neither by reason nor pity to help others is rightly called inhuman." *Commisseratio* is humanity in its immediate form, but at the same time "bad and useless," since it is the opposite of the manly competence which, from Roman virtue through the Medici to efficiency under the Fords, has always been the true bourgeois virtue.



Contemporary German print of Charles I's execution. 1649



Scaffolding (where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world) 2015



for Octavian to prevail - slum baroque. Installation view
2015



Sister Ray (ss 15)
2015

René Descartes
THE WORLD or TREATISE ON LIGHT

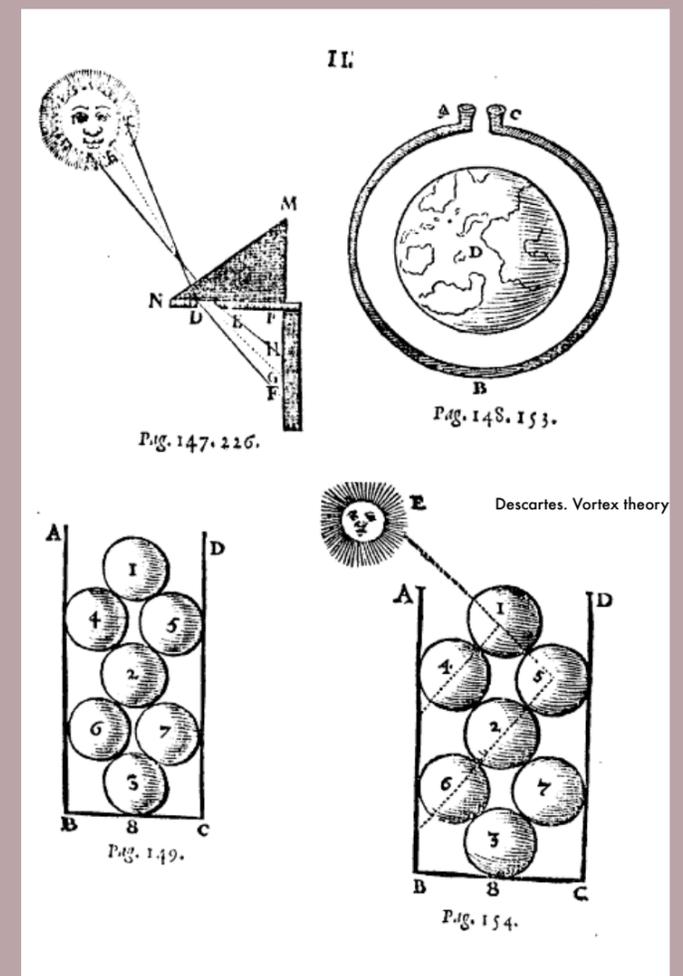
*O*n the Number of Elements and on Their Qualities

The philosophers assure us that there is above the clouds a certain air much subtler than ours. That air is not composed of vapors of the earth as it is, but constitutes an element in itself. They say also that above this air there is still another, much subtler body, which they call the element of fire. They add, moreover, that these two elements are mixed with water and earth in the composition of all the inferior bodies. Thus ~ I am only following their opinion if I say that this subtler air and this element of fire fill the intervals among the parts of the grosser air we breathe, so that these bodies, interlaced with one another, compose a mass as solid as any body can be.

But, in order better to make you understand my thought on this subject, and so that you will not think I want to force you to believe all the philosophers tell us about the elements, I should describe them to you in my fashion.

I conceive of the first, which one may call the element of fire, as the most subtle and penetrating fluid there is in the world. And in consequence of what has been said above concerning the nature of liquid bodies, I imagine its parts to be much smaller and to move much faster than any of those of other bodies. Or rather, in order not to be forced to admit any void in nature, I do not attribute to this first element parts having any determinate size or shape; but I am persuaded that the impetuosity of their motion is sufficient to cause it to be divided, in every way and in every sense, by collision with other bodies and that its parts change shape at every moment to accommodate themselves to the shape of the places they enter. Thus, there is never a passage so narrow, nor an angle so small, among the parts of other bodies, where the parts of this element do not penetrate without any difficulty and which they do not fill exactly.

As for the second, which one may take to be the element of air, I conceive of it also as a very subtle fluid in comparison with the third; but in comparison with the first there is need to attribute some size and shape to each of its parts and

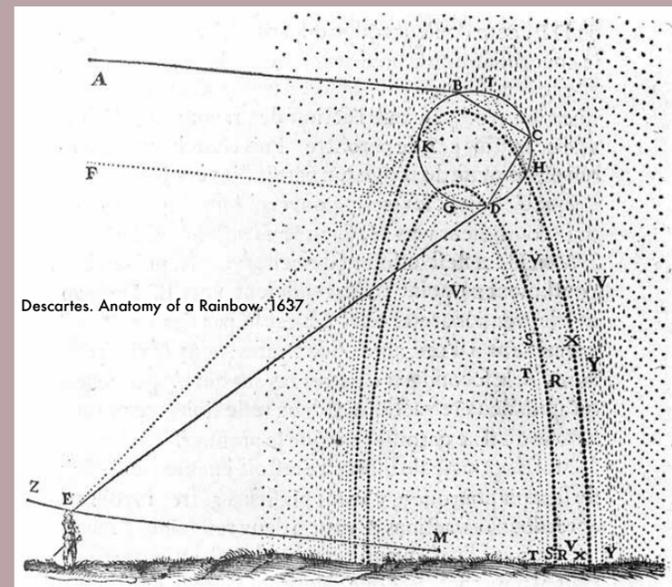


Descartes. Vortex theory

to imagine them as just about all round and joined together like grains of sand or dust. Thus, they cannot arrange themselves so well, nor so press against one another that there do not always remain around them many small intervals into which it is much easier for the first element to slide than for the parts of the second to change shape expressly in order to fill them. And so I am persuaded that this second element cannot be so pure anywhere in the world that there is not always some little matter of the first with it.

Beyond these two elements, I accept only a third, to wit, that of earth. Its parts I judge to be as much larger and to move as much less swiftly in comparison with those of the second as those of the second in comparison with those of the first. Indeed, I believe it is enough to conceive of it as one or more large masses, of which the parts have very little or no motion that might cause them to change position with respect to one another.

If you find it strange that, in setting out these elements, I do not use the qualities called "heat," "cold," "moistness," and "dryness," as do the philosophers, I shall say to you that these qualities appear to me to be themselves in need



of explanation. Indeed, unless I am mistaken, not only these four qualities, but also all the others (indeed all the forms of inanimate bodies) can be explained without the need of supposing for that purpose any other thing in their matter than the motion, size, shape, and arrangement of its parts. In consequence whereof I shall easily be able to make you understand why I do not accept any other elements than the three I have described. For the difference that should exist between them and the other bodies that the philosophers call "mixed" or "composite" consists in the forms of these mixed bodies always containing in themselves some qualities that are contrary and that counteract one another, or at least do not tend to the conservation of one another, whereas the forms of the elements should be simple and not have any qualities that do not accord with one another so perfectly that each tends to the conservation of all the others.

