



PETER SLOTERDIJK

ESFERAS III

With *Foams*, Sloterdijk has completed his three-part essay of a new narration of the history of humanity. The anthropological concept of the sphere refers back to the author's fundamental thesis that life is a matter of form. It suggests that "living, configuring spheres and thinking are different expressions for the same thing." The first volume, *Bubbles*, reconstructed how the coexistence of human beings with human beings produces an interior of a special kind. The accent was then placed on the thesis that the couple represents, as opposed to the individual, the most authentic and real magnitude. In the philosophical novel *Globes*, the second volume of the series, it was narrated how classical metaphysical thought, as a contemplation of the round whole, spreads throughout the world, the globe, and sets in motion diverse forms of globalization. *Foams* now offers a philosophical theory of the present age in which it is emphasized that life unfolds multifocally. The joyful image of foam serves to recover the pluralism of the world's inventions and to formulate an anthropological-philosophical interpretation of modern individualism that goes beyond existing descriptions. In doing so, *Foams answers* the question of what is the nature of the bond that brings individuals together, forming what the sociological tradition calls "society." Because of its dedication to the most pressing issues of the day, it is possible to read the third volume of *Spheres* as if it were the first. And, in a sense, it is.



Peter Sloterdijk

# Spheres III

**Foams. Plural Spherology Spheres**

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*I go back from century to century to the most remote Antiquity; I see nothing that resembles what I have before my eyes.*

Alexis de Tocqueville, *On Democracy in America*

## Note

The present book is the third and last volume of a philosophical project that began in 1998 with the publication of *Spheres I, Bubbles*, and continued in 1999 with *Spheres II, Balloons*. This has consequences for its readability. The author wanted to satisfy those who wish that a book that appears separately can also be read and understood separately. This is certainly true for the present work. It is possible to begin with the third part of *Spheres* as if it were the first. And in a certain sense it is so, indeed, because the total enterprise can only be appreciated as a whole from its conclusive pole.

It would not necessarily hinder its reading to place a few lines before it as the relational context of the trilogy. In the two preceding volumes, an attempt is made to confer on the expression *sphere* the rank of a fundamental concept, which branches out into significant topological, anthropological, immunological and semiological aspects. *Spheres I* proposes a description (the author thinks that, in part, new) of human space, which emphasizes the fact that the close being-together of human beings with human beings produces an interior hitherto little considered. We call this interior the microsphere and characterize it as a system of spatial immunity, animic (moral, if you will), very sensitive and capable of learning. The accent is placed on the thesis that it is the couple, and not the individual, that represents the most authentic magnitude; this means, at the same time, that, in contrast to the immunity-self, the immunity-we embodies the most profound phenomenon. Such a thesis is not understandable in an epoch sworn to elementary particles and individuals.

We characterize human proximity worlds as surreal spaces to express that even non-spatial relations such as sympathy and understanding are translated into quasi-spatial relations in order to become comprehensible and experiential.

As we showed in seven rounds, human space is formed from the beginning, literally *ab utero*, first bipolar, then pluripolar in more developed stages; it has the structure and dynamics of an - to speak in the old way - animating intertwining<sup>[\*]</sup> of living beings, interested in being in proximity and participation with each other; This close intertwining often triggers the perverse proximity of primary aggression, since what shelters each other can also imprison and suffocate each other. In this relationship are included, at the same time, all the possibilities that tradition designates with sonorous concepts such as friendship, love, understanding, consensus, *concordia* and *communitas*. Even the fading expression of solidarity, on which the soul of the left nowadays hangs without drive (and which nowadays means something like tele-sentimentalism), can no longer be regenerated, and in that case, only from that source.

As a being that "exists," the human being is the genius of the neighborhood. Heidegger conceptualized it thus in his most creative epoch: if there are existents together, they remain "in the same sphere of patency". They are accessible to one another and yet transcendent to one another, an observation that thinkers of dialogue never tire of emphasizing. But not only persons, but also things and circumstances are understood, in their own way, from the principle of neighborliness. That is why "world" means for us the context of access possibilities. "The being-there already carries with it the sphere of possible neighborliness; it is already originally a neighbor of..."<sup>[1]</sup>. The stones, which are next to each other, do not know the ecstatic openness of one with respect to the other<sup>[2]</sup>. Anyone can read *Spheres I* as an immersion into the abyss of ontological nervousness in the face of the co-existent, the other, the strange. In this journey

stoic to the first ecological niche of the human being, one cannot avoid sketching a kind of philosophical gynecology. It is understandable why this is not well received by all. So much the worse for readers who will find even less joy in the theologically informed propaedeutic of intimacy, with which this book of excesses closes inwardly.



Pablo Reinoso, *La parole*, 1998.

In *Spheres II*, consequences are drawn from the examination of the ecstatic-surreal nature of lived and inhabited space. This happens in the form of a grand account of the expansion of the animic in the unbroken series of imperial and cognitive occupations of the world. The enterprise could now be called a philosophical novel, which reproduces in synoptic stages the rounding of the external. Here hyperbole is credited not only as a stylistic means, but as a procedure for clarifying contexts. The first chapter of



this hyperbolic novel corresponds to the first volume of the *Spheres* project, which speaks of the intimate constitution of the dyad and its development into simple familiarity, a process that leads from duality to a five-pole structure as a minimum form of openness to the world and capacity for psychic connection. At the exit from the fundamental familiar situation - its architectural symbol is the hut - the expansive program moves from the village to the city, to the empire and, beyond, to the finite universe, until it is lost in limitless and uninhabitable space. Dante's hells are tormenting ramifications of this luminous path, illustrating almost all the possibilities of immersion in the lousy. In those years of learning inclusive sentiment, one observes how countless small spheres burst and occasionally recompose themselves into larger formats. Once again: the microsphere is a learning space that has the capacity to grow. In it the law of incorporation by assimilation applies; if it remains in flux it is because of its escape into the larger. It is an elastic hybrid space, which responds to deformation not only with recomposition, but also with expansion. The postulate that security is to be found in the larger, and only in that, prompted the soul's *affair* with geometry. Nothing else meant the event that is called metaphysics: that local existence is integrated into the absolute sphere, and the animated point is inflated to the sphere-all. In it the psyche believed to find participation in the indestructible. The most thoughtless simplification opens the way to salvation.

In the course of the narrative it should become plausible why classical philosophy adopted the form of macrospherology, as contemplation of the larger sphere and the larger structure of immunity. Whenever, after Plato, philosophical thought was at its due height, the two paradigmatic concepts of totality, world and God, were represented as an all-embracing spherical volume, in which are embedded concentrically, in gradation, innumerable circles of energy, spheres of value and covers of world, until reaching below, to the point of

The soul that is experienced as the source of light of the atom-self. Existence is characterized by immersion in a last element, it is either "in God" or "in the world", if possible in both at the same time. Tell me where you are immersed and I will tell you what you are. One gets an idea of the penetrating force of such intuitions when one considers to what extent they gained respect among the most powerful thinkers of old Europe: from Plotinus to Leibniz the consideration of the macrospheres was the authoritative force of ontology<sup>[3]</sup>. In accordance with the traditional conviction, the very

The "sphere of patency" embraces both the physical cosmos and the cognizing subject. Hence the exalted belief that it is in the nature of the human spirit to achieve a kind of complicit knowledge of the first and last things; hence also the initial assumption of the beginners of being, easily defrauded, of being able to carry it on a large scale on earth. "All I was head; and I was round as a circle, as perfection and eternity are represented; this enabled me to make plans for the future... I set out for the conquest of the world..."<sup>[4]</sup> According to the poet's ironically broken consideration, every individual prenatally delineates his vital unfolding with such anticipations. If it were to happen in reality as in the ideal, the human spirit would not develop until it learned to understand itself as a junior partner of the absolute. Just as the anonymous placental genius and the fetus form the first couple, so God and the soul, optionally the cosmos and the individual intellect, the latter.



Albert Speer, project of the great pavilion.

The great story of *Spheres II*, which follows the curve, punctuated by catastrophes, from the minimum to the maximum, aims to make understandable the reason why metaphysics was the pursuit of animism with both theoretical and political means: animism is the belief in the hypersystem of immunity: soul. Against this background, the failure of classical metaphysics is understandable because of its internal contradiction. It is true that everywhere one comes across the legend that it perished because of a disenchanting criticism and a better knowledge, corresponding to a later order of intelligence; in truth, it is the internal impossibility of its project that was the cause of its ruin. The few who took it seriously understand it even today: it shatters because it claims to defend the issue of life, which by nature is only maintained in the finitude of an individualized system of immunity, and takes sides, at the same time, with the infinite, which denies all individual life and ignores private immunity interests.

As the servant of two masters she fails because of the very impossibility of her position, without the critique of language, psychology, or the

"The lessons of this endogenous failure (which can also be observed externally, of course) are far-reaching. The lessons of this endogenous failure (which can also be verified externally, of course) are far-reaching: it reveals the conflict between infinity and immunity, in which the original polemic of modern thought, perhaps of any thought that claims to be philosophical, takes place.



Josiah Woodward, *Fair Warningsto a Careless World*, detail, 1707.

In accordance with the logic of the object itself, the reconstruction of the metaphysical delirium of simplification and unification closes with a brief history of the modern world, as European as necessary, as philosophically universal as possible. By Modernity we understand, rather conventionally, the epoch in which the ancient world emerged from metaphysical monocentrism. In it the simple magic circle was blown up, which in former times promised all living beings immunity in their One God, i.e. in the resounding totality. Whoever tells such a story has *nolens volens* to represent in outline the European expansion after 1492. This eccentric movement, now tersely designated as "globalization" (as if there were only one, and not three), is reproduced in chapter 8 of *Spheres II*, under the title "The Last Sphere. For a philosophical history of terrestrial globalization", in the style of a macrohistorical consideration. We call terrestrial the globalization that follows metaphysical globalization and precedes telecommunicative globalization. Both for its external and internal dimensions, this chapter can be read as an independent publication<sup>[5]</sup>.



Arkadi Schaichet, mounting of the globe over the Moscow Post Office building, 1928.

An anecdote, which Albert Speer has collected in his *Memoirs*, informs about the state of the ideas of the circle and the sphere - as far as world theory is concerned - in the 20th century: in the early summer of 1939, Adolf Hitler (whose name was tossed around with Gandhi's a year earlier for the Nobel Peace Prize), certain of his plans for universal domination, set out to make a modification to the model, designed together with Speer, of the Reich Chancellery

in Berlin. The Reich eagle was no longer to hover above the Nazi symbol, the swastika, at the top of the 290-meter dome, as had previously been planned. Hitler would have ordered:

[...] The crown of this building, the largest in the world, must be the eagle on the ball of the world<sup>[6]</sup>.

Is it still necessary to clarify why these words explain the history of the decomposition of political metaphysics? It had always manifested itself as imperial monospherology when it spoke clearly, and when Hitler, in his fantasies, substitutes the swastika for the ball of the world, he too is, for a second, a classical philosopher. It is somewhat more difficult to understand how the decomposition of the monospheric theory of God proceeds. Its beginning could be explained from the following consideration of Abbé Sieyès, from the year 1789:

I imagine the law as the central point of a grandiose sphere; with respect to it, all citizens, without exception, are at the same distance on the surface of the sphere and occupy equal places there; they all depend in the same way on the law....<sup>[7]</sup> I imagine the law as the central point of a grandiose sphere.

The crumbling of the divine monosphere becomes evident with the decree that all human creatures are to be equally distant from the point of God. Was it not to be presumed that the democratization of the relationship with God would end in its neutralization, finally in its extinction, and force the new occupation of that position? In a defense of the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot had already consummated this substitution in 1755 *expressis verbis*, declaring the human being as the "common central point" of all things (and of all lexicographical entries): "Is there in infinite space any better point from which those immeasurable lines we want to draw to all other points can be made to go out?"<sup>[8]</sup>. At the tentative end of the story we come across a radio-theoretical phrase by Marshall McLuhan:

The electrical simultaneity of the informative movements produces the total oscillating sphere of the auditory space, whose center

is everywhere and its circumference nowhere<sup>[9]</sup>.

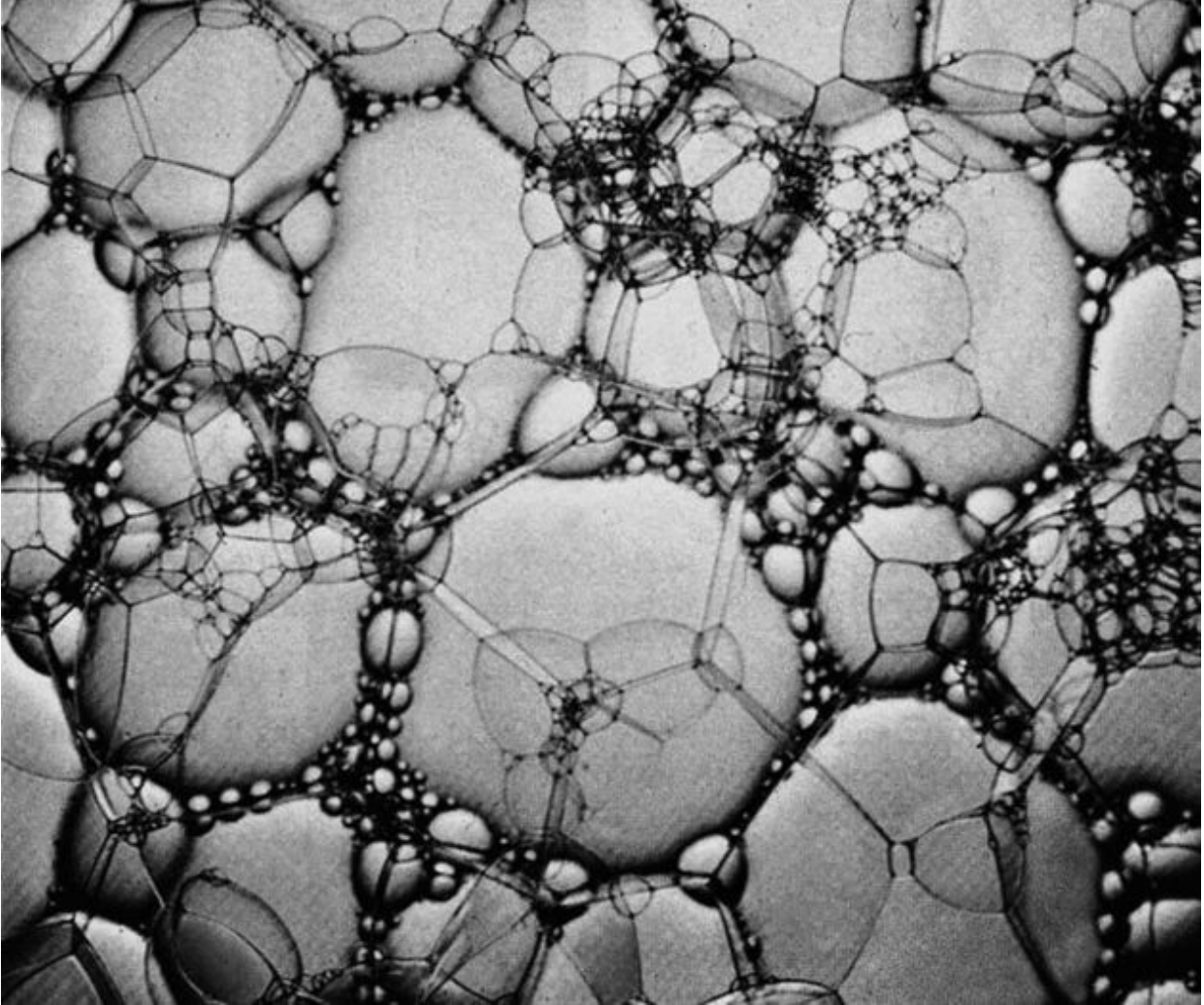
Superficially, this appears to be a thesis on the distribution of aural opportunities in the radio-acoustic space of the global village. Upon closer examination, the phrase shows its theological undertones: the Pauline ambitions of the greatest media theorist of his time draw directly on the mysterious halo theorem of the Hermetic theosophy of *The Book of the Twenty-Four Philosophers*<sup>[10]</sup> in the early medieval period, to evoke an ultimate theory of the one-sphere, based on the spirit of electronic Catholicism. With a breadth of vision bordering on hoarding, McLuhan postulates a hybrid, global-tribal information sphere, which would enclose all of us, as happy and obliged members of the "human family", in a "single universal membrane"<sup>[11]</sup>, which would be both round (centered, Roman) and oval (peripheral, Canadian). The machine that would perform this simplifying miracle is the *computer*, interpreted in a Pentecostal spirit: according to McLuhan, it makes possible the integration of humanity into a supratribal "psychic community". Who can ignore that here was taught, once again, and who knows if not for the last time, the unity of global village and Church?

In contrast to all this, *Spheres III, Foams*, offers a theory of the present epoch under the point of view that "life" develops multifocally, multiperspectively and heterarchically. Its starting point lies in a non-metaphysical and non-holistic definition of life: its immunization can no longer be thought of by the means of ontological simplification, of recapitulation in the smooth sphere-everything. If "life" acts unlimitedly, shaping spaces in diverse ways, it is not only because each of the monads has its own environment, but rather because they are all assembled with other lives and composed of innumerable units. Life is articulated in simultaneous scenarios, imbricated in one another, produced and consumed in interconnected workshops. But what is decisive for us: it always produces the space in which it is and which is in it. Just as Bruno Latour has spoken of a "parliament of the



things"<sup>[12]</sup>, we, with the help of the metaphor of foam, intend to deal with a republic of spaces.

The analyses in the third volume pick up the thread at the point where the work of mourning - or rather, the work of disenthralment - for the impossible metaphysics of the enveloping One comes to an end. Their starting point is the assumption that the matter of life was not really in good hands, neither with the representatives of the traditional religions nor with the metaphysicians. Both were dubious advisors of unresolved life, since, in the last analysis, they did not know how to refer it to anything other than the placebo of surrender to a celestial simplification. If this is so, the relationship between knowledge and life must be rethought much more broadly than it occurred to the reformers of the twentieth century. It is clear that the old European way of thinking and living, philosophy, has been exhausted; biosophy has just begun its work, the theory of atmospheres has just been provisionally consolidated, the general theory of immunity systems and community systems is in its infancy<sup>[13]</sup>, a theory of places, of situations, of immersions is slowly getting underway<sup>[14]</sup>, the replacement of sociology by the theory of actor-networks is a hypothesis with little reception as yet<sup>[15]</sup>, considerations on the mobilization of a realistically constituted collective in order to adopt a new constitution for the global society of knowledge have barely shown more than sketches<sup>[16]</sup>. No common trend can be recognized in these indications. Only one thing is clear: where losses of form were regretted, gains in mobility are appearing.



Michael Boran, *Honey*.

The festive image of the foam serves us to recover post-metaphysically the pre-metaphysical pluralism of the fictions of the world. It helps to enter into the element of a diverse way of thinking, without being disconcerted by the nihilistic *pathos*, which during the centuries

XIX and XX was the involuntary companion of a reflection disappointed by monological metaphysics. It once again shows the importance of our contentment: the proposition "God is dead" is confirmed as the good news of the present. It could be reformulated: The one sphere has imploded, now, the foams live. The understanding of the mechanisms of hoarding by means of simplifying globes and imperial totalizations does not provide

precisely the reason to destroy everything that was considered great, imaginative, valuable. Proclaiming the pernicious God of consensus dead means recognizing with what energies the work is taken up again, which can be none other than those that were constrained in metaphysical hyperbole. If a great exaggeration has served its time, new ideals of more discreet flights emerge.

# Foreword:

## The birth of foam

*And also to me, who am good with life, it seems to me that those who know most about happiness are butterflies and soap bubbles, and all that among men is of the same species.*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,  
part one, "On reading and writing"<sup>[\*]</sup>.

## **Air in unexpected place**

Almost nothing, yet not nothing. A something, though only a tissue of empty spaces and subtle walls. A real datum, but an elusive fabric, which at the slightest touch abandons and bursts. That is foam, as it presents itself to everyday experience. By air supplement, a liquid, a solid loses its compactness; what seemed autonomous, homogeneous, consistent, is transformed into spongy structures. What happens there? It is the miscibility of the most opposite materials that becomes a phenomenon in foam. To the light element corresponds, evidently, the perverse capacity to infiltrate the heavier ones and to associate with them, most of the time fleetingly, in some cases even for a longer time. "Earth", coupled with air, produces stable, dry foam, like lava stone or bubbling glass, phenomena only considered as foams in modern times, after the introduction of air chambers in certain hard or elastic materials became industrial routine. On the other hand, "water", combined with air, produces fluid-wet and ephemeral foam, like that of sea waves and that which rises from fermenting vats. This short-term union of gases and liquids constitutes the model of the usual concept of foam. It alludes to the fact that, under circumstances as yet unexplained, the compact, continuous, solid undergoes an invasion of the hollow. Air, the misunderstood element, finds ways and means to infiltrate into places where no one counts on its presence; moreover, by its own force, it conditions strange places there where

How, then, would a first definition of the foam pray? Air in an unexpected place?

Because of its ephemeral form, foam offers the opportunity to observe with one's own eyes the subversion of substance. At the same time, it is possible to experience how the revenge of the solid is usually not long in coming. As soon as the agitation of the mixture, which seeks the introduction of air into the liquid, stops, the splendor of the foam quickly collapses. One concern remains: what dares to hollow out the substance, even for a short time, does it not participate in that which is to be considered evil and suspicious, perhaps even hostile? This is how tradition has most of the time conceived this precarious something, distrusting it as a perversion. Like a labile contexture of gaseous concavities, triumphing over the solid as if by a nocturnal coup d'état, the foam presents itself as an insolent subversion of the natural order in the midst of nature. It is as if matter had gone astray and given itself over to the sterile in physical saturnales. It is no coincidence that for an entire era it is pejoratively considered to serve as a metaphor for the unessential and unsound. At night human beings give credence to ghosts, in the twilight, to utopias; but come the awakening of the world and the morning sun, and all that "melts like fatuous foam".<sup>[17]</sup> It is the pale light, the seemingly lumpy, the unreliable and changeable - a bastard of matter, generated by an illegitimate union of the elements, an iridescent surface, a charlatanry of air and whatever else. Impulsive forces, suspicious to the friends of pure states, manifest themselves in the foam. If compact matter ventures to foam, it must incur a deceptive image of itself. Matter, the fecund matron who leads an honest life at the side of the logos, undergoes a hysterical crisis and throws herself into the arms of the first illusion that presents itself. The evil pearls of air subject her to the most daring games of prestidigitation. It foams, sponges, shudders, explodes.

What is left? The air from the foam returns to the general atmosphere, the more solid substance decomposes into dust droplets. Almost nothing becomes almost nothing. If solid matter only gets false pregnancies from embraces with the inane, who could claim that it is something that arrives unexpectedly?

Disappointment is thus guaranteed wherever the foam jumps. As formerly dreams seemed to represent nothing more than an empty appendage of the real, which could be passed over quietly, yes, which one had to dispense with at the earliest possible moment if one wanted to remain in the sphere of the categorial, substantial, public, so too the foams lacked anything that could be related to the respectable spheres of the valid-durable. Heraclitus' admonition to follow the common (*koínon*) was considered for an entire era as an exhortation to stay away from the nocturnal and only-private, from the dreamy and the frothy, from those agents of the non-common, non-public, non-universal.<sup>[18]</sup> Join the clear day, so you will be right. When the common is experienced in candlelight, being is officially offered. In the phrase

"Dreams are foam" equates two types of inanity. Foam and dream, one inessentiality is framed in another. Goethe, still a student in Leipzig, precociously censures the "empty head that foams on the tripod / And like the pythia dreams sentences-oracles." The foam is the really existent delusion - the non-existent as an existent or as a simulacrum of being - yet an allegory of the first falsehood, emblem of the infiltration of the untenable into the solid - a fatuous fire, a too much, a whimsy, a gas of the swamps, inhabited by a suspicious subjectivity.

That is what not only the academics, the fundamentalists of the essential, following Plato, have thought. A kind of popular probity is that which has always wanted to turn its cold back on the spurious, light, too light. Between classical metaphysics and the ontological-popular everyday life, over and above profound differences, there has dominated since ancient times the agreement that the

more serious, responsible spirit is recognized by its disdain for foam. The verbal products of the unserious: foam and castles in the air; the mode of existence of the degenerate: scum; the nostalgic textures of romantic spirits: syrupy effervescence of a subjectivity that ferments in itself; the rabid empty demands of the many dissatisfied with politics or, better yet, with everything: speech bubbles, originated by removal in the receptacles of collective illusions. These things are well known: when hollows appear in power they leave a trail of burst phrases. In the foam, as in the castles of cards, the dreamers and agitators are at home. There you will never find the mature ones, the serious ones, those who act moderately. Who is mature? He who refuses to seek support in the inconsistent. Only the seducers and the white-collar rogues pretend, supporters of the impossible, to introduce their victims to their bottomless agitation. The foam is the exit uniform of the *nihil*, of the nothingness from which nothing can come, if one continues to trust Lucretius' affirmation; it is the inconsistent,

"without any age", which is distinguished by its sterility and lack of action. The spurious exists - one hears the informed say - only in empty self-reference, it produces nothing but episodes, it never does more than bulge and collapse. What has before it no other perspective than its disintegration is mere inflation, it is the anecdote that has come to power. Foam begets nothing, nothing follows from it. Without hope of life or of the next generation, it knows only the advance towards its own bursting. That is why the foam, among the extravagant children of chaos, if not the first-born, is the most despicable.<sup>[19]</sup>

And yet: when in Hegel's new logic thought became polyvalent, there was a positivization of the negative and, with it, a possible rehabilitation of the foam: "From the fermentation of finitude, before it turns to foam, exhales the aroma of the spirit."<sup>[20]</sup> Would, then, even the spirit itself, the *medium* in which the



Is the bastard, in whom no confidence was placed, revealed as the long-sought intermediary, in whom the spiritual and the material meet in the concreteness called existence? Is the foam the third party, in whom binary idiocy is overcome? Was Aristotle asking such amalgams when in the *Problemata physica* he attributed the illness of men of subtle spirit, melancholia, to the

"Volatile evils", to whose characteristics belongs the affinity with foamable materials: to the black bile, which in the opinion of the ancient physicians appears as a volatile mixture? When ordinary mortals want to put themselves in the situation of those of subtle spirit, to try to understand it, dark, hot, sparkling wine helps them, inasmuch as it transfers them to a state "in which the volatile melancholics are (always) found".<sup>[21]</sup>

Would the study of melancholy be, then, the unsuspected link between anthropology and the theory of foams? It is towards wine that the longing of such men is directed, insofar as it makes them maniacs of love to the same extent that it is frothy and volatile. Following Aristotle, even male ejaculation, like erection, is a pneumatic effect - once again, therefore, air in an unexpected place: for the "expulsion (of the sperm) happens also, obviously, because it pushes the air".<sup>[22]</sup>

## Foam interpretation

The fact that, in the changing world picture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, both dreams and foams could not remain in the place they occupied in the old cosmos of essences, belongs - together with numerous other changes of signs and surprising new dispositions of forces - to the intimate signatures of the form of the world, which, in the meantime, in a calmer tone, is called modern. If Viennese psychoanalysis, despite its conservative traits, is counted, with good reason, among the driving forces of mental modernization, it is primarily because it exercises a new way of dealing with the apparently marginal, the hitherto incidental and once ignored. By its positioning in the epistemological place, in which the common influx of late-idealist-romantic philosophies of the unconscious with scientific-natural and technical conceptions-mechanisms was to take place, the psychoanalytic avant-garde succeeded in formulating a symbolic concept, which allowed a new look at the inapparent. By making psychic symptoms legible as if they were texts, Freud was able to become a "Galileo of the inner world of facts", as Arnold Gehlen put it. What was *quantité négligeable* acquired significant relevance and came into the focus of consideration. Freud's early decision to point to the dream as the royal road to the unconscious highlighted the shift "revolutionary" accent between the central and the peripheral. The appearance of the *Interpretation of Dreams* in the year 1900, however, not only highlighted how early in the century's retrospective the epistemic-propagandistic foundational act manifested itself.

of the psychoanalytic movement, was also one of the starting points of the subversion of the traditional seriousness system and of the consciousness of the heavyweight category in general. What overturns seriousness and revises the *decorum* transforms the culture as a whole. By its collaboration in the rehabilitation, prepared by Romanticism, of the dream dimension, Viennese psychoanalysis entered a context in which nothing less was at stake than a new distribution of accents in the field of the primary, foundational, meaning-creating, an event of cultural-revolutionary scope: into it flowed the shock waves coming from Nietzsche's intervention against metaphysical idealism, together with the irritations coming from both Marxist and positivist critiques of the superstructure. The new art of reading the barely perceptible signs of both intimate and public contexts of meaning integrated the most private occurrences, tics, deviations and failed acts into subversively expanded meaningful assumptions. As this revision redrew the boundaries between meaning and non-sense, seriousness and non-seriousness, it gave the cultural space a decidedly different shape. Now the non-significant could settle old scores with the significant. Since then, dreams are no longer foams; they signal, in any case, an endogenous foaming of psychic systems and give rise to the formulation of hypotheses about the laws to which the development of symptoms and the effervescence of interior images are subject.

If Modernity is recognized by displacements of seriousness, what about the other side of the equation of dreams and foams? How seriously did the twentieth century take foam? What rank of value did it assign to "air in an unexpected place"? How did it work on the rehabilitation of that evanescent entity, doomed to disintegration? By what means did it try to do justice to self-referential hollows, to inner spheres full of self-values, to the halitosan interior and to climatic facts? If an adequate answer to these questions were already possible in our time, it would provide a synopsis of modernization. It would describe a

a broad procedure of admission of the casual, momentary, vague, ephemeral and atmospheric, a procedure in which the arts, theories and experimental forms of life participate with their own approaches in each case. Among its results is a fundamentally new, postheroic conception of the *decorum*, of the complex of rules by which cultures are calibrated as a whole.<sup>[23]</sup> Anyone wishing to undertake a comprehensive reproduction of these processes would have to speak both of the intentions of an unfalsified Nietzsche and of the development of Husserl's impulse; both of perspectivism around 1900 and of chaos theory around 2000; as much of the promotion of the surreal, turning it into an arbitrary section of the real, as of the elevation of the atmospheric to the dignity of theory;<sup>[24]</sup> as much of the mathematization of the blurred<sup>[25]</sup> as of the conceptual penetration of striated structures and irregular sets.<sup>[26]</sup> It would be necessary to speak of a rebellion of the inconspicuous, of the discreet, by which the small and ephemeral secured a portion of the visual force of the great theory, of a science of traces, which, from little apparent indications, wanted to read the tendential signs of world events.<sup>[27]</sup> Beyond the "micrological" turn, we should speak of a discovery of the indeterminate, thanks to which -perhaps for the first time in the history of thought- the not-nothing,<sup>[28]</sup> the almost-nothing,<sup>[29]</sup> the casual and the formless<sup>[30]</sup> have managed to connect with the realm of theorizable realities.



Jean-Luc Parant, *Livres de Jean-Luc Parant mis en boules.*

However broad such an overview of the new distribution of seriousness, founded on ignored, unnoticed, marginalized facts and signs, would confirm the diagnosis that nowhere has there been a convincing compilation of these innovations into a common horizon. The long shadow of the thinking of substance, which has so little taste for the accidental, still continues to hang over modern theories and the theories of Modernity.



Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, 1477-1478.

The contempt for the insubstantial has characterized the search for themes of a rigged philosophy, in which the oldest inertias are still at work, up to the most recent times. This does not prevent freer spirits from committing themselves for some time now to the fronts of a current situation full of risks, even if their approaches have not yet been able to lead to a new coherent determination of the situation. It may be that dreams have ceased to be worth as foams, this will remain a half-conquest as long as the foams do not also achieve their emancipation. The revolutions of seriousness and the revisions of the *decorum* of Modernity will only bring definitive consequences when the interpretation of dreams is followed by an interpretation of foams.<sup>[31]</sup>

Whose task would be to lend the

The "air in an unexpected place" the attention that is due to it, at the risk of also giving rise to theory in an unexpected place, postheroic theory, which dedicates to the ephemeral, irrelevant, secondary the

consideration that in the heroic theory was reserved for the eternal, substantial, primary. After a parallel action in favor of the foam, perhaps what was meant by the interpretation of dreams is manifested. As Ernst Bloch in his - after first successes, almost forgotten again - political ontology of the human capacity for anticipation dissolved the constriction of Freudian dream interpretation to nocturnal and regressive strata of signification in order to grant day dreaming dignity as utopian power and reality-establishing projective force, so the interpretation of foam would have to constitute itself as a political ontology of animated interior spaces. In it, the most fragile would be understood as the heart of reality.



Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, detail.

In the language of our essay, the interpretation of foam has to be negotiated under the name of polyspherology, or expanded science of greenhouses. From the outset it must be clear that this "reading" in foams cannot remain mere hermeneutics, nor can it stop at the deciphering of signs. It only enters the field as a technological theory of humanly inhabited spaces, symbolically climatized, that is to say, as instruction

The closest discipline to this heterodox theory of culture and civilization can be found, for the time being, in manned astronautics, for nowhere else does it ask so radically about the technical conditions of culture and civilization. The closest discipline to this heterodox theory of culture and civilization can be found, for the time being, in manned astronautics, for nowhere else is the technical conditions of the possibility of human existence in life-sustaining capsules so radically questioned.<sup>[32]</sup>

The new constellation therefore reads: the serious and the fragile, or - to take the revolution of the state of affairs of the serious to the extreme where it is now -: foam and fertility. Apropology - from the Greek *áphros*, the foam - is the theory of *cofrágiles* systems. If it were possible to prove that the foamy can be that which has a great future, yes, that it is, under certain conditions, capable of generating, the foundation for the substantialist prejudice would be subtracted. This is precisely what will be attempted in what follows. That which for a whole era has been considered contemptible, that which is apparently frivolous, that which exists only in view of its implosion, would recover its part in the definition of the real. One understands, then: one must understand the floating as something that in some special way provides foundation; describe the hollow again as a fullness in its own right; consider the fragile as the place and mode of the most real; evidence the unrepeatable as the superior phenomenon in the face of the serial. But does not the idea of an "essential" foam represent a contradiction in itself, hardly less on a physical level than on a metaphorical level? Can a workmanship that cannot even guarantee its own permanence-in-form really be taken into consideration as an enabler of vital consequences and creative actions from a distance?



## Fertile Foams - Mythological Interlude

That the figure "fertile foam" was not always an illegitimate fiction in the history of motifs of thought and figuration is a thesis that can be proved as soon as one goes back to a time before the ontologically-popularly and metaphysically-substantially originated disparagement of foam. In the earliest mentions of foam, both in ancient European and in Indian and Near Eastern traditions, there appears a close connection between the representative complexes of the foamy-maritime and the changing-indestructible life. The philosophizing rhapsode Hesiod, who lived after 700 B.C. in Boeotia as a shepherd and free farmer, did something unforgettable for the Western tradition of the *liaison* between foam and generative power by his account of the birth of the foam of the goddess Aphrodite as a result of a titanic castration. Thanks to this lyrical-macabre story, a pre-Socratic poetry of the foam has been preserved in memory alongside the metaphysics of the ephemeral, which later dominated. In view of the scarce transmission of texts, it cannot be decided whether this association of Hesiod's was his invention or refers to a more ancient mythological allegoricity. True, it only seems that Hesiod was the victim of a happy etymological confusion in deriving the name of the goddess, who had been imported from the Near East into the Greek pantheon, from *áphros*, foam. With this he related the goddess of love and fertility of the Hellenes with that a substantial substance, to which noble erogenous functions are attributed. This pseudo-etymology of

Hesiod renders mythologically productive the Greek adulteration of the Syro-Phoenician name of the goddess Astarte (or the Babylonian Ishtar) into Aphrodite, and thereby achieves a genealogical contextualization, which gives the foam a spectacular debut in the stories, told and retold by the Greeks and their heirs, of the generations of the gods.

Here the poet achieves -along with the myth of a coastal advent, which enchanted the painters of the Renaissance- the unprecedented prototypical image of a foam, to which is attributed not only formative force, but also procreative capacity and generative efficiency of the beautiful, seductive, perfect. Indeed, the foam of which we speak is not just any foam: arising from the catastrophic contact between the wave of the sea and the sexual member of the primordial father, Uranus, artfully severed by Cronus, it testifies to an anomaly of great consequences in the succession of the generations of the gods:

*But the genitals of Uranus, severed from the body by steel, cast far from the mainland into the stormy pontoon, were then carried away by the sea, until finally a white ring of foam arose around the divine flesh: And in the midst of him a maiden was born. She went first to the sacred island of Cythera and then reached Cyprus, surrounded by currents. Here, the august and beautiful goddess emerged from the sea, and under her delicate feet the grass grew all around. Aphrodite, goddess born of the foam, crowned with the flowers of Cytherea, the gods and men call her, who grew from aphros, from the foam. And Cytherea, because she came to Cythera, also Ciprogenea, exit of the swell of Cyprus, and goddess of procreation, sprung from the member of procreation. She was followed by excitement and the desire for love, Eros and Himerus, when, newly born, she ascended towards the tribe of the gods.<sup>[33]</sup> The goddess of the gods.*

At the critical moment of his song the poet ventures an adjective characterization - *aphrogenéa*, as an epithet of *théa*, the goddess - of which it is now recognized that it has sufficient potential to overcome the character of an evocatively ornamental adjective and become a name with the rank of a concept. Insofar as it is attested of the goddess that she is one born of the foam, an aphrogene, the foam

herself acquires the competence to give birth. Because of her being born of foam - more precisely: of her growing-into-foam (*en aphro*) -, <sup>[34]</sup> the Hesiodic Aphrodite on the horizon of the Western tradition becomes the main witness that it is not true that foam is nothing at all, especially when it can be associated with the limb of the originating god. Just as a later metaphysics of the spirit attributes from time to time to the world-generating logos the attribute *spermatikós*, pre-Socratic poetry already knows at that point an *áphros spermatikós*, a foam with the potency of engendering and giving birth, to which are inherent matrix-qualities. It is significant that Hesiod's narrative transfers the later Olympian goddess Aphrodite (who, according to a different tradition, arose from the union of Zeus with the oak goddess Dione) to a titanoid context, to a series of monstrous begettings and elemental horrors, something that happens, no doubt, under the influence of a motive: to introduce the goddess of voluptuousness in a very early cosmic context, full of primary processes, completely dominated still by pre-rational elemental forces. Only in it was possible to charge the foam with generative potency and fertility meanings, and only from titanic sperm could it plausibly be made to manifest as an erogenous, aphrogenic, theogenic force. The *fertilization-in-aphro* of the goddess allows us to understand how the foam - during a mythopoetically productive instant - could be thought of as analogon of the maternal womb and matrix of conformations with great consequences.

[35]





J. A. D. Ingres, *Venus born of foam*, 1808.

Something similar, so superlativized as to resemble a transcendent baroque novel, is the ancient Indian myth of the decision of the celestials to churn the Ocean into foam in order to extract from it the nectar of immortality, a story that has been transmitted, among others, in the *Ramayana* version and in the *Mahabharata*.<sup>[36]</sup> Both versions have in common the motif that the gods, worried about their insecure immortality, are told by a divine counselor (Vishnu-Narayana, according to the *Mahabharata*) to stir the milky universal ocean until *amrita*, the elixir that ends death, emerges from it. The celestials follow this advice by using the universal mount Meru and the gigantic thousand-headed serpent Shesha, alias Vasuki, as stirring spoons, more precisely as a beating stick and rope.

After a thousand years of churning the foam in the depths, the moment of success is approaching:

Having recovered their strength, the gods continued to stir. A short time later the soft moon of a thousand rays emerged from the sea. Thereupon, out of the element arose Lakshmi (the goddess of fortune), all dressed in white, then Soma (the intoxicating drink of the gods), then the white steed, and finally the celestial gem Kaustaba, which adorns the breast of the god Narayana (Vishnu).... Then rose the same divine Dhanwantari (the divine physician of the gods) with the white vessel of nectar in his hand... Then appeared still Airavata, the Great Elephant, booming in body and with a double pair of white tusks. But when the removal continued, the poison Kalakuta appeared at last...<sup>[37]</sup>

In the *Ramayana*, attributed to the poet Valmiki (ca. 200 AD), the millenary removal also produces a series of appearances from the milk foam, but in a different order.), the millenary removal likewise produces a series of appearances from the milk foam, but in a different order: here first appears the physician of the gods Dhanwantari with his sublime vessel of nectar - containing the sacred "water of the ascetics" - followed by an enormous multitude of resplendent love girls, the *apsaras*, in all six hundred million, accompanied by innumerable maidservants, female beings dispensers of bliss, who "belong to all," because neither men nor gods are willing to marry them; these erotic emanations of the foaming Ocean are joined by Varuni, the daughter of the water god Varuna, then by the magnificent white horse, later by the divine precious stone, and finally once more by the desired elixir, the essence that makes immortal, for whose possession a bitter war immediately breaks out between the gods and the demons.<sup>[38]</sup>

In the Indian accounts of the churning or foaming of the Ocean it is striking that they no longer present, as in Hesiod, an anonymous elementary process, but an action, to which - under alchemical features - an undoubtedly productive character is attributed. Milky foam has not become only a matrix for new generative processes of a molder: it is itself produced by an aphrogenic operation, engendering foam in a second sense of the word; for the production from foam appears the production of foam. With this, the phenomenon aphrogenia acquires a technical character and becomes legible from two sides. It can ascend to a conceptual level insofar as it brings together in a higher expression the formation from foam and the formation of foam. However grotesque the instrument may appear to be - a mount and

a gigantic serpent, turned into a churning churn in the cosmic dairy - there is no doubt that we are dealing with an image typical of the context of motifs of artisanal observation. Above all, the analogy with procedures for the preparation of butter is imposed, which is not surprising in a culture in which the offerings of liquid butter in the sacrificial fire (*ajya*) belonged to the primary ritual gestures.<sup>[39]</sup> At the same time, the removal evidences the procedural core of alchemy, in which from time immemorial it seems that an active essence was sought to be obtained by filtration and reduction. The introduction of air into the substance serves for the precipitation of the most substantial of the substance, until reaching the extreme contraction of the generative power in a single receptacle, in a last seminal point. It is understood: when one presupposes, as in the First Generalizing Theory, the unity of originary force and fullness of essence, from there there is no great stretch until reaching a radicalization of the search; it is then that one ventures the magical access to the essence of the essence in order to filter power from power. In the theurgic drama, which is to make the gods definitively immortal, the preparation of the foam serves as a prelude to absolute extraction.

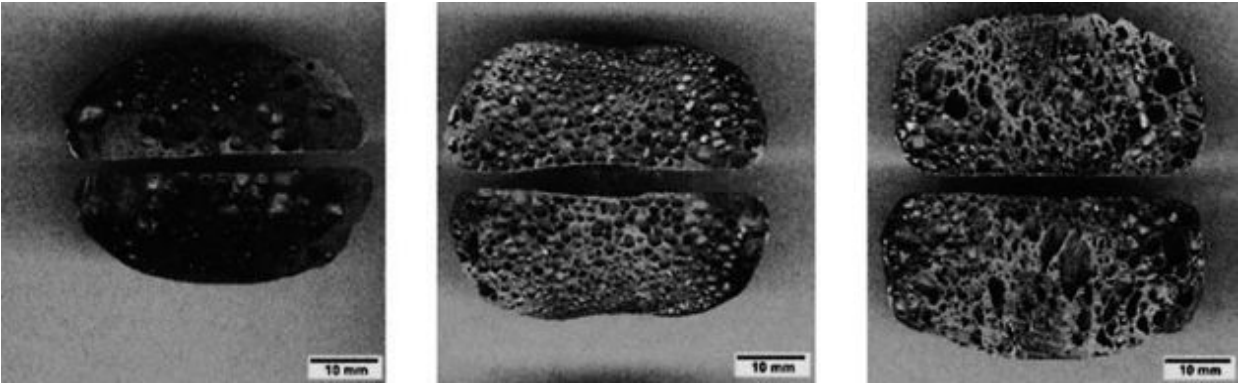
We do not want to forget that the Egyptian myth of creation even knew the image of a cosmogonic foam-saliva: in it the mouth of the god Atum is described as the first focus of movement or original receptacle, in which first *tefnut*, the moisture, and *schu*, the air, are created and assembled one in the other, until both, as a totipotent mixture, leave the original mouth to produce all the other creatures. Memorable is here, above all, that from the mouth of the gods do not emanate first orders-doings or differentiations, as is usual in the logocratic scheme, but a bimaterial foamy *prime matter*, which, analogously to a couple, calls to life the rest by procreation, by a supreme spitting, so to speak.

These myths allude to early alternatives to the sterility prejudice concerning foams; yet they can only give the constellation of foam and fertility, at best, a poetic plausibility. Still, they prepare from afar a concept of aphrogenia that stimulates us not only to inquire into the generations of the gods, but also into the emergence of the human being from the aerial, floating, mingled and inspired. In what follows it remains to be shown that the foam - in a sense of the word yet to be consolidated - constitutes the matrix of all human facts in their totality. *We are such stuff the foams are made on.* As we have seen, the first lesson in the interpretation of the foams was to become a mythological excursus; in the second lesson we will leave the theogonic motifs behind and, after a brief look at the current contributions of the natural sciences to the investigation of the foams, move on to the anthropological record.

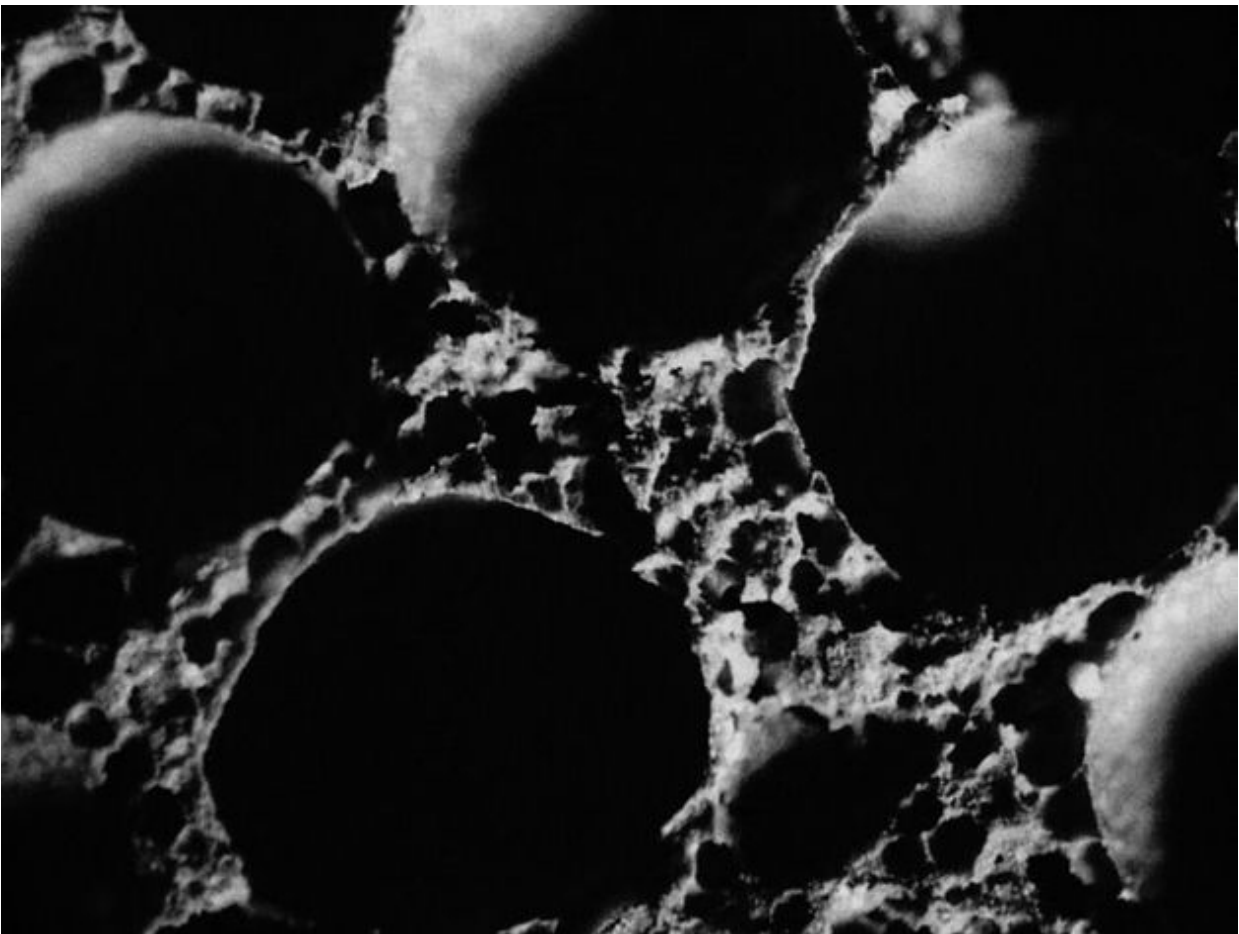


## Natural foams, aphereses

In the physical context, foams are understood as multi-chamber systems of gas confinement in solid and liquid materials, the cells of which are separated from each other by film partitions. The impetus for the scientific investigation of foam structures goes back to the Belgian physicist Joseph Antoine Ferdinand Plateau, who, in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, formulated some of the most important, so far recognized, laws of foam geometry, laws that brought a minimum of order into the apparent chaos of foam agglomerations-bubbles. With their help the foams could be accurately described as tensioned sculptures of pellicular teguments. They state that the angles of a foam bubble or, better, of a foam polygon, are formed by exactly three pellicular partitions; that two to two of these three partitions always meet at an angle of 120 degrees; and that exactly four angles of foam cells always converge at one point. The existence of soapy teguments is due to the surface tension of water, which was already pointed out around 1508 by Leonardo da Vinci in his observations on the morphology of droplets. The optical properties of wet and dry foams were presented around 1890 by the British physicist Charles Vernon Boys in a popular treatise on the color of foam.<sup>[40]</sup> He brought the wonders of the rainbow into the children's rooms of the Victorian era.