Now I could not find any such forms in the world except the three I have described. For the form I have attributed to the first element consists in its parts moving so extremely fast and being so small that there are no other bodies capable of stopping them. Beyond that, they require no determinate size or shape or position. The form of the second consists in its parts having such a middling motion and size that, if there are in the world many causes that could increase their motion and decrease their size, there are just as many others that can do exactly the opposite. Thus, they always remain balanced as it were in that same middling condition. And the form of the third consists in its parts being so large or so joined together that they have the force always to resist the motions of the other bodies.

Examine as much as you please all the forms that the diverse motions, the diverse shapes and sizes, and the different arrangement of the parts of matter can lend to mixed bodies. I am sure you will find none that does not contain in

itself qualities that tend to cause it to change and, in changing, to reduce to one of the forms of the elements.

Flame, for example, the form of which demands its having parts that move very fast and that in addition have some size (as has been said above), cannot last long without being corrupted. For either the size of its parts, in giving them the force to act against other bodies, will be the cause of the diminution of their motion, or the violence of their agitation, in causing them to break upon hurtling themselves against the bodies they encounter, will be the cause of their loss of size. Thus, little by little they will be able to reduce themselves to the form of the third element, or to that of the second, and even also some of them to that of the first. Thereby you can see the difference between this flame, or the fire common among us, and the element of fire I have described. You should know also that the elements of air and of earth (i.e. the second and third elements) are none the more similar to that grosser air we breathe nor to this earth on which we walk, but that generally all the bodies that appear about us are mixed or composite and subject to corruption.

And nevertheless one need not think therefore that the elements have in the world no places that are particularly destined for them and where they can be perpetually conserved in their natural purity. On the contrary, each part of matter always tends to be reduced to one of their forms and, once having been reduced, never tends to leave that form. Hence, even if God at the beginning had created only mixed bodies, nevertheless since the world began all these bodies could have had the chance to leave their forms and to take on those of the elements. Thus, there is now much reason to think that all the bodies that are large enough to be counted among the most notable parts of the universe each have the form of only one of these elements alone, and that there cannot be mixed bodies anywhere but on the surfaces of these large bodies. But there, of necessity, there must be some mixed bodies; for, the elements being of a very contrary nature, it cannot happen that two of them touch one another without acting against each other's surfaces and thus lending the matter there the diverse forms of these mixed bodies.

Apropos of this, if we consider in general all the bodies of which the universe is composed, we will find among them only three sorts that can be called large and be counted among the principal parts, to wit, the sun and the fixed stars as the first sort, the heavens as the second, and the earth with the planets and the comets as the third. That is why we have good reason to think that the sun and the fixed stars have no other form than that of the wholly pure first element, the heavens that of the second, and the earth with the planets and comets that of the third.

I link the planets and the comets with the earth because, seeing that they, like she, resist light and reflect its rays, I find no difference between them. I also link the sun with the fixed stars and attribute to them a nature totally contrary to that of the earth because the action alone of their light is enough to make me know that their bodies are of a very subtle and very agitated matter.

As for the heavens, in as much as they cannot be perceived by our senses, I think I am right in attributing to them a middle nature between that of the luminous bodies whose action we perceive and that of the solid and heavy bodies whose resistance we perceive.

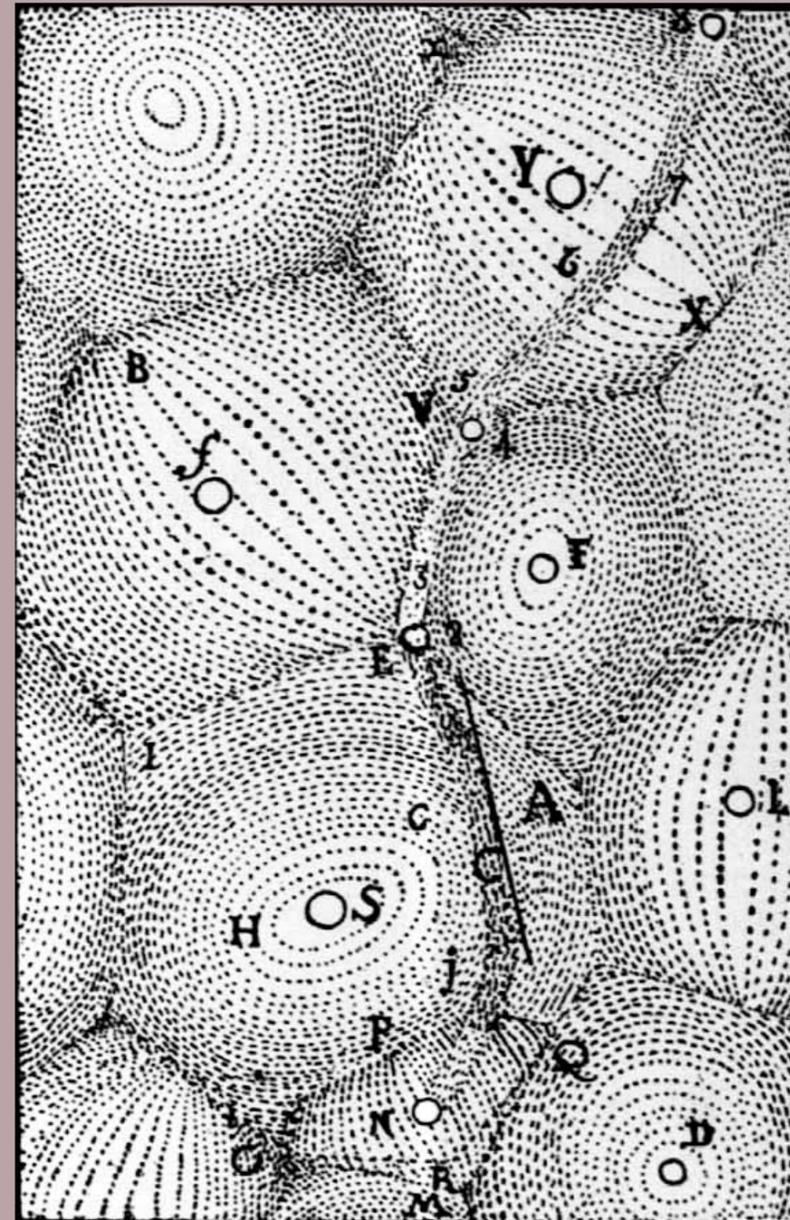
Finally, we do not perceive mixed bodies in any other place than on the surface of the earth. And, if we consider that the whole space that contains them (i.e. all that which stretches from the highest clouds to the deepest mines that the greed of man has ever dug out to draw metals from them) is extremely small in comparison with the earth and with the immense expanses of the heavens, we will easily be able to imagine to ourselves that these mixed bodies taken all together are but as a crust engendered on top of the earth by the agitation and mixing of the matter of the heavens surrounding it.