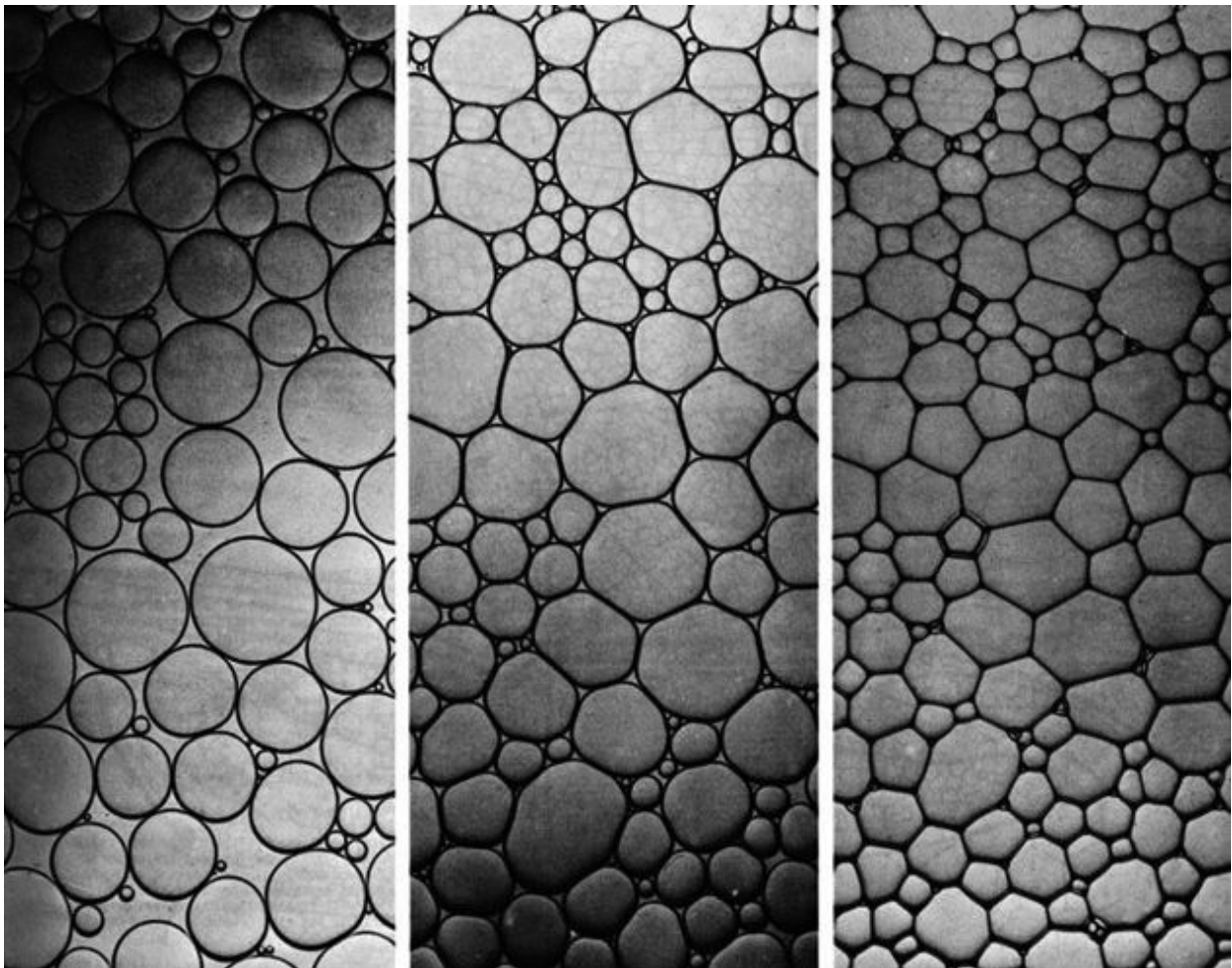
Porous ferrous-based materials.



Photograph of a foam adobe porozized with polystyrene and foam.

First and foremost, we have the 20th century to thank for the introduction of time in foam analysis. We have learned that foams are processes and that within the chaos of multiple cells there are constant leaps, transformations and changes of

format. This agitation has a direction, it leads to greater stability and inclusiveness. An old foam can be recognized because its bubbles are larger than those of young foams, because the young cells that burst die in a certain way within their neighbors, to whom they bequeath their volume. The wetter and younger a foam is, the smaller, rounder, more mobile and autonomous are the bubbles agglomerated in it; the drier and older, on the contrary, the more autonomous bubbles have perished, the larger the surviving cells become, the more forcefully they act on each other, the more Plateau's laws of neighborhood geometry assert themselves in the reciprocal deformation of the enlarged bubbles.



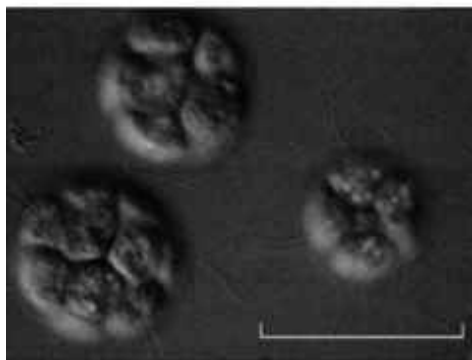
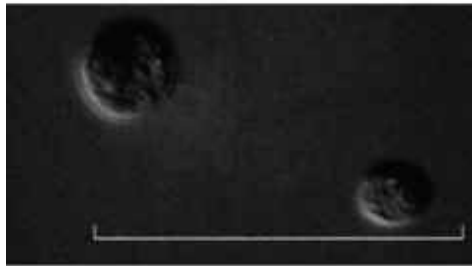
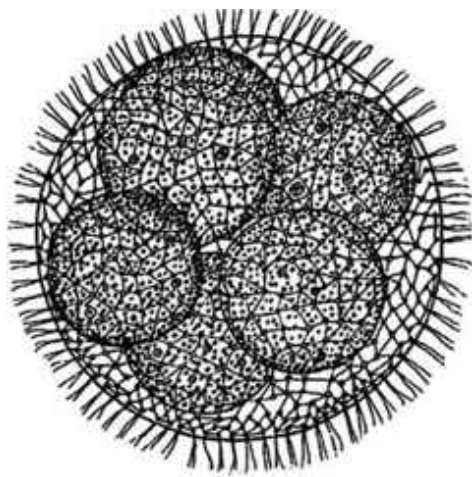
Transition from a bubble raft to a flattened polyhedral lattice, according to a study of the Frei Otto's group.

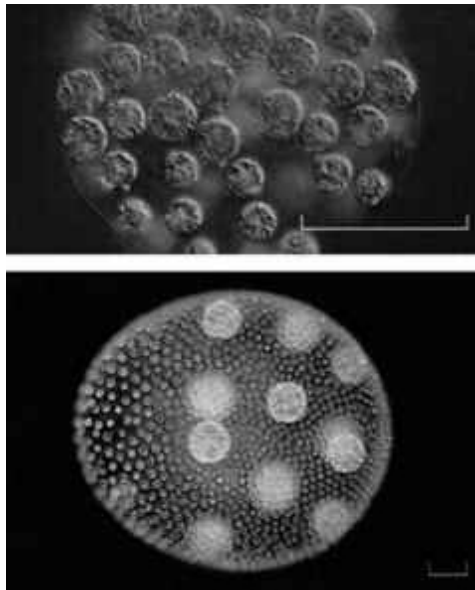
An aged foam embodies the ideal case of a co-fragile system, in which a maximum of interdependence has been reached. In the lattice of large labile-stable polyhedra, no single cell can potentially burst without dragging the whole structure with it into nothingness. The processual dynamics of foam thus provides the empty form to all stories dealing with immanently growing spaces of inclusion. In these tragic geometries such a high degree of inner tension or tensegrity is reached between the remaining co-isolated spaces that their common risk of existence can be expressed by a formula of co-fragility. Together, the large cells of a mature foam manage to increase the duration of their existence, together they fall apart in the final implosion. Let us note that in foams there is no cell as a central point and that the idea of a capital would be counterproductive *per se*.

Lately, the motif of the multiplicity of chambers has also made a career in the physical theories of space. As a consequence, the metaphor of foam is increasingly used to describe spontaneous space conformations, both in minimum dimensions and in mesocosmic phenomena, as well as, finally, in processes of galactic, indeed cosmic, dimensions. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is openly announced as the *century of the foam*. Much of the most recent astrophysics appears in aphrophysical clothing. Many of the cosmological models currently being discussed represent the universe as a braid of inflationary bubbles, each of which embodies an original explosion system of the type of the world context inhabited by humanity today.<sup>[41]</sup> Numerous microphysical realities are also recently presented with the sign of foam and of the spontaneous microspheric conformation of space. But none of the present sciences gives a greater role to the morphological power of foam than cell biology. From the point of view of numerous biologists, the emergence of life only

can be explained by the spontaneous formation of foam in the turbid water of the early ocean.

[...] if a mixture of oil and water is shaken, cell-like bubbles are formed completely spontaneously, enveloped in a membrane. In the early days of the Earth, still without life, it was such bubble-shaped hollow spaces that provided the separation of inside and outside. [...] These fat bubbles grew larger and developed the capacity for self-preservation. [...] Presumably there flowed, first, solar energy through the droplets; a controlled stream of energy led, finally, to formations that became living cells.<sup>[42]</sup> [The bubbles were then formed into](#) living cells.





A biological coenobium with filial colonies: the alga-Volvox as an evolutionary example of the transition from a single-celled colony forming to a globular, globular, multicellular individual.

sexually differentiated.

In this account of cellular genesis, the round form and the energetic content had to act on each other in such a way that they made it possible for a first living being to emerge from the sea, the monad born of the foam, swimming in the water and dissolved in it, but already detached from it, full of an interior, of a something of its own. From the original molecular broth small original interiors, formally protected, which are considered precursors of life, set out on the path of self-inclusion. In the systemic biology way of speaking, they constitute "semi-open systems", which process as sensitive reaction spaces with themselves and the environment. The oldest fossils found so far on Earth, more than three and a half billion years old, are interpreted by paleobiologists as the remains of original bacteria; because of their shape and place of discovery they are called microspheres - Zwaziland. Their existence demonstrates that the mystery of life cannot be separated from the mystery of form, more precisely, from the conformation of interior space under spherical laws. When unicellulars appear, the history of the organic as spherical condensation and encapsulation begins: under membranes in

The plus that will be called life is concentrated in the form of a globe. In the primitive organism space is on the way to the self. The first characteristic of the self is the capacity to adopt a position in opposition to the exterior. The position appears, as far as we can see, by folding in upon itself, or by obstinating itself to remain in an unexpected place. Did the most primitive life already have to lead the mysterious way inward?[\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[43\]\[44](#)



## Human foams

However impressive the connection between foam morphology and primitive zoogenesis may appear in the light of the new life sciences, for us the adventure of space-multiplicities begins only with the entry into anthropological and cultural-theoretical contexts. By means of the concept foam we describe agglomerations of *bubbles in* the sense of the microspherological analyses we have presented above.<sup>[44]</sup> The expression is valid for systems or aggregates of spherical neighborhoods, in which each of the "cells" constitutes a self-complementing context (in common parlance: a world, a place), an intimate sense-space, tensioned by dyadic or multipolar resonances, or a "home", bubbling in its own animation, which can only be experienced by it and in it.<sup>45]</sup> Each of these homes, each of these symbioses and alliances is a greenhouse of *sui generis* relations. One could qualify such conformations as a "partnership of two"<sup>[46]</sup> (if we did not later try to show that the expression "partnership" is always misleading when applied to such objects). When places of this type are formed, the exist-one-towards-another of the associates in proximity acts in each case as the authentic *agens* of the conformation of space; the climatization of the coexistential interior space is produced by the reciprocal extraversion of the symbionts, who temper the common interior like a fire before the fire.<sup>[47]</sup> Each of the microspheres constitutes in itself an axis proper to the intimate. It will be necessary to show how this axis is individually bent.



Vito Acconci, space distributor. "In their original position the walls form a box-shaped enclosed space in the middle of the room. If someone wants to enter it, he can move one wall to the side. But then he encounters another wall in his place..."

The introversion of each of the households does not contradict the fact that they agglomerate in denser alliances, I am referring to the social foams: the neighborly link and the reciprocal separation must be interpreted as two sides of the same fact. In the foam, the principle of co-isolation governs, according to which one and the same separating wall serves as a boundary in each case for two or more spheres. Such walls, appropriating both sides, are the original interfaces. From the fact that in the physically real foam a concrete bubble borders on a plurality of neighboring globes, which condition the distribution of space, a prototypical image can be deduced for the interpretation of social associations: also in the human field concrete cells are agglutinated with each other by immunizations, separations and reciprocal isolations. It belongs to the particularities of this region of objects the fact that

that the multiple co-isolation of the bubble-homes in their various neighborhoods can be described as both closure and openness to the world. That is why the foam constitutes a paradoxical interior, in which most of the surrounding co-bubbles are, at the same time, from my location, neighboring and inaccessible, and are, at the same time, united and apart.

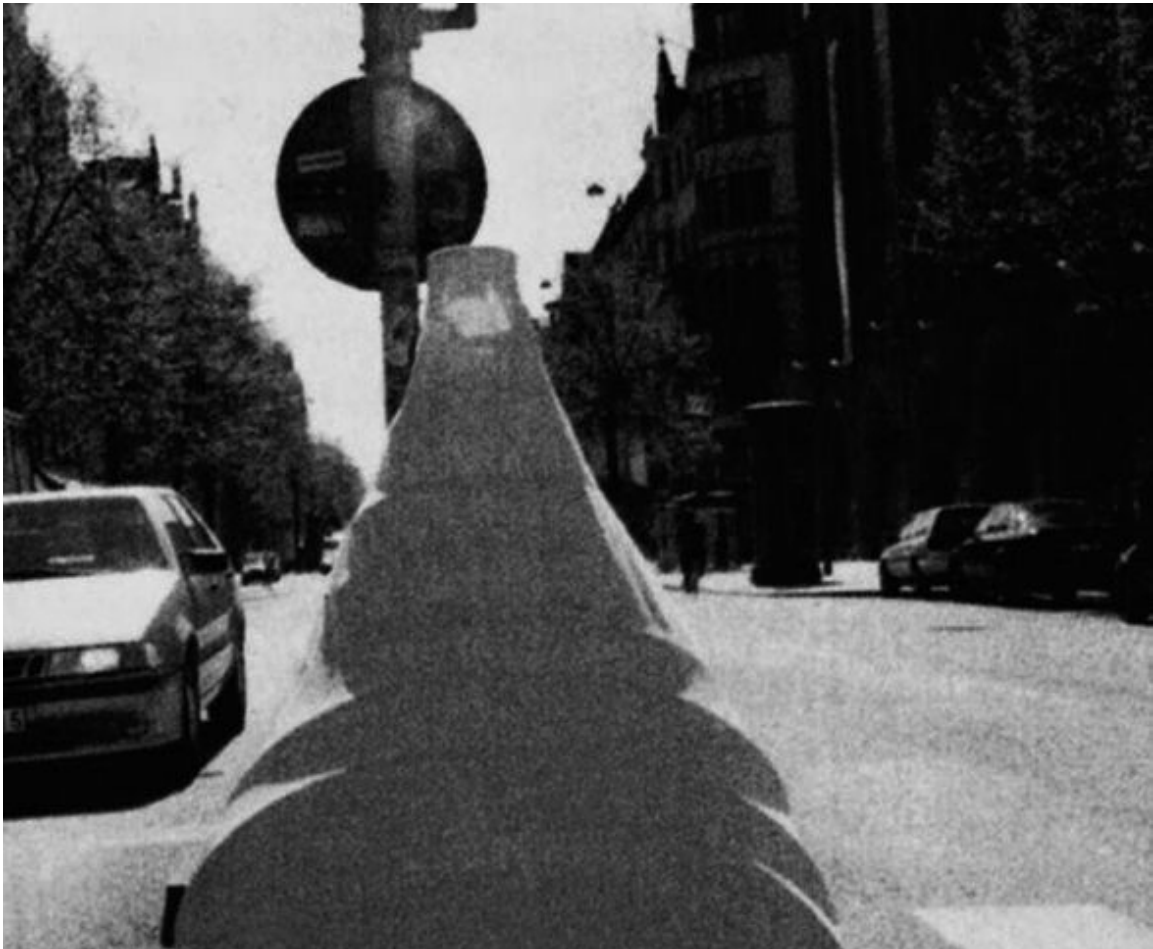
In a spherological sense, "societies" form foams in the sense of the word we have just defined. This formulation must block as soon as possible the passage to that fantasy, with which traditional groups procure an imaginary interpretation of their being: the idea according to which the social field forms an organic totality and is integrated in an omni-communal and omni-inclusive hypersphere. In reality, "societies" are only comprehensible as agitated and asymmetrical associations of multiplicity-spaces and multiplicity-processes, whose cells can be neither really united nor really separate. Societies" consider themselves as monospheres united from the origin (or thanks to an exceptional status) only as long as they hypnotize themselves by estimating themselves as homogeneous units, something like national peoples, genetically or theologically substantial. They present themselves as enchanted spaces, enjoying an imaginary immunity and a magically generalized community of essence and choice. It is in this sense that Slavoj Žižek has recently adopted our concept of the "sphere," applying it critically to the mental disposition of the United States before the attacks on the World Trade Center.<sup>[49]</sup> Is it necessary to clarify why the beginning of knowledge about the common action of human beings lies in the decision to abandon the magic circle of reciprocal hypnosis? Whoever intends to speak theoretically of "society" has to operate outside the obscurity of the "we". If this can be achieved, one can realize that "societies" or peoples are constituted by the "we".

more fluid, hybrid, permeable and promiscuously themselves than their homogeneous names suggest.



Morphosis (Thom Mayne/Michel Rotondi), Politix (retail store), Portland, Space modulator, 1990.

When we speak of "society" in what follows, the expression designates neither (as in violent nationalism) a monospheric receptacle, which includes an enumerable population of individuals and families under an essential political name or a constitutive phantom, nor (as for some systems theorists) a process of inespacial communication,<sup>[50]</sup> which diversifies into subsystems. We understand under "society" an aggregate of microspheres (couples, households, firms, associations) of different format, which, like isolated bubbles in a pile of foam, border one another, pile on and under one another, without being really accessible to one another, nor effectively separable from one another.<sup>[51]</sup> There is, indeed, according to Ernst Bloch's evocative formulation, "many chambers in the house of the world", but they have no doors, possibly even only blind windows, on which an exterior scene is painted.





Jennie Pineus, *Cocoon Chair*, 2000.

Bubbles in the foam, i.e. couples and households, survival teams and communities, are self-referentially constituted microcontinents. However much they pretend to be united with each other and the outside, they are in principle only in themselves in each case. Symbiotic units are world-shapers always in themselves and for themselves, together with world-shaping groups that do the same in their own way and with which they are constrained under the principle of co-isolation, forming an interactive assemblage. It seems that their mutual resemblances allow to draw the conclusion that they were reciprocally in intense communication and widely open to each other; in reality, most of the time they only resemble each other because of their genesis in common waves of imitation<sup>[52]</sup> and because of analogous media endowments. Operationally, most of the time they have virtually nothing to do with one another. (Think of the occupants of

vehicles, which travel in rows one after the other: each group of travelers forms a resonant cell inside, between the vehicles, however, isolation reigns, and so it is fine, since communication would mean collision).



Alfons Schilling, *Camera Obscura Hat*, 1984.

Their attunement is not produced by direct exchange between cells, but by the mimetic infiltration of norms, stimuli, contagious goods and similar symbols. In former times, these theses had to be demonstrated, above all, with the example of nucleated families, since couples willing to reproduce have always (and certainly for the future as well) been the most plausible example of dyads capable of growth. In the



present our diagnoses can be extended to childless couples, even to those who live alone in their special *cocooning-forms* (as, for example, the Japanese *takotsubo-culture*, the autism-marmite-of-squid scene).<sup>[53]</sup> We emphasize that the cell in the foam does not consist of the abstract individual, but of a dyadic or multipolar structure.<sup>[54]</sup> It is clear that the foam theory is neo-monadologically oriented: its monads, however, have the fundamental form of dyads or more complex spatio-animal configurations, with communal and team spirit.

From the technical-media perspective the foam cell "society" is a turbid *medium*, which possesses a certain conductivity for information and a certain permeability for materials. But it does not transmit effusions of immediate truths. If Einstein lived next door, that does not mean that I would know more about the universe. If the Son of God had lived for years on the same floor as me, at best I would learn only later who my neighbor had been. From every place in the foam, perspectives open up to the surroundings, but there are no general panoramic views available, in the most ambitious case within a bubble, hyperboles are formulated, which are useful in numerous neighboring bubbles. Selectively news can be transmitted, but there are no outlets to the whole. For the theory, which accepts the being-in-the-foam as the primary determination of the situation, conclusive super-views of the world-one are not only inaccessible, but impossible, and, if properly understood, also undesirable.

Whoever speaks of foams in this tone has said goodbye to the central symbol of classical metaphysics, of the all-embracing monosphere: of the one in spherical form and its projection in central panoptic constructions. They led, logically, to the encyclopedic system, politically, to the imperial *space-urbi-et-orbi* (whose destinies were reported in chapters 3 and 7 of *Spheres II*), politically, to the form of the surveillance panopticon, militarily, to a paranoid ontology-pentagon. Needless to say

that such centralisms are only of historical interest. As systems of asymmetrical neighborhoods between greenhouses of intimacy and medium-sized worlds of their own, foams are half-transparent, half-opaque. Every situation in the foam signifies a relative assemblage of encircling vision and blindness; every being-in-the-world, understood as being-in-the-foam, opens a clearing in the impenetrable. The turn to a pluralistic ontology was already foreseeably taken into account in modern biology and metabiology, since, thanks to the introduction of the concept of environment, it arrived at a new vision of its object:

It was a mistake to believe that the human world provided a common platform for all living things. Every living being has a special platform, which is as real as the special platform of human beings. [...] By that recognition we get a new vision of the universe. This does not consist of a single soap bubble, which we would have inflated by blowing it over our horizon to infinity, but of millions and millions of closely bounded soap bubbles intersecting and interfering everywhere.<sup>[55]</sup> The universe does not consist of a single soap bubble, which we would have inflated by blowing it over our horizon to infinity, but of millions and millions of tightly bounded soap bubbles intersecting and interfering everywhere.<sup>[55]</sup>

The gathering of innumerable endocosmic "soap bubbles," then, is no longer to be thought of in the manner of the monocosm of metaphysics, in which the plethora of existents was summoned under a logos common to all. In place of the philosophical super-pomp- de-soap, of the monad-everything of the world-one - of whose forms we have given an account in chapters 4 and 5 of *Spheres II*, above all - there appears a polycosmic agglomeration, which can be described as a grouping of groups, as a semi-opaque foam composed of world-shaping spatial structures. It is important to understand that this unlimited multiplicity of modes of sentient existence in meaningfully structured environments is already developed at the level of animal intelligence, and, as far as we know, there is no animal that takes inventory of all other animals and refers them to itself. For their part, human beings, after the attenuation of the centrist delirium (anthropo, ethno, ego, logos), may perhaps come up with somewhat more reasonable ideas of their existence in a milieu composed of ontological foams. Then one will understand why Herder was speaking rather of the past than of the future when he wrote: "Every nation has *in itself* its *middle point* of happiness, as every sphere its center of gravity."<sup>[56]</sup> Some very advanced formulations of contemporary cyberspace theorists offer a first concept of elastic modes of being of decentered designs of the world. Pierre Lévy writes in his essay on the semiotic productivity of emergently understood "collective intelligence":

In the space of knowledge, the active breath of those involved is unified, but not in order to achieve a hypothetical fusion of individuals, but to bring thousands of people together.

of iridescent soap bubbles, which are just as many provisional universes, just as many worlds of shared meaning.<sup>[57]</sup> The world of the soap bubbles is a world of the same meaning.

Since world conformations are always expressed architecturally, more precisely, in the synergic tension between movable and immovable goods, we must take into consideration the spheropietic processes, which materialize in the form of inhabited spaces, buildings and architectural agglomerations. According to an idea of Le Corbusier, a building can be compared to a soap bubble: "The soap bubble is perfectly harmonious when the breath is well distributed, well regulated from within. The exterior is the result of the interior."<sup>[58]</sup>

## Foams in the age of knowledge

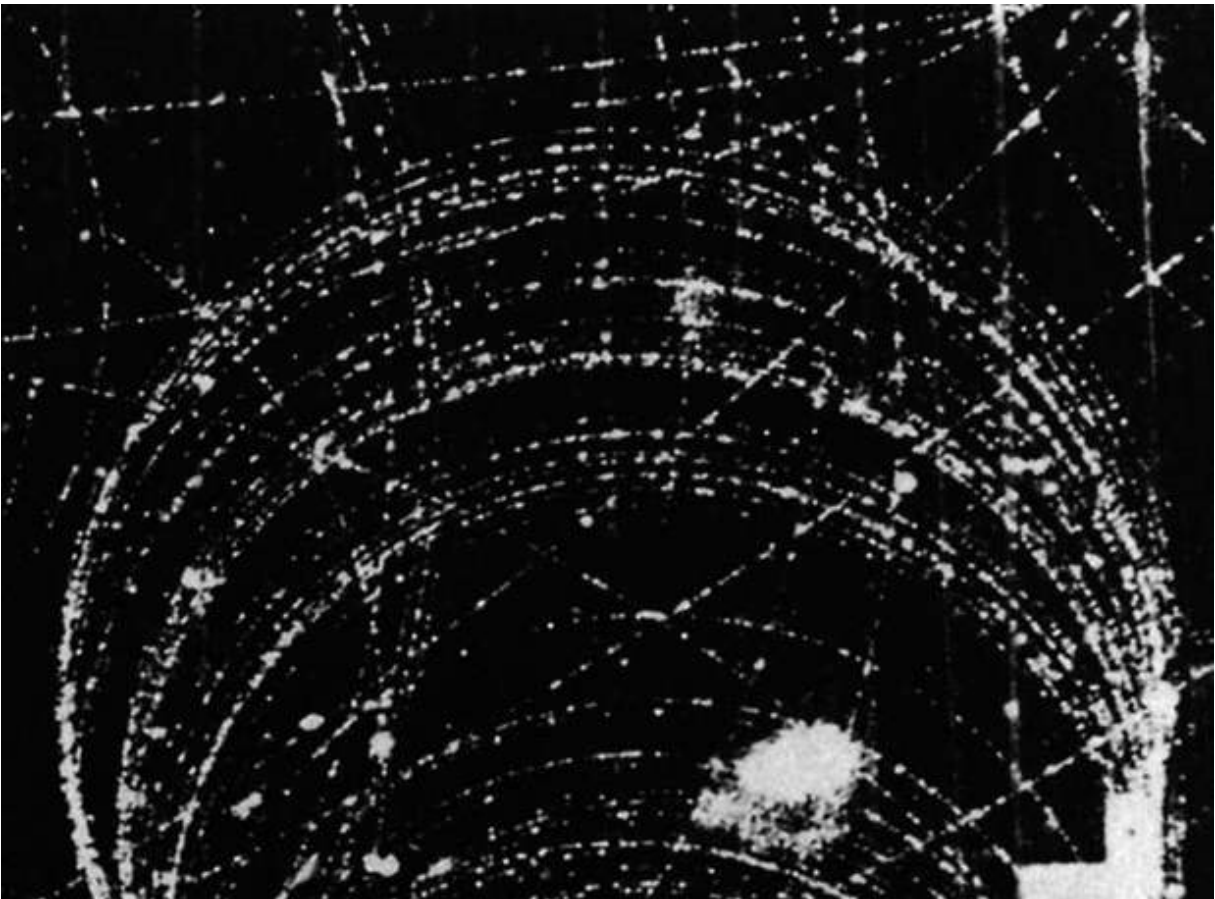
Delicate things belatedly become objects: that is what they have in common with numerous apparent truisms, which only manage to jump to the eye when they are lost, and, as a general rule, they are lost from the moment they are introduced into comparisons in which their innocent facticity vanishes. The air, which we breathe without realizing it; the situations, impregnated with moods, in which we unconsciously exist included-inclusive; the atmospheres, imperceptible because evident, in which we live, exist and are, all these things represent delays in the thematic space, because, before they could be explicitly paid attention to, as eternal natures or consumer goods they seemed to provide an *a priori* background scenery for our being-there and being-here. They constitute late warnings, which only because of their recently demonstrated manipulability, both in a constructive and destructive sense, have become thematic and technical careers. Considered until now as discrete pre-inputs of being, they had to become objects of attention before they became objects of theory. They had to be experienced as fragile, extractable and destructible before they became workable fields of labor for air and mood phenomenologists, for relationship therapists, for atmosphere engineers and interior architects; they had to become unbreathable before human beings learned to understand themselves as guardians, reconstructors and re-inventors of what was hitherto only taken for granted.

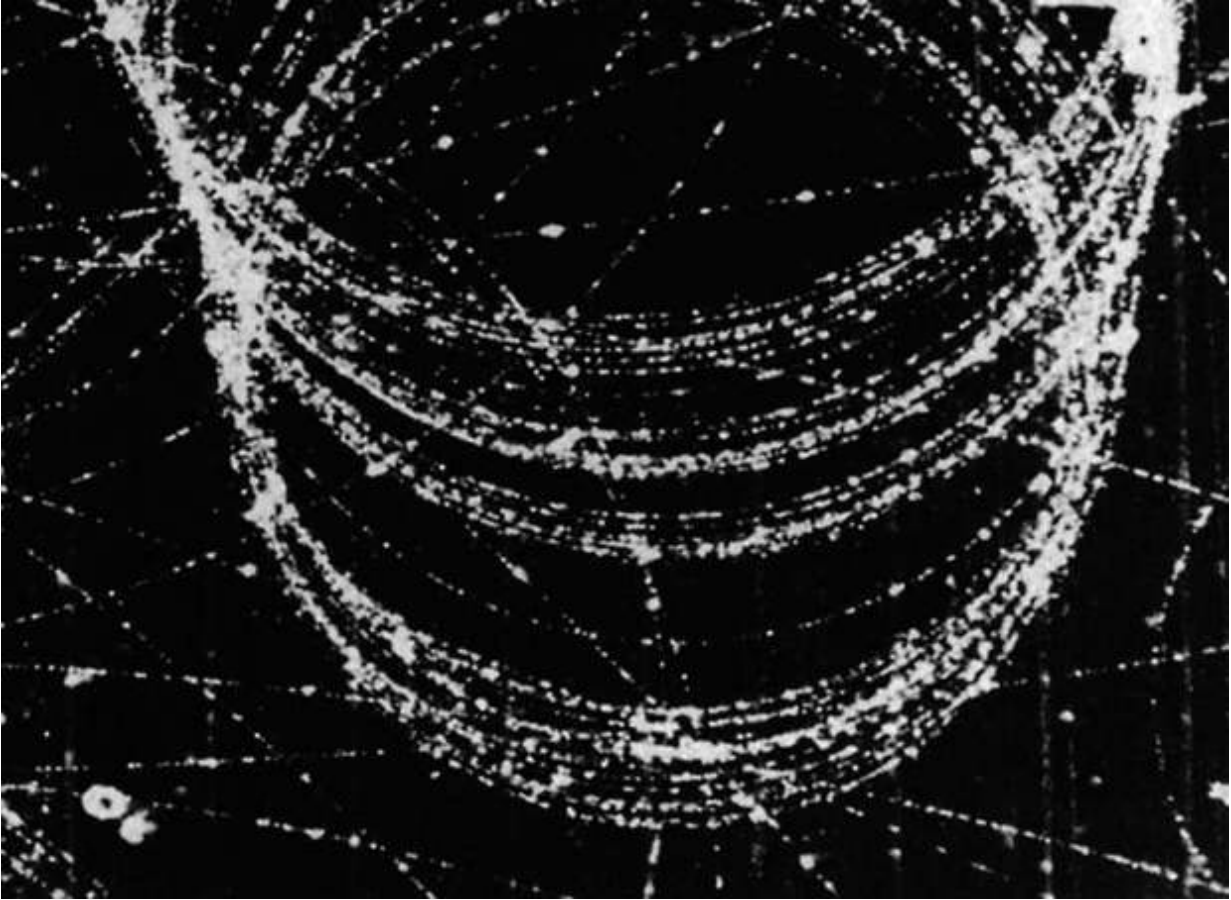


View of the inside of the head of a fly with the aid of a fluoroscopic microscope.

The background breaks its silence only when there are processes in the foreground that exceed its resilience. How many real ecological and military catastrophes did it take before it could be said precisely how to set up humanly breathable atmospheric environments? How much ignorance of the

atmospheric premises of human existence had to accumulate in theory and praxis before the attention of a radicalized thought was able to dive into the essence of states of mind,<sup>[59]</sup> and then transcend into the constitutions of being-in in absolutely general realms and into the *modi* of existential inclusion in relations of totality<sup>[60]</sup> (for which we recently used the expression immersion)? How far did the swing of the pendulum have to swing in the direction of individualistic incomprehensions and autistic desolations before the proper value of phenomena of resonance and interpsychic assemblage in spaces of animation could manifest itself linguistically without cutbacks, even if only half-heartedly? How much progressively masked neglect had to devastate human proximity relations before the constitutive meaning of sufficiently good family and couple relations could be described with fundamental respect?<sup>[61]</sup> How much did it have to devastate the relations of human proximity before the constitutive meaning of sufficiently good family and couple relations could be described with fundamental respect?<sup>[61]</sup> How much did it have to devastate the relations of human proximity before the constitutive meaning of sufficiently good family and couple relations could be described with fundamental respect?





Electrons made visible in a Wilson chamber.

Everything that is very explicit becomes demonic. Whoever ventures to make explicit background realities, which before were tacitly suspended in the known, thought -or rather, even in the never known, never thought-, recognizes a situation in which the scarcity of the presumable and callable has advanced and continues to progress unstopably. Woe to the one who hides deserts! Now it is necessary to reconstruct artificially what before seemed to be given as a natural resource. One is forced to articulate with impertinent care and provocative detail what once surely resonated as a gentle connotation. In this turn to the explicit, the modern function of the science of culture manifests itself. It presents itself as the agent of civilizational explanations in general. It must be shown that from now on it must also be a science of technology and administrative practice for the work in cultural greenhouses.



After the cultures -precisely them- have ceased to seem installed, it is necessary to worry about their permanence and their regeneration by cultivating them, describing them again, filtering them, explaining them, reforming them: the culture of cultures will become the criterion of civilization in the era of the explanation of the background.

To be absolutely contemporary one must presuppose that there is hardly anything yet to presuppose. Let us begin in this place to articulate strangely and in detail what, according to the *state of the art*, we can say about our being-in-the-world; let us describe (with the phenomenologists) with breadth of vision and explicitness in what global relations or enveloping situations we find ourselves introduced; let us design and construct, finally (with the media technologists, the interior architects, the occupational physicians, the atmosphere designers), the spatialities, the atmospheres and the surrounding situations in which we will remain according to our own plans and evaluations: Thus, in these constructive and reconstructive activities, the alienations that have liquidated the obvious continue to act, without allowing them to return to a new validity. If they return, it is because they are products of explanation or objects worthy of conservation. They will be under the surveillance of a permanent socio-political concern or of the new technical design. What used to be the "world of life" must become climatic technology.

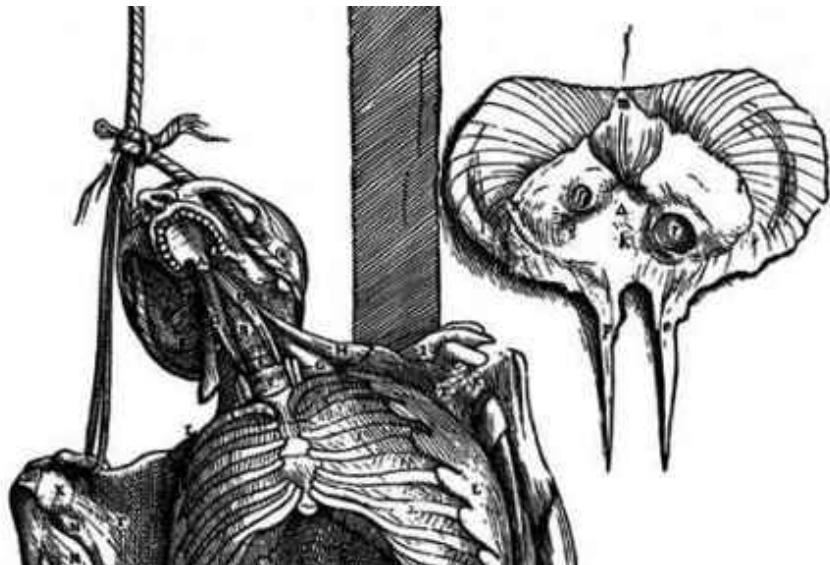
## Revolution, rotation, invasion

The demonism of the explicit is the trace of the history of civilization. It grows to the extent that Modernity effects progress in the consciousness of artificiality. If what was previously hidden in the background advances to the foreground, if what has not been mentioned since time immemorial has recently been thematically exhibited, if the fold of the implicit is extended and projected on the luminous surface, in which every detail previously hidden inside is presented outside, in equally clear visibility and uniform extension, then these events are testimonies of a movement in which the sapient radically change their position before objects, which are now known in this way and which were previously known in another way or not known at all. In view of such a change of position, the worn-out metaphor of *revolution*, as a fundamental subversion of relations between bodies and roles, can accede for the last time to theoretical-cognitive honors (and then be definitively stored in the archive of liquidated concepts).

What is meant by "revolution" can best be explained by looking to the innovations of the sixteenth-century anatomists, who undertook the task of incising open the interior of the human body and making it known by means of descriptively adequate figures. It may be that Vesalius' "revolution" had more consequences for the self-understanding of Western human beings than the long-superstitious and misunderstood Copernican turn. Inasmuch as early modern anatomy confronted the traditional obscurity of corporeality itself with its maps of organs and drawings of the

The architecture of the inner machinic world - not for nothing does Vesalius' *opus magnum* bear the title *De humani corporis fabrica* - contemplated with new precision, unfolded the inner somatic foundation of self-adherence, scarce of images, and gave the subject-bodies' own knowledge a twist, whereby nothing of the former could be found in the same place of being and knowledge. Now I have to look at the anatomical maps and accept their message. That's you! That's how you appear inside as soon as the wise men examine you with their scalpel! No anti-anatomical *mauvaise foi* can help to recover the naivety of being-there as bodily-being before power-operating. The actors of the Modern Epoch participate, whether they want to or not, in a *quasi* auto-surgical turn. Even those who do not have to occupy themselves by profession, as autopsy specialists, with cuts in the organic tissue, as participants in culture are virtually transferred to a point of knowing and operating, in which they can do nothing other than install themselves in the order of the great turning away from the old inner body-universe. To understand one's own inner-body-space from the possibility of its anatomical alienation: this is the primary cognitive result of the "revolution" of the Modern Age, comparable only to the transforming force of the image of the world of the first terrestrial circumnavigation carried out by Magellan and Elcano.

[62]





Andrea Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica*, seventh figure of muscles.

As a cognitive habit, it is the same to go around the Earth and reflect it in maps, as it is to open the human body on all sides and represent it graphically from all perspectives. Both operations belong to the great rotation that transforms the angle (*klima*) of the knowledge of things and states of things. *Making it explicit*, this means since the beginning of the Modern Age: to participate in the revolution of the bodily world through the operative capacity of anatomists and to constitute oneself as a virtual self-operator from a

<sup>63]</sup> The modern age is the age of anatomists, the age of cuts, of invasions, of penetrations, of implantations in the dark continent, the ancient Lethe.

At a much later stage, after academic abstractions had come to disfigure the fundamental operational relations of modern knowledge, philosophers could realize that explication was a discursive operation and concerned in the first line the administration of a speaker's current account of opinion and conviction. <sup>64]</sup> Would every human being who speaks be, then, a speculator on the stock exchange of affirmations, and would philosophy act as a controller of the stock exchange? The real meaning of the explanation lies in another field: the great characteristic of modern knowledge relations is not the fact that "subjects" can look into the mirror at themselves or account to the public for the reasons for their opinions, but that they operate on themselves and have blueprints before them of their own partly clarified obscurity, which point out to them points of potential intervention for self-intervention. We must not be confused by the division of work between surgeons and non-surgeons: those who, according to Vesalius, are "subjects", live, whether they agree or not, in a self-operatively curved space. Modernly I can no longer be myself authentically, that is to say in coherence with the cultural level, as long as I make abstraction of my potential surgeon. When modern human beings, going deeper, lie, they practically always do so consciously disregarding their self-operative condition. <sup>65]</sup> Refusing on principle to operate on oneself, according to one's own diagnosis and state, is the core of bad romanticism. Our possible intervention, inevitably imperfect, but always expandable, in one's own inner somatic and psychosomatic foundation constitutes the characteristic feature of the situation, which we designate with the strict predicate of

"modern". Needless to say why we still have hardly anything to deal with so-called reification at this level.



Gustave Courbet, *The Origin of the World*, 1866.



Veronika Bromová, *Views*, 1996.





Transvaginal correction.

# **When the implicit becomes explicit:**

## **Phenomenology**

That the home of knowledge is convulsed by the irrepressible invasion of intelligence into the occult: this fundamental fact for all higher civilization, and above all for Modernity, is called, in its normal exegesis, research. When the interpretation of that restlessness is filled with pretensions, it takes the name, during an outstanding lapse of time in the history of the spirit, of Phenomenology: theory of the exit of "objects" to the scene of appearing, and logical recognition of their existence together with the rest of the contingent of knowledge. That not everything is revealed to human beings all at once, but that the arrival of objects to knowledge follows the laws of a sequence -an order as strict as it is difficult to understand, of what comes before and what comes after-: this is the original intuition, first formulated by Xenophanes, which develops the evolutionary and phenomenological thought in histories of the spirit or philosophical educational novels. The core of this intuition is the observation that the posterior and the anterior often behave reciprocally as the explicit and the implicit. Explanations transform data and presentiments into concepts, and these transformations are both narratable and groundable. This makes possible the science of irreversible spiritual processes, which deals with logically-inventively ordered series of consecutive ideas (e.g., of representations of God, concepts of souls and persons, conceptions of society, of

forms of construction and writing techniques). Phenomenology is the theory that narrates the explicitness of that which at the beginning can only be given implicitly. To be implicit here means: a presupposition in an undisclosed state, left in cognitive repose, exonerated from the pressure of development and detailed mention, given in the *modus* of obscure proximity, not yet in the language, not yet interpellable in the near instant, not mobilized by the discursive regime and not installed in a procedure. To become explicit means, on the contrary: to be carried by the current that flows from the background to the foreground, from Lethe to the forest clearing, from the fold to the unfolding. The arrow of time of thinking tends to a higher explicitness. What can be said with a higher degree of more detailed articulation produces the mobility of arguments, assuming that the spirit of epistemic time has called for intervention. Certainly, implication is also a relation between statements; it is traditionally considered as the containment of the less general proposition in the more general one or as the inclusion of texts in contexts; and as far as this is valid, logical analysis can be credited as an explanatory procedure; but its real meaning rests on the fact that the implicit designates a place in the existent, in which the cocoon for an unfolding, for an articulation, an explanation is found.

[66] For this reason, the authentic history of knowledge has the form of becoming.

phenomenon of the once non-appearing, of the passage from the non-illuminated to the illuminated or from data-in-the-shadow to thematic-in-the-first-plane. Real knowledge: this is what we call the discourses that have survived the long night of implication and move into the day of the thematically unfolded.

Quite a few of the most eminent intelligences of Old Europe have thought about the process of knowledge according to this scheme, reason enough to concern themselves, after the collapse of that theoretical juncture, with the conditions of its success.[67] For nearly two hundred years, thinkers as strict as they were edifying, from different faculties, developed the conviction that everything that

appears in knowledge, however heteronomous and new it may be, in the last analysis it cannot be foreign to the self of the sapient, and consequently - after crises, however deep they may be - it must enter into our intimate history of formation (and, in this case, in the expression "our history" blows a breath of a superior self-culture, because it no longer refers directly to the spirit of the world). Phenomenologists propagate the good news that there is no outside to which there is no corresponding inside; they suggest that one encounters nothing foreign that cannot be assimilated by appropriation into our own. Their belief in unbounded appropriation would be founded on the assumption that late knowledge would unfold only what was already given in the earliest implications.

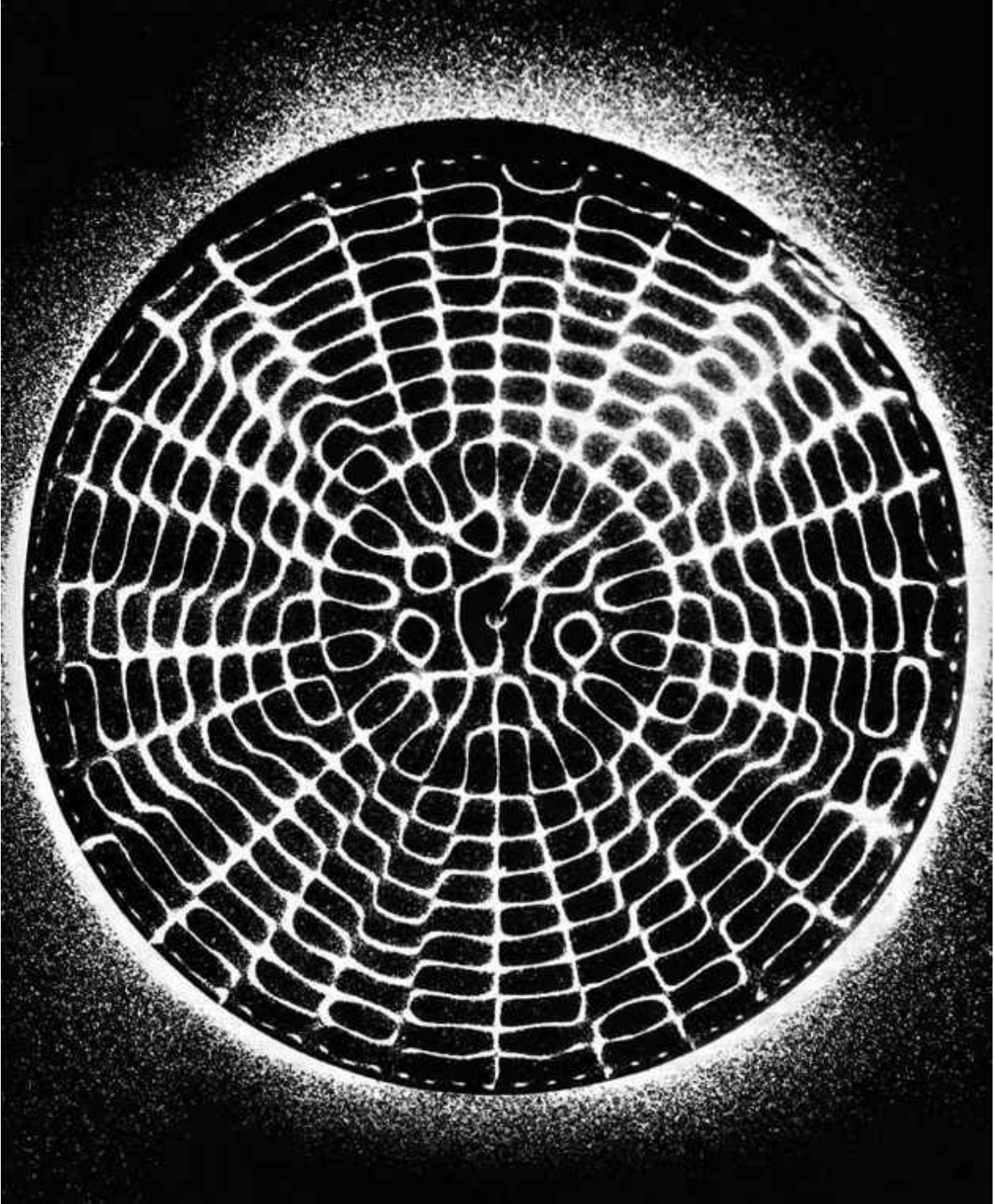
The ontological foundation of this optimism was expressed in the fifteenth century by Nicholas of Cusa, when he postulated the symmetry of the maximal implicit-being (God, as concentration in the atomic point) and the maximal explicit-being (God, as unfolding in the sphere-everything). Under Cusanian presuppositions, human thought would always be a cognitive accompaniment to the divine expansion in the explicit, that is, in the realized and created, insofar as such a consummation can be achieved in finitude. In the chapter *Deus sive sphaera* of *Spheres II*<sup>[68]</sup> we have dealt in detail with the culmination of the theology of the Western sphere in the apparently frivolous treatise *de ludo globi*, from the pen of the festive cardinal. A similar cognitive optimism is found in Spinoza's ethics, which represents a singular exhortation to the development of natural potential: We do not yet know all that the dark body is capable of; learn more about it and you will see and you will be able. In Leibniz, cognitive optimism takes more attenuated forms, because the author of the *Monadology* possessed a precise concept of the unfathomability of implications, which reach to infinity.<sup>[69]</sup> And still in Hegel's construct of a circle of circles the principle is maintained that the ultimate is only the first consummated, epicentrically brought to itself in our conceptualizing.

When it is optimism that sets the tone, it raises the question of how, finally, the internal can become external in its totality. Seen in a confident light, human praxis is nothing other than the great rotation that places what is hidden in the darkness of the lived instant in such a way that it must be incorporated into human reserves as a precise representation. The consequent optimism makes the history of knowledge and technique lead to a final image, in which the parity between interiority and exteriority would be consummated point by point.

But what would happen if it could be shown that with the explicit becoming of the implicit something completely arbitrary, strange, of another kind, something never thought of, never expected and never assimilated, sometimes infiltrates thinking? If the investigation, which advances to limit zones, makes known something unknown until now, of which the affirmation that a subject would arrive "to itself" in it is not valid? If there is something new that subtracts itself from the symmetry of the implicit and the explicit and penetrates the orders of knowledge as something immense, exterior, something that remains strange until the end?

## The monstrous appears

After the end of the optimistic conjuncture it can be dispassionately stated what phenomenology meant *de facto* in its usual application: it was a lifesaving service of phenomena in an epoch, in which most "appearances" no longer address the eye or the other senses from themselves, but are rather led to visibility by investigation, by invasive explanations and corresponding measures (i.e., "observations" thanks to machines and artificial sensors). He invited his followers to participate in the attempt to defend the metaphysical primacy of contemplative perception against measuring, calculating and operating.<sup>[70]</sup> He dedicated himself to the task of counteracting the alienating flooding of consciousness by the unassimilable internal and external gazes of machines to the cut and open entrails and bodies, not to refuse the new but to integrate it into the accustomed perception of nature or circumstances, as if nothing had happened because of the cut of technique. Heidegger had rightly taught that technique is a "mode of unhiddenness." This meant, at the same time, that to what is technically unhidden and made public can now only correspond a derived phenomenality, a hybrid publicity and a broken link with perception.<sup>[71]</sup> The technical is a "mode of unhiddenness."<sup>[72]</sup> The technical is a "mode of unhiddenness."<sup>[73]</sup> The technical is a mode of unhiddenness.