And thus we will have reason to think that it is not only in the air we breathe, but also in all the other composite bodies right down to the hardest rocks and the heaviest metals, that there are parts of the element of air mixed with those of earth and, consequently, also parts of the element of fire, because they are always found in the pores of the element of air.

But one should note that, even though there are parts of these three elements

mixed with one another in all bodies, nonetheless, properly speaking, only those which (because of their size or the difficulty they have in moving) can be referred to the third element compose all the bodies we see about us. For the parts of the two other elements are so subtle that they cannot be perceived by our senses. One may picture all these bodies as sponges; even though a sponge has a quantity of pores, or small holes, which are always full of air or water or some other liquid, one nonetheless does not think that these liquids enter into its composition.

Many other things remain for me to explain here, and I would myself be happy to add here several arguments to make my opinions more plausible. In order, however, to make the length of this discourse less boring for you, I want to wrap part of it in the cloak of a fable, in the course of which I hope that the truth will



Descartes. Aether vortices around celestial bodies

not fail to appear sufficiently and that it will be no less agreeable to see than if I were to set it forth wholly naked.

CHAPTER SIX

Description of a New World, and on the Qualities of the Matter of Which it is Composed

For a short time, then, allow your thought to wander beyond this world to view another, wholly new one, which I shall cause to unfold before it in imaginary

spaces. The philosophers tell us that these spaces are infinite, and they should very well be believed, since it is they themselves who have made the spaces so. Yet, in order that this infinity not impede us and not embarrass us, let us not try to go all the way to the end; let us enter in only so far that we can lose from view all the creatures that God made five or six thousand years ago and, after having stopped there in some fixed place, let us suppose that God creates from anew so much matter all about us that, in whatever direction our imagination can extend itself, it no longer perceives any place that is empty.

Although the sea is not infinite, those who are on some vessel in the middle of it can extend their view seemingly to infinity, and nevertheless there is still water beyond what they see. Thus, even though our imagination seems to be able to extend itself to infinity, and this new matter is not assumed to be infinite, we

can nonetheless well suppose that it fills spaces much greater than all those we shall have imagined. Indeed, in order that there be nothing in all this that you could find to blame, let us not permit our imagination to extend itself as far as it could, but let us purposely restrict it to a determinate space that is no greater, say, than the distance between the earth and the principal stars of the firmament, and let us suppose that the matter that God shall have created extends quite far beyond in all directions, out to an indefinite distance. For there is more reason, and we have much better the power, to prescribe limits to the action of our thought than to the works of God.

Now, since we are taking the liberty of imagining this matter to our fancy, let us attribute to it, if you will, a nature in which there is absolutely nothing that anyone cannot know as perfectly as possible. To that end, let us expressly assume that it does not have the form of earth, nor of fire, nor of air, nor any more particular form (such as wood, or a stone, or of a metal); nor does it have the qualities of being hot or cold, dry or moist, light or heavy, or of having some taste, or smell, or sound or color, or light, or suchlike, in the nature of which one could say that there is something that is not clearly known by everyone.

Let us not also think, on the other hand, that our matter is that prime matter of the philosophers that has been so well stripped of all its forms and qualities that nothing more remains that can be clearly understood. Let us rather conceive of it as a real, perfectly solid body, which uniformly fills the entire length, breadth, and depth of the great space at the center of which we have halted our thought. Thus, each of its parts always occupies a part of that space and is so proportioned to its size that it could not fill a larger one nor squeeze itself into a smaller one, nor (while it remains there) suffer another to find a place there.

Let us add further that this matter can be divided into any parts and according to any shapes that we can imagine, and that each of its parts is capable of receiving in itself any motions that we can also conceive. Let us suppose in addition that God truly divides it into many such parts, some larger and some smaller, some of one shape and some of another, as it pleases us to imagine them. It is not that He thereby separates them from one another, so that there is some void in between them; rather, let us think that the entire distinction that He makes there consists in the diversity of the motions He gives to them. From the first instant that they are created, He makes some begin to move in one direction and others in another, some faster and others slower (or indeed, if you wish, not at all); thereafter, He makes them continue their motion according to the ordinary laws of nature. For

God has so wondrously established these laws that, even if we suppose that He creates nothing more than what I have said, and even if He does not impose any order or proportion on it but makes of it the most confused and most disordered chaos that the poets could describe, the laws are sufficient to make the parts of that chaos untangle themselves and arrange themselves in such right order that they will have the form of a most perfect world, in which one will be able to see not only light, but also all the other things, both general and particular, that appear in this *true world*.

In the last three decades, if one word could be identified as having a primary effect on architectural theory and design, that word would most likely be complexity. The meaning of the term complexity has varied widely, yet its use as a vehicle for launching new ideas in architecture has been consistent. A very provocative history of architectural theory since 1966 could no doubt be written around the phrase "complexity in architecture." In fact, the pathological necessity for architecture continually to announce its newfound interest in complexity is perhaps the most important feature of architectural theory and design since the climax of late-modernism. I have elsewhere discussed the differing uses of the term complexity by architectural theorists as divergent as Robert Venturi – in *Complexity and Contradiction* – and Mark Wigley – in *Deconstructivist Architecture*.¹ The use of the term complexity in these architectural texts has been related to the conflict of multiple differences. Venturi's complex wholes are exemplary of complication and its requisite contradictions masquerading as complexity. Although the differences between complicated and complex organizations have been ill defined, and although their differences are not as discrete as they might seem, the primary characteristic unique to complexity is a provisional unification of disparate components without totality or wholeness.² Both Venturi's "difficult whole" and Wigley's "conflicting geometries" share an appeal to multiple systems in conflict.

While it is important to articulate an alternative theory of complexity that is not founded upon some notion of the multiple and differential being initially defined in dialectical conflict or contradiction, the present backlash of wholism and organicism in architecture under the umbrella of complexity theory should



Digital sketches.
2015

be avoided. The Neo-Platonist epistemology of multiple interacting simple systems giving rise to complex, synthetic, and, in the parlance of the new sciences, emergent wholes is troubling because it reinforces a naturalistic wholism from the bottom up. The previous challenges to totalization, synthesis and wholism need not be opposed by a theory of complexity, but instead those critiques of wholism might be incorporated into a theory of differential complexity that does not begin with the law of contradiction. The most difficult task for the moment is the development of a discourse of complexity that avoids an appeal to conflict and contradiction without drifting into the reactionary discourses of wholism and emergence. The perennial alternatives of either contradiction or wholism are presently both defining themselves through the use of the term complexity

in two distinct yet dialectically dependent ways. As dogmatic defenders of contradiction and deconstruction square off against the new age acolytes of complexity, any discussion of difference that is not a priori dialectic will be squeezed out.