Sound waves made visible on a metal disc.

To the monstrous visuality of anatomical facts, which has been with us since the 16th century (and which no longer manages to integrate an

humanism in the medallion of a reading human being), we add the panoramas opened up since the 17th century by microscopes and telescopes - the two infernal machines for the eye. Enlargement (along with cartography) is the first-impact capacity of explanation, by which the hitherto invisible world is placed under figurative constraint.<sup>[72]</sup> We think also of the becoming-phenomenon of atomic fungi, of cell nuclei and interior views of machines, of X-ray plates and computer tomographies, of galactic photographs, of a diffuse universe of more complex, barely decipherable aspects, for whose appearance no human eye (more cautiously put: ancient human) could have been prepared. (Let us note that the discipline of design - as the artificial production of surfaces of perception and of users on invisible functions, that is, as the aesthetically intentional enhancement of functional, if not inadvertent, motifs - is inaugurated in a more modern dimension than its contemporary, phenomenology, inasmuch as it already operates at the level of the second perceptibility, that is, of observation by apparatus and sensors).

Thus, he is committed phenomenologically who is determined to treat the artificially produced visibility of states of things previously hidden by nature and of latent functions or mechanisms, as if the old happy alliance between eye and light were also valid for these newcomers to the space of the observable. In this sense, phenomenology is a positive restoration of perception, after its overtaking by mechanical observation. It consciously sidesteps the question of whether the human eye can compete with the Geiger counter. While this diversionary maneuver is effective, the insinuation that knowledge can inhabit the world like the bourgeois his villa remains intact.

In the first instance it cannot be denied: also the sights and figures of the strange - which becomes visible when making incisions in the bodies of human beings and animals from different angles, as well as in the chemical decomposition of matter, up to the nuclear epiphanies over the American desert or the traces



of atoms in Wilson's chambers - penetrate human perception as if these new visualities were only a continuation of the diaphanousness of the first diurnal nature with more contemporary means. But they are not that. All these new visibilities, these penetrations into the background of phenomena, made possible by developed figurative procedures: those relentlessly explicit cuts into living and lifeless bodies, those external views of naturally hidden organs, those counter-intuitive artificial views of the nocturnal and mechanical side of nature, those close-up shots of uncovered matter, generated by a solid operational know-how and an experienced eccentricity, all this is separated by an ontological moat from the natural, cautious, tolerant, cognitive disposition of the human surrounding glances within more or less familiar circumstances, immanent to the horizon, for which the expression nature has been introduced since ancient times. Only after the self-operative turn does the new knowledge reach a position in which what was in no way predisposed for the human perceptive apparatus, at least not according to its first design, becomes for it a phenomenon. What the research brings to the surface had to be extracted "in the light of day" or "unhidden" in a kind of cognitive mining. For the whence-whereof of these extractions Modernity offers various names: they come either from the "unconscious" or from latency, from not-knowing, from concealment on the inner sides of the fold of phenomena, or from some other version of the cognitive not-yet.

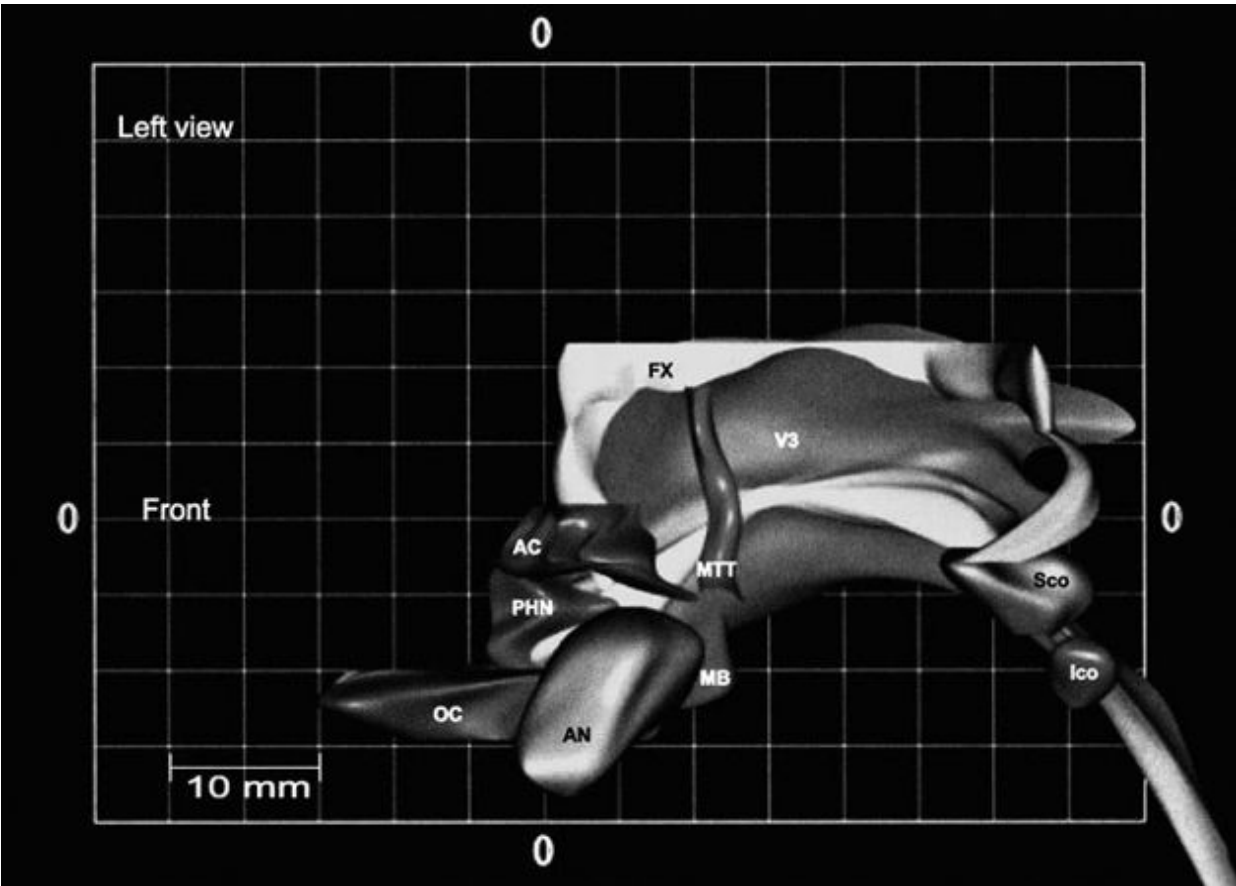


L. Rogozov, Nowolazarewskaja Station, Antarctica, during the performance of an appendicitis autooperation in April 1961.

For no genus of "object" does this apply more than it does for the heroic subjects of the new "life sciences", which have recently advanced spectacularly into the hitherto elusive, unapparent and therefore invisible: as a consequence of these invasions, human brains, the human genome and human immunity systems have been so theatrically placed on the epistemological stage that both formative and sensationalist advertising is continually kept on tenterhooks by their staging and the carte de nature granted to them, presenting them as "research" and "deciphering".

In these three fields of objects it can be shown how absurd would be the idea that disciplines of this orientation were an expression and emanation of human reflection on existence, or even manifestations of what idealist philosophers have called

self-reflection. The turning of knowledge towards the brains - in which, as far as we can see, all knowledge is processed, also that acute knowledge of knowledge -, as towards the genomes and systems of immunity - which also represent, no doubt, the current biological premises for the existence of those geneticists and immunologists -, has no "reflexive" or reflexive character; it only executes the self-operative rotation, as a consequence of which knowledge is placed behind the mirror or on the "back" of subjectivities. For this purpose it is necessary to force access to the hidden, because only after the irruption into the hidden and its inclusion in the illuminated space can that which by itself only existed and exists latent, a-phenomenal and without necessary relation to an accomplice consciousness, become perceptible as a phenomenon. In order for genes, brains and systems of immunity to fall under the pressure of appearance, neutralizing instruments and procedures of Lethe are needed, the effective instruments of the turn, which brings the non-given into the position of the given.<sup>[73]</sup>



Amygdala, fornix and periventricles of the brain, 3D reconstruction.

It must be emphasized that this making something happen cannot forever maintain the character of a haughty arrogance about objects; precisely the new life sciences make it possible to foresee how research will be penetrated more and more by the awareness of the growing importance of the object. Whoever asks the question what life is must begin by admitting that life itself provides the answer. It is less and less possible to speak of an appropriation of the object by the research subject. My brain, my genome, my immune system, the good old possessive pronouns sound in such contexts like folkloric-grammatical displays. The new goods can never become our property, because nothing will ever be as foreign to us as "one's own" biomechanics made explicit. That, evidently, the long attack on the occult happens out of necessity and from any

This, under blunt expressions such as "freedom of research" or "improvement of human living conditions", belongs to the primary convictions of modern civilization, convictions, for their part, that come from ancient sources, such as, for example, from the Aristotelian doctrine that the aspiration to knowledge is something natural to human beings.

We do not wish to comment on these postulates unless we point out that any coming to the fore of what has remained latent for a long time has its price, especially when it is the atmospheric and climatic conditions of the cultures that, by their erosion, and even more, by their intentional destruction, are urged to manifest themselves. After their violation, they remain there, converted into objects, and it is they who urge an operational reconstruction. This is especially true for the knowledge of cultures, which was placed by the great rotation in an external and technical position. <sup>74]</sup> One can say *a posteriori* all one wants about the twentieth century, but not that it did not pay the price for such alienations. No other epoch can exhibit an expertise taken so far in the art of annihilating existence on the basis of its own vital premises. On the reverse side of the procedures of destruction, the constructive conditions for the conservation of cultural spaces become visible. Their destiny will depend on the knowledge and reconstructive power that civilizations achieve by themselves.

## **We have never been revolutionaries**

Once the twentieth century has passed, it is beginning to be recognized that it was a mistake to place the concept of revolution at the center of its interpretation, just as it was a mistake to understand the extreme ways of thinking of that time as reflections of "revolutionary" events in the social "base". The self-mystifications of the actors of the time are still being complicitly credited. Those who spoke of revolutions, political or cultural, before and after 1917, were almost always misled by an unclear metaphor of movement. At no time was the force of the century encrypted in the revolution. Nowhere are the places above and below changed; nothing that was at the head was put at the feet; in vain would one look for a proof that the last became somewhere the first. Nothing was revolutionized, nothing turned around in the circle. On the contrary, everywhere things belonging to the background were brought to the foreground, on innumerable fronts the manifestation of the latent was fostered. What could be explored, exploited, investigated by means of deep drilling, invasive interventions and hypotheses, found its way into fuel tanks, printed text, balance sheets. The flat medium expanded, representative functions multiplied, the distribution of roles in the courts changed, administrations expanded, the points of application of actions, productions, publications proliferated, new official departments emerged out of nowhere, the number of career opportunities multiplied a thousandfold. Some of it all

This resonates with Paul Valéry's mischievous thesis that the French, and *eo ipso* the moderns, made "revolution" a "routine".

The authentic and true fundamental concept of Modernity is not called revolution but explanation. Explanation is for our time the true name of becoming, to which the conventional *modi* of becoming through flux, through imitation, through catastrophe and positive recombination can be subordinated or juxtaposed. Deleuze articulated a similar idea when he tried to transfer the "revolution" type of event to the molecular level, in order to circumvent the ambivalences of performance in the "mass"; it is not the voluminous subversion that counts, but the flowing, the discrete going beyond in the next situation, the continued escape from the *status quo*. At the molecular level what matters are only the small and minimal maneuvers; everything new, which goes further, is operative. The visibility of the real innovation is due precisely to the effect produced by the explanation; what is then praised as a "revolution" is, as a rule, no longer more than the noise that arises when the event has passed. The present era does not subvert things, situations, themes: it laminates them. It unfolds them, drags them forward, disintegrates and tampers with them, places them under compulsion to manifest themselves, spells them out again analytically and introduces them into synthetic routines. From assumptions it makes operations; it provides exact methods to confused expressive tensions; it translates dreams into instructions for use; it arms resentment, it lets love play innumerable instruments, often newly invented. It wants to know everything about the things in the background, about the folded, previously unavailable and subtracted, in any case, as much as it is necessary to have available for new actions in the foreground, for unfolding and unfolding, interventions and transformations. It translates the monstrous into the everyday. It invents procedures to introduce the unheard of into the register of the real; it creates the keys that allow users an easy approach to the hitherto impossible.

He says to his people: There is no such thing as fainting; what you can't do, you can learn. No wonder it is called the technical era.

We shall now repeat a few chapters taken from the history of the catastrophes of the twentieth century, in order to explain as a result of what struggles and what traumas the human stay in breathable *milieus* has had to become an object of explicit cultivation. Once this is done, it takes little effort to explain why all kinds of value, virtue and discourse ethics are hollow as long as they are not translated into climate ethics.

Was Heraclitus exaggerating when he said that war is the father of all things? In any case, a contemporary philosopher would not have exaggerated when he said that terror is the father of the science of cultures.



# Introduction:

## Aerimotos<sup>[\*]</sup>

*Breathless from tense wakefulness, breathless from suffocation in the unbreathable glow of the night...*

Hermann Broch, *The Death of Virgil*<sup>[75]</sup>.

# 1. The gas war or: The atmoterrorist model

If one wanted to say in one sentence and with a minimum of expressions what the 20th century, together with its immeasurable achievements in the arts, contributed as unmistakable characteristics to the history of civilization, it would be enough to consider three criteria. Whoever wishes to understand the originality of that era must take into account: the praxis of terrorism, the conception of product design and ideas about the environment. For the first, interactions between enemies were established on post-military foundations; for the second, functionalism managed to re-enter the world of perception; for the third, the phenomena of life and knowledge were linked to each other to a previously unknown depth. These three criteria together point to the acceleration of explanation, of the revelatory inclusion of latencies and background data in manifest operations.

If, in addition, the task of determining when, from the beginning of the From this point of view, the twentieth century began, the answer could be given with great pinpoint accuracy. It can be illustrated with a single datum how the three primary characteristics of the era were united at the beginning in a common primordial scene. The 20th century opened spectacularly revealingly on April 22, 1915 with the first major use of chlorine gases as a means of combat by a "gas regiment" - created expressly for this purpose - of the German armies of the West against French-Canadian infantry positions in the northern arc of Ieper. During the weeks

precedents in that sector of the front German soldiers, unbeknownst to the enemy, had installed in battery at the edge of the German trenches thousands of hidden gas bottles of a type unknown until then. At 18 o'clock sharp pioneers of the new regiment, under the command of Colonel Max Peterson, with a prevailing wind from the north and northeast, opened 1600 large (40 kg) and 4130 smaller (20 kg) bottles filled with chlorine. By this "escape" of the liquefied substance about 150 tons of chlorine were deployed in a gas cloud about 6 km wide and 600 to 900 m deep.<sup>[76]</sup> An aerial shot preserved for memory the development of this first toxic war cloud over the Ieper front. The favorable wind propelled the cloud at a speed of 2 up to 3 meters per second against the French positions; the concentration of the toxic gas was calculated at about 0.5 percent: over a prolonged exposure time it caused very serious damage to the respiratory tract and lungs.

The French General Jean-Jules Henry Mordacq (1868-1943), who was then 5 kilometers from the front, received shortly after 18:20 hours a field telephone call, in which an officer of the first regiment of *tirailleurs* announced the appearance of yellowish clouds of smoke, coming from the German trenches to the French positions.<sup>[77]</sup> Because of this alarm, doubtful at first but later confirmed by further calls, Mordacq mounted on horseback with his assistants to examine for himself the situation on the front, and after a short time respiratory disorders, bronchial irritation and loud ringing in the ears appeared in himself and his companions; after the horses refused to continue, Mordacq's team had to approach the gassed area on foot. They were soon met by crowds of horrified soldiers, running, warriors openly open, throwing their weapons, spitting blood, begging for water. Some were rolling on the ground, struggling in vain for breath. By 7:00 p.m., a gap of 6

kilometers wide on the French-Canadian front; German troops then advanced and occupied Langemarck.<sup>[78]</sup> For their own protection the attacking units had only gauze pads impregnated with a sodium solution and a chlorine-retaining liquid, fitted over the mouth and nose. Mordacq survived the attack and published his war memoirs in the year of Hitler's seizure of power.



Aerial shot of the first German chlorine attack on Ieper on April 22, 1915.

The military success of the operation was not controversial at any time; a few days after the events at Ieper, Emperor Wilhelm II already received the scientific director of the German combat gas program, the chemist Professor Fritz Haber, director of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry in Dahlem, in personal audience, promoting him to captain.<sup>[79]</sup> In any case, the opinion spread that the German troops, themselves surprised by the effectiveness of the new method, would not have known

to make profitable with sufficient energy its triumph of April 22. On the other hand, the data on the number of victims differ greatly, then as now: according to unofficial French sources there were only 625 affected by the gas, of whom no more than 3 died of poisoning, while, according to initial German reports, there were 15,000 intoxicated and 5,000 dead, figures which, certainly, in the course of the investigation have been continually corrected downwards. It is obvious that in these differences there are interpretative controversies, which show clearly different technical-military and moral sense of the operations. A Canadian autopsy report of an autopsy carried out on a gas victim in one of the worst affected areas of the front says: "On removal of the lungs considerable quantities of a light yellow frothy fluid, evidently containing much albuminous material, were spilled....The veins on the surface of the brain were obstructed to a high degree, all the small blood vessels had ostensibly appeared."<sup>[80]</sup>

While the wretched twentieth century is now preparing to enter the history books as the "age of extremes"<sup>[81]</sup> and is being consumed by the progressive outdatedness of its lines of struggle and mobilizing concepts - its scripts for world history are no less yellowed than the proclamations of medieval theologians for the liberation of the Holy Sepulcher - one of the technical models of the last century is manifesting itself with increasing clarity. It could be called the introduction of the environment into the adversarial struggle.

As long as there have been artilleries, it has belonged to the defenders' trade and warlords to address the enemy and his protective shields with immediate shots. Whoever intends to eliminate an opponent according to the rules of the military art of killing at a distance has to establish, by means of the cannon of an artillery piece, a *direct intentio* to his body and to immobilize the object placed in the point of aim by a sufficiently accurate impact. Since the Middle Ages

From the late Middle Ages until the outbreak of the First World War, the definition of a soldier was the fact that he managed to establish and "maintain" this intentionality. During that time manliness was codified, among other things, by the ability and willingness to directly and causally kill an enemy with one's own hand and one's own weapon. To aim at one's adversary is, so to speak, the continuation of the two-way fight with ballistic means. That is why the gesture of killing one man to another remains so linked to the pre-bourgeois idea of personal courage and possible heroism that continued to act, however anachronistic it might be, even under conditions of combat at a distance and anonymous battle with technical equipment. If the members of the armies of the twentieth century could be of the opinion that they still exercised a "manly" profession and, under warlike premises,

The "honored" was by appealing to the risk of the immediate encounter to the death.

Its technical-armamentistic manifestation is the rifle with bayonet: if for some reason the (bourgeois) elimination of the enemy by shooting from a distance failed, the rifle always offered the possibility of returning to the (noble and archaic) direct drilling from close range.



Installation of chlorine bottles in German front-line trenches.

The twentieth century will be remembered as the era whose decisive idea consisted in targeting not the enemy's body but his environment. This is the fundamental idea of terror in a more explicit sense and more adapted to the times. Its principle was prophetically put by Shakespeare in the mouth of Shylock: "You take away my life if you take away the means by which I live."<sup>[82]</sup> Among these

In addition to economic conditions, the ecological and psychosocial conditions of human existence have now become the focus of attention. In the new procedures for managing from the enemy's environment or surroundings the subtraction of his living conditions, the outlines of a specifically modern, post-Hegelian concept of horror appear.<sup>[83]</sup> In the new procedures for managing from the enemy's environment or surroundings the subtraction of his living conditions, the profiles of a specifically modern, post-Hegelian concept of horror appear.<sup>[83]</sup>

The horror of the twentieth century is essentially more than the I-can-because-I-want-to-, with which Jacobin self-consciousness passed over the corpses of those who stood in the way of its race to freedom; despite formal similarities, it is also fundamentally different from the bombings of the anarchists and nihilists in the last third of the nineteenth century, who attempted a pre-revolutionary destabilization of the bourgeois-late-aristocratic order of society; among them there flourished not infrequently a comfortable and ornate "philosophy of the bomb", which gave expression to the fantasies of power of petty-bourgeois friends of destruction.<sup>[84]</sup> Moreover, neither methodically nor in terms of its objectives can it be confused with the phobocratic technique of permanent or emerging dictatorships to subdue their own population by means of a calculated mixture of "ceremony and terror."<sup>85]</sup> Finally, we must keep far from its precise concept the innumerable episodes in which desperate individuals, for reasons of revenge, paranoid or erostrasian, appropriate modern means of destruction to stage the occasional twilight of the world.

The horror of our times is a phenomenal form of the knowledge of extermination, theoretically and environmentally modernized, thanks to which the terrorist understands his victims better than they understand themselves. When the enemy's body can no longer be killed by direct hits, the attacker is presented with the possibility of making it impossible for it to exist by submerging it for a sufficient time in an environment without living conditions.

From this conclusion arises modern "chemical warfare" as an attack on the vital functions of the enemy that depend on the environment.



environment, namely, respiration, nervous-central regulations and conditions of temperature and radiation suitable for life. In fact, this is the passage from classical warfare to terrorism, insofar as the latter has as its presupposition the renunciation of the ancient exchange of arms between adversaries of the same rank. Terror today operates beyond the naive exchange of armed blows between regular troops. What matters to it is the substitution of the classic forms of struggle by attacks on the enemy's environmental conditions of life. Such a change is hinted at when very unequal adversaries are confronted, as can be seen in the current conjuncture of non-state wars and of the friction between state armies and non-state combatants. However, the claim that terror is the weapon of the weak is completely false. Any look at the history of terror in the 20th century shows that it was the states, and among them the strong ones, that first turned their hand to terrorist methods and means.



The discovery of the "environment".

As can be recognized in retrospect, the military-historical curiosity of the gas war of 1915 to 1918 consists in the fact that in it, on both sides of the front, officially sponsored forms of environmental terror had been integrated into the regular exercise of the

war of legally conscripted armies, in conscious disregard of Article 23a of the Hague War Convention of 1907, which expressly excluded the use of intoxicants and weapons of any kind that increase suffering, in actions against the enemy and, above all, against the non-combatant population.<sup>[86]</sup> It seems that in 1918 the Germans had more than 9 gas battalions with about 7000 men, the Allies more than 13 battalions of "chemical troops" and more than 12,000 men. Not without reason there were experts who spoke of a "war within the war". The formula announces the liberation of exterminism from the moderation of war violence. Numerous demonstrations by soldiers of the First World War, above all by professional officers of noble origin, testify that they considered gas fighting to be a degeneration, dishonorable for all participants, of the way of conducting a war. However, hardly any case has been handed down in which a member of the army openly objected to the new "law of war."<sup>[87]</sup>

The discovery of the "environment" took place in the trenches of World War I, where the soldiers on both sides had become so unreachable for the ammunition of weapons or explosives designed for them that the problem of atmospheric warfare had to be urgently raised. What was later called gas warfare (later still, aerial bomb warfare) was offered as its technical solution: its principle consisted in enveloping the enemy long enough - which in practice meant at least a few minutes - in a cloud of polluting materials, of opportune "tactical concentration", until he fell victim to his own natural need to breathe. (The production of psychological clouds of contaminating material on the population itself is a matter, as a rule, of the mass media of the belligerent groups: they transform their imperative to inform into an involuntary complicity with the terrorists, since, with an honest gesture, they generalize the local horrors supranationally). These

Toxic clouds were practically never composed of gases in the physical sense, but of very fine dust particles released by the discharge of explosives. This gave rise to the phenomenon of a second artillery, which was no longer aimed directly at enemy soldiers and their positions, but rather at the air environment of the enemy's bodies. Consequently, the concept of "target" was mobilized according to a fuzzy logic: what was sufficiently close to the object could from now on count as sufficiently accurate and thus operationally mastered.<sup>[88]</sup> In a later phase the high-explosive projectiles of classical artillery were recombined with the fog-generating projectiles of the new gas artillery. A feverish research then dealt with the question of how to cope with the rapid dilution of the toxic clouds over the battlefield, which, as a rule, was achieved through chemical additives that modified the highly volatile behavior of the combat dust particles in the desired direction. As a result of the events at Ieper, a kind of military climatology quickly emerged out of nowhere, which is not too little said if it is recognized as the guiding phenomenon of terrorism.

The knowledge of toxic clouds is the first science with which the twentieth century shows its identity card.<sup>89]</sup> Before April 22, 1915, this statement would have been pataphysics; subsequently it must be valid as the nucleus of an ontology of the present. It makes explicit the phenomenon of unbreathable space, which was traditionally implicit in the idea of miasma. The unclear status to this day of the knowledge of toxic clouds or the theory of unlivable space within climatology only makes it clear that climate theory has not yet emancipated itself from its natural-scientific obscurity. As we shall show, it was, indeed, the earliest of the new human sciences to emerge from the knowledge of the world war.<sup>[90]</sup> [The theory of climate has not yet emancipated itself from its natural-scientific obscurity.](#)

The explosive development of military breathing protection devices (popularly, regular troop gas masks) betrays the accommodation of the troops to a situation in which the

human respiration was on the way to assuming a direct role in war events. Fritz Haber could soon be celebrated as the father of the gas mask. When it becomes known from military-historical literature that between February and June 1916, about 5.5 million gas masks were distributed among the German troops in Verdun alone in the corresponding depot in the rear area, as well as 4300 oxygen protection devices (mostly taken from the mining industry) equipped with 2 million liters of oxygen,<sup>[91]</sup> it becomes clear in figures to what extent already at that time the "greening" of warfare, transferred to an atmospheric environment, had become a struggle around the respiratory potentials of the enemy parties. The fight then included the biological weak points of the warring parties. The image of the gas mask, which quickly became popular, shows that the attacked party tried to free itself from its dependence on the immediate environment of breathable air by hiding behind an air filter - a first step to the principle of air conditioning, which is based on the decoupling of a defined volume of air from the surrounding air. Corresponding to this, on the attacking side, was an escalation of the attack on the atmosphere through the use of toxic materials that penetrated through enemy breathing apparatus; from the summer of 1917, German chemists and officers began to use as a war material ethyl dichloride sulfide, known as "blue cross" or "clark I", which, in the form of very fine particles of suspended material, was able to overcome enemy breathing filters, an effect that was recorded by those concerned with the expression "mask breaker". At the same time, the German gas artillery introduced the new combat gas yellow cross or *lost*,<sup>[92]</sup> which, even in minute quantities, caused havoc in the body, especially loss of sight and catastrophic nervous dysfunctions, on contact with the skin or rubbing against the mucous membranes of the eyes and respiratory tract, against British troops on the western front. Among the

The best known victims of the lost or iperite on the Western Front was Corporal Adolf Hitler, who on the night of October 13-14, 1918, on a hill near Wervick (La Montagne), south of Ieper, was involved in one of the last gas attacks of World War I, carried out by the British. In his memoirs he declared that on the morning of the 14th his eyes had become like glowing coals; that, moreover, after the events of November 9 in Germany, which he experienced only by hearsay in the Pasewalk military hospital in Pomerania, he had suffered a relapse in the loss of vision caused by the lost, during which he had made the decision to "become a politician". In the spring of 1944 Hitler told Speer, in view of the approaching defeat, that he harbored the fear of losing his sight again, as then. The trauma of the gas was present in him until the end, as a nervous trace. It seems that among the military-technical determinants of World War II played a role the fact that, because of these events, Hitler introduced an idiosyncratic understanding of gas into his personal conception of war, on the one hand, and of the praxis of genocide, on the other.<sup>[93]</sup> The fact that, because of these events, Hitler introduced an idiosyncratic understanding of gas into his personal conception of war, on the one hand, and of the praxis of genocide, on the other, seems to have played a role.<sup>[93]</sup>

In its first appearance gas warfare brought together in close consortium the operational criteria of the twentieth century: terror, *design* consciousness and environmental approach. The exact concept of terror presupposes, as has been shown, an explicit concept of environment, because terror represents the displacement of destructive action from the "system" (here, from the physically concrete enemy body) to its "environment" (in this case, to the atmospheric environment in which the enemy bodies move, forced to breathe). Hence, the terrorist action always already possesses, by itself, an attacking character, since to the definition of attack (Latin: *attentatum*, attempt, attempt to murder) belongs not only a surprise blow from ambush, but also the malicious exploitation of the living habits of the victims. In gas warfare, the deepest layers of the biological condition of human beings are included in the attacks on themselves: the inescapable habit of breathing is turned against the breathers in such a way that they become unwitting accomplices in their destruction, assuming that the gas terrorist manages to corner the victims in the toxic environment long enough until they, by unavoidable inhalations, surrender to the unbreathable environment. It is not only despair, as Jean-Paul Sartre observed, it is an attack of the human being against himself; the attack on the air of the gas terrorist produces in the attacked ones the despair of

forced to cooperate in the extinction of their own life, because they cannot stop breathing.

With the phenomenon of gas warfare a new explanatory plane for climatic and atmospheric premises of human existence is reached. In it the immersion of living beings in a breathable medium is brought to a formal elaboration. From the very beginning, the *design* principle is included in this explanatory challenge, since the operative manipulation of gaseous environments in open terrain requires a series of atmospheric innovations. Because of this, the toxic clouds of combat became a productive design task. Combatants mobilized as regular soldiers on gas fronts, both in the West and in the East, were faced with the problem of developing routines for regional design of atmospheres. The installation or artificial production of combat dust clouds required efficient coordination of cloud generating factors under criteria of concentration, diffusion, sedimentation, coherence, mass, expansion and movement. This heralded a new meteorology, dedicated to "precipitation" of a very special kind.

A stronghold of this special knowledge was to be found at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry, headed by Fritz Haber, in Berlin-Dahlem, one of the most ominous theoretical addresses of the 20th century; correspondingly, similar institutes existed on the French and British side as well. Most of the time, combat materials had to be mixed with stabilizers in order to achieve suitable concentrations that would be effective in the open field. In view of the definite principle of the selective production of toxic clouds over a defined terrain, necessarily vaguely delimited under *conditions-outdoors*, it made only a relatively insignificant technological difference whether such toxic precipitations were achieved by subjecting sections of the front to a continuous fire of gas grenades or by "emptying" downwind gas bottles arranged in line. In an attack by German gas artillery with

The gas cross green-diphosgene near Fleury, in the Maas, during the night of June 22-23, 1916, was based on a cloud consistency, necessary to cause death in open terrain, which would guarantee at least 50 howitzer shots or 100 cannon shots per hectare per minute, values that were not completely reached, since the next morning the French "only" had to lament 1600 intoxicated and 90 dead on the field.<sup>[94]</sup> The French were not able to reach these values.

What was decisive was that technology, by means of gas terrorism, appeared on the horizon of a design of the unobjective, and thus latent issues such as physical air quality, artificial additives of the atmosphere and other climate-forming factors in human living spaces came under explanatory pressure. By progressive explanation humanism and terrorism are chained to each other. Nobel laureate Fritz Haber declared himself throughout his life an ardent humanist and patriot. As he solemnly stated in his, so to speak, tragic farewell letter, addressed to his Institute on October 1, 1933, he was proud to have worked for the fatherland, in war, for humanity, in peace.

Terrorism blurs the difference between violence against people and violence against things from the environmental flank: it is violence against those "things"-human-circumstances without which people can no longer be people. Violence against the breathable air of groups transforms the immediate atmospheric envelope of human beings into something whose vulnerability or invulnerability can be disposed of in the future. Only by reacting to terrorist deprivation could air and atmosphere - primary means of life in both the physical and metaphorical sense - become the object of explicit foresight and aerotechnical, medical, legal, political, aesthetic and cultural-theoretical attention. In this sense, air theory and climate technology are not mere sediments of war and post-war knowledge, nor, *eo ipso*, primary objects of a science of peace, which could only emerge in the shadow of the stress<sup>[95]</sup> of war, but, first and foremost, they are primary post-terrorist forms of knowledge. To call them so already means to explain why such knowledge has so far only been maintained in labile, incoherent and authority-deprived contexts; perhaps the idea that there can be such a thing as genuine terror experts is, as such, hybrid.

Analysts and professional terror fighters show a remarkable interest in ignoring its high-level nature, a phenomenon



for which the elaborate belittling of the avalanche of expert statements following the attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on September 11, 2001, provided clear evidence. The tenor of almost all the statements about the attack on prominent symbols of the United States was that one was shocked, like the rest of the world, by what happened, but nevertheless confirmed in the thesis that there are things against which one can never protect oneself sufficiently. In the *War-on-Terror* campaign of the US television networks, which had short-circuited the Pentagon's communiqués in order to regulate their language, reoriented, almost without exception, to propaganda, not even once was an elementary notion mentioned, namely that terrorism is not an enemy, but a *modus operandi*, a method of struggle, which is generally shared by both sides in a conflict, which is why "war on terror" is a meaningless formulation.<sup>[96]</sup> It elevates an allegory to the status of a political enemy. As soon as one brackets the requirement to take sides and follows the principle of peace processes, also that of listening to the enemy, it becomes clear that an isolated terrorist act never constitutes an absolute beginning. There is no *acte gratuitous* terrorist *act*, no "let it be done" originating from horror. Every terrorist attack is understood as a counter-attack within a series, which in each case is considered to have been initiated by the adversary. Terrorism thus conceives itself anti-terroristically; this applies even to the "originating scene" on the leper front in 1915, not only because the customary sequence of counter-attacks and counter-counter-attacks immediately followed, but also because on the German side it was possible to appeal truthfully to the fact that the French and British had already used gas ammunition earlier.<sup>[97]</sup> The beginning of the terror is not the concrete attack carried out from one of the sides, but rather the willingness and readiness of the warring *partners* to operate on an enlarged battlefield. By the enlargement of the zone of struggle the principle of explanation becomes perceptible in the procedure

war: the enemy is made explicit as an object in the environment, whose elimination is equivalent to a condition of survival of the system. Terrorism is the explanation of the other from the point of view of his exterminability.<sup>[98]</sup> If war has always meant a behavior in the face of the enemy, only terrorism reveals its "essence". As soon as the moderation of disagreements disappears, in accordance with the law of peoples, the technical relationship with the enemy takes over: insofar as it stimulates the explicitness of procedures, technique makes clear the essence of enmity: which is none other than the will to extinguish that which is opposite. Enmity made technically explicit is called exterminism. This explains why the mature style of warfare of the twentieth century was oriented toward annihilation.

The stabilization of a solid knowledge on terror does not only depend, then, on the precise memory of its practices; it requires the formulation of the principles to which the practice of terror has been subject in its technical explicitness and progressive explanation since 1915. Terrorism is only understood when it is conceived as a form of investigation of the environment from the point of view of its destructibility. It takes advantage of the fact that the simple inhabitants have a user relationship with their environment and, as a matter of principle, consume it in a natural way exclusively as a mute condition of their existence. But, in this case, destroying is more analytical than using: punctual terror takes advantage of the difference in the level of innocuousness between the attack and the defenseless object, while systematized terror creates a climate of incessant anguish, in which the defense adapts itself to the permanent attacks, without being able to attack them. Thus, the sharpened terrorist struggle becomes more and more a competition for explanatory advantages over weak points in the opposing environment. New weapons of terror are those by which conditions of life are made more explicit; new categories of attacks reveal - in the manner of a malign surprise - new areas of vulnerability. A terrorist is the one who achieves a

explanatory advantage with respect to the implicit living conditions of the opponent and uses them for action. This is the reason why, after great and violent historical caesuras produced by terrorism, one can have the sensation that what happened refers to the future. What has a future is what uncovers the implicit and transforms apparent innocuities into zones of struggle.



Fumigation of effects in a moving truck circa 1930.

According to its principle of action, all terrorism is conceived atmoterroristically. It takes the form of an attack on the environmental conditions of life of the enemy, starting with a toxic attack on the most immediate resource of the environment of an enemy.

human organism, the air it breathes.<sup>[99]</sup> This admits that what since 1793, and even more so since 1915, we call *terreur* or terror could have been anticipated in any possible way of using violence against environmental conditions of human existence: think of the poisoning of drinking water, of which Antiquity already offers examples, of medieval infesting attacks on defended fortresses, as well as the burning and smoking of cities and caves of refuge by siege troops, or the spreading of horrifying rumors and demoralizing news. But such comparisons fail in the main. For all that matters, terrorism remains to be identified as a child of Modernity, since it could not mature into an exact definition until the principle of attacking the environment and the immunological defense of an organism or a life form became sufficiently explicit. This happened for the first time, as has been explained, in the events of April 2, 1915, when the cloud of chlorine gas, produced by the emptying of 5700 gas cylinders, was carried by a light wind from the German positions to the French trenches between Bixschoote and Langemarck. At dusk of that day, between 6 and 7 p.m., the hand of the epochal clock jumped from the vitalist-late-romantic phase of Modernity to atmoterrorist objectivism. There has never been, since then, a cessation of equal depth in that field. The great disasters of the 20th century and of the incipient 21st century belong, without exception, as it must be shown, to the history of the explanation that was inaugurated that April afternoon on the western front, when the surprised French-Canadian units retreated, panic-stricken, under the effect of the whitish-yellowish gas cloud that was sliding towards them from the northeast.

The subsequent technical explanation of this procedural knowledge of climatological combat, gained in the war, naturally took, at the latest from November 1918 onwards, the roundabout way of its "peaceful use". In view of the imminent end of the war, bedbugs, common songbugs, mealy moths and, above all, lice on clothing came into the sights of the Berlin chemists. It is clear that the prohibition of the Treaty of Versailles of

The fact that all production of warfare substances on German soil did not cause them to lose their professional fascination. Professor Ferdinand Flury, one of the closest collaborators at the Dahlem institute, gave a programmatic lecture in September 1918 in Munich at a congress of the German Society for Applied Entomology on the topic: "The activities of the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry in Berlin-Dahlem in the service of pest control". During the discussion Fritz Haber took the floor and reported on the activities of a "Technical Committee for Pest Control" (Tasch: "Technischer Ausschuss für Schädlingbekämpfung"), which was primarily concerned with the introduction of hydrocyanic acid gas (HCN) in the insect defense of German farmers. He observed in this connection: "The main basic idea, after the restored peace, is to make other combat substances produced by the war usable for the promotion of agriculture by pest control, in addition to hydrocyanic acid."<sup>[100]</sup> In his report Flury pointed out "that in the action of gases on insects or mites, completely different circumstances arise than in the case of the inhalation of gases and vapors through the lungs of mammals, although there is a parallel with the toxicity in higher animals".<sup>[101]</sup> As early as 1920 a specialist journal of the German Society for Parasite Control Ltd. [Deutsche Gesellschaft für Schädlingbekämpfung GmbH (Degesch)], founded shortly before the end of the war, was able to report that since 1917 about 20 million cubic meters of "building space in mills, ships, barracks, field hospitals, schools, grain and seed warehouses" and similar places had been gassed according to the criteria of the advanced hydrocyanic acid technique - according to the so-called vat procedure. To this must be added, since 1920, a gaseous product, developed by Fleury and others, which preserved the advantages of hydrocyanic acid, its extreme toxicity, without assuming its disadvantages: the dangerous non-perceptibility of the gas by smell, taste or other senses by human beings (more precisely: by a group of human beings, since it seems that the ability to perceive or not perceive the smell of hydrocyanic gas is genetically determined). The gist of the new invention consisted in adding to the toxic hydrogen cyanide gas 10 percent (or less) of an irritant gas (e.g.

"Chlorkohlensäuremethylester"), very noticeable. The new product was marketed under the name Cyclone A and was recommended for the "disinfection of insect-infested rooms". The interesting thing about Cyclone A was that it was a design gas, in which a specific design task can be exemplarily observed: the reintroduction of unperceivable or muffled product functions into the user's perception. Since the fundamental component of the mixture, hydrogen cyanide gas, which evaporates at about 27 degrees Celsius, is often not immediately perceptible to humans, it seemed appropriate to the creators of this material to equip their product with a provocative, very striking component, which by its strong aversive effect would warn of the presence of the substance (from a philosophical point of view one would speak of a re-phenomenalization of the non-apparent).<sup>[102]</sup> Let us note that the first "disinfestation of large spaces" was carried out on almost exactly the same day as the leper attack, two years earlier, on the occasion of the fumigation of a mill in Heidingsfeld,

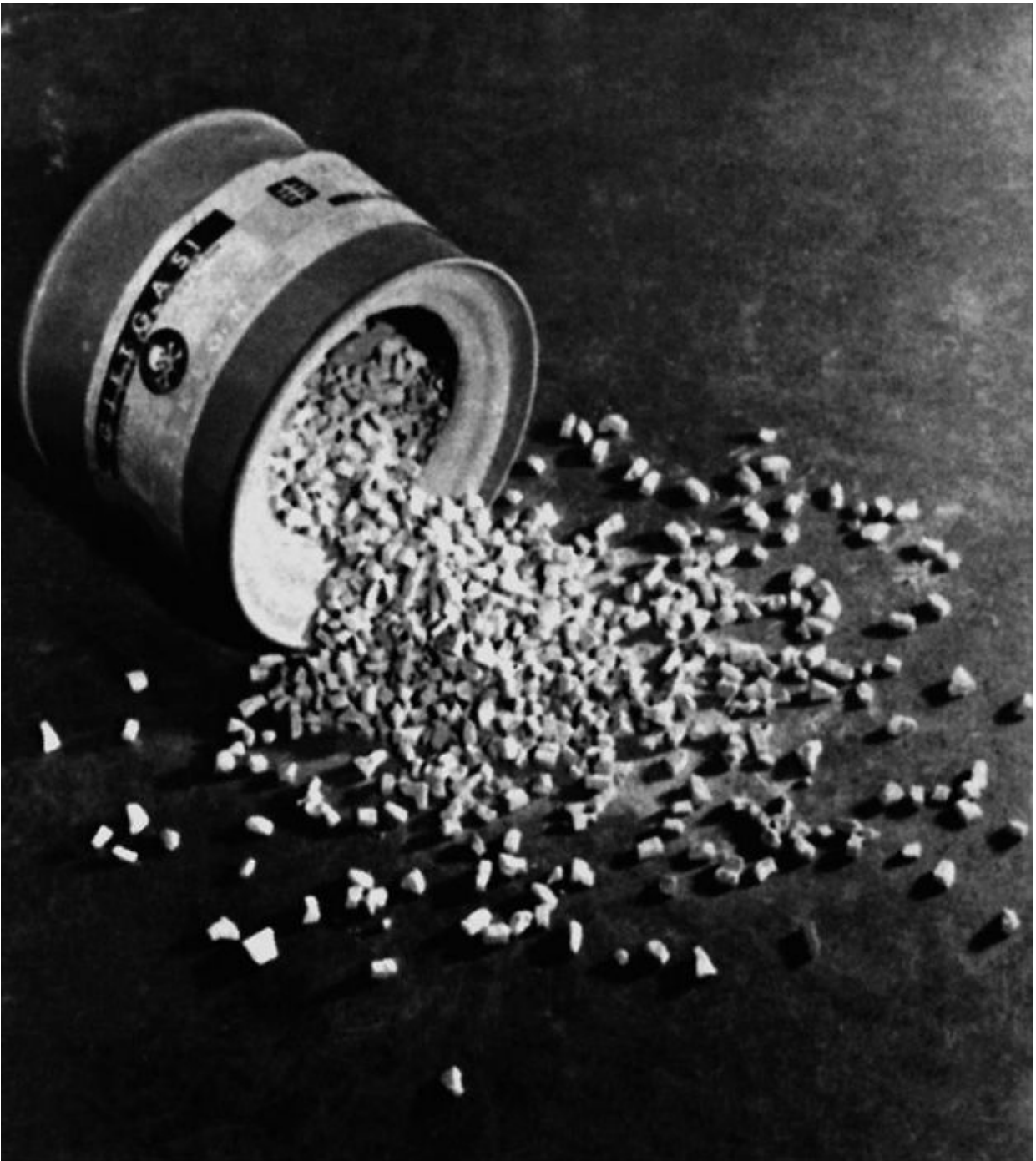
near Würzburg on April 21, 1917. Only eighty-five years had passed between Goethe's death and the introduction of the expression "disinfestation of large spaces" into the German language.

"de-pollute" and "de-root" have since enriched the lexicon of the Germans. The owner of the mill declared that his establishment had remained completely "moth-free" even for a long time after spraying.

Civilian production of hydrocyanic acid clouds was almost exclusively confined to enclosed reconstructed spaces (exceptions were open-air fruit trees, which were covered with airtight canopies and then fumigated). In these cases it was possible to work with concentrations that allowed the providers of such services to ensure the total extermination of local populations of insects, including their eggs and nits, not least because of the property of hydrogen cyanide gas to get into every nook and cranny. In the first phase of these practices the relationship between the special air area, i.e. the spatial volume to be fumigated, and the general air, the public atmosphere, was not considered problematic. The consequence of this was that the completion of the fumigations usually consisted of simple ventilation, i.e., distribution of the toxic gas into the surrounding free air until it recovered

"harmless values" inside. No one was concerned at the time that the The "ventilation" of the former enclosures entailed a burden on the latter. It seemed to be indisputable *a priori* and forever the insignificance of the relationship between the fumigated indoor spaces and the non-fumigated outdoor air. The specialized bibliography of the field testifies, not without pride, in the early forties, that 142 million cubic meters had been "disinsected" in the meantime, using -we we would add: inconsiderately introducing into the atmosphere - for this purpose one and a half million kilograms of hydrocyanic acid. With the progressive development of the environmental problem, the relationship between the surrounding air and the special air zone was reversed, since now the artificially - we would say in the meantime: the air-conditioned - air-conditioned zone offers privileged air conditions, while in the

environment is burdened with an increasing respiratory risk, which can lead to acute unrespirability and chronic uninhabitability.



Cyclone can found in Auschwitz.

During the 1920s, a number of disinsecting and rat exterminating companies in the at north of Germany offered fumigations

routine cyclone systems for ships, warehouses, mass shelters, barracks, railroad carriages and similar spaces. Among them, from 1924 onwards, the newly founded Hamburg firm Tesch & Stabenow (Testa), whose main product, patented in 1926, was to achieve popularity under the name Cyclone B.<sup>[103]</sup> The fact that one of the firm's founders, Dr. Bruno Tesch, born in 1890, was sentenced to death after being tried before a court of law and sentenced to death by a court of law in 1924, was a major factor in its success. Bruno Tesch, born in 1890, sentenced to death after being tried before a British military court at the Curio-Haus in Hamburg in 1946 and executed in Hameln prison, worked from 1915 to 1920 at Fritz Haber's war-chemical institute and was engaged from the beginning in the development of war gas, is a concrete case which confirms the otherwise widely extended personal and objective continuity of the new antiseptic practices beyond war and peace. The advantage of Cyclone B, invented or developed by Dr. Walter Heerdt, was that the highly volatile hydrocyanic acid was reabsorbed by dry, porous carrier substances, such as fossil flour, so that transport and storage conditions were decisively improved compared to those offered by its previous liquid form. It appeared on the market in 200 g, 500 g, 1 kg and 5 kg cans. Already in the 1930s Cyclone B, which was initially produced exclusively in Dessau (later also in Kolin) and marketed in cooperation by the Testa company and the German Society for Pest Control, had achieved a quasi-monopoly position on the world market for pest control agents, a position which only had to withstand - in the field of ship fumigation - competition from an older procedure with sulfur gas.<sup>[104]</sup> At that time the antiseptic practice had already been introduced in fixed or mobile "disinsectisation or de-polishing chambers", into which the material to be treated, as a rule carpets, uniforms and textiles of all kinds, including upholstered furniture, were introduced and then ventilated.

After the beginning of the war, in the fall of 1939, the Testa firm gave disinfector courses in the east of the country to members of the



and civilians. They also included demonstrations in gas chambers. Then as before, the delousing of both troops and prisoners of war was one of the most urgent tasks to be performed by the anti-parasitic fighters. At the turn of the year from 1941 to 1942, the firm Tesch & Stabenow published for its customers, among them the Eastern Army and SS units, a brochure entitled *The Little ABC-Testa on the Cyclone*, in which one could find expressions symptomatic of a militarization of the

The report states that "disinsection procedures", perhaps even a possible reapplication of hydrocyanic acid to human environments. There it is stated, for example, that disinsection "not only responds to an imperative of good sense, but also represents an act of self-defense!"<sup>[105]</sup> In medical context this can be interpreted as an allusion to the typhus epidemic that had broken out in 1941 in the East German army, in which almost more than 10 percent of those infected died; compared with the normal mortality rate of 30 percent, this was a success for German hygiene, since the causative agent of exanthematous typhus, *rickettsia prowazcki*, is transmitted by lice on clothing. In the light of subsequent events, it is clear how the *terminus technicus* "self-defense" was used in advance as a semantic term for the potential reintroduction of the fumigation technique to the area of human objects. It was only a few months later that it became clear how the atmospheric form of the extermination of organisms was to discover applications to a human content. When in 1941 and 1942 some articles by the firm's own chemistry historians celebrated the 25th anniversary of the first use of hydrocyanic acid in pest control as an event relevant to the entire cultural world, their authors did not yet know to what extent their opportunistic hyperbole would prove significant for the diagnostic determination of the civilizational context in general.

The year 1924 plays an eminent role in the drama of atmospheric explanation not only because of the founding of the Cyclone B firm, Tesch & Stabenow of Hamburg; it is also the year in which the atmoterrorist motif of extermination of organisms by destruction of their environment was introduced into the criminal law of a democratic state. The US state of Nevada put into operation on February 8, 1924 the first "civilian" gas chamber for allegedly effective human executions, with exemplary effect in 11 other US states, including California, which became famous for its octagonal, two-place, crypt-like gas chamber in San Quentin State Prison, and infamous for the possible legal murder there of Cheryl Chessman on May 2, 1960. The first to be executed under the new method was 29-year-old Chinese-born Gee Jon, who (against the backdrop of a gang war in California in the early 1920s) had been found guilty of the murder of Chinese Tom Quong Kee. In the American gas chambers, criminals died from inhaling hydrocyanic acid vapors, which were produced after the toxic components had entered a container. As the chemical-war research had recognized in the laboratory and proved in the battlefield, the gas stops the transport of oxygen in the blood and produces internal asphyxia.

The international *community* of experts in toxic gas and atmosphere design was from the last years of World War I sufficiently permeable to react within the shortest space of time, both cisatlantically and transatlantically, to innovations in technique as well as to fluctuations in the climate of the morale of application. Since the construction of Edgewood Arsenal near Baltimore, a gigantic facility devoted to war research, which after entry into the war in 1917 was vigorously promoted with great means, the United States had an industrial-military-academic complex that permitted much closer cooperation among the various armament development faculties than the corresponding European institutions were aware of. Edgewood was one of the birthplaces of *teamwork*, surpassed, in any case, by the *dream team* of Los Alamos National Laboratory, which since 1943, as in an extermination meditation camp, was working to achieve the atomic weapon. As a result of the waning of the war situation after 1918, what mattered to the Edgewood teams, composed of scientists, officers and businessmen, was to find a way to develop the atomic weapon.

civilian forms of survival. The creator of the gas chamber at the Nevada State Prison in Carson City, D. A. Turner, had served during the war as commandant of the US-Army Medical Corps; his contribution consisted of transferring the experiences of the military use of hydrocyanic acid to the conditions of a civilian execution.



Nevada State Prison gas chamber in Carson City, 1926.

Compared to the use of toxic gas in the open air, its use in a chamber offered the advantage of eliminating the problem of unstable lethal concentration in the open air. Thus, in contrast to the design of the chamber and the gas apparatus, the design of toxic clouds took a back seat. But that the relationship between chamber and cloud can be problematic is shown not only by the mishaps that occurred in the gas chamber executions in the United States; also by the very different development of the Sarin attacks in various lines of the

The Tokyo subway on March 20, 1995, demonstrates that the ideal conditions of a controlled ratio of toxic gas to spatial volume are not easy to establish empirically.<sup>[106]</sup> This would apply even to more professional bombers than the members of the Aum Shinrikyo sect, who placed their prepared plastic bags of Sarin, wrapped in newspaper, on the floor of the carriage and, shortly before arriving at the station where they got off, pierced them with the sharp metal tips of their umbrellas, while the passengers who continued their journey inhaled the poison emanating from them.<sup>107]</sup>

What secures Nevada justice a place in the history of the explanation of human dependence on the atmosphere is its sensitivity, at once serene and forward-looking, to the modern qualities of death by gas. In this field that which promises to unite humanity and high efficiency may be validated as modern; in the given case, the alleged reduction of suffering in criminals by the rapid action of the poison. Major Turner had expressly recommended his chamber as a gentler alternative to the then notorious electric chair, in which strong pulses of current could crush the brains of criminals under a tightly fitting, moistened rubber cap. In the idea of execution by gas, the fact that it is not only war that acts as an explainer of things is manifested; the same effect so often follows from that humanism without recesses, which constitutes since the middle of the 19th century the spontaneous American philosophy and which becomes pragmatism in its academic version. In its desire to unite the effective with the painless, this way of thinking does not allow itself to be disconcerted by protocols of execution, which speak of unparalleled torments of many criminals in gas chambers, descriptions so drastic that they lead one to think that in the United States, under humanitarian pretexts, a regression to the tortures of medieval executions has taken place during the 20th century. For the official perception of things, death by gas was to be valid until further notice as a procedure as practical as the one used in the United States.

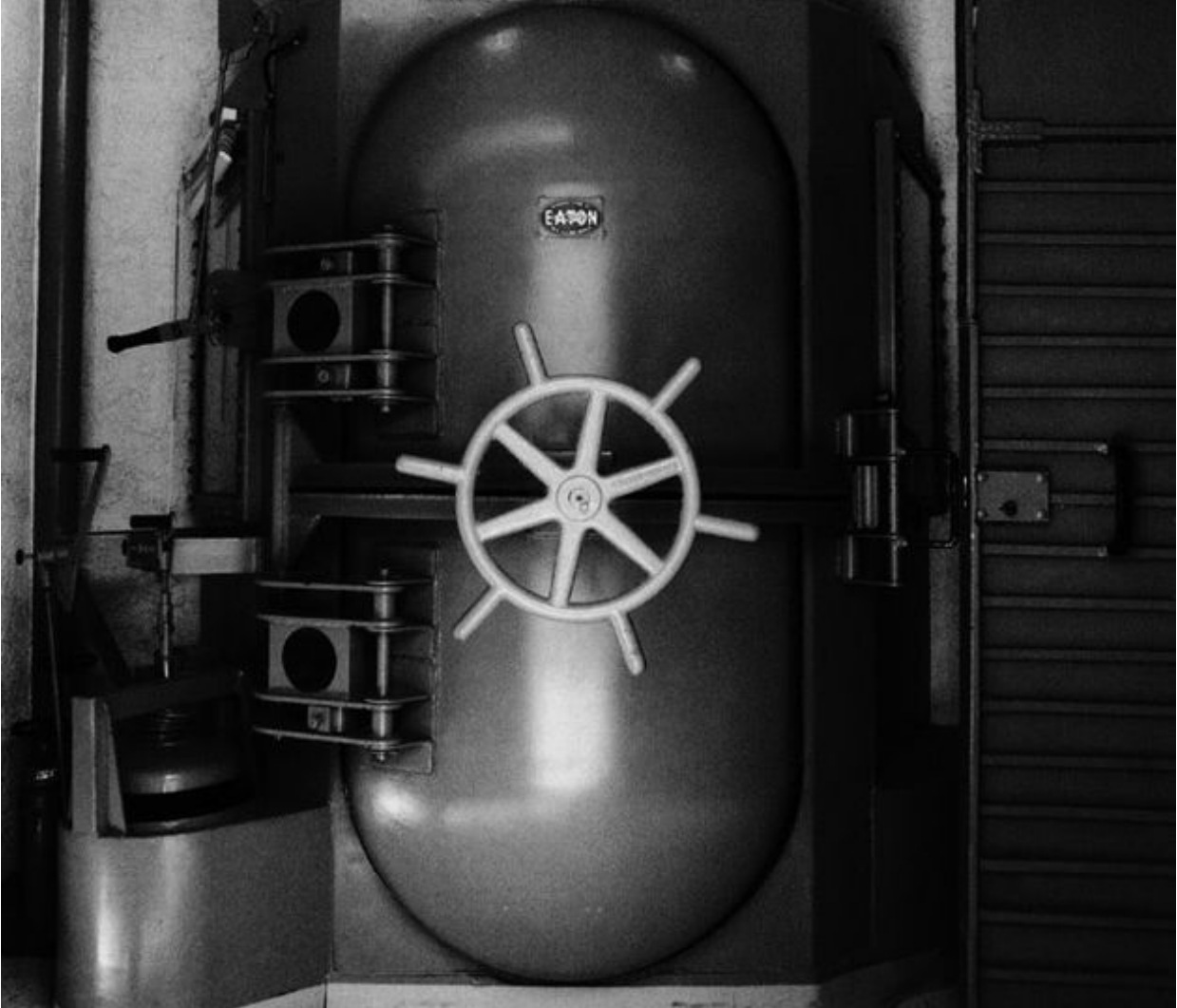
as human; from that point of view, the Nevada gas chamber was a place of worship of pragmatic humanism. Its installation was dictated by that sentimental law of Modernity, which prescribes keeping public space free of acts of manifest cruelty. No one has expressed as powerfully as Elias Canetti that compulsion of the moderns to conceal the cruel features of their own actions: "The sum total of sensibility in the world of culture has become very great. [...] today it would be more difficult to publicly condemn a single human being to the stake than to unleash a world war."<sup>[108]</sup>



Lucinda Devlin, *The Omega Suites: Witness Room*, Broad River Correctional Facility  
Columbia, South Carolina, 1991.

The technically and criminally innovative idea of execution in a gas chamber presupposes full control of the difference between the deadly internal climate of the chamber and the external climate, a motif that

is concretized in the installation of glass windows in the execution cells, through which invited witnesses of the executions were to be allowed to convince themselves of the effectiveness of the atmospheric conditions inside the chambers. A kind of ontological difference is thus spatially installed: mortal climate inside the clearly defined, meticulously hermetized cell, convivial climate in the mundane-life zone of the executioners and observers; being and power-being outside, entity and non-power-being inside. In the given context, to be an observer means as much as to be an observer of an agony, endowed with the privilege of following - seeing it from the outside - the collapse of an organic "system" for having made its "environment" an environment in which it is impossible to live. Also the doors of the gas chambers in the German extermination camps were partly equipped with glass sights, which allowed the executioners to assert their privilege as observers.



Lucinda Devlin, *The Omega Suites*: gas chamber, Arizona State Prison, Florence, Arizona, 1992.

If it is a question of considering the administration of death as a production in the strict sense and, consequently, as an explanation of the processes that result from the presence of dead bodies, the Nevada gas chamber represents one of the milestones in the rational exterminism of the twentieth century, although its use and imitation in numerous other US states has been sporadic (the Carson City chamber was used 32 times between 1924 and 1979). When Heidegger, in 1927, in *Being and Time*, spoke with ontological prolixity of the existential feature of being-for-death, American magistrates and doctors of execution had already put into

functioning of an apparatus that made breathing-for-death an ontically controlled process. It is no longer a matter of "advancing" towards one's own death; now it is a matter of keeping the candidate fixed in the lethal air-trap.

What is important here is not to reproduce in detail how the two coexisting ideas of the gas chamber merged into each other since the 1930s. Suffice it to retain that the scenario or processor of this fusion was a certain SS intelligence, which, on the one hand, received advice from the German anti-parasitic industry, and, on the other hand, could be sure of the order received, coming from the Reich Chancellery in Berlin, to choose "unusual means", especially after Hitler's decision on the "final solution of the Jewish question", a decision which was put on the agenda of selected SS units in the summer of 1941 by means of an orally transmitted secret mandate. Armed with this order, which left ample room for their own initiative, Hitler's most loyal assistants began their murderous career of the line of duty. The systematic killing of prisoners of war with the aid of engine exhaust gases (in camps such as Belzec, Chelmno and elsewhere), as well as the extensive killing of the sick in German psychiatric hospitals by means of gas showers in truck-mounted chambers, acted as catalysts for the union of the idea of anti-parasitic warfare and that of the execution of human beings by means of hydrocyanic acid gas.

The Hitler-factor comes into play, as a moment of escalation, at this relatively late point in the explanation of atmospheric background realities by means of technically supported terrorism. There can hardly be any doubt that the extremely exterministic sharpening of the German "Jew policy" was mediated by the metaphorism of the parasites, which had constituted since the early 1920s an essential component of the rhetoric of the National Socialist party, coined by Hitler, and which from 1933 was elevated, as it were, to the status of official idiomatic regulation in a uniformed German public milieu. The pseudonormalizing effect of the way of speaking of "parasites of the people" (which covered a wide semantic field, including defeatism, black trade, jokes about the Führer, criticism of the system, and internationalist convictions) was co-responsible for the national movement's prompters managing, if not to popularize their idiosyncratic way of



excessive anti-Semitism as a specifically German coinage of pretended hygiene, yes, at least, to make it bearable or imitable on a broad basis. The metaphorism of insects and parasites belonged also, at the same time, to the rhetorical ammunition of Stalinism, which produced the broader policy of camp terror, without reaching the extremes of SS "deworming" praxis.

At the core of the gas chamber and crematoria factory of Auschwitz and other camps was unmistakably the real metaphor of the "anti-parasite struggle". The expression "special treatment" meant, first and foremost, the strict application of insect extermination procedures to human populations. The practical transformation of this metaphorical operation went as far as the use of the most common means of "deworming", the cyclone B, as well as the fanatically analogous implementation of the chamber procedure, introduced in many places. In the extreme pragmatism of the executors, the psychotic realization of a metaphor and the officially impassive fulfillment of the provisions converged one on the other, with hardly any friction.

Holocaust research has rightly recognized the fusion of homicidal madness and routine as the trademark of Auschwitz. The fact that Cyclone B was apparently carried most of the time to the camps in Red Cross vehicles also corresponds to the sanitizing and medicalizing tendency of the provisions, as well as to the need for concealment of those responsible for carrying them out. In the specialist journal *Der praktische Desinfektor* [*The Practical Disinfector*] a military doctor in 1941 spoke of the Jews almost as the only "carriers of epidemics", which in a broader temporal context was almost a conventional statement, but in the background of that precise moment expressed a barely codified threat. An aphoristic entry in the diary of Reich Minister of Propaganda Goebbels on November 2 of the same year confirms the stable association between the entomological and political spheres of representation:

"The Jews are the lice of civilized humanity."<sup>[109]</sup> That remark shows that Goebbels was communicating with himself as an agitator in front of a crowd. Evil, too, like idiocy, is self-hypnotic.

In January 1942, in a renovated peasant house (called Bunker I) within the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp compound, two gas chambers were installed and "put into operation". It soon became clear that their capacity needed to be expanded; new facilities were added in rapid succession. On the night of March 13-14, 1943, 1,492 Jews were gassed in the basement of the Auschwitz Crematorium II,

"The concentration of approximately 20 grams of hydrocyanic acid per cubic meter of air, which was the concentration recommended by Degesch for delousing, was produced using 6 kilograms of Cyclone B, from the Krakow ghetto. In the summer the basement of crematorium III was provided with a gas-tight door and fourteen mock showers. In the early summer of 1944 technical progress made its entrance at Auschwitz with the installation of an electrical device for short-wave delousing of work clothes and uniforms, developed by Siemens. The supreme SS commander Himmler ordered in November of that year the cessation of the killing by poison gas. According to the lowest serious estimates, up to that time 750,000 human beings had been killed by such treatments; the actual figures may have been higher. During the winter of 1944-1945, camp troops and prisoners were busy destroying the traces of the gas-terrorist installations before the arrival of the Allied troops. At the firms Degesch (Frankfurt), Tesch & Stabenow (Hamburg) and Heerdt-Linger (Frankfurt), which had supplied their product to the camps knowing its intended use, it was understood that it was necessary to eliminate commercial documents.

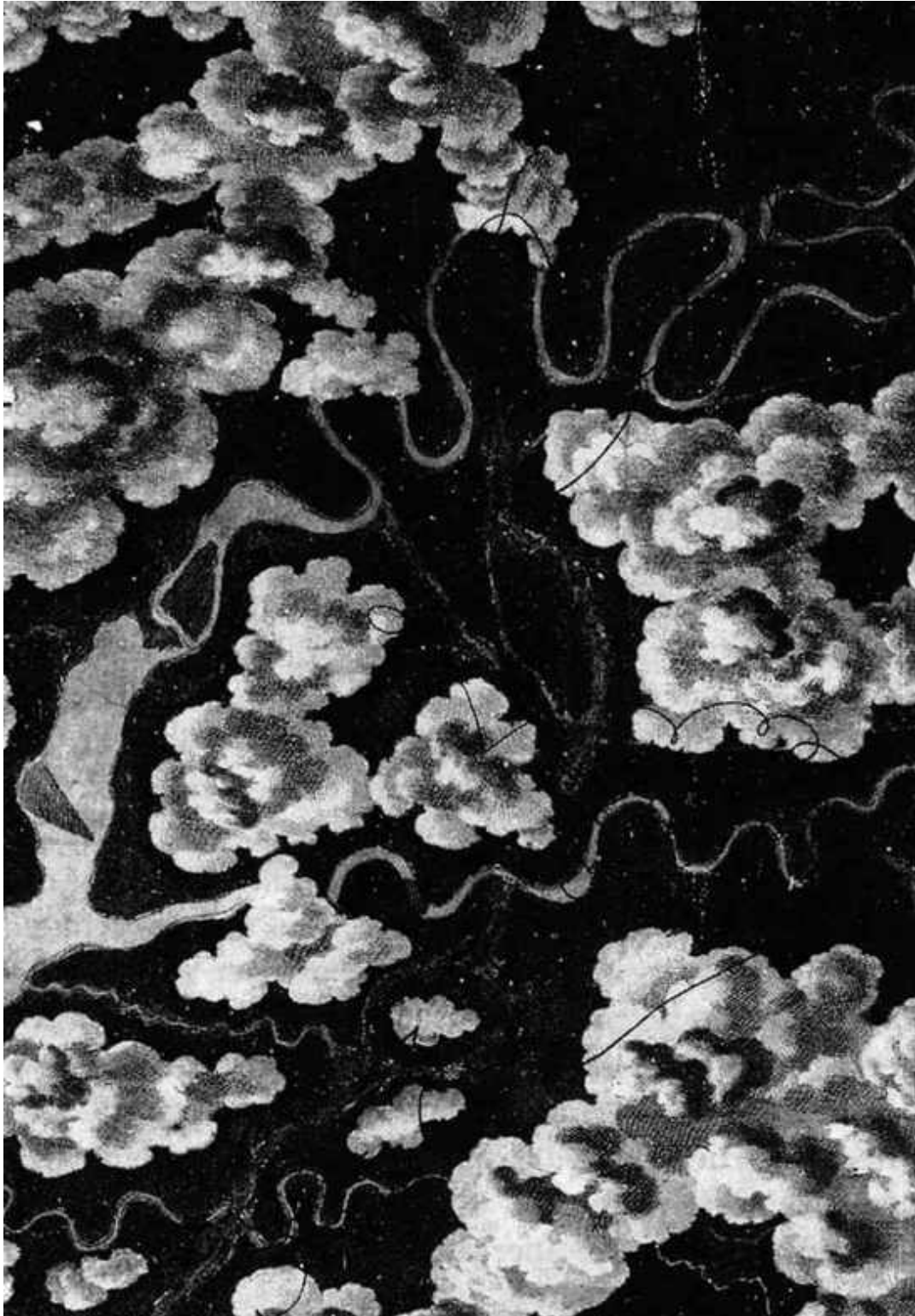
## 2. Increasing explicitness

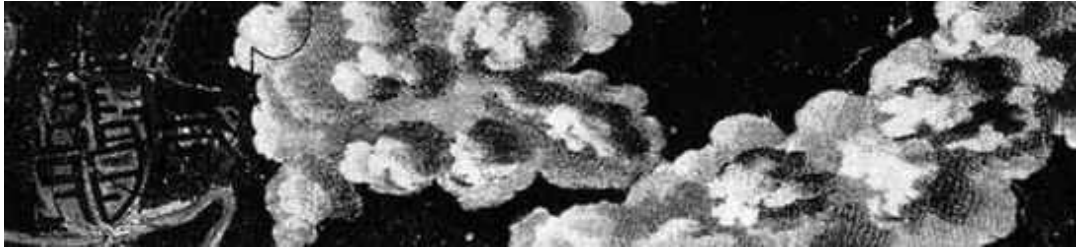
From the references to the atmoterrorist procedures of gas warfare (1915-1918) and genocidal gas exterminism (1941-1945) the contours of a special climatology appear. And, with it, the manipulation of breathable air becomes a cultural issue, although at first only in the most destructive dimension. It bears from the beginning the traits of a design intervention, by which microclimates are projected and produced, *lege artis*, more or less exactly delimitable, where human beings kill human beings. From this "negative air conditioning" conclusions can be drawn about the process of Modernity as an explanation of atmospheres. Atmoterrorism provides the decisive modernizing thrust to those human enclosures of residence in "lifeworld" conditions that had managed to resist for the longest time to take the step towards modern conceptions, from the natural relation with the atmosphere and from the tranquility of those who live and travel in an unquestionably given and unconcernedly predictable air environment. The average human being-in-the-world - also a modern explanatory name for the ontological "situation" after the loss of the old European universal certainty - had until then been a being-in-the-air, or more precisely a being-in-the-breathable, to such an unquestionable and natural extent that a detailed thematization of the conditions of air and atmosphere could not emerge, at any rate in poetic forms or in physical and medical contexts,<sup>[110]</sup> but never in the daily self-relations of the participants in culture, let alone in the definitions of their way of life in general,

With the exception, perhaps, of the very advanced intuitions of the precocious cultural theorist Johann Gottfried Herder, who as early as 1784, in his inexhaustible *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* [*Ideas for the Philosophy of Human History*], postulated a new science of "aerology," as well as a general knowledge of the atmosphere, as an investigation of the "globe of air" that shelters life: "For the human being, like everything else, is a pupil of the air". If we had, at last, Herder proclaimed, an academy to teach such disciplines, a new light would be shed on the connection of the human cultural being with nature and we would succeed in "seeing how that *great hothouse* of nature acts in a thousand transformations according to uniform fundamental laws."<sup>[111]</sup>

These sentences remind us that Herder sponsored in that century a large-scale anthropology; we do not intend here to claim him again as the creator of the precarious doctrine of the imperfect nature of the human being,<sup>[112]</sup> but as the initiator of a theory of human cultures as forms of organization of existence in greenhouses. Nevertheless, his philanthropic anticipations, eutonically suspended on the contraposition of nature and culture, cannot yet conceive of the dialectical or thematic connection of terrorism and background explanation. Also the well-known Nietzschean hypersensitivity to everything that had to do with climatic conditions of existence, such as air pressure, humidity, wind, clouds and quasi-material tensions, still belongs to the last dawn of an ancient European trust in nature and the atmosphere, albeit already in a distorted form. In a humorous outburst, Nietzsche, because of his abnormally sensitive condition to the atmosphere, offered himself as a possible exhibit at the exhibition of electricity in Paris in 1881 as a, shall we say, pataphysical instrument of measuring tension.<sup>[113]</sup> But what air, climate, respiratory medium and atmosphere mean, both in the micro- and macroclimatological sense and, above all, from the cultural-theoretical and media-theoretical point of view, can only be experienced after the

The first is a review of the modes and levels of atmoterrorist extermination practices during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it can now be recognized that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is moving towards new manifestations in this regard.





Thomas Baldwin, *Airopaidia*, 1786, detail, view from the globe above the clouds.

Airships: with the explanation of the conditions of air, climate and atmosphere, the original advantage of those existing in a primary means of existence is undermined, and their judgment in favor of it comes to be considered naivety. As it is understood in retrospect, when human beings in their preceding history could place themselves under any region of the sky in the open air or under a roof, confident in the unquestionable assumption that the surrounding atmosphere - except for the miasma zones - would allow them to breathe, they made use of a privilege of naivety, which has been lost forever after the cut-off of the 20th century. Whoever lives after this historical caesura and moves in a cultural zone synchronized with Modernity is expressly condemned to the design of atmospheres and concern for climate, whether in rudimentary or elaborate forms. He has to confess his willingness to participate in Modernity, allowing himself to be captured by its explicit force of the previously quietly sub-"recumbent" or environmentally enveloping-circling.

Before the new obligation to be concerned with the atmospheric and climatic could be stabilized in the consciousness of later generations, atmoterrorism had to take a few more explanatory steps. Here there is an opportunity to speak with philosophical expressions of the development of the modern *Luftwaffe*<sup>[\*\*]</sup>, whose name attests to its competence for interventions in atmospheric events. In our context it should be clarified that air weapons represent *per se* a central phenomenon of atmoterrorism from its state side. Like later missile artillery, military aircraft function in the front line as access weapons; they suppress the immunizing effect of the spatial distance between groups.

They gain access to objects, which on the ground would hardly be reachable or only with a large number of casualties. They make it irrelevant whether the combatants are natural neighbors or not. The globalization of warfare by means of teledestructive systems would be incomprehensible without the long-range explosion achieved by airborne weapons. Because of its use, large parts of the specific exterminism of the 20th century are to be attributed to a black meteorology. In this theory of special precipitation caused by human beings we speak of the colonization of airspace by flying machines and their commissioning for atmoterrorist and para-artillery tasks.



Beginning of bomb warfare by hand-dropping from the air, 1914.



Whereas atmoterrorism, in its overt forms between 1915 and 1945, always operated on the ground (except in the Rif war in Spanish Morocco, 1922-1927, which was the first to be conducted as aerochemical warfare),<sup>[114]</sup> terrorist attacks on enemy lifeworlds, using heat and radiation, depend practically always, for technical and tactical reasons, on Air-Force operations; The destruction of Dresden by fleets of British bombers on February 13 and 14, 1945, and the liquidation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, by the dropping of two single nuclear bombs from American fighter planes, remain paradigmatic in this respect (after the scandalous attacks by German planes on Guernica on April 26, 1937, and on Coventry on the night of November 14-15, 1940), above all. However much they occupied the imagination with chivalrous-romantic scenes of tournaments in the air, historically the combats between equivalent units of aviators were of rather marginal importance; the infamous "Battle of Britain" was an exception from the military-historical point of view. On the contrary, in the field of "air warfare", the practice of unilateral air strikes has *de facto* prevailed, which are irreplicable, in which either single aircraft carry out precision attacks against defined targets, or larger air fleets are used for surface bombardment, the latter in line with the fuzzy-logical principle of gas artillery: close enough means operationally the same as exact. What must always be presupposed is the modern exterminist approach, according to which to win means to annihilate; air force, artillery and asepsis unfold in this respect along analogous paths. The metaphor of the carpet of bombs, which has been introduced since the 1940s, summarizes the process in a suggestive plastic image: attacking air squadrons cover large segments of built-up and inhabited terrain with deadly carpeting. The NATO air strikes against Serbia in the Kosovo conflict, between March 24 and June 10, 2001, were the first to be carried out by NATO.

1999, show that spot bombing can also produce surface destruction effects in cases of sufficient proximity to the targets.

However much air weapons may be susceptible to a romantic-military interpretation of their functions and may present themselves discreetly as a neo-aristocratic variety of weapons - to a certain extent as a continuation of artillery as a real variety in a freer environment -, because of their practical tendency they constitute the preferred resolving organ of state-instituted atmoterrorism.<sup>[115]</sup> This confirms that the statehood of weapons, far from constituting the antidote to terrorist practices, produces their systematization. There can no longer be any symmetry between attack and defense, since the principle of terror is inherent to the weapon as such; the extermination of the attacked, whether people or things, is something proposed *a priori* (but, since exterminism cannot appear in the self-description of Western political structures and can only serve to characterize antagonistic feelings, since the *Desert Storm* operation in 1990-1991 for the liberation of Kuwait, no graphic information is allowed on the effects caused by American air strikes). The fact that since World War II air forces have had access to first-rate weapons systems, especially in the numerous interventionist wars of the United States since 1945, speaks only in favor of the normalization of the state-terrorist habitus and the greening of the way war is conducted.

<sup>[116]</sup> Wherever state terrorism based on aerial weapons sets the tone, the mass annihilation of civilian lives is to be reckoned with; the alleged *collateral damage* is not infrequently manifested as the main result. From this point of view, the demonstrations of Serbian civilians, who, decorating themselves as targets, positioned themselves during the NATO air strikes in the spring of 1999 on the Branko Bridge over the Save, offer an apt commentary on the reality of air warfare in the 20th and 21st centuries.

As not only the experiences of the Second World War in Europe and the Far East have shown, in the way of conducting warfare of the state air forces one arrives at the general utilization of the attacking habit, since air attacks, by their very *modus operandi*, always already possess the character of an unforeseen assault. They always involve, moreover, even when they occur as precision strikes against "installations", the detriment of the enemy's lifeworlds and *eo ipso* the risk of killing civilians; in case of surface attacks this becomes the primary intention. It is known that the "terror bombing", widespread from 1940 to 1945 on the territory of the German Reich, was not only aimed at military structures, but rather at the mental infrastructure of the nation; therefore, because of its supposedly demoralizing effect - there was talk of *moral bombing* - it had to be defended among the Allies in the face of internal criticism, not only pacifistically motivated. Two whole generations had to pass before military historiography dared to proclaim the systematic character of the will to annihilation, which was at the basis of the British and American air war against German cities.<sup>[117]</sup> It was not until two generations had passed that military historiography dared to proclaim the systematic character of the will to annihilation, which was at the basis of the British and American air war against German cities.<sup>[117]</sup>



Civilians on the Branko Bridge over the Save, Belgrade.

The bombing of Dresden on the night of February 13-14, 1945 by two Lancaster air fleets of the Royal Air Force was carried out according to a pyrotechnical plan, according to which the old combustible core of the city was surrounded and densely seeded, in a circular quadrant-shaped sector, by a thick ring of explosive and incendiary bombs. In this way, the whole area was to be included in a blast furnace effect; what mattered to the attackers was to make the multiplicity of fires grow into a total blaze, of whose possible destructive force the first tests already made in other easily combustible old cities, namely in Hamburg in July 1943 (in operation "Gomorra") and in Kassel in October of the same year, had convinced them of its potential destructive force. By the high concentration of the incendiary bombs, in the form of a baton, an attempt was made to create a central vacuum that would trigger a whirlwind of suction similar to a hurricane.

This procedure for the systematic unleashing of the firestorm - corresponding to the "closed destruction space principle" <sup>[118]</sup> was declared by the British Air Marshal Arthur Harris as a possibly decisive means of warfare. The desired effect was prepared in Dresden by the first bombardment between 22:03 and 22:28 hours and secured by the second wave of attacks between 1:30 and 1:55 hours, which fanned the firestorm and spread it to other areas of the city, especially that around the station, full of fugitives. The third wave of attacks by American air units found an already ravaged city. In the first two attacks 650,000 bombs were dropped, of which about 1,500 tons were mine bombs and explosive bombs as opposed to about 1,200 tons of incendiary bombs, which were dropped in small dispersion, as rain.<sup>[119]</sup> The high quota of incendiary bombs reveals that the primary intention was the destruction of living areas and the extinguishing of civilian lives. The attackers knew the circumstances, according to which a methodical realization of their plan, in a city like Dresden, overburdened by fugitives from the east, was bound to produce a large number of civilian casualties. Churchill, in any case, was prepared to label himself a terrorist.



"On the way to the goal. Incendiary and explosive bombs fall to earth over the knot

Nazi railroad in Bruchsal on March 1, 1945."

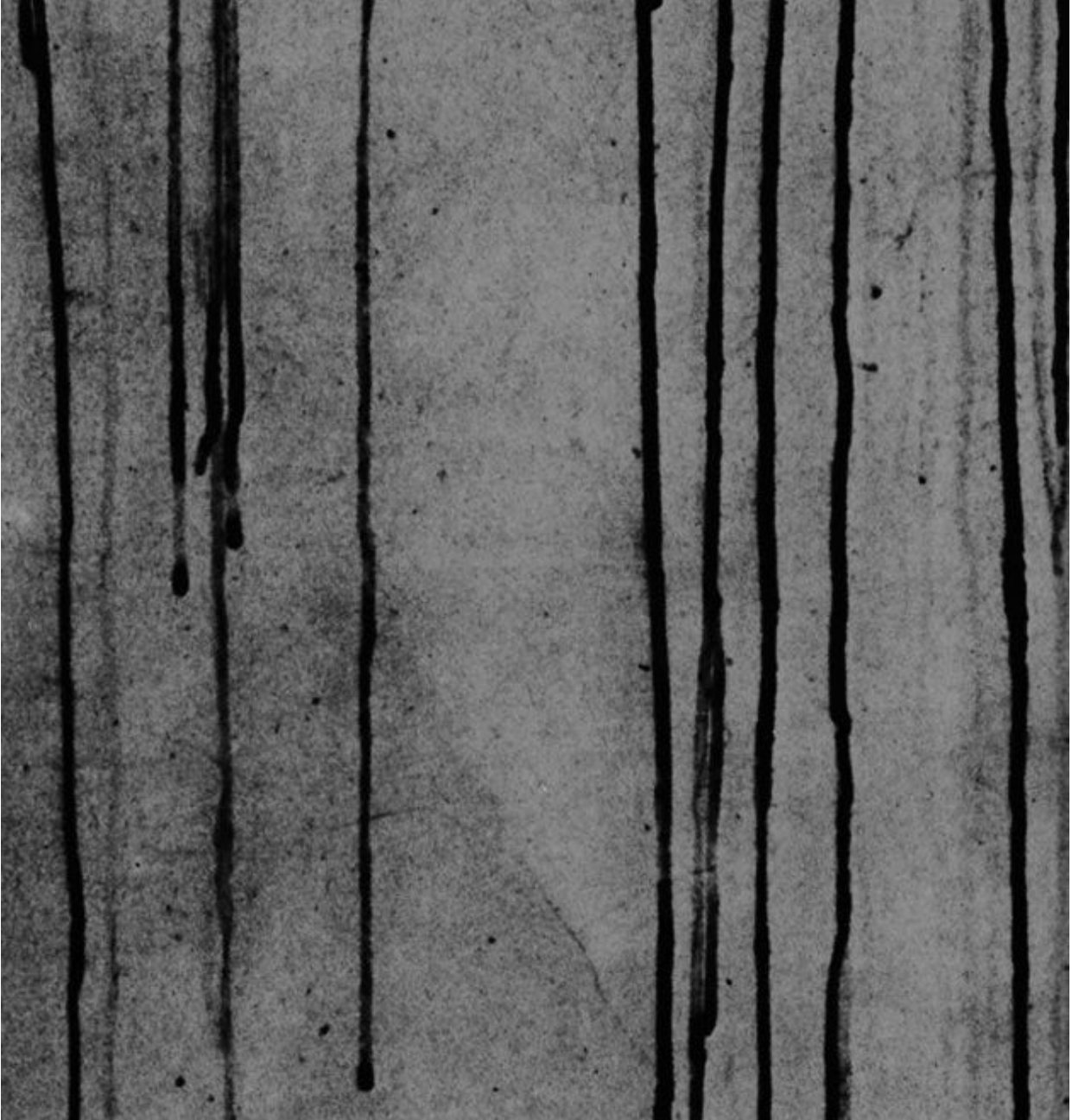
The success of the project was manifested, among other things, in the fact that numerous people were found inside the fire pot, who had been enclosed in it, dehydrated, shrunken and mummified without having come into direct contact with the flames. Because of the chimney effect, many shelters became hot air ovens, whose occupants were roasted alive; for more than 12 000 people the cellars became smoke gas traps. In the history of applied horror, before August 6, 1945, there is hardly such an example of how in a "living world" of the extent of the historic center of an old city, situations can be created whose characteristics correspond to a highly activated combustion chamber; temperatures of more than 1000 degrees Celsius occurred there. That in that special atmosphere during a single night, according to the lowest estimates, 35,000 human beings (but probably more than 40,000) could be burned, charred, parched and asphyxiated, was an innovation in the field of rapid mass killings.<sup>[120]</sup> Although it can be understood as the culmination of a series of singularities conditioned by the war, the night of the Dresden fire brought to the world the new archetype of extensive thermoterrorism. What happened there was a great attack, thought through to the end, against the thermal boundary conditions of life. It brought about the most explicit denial of the most implicit of all hopes: that the being-in-the-world of human beings cannot under any circumstances mean a being-in-the-fire.

It belongs to the surprises, no longer surprising, of the twentieth century that this maximum proved to be surmountable. The explanation of the atmosphere by terror did not stop at the transformation of "lifeworlds" into gas chambers and fire chambers. To overcome the horrors of Churchill's blast furnace it took nothing less than a "revolution of the image of the world" or, more accurately - since we understand the falsity of the discourse of revolution - an even greater unfolding of what sustains the world in its physical and biospheric latency. It is not necessary at this point to recapitulate the joint history of nuclear physics and nuclear weapons. In our context it is important that the nuclear-physics explanation of

radioactive matter and its popular demonstration by means of atomic mushrooms on barren experimental terrains and inhabited cities, at the same time, revealed a new step of depth in the explanation of the humanly relevant atmospheric. This led to a new "revolutionary" orientation of the consciousness of the "environment" in the direction of the invisible medium of waves and radiation. In the face of this, nothing can any longer be achieved by recourse to the classical clearing [*Lichtung*] in which "we live, weave and are," whether understood theologically or phenomenologically. The (post)phenomenological commentary on the atomic lightning over the Nevada desert and the two Japanese cities reads: *Making radioactivity explicit*.

With the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, not only did the events in Germany surpass those of Germany in quantitative terms, but the simultaneous extinction of (according to the most cautious estimates) more than 100,000 human lives in one case and more than 40,000 in the other<sup>[121]</sup> marked the culmination, for the time being, of the atomoterrorist process of explanation; the nuclear explosions of August 6 and 9, 1945, at the same time, gave an impetus to an escalation from the qualitative point of view, in that, beyond the thermoterrorist dimension, they opened the way to the radioterrorist one. The victims of the radiation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who met shortly afterwards with the victims of the heat of the first minutes and seconds - in countless cases also with a delay of years or decades - made express the knowledge that human existence is continuously included in a complex atmosphere of waves and radiations, of whose reality only certain indirect effects, but never any immediate perception, can testify to us. The direct delivery of a dose, acute or delayed lethal for human beings, of radioactivity, released "after" the primary thermal and kinetic effect of the bombs, opens a completely new dimension of latency in the knowledge of those affected and of the witnesses.





Black, highly radioactive rain fell on Nagasaki. Photo: Yuichiro Sasaki.

The previously hidden, unknown, unconscious, never known, never observed, never observable was suddenly forced to appear on the plane of manifestation; it suddenly became conspicuous in the form of peeling skin and sores, as if an invisible fire were producing visible burns. On the faces of the survivors a new form of apathy was reflected: the

The "masks of Hiroshima" gazed in astonishment at the remains of a world, from which human beings had been deprived in a storm of light. Which was returned to them as irradiated desert. Those faces comment on the ontological abuse at its dark limit value. After the black rain on Japan, the nameless evil manifested itself for decades in the form of cancerous polyps of all kinds and psychic disorders of the deepest kind. Until 1952, because of U.S. censorship, any public allusion to both acts of terror was forbidden in Japan.<sup>[122]</sup> [The following is an example of this.](#)



"Mask-Hiroshima". A young girl searches for her family in Hiroshima.

In these events we must see a dimensional growth of the action of terror: the nuclear attack on the enemy's lifeworld also includes since then the exploitation of latency as such. The non-perceptibility of the radioactive weapons becomes

an essential part of the very effect of these weapons. Only after their irradiation does the enemy understand that they exist not only in an atmosphere of air, but also in an atmosphere of waves and radiation. Nuclear extremism is, even more than chemical extremism, which uses gas and fire, the critical moment of atmospheric explanation.

With the nuclear explanatory step the phenomenal catastrophe becomes a catastrophe of the phenomenal. The irruption of physicists, and of the military informed by them, into the radioactive level of influence on the environment has made it clear that there may be something in the air, which the mundane creatures of the prenuclear era -breathing carefree, naively sensitive to the environment-, the ancestral human "pupils of the air", fail to notice at all. From that moment of historical caesura they are subject to the coercion of counting on the imperceptible, as if it were a new law. In the future, it will be necessary to distrust one's own perception in order to survive in toxic environments. The paranoid way of thinking and feeling becomes a part of general education, *Only the Paranoid Survive*;<sup>[123]</sup> whoever is aware of the facts feels on edge because of the likelihood that desires to do harm from distant enemies will materialize invisibly.



Drawing of a survivor of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima: someone, lying on his back in the street, died immediately after the dropping of the atomic bomb. His hand was reaching for the sky, fingers burning amid blue flames. A dark liquid dripped from the hand to the earth.

In the redefined latency also bioterrorists (like their simulators and parasites) operate on a state and non-state background. In their attack calculation they take into account the dimension of the imperceptibly small and threaten the enemy's environment.

with invisible attackers. The most explicit advances in the dimension of bio-atmospheric terrorism were carried out by Soviet military researchers in the 1960s and 1970s. To their early scenes belong the tests carried out in 1982 and 1983 with the agent provocateur turalemia, for which, on an island in Lake Aral, inaccessible to the public, hundreds of monkeys imported expressly for this purpose from Africa were tied to poles. The dropping of newly developed turalemia bombs on them led to the result, satisfactory to the researchers, that almost all of the experimental animals, despite being vaccinated, perished within a short time by inhalation of the provoking agent.<sup>[124]</sup>

When Martin Heidegger, in his articles from 1945 onwards, most often used "statelessness" as the existential password of the human being in the age of the-technical-entanglement [*Ge-stell-Zeitalter*], this expression did not only refer to the lost naivety of the stay in country houses and the passage to an existence in habitable urban machines. On a deeper level, the term "statelessness" signifies the denaturalization of the human being from the natural envelope of air and its move into air-conditioned spaces; in an even more radicalized reading, the discourse of homelandlessness symbolizes the exodus from all possible niches of shelter in latency. After psychoanalysis, not even the unconscious is usable as a homeland, after modern art not even "tradition", after modern biology hardly yet the "life", not to mention the "environment". To the spectrum of these openings to stateless existence belongs, after Hiroshima, the forced revelation of the radiophysical and electromagnetic dimensions of the atmosphere. Instead of dwelling, there appears the sojourn in radio-technically monitored areas. The physicist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, familiar with Heidegger's work, erected a memorial to this situation when, at the height of the nuclear arms race between the USA and the Soviet Union in the 1970s, he had a radioactive protection bunker demonstratively built in the garden of his house in Starnberg.



Atomic protection bunker, installation by Guillaume Bijl, 1985, Place St. Lambert, Liège.

It is permissible to doubt that Heidegger's evocative discourse on the "dwelling" of the human being in a "region" that enables and refers to itself may remain the last word in questions of an existence trapped in explanatory coercion and its task of self-design. When the philosopher praised the wise to remain in the "region" jumped, somewhat precipitously, to the ideal of a space that remakes the whole, that implies the old and the new.<sup>[125]</sup> "Region" [*Gegend*] means for him the name of a place.

in which an authentic existence could still flourish. It would not be possible to say very well how to reach it if one were not already there. It would have to be a place beyond explanation, as if it could only be explained elsewhere; a place that was indeed battered by the cold wind from the outside, by the risk of modernization's location, but which, in spite of everything, would still be the homeland. Its inhabitants would know that the desert grows, but they could feel engaged, precisely where they are, with a wonderfully immunizing "expanse of land and temporary recess."<sup>[126]</sup> Here one can speak of high bucolithic bucolithism. Here one can speak of high bucolism. To the word

<sup>[127]</sup> What is therapeutic if not the procedural knowledge and the art of knowing about the new organization of a scale of measurement in conformity with human rights after the irruption of the immoderate; if not an architecture for living spaces after the unlivable has shown itself to be unlivable? What makes us diverge from Heidegger is the historically grown and theoretically stabilized conviction that in the age of the explanation of the background even "regional" and patriotic relations, where they still flourish locally, cannot be taken simply as gifts of being, but depend on a great deployment of formal design, technical production, legal advice and political structuring.



Magdalena Jetelová, *Atlantic Wall*, 1994-1995.

In these references to the development (set in motion by gas warfare and reinforced by industrial smog) of the question of the conditions of breathability of the air, then to the gasterrorist and thermoterrorist exacerbations of World War II, and finally, to the highlighting of the radiological dimensions of the background of the human being-in-the-world, which since the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must be thematically and durably retained, we will now describe a historical arc of increasing expressiveness in the problematization of the human stay in gas and radiation environments. One cannot associate with a retrospective consideration such as that attempted here the assumption that the history of the explanation of the atmosphere through the refinement of atomic weapons has come to an end with the termination of the cold war. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, the last remaining world power has gained the monopoly to develop the *continuum* of atmoterrorism, elaborated from 1915 to 1990, in dimensions still



more explicit and monstrous. The end of the cold war may have brought with it a decrease in nuclear intimidation; but as far as the inclusion of the hitherto undeveloped climatic, radiophysical and neurophysiological dimensions of the background of human existence in world power military projects is concerned, the threshold of the 1990s signifies a new beginning. From that moment, and unnoticed by public opinion, the leap to an unpredictable level of escalation in the opportunities for atomterrorist attack was made.

In a *Department of Defense* paper, submitted on June 17, 1996, and whose release to the public was authorized without regard to its sensitive subject matter, seven officials from a Pentagon scientific research department explained the broad outlines of a future way of waging war in the ionosphere. The project paper, presented under the title "*Weather as a Force Multiplier: Owning the Weather in 2025*", was written on behalf of the Air Force General Staff with the instruction to provide conditions under which the United States could assert its role as the absolutely dominant weapons power in air and space in 2025. The authors of the paper assume that in thirty years of development it will be possible to make the ionosphere as one of the components of the outer physical ground cover invisible to human perception, especially by suppressing and producing arbitrary stormy weather conditions, which will guarantee *battlefield dominance* to the possessor of the ionospheric weapons, in a way relevant to warfare. According to current anticipations, the meteorological weapon includes, among other things: preservation or blurring of vision in airspace; raising or lowering of *comfort levels* (morale) of troops; intensification and modification of storms; suppression of rainfall over enemy territories and artificial production of drought; interception and jamming of enemy communication; and

hindering similar meteorological activities of the enemy.

With the clarification of these new parameters for military operational interventions in the *battlespace environment*, the possible future condition of *battlefield shaping* and *battlefield awareness* is already taken into account. In the final summary of the paper it is stated in this regard:

As a high-risk, high-reward endeavor, time modification presents us with a dilemma akin to nuclear fission. As long as some sectors of society remain constantly opposed to discussing controversial topics such as time modification, the enormous (*tremendous*) military possibilities that may arise in this field will be ignored, in a manner dangerous to ourselves.

In doing so, the authors of the paper on meteorological warfare not only imply that they are recommending the development of such weapons even against public opinion; they also place themselves in a cultural environment that is already capable of anticipating only one type of war: the U.S. military conflict with the United States.

"scoundrels", i.e. with States that tolerate or support military or terrorist actions against the civilizational complex of the "West". Only in this context is propaganda in favor of a future meteorological weapon and the entry into an escalation of atmoterrorist practices compatible with a highly legalized cultural situation characterized by an extreme sensitivity to the obligations of substantiation. Inherent in the premises of weather weapons research is a stable moral asymmetry between the U.S. way of waging war and any possible way of waging war by anyone other than the United States: under no other circumstances could the investment of public means in the construction of a technologically asymmetric weapon of obvious terrorist quality be justified. In order to democratically legitimize atmoterrorism in its most advanced form, it is necessary to presuppose the image of an enemy that makes plausible the use of appropriate means for its special ionospheric treatment. In the *American way of war* the harassment of the enemy entails his punishment, since only overt criminals can be imagined as being responsible for armed rudeness against the United States. This standard has been valid, moreover, since the Cold War, during which Moscow was obstinately described as the "world's base of terrorism". Therefore, the declaration of war is replaced in practice by an arrest warrant or an enforcement order against the enemy. Whoever possesses the interpretative sovereignty to declare fighters for a foreign cause as terrorists systematically shifts the perception of terror from the plane of methods to the mood of the adversary group, and thereby removes himself from the scene. From that moment on, the way of waging war and the trial by martial law become indistinguishable. The anticipated justice of the victor is not only fulfilled in the way of conducting a declared war as a disciplinary measure; it is also carried out as a weapons research against the enemy of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

Beyond the declared interest in the meteorological weapon, the United States has been working since 1993 on a related program, although in this case kept secret, for aurora research, the *High-frequency Active Auroral Research Programme*, HAARP, from which the scientific and technological premises of a possible super-wave weapon could follow. When they fail to avoid public opinion, the sponsors of the project boast of its civilian character, more or less of its possible ability to recreate the defective ozone layer and to prevent cyclones, while its - not numerous - critics see in such statements the typical camouflage of absolutely secret military projects.<sup>[128]</sup> The HAARP project is based in a research complex in Gakona, South Central Alaska, approximately 300 kilometers northwest of Anchorage, composed of a large number of antennas that create high-energy electromagnetic fields and radiate them into the ionosphere. Their reflection and resonance effect appears to be used to focus energy fields onto discretionary points on the Earth's surface. Radiation emissions of this type could result in an energetic artillery of almost unlimited effects. The technical premises of such an installation derive from ideas of the inventor Nicola Tesla (1856-1943), who had already warned the US government around 1940 about the military possibilities of a tele-energy weapon.



Antennas of the Haarp Project.

If such a system were implantable, it would be capable of triggering powerful physical effects, up to and including the triggering of weather catastrophes and earthquakes in selected areas. Some observers link the Alaskan facility tests to erratic fogs and snowstorms in Arizona and other unclarified atmospheric phenomena in different parts of the world. But since ELF (*Extremely Low Frequencies*) waves, or infrasound waves, not only influence not only anorganic matter but also living organisms, especially the human brain, which works in deep frequency ranges, HAARP holds out the prospect of producing a neurotelepathic weapon that could destabilize human populations by remote attacks on their brain functions.<sup>[129]</sup> Such a weapon can only be conceived, even speculatively, if the moral gap between the brains developing it and the brains to be attacked with ELF waves appears completely clear in the present and can be kept stable in the future. Even if it were a non-lethal weapon, it could only be used against the absolutely bizarre or against absolute evil in its human incarnations. But it would not

it can be excluded that the collateral effect of such research enterprises entails *per se* moral complications, disastrous for the determination of such a gap. When the differentiation between rogue brains and non-rogue brains is not clear, the production of such a wave weapon against one side of that difference - as has already happened with atomic weapons - could prove disastrous, by self-reference, for the other side as well.

Mention of such prospects may be considered surreal; but it is no more surreal than announcements of a gas weapon before 1915 and of an atomic weapon before 1945 would have been. Prior to the demonstration by events, most intellectuals in the Western hemisphere would have dismissed the development of nuclear weapons as a kind of scientific-naturally camouflaged occultism and denied it any plausibility. The surreality effect of the real before publication belongs to the collateral effects of the leading explanation, which from its inception divides societies into a small group of people, who participate in the irruption of the explicit as thinkers, operators and victims, and into another, much larger one, which, from the point of view of what is existentially licit, persists *ante eventum* in the implicit and, in any case, reacts later and punctually to the explanations. Public hysteria is the democratic response to the explicit, after becoming undeniable.

The daily stay in latency is increasingly prey to restlessness. Two types of sleepers appear: the implicit sleepers, who continue to seek shelter in ignorance, and the explicit sleepers, who know what is planned at the front, but wait for the order to act. The atomoterrorist explanation so distances the consciences in one and the same cultural population (it has long been indifferent to call it people or population) that *de facto* they no longer live in the same world and only formally constitute a simultaneous society, because of the state citizenship condition. It makes some of them collaborators in the explanation, and with

In this way, they - in front sections that change incessantly - become agents of a structural terror - although only rarely concrete and real - exercised against the background conditions of nature and culture, while the others - transformed into regionalists, domestic aborigines, into voluntary protectors of their own anachronism - cultivate in fact-free reserves the advantage of being able to continue clinging to images of the world and conditions of symbolic immunity of the latency epoch.

### 3. Air/Condition

Among the offensive campaigns of Modernity, that of surrealism has especially sharpened the idea that the fundamental interest of actuality has to be directed to the explanation of culture. We understand culture - following the suggestions of Bazon Brock, Heiner Mühlmann, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Dieter Claessens and others - to be the set of rules and action commitments that are transmitted and vary in generational processes.