The law of contradiction announces that two different statements, A and B for instance, cannot be identical, so that A cannot be identical to B without being B. This relation, that two statements cannot be both different and identical, announces that the foundation for identity is in fact the identification of difference. It is no surprise then that complexity is often defined as the contradiction between multiple systems that cannot be synthesized into a single unified system. Although this is an alternative to a simplistic understanding of identity, to define complexity as the contradiction of differences is to remain within a very classical epistemology, however complex and undecidable identity becomes within such a relation. Given this understanding of complexity as contradictory, simplicity can be defined in one of two ways: either as the primitive components from which more complex assemblages are constituted, or as the single organization underlying a composite assemblage that is discovered through reduction.

The differences at stake between these two understandings of simplicity



and complexity are between theories of emergence, on the one hand, and theories of reduction, on the other. Common to both of these positions is the assumption that complexity is irreducible and multiple and simplicity is

reducible and singular. The differences are based on the position from which order is seen to proceed; in the case of emergence, order emerges from the bottom up, whereas in the case of reductivism, order is discerned from the top down. In the popular press and science journals there has been a distinct shift from top-down concepts of order that begin with complexity and arrive at simplicity, to concepts of order that begin with the interaction of simple components aggregating higher degrees of complexity and organization, which produces a nagging feeling that a dialectical system has simply been inverted. This is compounded by the troubling affinity between theories of emergence and the various revivals of Neo-Darwinism and free market economics. The fact that contemporary complexity theories of emergence are presently being used to underwrite free-market capitalism and programs of Social Darwinism is troubling insofar as they implicitly assume invisible control and selection through combination. It is this theoretical blind spot in the theories themselves that allows them to be adopted by conservative ideologies.

Complexity is often described in a Neo-Darwinian fashion as the gradual accumulation of differences that are in essence random in their combination and mutation. This explains combination and affiliation as an ad hoc process that is organized by some invisible hand – in the case of Darwinism the hand of external selection and in the case of free market capitalism the informed consumer. In effect, affiliations between systems are mere super-impositions without method that are later read by a system that is incapable of being theorized or understood; an external act of selection from outside of the system of differentiation. The parallels with certain architectural practices of the 1980s seem all too literal and obvious in relation to the use of superposition of information – such as conflicting grids or figures – which are then read for their latent organization. Bernard Tschumi, Daniel Libeskind and Peter Eisenman would be the best example of these practices which even today remain the dominant mode for architectural experimentation in the universities and the profession. Any definition of complexity as primarily the contradiction of multiple systems is doomed to being understood as a critique of Cartesian reductivism from within a Cartesian horizon. There is a counter tradition, however, that does not exclude a theory of combination from discussions of order but instead makes the act of combination the primary mode of relationships. If Cartesianism is associated with isolation and the reduction of systems to their constitutive identities then Leibniz's *Ars Combinatoria* is an alternative epistemology founded on the systematic nature of combinatorial changes in identity that take place with greater degrees of complexity.

In order to develop a theory of complexity that is not founded on the contradiction of differences it is necessary to reconceptualize identity as neither reducing toward primitives nor emerging towards wholes. A theory of complexity that abandons either the single or the multiple in favor of a series of continuous multiplicities and singularities is one way of escaping the definition of identity through dialectic contradiction.

In other contexts I have argued for the development of theories of multiplicitous organizations that are neither one nor many. Similarly, one approach to a theory of complexity might be to develop a notion of the composite or the assemblage which is understood as neither multiple nor single, neither internally contradictory nor a unified. Complexity involves the fusion of multiple and different systems into an **assemblage** which behaves as a singularity while remaining irreducible to any single simple organization. Such a state of organization would have to be distinguished from the merely contradictory or complicated as it is **organized** as a **singularity**, yet it would be distinguished from the wholistic by its **internal multiplicity**. The terms multiplicity and singularity both describe a linked assemblage of discrete components, although in two ways. The first is a provisional composition that exhibits a collective identity or a singularity. The second is a provisionally unified composition that exhibits its own internal diversification or a multiplicity. Singularity and multiplicity are mutually constitutive terms as one that is internally multiple is termed a multiplicity and **many** that are aggregated into

an assemblage are termed a singularity.

Both reductive and emergent theories of complexity contain geometric assumptions. A theory of iterative reduction through variation emerges from a top-down elimination of complexity towards a simple geometric type. On the other hand, the formation of a higher level dynamical or structurally stable type through emergence is implied by a bottom-up development of complexity from a simple collection of types. Both assumptions are inadequate to describe the relationships within a continuously differentiated multiplicity. Nevertheless, in order to develop a theory of complexity, it is necessary to develop an abstract model of its relations, a task for which geometry has been invoked throughout the history of philosophy. The question remains, if complexity and contradiction were characterized by the conflict of geometric systems, what is the implicit spatial model with which one can measure a complex relationship that is not reducible to either the contradiction of the many or the wholistic unity of one. The effects of geometry and proportion on architecture are much deeper and less localizable than other disciplines' relationships to signifying systems. The implicit limitations and built-in prejudices of both geometry and the organizational analogies upon which it depends, influence architectural design and theory at its foundations. Architecture is the discipline where systems of regulation and proportion are implicit and it is in the discipline of architecture that concepts of geometry and wholistic order are most inextricably joined together. Linked to this critical project is an assertion that alternative geometries imply alternative instrumentalities. I would argue, that new systems of organization

Explorer 3Design program, it is possible geometrically to model an organization whose singular characteristics are defined by an assemblage of interacting local forces³ For example, in their blob modeling package, objects are defined by monad-like primitives with internal forces of attraction and mass. Unlike a conventional geometric primitive such as a sphere, these objects are defined with a center, a surface area, a mass relative to other objects and importantly by two types of fields of influence. These meta-ball primitives are surrounded by halos of influence. The inner volume defines a zone within which the meta-ball will connect with another meta-ball to form a single surface. The outer volume defines a zone within which other meta-ball objects can influence and deflect the surface of the meta-ball object. The surfaces are surrounded by two halos of relational influence – one defining a zone of fusion, the other defining a zone of inflection. When two or more meta-ball objects are related to one another, given the appropriate proximity of their halos, they can either mutually redefine their respective surfaces based on their particular gravitational properties or they can actually fuse into one contiguous surface that is defined not by the summation or average of their surfaces and gravities but instead by the interactions of their respective centers and zones of inflection and fusion. A meta-ball aggregate is defined as a single surface whose contours result from the interaction and assemblage of the multiple internal fields that define it. In this sense, an aggregate geometric object such as this is a multiplicity; it is simultaneously singular in its continuity and multiplicitous in its internal differentiation. From the perspective of the unified surface it is a singularity (as it is contiguous but not reducible to a single order) and from the perspective of the

constituent components it is a multiplicity (as it is composed of disparate components that are put into a complex relation). Fusion and unity should be distinguished from concepts of totality and wholism. Because fusion, unity and duration are considered conservative and reactionary themes relative to the decompositional techniques that have dominated architecture for the last twenty-five years, they have been equated with wholism and understood as reactionary. Although these themes are potentially conservative, they are easily radicalized when linked with concepts of differentiation and multiplicity.