Surrealism obeys the imperative of occupying symbolic dimensions in the modernization campaign. Its declared or undeclared objective is to make creative processes explicit and to technically clarify the domains of its sources. To this end, it simply resorted to the fetish of the time, the omnilegitimizing concept of "revolution". But as was already the case in the political sphere (where, *de facto*, it was never a question of a real "turn" in the sense of a reversal of top and bottom, but rather of the proliferation of leading positions and their new occupation by representatives of aggressive middle social strata, which in reality could not be achieved without the mechanisms of power becoming partially transparent, i.e. without democratization, and rarely without an initial phase of open violence from below), the mischaracterization of events is also evident in the cultural field; for here it was never a question of "revolution" either, but rather, and exclusively, of a new distribution of the symbolic hegemony; and this required a certain highlighting of the artistic procedures; for this reason there had to be a phase of barbarisms and tempests of

images. As far as culture is concerned, "revolution" is a covert expression of "legitimate" violence against latency. It stages the rupture of the new operators, sure of their procedures, with the holisms and comforts of bourgeois artistic situations.

The memory of one of the best-known scenes of the surrealist offensive can clarify the parallelism between the atmoterrorist explanations of the climate and the "revolutionary"-cultural blows against the mentality of a bourgeois art public. On July 1, 1936, Salvador Dalí, who at the beginning of his career passed as a self-proclaimed ambassador of the realm of the superreal, gave a lecture-performance at the New Burlington Galleries in London, on the occasion of the International Surrealist Exhibition, in which, in connection with his own exhibited work, he proposed to explain the principles of the "critical-paranoid method" developed by himself. In order to make it clear to the public already with his own presentation that he was speaking on behalf of the other and as the representative of a radical in-other-part, Dalí had decided to wear a diving suit for his speech; according to the report of the *London Star* of July 2, a car radiator had been placed on the helmet; the artist was also carrying a billiard cue in his hands and was accompanied by two large dogs.<sup>[130]</sup> In his self-presentation *Comment on devient Dalí* the artist tells a version of the incident that gave rise to this idea.

On the occasion of the exhibition, I had decided to say a few words to offer a symbol of the subconscious. So I was put into my armor and even lead soles were placed on me, making it impossible for me to move my legs. I had to be transported to the platform. Then my helmet was put on and screwed on. I began my speech behind the glass of the helmet, and in front of a microphone, which obviously could not pick up anything. But my mimicry fascinated the audience. Soon I began to open my mouth, however, in search of air, my face turned first red and then blue, and my eyes rolled back in my head. Evidently they had forgotten [*sic*] to connect me to an air supply system and I was about to suffocate. The specialist who had equipped me had disappeared. By gestures I gave my friends to understand that my situation was becoming critical. One took a pair of scissors and tried in vain to pierce the suit, another wanted to unscrew the helmet. Two men tried to tear off my helmet, a third one was hitting the metal so hard that I almost lost my senses. On the platform there was only a



I would emerge every now and then like a wimp with dislocated limbs, and my copper helmet sounded like a gong. The audience applauded this achieved Dalinian mimodrama, which in their eyes represented, no doubt, how the conscious tries to take over the unconscious. But I would have almost succumbed to that triumph. When my helmet was finally torn off, I was as pale as Jesus when he returned from the desert after forty days of fasting.<sup>[131]</sup> I was as pale as Jesus when he returned from the desert after forty days of fasting.

The scene makes two things clear: that surrealism is a diletantism when it does not use technical objects according to their own characteristics, but symbolically; and that, at the same time, it is a part of the most explicit movement of Modernity, insofar as it presents itself unequivocally as a latency-breaking and background-dissolving procedure. The attempt to destroy the consensus between the productive and receptive side in matters of art, in order to liberate the radicality of the self-value of exhibition-events, constitutes an important aspect of the dissolution of the background in the cultural field. It makes explicit both the absolute character of production and the arbitrariness of reception.

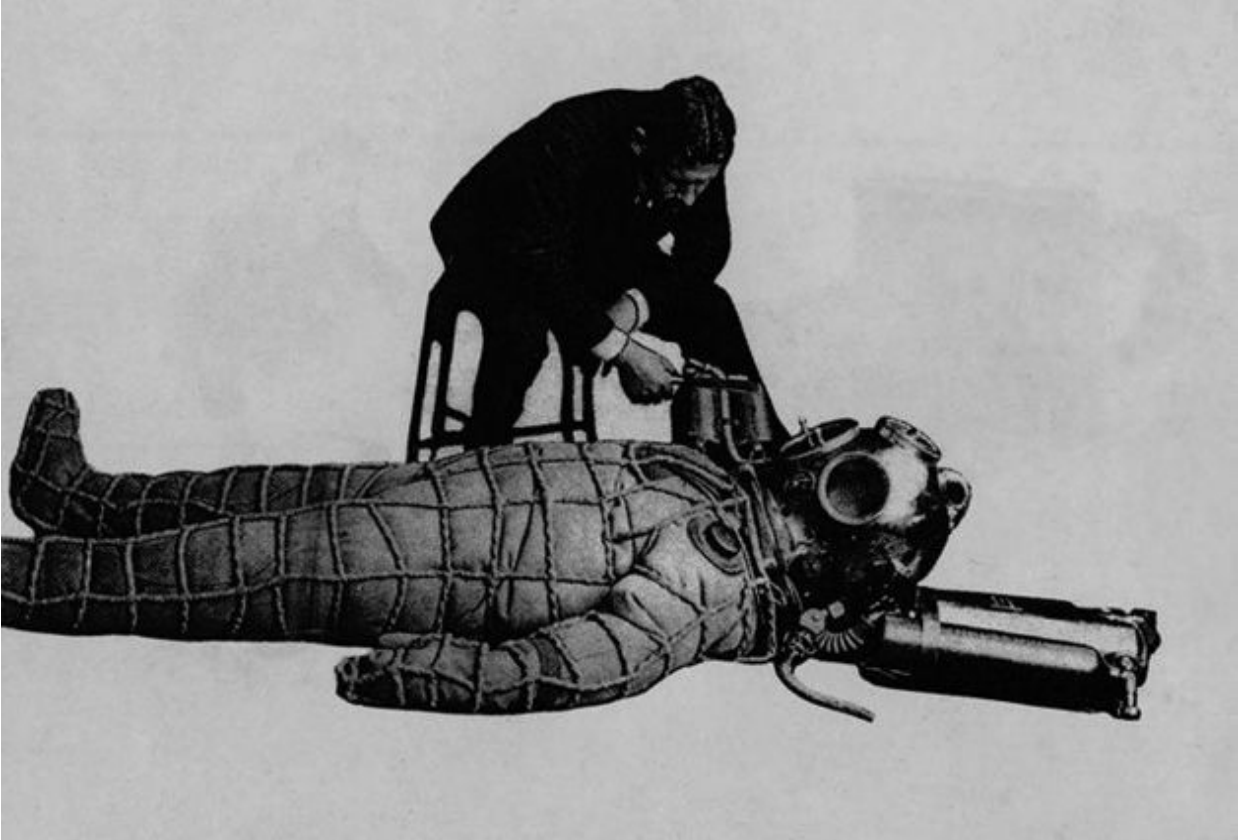


Dalí in a diving suit during his speech on July 1, 1936 in London.

Such interventions have value combative at as anti-provincial and anti-cultural-narcissistic illustrations. Not in vain

the surrealists, in the early phase of their aggressive onslaught, developed the art of scandalizing the bourgeois as a *sui generis* form of action, on the one hand because this helped the innovators to distinguish *ingroup* from *outgroup*, on the other hand because the protest of public opinion could be considered a sign of success in the decomposition of the traditional system. Whoever scandalizes citizens makes a profession of progressive iconoclasm. He instigates terror against symbols in order to make them explode latent mystified positions and to make them appear with the help of more explicit techniques. The legitimate premise of symbolic aggression lies in the assumption that cultures have too many corpses in the closet and that it is time to blow up the latently protected connections between armor and edification.

But if the first avant-gardes succumbed to deceptive reasoning, it was because the bourgeoisie that was to be intimidated always learned its lesson more quickly than any of the aesthetic terrorists had foreseen. After a few exchanges in the game between the provocateurs and the provoked, a situation had to arise in which the mass-culturally relaxed bourgeoisie took the initiative in making art, culture and meaning explicit through marketing, design and self-hypnosis. Artists continued to terrorize strenuously, not realizing that the moment for that medium had passed. (Semantic terrorism becomes ineffective as soon as the public understands its game; the same would also happen, by the way, with criminal and military terror if the press renounced its role as an accomplice). Others succumbed to a neo-romantic turn and made a new pact with depth. Soon there were many who seem to have forgotten the principle of modern philosophy established by Hegel: that the depth of a thought can only be measured by its strength of detail; otherwise, the claim to depth remains only an empty symbol of unmastered latency.



Dräger Pressure Suit, 1915, for the treatment of diseases of the decompression.

These diagnoses can be seen in Dalí's unsuccessful and therefore informative performance: it demonstrates, on the one hand, that the destruction of the consensus between artist and public is not achieved as soon as the latter understands the rule that the extension of the work to the environment of the work itself must be understood, in turn, as a form of the work. The enthusiastic applause with which Dalí was received at the New Burlington Galleries shows how consistently the informed public complied with the new covenants of art perception. On the other hand, the scene showed the artist as a breaker of latency, transmitting to the profane people a message coming from the realm of the other. Dalí's function in this game was distinguished by an ambiguity that reveals something essential about his fluctuation between romanticism and objectivity: on the one hand, he presented himself as a cold technologist of the other, given that in the text of his speech, he did not

The book, which was not transmitted but easily imaginable from the title: *Authentic Paranoid Fantasies*, was intended to deal with a precise method of access to the "subconscious": that critical-paranoid method, with which Dalí formulated instructions for the "conquest of the irrational".

[132] He confessed himself a proponent of a kind of photorealism in relation to irrational images, which was to objectify with proverbial accuracy what presented itself in dreams, delusions and inner visions. The surrealist artist is, in a certain sense, the secretary of a private beyond, under whose dictation he elaborates his notes as mechanically and precisely as possible; consequently, the work represents an archive of visions. Like Picasso, Dalí does not seek, he finds, and finding here means as much as archiving the form that emerges from the unconscious.

Like Breton and others before him, at that time Dalí understood his work as a parallel action to the so-called "discovery of the unconscious by psychoanalysis": that scientific myth that in the 1920s and 1930s was received in different ways by both the artistic avant-garde and the educated public (and which Lacan, an admirer and rival of Dalí, gave prestige again between the 1950s and 1970s, by reviving the surrealist slogan of "return to Freud"). From that perspective, surrealism is incorporated into the manifestations of the operativist "revolution" that sustains continued modernization. On the other hand, Dalí remained resolutely anti-critical of the romantic conception of the artist-ambassador, who wanders among the unenlightened as a delegate of a beyond pregnant with meaning. In this attitude he reveals himself as a haughty *amateur*, who abandons himself to the illusion of the possibility of introducing pretentious technical instruments for the articulation of metaphysical *kitsch-actions*. Typical in this respect is the attitude of the user, who candidly leaves the technical side of the performance in the hands of "specialists", of whose competence one is not convinced. The fact that the scene had not been rehearsed also betrays the artist's poor literary relationship with technical structures.

Dalí's choice of attire shows a lucid aspect, however. His accident is prophetic, and not only with regard to the reactions of the spectators, who were already announcing the applause of what was not understood as a new cultural habit. That the artist chose for his appearance on stage as an ambassador of depth a diving suit designed for an artificial supply of air, certainly puts him in connection with the development of the consciousness of the atmosphere, which, as we try to show here, is at the center of the self-explanation of culture in the twentieth century. Even if the surrealist only arrives at a half-hearted technical explanation of the background of the world and culture as a "sea of the subconscious," he claims the competence to navigate in that space with professional procedures. His performance demonstrates that a conscious existence has to be lived as an explicit immersion in the context. Whoever in the multi-media society ventures out of his own cantonment must be sure of his "immersion equipment", i.e. his physical and mental immunity system, or his social space capsule. (Marshall McLuhan wrote in the early 1960s that the modern human being has become a "cosmic frogman": an expression that can be interpreted as a commentary on both cultural surfing and space travel).<sup>[133]</sup> The accident is not only to be blamed on dilettantism, it also highlights the systemic risks of the technical explanation of atmospheres and the technical conquest of access to another element, just as the risk of intoxication of the troops themselves in the gas war was already inseparable from the actions of military atmoterrorism. If Dalí's account of the incident is not exaggerated, it was not long before he would have entered the history of the culture of Modernity as a martyr of immersions in the symbolic.

Under the given conditions, the accident proved its effectiveness as a form of production. It released in the artist the panic that had always been inherent, as a stimulus, to his work. In the unsuccessful attempt to present the "subconscious" as a navigable zone, it was

The fear of destruction, for whose domination and repression the explanatory process is set in motion, has broken through to the foreground. To speak in general terms: the counter-phobic experiment of modernization can never emancipate itself from its background of anguish, because this would only be able to emerge when it would be permissible to admit anguish itself into existence; something which, given the nature of things, represents the excluded hypothesis. Modernity as an explanation of the background remains locked in a phobic circle; insofar as it aspires to overcome anguish by means of an anguish-generating technique, it will miss its target time and again. Both primary and secondary anguish provide the relentless drive for the continuation of this futile process; their urgency justifies at any stage of modernization the use of new, latency-breaking, background-controlling violence; or, according to the dominant linguistic rules: it demands investigation of the fundamentals and permanent innovation.

Aesthetic Modernity is a procedure for the use of violence, not against people or things, but against unclear cultural circumstances. It organizes a wave of attacks against global attitudes of the type of belief, love, probity, and against such pseudo-evident categories as form, content, image, work and art. Its *modus operandi* is the live experiment with the users of such concepts. Consequently, aggressive modernism breaks with reverence for the classics, in which - as he notes with great aversion - a vague holism is most often manifested, coupled with a propensity to continue to rely on a *totum* abandoned to its lack of clarity and unfolding. Because of its sharpened will for explicitness, surrealism declares war on mediania: it recognizes in it the opportune hiding place of anti-modern inertias, which oppose the operative deployment and the reconstructive highlighting of retracted models. Since in this war of mentalities normality is considered a crime, art, as a means of fighting crime, can rely on unusual orders of entry into action. When Isaac Babel declared: "banality is the counter-revolution", he was expressing the principle of the modernist revolution: the use of horror as violence against normality explodes both aesthetic and social latency and brings to the surface the laws according to which societies and works of art are to be constructed. Horror helps the consummation of the anti-naturalist turn, which asserts everywhere the primacy of the artificial. The Permanent "revolution" means permanent horror, since it postulates a society that always manifests itself anew as terrifying, revisable. In the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*, 1930, André Breton writes:

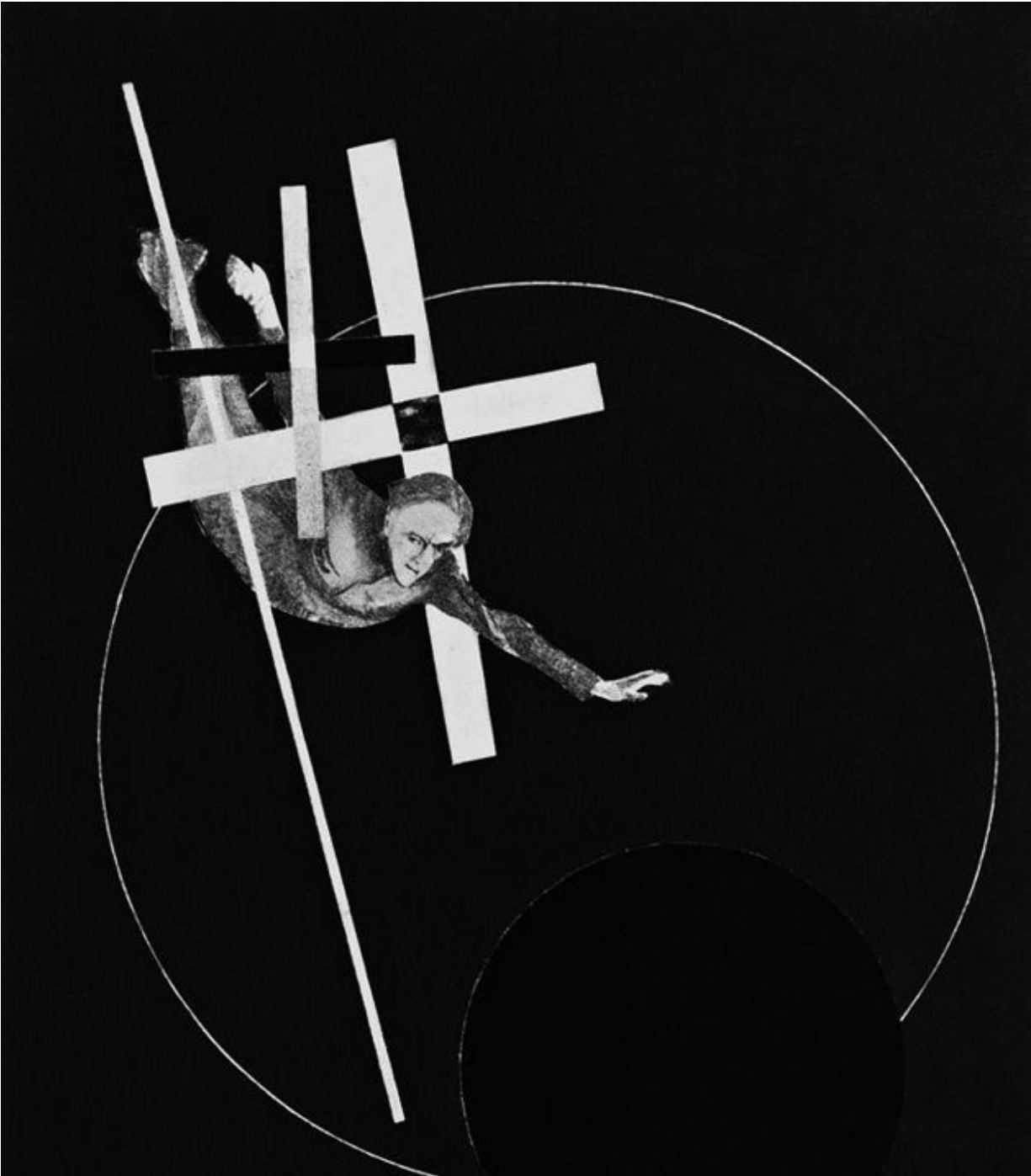
The simplest surrealist action consists of going out into the street wielding revolvers and firing blindly into the crowd as many times as possible.<sup>[134]</sup> The most simple surrealist action consists of going out into the streets wielding revolvers and firing blindly into the crowd as many times as possible.<sup>[134]</sup>

The new art is imbued with the excitement of the newest, since it presents itself as mimetic to terror and analogous to war, often without even being able to say whether it declares war on the war of societies or whether it wages war in its own cause. The artist is always faced with the choice of presenting himself to public opinion either as the savior of differences or as the warlord of innovations. He must also clarify himself as to whether he agrees with the law of imitation of the superior, on which all culture is based up to now, or whether he associates himself with the neo-barbaric habit of Modernity of making imitation of the inferior the rule.<sup>[135]</sup> In view of these ambivalences, so-called postmodernity was not so wrong to articulate itself as a counter-explicit, counter-extremist and partially anti-barbaric reaction to the aesthetic and analytical terrorism of Modernity.

Like any terrorism, aesthetic terrorism also deals with the imperceptible background on which works of art are articulated, and makes it appear on the proscenium as a phenomenon with its own value. The prototype of modern painting of this tendency, Kasimir Malevich's *Black Square* of 1913, owes its inexhaustible interpretability to the author's decision to evacuate the image space in favor of the pure dark surface. Thus, his being-square itself becomes the figure, to which it is subordinated, as a support, in other figurative situations. The scandal of the work of art consists, among other things, in the fact that it asserts itself as painting in its own right and does not at all present the empty canvas as a thing worth seeing, as would be imaginable in the context of Dadaist actions of mockery of art. It is possible that the image can be considered as a Platonic icon of the equilateral quadrangle, a minimally irregular icon, which pays tribute to sensibility; but it is at the same time the icon of the an-iconic, of the background of the image, normally invisible. That is why the black square appears before a white background, which surrounds it almost like a frame; in the *White Square* of 1914, this difference will almost disappear as well. The fundamental gesture of such formal representations is an elevation of the non-thematic to the category of the thematic. The possible and diverse figurative contents, which could appear in the foreground, are not lowered, but placed in the foreground.

on one and the same background always; rather the background as such is carefully extracted and made explicit as a figure of that which supports the figures. The terror of purification in the desire for  
The "supremacy of pure sensation" is unequivocal. The work demands the unconditional capitulation of the observer's perception to its real presence.







Lissitzky, *Black Spheres*, 1921-1922.

However clearly suprematism, together with its anti-naturalism and anti-phenomenalism, becomes known as a movement on the offensive on the aesthetic flank of explanation, it remains bound to the idealistic assumption that explicitation means the referral of the sensibly present to the spiritually non-present. It is anchored in models of old Europe, insofar as it explains things upwards and simplifies empirical forms, making them mere primary forms. On this point surrealism proceeds differently, which rather solidarized downwardly with the materialist explicitation, without going so far as to call itself *sous-realism*. While the materialist tendency remained a coquetry for the surrealist movement, its alliance with deep psychologies, especially with the psychoanalytic orientation, revealed an essential feature of its own. The surrealist reception of Viennese psychoanalysis is one of the many cases that confirm that Freudianism achieved its first successes among artists and educated citizens, not as a therapeutic method, but as a strategy of interpretation of signs and manipulation of the background, which made available to each interested party a mode of use according to his own needs. Is it not the analysis that has not been done that always seduces the most?

Freud's approach led to the unfolding of a special kind of latency realm, which was baptized with an expression, "the unconscious", borrowed from idealistic philosophy, especially Schelling, Schubert, Carus, and the philosophies of life of the 19th century, particularly Schopenhauer and Hartmann. It circumscribed a subjective dimension of non-disclosure, insofar as it verbalized inner latencies and conditions, invisibly retracted, of individual states. After the Freudian wording, the meaning of the expression became much narrower, and so specialized that it became suitable for application to clinical operationalism; now it no longer meant the reservoir of dark integrative forces in a nature anteposed to consciousness, therapeutic and image-creating, nor the undercurrent, composed of volitional currents.

blindly self-affirming, under the "subject": it circumscribed a small inner *container*, full of repressions and placed under neurosis-creating pressure by the impulse of the repressed.<sup>[136]</sup> The surrealists' enthusiasm for psychoanalysis was based on their confusion of the Freudian concept of the unconscious with that of romantic metaphysics. From a creative misreading came statements such as Dalí's 1939 *Declaration of the independence of fantasy and declaration of the rights of the human being to his madness*, in which phrases such as this are found:

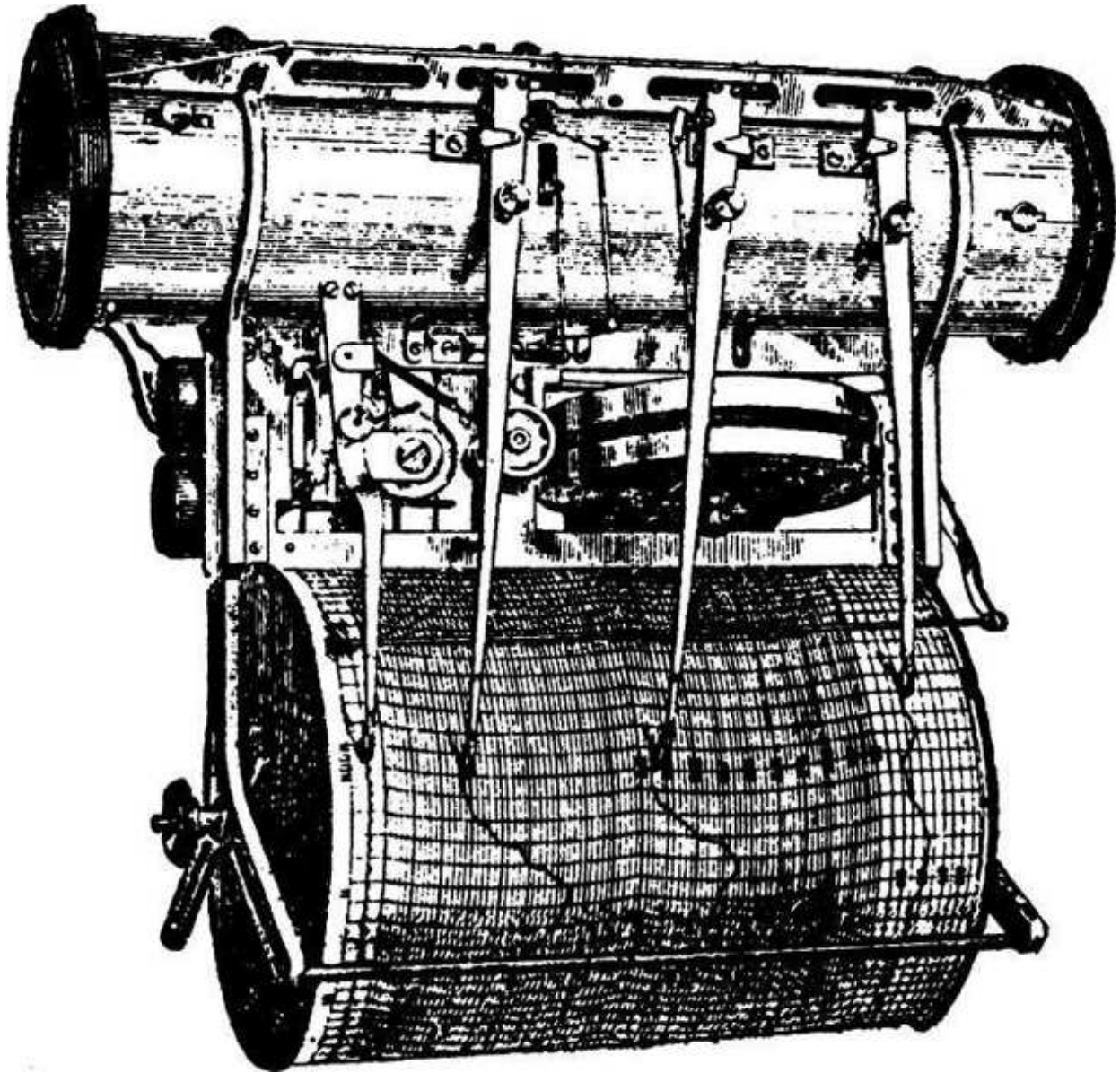
A man has the right to love women with ecstatic fish heads. A man has the right to find warm telephones disgusting and to demand cold, green, aphrodisiacal telephones like the hallucinated dream of the cantharides.<sup>[137]</sup> A man has the right to love women with ecstatic fish-heads.

The surrealist reference to the right to be mad warns individuals against their inclination to submit to normalizing therapies; it wants to make patients normally unhappy monarchs who return from neurotic-rational exile to the realm of personal delirium.

If Dalí's performance in July 1936 ended with his assistants making it possible for him, by tearing off his diving helmet, to return to the common air atmosphere of the London gallery, this solution, opportune in a specific case, turns out to be useless for the civilizational situation as a whole, since the process of explaining atmospheres does not allow any return to what has been implicitly foreseeable up to now. The relations of technical civilization no longer allow, as in the case of Dalí's experiment, to forget the essential: human beings, who are momentarily or habitually in typical *indoor* situations, have to be connected to an auxiliary "air supply system". The advanced explanation of atmospheres forces a continuous attention to the breathability of air: first, in a physical sense, but, later, also, and progressively, in relation to the metaphorical dimensions of breathing in cultural spaces of motivation and restlessness.

At the end of the 20th century, the theory of *homo sapiens* as a pupil of the air acquired pragmatic profiles. We begin to understand that the human being is not only what he is, but also what he breathes and what he immerses himself in. Cultures are collective states of immersion in sound air and sign systems.

The theme of cultural sciences in the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century thus reads: *Making the air conditions explicit*. They are dedicated to pneumatology from the empirical point of view: the science of the respiration of living, sense-dependent beings through informing and imperative means. For the moment, this program can only be elaborated reconstructively and compilatorily, since the "thing itself", the universe of the influenced climates, of the configured atmospheres, of the modified airs and of the delimited, measured, legalized environments, after the far-reaching explanatory thrusts carried out in the scientific-natural, technical, military, legal-legislative, architectural and plastic space, has taken an advantage, hardly salvageable, to the theoretical-cultural formation of concepts. Therefore, it seems most reasonable that in a first phase of self-certification it should be oriented to the most widely developed forms of scientific description of atmospheres, to meteorology and climatology, in order to dedicate itself, in a second step, to air and climate phenomena that are closer to people and more culturally relevant.



Marvin Meteorograph for the U.S. Weather Bureau in the 1990s.  
XIX century.

By its most successful journalistic form, the so-called *meteorological report* (*Wetterbericht*, *informations météorologiques*, *weather news*), modern meteorology (derived in the 17th century from the Greek word *metéoros*: "suspended in the air") - the science of the "precipitation" and of all other bodies glittering in the sky or suspended at altitude - has imposed on the populations of modern nation-states and media political communities

a historically new form of conversation, which can best be characterized as "climatological debate about the situation". Modern societies are weather-discussing communities, insofar as an official weather information agency puts the subjects for their self-understanding of the prevailing weather circumstances in the mouths of the citizens. Through media-supported weather communication, large modern communes with many millions of members are transformed into village-like neighborhoods where people discuss whether it is too hot, too cold, too much rain or too little rain for the time of year. (Marshall McLuhan even claimed that the medium "weather" constitutes the "most important point of that radio program, which recreates our hearing and creates the sound space or living space.")<sup>[138]</sup> Modern weather reporting shapes national populations as spectators in a weather theater, encouraging recipients to compare personal perception with the situation report and to form their own opinions about ongoing events. Insofar as they describe the weather as a staged representation of nature before society, meteorologists bring human beings together by turning them into an audience of experts under a common sky; they make each individual a climatological critic, who assesses the current representation of nature according to his or her own taste. There are stricter weather critics, who in periods of bad weather fly en masse to regions, where with sufficient probability a more pleasant representation can be expected: that is why Mauritius and Morocco are flooded with weather dissidents from Europe between Christmas Eve and Epiphany.

As long as meteorology comes on the scene as a natural science, and nothing else, it can afford to obviate the question of a weather creator. Conceived in a natural context, weather is something that is exclusively self-made and processes incessantly from one state to the next. It suffices, then, to describe the "factors".

The most important climatic processes in their dynamic action: atmosphere (gaseous cover), hydrosphere (water world), biosphere (animal and plant world), cryosphere (ice region), pedosphere (dry land) develop under the influence of solar radiation extremely complex energy exchange patterns, which can be represented in a purely natural-scientific arrangement, without recourse to an originally planning or intervening intelligence *a posteriori*.<sup>[139]</sup> An adequate analysis of these processes proves so complex that it forces a new type of physics capable of dealing with turbulence and unpredictable currents. This meteorological physics, too, theoretically and chaotically equipped, manages without the resource of a transcendent intelligence; to interpret its data it needs neither a universal Weather Maker, of animistic origin, nor the universal Clockmaker of deism. It is in the tradition of Western rationalism, which from the beginning of Modernity withdraws to any god still possible the competence in meteorological phenomena and elevates it to supraclimatic zones. Zeus and Jupiter may have thrown lightning bolts, the god of modern Europeans is a *deus otiosus* and, *eo ipso*, climatically inactive. Thus, the modern weather report can be presented as an ontological-regional discipline, in which it speaks of causes, but not of causers. It speaks of that which, prior to any consideration of human interests, happens as it happens, by itself and according to its own conditions; of that which, in any case, is "reflected" in a subjective medium as data of objective rank.

However, modern meteorology goes hand in hand with a progressive subjectivization of the weather, in multiple senses: on the one hand, because it increasingly relates climatic "data" to the opinions, calculations and reactions of populations, for whom the atmospheric environment becomes less and less indifferent in view of their own projects; on the other hand, because the objective climate, both regional and global, has to be increasingly described as an effect of socio-industrial ways of life. Both aspects of this adjustment of the weather to the modern human being, as

client and meteorological co-causer, they are objectively implicated in each other. Certainly, from the point of view of the most ancient tradition, meteorological information, as we know it, would already have to appear as a form of temptation to blasphemy; since it unequivocally incites human beings to the shamelessness of having an opinion about something to which, according to metaphysical orthodoxy, one could only resign oneself in mute submission. For the ancients it was valid: like birth and death, time proceeds only from God. Submission to God and submission to time are in the tradition analogous indications of the effort of the reasonable subject to minimize his differences, loaded with *hybris*, in the face of destiny.

However, the modern tendency to form an "opinion" about the climate is not a mere whim of the subject that departs from a valid ontological norm and would be better if it did not exist; it reflects the fact that the polytechnically active European and europid cultures, since the early eighteenth century, have themselves become climatic powers. Human beings find in time since then, as indirectly always, converted into something atmospherically objective, the detritus of their own technical-chemical-industrial, military, locomotive and tourist activities. As a whole, through many billions of emissions, they not only modify the energy balance of the atmosphere, but also the composition and "fine-tuning" of the air layer on a large scale. Thus, the urge to have a say on climate is not so much an indication of the arbitrary human takeover of power over everything that is the case in the environment. It prepares the fundamental change of attitude, whereby human beings, the supposed "lords and masters" of nature, are transformed into designers of atmospheres and guardians of the climate (not to be confused, by the way, with Heideggerian shepherds of being).

The challenge to the climate judgment capacity of modern people comes first and foremost, at the macro level, from a phenomenon that has come to be known in public debate as the anthropogenic greenhouse effect. By it, we mean the cumulative effects of the



climate-modifying emissions from human cultural and technical activities, such as the operation of electric power plants, industrial complexes, private heating systems, automobiles, airplanes and countless other exhaust gases and fumes introduced into the surrounding air. This secondary greenhouse effect, of which we have only been aware for two hundred years in a diffuse way, and three decades short in explicit formulation, is a historical fact in which the style of energy consumption of the "industrial era" is condensed: it is the climate footprint of a civilizational project, based on access to large quantities of fossil fuels facilitated by coal mining and oil extraction.<sup>[140]</sup> The recourse to fossil energy is the objective support of frivolity, without which there would be no global consumer society, no motoring, no world market for meat and fashion.<sup>[141]</sup> Due to the development of the massive demand for energy-rich carbons, the "subway forest" of the Earth's antiquity is brought in liquid form to the Earth's surface and transformed by thermal engines.<sup>142]</sup> As a result, the combustion product carbon dioxide (together with methane, carbon monoxide, fluorinated hydrocarbons, various nitric oxides, etc.) plays the quantitatively most important role in the enrichment of the atmosphere with second-order greenhouse factors. They reinforce - in a catastrophic way in all probability - the primary greenhouse effect, in respect of which climate science can never sufficiently emphasize the fact that without it no life would have been possible on our planet. If the Earth, as a parasite of the Sun, became the birthplace of life - it does not attract even one billionth of the energy radiated by the Sun - it was because water vapor and greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere prevent the reverberation of the short-wave energy absorbed by the Sun in the form of long-wave infrared rays, so that a heating of the Earth's surface compatible with life could result, with an average temperature of more than 15°C, which is more than 15°C.

degrees Celsius. If this trap for capturing heat, by which solar energy is retained in the atmosphere, were to disappear, the temperature of the earth's surface would not reach more, on average, than -18 degrees: "Without the greenhouse effect the earth would be a desert expanse of ice"<sup>[143]</sup> What we know as life is conditioned, among other things, by the fact that the earth's surface, thanks to its atmospheric filter, lives 31 degrees above its possibilities. If human beings, to quote Herder again, are pupils of the air, the clouds were their tutors. Life is a side effect of climatic mimicry. The characteristic sign of the fossil energy era is the fact that the pampered became sufficiently irresponsible to put their pampering at stake, running the risk of anthropogenic overheating (according to different calculations from other prognoses, that of an interglacial period).<sup>[144]</sup> *The climate is a collateral effect of the climate mimicry.*

Long before macroclimatological views of this scope acquired scientific form and public resonance, the climatic judgment capacity of modern participants in culture was claimed rather by local and small-scale phenomena: by the air conditioning of houses and dwellings, which only by artificial fire sources became convivial heat islands; by the cooling effect of cellars, which allowed the storage of food and beverages; by the miasmatic air quality of public spaces near cemeteries, animal skinning and sewers;<sup>[145]</sup> by the precarious atmospheric state of numerous workplaces, such as weaving mills, mines and quarries, where organic and mineral dust caused serious lung diseases. From these original areas of microclimatic warning of the state of the air, areas of the most diverse nature, between the 18th and 20th centuries, we arrived at this "discovery of the obvious", supported by design, which induced human beings in the age of explanation to intervene for the second time in what is at hand. In these fields, concrete atmospherics were developed, without which modern forms of existence would be unimaginable, both in the field of the environment and in the field of the environment itself.

in both urban and rural contexts: the popularization of the once luxurious and stately parasols and umbrellas;<sup>[146]</sup> the installation of heating and ventilation in private homes and large buildings; the artificial regulation of air temperature and humidity in living rooms and warehouses; the installation of refrigerators in homes and the introduction of fixed or mobile cold rooms for the transport and preservation of foodstuffs; the air hygiene policy for working environments in factories, mines and office buildings<sup>[147]</sup> and, finally, the aromatic-technical modification of the atmosphere, with which the transition to aggressive *air design* is accomplished.



Partial view of the air-conditioning system of the Fondation Beyeler Museum in Rieten, near Basel, by Renzo Piano, 1997.

*Air design* is the technical answer to the phenomenological idea, transmitted with delay, that the human being-in-the-world always and without exception presents itself as a modification of the being-in-the-air. Since there is always something in the air, in the course of the atmospheric explanation, the idea of introducing it as one of the most important and most important elements of the human being-in-the-air is becoming more and more important.

itself, just in case. As soon as the dependence of human beings on air is generally articulated, a corresponding emancipation is also imposed, which demands and achieves the active transformation of the element.

Here the technical path separates from that of the phenomenologists, who only recently have been concerned with the means of the radical art of description, in order to make explicit the human residence in general atmospheric conditions. On this path, Luce Irigaray has even proposed bracketing the Heideggerian concept of *Lichtung* [clear, glade] and replacing it with a remembrance of air: *Luftung* [aeration] instead of *Lichtung*.

It is not the light that creates the clearing, rather it happens that the light arrives here only thanks to the transparent lightness of the air. It presupposes the air.<sup>[148]</sup>

Air constitutes a condition of existence, of which the author never tires of stressing how hidden it remains in the unthought and unnoticed (although, in doing so, she hardly pays attention to the fact that aerotechnical praxis, including atmoterror, has long since declared this supposedly unthought dimension as the field of application of highly explicit procedures). As a phenomenologist, she insists on the illusion, which has become naive, charming, that a thing only becomes explicit when it is elevated to the category of subject by Husserlian-trained philosophers. In reality, the technicians are already a hundred years ahead, working to take possession in practice of the supposedly unthinkable. The suspicion is reinforced: a thought that remains too long phenomenologically anchored in the limits of the phenomenal world turns into interior watercolorism and ends up in non-technical meditation.

On the contrary, the *air design* presents itself "in front" of the air in a position of practical force. It takes over from the hygienically motivated defensive attitude of concern for the "maintenance of the purity of the air" and subjects the themed air to a positive program, which, in a way, proposes the continuation of the private use of perfume by public means. The *air design* aims immediately at the modification of the mood in the users of the airspace; with this it serves the declared purpose of retaining in a place the passers-by of the air, imposing on them - induced by the smell - certain situations pleasantly, in order to provoke in them a greater assimilation to the product and willingness to purchase.<sup>[149]</sup>

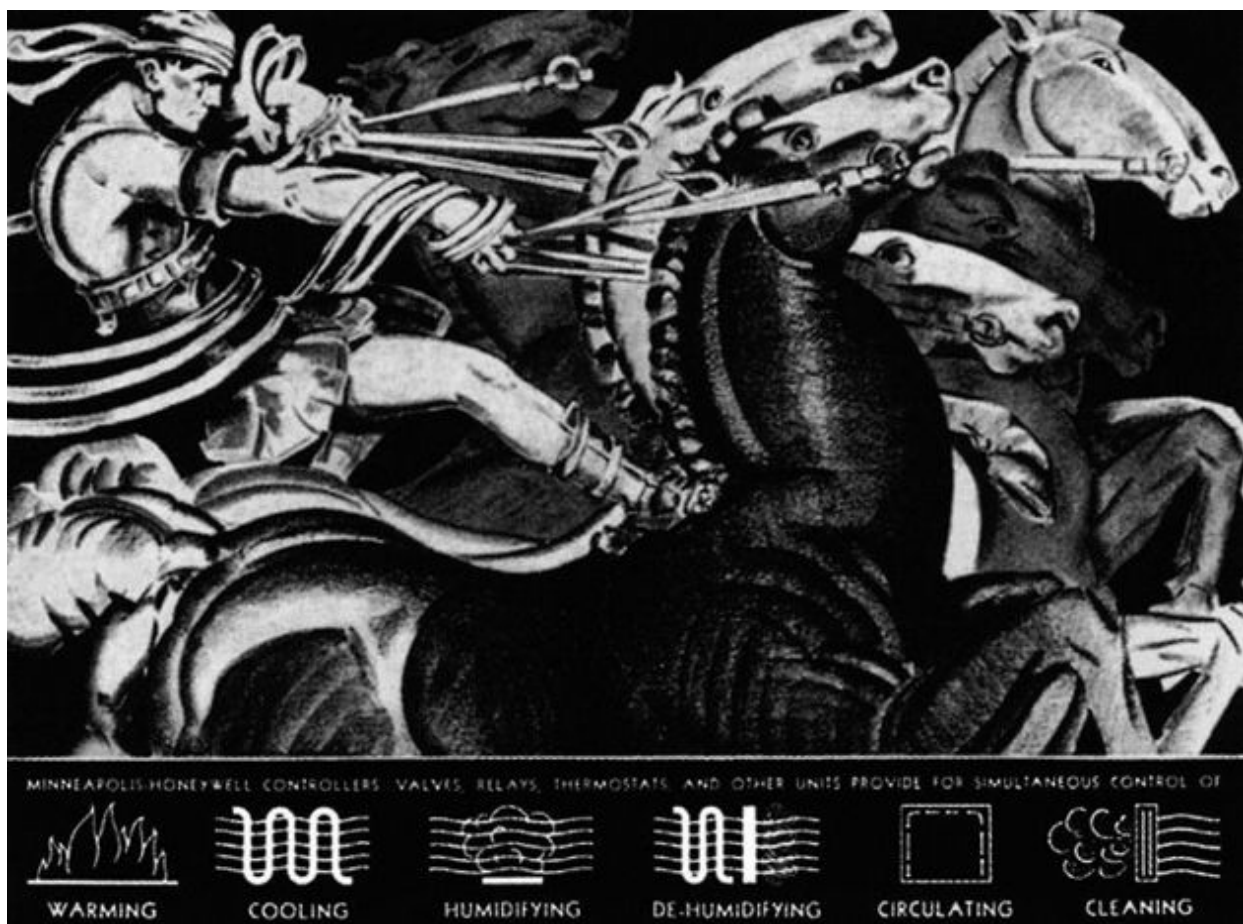
The *point-of-sale* atmosphere takes center stage as the "autonomous marketing tool". The trade, especially in the experiential area of *shopping*, fights with an active *indoor-air-quality-policy* for the affective attachment of customers both to the shop and to the assortment of goods. The legal estimation of such subliminally invasive methods of creating a "psychological compulsion to purchase" is debatable. If the "compulsive aromatization" of customers is interpreted by them as an attempt at manipulation, adverse reactions are possible and justifiable; in other cases, well-chosen olfactory tones of the sales environment are understood as a welcome aspect of an extensively interpreted customer service. By the configuration of breathing environments by means of psychoactive designer air - especially in *shopping malls*, but also in clinics, trade fairs, conference centers, hotels, experience worlds, *health* and *wellness* centers, passenger cabins and similar places - the principle of interior architecture is extended to the living environment, to the gas and aroma *environment*, which otherwise remains unnoticed. The index-values of such interventions are deduced from empirical observations on the "olfactory well-being" of airspace users. In doing so, the recognition that complex "olfactory offerings" are preferable to "mono-aromas" is imposed. The first commandment of the emerging odor-ethics reads: scent additives to space may not be used to hide harmful substances or negative odors present behind an olfactory mask. The *subtrend* towards "odor-hedonistic society"<sup>[150]</sup> fits into the primary tendency of the consumer society to develop markets for experiences and "scenes", in which atmospheres are made available, as general situations composed of stimuli, signs, and opportunities for contact.<sup>[151]</sup>

Let us not forget that today's so-called consumer and event society was invented in the greenhouse, in those glass-roofed passages of the early nineteenth century, where a first generation of experiential customers learned to breathe the intoxicating aroma of a closed inner world of goods. The passages represent a first rung of atmospheric-urban explanation: a

objective diverticulum of the "home manic-additive" disposition, of which, in Walter Benjamin's view, the nineteenth century was possessed. Home mania, Benjamin says, is the irrepressible impulse to "create ourselves an abode" in discretionary settings.<sup>[152]</sup> Already in Benjamin's theory of the interior the need

The "supratemporal" of the simulation-uterus is expressly connected with the symbolic forms of a concrete historical situation. The twentieth century has certainly shown in its great edifices how far it pushed the construction of

"The large containers and collectors<sup>[153]</sup> of the present, whether they are office buildings or shopping malls, stadiums or conference centers, have been progressively exempted from the task of pretending to be a home. The large *containers* and collectors<sup>[153]</sup> of the present, whether office buildings or *shopping malls*, stadiums or conference centers, have been progressively exempted from the task of pretending to be a home; the episodic encounter between department store and greenhouse, in which Benjamin, in genial hyperbole, wanted to see the characteristic sign of Modernity, had to be undone again by the progressive differentiation of architectural forms. A study is still lacking that offers with respect to the twentieth century what *Passagen-Werk* proposed with respect to the nineteenth. After all that we know today about the period, this work should be entitled: *Air-Condition-Werk*.



Air conditioning advertising, 1934, promises control over the six climatic-spatial factors: heating, cooling, humidifying, dehumidifying, circulating, purifying.

## **100 years of air conditioning installations: 1880-1890**

1880: The dining room of a New York hotel on Staten Island is cooled by passing air over ice.

1889: Alfred R. Wolff, an American engineer, cools Carnegie Hall in New York by blowing air over blocks of ice. However, this procedure does not work well because the humidity of the air is too high. A pipeline cooling system is installed in subway stations in London, Paris, New York, Boston and other major American cities.

1890: The "ice shortage", as a consequence of a hot winter, induces the American ice industry to turn to mechanical refrigeration methods.

1904: A larger audience is able to enjoy the benefits of an air conditioning system for the first time at the Missouri State Pavilion at the St. Louis World's Fair.

1905: Stuart Cramer, an American textile engineer, coins the concept "air conditioning", while the Carrier company uses the slogan "Time made by man".

1906: Carrier obtains a first patent for "an apparatus for the treatment of air".

1922: Carrier develops a centrifugal refrigeration machine, the first practicable method of air conditioning large spaces.

1928: Carrier produces the first air conditioner for private homes, the "weather maker".

1950: After television sets, air conditioners have the second highest growth rate of all industrial sectors.

1955: 5 percent of all American homes have an air conditioning system. The U.S. government encourages the installation of air conditioning in state buildings.

1979: President Carter declares a state of energy emergency and stipulates that air temperatures in businesses and state buildings cannot fall below 40 degrees Celsius.

1980: 55 percent of all American homes have an air conditioning system.



The mall built in 1961 by Victor Gruen in Camden, New Jersey.

The year 1936 is inscribed in the chronicle of the aesthetic and theoretical-cultural atmospheric explanation not only because of the London accident of Salvador Dalí in a diving suit; on November 1, 1936, he was killed in a car accident.



In the same year, the writer Elias Canetti, then 31 years old, gave a solemn speech in Vienna on the occasion of Hermann Broch's 50th birthday, unusual in its tone and content, in which he not only drew a profound portrait of the honored author, but also founded, so to speak, a new genre of laudation. The originality of Canetti's discourse lies in the fact of questioning in a previously unknown way the connection between an author and his time. Canetti defines the artist's sojourn in time as an atmospheric connection: as a special mode of immersion in the atmospheric circumstances of the present. He sees in Broch the first great master of a "poetics of the atmospheric as something static"<sup>[154]</sup> (today we would speak of an art of immersion); he notes in him the ability to make perceptible the "breathing static space", in our mode of expression: the climatic design of persons and groups within their typical spaces.

[...] he is always concerned with the totality of the space in which he finds himself, a kind of atmospheric unity.<sup>[155]</sup>

Canetti praises Broch's ability to grasp each human being ecologically, so to speak: in each person he recognizes a singular existence in his own breathing air, surrounded by an unmistakable climatic cover, included in a personal "breathing home". He compares the litterateur to a curious bird, which has the freedom to sneak into all possible cages and take away from them

"air samples". Thus, endowed with a strangely awakened "breathing and aerial memory," he knows what it is to feel at home in this or that atmospheric habitat. Since Broch engages with his characters more as a literary creator than as a philosopher, he does not describe them as abstract I-points in a general ether; he portrays them as embodied figures, each of whom lives in his own aerial envelope and moves among a multiplicity of atmospheric constellations. It is only in view of these multiplicities that the question of the possibility of literary creation arises,

"shaping from the breathing experience", leads to fruitful information:

To this we should respond, first of all, that the multiplicity of our world is also largely composed of the multiplicity of our respiratory spaces. The space in which you are now, in a very concrete disposition, almost completely isolated from the environment, the way in which your breath is mixed forming an air common to all... all this is, from the point of view of the one who breathes, a situation... absolutely unique. But take a few steps further, and you find a completely different situation of another different breathing space... The big city is as full of such breathing spaces as it is of a breathing space....

is of isolated individuals; and just as the disintegration of these individuals, of whom none is the same as another, each like a sort of dead end, constitutes the chief attraction and the chief calamity of life, so one might equally well complain of the disintegration of the atmosphere.<sup>[156]</sup>

According to this characterization, Broch's narrative art is based on the discovery of atmospheric multiplicities: thanks to them the modern novel manages to overcome the presentation of individual destinies. Its object is no longer concrete individuals in their actions and experiences, but rather the expanded unity of individual and breathing space (and the assembling of several such spaces into foam-like aggregates). Actions no longer take place between people, but between breathing homes and their inhabitants. Through this ecological perspective, the alienating-critical motif of Modernity is placed on a changed foundation: it is the atmospheric separation of human beings that causes their confinement in their own "atmospheric home" in each case; their difficult accessibility by people of different dispositions of mind, enveloped in a different way, air-conditioned in a different way, is more than ever founded. The division of the social world into zones of different kinds, inaccessible to one another, is the moral analogue of the "disintegration of the atmosphere" into microclimates (which, in turn, following the author, corresponds to a disintegration of the "world of values"). Since Broch, after his progress through the climatic-individual and ecological-personal plane, had quasi-systemically grasped the depth of the isolation of modern individuals, the question of the conditions of their union in a common ether, overcoming the disintegration of the atmosphere, had to be posed to him with an unequivocal and unequivocal answer to the question: "What are the conditions of their union in a common ether, overcoming the disintegration of the atmosphere? had to be posed to him with a clarity and urgency for which (except, perhaps, for Canetti's own analogous approach in *Mass and Power*) there is nothing comparable, either in his own time or at a later point in the history of sociological research on the element of social cohesion.