Along with an abstract geometrical model or typology, the primary component of any complex organization is temporal development. Curiously, both iterative reduction through variation and the

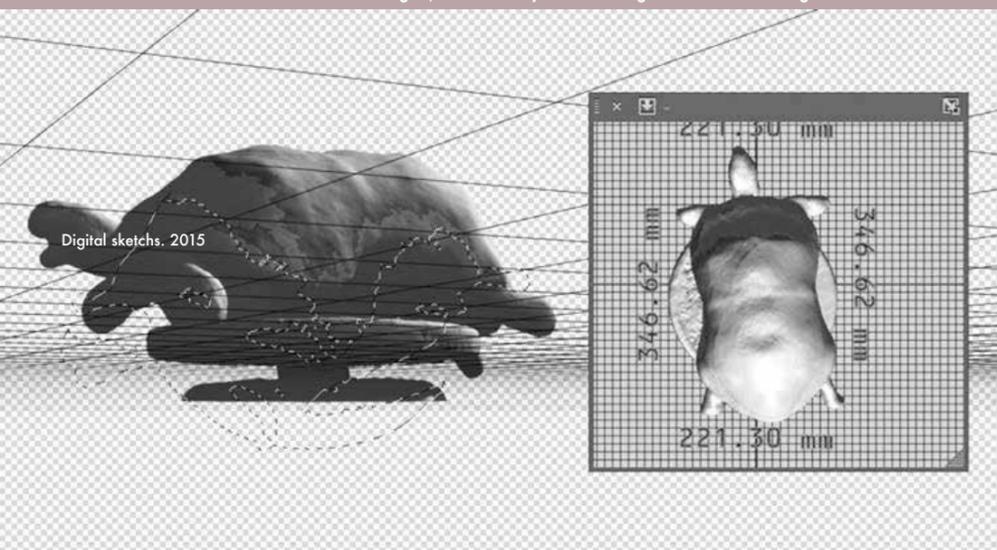
emergence of order through interaction assume a temporal development that is ceased or punctuated respectively by a generalizable type. The characteristics of these types are very different; reducible and fixed on the one hand as a Platonic form such as a sphere; and evolutionary and structurally stable on the other hand as a Neo-Platonic form such as an attractor. Both top-down reduction and bottom-up emergence, however, share the assumption that generalized types can describe both simplicity and complexity. Iterative differentiation is necessary for the development of a theory of complexity that integrates time, suggesting a repetition with difference, or iteration, that is proliferative rather than reductive. Such a theory of complex organization in architecture would incorporate temporal variation within the development of alternative geometric types. An iteration and differentiation that proliferates can provide a counter project to the antiquated and fixed theories of iterative reduction that architecture has adopted for its concepts of statics and proportion.

Temporal development, manifest as both subtle and catastrophic movements and fluctuations within and between interacting components, results in varying degrees of singularity in more global or large-scale structures. In the case of the isomorphic polysurfaces, a low number of interacting components and/or a stable relationship of those components over time leads to a global form that

is more simple and stable and less complex and unstable. The qualification of their organization as more or less simple – as opposed to reducible – and as more or less stable – rather than static – is a crucial distinction. A high number of components and/or a gradual or abrupt change in relative position of those components over time leads to a global form that is more complex and unstable and less simple and stable. Simplicity and complexity are separated by degrees along a continuum in this schema and there is no contradiction between systems but rather differing qualities of relative interactions and their transformation in time. According to this logic, there is no essential difference between a more or less spherical formation and a blob. The sphere and its provisional symmetries are merely the index of a rather low level of interactions where the blob is an index of a high degree of information in the form of differentiation between components in time. In this regard, even what seems to be a sphere is actually a blob without influence; an exact form that merely masquerades as an exact form because it is isolated from adjacent forces. Indeed, the sphere is exposed as a blob when it demonstrates the capacity of fluid and continuous differentiation based on interactions with neighboring forces with which it can be either inflected or fused to form higher degrees of singularity and multiplicity simultaneously. Complexity, therefore, is not only always present as potential in even the most simple or primitive of forms; but, even more so, it is measured by the degree of both continuity and difference that are copresent at any moment. This measure of complexity (the index of which is continuity and differentiation) might best be described as the degree to which a system behaves as a blob.

Endnotes

1. See my "Architectural Curvilinearity: The Folded, the Pliant and the Supple" in this collection. See also Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York, 1966) and Mark Wigley and Philip Johnson, *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York, 1988).
2. The term **wholeness** is one to which I have a great aversion despite the nuanced discussions of wholes common to many examinations of complexity in the sciences. Brian Goodwin, Gerry Webster and David Bohm are perhaps the most formidable defenders of wholism as it relates to theories of dynamical systems. See Brian Goodwin, Atuhiro Sibatani and Gerry Webster, *Dynamic Structures in Biology* (Edinburgh, 1989), Brian Goodwin and Peter Saunders, *Theoretical Biology: Epigenetic and Evolutionary Order from Complex Systems* (Baltimore, 1989) and Brian Goodwin, *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots: The Evolution of Complexity* (New York, 1994).
3. These modeling programs are native to Silicon Graphics computer hardware and are part of the Wavefront 3Design, Dynamation and Kinemation software as well as the Alias PowerAnimator software.



Digital sketches, 2015

and geometric description are available for implementation in various ways. Rather than simply transgressing these systems of proportion and order, it is possible that interests in diversity, difference and discontinuity do not preclude formal and mathematical thought. What is necessary for a rigorous theorization of diversity and difference within the discipline of architecture is precisely an alternative system of complexity in form; a complex formalism that is in essence freely differentiated.

A class of topological geometric types for modeling complex aggregates that exhibits the qualities of multiplicity and singularity outlined above has recently been developed. The most interesting example of these topological types are **isomorphic polysurfaces** or what in the special effects and animation industry are referred to as **meta-clay, meta-ball** or **blob** models. The explanation of the organization of these topological geometries actually outlines a working schema for a new typology for complexity. Perhaps if Leibniz had had the resources of these models available during his debate with Descartes over gravity and force we potentially might have avoided two centuries of reductive Cartesianism.

In a software program by Wavefront Technologies Inc, called Meta-Balls in their



Marcus Aurelius, Rydholt 9
2015



Testudo Tabulata/Pyx
2015

En sen eftermiddag kørte en vogn op foran huset i Fontenay. Eftersom des Esseintes aldrig modtog gæster, og eftersom ikke engang postbudet vovede sig ud i disse ubeboede egne, hvor der hverken var nogle aviser, tidsskrifter eller breve at aflevere, tøvede tjenestefolkene med at åbne; da dørklokken blev ved med at ringe af fuld kraft, dristede de sig til at kigge ud gennem hoveddørens dørspion og fik øje på en herre, hvis bryst fra halsen til bæltet var skjult bag et stort gyldent skjold.

De informerede herren i huset, som var i færd med at indtage sin morgenmad.

– Udmærket, luk ham ind, sagde han, for han kom i tanke om, at han ved en tidligere lejlighed havde givet sin adresse til en stensliber, således at denne kunne aflevere noget, han havde bestilt.

Manden bukkede og lagde skjoldet på spisestuens fyrretræsparket, hvor det vippede frem og tilbage, hævede sig lidt og en skildpaddes slangehoved stak frem, før det igen med et sæt trak sig forskrækket tilbage i sin skal.

Denne skildpadder var et indfald, des Esseintes havde fået, noget tid før han havde forladt Paris. En dag, mens han var i færd med at studere et orientalsk tæppe og dets genskær og følge de sølvglimt, som løb hen over uldstoffets vævning, aladdingul og blommeviolet, havde han sagt til sig selv: Det ville være fint at kunne anbringe noget på dette tæppe, som kunne bevæge sig, og hvis dunkle tone kunne fremhæve glansen i disse farveskær.

Besat af denne ide havde han vandret gennem tilfældige gader, var kommet til Palais-Royal, og der, stående foran Maison Chevets butiksvindue, havde han måttet slå sig selv for panden: Der lå en enorm skildpadder i et bassin. Han havde købt den; senere, da den først var blevet lagt på tæppet, havde han sat sig over for den og betragtet den i lang tid med sammenknebne øjne.

Det var helt sikkert, at dette skjolds negerbrune farve, den rå sienatone, dæmpede tæppets genskær, snarere end at forstærke det; de dominerende sølvglimt funkede nu knapt nok og krøb mere som kolde toner af skrabet zink langs kanterne på den hårde, matte skal.

Han bed negle, mens han forsøgte at finde en metode til at undgå disse uheldige vekselvirkninger, til at ophæve nuancerens beslutsomme afvisning af hinanden; endelig gik det op for ham, at hans første indskydelse, som havde været at ville animere det vævede stof ild ved at afbalancere den mod en dunkel genstand anbragt på tæppet, var en fejltagelse; tæppet var simpelthen stadig for heftigt, for prangende, for nyt. Farverne var ikke tilstrækkeligt faldede og dæmpede; det handlede om at gøre det modsatte, at svække farverne, at slukke dem ved at kontrastere dem med et skinnende objekt, som kunne overstråle alt omkring sig og kaste et gyldent lys over det blege sølv. Anskuet på denne vis blev problemet lettere at gå til. Han besluttede derfor at få sin skildpaddes panser forgyldt. Da det først var blevet afleveret af håndværkeren, der havde haft det i sin varetægt, strålede dyret som en sol og skinnede på tæppet, hvis eget skær dæmpedes, med en udstråling som fra et visigotisk skjold med overlappende skæl, lagt af en kunstner med barbarisk smag.

I begyndelsen fandt des Esseintes denne effekt fortryllende; snart kom han imidlertid til at synes, at dette gigantiske smykke ikke var andet end en skitse til noget, der ikke var fulden, før det var blevet indlagt med sjældne ædelstene.

Fra en japansk samling udvalgte han en tegning, der viste en sværm af blomster i et stjernekasternemønster omkring en tynd stilk, og tog den med til en juveler, hvor han skitserede en bort, der omkransede denne buket som en oval ramme og lod den forbløffede stensliber vide, at såvel blade som samtlige kronblade på alle disse blomster skulle udføres i ædelstene og indfattes i selve dyrets skjold.

Valget af sten måtte han overveje grundigt; diamanten er blevet helt og aldeles hverdagsagtig, nu da en hvilken som helst handelsmand går rundt med den på

sin lillefinger; de orientalske smaragder og rubiner er mindre vulgære med deres klare flammer, men de minder for meget om de røde og grønne trafiklys, visse omnibusser kører rundt med; hvad angår topassen er den, hvad enten den er brændt eller ubehandlet, en billig sten, som kun småborgerlige piger, der opbevarer deres smykkeskrin i et spejlskab, holder af; ametysten på sin side er også, skønt kirken har forlenet den med en vis gejstlig karakter, som er både salvelsesfuld og højtidelig, blevet vanæret på slagterfruers blodrøde ører og venede hænder, når disse for en beskeden pris har ønsket at pryde sig med ægte og tunge juveler; blandt den type ædelstene er det kun safiren, der har formået at holde sin ild ukrænket af den industrielle og pekuniære plumphed. Dens sydende gnister i et koldt, klart vand har på en eller anden måde beskyttet dens diskrete og stolte adel mod al besudling. Ulykkeligvis knitrer dens kølige flammer ikke i kunstigt lys; det blå vand trækker sig tilbage i sig selv og synes at falde i søvn for ikke at lade sig vække og tindre igen, før ved daggry.

Det var klart, at ingen af disse smykkesten kunne stille des Esseintes tilfreds; de var alt for civiliserede og velkendte. Han lod andre mere overraskende og bizarre mineraler glide rundt mellem fingrene, før han endelig udvalgte en række, dels ædle, dels kunstige sten, der skulle frembringe en fascinerende og forbløffende harmoni.

Han komponerede sin blomsterbuket på denne måde: Bladene skulle indfattes af juveler med en markant og tydelig grøn farve: af aspargesgrønne krysoberyler, af porregrønne krysolitter, af olivengrønne oliviner; og de skulle hænge fra grene af rødviolette almandiner og kromgranater og kaste små pailletter fra sig med samme tørre glans som de vinsten, der glimter i vinfades indre.

Med hensyn til de blomster, der løsrevne fra stænglen lå for sig selv ved bunden af buketten, anvendte han azurit; men han gav udtrykkeligt afkald på at bruge den orientalske turkis, som anvendes til brocher og ringe, og som, ligesom den banale perle og den afskyelige koral, kun kan behage middelmådigheder; han valgte udelukkende occidentens turkiser, sten som strengt taget blot er fossilt elfenben gennemsyret af kobberagtige substanser, og hvis blålige celadon er mættet, uigennemsigtigt, svovlholdigt og ligesom gulnet af galde.

Da dette var på plads, kunne han nu indfatte kronbladene på de blomster, der sprang ud fra midten af buketten, blomsterne tættest ved stilken, med gennemsigtige mineraler, hvis skær var brystne og morbide, og hvis stråler var febrile og bitre.

Han sammensatte dem udelukkende af ceylonesiske katteøjer, cymofaner og blå calcedoner.

Disse tre stentyper udsendte mystiske og forvredne glimt, smerteligt vristet fri af de frosne dybder i deres grumsede vand.

Katteøjet i en grønlig grå med striber som koncentriske vener, der synes at bevæge sig, konstant at forskyde sig, alt efter hvordan lyset falder.