In his 1936 speech Canetti recognizes in Hermann Broch the prophetic admonisher in the face of an unprecedented threat to humanity that looms over it, both in the metaphorical and physical sense of the atmospheric:

The greatest of all dangers, however, which has appeared in the history of mankind, has chosen our age as its victim.

It is about the helplessness of breathing, which I would like to talk about in conclusion. It is difficult to make too great a concept of it. The human being is as open to nothing as to air. In it he still moves like Adam in paradise... Air is the last communal property. It belongs to all at the same time. It is not shared out with advantages, even the poorest can take from it....

And this last good, which was common to us all, must poison us all in common....

Hermann Broch's work is situated between war and war, between gas war and gas war. It could be that he still notices the toxic particles of the last war somewhere... But surely he, who knows how to breathe better than we do, is already suffocating today with the gas that the rest of us, who knows when, will take away our breath.<sup>[157]</sup>

Canetti's pathetic observation shows how the information of the gas war of 1915 to 1918 had been translated conceptually by the most energetic diagnosticians of the time of the 1930s: Broch had understood that after the intentional destructions of the atmosphere in chemical warfare the social synthesis itself began to adopt, from a certain point of view, the character of gas warfare. The "total war", which was announced by chemical particles and political indications, would irremissibly adopt the features of a war of the environment: in this one the atmosphere itself would become the scene of war and the air a kind of weapon and a peculiar battlefield. And what is more: from the air breathed in common, from the ether of the collective, the community, seized by delirium, will wage gas war on itself in the future. How this will happen is a matter to be clarified by a theory of "twilight states", undoubtedly the most original, though also the most fragmentary, part of Broch's hypotheses on the psychology of the masses.

Twilight states are those in which human beings, as trend followers, move under the trance of the normal. Since the coming total war will develop in principle atomterrorist and ecologically (and, with it, in a medium of total mass communication), it will intervene in the "morale" of the troops, which can hardly be differentiated from the general population anymore. By toxic communions, combatants and non-combatants, those gassed synchronously and those provoked simultaneously, will be kept together in a collective twilight state. The modernized masses feel themselves integrated into a communist unity of necessity, which is to convey to them an acute sense of identity by means of the common threat. The climatic intoxicants that emanate from the affected people themselves while they are excited and have no way out and find themselves under closed communication hoods are particularly dangerous: in the pathogenic facilities

climaxes of excited-unified publics the inhabitants breathe always, and always again, their own exhalations. What is there in the air is put into it by circular totalitarian communication: it is filled with the victory dreams of humiliated masses and their delirious self-exaltations, far removed from empirics, which are followed like a shadow by the demand for humiliation of their opponents. Life in the media state resembles a stay in a gas palace animated by experiential intoxicants.

Broch's views are not only based, from 1936 onwards, on the short expectation of a new world war, which the author assumed would be conducted, above all, as a universal mutual "gassing";<sup>[158]</sup> they depend even more on the social-theoretical diagnosis, according to which the great modern societies, integrated mass-mediatically, have entered a phase in which their day-to-day existence has fallen atmospherically and politically under the domination of mass psychological mechanisms. For this reason, the *theory of mass delirium* had to appear at the center of the diagnosis of the present; Broch worked on it, since 1939, for a whole decade.

Since the twenties of the last century, permanent communications through the press and radio are carriers and agents of these delirious configurations in modern collectives. They act for the most part as means of disinhibition, in which certain phrases become true. The autointoxication of the

The "society" through mass communication is a phenomenon, the appearance of which a contemporary of Broch's, older than he, Karl Kraus, perseveringly observed, and against the development of which he always fought: only in February 1936, with the last issue of the *Fackel*, and four months before his death, Kraus gave up the fight against the "air of Sodom";<sup>[159]</sup> let us not forget that already in the year 1908 he had complained about the European tensions using the image of the worst possible clouding of the atmosphere: "From every corner penetrate the gases coming from the dung of the world's brain, culture can no longer breathe..."<sup>[160]</sup>

Too little is said about the effects of such means if they are characterized with the theological-missionary term, secularly disloyal, of "propaganda". They serve for the immersion of entire national populations in strategically produced climates of struggle; they constitute the computer analog of the chemical mode of waging war. Broch's theoretical intuition grasped the parallel between gas warfare - as an attempt to envelop the adversary in a toxic cloud dense enough for his physical annihilation - and the production of states of mass delirium - as an attempt to immerse the population in an ecstatic atmosphere, charged with longings for "super-satisfactions", sufficient for its self-destruction. In both cases envelopes are created, which captivate their victims or inhabitants, fascinating them, within a general situation from which there is no way out in practice: the propagandistically nationalized atmosphere acts temporarily as a "closed system"; the space of air and signs extends, trance-inducing, around its inhabitants as the zone of a prescribed obsession. Under the totalitarian bell of signs human beings inhale their own lies, converted into public opinion, and move, freely compelled, in an opportunistic hypnosis. Within such toxic atmospheres, individuals are even more recognizable as what they are even in freer situations: "sleepwalkers", moving, as if remote-controlled, in the "social daydream"<sup>[161]</sup> of their organizations. Here, journalists play the role of doctors specializing in narcotics, who watch over the stability of the collective trance. It is legitimate to assume that Broch's images echo Gabriel Tarde's thesis on social somnambulism ("... it is by no means a delirium of fantasy that I regard social human beings as real somnambulists").<sup>[162]</sup> The socialized somnambulists, together with their supply of fictions of freedom and critical illusions, gather under slogans and banners as co-owners in air castles. Canetti has expressed this in another context:

Flags are wind made visible. They are like pieces cut from the clouds... Peoples, as if they were capable of dividing the wind, use their own to qualify the air above them as their own.<sup>[163]</sup> The people, as if they were capable of dividing the wind, use their own to qualify as their own.

From intuitions of this kind Broch awakens the first approach of a new atmospheric ethics, which in its "hygienic" part is concerned with the redirection of the moved to the livable rationality of an "open system," aka democracy or division of powers of panics and hysterias.<sup>[164]</sup> Compared with the tasks of such an ethics of the atmospheric, the democracies of 1939 were not only living in a "yesterday's world";<sup>[165]</sup> they are still as blind today in the face of their acute tendency to the formation of closed atmospheres and the exaltation of systems of delusions of victory, as if the psychological-political and moral lessons of the twentieth century had always and only taken place in the face of empty classes.<sup>[166]</sup>





Marcel Duchamp, *Air of Paris*, 1919.

Marcel Duchamp spent the Christmas days of 1919 with his family in Rouen. On the afternoon of December 27 he wanted to go to Le Havre aboard the *SS Touraine* to travel to New York. Shortly before departure he went to a pharmacy on rue Blomet, where he persuaded the pharmacist to take a medium-sized ampoule from the shelves, open its seal, pour out the liquid contained in it and then reseal the bulging container. Once in New York, Duchamp gave the empty ampoule, which he had carried in his luggage, to the couple of collectors Walter and Louise Arensberg as a visiting gift, arguing that, since the well-to-do friends already owned everything, he had the idea of bringing them 50 cubic centimeters of *air from Paris*. This is how it happened that a volume of French coastal air entered the list of the first *ready-mades*. It seems that Duchamp was not concerned that his ready-made air object represented a forgery from the start, since it had not been filled with air from Paris, but with air from a pharmacy in Le Havre. The act of nomination took precedence over its real provenance. Nevertheless, he kept the "original" in his heart; when a neighbor's son inadvertently broke the vial of *Parisian air* from the Arensberg collection in 1949,



Duchamp had a solicitous friend in Le Havre procure the same ampoule for him again at the same pharmacy.<sup>[167]</sup> Ten years later, in the lobby of a New York hotel, Duchamp declared to an interviewer: "Art was a dream that has become useless". "I spend my time quite lightly, but I wouldn't know how to tell you what I do...I'm a respirator."<sup>[168]</sup>

## **4. The soul of the world in agony or:**

### **The emergence of immunity systems**

In the campaign of Modernity against the over-understood, which used to be called nature, air, atmosphere, culture, art and life have fallen under an explanatory pressure, which completely changes the mode of being of those "data". What was background or satisfied latency, has now been transferred, with thematic emphasis, to the side of the represented, of the objective, elaborated and producible. In the form of terror, iconoclasm and science, three latency-breaking forces have taken position, under whose effects the data and interpretations of the old "lifeworlds" crumble. Terror makes the environment explicit under the aspect of its vulnerability; iconoclasm makes culture explicit from the experience of its parodiableness; science makes first nature explicit under the viewpoints of its substitutability by prosthetic implements and its integrability in technical procedures; systems theories make societies explicit as configurations that are sighted for their sight and blind for their blindness.

Encompassing relationships, which usually could be experienced in the mode of surrender, participation and unreserved communion, have been transferred by the explanation to the objective mode of giving of technical factibilities and facts, without human beings being able to interrupt, for that reason, their stay in those

"circumstances" or "means". Mistrust may grow,

we remain immanent to the suspect. We are condemned to being-in, although the receptacles and atmospheres, by which we must allow ourselves to be surrounded, it is no longer permissible to presuppose them as good natures.<sup>[169]</sup>

Circumstantiated totalities, which we cannot abandon, to which we can no longer rely on without further ado, have been called *environments* or *half-environments* [*Umwelten*] since the beginning of the 20th century: a coinage introduced into the discourse of theoretical biology in 1909 by Jakob von Uexküll and which has so far followed an equivocal course that occasionally favors pseudo-evident concepts.<sup>[170]</sup> With the realization that life is now always life in an environment - and thus also against an environment and in opposition to many alien environments - the persistent crisis of holism begins. The old human disposition to allow oneself to be seized by the totalities of proximity as by the good gods loses its orientational value since the surroundings themselves have become constructs or have been recognized as such. The quasi-religious reliance on the primary surroundings - be it nature, cosmos, creation, situation, culture, homeland or whatever - would appear in the age of toxics and strategies as a temptation to put oneself in danger. The advanced explanation forces naivety into a change of meaning, indeed, makes it appear progressively more conspicuous, even scandalous; naive is now what invites somnambulism in the midst of the present danger.

After the realization of both the first and the second greenhouse effect, living and breathing under the open sky can no longer mean the same as it did in earlier times. From the immemorial sense of the mortal homeland in the open air has arisen something disturbing, uninhabitable, unbreathable. By the emergence of the question of the environment, human habitation in the primary environment has become progressively problematic. After Pasteur and Koch had discovered and scientifically publicized the existence of microbes, human existence has become increasingly problematic.

has to get used to dealing with explicit measures for symbiosis with the invisible; and, moreover, with prevention and defense against microbial rivals, now detectable with precision. After the massive gas attacks of the Germans as well as the devastating aftershocks of the Allies, since 1915, breathable air has lost its innocence; since 1919 it could be given away in portions as *ready-made*, since 1924 provide death to criminals as execution air. After the homogenization of national presses during the world war, civil communication has been ridiculed from its very basis, the signs themselves are as if smeared and compromised by their participation in warmongering deliriums and psychosemantic arms races; thanks to the critique of religion, ideology and language, large parts of semantic environments are accredited as intellectually unbreathable zones; only the stay in spaces that were breathed in, renewed and enabled for mobile-critical dwelling by analysis would be responsible from then on. Even the Mona Lisa smiles differently after Duchamp adjusted her moustache.

In this situation the immunity systems become subject. Where everything could be latently contaminated and poisoned, where everything is potentially false or suspect, wholeness and total being-power can no longer be deduced from external circumstances. Wholeness can no longer be thought of as something that is achieved by surrender to a beneficent envelope, but only as the achievement of an organism that is actively concerned with its delimitation in relation to the environment. This opens the way for the idea that life is not so much determined by openness and participation in the whole as by self-enclosure and selective refusal to participate. For the organism, most of the world around it is poison or insignificant background; it therefore establishes itself in a zone of strictly chosen signs and things, of which it speaks only as its own circle of relevance, i.e., precisely as environment.

Not too little is said when this is qualified as the fundamental idea of a different post-metaphysical or metaphysical civilization. Its psychosocial trace manifests itself in the naturalistic *shock*, whereby culture, biologically self-enlightened, learns to reorient itself from a phantasmatic ethic of universal peaceful coexistence to an ethic of antagonistic safeguarding of the interests of finite units: a learning process in which the political system had achieved by dint of hard work a clear step forward since Machiavelli.

The theme of the century emerges from the catastrophe of traditional culture and its holistic morality: *making the immun systems explicit*. It should be clear that the construction of immunity is an event too broad, too contradictory to be described by medical-biochemical categories alone. In accordance with its complex nature, political, military, juridical, technical-insurance and psychosemantic, or rather religious, components contribute to its development in reality.<sup>[171]</sup> The decline of immunity determines the intellectual conditions of light during the 20th century. An apprenticeship of mistrust, unparalleled in the history of the spirit, changes the meaning of all that was hitherto called rationality. For the intelligence that moves at the forefront of development, the years of learning non-delivery begin.

The first consequence, experienced in many ways but hardly conceptualized yet, of the primacy of delimitation over participation is the growing pressure of risk, which has been weighing on the inhabitants and scenario designers of today's world since the beginning of the 20th century. Since in the age of background explanation human beings can carry less and less intact aprioric information about their should-be-so-how-and-where, unless they are born among high mountains and invulnerably rooted in one of the now rare traditional cultures, they are forced to reconvert their implicitly background-anchored orientations into explicit stakes. When truisms have become scarce, choices have to assume their role. This inaugurates the era of elective images of the world and elective self-images. The long conjunctural cycle of the so-called "identities" is implanted. Identity is a prosthesis of obviousness on insecure ground. It is made up according to

Both individualistic and collectivistic patterns.<sup>[172]</sup> In the project of mental construction of prostheses are expressed both the realization and the circumstance that the production of vital assumptions - guiding "hypotheses" of life, in the sense of William James - is no longer primarily deduced from cultural inheritance, but becomes more and more a matter of new invention and continuous transformation. Hence arises the thrust to the tendency toward individualization of forms of life. If I admit, as long as I see in it the outstanding fact of my life, that I am Corsican, Armenian or Irish Protestant, I am not affected by modernisms of that kind; I consider myself then as an ethnic *ready-made* and I am ready to make appearances in the bazaar of multiculturalism. If necessary, I even take to the streets to demonstrate in favor of fox hunting in Great Britain. In case I don't go for the alignment in that type, I should make sure of the concrete organismic foundations in which I want to remain until further notice.

The excessive interest of modern human beings in the  
The term "health" can only be understood in this context: it is a cover phenomenon for the demand for background securities, which remain valid after the dissolution of natural and cultural latencies - and after the paling of the regional colorism of character.<sup>[173]</sup> Where else but to the biological, supposedly inner, foundation should the search for what is proper, indeed, for the core of what inalienably belongs to me be directed? Is not the existence of one's own body the ultimate proof of evolution as a success story, and can I do anything more reasonable than orient myself to its being able to be healthy? All in all, this quest for the solid within is not free from irony. Precisely because of the massive interest in biologically anchored selfhood, the most passionate clients of the identity-through-health program fall into a paradoxical insecurity, to the point of recognizing that there can be no health in the full sense of the word. What is lost sight of in the cult of health is the subversive role that medical research plays in the explanatory event: the search for the ultimate foundations of health as the minimal biological satisfaction of the background of existence should lead to the discovery and problematization of those finely tuned, labile structures that we have been calling "systems of immunity" in the last hundred years or so.

the biochemical sense of the word. The forced localization of background security in one's own body base reveals a layer of regulatory mechanisms, behind the emergence of which the profound improbability of biosystemic integrity in general comes into view.

With the thematization of the body's own immunity systems, the relationship of the illustrated individuals with the organic conditions of being healthy or sick is radically transformed. One only has to take into account that there are hidden struggles between pathogens and "antibodies" in the human organism, the results of which emerge as being responsible for our state of health. Many biologists describe the somatic self as a besieged terrain, which is defended by the body's own border troops with changing success. In contrast to the users of this hawkish terminology, there is a biological fraction of pigeons, which paints a slightly less martial picture of immunological events; according to them, the self and the foreign appear so deeply intertwined that overly primitive strategies of demarcation have counterproductive effects. In addition, an intricate interplay of endocrinological emissions is manifested, which act on the threshold between the unconscious biochemical processes and the experiential surface of the organism. It is not only because of their complication that the systems of immunity confuse the desire for security of their owners; they are even more irritating because of their immanent paradox, since they transform their successes, when they are too profound, into causes of illness of their own kind: the growing universe of pathologies of autoimmunity illustrates the dangerous tendency of the self to win to the death in the struggle with the other.

It is not by chance that in the most recent interpretations of the immunity phenomenon is manifested by a tendency to grant the presence of the foreign within the self a much more important role than was foreseen in the traditional identity conceptions of an organismic self.

monolithically closed; one could almost speak of a poststructuralist turn in biology.<sup>[174]</sup> The patrol of antibodies in an organism appears less like a police force, enforcing a rigid policy of aliens, than like a theater troupe, parodying its invaders and going on stage as their transvestites. But, however one sums up the dispute of biologists over the interpretation of immunity, whoever takes a sufficiently detailed interest in power-being-healthy as a fundamental stratum of identity and personal integrity will sooner or later learn so much about its functional conditions that the biochemical dimension of immunity, as such, will irritatingly emerge from latency and grow to become the most disturbing of all foreground subjects.

This has consequences for the mental immunity status of the "enlightened society": it not only knows now what it knows, but it must also make up its mind how it wishes to live, in each case, with the explanatory stages it has reached. It is shown to the moderns with increasing explosive force that the progress of the capacity to know does not consequently turn into analogous advantages of immunity. To know is not precisely power, without more. When, as is now the case, five hundred new diseases are described or discovered every year, this does not immediately increase the security of the inhabitants in the proud tower of civilization. On balance, because of their increasing explicitness (and limited repressibility), the knowledge developed about the security architecture of existence - from the medical to the political to the legal fields - often acts as a destabilizing factor. Because of the counterproductive effects of advanced explanation, latency, as such, is co-explained in its plausible functions. Retroactively, it becomes clear to the one who comes to know what he had of not-knowing. It is now shown that pre-enlightened or pre-explicit states may be immunologically relevant as such; at least in the sense that the sojourn in the undeployed allows, in a way



and in some respects, psychically benefit from certain protective effects of not-knowing. This was already recognized by ancient authors such as Cicero, for example, who explains:

"Certainly, ignorance of future evils is more useful than knowledge of them."<sup>[175]</sup> It may be that the discovery of these contexts is in direct connection with the invention of salvific religions. Yes, perhaps what the Christian tradition called belief was initially nothing more than a programmatic, progressive-regressive change of attitude from debilitating knowledge to a fortifying ignorance connected with a humanitarian illusion. The *vera religio* succeeded against the background of ancient enlightenment because it could be recommended as a priestly-therapeutic cure for the disease of imperial realism. By its counterfactual form, faith offered its practitioners the opportunity to cling to a salvation-bearing phantasm, even if it was against a better knowledge of the dire circumstances, which were now boldly called external.

While enlightened awareness today necessarily starts from explicitly represented possibilities of failure - from the warning, based on figures, against accident risks, terrorist risks, business risks, cancer and heart attack risks and other precisely quantifiable dimensions of mishap probabilities - unarmed life, while vaguely sympathizing with its background and being carried along by traditions, still sometimes retains an aura of shelter in naivety. As an enlightened person, one scoffs at it, but one also envies its possessors occasionally, when one oneself has too long lived in permanent alarm. Enlightenment upon enlightenment becomes *management* for collateral damage to knowledge. As a result of first-stage enlightenment, we are all - to borrow an expression of Botho Strauss

"prognostically infested".<sup>[176]</sup>

In any case, it is also now shown that no conscience, because of the narrowness of its window of subjects, can

process more than one or two alarm motifs at the same time, so that it has to put most of the currently explicit issues of concern in the background, as if there were none *at all*. (In the multi-alarm society, several dozen bells are ringing 24 hours a day at the same time, although most of the time we manage to filter out one actionable fundamental alarm). From the non-interruptible game of thematizing and de-thematizing of risks arises a functional substitute, proven in practice, for naivety: while the primary naive, because of the pre-explicit constitution of his consciousness, could not have any adequate representation of the space of risks in which he moves, the modern navigates in the same space with a kind of second naivety, because even in a zone analytically prepared for risk it is not possible to consider at the same time everything that would have to be considered. We call the secondary-ingenuous attitude "re-implication"; it is the *function-standby* of themes already explicit, but temporarily outdated. Re-implication provides the prosthesis of trust; its use presupposes that everything that can happen does in fact happen, although only sporadically and, as a rule, in such a way that the injured parties are others. The typical place of re-implication is, as far as documents are concerned, the archive, and as far as personal experience is concerned, the long-term memory in a state of non-fatigue; the potential knowledge of alarm, stored there, allows the user secondary unconcern. Archives and long-term memories, sufficiently ordered, provide a formal support to the second latency.<sup>[177]</sup>

Shortly before Emil von Behring and Schibasaburo Kitasato, Robert Koch's assistants in Berlin in 1890, with the joint discovery and naming of "antitoxin", a first manifestation of antibodies, gave a decisive push to the development of medical immunology (in 1883 Ilya Meschnikow had already exposed in Messina the role of "phagocytes" in the rejection of intruders in the organism), Nietzsche had fallen in the

In his investigations on the fundamentals concerning the mode of function of the human consciousness, Nietzsche noticed the existence of a defensive mental system, of which he recognized how it efficiently and disguisedly places itself at the service of a dominant center-self and of its needs of meaning. From this point of view Nietzsche can be considered, after preliminaries such as those of Mesmer, Fichte, Schelling, Carus and Schopenhauer, the authentic discoverer of the operative unconscious. In his major moral-critical work *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, which appeared in August 1886, he writes:

The strength of the spirit to appropriate the strange manifests itself in a strong inclination to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the diverse, to overlook and reject the totally contradictory. [...] This same will is served by a [...] sudden decision for ignorance, by the arbitrary closing of its windows, an inner saying-no to this thing or that, a not-letting-them-approach, a kind of defensive state in the face of many learnable things, a satisfaction with the obscure, with the horizons that close, a saying-yes and taking ignorance for granted...<sup>[178][178]</sup>

If it is licit to imagine considerations of this kind under the heading of a *philosophy of the future*, it is because with them the opening to the immunological paradigm of the critique of reason was consummated: from that threshold thought operates beyond the "know thyself." According to this it seems that there is something like suppressors of ideas or semantic antibodies, disposed to the elimination of incompatible representations, arising from the realm of consciousness. Where there was a love of wisdom, there must now be an understanding of the repellent and non-integrable properties of numerous true representations. The theory of knowledge becomes a scientific-cognitive offshoot of allergology.<sup>[179]</sup> With this, the broadest foretaste of the forms of rationality of cybernetics, which asks about the internal and external conditions of functioning of consciousnesses, took place until then. In the light of artificial intelligence it becomes clearer what the natural intelligence realizes. We only protect what we have understood with sufficient explicitness; we re-evaluate what cannot be protected.

Early allusions to this transition can be traced in Nietzsche's thought up to the early 1970s; prominent among them is the posthumously known treatise *On Truth and Lies in an Extramoral Sense of 1873*: an early attempt to understand human thought and speech, of

According to its primary function, as the erection of a protective envelope of metaphors, which is to remove the fearful and bottomless conditions of existence from the sight of the cultural subjects.<sup>[180]</sup> Memorable remains the fact that Nietzsche, with the immunological and allergological mode of consideration of rational processes, already discovered, at the same time, its paradox: when thought takes completely seriously the possibility of following its own logic, it can even emancipate itself from its immunological functions for life and take sides against the vital interests of its own bearers. This is what Nietzsche had in view in his plea against "metaphysics." A strong program of enlightenment must in the future include the knowledge of the autoimmune paradoxes of knowledge and recalculate the costs of idealistic impulses. It was clear to Nietzsche from the outset that this kind of investigation of the self-application of consciousness no longer leads back to tranquil states of knowing, moreover, that from now on self-contradiction, even self-harm, belong to the premises, which must be kept clear, of the progress of knowledge: philosophical life can only be justified because it becomes a self-trial of the cognoscente. The thinker had been made aware of how the interests of knowledge are separated at this point from those of life. He had no doubt of the fatality of the choice.<sup>[181]</sup> With respect to his own person he was determined to concede preeminence to the cognitive motive over the vital "surface will": a preference that was temporarily obfuscated by the flaming metaphors of the Zarathustra's affirmation of life. As early as 1872, still in the spirit of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche had written: "Nature has enclosed the human being in an accumulation of illusions. This is its proper element", to draw the conclusion that only the break with the medium of illusion or legitimately human dispositions opens access to the sphere of knowledge.

Soon Nietzsche had made himself adequate ideas about the price of this option. He speaks expressly of the presuppositions of tolerance, heroism and masochism, only under which the knower sufficiently forewarned against himself, hardened against his own needs, resists the insinuations of his obtuse vital reason: it is no longer permissible for a thinker to care whether an idea deserves the predicate of "psychically usable." The

"The new critique of knowledge, biologically warned, frees itself from the tutelage of the usual representation, dictated by a chronic need for illusion. Consequently, thinking will have more scope in the future than philosophy: the latter, as a love of wisdom, ends from the very moment when wisdom and truth are revealed as more repellent than attractive magnitudes. Whoever wants to be theoretically an immunologist or - what is then almost the same thing - a free spirit, and through both things declare as a witness of philosophy after the end of that exercise of harmonization of old Europe (and old Asia) of the same name, has to mobilize in himself "a kind of cruelty of taste and intellectual conscience":<sup>[182]</sup> an irreverence, scientific and moral at the same time, that only those who do not shy away from the possibility of causing extreme displeasure to themselves can achieve. The free spirit goes through a long program of vaccines and bio-negativity.

It is not surprising that this self-surprising explanation of mental mechanics was established with the moralists of the late seventeenth century, when they devised a worldly variant of the religious examination of conscience. Their views were assimilated and strengthened by romanticism until they could be reformulated by psychoanalysis and related doctrines, which, in turn, in the last decade of the 20th century gave way to disciplines such as psycholinguistics and psychoneuro-immunology. All forms of knowledge about the mechanical aspects of the processes of thinking and feeling have in common the fact that they describe the

human consciousness as the place of the incessant separation of the explicit from the implicit.

## ***Intermediate consideration:***

### ***Luminous compulsion and irruption in the articulated world***

*Making the immune systems explicit:* this is one of the logical and pragmatic premises that the citizens of Modernity have had to follow since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century if they want to remain connected with the *modus vivendi* of their time. It belongs to the characteristics of explanatory progress that it develops the security arrangements of existence - from the level of antibodies and dietetics to the social state and military apparatuses - into formally secured institutions, disciplines and routines. It is doubtful whether it thereby provides human beings with the intellectual means to understand what they do. For the explanatorily moving domain of existence in the world, the majority has at its disposal only a few dislocated rhetorical formulas with which the ambivalence of the human immunological situation can be thematized in non-technical considerations: Thus, modern "society" talks in a sensible, thoughtful Sunday manner about the "blessing and curse of scientific discoveries"; it articulates in symposia its fluctuation between "distrust of technology and hope in technology"; in public meditation it collects ideas about the advantage and disadvantage of the disenchantment of the world for life; it ponders the question of how much uneasiness and how much calmness should be balanced in the technical world. These discourses - if they are discourses at all - process the basic material of the problematic

immunological as it is agglomerated in the consciences by the daily experiences of modernization.

According to the basic assumptions shown here, explanations always concern words and things at the same time; in this sense, they are analytical of reality and synthetic of reality at the same time. They stimulate the unfolding of facts as active connection of operative steps and discursive turns. Not only do they make explicit unexpressed background assumptions ("unconscious", unknown, misunderstood), but they raise into manifest existence "realities" hitherto folded in latency. If it were otherwise, all analyses would remain only rhetorical events; they would provide, at best, prolix substantiations of judgment, of which Robert B. Brandon teaches how they are transmitted from the desks of judges and experts to the manifestations of opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Everybody, to the extent that propriety compels. When someone sets out to make "something" explicit, it means that he or she has to take charge of the new argumentative refinement of his or her convictions: a point of view that is realistic with respect to certain academic discursive games, in which formalisms accumulate points.

Since explanation takes place as both analysis of reality and synthesis of reality, both in the workshops and in the texts, since it advances both in technical procedures and in the corresponding commentaries and descriptions, it develops, wherever it is applied, a violence that affects both the real and the mental. It alters the cognitive and material environments by repopulating both with explanatory results. This effect can be traced at least as far back as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the invasion of the lifeworlds by mechanics and its creatures began to unfold on a broad front. Its threshold epoch may have been that of the introduction of motor machines; since then, the cultures of the West have been, first and foremost, countries of machine immigration. What capitalism signifies is the policy of open borders for the entry of



mechanical, natural-historical and epistemic migrants, who pass from non-invention to invention, from non-discovery to discovery. Invention and discovery are, therefore, facts that concern the cognitive civil status of things. The process of civilization consummates the naturalization of the new non-human. Without this permanent making-place for immigrations from the new, the modern world is unthinkable; on this point, the difference between the United States and the Old World is only one of style; in fact, all cultures supporting modernization are countries of immigration. Any private household in them has to manage to accept continuous accommodations of innovations. In fact, to cite one of the most important examples, a physical *novum* such as electricity (which for a time was also a *numinosum*)<sup>[183]</sup> had to be taken out of the background of nature and implanted on a large scale in territorial planning, before the enlightened, automated, image-eroticized, tele-participatory mass culture could emerge.<sup>[184]</sup> The universe of microbes first had to be transferred from its invisibility to the sanitary arena of the late nineteenth century, before the transformation of modern populations into hygienic societies and the recruitment of the masses for antimicrobial campaigns became possible. Since then, viruses, bacteria and other small creatures have been, in a proper sense, "among us".

<sup>[185]</sup> If telegraph and railroad lines suddenly cross the agricultural landscapes of old Europe; if telephones and microwave ovens make their entrance into the homes of citizens; if chemical fertilizers and antibiotics place on new foundations the metabolism of human beings with nature; if the automobile, in a wave of imitation of barely a hundred years, leads to a radical revision of all traditional ideas of cities, streets, homes and environments: after each of these invasions and their epidemic spread, the common world of human beings and things is no longer, to say the least, the same as before. Analogous things avail of countless new introductions of explanatory products on the physical, chemical and cultural fronts; and, from the point of view of

of incorporation into the civilizing collective, invented objects, such as automobiles and tamagochis, discovered objects, such as pheromones or the AIDS virus, and mixed objects, such as recombinable bacteria, transgenic enzymes or phosphorescent rabbits, maintain the same rank.

Modernity is an open-air experiment, presumably advised by pragmatism but largely uncontrolled *de facto*, with the simultaneous and successive introduction of an indefinite number of innovations into civilization.<sup>[186]</sup> The multi-innovative constitution of contemporary "society" rests on the assumption that the death struggles of the new with the old (Tarde has thematized them under the title of "logical challenges") lead, as a rule, to social progress, and that novelties can coexist peacefully, either in the mode of reciprocal indifference, or in the sense of positive combinability and accumulation (according to Tarde, "logical couplings", *accouplements logiques*). Obscurity reigns over the criteria of compatibility of explanations and inventions with each other. What does not lead immediately or in the medium term to physical and cultural catastrophes seems to be a success. One part of the new introductions is evaluated by the markets, another is moderated by state regulations, a third is censured by moralists and communities of experts; the greater part infiltrates, always reinforced by imitative waves, of course, in the technical installations and spreads, with greater or lesser delay, to the "worlds of life". When the spirit of modernization dominates, populations are programmatically placed in a receptive disposition for the innovations that infiltrate.

In view of these processes, the usual discourse of discoveries and inventions is not appropriate to explain the reality-constituting seriousness of the explanation: what is invented or discovered most of the time breaks into the real at a narrowly circumscribed point, and can only become a factor of collective relations by a powerful imitative wave. Even the commonplace expression that this or that invention, discovery or

The development of a product has been of a "revolutionary" nature is, as a rule, nothing more than a form for fake news from the front of explanation. Such fake news about so-called revolutions are susceptible of explanation and need it: in their dilettante phase they are called utopias, after their professionalization, publicity or *public relations*. (Considered from this point of view, the Soviet Union was, first of all, an advertising agency that brought to the world the news of revolution, which it pretended to be itself).

[187]

Indeed, new introductions motivated by the explanation often produce the impression that new aggressive neighbors have moved into the being's house, for whom no suitable space was available, and have, so to speak, violently moved in. No wonder that this was sometimes described as "revolutionary" turbulence. To recall one of the most striking introductory dramas, there is no doubt that the explanation of writing by printing with movable letters upended the entire economy of European civilization after 1500. One can go so far as to say that the post-Gutenberg world represents the attempt to include in a bearable cohabitation with the other cultural facts, above all with the religious convictions of human beings, those newcomers, harmless at first sight, who appeared in the typesetting workshops in the form of small pieces of lead. Demonstration by success: modern literature and the public instruction of the nation states; demonstration by failure: the dismal role of the printing presses as supports of the nationalistic deformation of consciousness, as allies of all ideological perversions, and as propagators and accelerators of collective hysterias.<sup>[188]</sup> Gabriel Tarde, rightly, designates the effects of book printing as a "surprising invasion," which gave wings to the illusion that "books are the source of all truth."<sup>[189]</sup>

Whatever it is that emerges in the form of new devices, theorems, entities and procedures in the field of reality of

intelligence, scattered over collectives and corporations, has to be settled in the foundational books of cognitive administration and socialized in the consciences of the users. Non-socializable innovations are either eliminated or transformed into dangerous parasites: think, for example, of the fierce dispute over the integrability of nuclear technology. Since an effective explanation advances as an analysis and synthesis of reality, technical or operational, it produces in numerous practical continuums of the life process of societies cuts or leaps that clearly mark a before and an after. Explanations change the form and direction of currents of events and routines of action. One could recognize in them, frankly, the material of which the differences that produce a real difference are composed. In that property is formed the fundamental motif of a new ontology, which treats the existent not as consistency, but as event.

To what extent this conception is legitimate can be demonstrated by a simple consideration. When, by a so-called discovery, a new "fact" is introduced into the domicile of the realities of official culture—the fact America, say, which since 1493 was made public in Europe by the report of Columbus, or the fact of lactic acid yeast, which was introduced in 1858 in the French scientific community thanks to the efforts of Pasteur—, the consciousness "informed" or reorganized by the novelty undergoes a *shock* of arrival, in which the difference between not-being-discovered and being-discovered of a thing is intensely experienced: it is as if in that transit the difference in level between nothingness and being becomes locally acute. Where before there seemed to be little or nothing, by explanation and its publication something new presents itself and announces its claim to be admitted into the community of realities. It is during the interval of surprise, before the transition from astonishment to routine, that thought is best disposed to admit questions, by which explanation can be properly placed in the spotlight.

Under the impression of the first sensation, we should ask: in what corner of the world was the double continent of America before its emergence in Columbus' assertions? Did the sailor really give the right answer when in his *Book of Prophecies* of 1502 he writes that the New World had been hidden in the spirit of God until the Almighty lifted the veil that covered it somewhat before the eyes of his favorite servant Columbus?

Where had the famous lactic acid ferment been hiding before Louis Pasteur assigned it a place of honor on the panel of the quintessential values of knowledge for enlightened human beings and dairy owners? Still: where were the microbes before the same Pasteur and his German rival Robert Koch brought them out of their epistemological hiding place and turned them into castmates on a stage of expanded reality?

[190] Where were radioactive rays before Madame Curie began experimenting with pitchblende, and before the Los Alamos physicists, because of the Hiroshima scandal, introduced them into the factual environment of news-accessible mankind? Or, to pose the questions that touch on the explanation of foams as defensively creative life-space multiplicities: in what way were climate, air and atmosphere disguised for individuals and groups, before by their atmoterrorist explanations, on the one hand, and by their meteorological and technical-climatic developments, on the other, they became objects of modern environmental concern? In what hiding place, in what pre-concept were human cultures hidden, before seafarers and ethnologists catalogued them, and system, war and stress theorists functionally explained them? How did human beings themselves, in short, interpret their exposure to the climates of "nature," before they became aware that they are, even in their most intimate dispositions, "wards of the air" and creatures of greenhouse effects?

[191] And finally: where were the immunity systems before

that the explanatory dawn of the 20th century brought them within sight of the new life sciences and to the forefront of medical self-care?

At first sight, these questions seem extravagant and of an undeniably naive tone. Nevertheless, they are legitimate and theoretically and scientifically productive as long as they incite to account for the stay of human beings in a *res publica*, cohabited by products of explanation, in a more explicit way on their part. With this commitment nothing is decided in advance as to whether an adequate answer to them will be found; it is certain only that the two customary answers to the question of the modes of being of the discovered prior to discovery are not only unsatisfactory, but decidedly false: the first answer comes from idealism (transcendental and constructivist), which asserts that the things discovered did not possess any kind of pre-existence prior to their perception by a consciousness and their expression in a discourse. The error of this thesis lies in suggesting that it would be permissible to understand the classical assumption of the identity of being and perception as absolute dependence of objects on a thinking subject. This is not far from the hypnotic absurdity of subjective idealism, according to which objects from which a human observer occasionally departs also lack their being as such. The complementary error is found in the second answer, which posits a pre-existence, objective and independent of knowledge, of what is discovered before discovery, representing the being of the thing as something from which it can be easily abstracted, without its consistency losing the least, the fact of being perceived by an intelligence. In this conception, close to the daily exercise of science, the objectivism of an insufficient ontology celebrates misleading successes: according to it, what exists is always strictly so and only so as it subsists "in itself" before any perception, while thinking plays the role of a contingent addition, which might not intervene in the same way - as, evidently, is the case before the discovery of a thing - and which becomes

suspicious, moreover, because of the susceptibility to error and the versatility of interpretations. Here it is the discovery that can supposedly be lacking in what has been discovered, without this being detrimental to its own fullness. The symmetry of both sophisms is clear: while the error of the first type consists in consciously-absolutely exaggerating the discovery of the discovered, the wrongness of the second type is shown in the fact that it objectively undervalues the discovery, as if an entity or "substance" existing by itself were not affected by when, where and how it is incorporated into a knowledge and under what symbolic forms and logical neighborhoods it circulates in a society of assimilators of knowledge.

The only way out of the dilemma of having to choose between alternative errors lies in the demonstration that a third way is open. Demonstrations of this type can be found in different works, of which we would like to mention two, which seem to be very different on the surface, but which show similarities in their deep structure: [192] on the one hand, Bruno Latour's contributions to scientific research, from which comes the impetus for an epistemological movement for citizens' rights, whose aim is to naturalize technical objects and animal symbions in an expanded constitutional space, in order to create a republic that, together with human actors, at last also recognizes artifacts and living beings as fellow citizens who ontologically fulfill all the requirements; [192] on the other hand, Martin Heidegger's meditations on a new determination of the "essence of truth," considerations that take as their point of departure the Greek word *alethéia*, not concealment, not concealment, interpreting it as alluding to the incorporation of the hidden into the diurnal side of the existent.

Latour's originality in opening his third path between idealism and realism is shown in his attention to the rituals of transit, by which new facts, discoveries, inventions, theorems, and scientific artifacts are introduced into the environment that surrounds them.

serves as a "host culture". When we speak of the "introduction" of the discovered into the cognitive *environment* or of the incorporation of new facts into already existing communes, we should not reinforce the idea that an autonomous entity, let us say lactic acid yeast, at a totally discretionary point in time is snatched from its pre-existence and incorporated into the multitude of things known or admitted by human consciousness. In this case, Pasteur's role would have corresponded to nothing more than that of a customs entry officer, who would have had to examine whether the passport of the new things he had found was in order; if it were manifested, in so doing, that the lactic acid ferment is an objective entity and not a chimera, nothing would stand in the way of its reception into the realm of accredited facts. In reality, the function of the discoverer is much more active and complex, since, by his conjectures, his observations, his manipulations, his descriptions, his trials, and his conclusions, he first shapes the

The "thing" to be discovered, so that its discoverability can be virulent as an autonomous entity or delimitable effect. According to Latour (who refers to Whitehead's *Process and Reality*), the discoverer, later recognized as such, is a manipulator and co-producer of "statements" or rather of "*propositions*" from which the future discovery may emerge, not someone who merely notes or finds decontextualized facts.<sup>[193]</sup> To discover does not mean to remove at a stroke the veil that covers a pre-existing finished object, but to unfold the propositional or problematic state in which the "thing" was *implicit* before its new formulation, through a broader articulation, and, in this way, to weave a new and more compact network between the articulated entity, other entities, science and society.

Latour's concept of articulation is very close, in certain aspects, to what in the context of what has been said so far has been called explanation. Both the one and the other are at the boundary between theoretical-scientific and ontological meanings. A world in which articulations or explanations are possible is neither the



It constitutes, rather, the agitated horizon of all "proposals", in which something existent, possible and real is offered to human warning in a propositional or provocative way. In a certain way, the matter of being presents itself from itself in the form of a proposal, one might even say, in the form of a reproach, if one understands the expression reproach [*Vorwurf*] from the Greek verb *probállein* (to throw, to reproach), from which the name *problem* is derived. In problems, things speak to the intelligence; in proposals, they open themselves to human participation. By pressure of relevance they provide wings to creativity. As non-speakers, things, states of affairs, natures can only appear if, and insofar as, they have first been reduced to mutism by an intellect that reserves language for itself. The original mode of the giving of things is their interest for another: the one matters to the other; the existent is always immersed in a bath of relevance in which it moves together with intelligences.

The ontological-problematic mode of consideration - to be means to propose oneself - offers, in principle, the advantage of no longer allowing at all the supposed abyss between words and things to open up, into which so much intelligence metaphysically engaged in superfluous attempts to cross it disappeared. If the world is all that is the case, and the case is all that is proposed or all that reproaches a cognizing sympathy, then one must understand discovering as the unfolding of a proposal, in which a greater perceivable degree of articulation is reached. The same is expressed by the metaphor of the fold: where there is a fold or something rolled up, an unfolding or an unrolling can be applied (*explicare*). Folds are propositions or propositions to which an explication is applied. The perceived fold alludes to a folded interior that has not yet been unfolded. Latour, an optimist with respect to science and a radical democrat, explains without hesitation: "The more articulation, the better."<sup>[194]</sup> Articulations develop the neighborhoods between propositions. New things discovered or

invented are articulations in the midst of articulations on a background composed of proposals: deployments in a landscape composed of deployments in front of a panorama of folds.

How, then, should the new element, discovered by Pasteur, be valued in the republic of human beings, theorems and artifacts? Latour's information is convivial and civil: "The lactic acid ferment now exists as a discrete unit, because among many other entities it is now articulated in as many active and artificial environments"<sup>[195]</sup> In this statement there is a clear variant of institutionalism, which gives validity to the idea that discoveries and inventions must be socialized and contextualized as second-degree practices, in order to achieve the "stability proper", described by Arnold Gehlen,<sup>[196]</sup> to quasi-institutions that are suitable for living in them. It is precisely of modern knowledge that, as D'Alembert has already pointed out, it has "acquired a social function": "it constitutes the breathing air to which we owe life".<sup>[197]</sup> Scientific research is a decent title for a serene philosophy of a world populated by products of explanation. It offers one of the most adequate theories of Modernity insofar as it blows the myth of Modernity out of the water.<sup>[198]</sup>

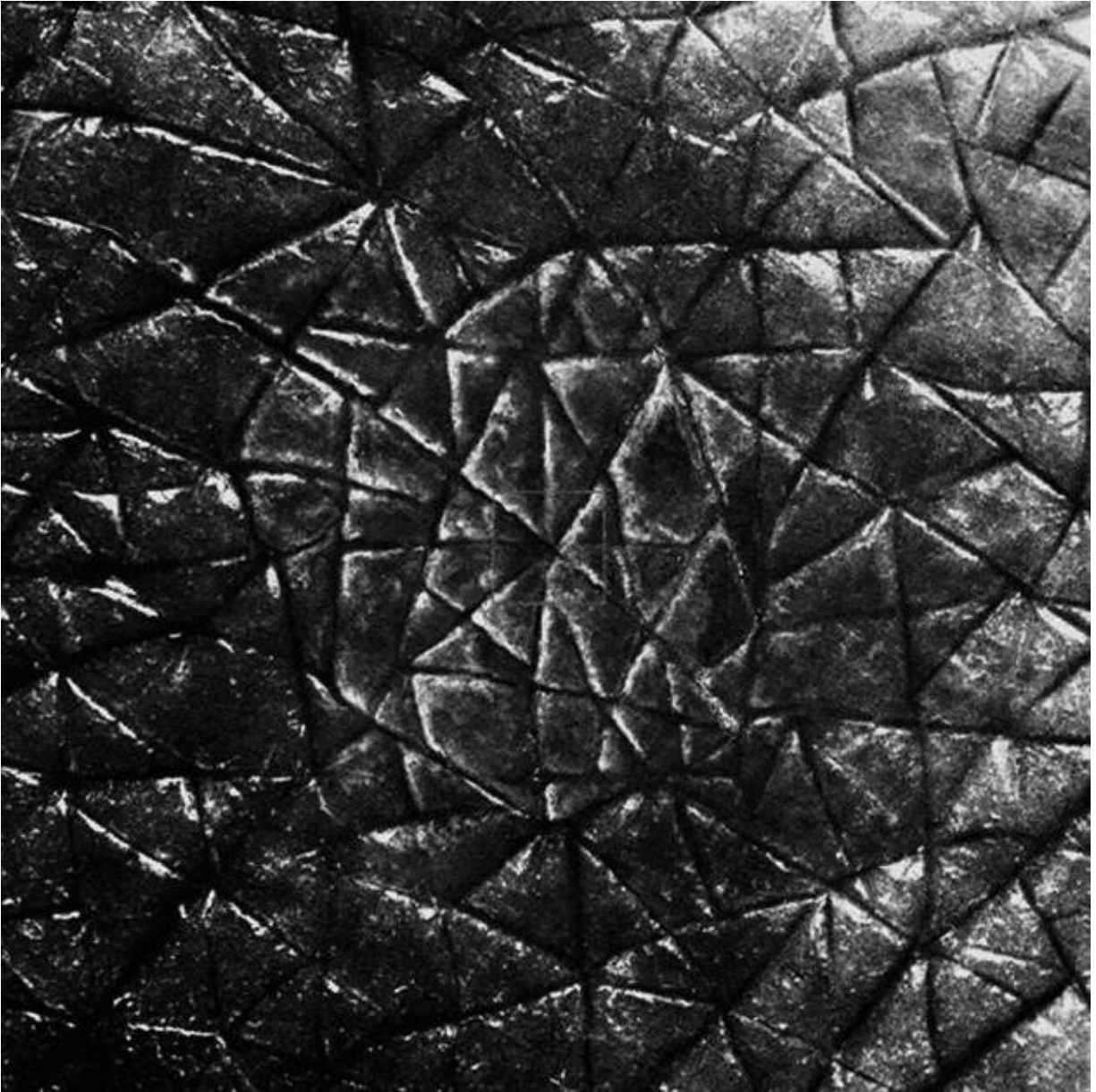
Comparable considerations, although of a completely different tone, are the analyses on the "essence of truth" made known by Heidegger. These had to adopt a darker tone since Heidegger believed to see, above all, in the phenomenon that Latour calls articulation, an invasion, always generating violence, of the will to know in nature, reduced to a mere resource. According to him, science and technology have in themselves the character of an attack on concealment. Heidegger received the decisive nod for the development of this way of seeing things from the Greek word for truth, *alethéia*, which he translated as un-concealment, from a point of view that is certainly correct, since it seems coherent to analyze the expression as a compound of the word *lethe*, concealment, hiding, forgetting, and the negative prefix *a-*. According to this, the concept would be based on the idea that

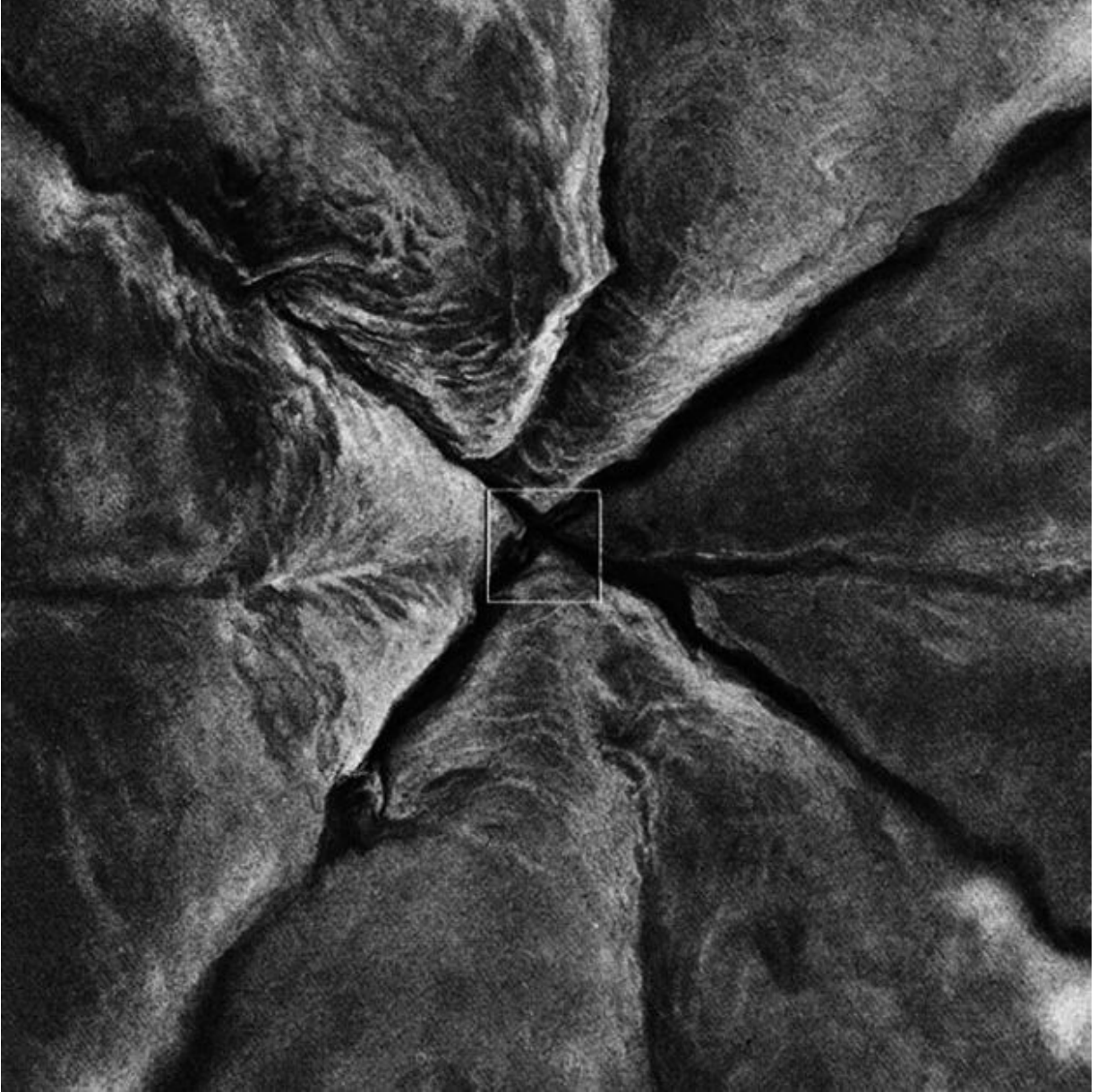
"true" is - or rather, enters into the realm of truth as - that which from concealment, hiding, forgetting "comes this way" to discovery, unhiding, remembering. Truth is not founded as truth only by the judgment that determines a proposition as true or false, but an appearance, a proposition, a phenomenon-folding emerges into the realm of the patent and provokes the judgment (which, by nature, can also be false), keeps the event of truth in motion. One could associate with this Whitehead's *dictum*: "[...] in the real world it is more important that a *proposition* be interesting than true. The importance of truth consists in the fact that it increases interest"<sup>[199]</sup> Truth, polyvalent in principle, occurs in *both* uncovering and expression. Therefore, it is always also a transition from lack of interest or from pre-interest to actual interest.