Cymofanen med azurblå moiréglans, som løber hen over den mælkeagtige farve, der flyder i dens indre.

Calcedonen, som tænder blålige fosforbål på en baggrund af mat chokoladebrun.

Stensliberen noterede målene for de steder, hvor juvelerne skulle indfattes. – Og hvad med kanten af skjoldet? spurgte han des Esseintes.

Denne havde til at begynde med forestillet sig nogle opaler og verdensøjer; men disse ædelstene, som er interessante på grund af deres farvers tøven, deres flammes tvivl, er for opsætsige og upålidelige; opalen har en helt reumatisk følsomhed, dens strålers spil ændrer sig alt efter luftfugtigheden, og alt efter om det er koldt eller varmt; hvad angår verdensøjet, så brænder det kun i vand og vil ikke tænde sin glød, før man fugter det.

Til sidst besluttede han sig for mineraler, hvis reflekterede lys ændrer sig: For compostelahyacinten, mahognirød; akvamarinen, søgrøn; balasrubinen, eddikerosa; spinellen fra Södermanland, skiferbleg. Deres svage farvespil var tilstrækkelige til at oplyse det dunkle skjold, og de tillod de blomstrende sten at bibeholde deres valør, som de omkransede med en slank guirlande af stille ild.

Des Esseintes betragtede nu, hvorledes skildpadden lå sammenkrøbet i et hjørne af spisestuen og skinnede i halvmørket.

Han følte sig fuldkommen lykkelig; hans øjne lod sig ganske betage af disse flammende blomsterkroners funklen mod en gylden baggrund; snart blev han – noget der sjældent skete for ham – sulten, og han dyppede sit ristede brød, belagt med en ganske særlig slags smør, i en kop te, i en ulastelig blanding af Xiafajun, Mojutan og Khanski – tre slags gule teer, der var kommet til Rusland fra Kina med særlige karavaner.

Han drak denne flydende parfume af kinesisk porcelæn af den type, man kalder æggeskaller, fordi de er så lette og gennemskinnelige, og ligesom han aldrig ville drikke den af noget andet end disse fortryllende kopper, ville han ligeledes kun servere den med forgyldt sølvbestik, en smule afskallet, så sølvet her og der var synligt under det slidte lag forgyldning, og således gav det et blidt skær af ælde, som om det var helt udmattet og døende.

Efter at han havde drukket sin sidste slurk, gik han tilbage til sit arbejdsværelse og fik tjeneren til at bære skildpadden med, idet den stædigt nægtede at røre på sig. Sneen faldt. I lygternes skær skød isblomster frem på de blålige vinduer, og rimfrosten glimtede som smeltet sukker i flaskebundsrunderne spættet med guld.

En dyb stilhed lagde sig over det lille hus, som sank ned i tusmørket.

Des Esseintes gav sig hen til drømmerier; gløderne fra kaminens brændeknuder fyldte værelset med svedne uddunstninger; han åbnede vinduet på klem.

Som et stort draperi af kontrahermelin rejste himlen sig foran ham, sort plettet med hvidt.

En iskold vind strøg forbi, pustede sneens rasende flugt endnu vildere og vendte op og ned på farvernes orden.

Himlens heraldiske draperi vendte sig igen, blev til ægte hermelin, hvid plettet med sort, med prikker af nat spredt mellem sneflokkene.

Han lukkede vinduet igen; det bratte skift uden overgang fra buldrende varme til midvinterfrost lod ham ikke upåvirket; han krøb igen sammen ved ilden og fik den tanke, at han havde brug for en slurk spiritus for at blive varmet op igen.

*H*an gik ind i spisestuen, hvor der i en af skillevæggene var indrettet et skab med en række små tøndefade, stillet side om side på miniaturebukke af sandeltræ og hver monteret med en sølvhane fornedet. Han kaldte denne samling af spiritusfade for sit mundorgel.

En stang gjorde det muligt at forbinde alle hanerne, styre dem med én bevægelse, således at det, når apparatet først var på plads, var nok at trykke på en knap, skjult i træværket, for at samtlige rørhaner, drejet på samme tid, kunne fylde spiritus i de uanseelige bægere, der var placeret under dem.

Orglet stod nu åbent. Ventilernes mærket “fløjte, kor, vox celeste” var trukket ud og parat til at blive betjent. Des Esseintes sippede en dråbe her og der, nød de indre symfonier, formåede at skabe fornemmelser i halsen, der var analoge med dem, musikken skaber i øret.

Løvrigt svarede smagen af hver likør, ifølge ham selv, til lyden af et instrument. Den tørre curaçao, for eksempel, til klarinetten, hvis lyd er syrlig og fløjsagtig; kümmelen til booen med dens snøvlende klang; crème de menthe og anisette til fløjten, der på én gang er sukret og pebret, pippende og sød; for at gøre orkestret fuldkomment har man kirsch, der klinger heftigt som trompeten; gin og whisky bider i ganen med deres skærende brag af basuner og klaphorn; marcbrændevinen buldrer med tubæens øredøvende drøn, mens bækkernesens tordenskrald og trommen slået af fuld kraft ruller gennem munden takket være Chio-raki og mastika! Han tænkte også, at denne sammenligning kunne udstrækkes, at strykekvartetten kunne fungere på ganebuen, med violinen repræsenteret af en lagret brandy, fin og røget, spids og spinkel; med bratschen som den mere robuste rom, brummende og dump; med vespetró langstrakt og hjerteskræende, melankolsk og kælen som

en cello; med den fyldige kontrabas, kraftig og mørk som en gammel bitter. Man kunne endda, hvis man ville lave en kvintet, tilføje et femte instrument, harpen, som via en plausibel analogi efterligner den dirrende smag, den sølvklare tone, spinkel og lidenskabsløs, i den tørre kommensnaps.

Og lighederne gik endnu videre: De forhold, der eksisterer mellem tonene, genfindes i likørernes musik; for blot at tage et enkelt eksempel optræder benediktin-erlikøren så at sige som moltonen til den alkohol-durklang, der i kommercielle partiturer går under navnet Grøn Chartreuse.

Da først han havde anerkendt disse principper, kunne han, efter omhyggelige eksperimenter, fortsætte med at lade tavse melodier spille på sin tunge, fra stumme sørgemarcher til store udstyrsstykker, og i sin mund høre myntelikørens soloer, vespetróens og rommens duetter.

Han blev endda i stand til at overføre hele musikstykker til sin kæbes indre og til, ved at følge skridt for skridt i komponistens spor, at gengive dennes tanker, hans effekter, hans nuancer, via væskernes forbindelser eller deres nærliggende kontraster, via tilnærmelsesvis og kyndige blandinger.