Truth, then, is not only a property of expressed sentences, which can be called true if and only if "in the real" were "effectively" the case what is stated or "figured" in the sentences; it is rather the case that *physis*, according to that interpretation, represents a self-publicizing event, in whose communications the perceptive and sentence-forming intelligences are involved. One need not be intimidated by the allegorical mode of speech: when speaking of nature as an active person, medial processes are always assumed. The idea can be reformulated as follows: in its appearance, nature makes itself understood, gives out winks, shows an image of itself, lets itself be seen and heard, manifests itself in its opening, in its sounding. With the reservation just made, it could be said that nature is an author who publishes in her own publishing house (although for this she certainly needs human readers). Understandably, this interpretation of the event of truth is opposed to the dualistic dogmatics of the metaphysical era, inaugurated by Plato and other post-Socratics, and of their techno-scientific heirs, in whose view nature - as the existent in its totality - presents itself as

as a block of mute cosicities, free of meaning, far from signs. From that perspective, it would be the human spirit, alone, who, in possession of its monopoly of language, donation of meaning and interest, would approach the indifferent natural mass as if approaching from outside and would force it to surrender its secrets.

The tragic irony of this failed interpretation of the knowledge of nature, made both by metaphysics and by its continuators in modern technologies and natural sciences, consists, according to Heidegger now, in the fact that its extremely reductionist, impoverishing and disfiguring concepts of the event of truth were so successful that, in the same way as a self-verifying prophecy, they were determinant for more than two millennia of the European culture of rationality. This space of time would have the same extension, then, as the era of the oblivion of being. Let us remember that a similar way of looking at things was manifested in the statement: "The whole is the false", which, historically turned around, means: the false also has its antiquity. Whoever wants to locate its beginnings, to go back to situations not disfigured before them, has to deal with Plato's deformation of truth by turning it into an "idea" or, even further back, with Democritus' splitting of human reality into body and soul. Faulty descriptions of this magnitude exceed, as Heidegger saw, the designative capacity of the usual concept of error; they force the observer to turn to expressions such as "fate," perhaps even to "fatality."<sup>[200]</sup>

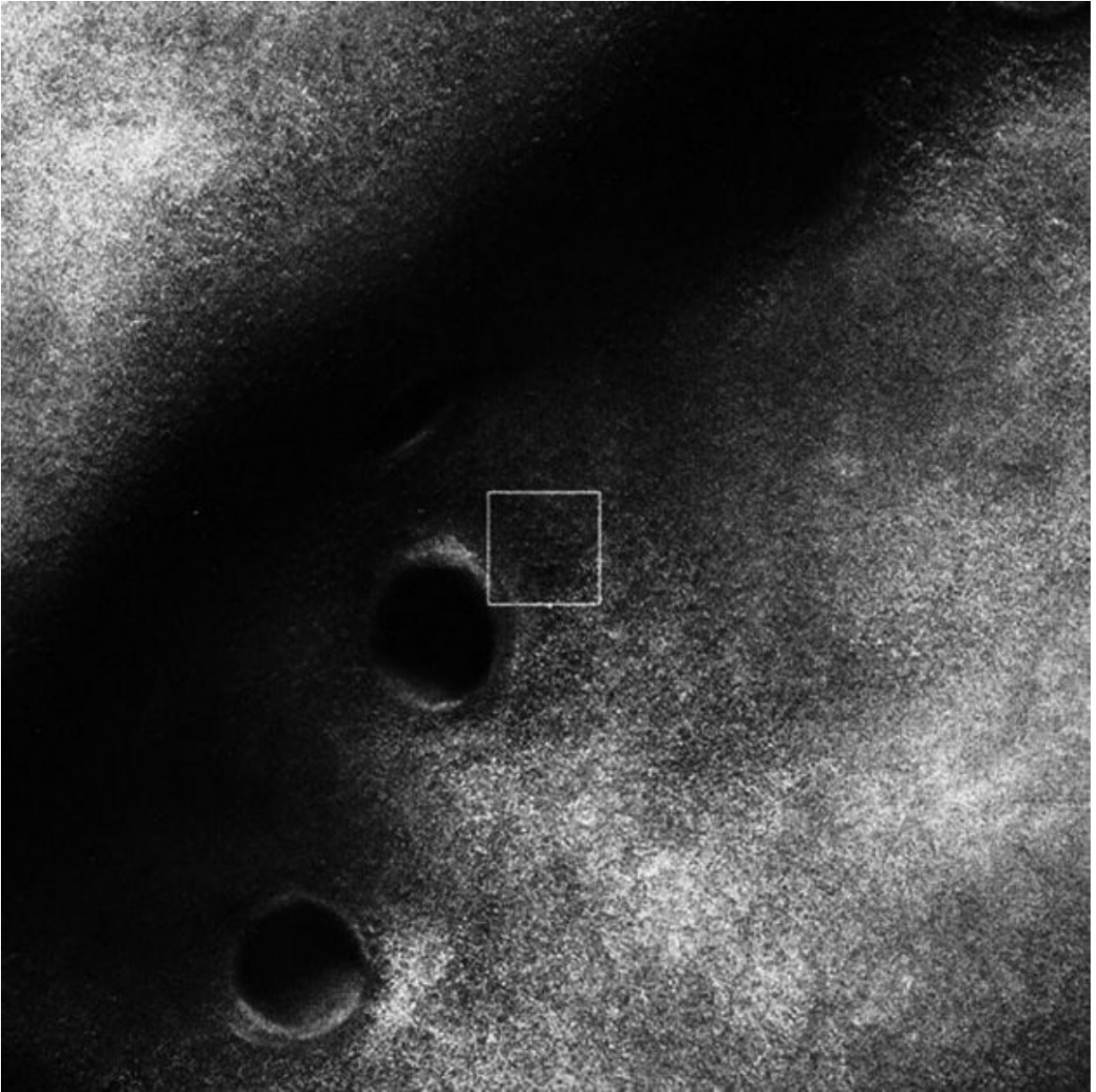


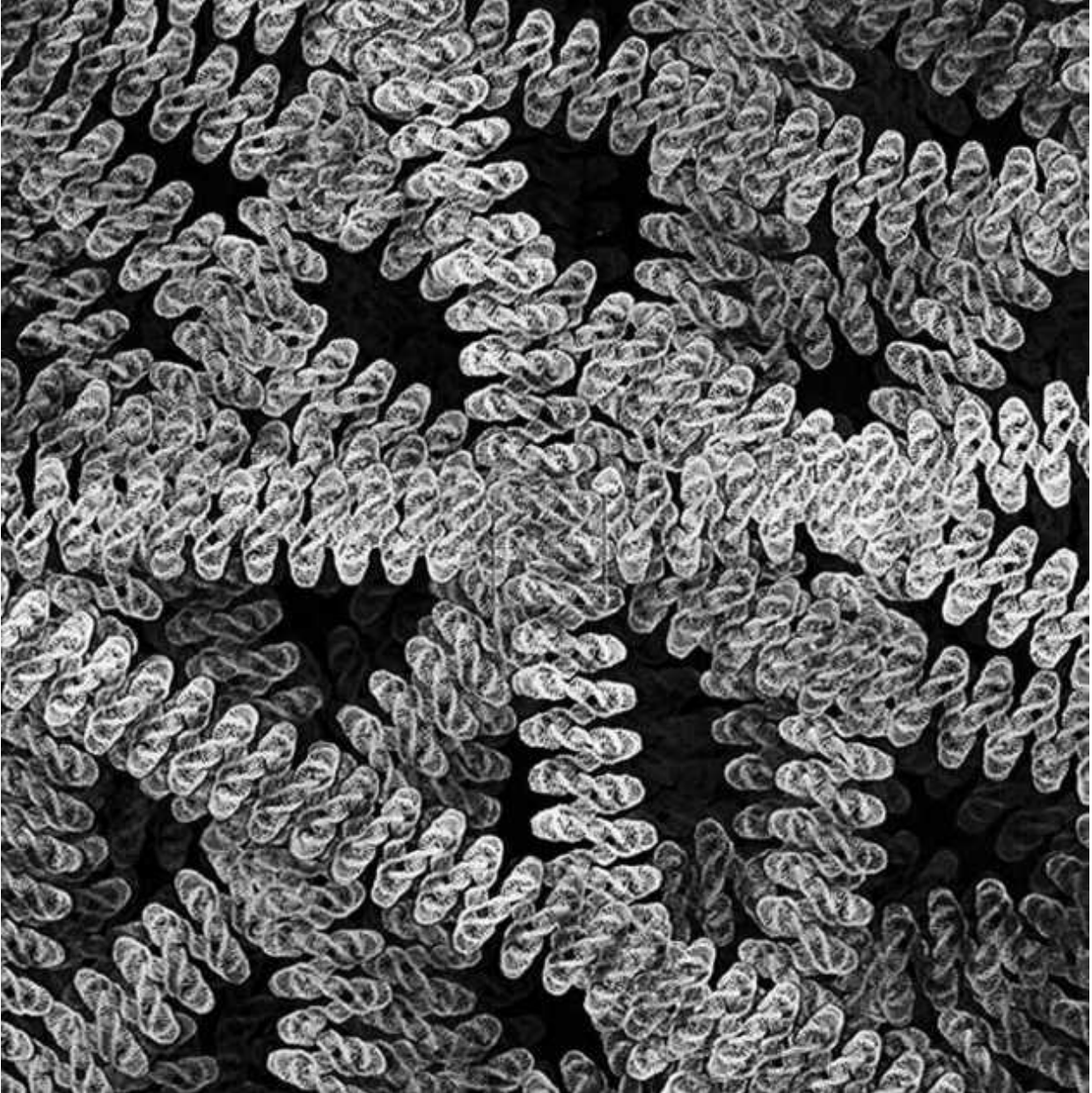












Enlargement of the back of a hand.

When it comes to locating the drama of the explicitness of atmospheres and systems of immunity in the history of ideas and catastrophes of the twentieth century, Heidegger's views on the genesis of the manifest might again prove attractive. As has been noted, the thinker made the manifestation of the manifest arise originally from a self-publication of being, and as the publisher of the publication he cites the *Lichtung*. Indeed,

Heidegger, in the course of his meditations, had to come to realize the limits of this understanding of truth, because he, as a contemporary of the world wars and the technification of the world, could not escape the little that could still be undertaken in view of the modern situation, with the early-Greek concept, reconstructed in its sense, of a self-communicative and self-cultivating world of phenomena. Faced with this impasse, he chose the way out of interpreting as a new "trick" of being itself the fact of transferring the self-revelation of being as nature to a forced bringing into evidence of the existent by means of research and development; which, naturally, offered the advantage of leaving open the possibility of a new change of trickery, with respect, this time, to primary truths of the new-old Greece, although with the counter-performance of no longer being able to formulate a positive concept of scientific research and technical civilization, not to mention, for the time being, the fatalistic over-interpretation of the history that is taking place.

It is certain, in any case, that in the reality recomposed by the enlightened praxis the artificial illumination covers the self-radiating one. What in the modern way is considered "patent" or displayed on the surface is no longer anywhere nature, opening by itself, which shows what it shows and hides what it hides. Nor is modern unhiddenness any longer the gray-warm daily light on a peasant-artisan environment, in which the existent, protected by habits, knows how to orient itself, because it always, and only, encounters things and living beings within its own radius of action. In the technical world the non-patent is brought into **v i e w** by an organized rupture of latency; or, thanks to an analogous movement, with the help of design and the technique of presentation, it is brought out of non-evidence into artificial perceivability and from non-manipulability into a second manageability. The knowledge produced by research and invention is neon light knowledge. In place of the self-clarity of being appears the obligatory clarity of the "given", in place of organic perception the organized observation. Under such assumptions it is unimaginable that beings

human beings could ever again become involved in a "event of truth", in connection with the old nature, with its "opening", its "giving birth", its hiding and retreating into inappearance: an event in which things show by themselves, not forced, what and how much they let see of themselves, to keep the rest obscure as their secret.

The modernity of our situation is shown in the fact that the uncovering, the revealing, the expressing has been placed at the forefront of a systematic offensive against the hidden and forgotten. To wrest a manifestation from latency and to foreground the background of the world in order to deploy it in practical uses: this seems to be the most important apriori of modern civilization, which, for this reason, can be called a society of knowledge for deeper reasons than those normally stated. The human right to unveil nature and to reconstruct culture is so obviously and so super-obviously presupposed that no declaration of the rights of the human being has so far deemed it necessary to make it explicit. Nowhere is this formulated more clearly than in Heidegger's *dictum*: "Technology is a mode of unveiling"; a proposition which, although stated with the calm of comprehensive penetration into an enormous state of affairs, reserves the decision as to whether it is still to be understood as a diagnosis or already as a warning. From it speaks the concern that the organized invasion of the occult is manifesting itself increasingly as a "fatality", more precisely: as a state of aletheiological cause of injustice. What begins as an enlightened *management* of reality increases the risk of the misfortune caused by knowledge. Because of the persistent indication that technique is essentially uncovering or explanation - more clearly: a mode of application of latency-breaking violence - it is inadvisable to continue to recount the large-scale exploitation of discovering, inventing and publishing as the festive history of the human progress of knowledge, as it has tended to present itself from the eighteenth century to the present day, although in the course of the twentieth century it has been intermingled with

some skeptical tones in these progressive narratives. Research, as a systematic work of unfolding the undiscovered, must lead, according to Heidegger, to an ever deeper misunderstanding of concealment.

Considered from this point of view, the fundamental secret event of the 20th century is the catastrophe of latency. Its most striking results are the instrumentalized nuclear power, the revealed immunity systems, the decoded genome and the exposed brain. In view of these magnitudes, the playmates of the technically decultured civilization are confronted with the monstrous, which, after the rupture of latency, settles into the harmony of reality. After August 6, 1945 Elias Canetti wrote in his *Annotations*:

What a blessing that we have not always been scorched by possibilities we did not suspect. [...] The smallest thing has triumphed... The road to the atom bomb is philosophical.<sup>[201]</sup>

## ***End of course***

Where, then, were the immunity systems prior to their  
"In what folding were they enclosed before the biochemical articulation liberated them and incorporated them into the space of reality of contemporary knowledge and practices? In what proposal, in what proposition did they linger before their debut on the modern stage of science? Under what masks did they confirm Heraclitus' saying that nature likes to hide: *ph'ysis kr'yptestai phílei*, to that same *physis* that, moreover, questions us by showing itself, giving itself to us as open?<sup>[202]</sup> Did the systems of immunity, those security services and agencies of organismic, social and political self-affirmation, carry a pre-explicit existence under the popular conceptions of robustness and health, to which is linked from the beginning the idea that only their destruction brings, retrospectively, the awareness of their fullness and claims their total recovery? Were they hidden in the intuitions of primitive law, which since time immemorial allowed both the deteriorated life and the wounded honor the gesture of self-defense and approved the restoration of a deteriorated status? Were they *implicitly* in play, when human beings feared the vengeance of the gods as soon as they saw the protocol violated in the relations of the hereafter with the hereafter? Were they present in the rituals of defense against demons or of blessing of buildings and lands, by which delimited spaces were dedicated to their

Were they implicit in the imago of the sacred Germanic monarchic principle, according to which a plethora of charismas had been bestowed on the most worthy prince: the power of victory, the fortune of the harvest, the affability and generosity of the chief, the far-sightedness of foresight, the splendor of ambition, the health-transmitting presence? Can we indirectly think of systemic-immunizing effects when the god of the Lutherans was sung of as a firm castle and as a good weapon and defense?

Does the etymological fact that the Roman word *immunis* at the beginning meant nothing else than "freed from taxes and tributes" (an early manifestation of lack of solidarity?), besides being able to refer also to a person freed from military service, still help us: a background on which the later legal meaning of immunity as non-incrimination of persons in political office was formed?

If one only conceives the idea of the existence of immunity systems according to their present biochemical-medical articulation, one must answer negatively to all these questions as a whole. In none of the above-mentioned dimensions are immune systems involved in the limited sense of the word. Nowhere can one speak of an internal combat between microbial invaders and the system's own antibodies; in no way do the aforementioned phenomena describe the operations of a regulatory endocrinological dimension. Nevertheless, the explicit phenomenon of bio-systemic immunity casts a long shadow on the past: the field of humanly relevant representations of integrity includes a plethora of "proposals" of how to conceptually, operationally and ritually shape struggles for violated states of order and totalities.

Pre-metaphysical thinking already knows a kind of ontology of the limit, which is closely linked to an ethics of defense. Here a pre-territorial concept of limit appears in view, which intimately concerns the immunity phenomenon: what is to be

guarantee are not demarcation lines of pieces of land and domains of soil, but communities of animation and energy, composed, clearly, by a nuclear sphere and by a vulnerable periphery. The spontaneous pluralism of pre-metaphysical sketches of world-images counts in its fields a plurality of individual "subjects of energy" or "existents" - both are improper expressions by nature, originally formulated already by later metaphysics - among which there are ongoing endless struggles for sharing. And, despite the fact that these herds of force or energy are implicated in one another in a much broader environment than would be appropriate in the later cosmos of essences, regulated by an ontological status, where each "thing" is placed in its "place" in order to accredit itself, here a permanent drama of delimitation is always perceived.

The premetaphysical interpretation of the world has a ontological-guerrilla conception of the world, as attack and defense. Here there is as yet no grand framing of the whole, within which each particular occupies its place under a dominant logos. Reality is, rather, a *patchwork* composed of micro-dramas, a fluctuation of skirmishes between a plethora of mobile units. The intensities of attack and those of defense return to each other in constant onslaughts, invasions and expulsions: a wild war, endlessly oscillating between one side and the other, of energies. That is why science, under these assumptions, can only take shape as the *gaya ciencia* of the lists of wars between energetic herds. In it pre-exists - in case it is granted a pre-existence - the unformulated conception of immunity, folded into the attention paid to the fighting capacity of a force or energy. In a world thus described there can still be no central repository of knowledge, interested in generalizations. If, nevertheless, in such circumstances, several knowledges come together to show and empower themselves, it is only in agonal events such as contests of magicians and pugnasts of



singers: forms that survived among the Greeks until the age of tragedy.

Since the appearance of metaphysical world pictures two and a half thousand years ago, with which, according to Weber, Spengler, Jaspers and others, whether rightly or wrongly, concepts such as high culture and high religion are associated, the subject of the predecessors of the system of immunity moves from the herds of fighting forces to storage in an inner realm of experiences, which begins to be described by the name of *psyche*. When one speaks of the soul in the metaphysical sense, a change of motive in the interpretation of the inner forces of defense and affirmation has already taken place. If the local points of life or "subjects of energy" were previously able to assert their ground against invaders thanks to their capacity for defense and counterattack, from now on it is rather immanent formal constants that give strength to the so-called souls in the border war with neighboring souls and with the non-animic. With the concept *psyche* and its translations was found the proposal, of major repercussion for the form of immunological latency in the metaphysical era. It implied the conversion of defensive force into conservation of form: not in vain is the first attribute of the soul in this regime that of "immortal", an expression that is only appreciated at its true value when connotations such as "undeformable" or "immortal" are simultaneously heard to resonate in it.

"incorruptible". Provided with that inner quota of stability, the *homo metaphysicus* managed to cope with the existential risks of his mundane condition: more expansively and fearlessly than an animist had ever managed in his local skirmishes. This, then, is the immunological performance of the psychic form properly understood: to possess and give immortality. It alone helps individuals to achieve superiority over the scenarios of their relative ties.

That is why truth, as understood by the philosophers, the first immunologists of being, has such an outstanding value in the history of metaphysics: because *aletheia*,

unveiling, uncovering, according to its deep structure, is the same as *immunitas*, lack of engagement, lack of entanglement in the common destinies and tasks (*munera*) of mortals, that is why it is to be considered (by its few connoisseurs) as the supreme good. Accordingly, to discover the truth means to grasp the non-daily foundation of the invulnerability of life. Because truth remains true, even where it is misunderstood or contested, that is why the sapient partake of its transcendent stability. It is from here that we must explain the presuppositions that allow us to raise the concept of God to supra-rational heights. God is from then on the name for the solution of a problem, which human intellects cannot cope with: how is a system of universal immunity to be constituted which acts at the same time as a universal system of community? It is now understood that this question makes clear the deep structure of the formula "God and the world". Only God can know how the salvation (or immunization) of all things (in God) would be compatible with the actual coexistence of things (in the world, the scene of their mutual destruction). Whoever is looking for an exact concept of optimism finds here the definition: optimistic is the assumption that there is such a transcendent being.

Yet Goethe, in his verse of the "coined form, which is The "living development", he adhered, making profession of it, to the belief in the solution of the enigma of immunity: the resistance of the form is the one that ensures that no time nor any power is able to shatter what is coined from eternity as form and appears in the temporal; original, Aristotelian words. By the conversion of defensive force into formal security arises the new archetype of the wise and just, who gains access to the *optimum* immunity thanks to formal soul consummation. *Integer vitae scelerisque purus / non eget Mauris iaculis neque arcu...*<sup>[203]</sup> He who is whole of life and free of crime has no need of a Moorish devil or bow: in this line of Horace is expressed for an entire era an idea of immunity as a non-immunity.

social aggressiveness and not contamination with crimes. The sage, as the logically consistent and morphologically just, rejoices in an unarmed power-being out of pure correspondence with the formal endowments of the soul. Integrity now means formal consummation.

[204]

That this cannot be understood by a modern concept of form, deflated in an empty scheme, but in the sense of a pleromatic conception of form, as substance of the total being-power of a thing or of a state of life, is shown, moreover, also *per analogiam*, in the Roman juridical expression *integrum*, which designates the invulnerable state of a unit of life protected by law. Accordingly, the task of the Roman and Old European administration of justice is therapeutic, in that it is concerned with the defense against injury and the restoration of the integrity of "things", so that the process of compensation for damages represents the legal procedure *par excellence* of the Roman courts. Roman law, however, does not rely so much on the totalizing or integrating functions of "form", which rather remain a motif of philosophical-Greek style discourses, as on those of the *ius civile*, of that privilege which guaranteed to free Roman citizens, and to those raised to the same category in the Empire, a life under the protection of the formalities of a developed procedural law. It is not by chance that, with his *civis romanus sum*, St. Paul claimed for himself at a critical moment the benefits of immunity from Roman juridical procedure (with the result that his capital trial was transferred to Rome and carried there to the end).

The broadest and most radical formulation of the concept of the soul is the

we find in the conception of the soul of the world, as formulated by Plato in his late dialogue *Timaeus*. It represents the supreme figure among the ancient proposals for the articulation of immunologically relevant states of affairs. Whoever speaks of the soul of the world elevates to the supreme level the information about the principles of

spiritual defense and resistance against the loss of meaning and form. From this conception it can be deduced how the metaphysical concept of soul contributes to the integration and protection of the animate. According to the narration of the sage Timaeus, in the creation of the world the demiurge is guided by the consideration (*logismós*) of generating a product that, because of its perfect composition and form, does not fall into any kind of corruption:

For that reason and from that consideration, then, he constructed this world as a single whole, itself composed, in its turn, of all, and free, therefore, of old age and illness. [...] To that living being, which was to contain within itself everything else that was alive, there must certainly also correspond a figure, which would include within itself all the other figures. That is why he also turned it into the shape of a sphere [...] on the outside he made it completely smooth all around, down to the smallest detail [...] and he did not need eyes or ears, because, outside of it, there was nothing visible, nothing audible; likewise, there was no air around it that still needed to be breathed....

[205]

The construction of the perfectly round body of the world was superseded by the addition of the soul of the world, which is said to have been implanted in the center of the body of the world, and which penetrates the whole in its entirety and also clothes the body of the world from the outside. From this last indication it follows that it is not the soul that is in the body, but the body in the soul, since the continent is always more distinguished than the contained. <sup>206]</sup> By its internal context, the soul, composed arithmetically, occupies the middle ground between the nature of the indivisible "same" (*taúton*) and that of the "other" (*héteron*), subordinated to the divisibility proper to bodies. Thanks to this central position, the soul of the world possesses the capacity for assimilation on both sides: it can encounter either the indivisible same, always unalterable, or the divisible other, the sensible and becoming: it can take both into itself and, by its corresponding participation in both, inform with truth of that with which it comes into contact.

The Platonic world soul represents a perfect *medium* of knowledge, which constitutes, at the same time, the perfect system of immunity, since, by its composite nature, it is capable of absorbing without remainder the two primary "information": selfhood and otherness together with their derivations and mixtures. Whatever it "encounters", it is always preformed in it and in a certain way known beforehand; therefore, nothing can surprise or hurt it. Its immunological contribution consists in the fact that it is prior to

It is freed *a priori* from the pressure of having to reject a possible enemy, because it cannot suffer anything from outside that it does not already have in its own program. Whereas in the autism of normal mortals an "empty fortress" shields itself against the outside, the exquisite autism of the metaphysically interpreted soul has the properties of a full fortress. If something would like to enter it -but coming from what outside-, it is already contained in it. Plato puts in concept or in image, with sublime precision, the phantom of a living intelligence, which for its receptivity and sensibility would no longer have to pay the price of being vulnerable, deformable, destructible: "soul of the world" means a sensibility that, extensively self-sensitive, folds in on itself, excluding all external, potentially disturbing or heteronomous "information". As the body of the world must be perfectly smooth on its surface, because it subsists without environment, independent of an exterior, and knows no metabolism, so the soul of the world can circulate exclusively in itself, because, on account of its satiation of all identity and all difference, it does not need to learn anything, or, at any rate, only an external stimulus for the actualization of the memory. Like a biochemical system of immunity, which would do away with all pathogens because it carries within itself programs of recognition and neutralization for each one, the soul of the world copes with all experience because, by its complete provision with the proto-images of the same and of the other, it is prior to all novelty. It is the perfect cognitive installation, which reduces everything apparently new to something known.

The retrospective look at the metaphysical-formal explanation of the

soul in its supreme psycho-cosmic figure is instructive because from it can be deduced what in this order of things is expected of the souls of subordinate format, of the souls of towns, cities, municipalities and families and, *last but not least*, of individual souls. Soul of the world is the title of a superimmunity,

to participate in which it grants a broad guarantee of integrity to individuals; with the precariousness of the restriction that the protective effect of the psychic form can never be extended to the inconsistent part of existence, to the dimension of the body and of experience. As is well known, Platonic immunity is limited to the "realm of the spirit", while the fragile, perceptual bodies are only transitorily - the time of permanence of the soul - kept in form. Platonic philosophy appears, consequently, as a school of separation, in which the differentiation of the consistent from the transient is exercised beforehand. That is why Socrates, without irony, can set the stage by saying that what the philosopher must strive for is to be as dead in life as possible.

[207] Dying is an analysis-dissolution of the corporeally bound unity of selfhood and otherness, with the aim of returning the part of selfhood to the immortal reservoir of pure forms.

We recognize retrospectively that the metaphysical interest in the immortal was one of the figures of implication of the later concern for a technically molded and reconstructed immunity, insofar as in the metaphysical project appears the aspiration to protect life against what is contrary to the life of life itself. The refuge in form sought help in the face of injuries and deformations inseparable from the risk of existence, and even provided what was necessary against finitude as such. At the base of this version of the preoccupation with the eternalization of life (Heidegger, stimulated by Nietzsche, even pretended to see in it the denier's resentment against passing time) was, evidently, the sublime confusion of life with form: a confusion that gave impetus to the idea that life is only life because it participates in a higher register, that of the spirit. It was not in vain that the latter was designated as the life of life. The human being can only be rescued from his expiration if he is protected by a substance that cannot die, since he is beyond the difference between death and life. It is enough to affirm the participation of the living in this substantial stratum for it to be possible to conclude by considering life as a non-power.

die. That was how the immortality operation was to be carried out.

It could only succeed by a methodically managed deviation from the question, whether eternalized life is life in a plausible sense, or whether it is not the case, rather, that those who defend it only advertise a nameless dead. If this suspicion is followed, the diagnosis that the metaphysical "system of immunity" puts at its service a special type of dead, be it spirit, form or idea, as a defense against death and against all other vital contingencies, at the risk of, under the pretext of saving it, placing life in advance in the hands of its opposite, gains plausibility. Was not the secret of metaphysics in the equating of forms with the essence of life? And did not a paravitalism arise from there, which pretended to place empirical life under the protection of a superior life, although in reality it subordinated it to the dead or spiritual, exactly to that which cannot die because it has never lived: to the realm of numbers, of proportions, of ideas, of pure forms (and of mortal simplifications)? Athanasian paravitalism endows the world with forms of experiences of consummation and happiness, borrowing them from the passing sentient life and projecting them into the afterlife, as if they were timelessly repeatable elsewhere chosen, freed from their painful reverse.

The metaphysically codified conception of the soul represented for millennia the most suggestive proposal, in which the interest in anti-corruption programs for the perishable living was articulated. It was the first powerful analgesic and antibiotic. Its strength lay in its capacity to admit both the most popular and the most subtle interpretations; its power of allusion reached from arrational representations of excitement and force to the level of intelligence of mathematical angels. However distant it may seem from the modern idea of an endocrinological shield and a patrol of antibodies, circulating through the organism, specialized in defense against microbes, the

metaphysically interpreted soul united the sensitive-mobile level of empirical vitality with the defense and maintenance services of a metavital level of form. If philosophy ever possessed any consolation, it was that emanating from the immunological effects of such formal considerations.

But it cannot be overlooked that the idea of the soul of the world, by its ethical approach, represented precisely the opposite of a system of individual immunity: in the metaphysical regime individuals are subjected to a holistic instruction that forces them to sacrifice their idiosyncrasy and submit to the rule of a general plan; salvation is brought here only by the relation to the whole and the surrender to the enveloping. Therefore, an all-pervading anti-egoism propaganda is constitutive of the metaphysical order: because the power-being-all of the individual is thought from its participation in forms and generalities, individuals fall beforehand under the suspicion that they want to illegitimately place their self above the whole. Metaphysics protects totalities more from the desires of individuals than it protects individuals from their vital contingencies. Its *pathos* is to see existence exclusively under the sign of the great symbiosis. It does not want to make life easy for individuals, but death. The idea of the soul of the whole advertises the overcoming of the small in the great, with the irresistible connotations of meaning and warmth, which come from a conception of organism turned to the universal and to which is added the benefit of a certain pan-familiarism. When everything corresponds to everything in a complete whole, everything is also distantly and intimately related to everything. It is curious that the fact that pan-symbiosis, according to its deep structure, meant a pan-thanasia managed to remain hidden for so long behind the sublime effects of the discourse on the universal connection of things.

One does not get a proper idea of the dynamics of the new European history of ideas as long as one does not perceive its fundamental hidden motive, which is Plato's second chance. Already early on, Renaissance thought responded to the world-image shattering effects of the new empirics:



Columbus' voyage, Magellan's voyage, the early globography of the Earth, the mapping of the world, the dissection of the body, the incipient chemistry and the growing construction of machines, with a pathetic revival of Platonic natural philosophy and a recovery of ancient panorganicism and panpsychism. Consequently, there has never been the much cited "disenchantment of the world" by the modern sciences, as well as its supposed re-enchantment by the vitalist and neo-religious movements; it is rather the case that in the course of modern thought, mechanistic and panpsychistic motives were polemically and co-productively assembled from the beginning, and continue to be so even today.

In the year 1612, John Donne, in his poem *An Anatomy of the World*, thought he had to lament the death of the world's soul. He was thinking of the fading of the pre-Christian devotion to the cosmos, which, even after its Christian hyper-remoulding, pretended to see in the universe a living whole. That elegiac poem of lament unmistakably responds to the early effects of mechanization. Nevertheless, with his swan song to the *anima mundi*, the poet provided the most powerful performative demonstration of the vitality of the lamented. Already in his time, under various names, the cosmotheistic elements of the Greek interpretation of nature achieved modern honors in critical function. The more the triumphal parade of post-Cartesian and post-Hobbesian mechanics advanced, the more firmly it had to resort to its vitalist-panorganic alternative, which, as a rule, was clearly conscious of its belonging to the kinship system of the Platonic doctrine of the soul of the whole. The line runs from Plato's Florentine revival of the late fifteenth century to the pansophists and magicians of the baroque age of the universal sage and the Cambridge Platonists. From these extends this subtle chain to the pantheisms of Goethe's time, as well as to the romantic-philosophical-natural flanks of German idealism, together with its later offshoots in the mixed systems of the speculative-positivist interpretations of nature characteristic of the nineteenth century. These successful offshoots of popular Platonism must be held responsible for the fact that the beautiful souls of the time of the Enlightenment were spilling from their lips, like

synonyms, the words all and soul. But it was more than a manner of speaking when Hegel, in the well-known letter to Niethammer of October 13, 1806, referred to Napoleon as having seen the emperor-"that soul of the world"-an individual, "who, concentrated here at one point, seated on a horse, transcends the world and dominates it."<sup>[208]</sup>

From the impulses of the poetic pantheisms of 1800 and the "gloomy" hermeneutics (to speak with Fechner) of a nature sympathetic to the whole, which flourished between 1810 and 1850,<sup>[209]</sup> a great atmospheric state, common to all Europe, of animistic-universal neoplatonic tendencies and a popular-pantheistic organicism, in which the word "life" was presented as a creed full of arcana of salvation, developed once again around 1900. Needless to say how much this pious attitude towards life was present in the face of its opposite, which never gave up its claims. He energetically expressed his disagreement with the new advanced interpretation of nature as an industrial resource and source of raw materials, which was carried out by the mechanical-capitalist image of the world. This had practically become the dominant doctrine since it was equated with a self-explanation, highly conscious of its principles, of the technical-pragmatic project of the world. Symptomatic of this is the concluding recapitulation of a book widely read at the time, *The Old and the New Belief*, 1872, from the pen of the former theologian and great German philistine David Friedrich Strauss, who was ecstatic with his depiction of the modern world as a planetary factory ship. This position had its equivalent in the Anglo-Saxon world among utilitarians and optimists, for whom the word factory was less a metaphor for the world than a fact in front of which one stood in a concrete relationship, either as owner, collaborator or customer. Without fearing the reproach of philistinism, with their liberal propaganda of factory reason, they rejected the claims, enemies of analysis, of the romantic-totalizing feeling of the world.

And yet: although the history of ideas in the second half of the nineteenth century could already be presented, in large parts, as a report on a disappointed pantheism,<sup>[210]</sup> only the profound break brought about by the First World War culminated in the catastrophe of the idea of the soul of the world that the new Europe had received. In this sense, the tenacious survival of the idea in quietist subcultures did not change anything. Also its therapeutic use remained a fringe arrangement and did not provide it again with any culture-shaping force. The de-animistic turn had been prepared by the naturalistic infiltration of pantheism, which by about 1900 was already a universally consummated fact, though scarcely understood by contemporaries. The discourse of nature as a force had long since ceased to be a variant of Goethe's poetic utopianism of the unification of time, nor did it represent a tribute to the early romantic hypothesis of a salvific unconscious, which prevails over all selfhood. In the meantime, it was already ordered, rather, to the "dark" hints of sex, impulsive energy, will to power, vital impetus.<sup>[211]</sup> However, it is still legitimate to consider as metastases of the doctrine of the world soul the time-obscured philosophies of nature of the turn of the century. In some of these new metaphysical-natural systems, God and the world-soul were simply replaced by such figures as the "breath of the world",<sup>[212]</sup> the "oceanic feeling", the primary world-self-indifference and other pseudonyms of the "life principle". Only since the new objective caesura of the twenties of the twentieth century, that cold ontology, modernized as a theory of immunity and environment, could achieve the intellectual and atmospheric-cultural plausibility that must be presupposed when an image of nature and society must be achieved that presents them as prototypical self-maintaining, polemically delimiting units, which reciprocally become "environment". It is in this context that the theme of coldness begins his career.<sup>[213]</sup>

Here, as usual, we must be wary of blunt declarations of trends: although mechanistic and functionalist hints do not escape the logics and moods of the twentieth century, we must take note that at the time of the world wars some of the most powerful revivals of the idea of the world soul collapse; we think of the psycho-cosmological system of Alfred N. Whitehead, which reaches its most subtle presentation in *Process and Reality*, as well as the poeticized Platonism of Hermann Broch, which developed with sovereign timelessness in his late novel *The Death of Death and Reality*. Whitehead, which reaches its most subtle presentation in *Process and Reality*, as well as Hermann Broch's poeticized Platonism, which developed with sovereign timelessness in his late novel *The Death of Virgil*, 1945. In this work classical metaphysics is transformed into a cosmo-poetics of breath.

European Modernity, as a whole, offers the aspect of a hyper-innovated and unregulated civilization, in which the cultures of the belief in a world soul and of progressive mechanicism coexisted intertwined antagonistically as continuous reciprocal irritations, whose front lines were often confused and not infrequently collided in one and the same person, as the example of Newton shows. They constitute the two cultures whose antithesis has energized the history of European ideas since the seventeenth century. Charles Percy Snow's well-known differentiation between literary intelligence and techno-scientific-natural intelligence offers only an impoverished image, boxed in between the battlements of the academic ivory tower, of their antagonism. [\[214\] The two cultures are the same.](#)

The discovery of the systems of immunity and their incorporation into the ecology of knowledge of modern "society" presuppose a global cultural situation in which the replacement of classical holism by an organism-environment consideration adapted to the times was pressing to become the order of the day. Only with the new way of thinking could the metaphysical imposition of surrender to the whole and the poetic disposition to embrace it be set aside as matters of private feeling. The scientific investigation of the empirical and functional conditions of wholeness at the level of the individual organism could be unblocked, without this optic being immediately susceptible to accusations of amoralism or even cultural dissolution. In the development of the biological investigation of the

In this way, an unconscious, pre-personal, inter-organismic dimension has appeared, in the face of which classical moral holism walks in a vacuum. Insofar as a somatic immunity system represents an antimicrobial defense mechanism, it and its owner, the individual, "participate" in an innocent defensiveness, which is no longer affected by the selfishness critique of the ethics of totality. It belongs both to nature and to the virtue of a system capable of self-maintenance to be able to defend itself against its invaders and competitors for the domination of the same biological space, especially when the symbiotic alternatives have been exhausted.

While, with his fundamental doctrine of the repression of trauma and his subsequent systematization of defense mechanisms, he had already arrived at a semi-immunological point of view, Viennese psychoanalysis played a significant double role in the transition from a holistically negative to a systemically positive self-interpretation of the individual in relation to the surrounding totality. Freud, on the one hand, had recognized the psycho-organismic inevitability of the primary defense against unbearable psychic presences and, on the other hand, had placed at the center of his clinical procedure the vital-historical or therapeutic convenience of a subsequent overcoming of a solidified defense. In this way a remnant of ethical holism became effective in psychoanalytic praxis: only those who could free themselves from fixation in a defensive structure, neurosis, would have fulfilled the conditions for a return to a total, undistorted perception of their existential situation and thus, it is assumed, for psychic health. This same typical Janus-headed characteristic can be seen in the psychoanalytic theory of narcissism, which, in a first reading, establishes in certain individuals a perverse self-reference, to later, however, proceed, under the heading of "primary narcissism", to a positivization of the "primary narcissism", to a positivization of the dimension autoeroticism, which is admitted to represent a precondition of achieved psycho-organismic integrity. The history of the concept of narcissism reflects the cultural change of the twentieth century, which

led from the Stoic beginnings to an Epicurean outflow: a change of accent, which could be interpreted as a trace of entropy in the moral field. For our context, it is significant that the theoretical sines of psychoanalysis, already epistemologically put on the defensive, represent the explanatory drama, in the course of which the systemic-immunological paradigm enters the scene.

Only since the explanation of structures of immunity has been sufficiently developed are the means available that describe modern societies as multiplicities of immune space production or, to bring back into play the guiding metaphor of this third part of our novel of spaces: as *foams*. When Jakob von Uexküll formulated the thesis that it was a mistake to believe that the human world provides a common stage for all living beings, he not only drew the vital-scientific consequences of the deflation of the idea of the soul of the world; he also consummated the passage from monological metaphysics, which interprets the world as a monocontext and projects it onto a single eye, to a plural ontology, which takes into account as many worlds as there are types of eyes and other sensors to see and feel it, without taking refuge in the hypostasis of an eye of all eyes (or a sensor of all sensors). Only thus could he arrive at the transcendent realization, already quoted, that the universe consists "not of a single soap bubble, which we have inflated beyond our horizon to infinity (mid-sentence interruption: the best characterization of metaphysical activity ever given outside the guild!), but of millions of closely adjoining, intersecting and interfering soap bubbles everywhere."<sup>[215]</sup>

Just as, as a general rule, desires are ironized by their fulfillment, after their explanation, due to the taking of power by technology, the metaphysical pretension must be ready to be refuted by success: it could happen that also in its case the becoming truth and the parody end up being one and the same thing. In the modern sines of the idea of the soul of the world the European history of the spirit takes its ironic turn. As citizens of the modern culture of reason we still wanted to be souls and we made ourselves explicit as users of systems of immunity;

We wanted to participate in the guarantees of invulnerability of the form of all forms and we have ridiculed ourselves as mere systems of nerves; we wanted to anchor ourselves in the whole and we have scattered ourselves in a multiplicity of systems with their specific environments. At the height of the power of the world-soul-impulse we even wanted to conceive of a universe in which everything is in communication with everything and we have made explicit a world in which almost everything defends itself against almost everything.

So, how should we think if, in view of these articulated positions of systemic knowledge, we want to ensure the salvageable remainder of the longing, metaphysically codified before, for openness, communication and connection of everything?

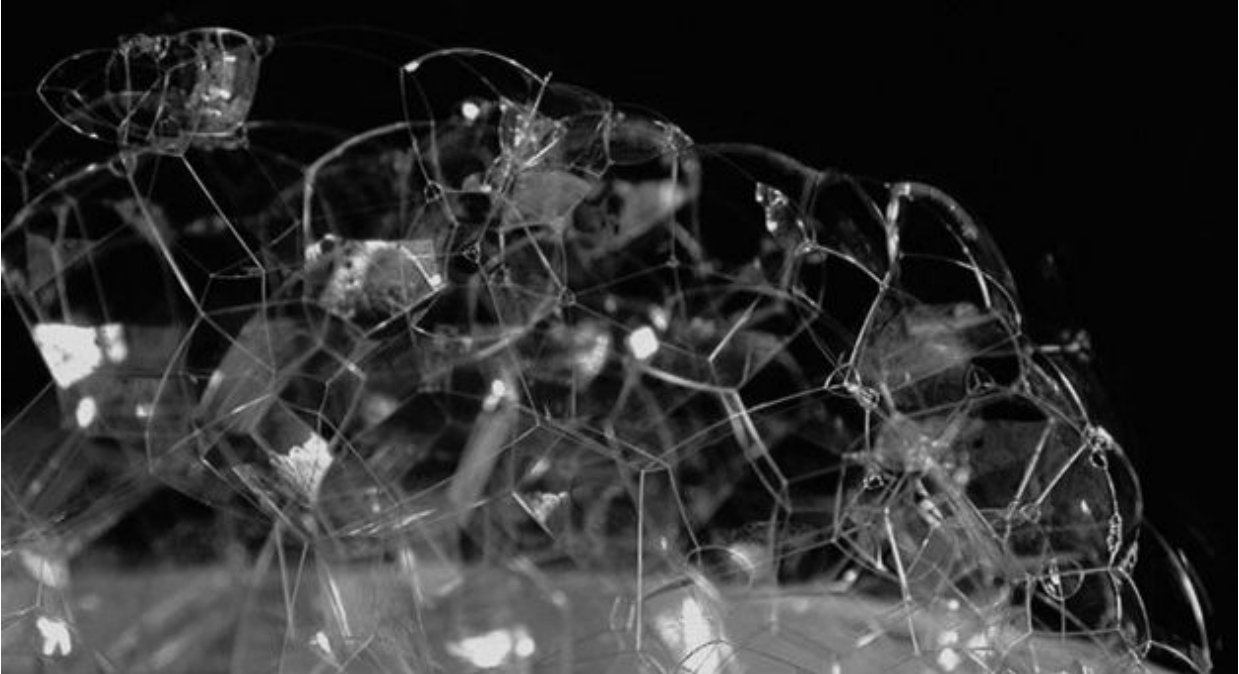
## 5. Program

At the end of this exposition, it still remains to transport Uexküll's pluralist axiom from the biological to the metabiological level, and from the latter to the cultural-theoretical one. The vital "foams" evoked by biologists, these soap-pump multiplicities of life forms in their own environments in each case, have not yet been specified with sufficient complexity to characterize the human spheres according to their specific properties. If they also share with the rest of life the characteristic of living in environments that intersect and interfere everywhere, they are nevertheless situated in an ontological dimension beyond the biologically interpreted spaces and forms of life, whose limits are guarded by the body's own defense and by species-specific patterns of withdrawal.

The bubbles in the aggregate of human multiplicity-spaces cannot be stabilized by defensive means alone; for their stability is responsible, likewise, a primary capacity for expansion, which could be transcribed with the concepts of creativity and relational capacity, if both expressions were not inflationary. What remains before us is the processing of the task of characterizing the human multiplicities of self-space as processes of form, in which defense and invention become the same: as speaking foams, as systems of immunity that dream beyond themselves, as it were. Human domiciles, which we describe as cells [celdillas, cells] in the social foam, use, as must be shown, beyond their defensive devices, multiple mechanisms of expansion, that



The observations range from the installation of a habitat, through the interweaving of a personalized communications network, to the production of a world-image-cover defined by the users. From such observations we obtain a concept of immunity from offensive features, which, starting from the biochemical level of meaning, rises to an anthropological interpretation of the human *modus vivendi* as self-defense through creativity.



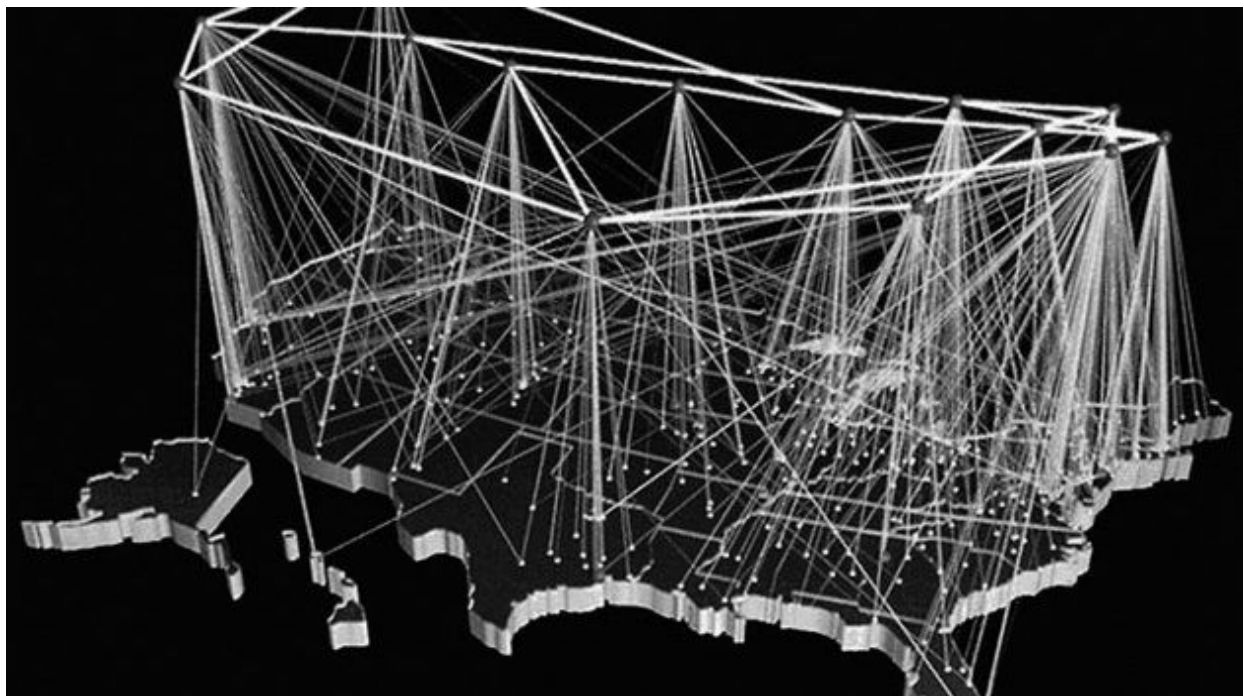
Large cell soap foam.