Andre gange komponerede han selv nye melodier, opførte hyrdesange med den milde solbærlikør, som fik nattergaletriller til at rulle gennem svælget på ham; med den bløde Chouva-kakaolikør, der nynnede fordums sirupsidyller, såsom Estelles romancer og *Åh mor! Hvis blot jeg kunne fortælle...*

Men denne aften havde des Esseintes ingen lyst til at høre musikkens smag; han nøjedes med at uddrage en enkelt tone fra sit orgels klaviatur ved at tage et lille bæger med sig, han først havde fyldt med en ægte irsk whisky.

Han satte sig atter til rette i sin lænestol og indåndede omhyggeligt denne saft af gæret byg og havre; en udtalt odør af tjære forpestede hans mund.

Lidt efter lidt, mens han drak, forfulgte hans bevidsthed et sanseindtryk, der nu blev genoplivet på hans smagsløg, fulgte lige i hælene på smagen af whisky og via lugtenes fatale nøjagtighed vækkede nogle erindringer, årene ellers havde udvisket.

Denne beske karbolsyre mindede ham voldsomt om en lignende smag, han mange gange havde haft på tungen, når tandlæger arbejdede på hans tandkød.

Da nu hans tanker en gang var ført ind på disse baner, flagrede de først rundt mellem alle de tandlæger, han havde kendt, for så at samles og rette sig mod den af dem, hvis mærkværdighed stod særligt indprentet i hans erindring.

Det var hændt for tre år siden; ramt, midt om natten, af den mest forfærdelige tandpine, havde han stoppet mundhulen til med vatruller, var snublet over møblerne, og havde raved rundt som en galning i sit soveværelse.

Det var en kindtand, der allerede var blevet plomberet; ingen helbredelse var mulig; kun en tandlægetang ville kunne hjælpe ham. Han ventede febrilsk på, at det skulle blive dag, fast besluttet på at gennemgå selv den værst tænkelige operation, hvis blot den kunne sætte en stopper for hans lidelser.

Med hånden mod kinden spurgte han sig selv, hvad der kunne gøres. De tandlæger, som plejede at tage sig af ham, var velhavende erhvervsdrivende, som ikke kunne tage imod når som helst, man ønskede det; man måtte aftale en tid med dem på forhånd. – Det går ikke, jeg kan ikke vente længere, sagde han til sig selv; han besluttede sig for at skynde sig hen til den første den bedste gebissnedker, en af disse typer med jernnæve, der, omend han ikke kender så meget til den iøvrigt ret nyttesløse kunst at bore caries ud og fylde huller, ikke desto mindre ved alt om, hvordan man lynhurtigt får trukket selv de stædigste tandstumper ud; den slags steder åbner tidligt om morgenen og har ingen ventetid. Omsider blev klokken syv. Han styrtede ud ad døren, og eftersom han huskede navnet på en maskinsmed, der også kaldte sig folketandlæge, og som holdt til på hjørnet af en af kajerne, hastede han gennem gaderne, mens han bed sammen i sit lommeørklæde og kæmpede for at holde tårerne tilbage.

Ankommet foran huset, der var let at kende på et umådeligt, sort træskilt, hvor navnet "Gatonax" strakte sig med enorme, græskarfarvede bogstaver, og med to små glasmontrer, hvor kunstige tænder omhyggeligt stod på række, i gummer af lyserødt voks, der selv blev holdt sammen af messingfjedre, gispede han efter vejret, mens sveden sprang af ham; en forfærdelig trance greb ham, en gysen krøb henover huden, en lindring indfandt sig, smerterne fortog sig, tanden faldt til ro. Han blev stående, åndssløv, på fortovet; endelig fik han mandet sig op, sprang op ad en mørk trappe, fire trin ad gangen, op til tredje sal. Der stod han så foran en dør, hvor en emaljeret plade med himmelblå bogstaver gentog navnet fra skiltet udenfor. Han trak i klokkestrengen for så, forfærdet over de store røde spyt-klatter, han havde bemærket på trappetrinene, at vende om igen, fast besluttet på at udholde tandpinen resten af livet, da et øresønderrivende skrig gik gennem væggen og fyldte trappeopgangen, naglede ham til stedet i rædsel, samtidigt med at en dør gik op, og en ældre kvinde bad ham træde indenfor.

Hans skamfølelse overvandt frygten; han blev ført ind i en spisestue; en anden dør knirkede og åbnede sig for en uhyggelig grenadér, klædt i skødefrakke og sorte bukser, som skåret i træ; des Esseintes fulgte ham ind i et andet værelse.

Fra dette øjeblik var hans indtryk kun vage. Uklart huskede han at være sunket ned i en lænestol, over for et vindue, og at have fremstammet, med en finger på tanden: “Den er allerede plomberet, jeg er bange for, at der ikke er noget at gøre”

Manden havde øjeblikkeligt afbrudt disse forklaringsforsøg ved at stikke en enorm pegefinger ind i munden på ham; derefter samlede han et instrument op fra bordet, alt imens han brummede under sine pomadiserede knebelsbarter.

Så var den store scene begyndt. Mens han klamrede sig til stolens armlæn, havde des Esseintes mærket noget koldt i kinden, derefter så han stjerner, og overvældet af helt ulidelige smerter stampede han med fødderne og brægede som et dyr på vej til slagtebænken.

Der lød en knasen, kindtanden var splintret på vej ud; han følte det, som om nogen havde rykket hovedet af ham, som om nogen havde knust hans kranie; han mistede sin fornufts fulde brug, hylede af al kraft og forsvarede sig rasende mod manden, der på ny kastede sig over ham, som om han ville stikke armen langt ned i maven på ham, men som så pludseligt trådte et skridt baglæns og løftede hele legemet, der hang fast i kæben, med sig, før han brutalt lod det falde på bagen ned i stolen igen, mens han selv, stående, dækkede helt for vinduet, pustede ud og for enden af sin pelikantang fremviste en blålig tand, hvorfra der hang noget rødt!

*H*elt ødelagt spyttede des Esseintes et vaskebækken til med blod, afviste med en håndbevægelse den gamle kvinde, der kom ind for at tilbyde ham tandstumpen, hun var parat til at pakke ind i avispapir, og han betalte to franc, flygtede ud og hostede på sin vej ned blodigt spyt ud på trappetrinene og befandt sig så igen på gaden, lykkelig, ti år yngre og interesseret i de mindste bagateller.

–Puha! udbrød han, forstemt af dette voldsomme erindringsanfald. Han rejste sig for at bryde denne visions frygtelige fortryllelse, og tilbagevendt til nutiden begyndte han atter at bekymre sig om skildpadden.

Da den stadig overhovedet ikke havde rørt på sig, bankede han let på den; den var død. Tydeligvis havde den været så vant til sin ydmyge eksistens, et stillestående liv tilbragt under et fattigt skjold, at den ikke havde kunnet bære den blændende luksus, den var blevet påtvunget, den glitrende kåbe, den var blevet iklædt, de juveler, hvormed dens ryg var blevet belagt, som et *hostiekar*.

Oversat af Martin Larsen