The permanent human works in the proper spheres of life are, then, the first aphrogenic activity: they produce the multiplicities of bubbles or domiciles, from whose agglomeration in dense neighborhoods arises the perceivable effect of space stacking that we call foam. Through this generalized concept of structures of immunity, the bridge from the theory of the body's own defense mechanisms to the theory of endo-atmospherically protected space and, from there, to the theory of cultures as self-climatizing (and potentially autointoxicating) life-form units becomes traversable.

The discourse on foam provides a metaphor that is used as an explanatory expression of multiplicities, which have become

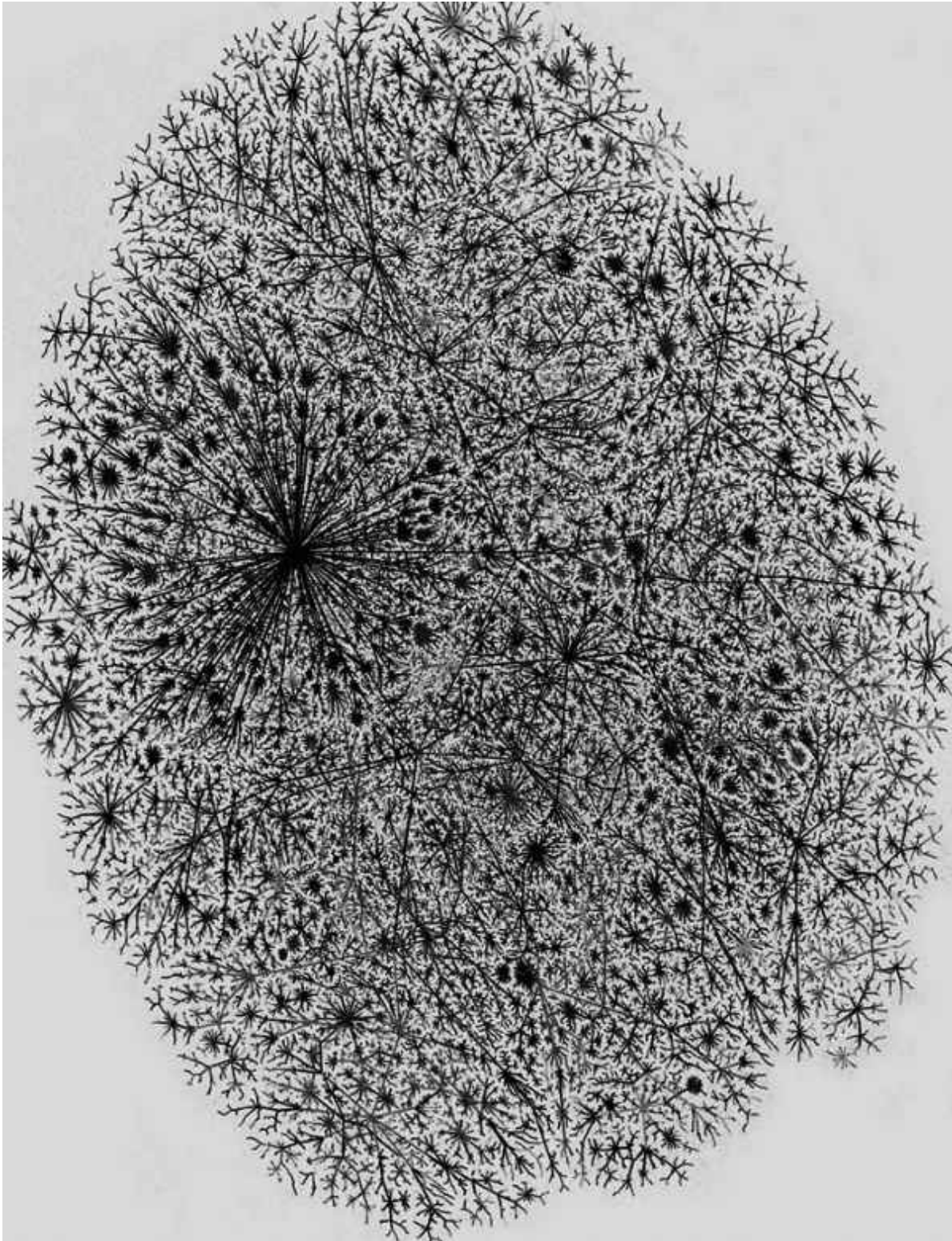
Theoretically interesting, of spatio-vital immunological improvisations, intertwined with each other, tumultuously superimposed. It serves to formulate a philosophical-anthropological interpretation of modern individualism, which we are convinced cannot be sufficiently described with the means available so far. Linked to the theory of foam is the possibility of a new form of explanation of what the sociological tradition calls the social nexus or the "social synthesis"; the possibility of an explanation that goes beyond the classical answers to the Christianizing question of how the social nexus is possible.

"society" as a connection of social beings. The well-known solution proposals, subjected to criteria such as labor sharing (Smith, Durkheim), capital relation (Marx), imitation and somnambulism (Tarde), interaction (Simmel), sacrifice (Girard, Heinrich) or differentiation and communication (Luhmann), suffer from the same deficit, namely that they do not adequately express neither the spatial qualities of social cells, nor the immunological character of primary spaces.<sup>[216]</sup>



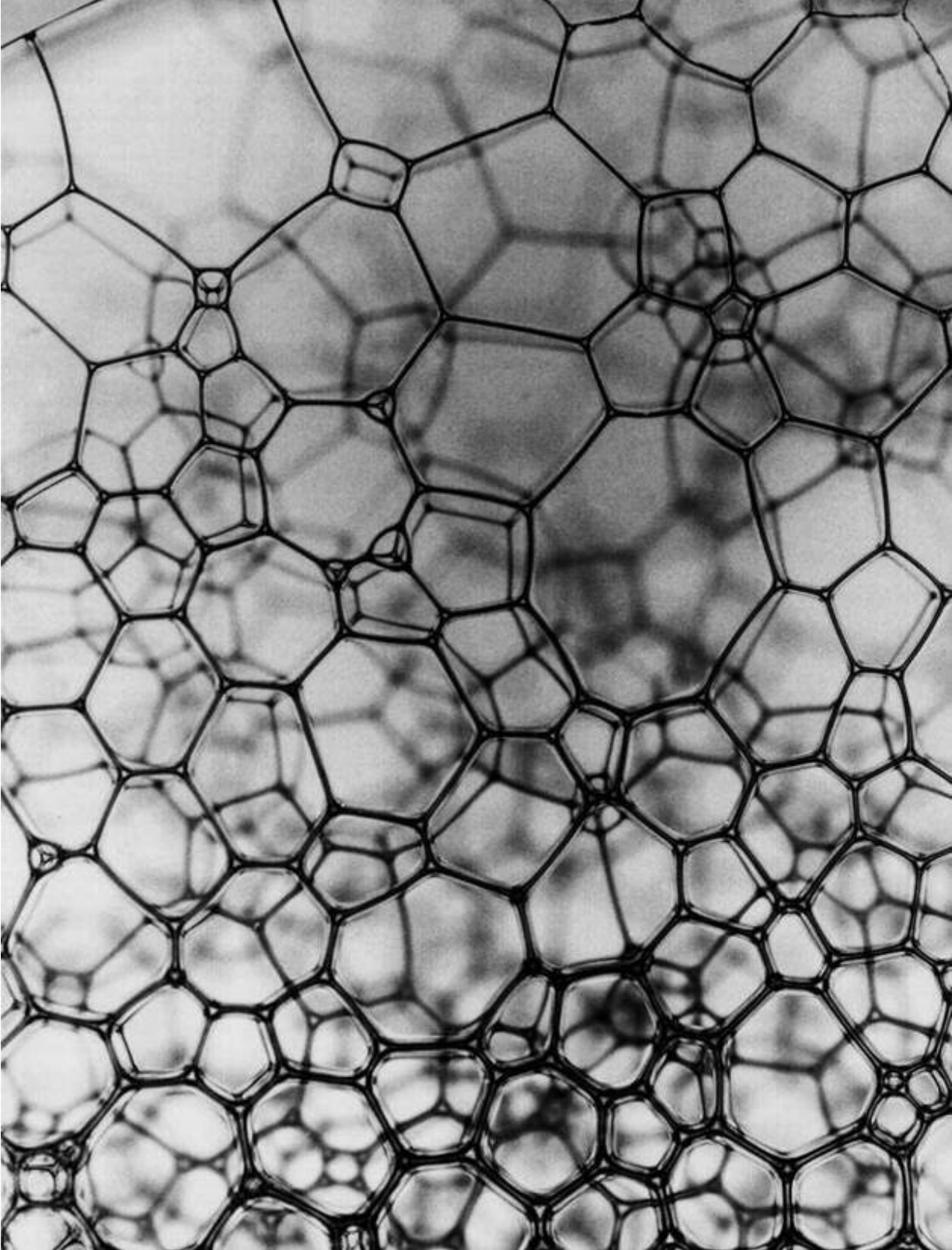
Donna Cox/Robert Patterson, NSFNET Traffic Flows over North America.

The spatial multiplicities, projected according to the media and psychological rules of the game of individualism, closely packed together, semi-transparent to each other, are also called foams because their improbability must be emphasized without it being permissible to consider their fragility as a deficient vital performance of the inhabitants of the foam. The strongest characteristic of individualistic forms of life is to have to attempt conformations of space in the midst of a world situation, which, because of its extreme mobility, leads to demand too much of both innate and acquired structures of immunity. Stability through liquidity: this postmodern formula penetrates directly to the core of general immunology. Never before has the maintenance of self-affirmation depended on so much additional performance beyond the defensive level. The immunological sense of creativity is clearly evident: it is at the service of forces in tension, which open up concrete spheres of life and keep local improvisations in shape. Don't worry about the next day's creativity; it is enough that each day has its own momentum.



Bill Cheswick/Hal Burch, Internet connections in the northern hemisphere.

The metaphor of foam offers the advantage of capturing in one image the topological structure of creative-self-securing living space productions. It not only recalls the close neighborhood between fragile units, but also the necessary enclosure of each foam cell in itself, even if they can only exist as users of common separating facilities (walls, gates, corridors, streets, enclosures, border facilities, transit domains, media). Thus, the foam representation evokes both the co-fragility and co-isolation of units stacked in compact associations. That coexistence is to be thought of as co-existence is something that has nowhere been more clearly and technically articulated than in certain conceptions of separation and interlocking space in modern architecture, most notably in the *connected isolation* formula proposed by the American architectural group Morphosis (Thom Mayne and Michel Rotondi, founded in 1974). The concept of co-existing systems emphasizes the simultaneity of neighborhood and separation: a fact without the understanding of which the great modern "societies" are incomprehensible. A socio-morphologically adequate description of residential complexes, apartment houses, and colonies of cheap houses presupposes an instrumentation that manages to take into account the co-existent co-existence and interconnected isolation of habitable spherical units. With the idea of co-isolation in the foam, the confusion produced by the overstressed metaphor-network, from which too many authors expected too much, most of them without realizing that with the discourse of redification they were giving themselves credit for a false graphism and an overly reductive geometry, can be corrected: instead of emphasizing the dimensionality proper to the communicators to be put in mutual relation, the image of the network suggested the idea of non-expanded points, which, like interfaces, were linked by lines: a universe of data fishermen and anorexics.



In the formation of plant embryos, the thickness of the cell walls is an indication of  
of age.

The discourse of the spheres shows the volume of the communicating units. It is appropriate to bring, if not to concept, to intuition the relative legality proper to productions of meaning and their decoupling from social functions. Niklas Luhmann made use of this possibility when he occasionally explained: if social structure and social semantics fall apart, "*foam*" arises. In the discourse of systems theory, the expression figures the effect of inflationary productions of meaning, which proliferate without close linkage to functional social imperatives. In that sense, semantics, like music, would be a demonic realm; it leads to a realm in which individuals and groups, with their occurrences, their dispositions and abysses, stand alone. No external norm of reality can effectively control the arbitrary exudations of their discourse; no filter of truth can guarantee the separation, in what is said, of the sustainable and the unsustainable. <sup>217]</sup> Without the confrontation between social structure and semantics, "societies" would not provide their members with any sense of freedom, because the function of the dysfunctional consists, precisely, in opening up a field of play for the individual. Only when foam emerges, in Luhmann's sense, does freedom appear concretely, understood as emancipation of the individual from the functioning of the whole and as liberation from the discourse of filling in forms for true propositions. Considered in this light, is not the "art of society", as a whole, a realm of foam, a surprising non-connection with the real in an exactly determined place, suitable for the discrepancy of opinions? And is not modern society, as a whole, subject to the law of the increasing liberation of whim and luxury?







Philippe Parreno, *Speech Bubbles*, 1997, courtesy of Air de Paris, Paris.

From the critical-semantic point of view, foam means as much as mental paper money, which is issued without collateral funds,

by objective and functional values (of the economy, of science, of the political system and of the bureaucratic procedures of justice and administration). The popular figure that speaks in the "bocadillos" of comic strips is quite close to this idea: it designates private languages and unlinked expressivities, in which one must count, as a matter of principle, on a surplus of the performative and autologous in any possible objective reference. The parrot of *Zazie dans le métro* already half a century ago understood them well in this: *Tu parles, tu parles*. As soon as it was conceptually understood what functional systems work and why meaning systems foam, the inflationary tendency of the production of meaning was already close to being valued, less as a mistake with a logical norm than as an expression of the inclination to fantasize one's own values, which speaking beings follow as soon as they become "original" individually or within the group. In the previous century this was pejoratively and unjustifiably designated as the "unbridled realm of subjective outburst extravagances."<sup>[218]</sup> Once the self-immunizing, space-creating sense of "Originality", or better, of micromaniac competence (to the point of *kitsch* and delirium), the constitutive speaking-leaving-aside-from-reality of most human manifestations, a certain hallucination even, can be interpreted as an indication of the successful installation of individuals and small groups in their idiosyncrasy. Original is the one who wears a self-made fabric. And from this follows the question of whether stabilizations of small-space units of the said type can be considered as achievements compatible with culture. Even more serious is the problem perceived by the claims of the holists: how would it be justified to demand of individualized spaces, where individuals roam as tribal chiefs of their delusion (Axel C. Springer: "If there is a word I hate, it is reality"), that they "vanish" in the super-institution of the whole of civilization.

The bond of similarity between neighbors in the regional foam mountain (elsewhere described as *milieu* or subculture) is produced neither by common inspiration nor by linguistic trade, but on the basis of a mimetic contagion, thanks to which a *modus vivendi*, a mode and manner of projecting and securing the living space, spreads in a population.<sup>[219]</sup> As Gabriel Tarde says, imitation is a generation at a distance: a *génération à distance*.

<sup>[220]</sup> "Neighbors" are now called the applicators of analogous institutions of immunization, of the same patterns of creativity, of family survival arts; from which it follows that most "neighbors" live far away from each other and that they only resemble each other because of imitative infections (today, transcultural exchange). When they come to a good

"The reason for this is that they are infected in advance by imitative analogy and presynchronized by effective analogies with respect to their location and installation in it. Naysayers know that it is necessary to talk to each other as long as necessary so that, by the imitative and mutual assimilation of the negotiators, a sufficient basis for written agreements is created. In this sense, negotiation rooms must be understood as treatment rooms: they are aphrogenic spaces, in which new bubbles-community are opened. Understanding by verbal or other signs parasitizes pre-understanding thanks to similar conditions of immunity and climate, among which the use of analogous rituals, equipotent means and compatible instruments play the decisive role.

Against this background, the illusion that consonant communication would be possible across borders of foam regions or environments can be more accurately understood. This chimera could only be maintained on the basis of abstractions, according to which decontextualized communicators meet in feigned forums to seek there a common background of signs and arguments. Against helpless formalisms of this kind, which, *faute de mieux*, have

achieved a suspicious popularity, both academically and journalistically, it is necessary to establish an ethics of situations, or of business in a broad sense of the word. It would be a theory of business economics for civilizational greenhouses. We could call it an ethics of the atmosphere. It would formulate the good as the breathable; it could also be called the ethics of soap bubbles. Its characteristic is that it describes the most fragile as the starting point of responsibility. It imputes to people and cultures the atmospheric effects of their actions; it draws attention to the production of climate as a nuclear civilizing process. For the moment it is sufficient to apply these rules to the present book; without excluding further generalizations.

## **Transit:**

### **No contract, no organization**

***Approach to space-multiplicities, which, unfortunately, are called societies.***

Human beings are coexistent beings who most of the time do not really know how to talk about the reasons for their coexistence.

What exactly is coexistence? If no one asks me, I know, if I have to explain it to someone who asks, I don't know.

In principle, the coexistence of human beings with others and the other does not contain any indication that it might contain a problem, either at the level of being or at the level of knowledge. Since coexistence constitutes our basic situation, everything that refers to it is given, in principle, only as the familiar, the trivial, the taken for granted. As long as one coexists in the usual way with other human beings and with others, one always knows enough about this relationship, but one does not succeed in expressing anything about it in an explicit, authoritative, legitimating way. Such knowledge constitutes a case of almost total implicitness. Its bearers participate in it, in principle, only as a blind immersion. Insofar as they belong to groups of people similar to themselves, including their possessions, all human beings are latently sociologists; most of them, however, see no reason during their lifetime why they should be so manifestly: they would have to die as

members of their group to return as observers, a phantom to which the nineteenth century, obsessed by twilight, was the first to indulge. The longest epochs have availed themselves without "sociological enlightenment"; they knew little of the decadence, inherent in it, of the willingness to live one's own life, without reserve, as an agent of one's own group.

During the long evolution of the hordes, the coexistence of human beings with each other and with everything else is immersed in an intricate lack of secrecy, which is articulated in the form of kinship systems and logics of resemblance. The concept of kinship, in which vertical relations of descent between mothers or fathers<sup>[221]</sup> and their children and horizontal relations of alliance between spouses, together with their clans, are concentrated in a common nexus, serves early cultures as a key that opens more or less all the doors leading to the house of coexistence. As long as being and being kin seem synonymous the question cannot be raised for other reasons and modes of coexistence: and perhaps not to the misfortune of those involved. In the old anthropological regime there is but a single social network, and this means the world to each and every one who hangs on it. When all others of relevance are relatives - ancestors, parents, siblings, children, cousins and brothers and sisters-in-law - coexisting means as much as: navigating in the space of family relations codified by the laws of lineage. <sup>222]</sup> The eternal return of the similar must take care of the rest. The fact that the motif of blood, flesh, bone and totem kinship also renders irrecusable archaic representations of consubstantiality between the members of the clan or line, contributes to neutralize the beginnings of an awareness of the almost foreign and foreign political dimension that exists within marriages, even of any possible gulf of difference between the related, and, above all, between the non-related and dissimilar. The external, that which lies beyond kinship and belonging, is at first and for a long time the unthinkable, that which cannot be marked. The unknown has not yet

from which it could be manipulated. In this state of affairs, the problematic of the coexistence of human beings with human beings and with the rest of the existing remains latent. The incommensurability of strangers remains behind the horizon; communities are still unaware of the centrifugal forces of the great number; nor do the boundaries between us and not-us give much food for thought so far; the secession of individuals from their conforming groups has just imperceptibly begun; the coil of implications is still solidly coiled. The coiled ones do not suspect to what stages of development and unfolding the analysis of the motives and forms of possibility of coexistence of associated and free subjects will one day take. They still have no idea that closeness and kinship are drops in a sea of distances.

The emergence of the political brings about the end of that "state of the world" - Hegel's expression - in which coexistence could be interpreted exclusively through kinship. If we had to explain in one word what is new in "politics", we would have to say: politics is the invention of coexistence as a synthesis of the non-related. It goes hand in hand with the creation of a common collective that is not exhausted in the familiar. The epoch of the first empires and of the ancient citizen domains - to speak now in terms of political history - is marked by advances towards expanded forms of the "we". Since then, we must think of our own as a result: when at that time human beings say "We" think of a fusion of the self and non-self in an encompassing principle. Thus the early problem of high culture finds a solution, how to integrate large spaces of multiplicity and non-certainty into something binding. The production of symbolic umbrellas begins, creating over the heads of countless people a *coelum nostrum*, a celestial vault composed of shared things. What else are metaphysics and high religion but great umbrella factories? The emerging state of the world will be that in which coexistence and

The collaboration of actors must be understood as a mutual relationship beyond conjugal ties and genealogical and totemic lines of descent. With the imperative towards the great we-forms begins the era of artificial solidarities with its enigmas and fractures: the era of peoples and meta-peoples, of totemic communities and magical nations, of corporate identities and regional universalisms.

How is one to understand, in its totality, the gathered life and the mutual adjustment of those gathered in human multiplicities, when among the participants one can no longer presuppose, with that first obviousness, the aprioric coordination provided by the system of blood and marriage? How to interpret the coexistence of human beings with their equals, together with their property and kin, in a collective that presupposes a binding relation of existing with one another, in one another and vis-à-vis one another, now that the compactness of their association can no longer be derived from the configurations of the community of blood? How to understand *synousia* when tribal orientations fail and the subject of synthesis has to be determined independently of genealogy? The mysterious bond - says the first information - is knotted through participation in the life of the *polis*, through courtly and imperial service relations, through spiritual alliances, through commitments to a common "thing" or through solidarizations *in distans* on the basis of shared values and sorrows. Ultimately one refers back to the constitution of the cosmos, which governs all, or to the mystery of the world, which encompasses all. But, since it is evident that the coexistence of human beings in the *polis* means something different from a mute gathering of "cattle, grazing in the same pasture",

[223] Is it really sufficient to adduce, following Aristotle, a "community of speech and thought" as a reason for coexistence among the many unrelated? Is coexistence properly understood, understanding it, with the author of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as a synergy of politics and friendship?



European antiquity demonstrates its irradiating force by the fact that it already raised these questions, or at least pre-formulations of them, with suggestive intelligibility; moreover, by the fact that the answers it was able to give to them have been in use until yesterday and have only recently been replaced, thanks to a basically improved instrumentation of description of social and political facts. Both answers and questions had been provoked by the crisis and catastrophe of the Greek city-states at the turn of the fourth pre-Christian century: in remarkable parallelism with the crisis and triumph of Greek philosophy and the sciences, which developed, at the same time, into a general theory of the coexistence of the existent with the existent in general.<sup>[224]</sup> Philosophy, which in Plato's century was really a new one, interpreted the cohabitation of human beings with their equals, as well as with animals, stones, plants, machines, gods, and planets, as a mathematically ordered, eutonically proportioned whole, under the promising title of *kosmos*. He seldom dealt with this without opening up from the impressive conditions of order in the great to the power-feeling-in-order-and-in-its-place of the individual souls and their co-operations in the imaginatively reformed *polis*. In general, the ancients hardly ever talk about the universe without at the same time dealing with the city, and they practically never discussed the city without casting their gaze on the universe through the lenses of analogy.<sup>[225]</sup> As a great totality of places, one is exemplary for another in every case.

In the context of these cosmological-citizenship considerations, two discrepant, even opposing, explanations emerge as to why and how so many human beings, so strikingly different in appearance, situation and origin, exist together in the republic: explanations which, from the point of view of the history of their repercussions, deserve to be called archetypal. In them, the kinship motif, as the foundation of coexistence, is replaced by more abstract principles. The first interprets human coexistence as the result of an original assembly and covenant of

individuals, oriented in principle to themselves; the second, with an organismic simile, interprets the enigma of coexistence through the ontological and juridical primacy of a totality over its individual "parts" or members. That both explanations appear in Plato's writings demonstrates less their compatibility than the unconcern of philosophical thought in its foundational epoch to systematize itself.

As for the explanation of "society" by gathering or assembly, which will serve as a model for later theories of contract, recourse to the sources leads, among other things, to the third book of Plato's *Laws*, which alludes to a possible emergence of the State by the grouping of the few survivors after the last great flood. The attraction of the Platonic hypothesis of the universal flood is that it presents the initial conditions of a social conformation from adult individuals, without the philosopher having to resort to possessive-individualistic abstractions, which, as is well known, only managed to gain a semblance of plausibility in modern constructions of society by the theory of contract, especially in Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Plato's "state of nature" presents a set of human beings after the cataclysm, whose isolated existence is not deduced from their selfish nature or from their imperious interest in self-preservation and self-accreditation, but from the randomness of their survival on the mountaintops; From which it is easy to deduce, moreover, that the actors of the first assembly must have been mainly sodomite shepherds, living alone, who, suddenly, after the decline of all civilization and political forms in the valleys, felt the need to meet. The question of the sexes remains in the background, as if among the enlightened Greeks there was a tacit agreement to understand the transformation of alpine sodomy into citizen pederasty, while another type of relationship was responsible for providing the State with new citizens. Plato does not need to elaborate on the rest of the reasons for the formation of community (*synoikía*), as the

Ancient anthropology presupposes a natural sociability of human beings and allows itself to be disturbed only occasionally by concrete cases of asociality, such as appeared in the fatalities suffered by Philoctetus and in the first manifestations of misanthropy.

"Must not human beings in those times have been desirous of seeing each other (often) because of their small numbers?"<sup>[226]</sup> Moreover, in his myth of the original assembly Plato does not forget to mention that those first partners were accompanied in their new frugal community by certain useful animals, such as goats and cattle, which would also have survived: something that, however, has no consequences for the theory of coexistence with the other in a political whole (another way of saying that domesticated animals are left unrepresented in that regime).<sup>[227]</sup> The other, however, has no consequences for the theory of coexistence with the other in a political whole (another way of saying that domesticated animals are left unrepresented in that regime).<sup>[227]</sup> The other, however, is not represented in the political whole.

The theme of the emergence of society by the common settlement of adults, living in isolation, is not without plausibility in the most ancient Greek tradition: it constitutes, at least, an assimilable phantasm as soon as one remembers that not a few of the most important Attic cities seem to have arisen from a *synoikismos*, from the decision of communes ruled by the nobility, previously autonomous, to collaborate within common walls. In addition to this, proponents of the assembly theory might refer to the multiply documented phenomenon of the "genesis of the town from asylums," which - in stark contradiction to modern Romantic substantive concepts of town - allows one to recognize how a large number of what were later called towns were formed by a mixture of asylum-giving populations with asylum-receiving ones of the most disparate provenance.<sup>[228]</sup> (Moreover, such figures as the asylum towns of antiquity and the free towns of the Middle Ages demonstrate the formation of a more or less homogeneous population from human aggregates that were completely heterogeneous in principle). But both ways of seeing things, that ethnopoiesis happens by contract or by mixing of different ethnic stocks, must discourage ethnozoologists and ethnic essentialists. Nevertheless, the sense of the explanations

However, what matters to the advocates of such theories of human coexistence is not historical. What matters, rather, to the advocates of such theories is to interpret coexistence "in society" as an expression of the interests of the partners, in order to be able to subject the state of the actual community to an examination of reasonableness from the point of view of the interests of the participants. Already Plato's theoretical writings on the state, the *Republic*, the *Politician* and the *Laws*, made it clear that the empirical *polis* could not withstand such an examination, so that it had to resign itself to an emigration of the most intelligent and dissatisfied to the foreigner of rationalism, to the cosmopolis. Since then, men of spirit have a second home in the universal. For this reason, the ideas of a new take-off of "society" thanks to a primitive assembly of interest-seekers, adult, reasonable and in a position to make a contract like to be articulated under the form of utopias, that is to say, of travel prospects that make fabulous situations in islands governed by reason more expensive. They have to provide proof that "societies" are possible in general. Consequently, utopianism, especially in the form of island political dreams, is, so to speak, the natural dialect of Modernity, which likes contracts; a dialect that assimilates the sense-like enterprise of Antiquity as a preliminary exercise for projects of its own. As Gilles Deleuze noted in an early work, the abandoned island offers an appropriate refuge for the idea of a second and richer new beginning.<sup>[229]</sup>

Only from the new descriptions, circulating in the seventeenth century, of human associations as the results of contracts can one recognize what the fantasies of an original assembly of individuals to form "society" are aiming at. According to them, all historical peoples - or whatever one wants to call the units of those who habitually coexist in genealogical lines - would proceed from a contract of coexistence, closed *in illo tempore*, *implicitly* renewed in actuality among the members of the collective, in a manner similar to how a mercantile society

results from the meeting of the partners and becomes a legally organized company with shared responsibilities. Theories of this type are formulated in the service of individualism, both possessive and expressive, insofar as we define it as the passion to be individual and independent. The passion of the individual individual is to assert himself as *maître et possesseur* of his own life in all its dimensions. Self-possession, as understood by modern possessors, presupposes the rupture with one's own and collective past, demands the renunciation of the dictates of genealogy, of any kind of chain that pretends to reach from the past to the present. The murder of the father makes no sense if it does not extend to the murder of the ancestors. On the erased slate of the reason for the new take-off there can be no names of ascendants or predecessors, so long as these claim to be more than distant advisors.<sup>[230]</sup> Whoever speaks of "society" is referring, if he knows what he is saying, to an association of neoprincipals who elevate oblivion to first virtue.<sup>[231]</sup>

The model for this is well known: in the initiator of the most recent radical contractualism, Thomas Hobbes, individuals filled with rational fear of death together found the firm-state Leviathan, with the idea that it is to be run by its general *manager*, the prince, as a fear-provoking, imposing, service-providing enterprise for the production of peace and legal security in a former civil war zone. The object of the contract is in Hobbes an abysmal cession of the self-will of all individuals as a whole to the sovereign, who, according to it, has power only insofar as he represents a privileged third party. He is an absolute monarch insofar as his sovereignty tolerates no opposition; constitutional, insofar as his power is no more than the cumulative effect arising from the delegation of the self-governing passions of the contract partners to one, who is to discipline, threaten, surpass them all. The suspicious formula of the contract, which, once signed by all, founds constitutional absolutism, reads:

*I authorize and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and authorize all his Actions in like manner.* This done, the Multitude so united in one Person, is called a COMMON-WEALTH... [232].

The most remarkable thing about this conditional oath lies in the fact that the people of the State are united by the cunning of the contract in a single person (or in a single chamber), without having to assemble physically; and the renunciation of that assembly is no less important, of course, than the abandonment of all their violent pretensions to self-government. When the partners in the contract will one day again endeavor to appear all together in face-to-face assemblies, the absolutist idea of rational delegation is over: the new sovereign, the people of the nation-states, in spite of all efforts at a democratic idea of representation, will, since 1789, surrender again and again to the dream of the assembly with real presence of the associates in great common enterprises; and the trace of violence of the will to direct assembly will mark what is called the age of the masses. (Hence the cry of the anti-G8 demonstrators in Genoa in July 2001:

"We are 6 billion" produces mixed feelings among those who know the story).

As for the violent constructivism of the *Leviathan*, and disregarding systemic motives, it results, above all, from Hobbes' macabre views on the original interactions of human beings. In their purely natural, pre-state or insufficiently state-governed coexistence, human beings, for apparently timelessly valid reasons, necessarily constitute non-peaceful pluralities: those who live simultaneously are doomed, without mercy, to incessant war and rivalry, because each individual, as a *perpetuum mobile* of egoism, is compelled to intervene in his environment and cause disruption to competitors in the struggle for scarce resources. Consequently, an endless struggle for unshareable goods and advantageous positions stirs up the social field. Civil war tells the truth about the coexistence of citizens before the contract. As a war of all against all, it is the most powerful symbiotic mechanism, in that it creates between the combatants that proximity which only establishes the cordiality of mutual hatred. That war means for Hobbes the natural efflux of the spontaneous pluralism of arrogances, and, consequently, only a second assembly or meeting under a sovereign, which would maintain

in check all with the same intensity, could establish bearable relations between the associates. A contract of renunciation of arrogance has to found society as such: "society" is, in principle, nothing else than a name for the association of subjects who have renounced their presumptions. It follows that those who have no possessions do not belong to society, because they have not yet achieved anything they could renounce; likewise, incorrigible nobles are not capable of living in society, because they find it impossible to renounce their inherited presumption. Possessed of their right to the prestige they carry with them, and to maximum expansion, they are incapable of being subjects in a regulated *commonwealth*; they manifest themselves as untractable, eternally restless anarchists. For Hobbes it seems indubitable that the natural multiplicity of presumptions can only be contained by the marvelous artificiality of the State machine.

In its application to public affairs, contractual-legal thought constitutes an early form of explanation, suggestive for its unilaterality, of that which in the primary knowledge about the coexistence of human beings with their fellows is given only in compact implications. If I interpret human association as the result of a contract, I have a concept that allows me to understand those who coexist as associates and their form of coexistence as society; and in this way the principle of their connection becomes clear to me. If it is legitimate to imagine a society, in that sense, as a machinery of people driven by interests, then its *modus operandi* is no longer a secret. The

The "social synthesis" would be effected by the joint play of individual wills that are contractually coordinated and, to that extent, transparent. Whoever speaks of a contract seems to have before his eyes, so to speak, the construction plan or the organization chart of the association. When interests can be counted on there is no mysterious solidarity to be presumed, no deep rapport before adhesion to the contract, no pre-rational depth of the community.









### Leviathan Body.

In fact, for a state of the world increasingly characterized by industrial enterprises, finance capital, trade and commerce, wage labor, collective bargaining agreements, service provision, advertising, media and fashion, the concept "society" possesses descriptive force in an enormous number of situations. Its rise to a dominant metaphor for the whole of the coexistence of human beings and the rest was propelled during the era of the transition to modern world conditions by a strong empirical suggestion; one might even hail it as a rationally satisfactory explanation of cooperating collectives in general, were it not for a fact that only now, contrasted with the film of contractual affirmation, was to prove surprising and ripe for explanation itself: That some of the essential dimensions of the coexistence of human beings with their fellows do not have, nor can they ever have, under any circumstances, contractual character or quality of association of convenience. Or did my parents, for example, have a birth-in-the-world contract with me? Can I claim to have concluded a kinship contract with my parents and siblings? The field of relationships

"It extends to religious confessions, regardless of whether they are of a religious-popular nature or whether they are reached by profession of faith and entry into a spiritual commune, and it also includes, finally, community-cultural groups of national or popular identification, even entrepreneurial (as the example of Japanese corporate feudalism shows). Moreover, more than anything else, it is the relations of direct or indirect domination, which persist under the mask of contractuality, that disprove the fiction of the contract. These objections come, however, too late, in view of the self-forming social form of the coexistence of human beings with human beings and the reflection on it by the "sociologies" of Modernity.

Nevertheless, irritation is growing at the inadequacy of these linguistic arrangements. It is not surprising that during the development of "bourgeois society", especially in the interpretative epilogues of the French Revolution, not a few thinkers, invoking the aforementioned aspects of human coexistence, began to rebel against the contractualist absurdities taken to the extreme by the unilateralized "Enlightenment". It was then that concepts such as tradition, customs, people, culture and community came to be charged with a hitherto unknown *pathos*; certain users of these expressions promised themselves nothing less than true sociodicy. Above all, the word community was filled with metaphysical-group connotations, which had hitherto been alien to it. Under its sign, romanticism, conservatism and dialectical state holism - with Marxism as the most aggressive sociological variant - were formed at approximately the same time, as three attempts, imbued with high modernity, to defend themselves against the distortions of knowledge about coexistence produced by contractual, individualistic and atomistic ideologies. But, as can be seen in retrospect, these movements - one could synthesize them as the uprising of the holists - did not have at their disposal a sufficiently developed language to formulate their anti-contractualist intuitions, which is why the heads of this trend were forced most of the time to resort to the clichés of classical authoritarian holism, whose sources - like that of the meeting or assembly theory - can be traced back once again to Plato's *Laws*.

Thus, the hour of thinking with sociological pretensions of totality also rings twice: first, in the early rationalist foundations of public affairs made by ancient philosophy and, again, in both modern and counter-modern rediscoveries of collectivity in a holistic sense. Only if it is admitted that the principle of the coexistence of human beings with human beings and the rest cannot be

properly represented as a contract and not at all merely as an arrangement of convenience between individuals of legal age, calculators of interests, it will be necessary to ask in what larger collective are the reciprocal coexistents "contained" and what nexus really binds them to each other. Evidently, what is sought here is an explanation of a strong connection between human beings, older than the assembly, the agreement, the contract and the ratified constitution. What now comes into view and demands interpretation is the possibility of a unifying and sustaining power with such pervasive punching power that it preempts the self-reference of interest-bearers and determines all individuals as punctual manifestations of a preeminent common reality.

One speaks, naturally, of totality: that heroine of a thousand forms, of which the traditional doctrines of wisdom are concerned. Classical holism is best understood as a first form of explanation and crisis of the expectations of integration, hardly in need of articulation before, archaically compact, automated, so to speak, of members of groups of great reproductive power and great traditions; expectations, however, which, in circumstances of greater development, are so often and necessarily frustrated that a new, more explicit conception of the relationship between the *polis* and its citizens becomes inevitable (we are now in the realm of Greek citizen cultures). The frustration is due to the fact that individuals, insofar as they enjoy local liberties and civic comfort, no longer comply, without further ado, with what the so-called whole demands of them. This manifests itself, normally, because in the service sectors there appears a resistance to the tasks, sacrifices and tributes demanded by the dominant. Already the classical city is overwhelmed by the unwanted side effects of its liberalism: the first principle of its synthesis, the solidarity commitment of the many, is undermined by the second principle, the orientation of citizens to their legitimate self-interest and family interests.

The greater the political successes of the republic, the more notorious it becomes. The most prosperous commune is the first to run the risk of being ruined by its own flourishing. From this situation comes the original political philosophy of totality (the first ontology of conservatism, one might also say). It illustrates the Western path to the thought forms of authoritarian administrative empires.

The masterly argument in favor of the rearrangement of deregulated individuals and separatist interest groups into a so-called one and all was presented by Plato in the tenth book of the *Laws*, and not by chance in the context of a dissertation on the penalties that threaten the contravention of the will of the gods, especially in the case of the capital politico-religious crime, called atheism (which means, basically, outrage to the whole). The context is symptomatic because in the discourse of the first political scientist the gods are recognized as the authentic and real means of citizenship and represent *eo ipso* the ontological guarantors of the spirit of solidarity. The Athenian interlocutor in the Platonic dialogue conceives a model of discourse, with whose help young people threatened by atheism and anomism can be recovered for the ecosystem of the divine planning of the world: it would be necessary, he concludes, to convince the offenders



Giuseppe Arcimboldo (outline), *The Trojan Horse*, early 17th century.

[...] that he who deals with the universe has all things ordered with a view to the preservation and virtue of the whole, while each of its parts is limited to being subject and object,

according to its possibilities, of what is proper to it. And each of these things, even on the smallest scale, has in every act or experience rulers charged with bringing about a perfect completion even in the smallest fraction. "Well then, *one* of these is yours, fool of you, which tends towards the whole and always looks to it, even being as small as it is; but what happens is that you do not understand, in relation to this very thing, that there is no generation that is not produced with a view to that, so that there may be a happy reality in the life of the whole, and that the generation is not produced in your interest, but that it is you who are born for the benefit of it..."<sup>[233]</sup> [The supreme ruler] has already disposed, in relation to all this, what kind of disposition should go to occupy and what places to inhabit in each case that which is one way or the other.<sup>[234]</sup>

The key performative expression of this speech is: "it is still hidden from you", completed by the warning: here, however, what has been hidden for a long time will be revealed to you once and for all. The doctrine of totality is addressed to rebellious individuals, who must be brought out of the popular original error that there is a natural plurality of individualities, more or less of the same rank, each in its own way, legitimately concerned with its own; from which it might follow that the public thing is only, so to speak, a by-product of individual and idiosyncratic games of life in each case. Liberal sophists (and their modern successors, the plurality romantics and, worst of all, the Deleuzians and Latourians) may speak thus, but such statements are not worthy of a (platonically) thinking being. Whoever wants to experience the truth has to be ready for higher missions: the super-grand Platonic answer to the great question of the foundation of the coexistence of human beings with their fellows and with each other reaches the level of ultimate theocosmological statements with a bold leap, without regard to bourgeois scruples. According to his theses, the whole of the world constitutes a perfect work of art and, according to other versions, a truly existing blessed god<sup>[235]</sup> or a hyper-being without environment and eternal,<sup>[236]</sup> which, in correspondence with its all-embracing constitution, surpasses, encompasses and integrates all individual beings. Plato's doctrine of the unity of beings constitutes philosophical information in the precise sense of the word, insofar as, according to its traditional design, philosophy is understood as an expert report on relations of totality, and even, perhaps, in its idealistic mainstream, as a covert priesthood of totality, consecrated to a religion of consensus. But, whatever the definition of philosophy: it is, in the first place, an agency of hyperbolic sub-ordinations as regards all that is the case. Ordination means allocation of place. It is easy to understand why it must be a question here of edifying information, that is to say, dissipating doubts,

The relations bring about that the gospel of the invisible harmony of the whole has to be preached also to the layman, and introduced in his repertoire of truths, and that it has to be introduced in his repertoire of truths. Nevertheless, the relationships bring with them that the gospel of the invisible harmony of the whole has to be preached also to the profane, and introduced in their repertoire of truths. For whoever understands this will show a willingness to remain calm in the place assigned to him.

The lure with which Plato wants to win the discordant individual consciousness for the cause of the gods of the totality and for the cosmos constituted by them is no persuasive thesis because it pleases. Insofar as he portrays the cosmos as a perfect sense totality, thought out to the last detail, and the individual human being as its functional part, the philosopher avails himself of an argument of formal power of conviction and of mute elevation: a proof, if one wants to call it that, whose irradiations can be followed through two and a half millennia. The irresistible compulsion that proceeds from the Athenian's reasoning lies in the insinuation to stick, when interpreting the situation of the human being in the political world, to the scheme: the organized whole and its parts; a scheme from which, once accepted, only the submission of the individual to the general plan can follow (assuming that one does not consider the possibility of open secession in the evil willed and known, as the other of the perfect).

We are witnessing nothing less than the primordial argumentative scene of holism; and *eo ipso* the original foundation of social biologisms, political organicisms and doctrines of the State considered as a work of art. What gave this argument its force was the subversive introduction of the teleological principle into the concept of the world, according to which the coexistence of existing things in the universe is determined by a finalistic context that pervades everything, just as in architectural works every detail is in its place and in living bodies every organ contributes disinterestedly to the healthy eudaimonia of the whole. This introduction was not subversive in the sense that it brought into the discourse something tacit, of which it was intended to



What it did, rather, was to post its fundamental premise on billboards, and so aggressively that its precarious status became invisible amidst the glare of that hyper-explicit exposure. Suddenly, the most improbable wanted to be valid as the most certain. The transference of the idea of the work of art or organism to the whole of the world was carried out with such persuasive energy that its precarious status became invisible amidst the glare of this hyper-explicit exhibition.

I have yielded a subordination, which makes me, with my entire existence, the organ of a living cosmic being or the ashlar of an integral temple (or, to change the metaphor once again, the voice of a universal choir), I submit to an image of my situation in the whole of the world, from which nothing else can follow but the obligation to allow myself to be used docilely for the supposed ends of the hypostatized totality. I feel that I am just where I belong. With the scheme of the living whole and its parts the sublime holism provides the matrix of the highly cultural of cooperation, service, sacrifice, without which to this day no Roman Church, no Japanese company, no Marine Corps, and no U.S. Marine Corps would function without USA nor no of the military regimes that have shown their violent colors on the political maps of the 20th century. The maturity of holistic hypnosis was reached as early as the time of the Roman emperors. Marcus Aurelius provided a testimony to the monolithic naturalism of Stoicism by designating as "a tumescence in the body of the world" anyone who would think of being shocked by situations in nature; we are created to cooperate "like the upper and the lower jaw."<sup>[237]</sup> Otherwise, according to this way of looking at things, there are no wrong places in the universe; any place in the whole is suited to its occupant; the latter, consequently, can never do better than submit to the judgment of God, who speaks from the situation itself. "Recognize the place" means here: Discover the task that includes your place. Just as Rousseau says in the *Social Contract*: "Once the State has been founded, adhesion resides in the domicile,"<sup>[238]</sup> the motto

Plato's, like Zeno's, could be: Once the cosmos is organized, adherence resides in being-there itself.

That the application of the metaphor of the organism to the coexistence of many and different in a political whole, integrated quasi-psychosomatically, was not only an invention of Athenian philosophy, but constitutes an elementary thought of the first peoples with a State, can be deduced from the fable of the stomach and the limbs, introduced into the canon of the political legends of ancient Europe by Titus Livy and his eloquent ex-consul Menenius Agrippa. Livy, in the second book of his Roman chronicle *Ab urbe condita*, which deals with events at the turn of the sixth to the fifth century BC, reports on one of the darkest moments in the history of Rome, when the city, segmented by strife of estates, had sunk into a paralyzing panic because of the mutual fear (*mutuo metu*) between the noble *patres* and the insurgent *plebs*. In this desperate situation, in which the few capable of judgment could only promise themselves the salvation of the public thing by the recovery of *concord*, the critical moment for edifying political rhetoric arose. Menenius stakes the fate of Rome on an organismic comparison:

At the time - (thus the speaker addresses the irritated people) - when in the human being everything was not in harmony as it is now, but each of the members thought and spoke for himself, the other parts of the body would have been irritated if all their solicitude, effort and service had gone to the stomach, while the stomach remained quietly in the middle, doing nothing else but enjoying the pleasures offered. They would have conjured themselves, so that the hands would no longer bring food to the mouth, the mouth would no longer accept what is offered, and the teeth would no longer bite. By pretending, with that anger, to tame the stomach by hunger, one's own limbs and the whole body would be weakened in the extreme. So that it is clear that the stomach also renders its services diligently and is not fed to a greater extent than it feeds, proportionately distributing in the veins the blood, by which we live and which makes us strong, causing it to return to all parts of the body after it has received its strength by the digestion of the food.<sup>[239]</sup>

By the analogy between the rebellion of the members against the stomach and the anger of the plebs against the patres, Menenius finally succeeded in calming the tempers (*flexisse*) of the irritated crowd. The image of the consensus of the organs flexibilizes the rebellious multitude and makes it return from paralysis to cooperation. Perhaps it can

The conclusion to be drawn from the event is that certain obscurities of coexistence are clarifiable, in principle, by organismic similes, as if the idea of the antagonistically cooperative coexistence of dissimilar elements could only be articulated in an association thanks to borrowings from compact biological metaphors. The living body is the figurative trap, into which the first holistic thought cannot help but fall. And when the omni-integrating divine animal-world is not yet before one's eyes, as the Platonic cosmos will present it to educated disciples, a *public-animal* with reasonable individual organs fulfills its same function in principle.

It is unnecessary in our context to present in more detail the synonyms of the contract theories, as well as those of the organicisms. The fact that both schools have remained alive up to the present day, assembled one with the other, one in front of the other, one in the other, must be interpreted as an indication of how very suggestive were the primary answers to the questions about the foundation of coexistence. Nor need we be concerned at this moment with the modernizations of critical holism, which interpret the principle of social connection by the process of capital with its nexus of exchange or by the differentiation of subsystems within world society. For now it is much more interesting that both were accompanied almost from the beginning by a dismay, indeed, by a kind of incredulity in the face of the implausible pull of both the contractualist and the holistic explanations. This skepticism left its first traces, once again, in Plato, who, as if to disprove his two foundations of community, and making use of a freedom of thought prior to any orthodoxy, sketched the contours of a third theory of social synthesis: that inexorably realistic, quasi-functionalist doctrine of the noble lie, by which, following the advice of the *Republic*, the feelings of affinity of the citizens should be reaffirmed, to avoid the revolt of the disadvantaged in the division of classes. According to it, the principle of the coexistence of human beings with their fellows would reside in a common mystification or, to speak anachronistically, in an artificially created context of obfuscation, embracing, for its own benefit, both the liars and the lied-to.<sup>[240]</sup>

Both contract theory and holism have to contend with hyperbole of a markedly constructivist disregard, which is impressive because it abjures everyday experience and replaces it with elaborations of abstract metaphor. Most modern sociologies, political theories and social philosophies could be characterized as a series of attempts to balance the overextensions of one approach and the other by crossing them, as if it were possible to remedy two failures by combining one with the other.

Contractualism, like organicism, is essentially indebted to its object, above all because it offers to express the true reason for the coexistence of human beings with human beings and so on, without being able to formulate any meaningful word about the space in which the synthesis takes place, indeed, about the space that opens up this synthesis. Both are blind to the spatial eye, or to put it even more generally: to the eye of the situation or the eye of the context. They consider this blindness as an advantage, because they pretend to see in the middle of the theory something that is subtracted from the pre-theoretical point of view. Yet the contract theorist must still admit that his so-called societies are composed of spontaneously given pluralities, even if he only equivocally describes the principle of composition. By placing the intelligible basis of the connection of the associates in the supposed contract between them, he ignores the starting point, the irreducible multiplicity of families with their own idiosyncrasies and that of neighboring, similarly motivated examples of life. Of those coexisting in fact in their own spaces and times, in this model there remains only an abstract plurality of specific wills endowed with reason, which are transformed into "citizens" as soon as they have committed themselves to a cooperative way of life for the pursuit of common interests. The contractualist, with conscious haste, takes refuge in the idea of a voluntary configuration of unity, of which it will never be possible to say where, when and in what milieu it could have taken place, nor how it was achieved.

It is not surprising that no archivist has yet succeeded in discovering the cabinet of minutes in which the social contract is kept. Contractualism lives on hallucinations, today called counterfactual assumptions: above all that of an original assembly, in which the associates find pleasure in abandoning their pre-contractual way of life to place themselves under the protection of common laws. The exquisite in-no-part, in which the contract closes, diverts the view of the situational constitution of coexistence and of its own spatial dynamics.

When the concealment of the gaze on the real is expressly demanded, as in the most recent modernizations of contract theory, for example in John Rawls' *Theory of Justice*,<sup>[241]</sup> the parties are invited to a sociogenic game of blind man's buffoonery, in which behind a "veil of ignorance" clean reciprocal relations are to be stipulated. The contract must here proceed from a topological nirvana, called the "original state", in which blindness to the situation is declared as a virtue:

First of all, no one knows his place in society, his class or his status; nor his natural endowments, his intelligence, his bodily strength. [...] In the original state human beings also do not know to which generation they belong.<sup>[242]</sup> In the original state human beings also do not know to which generation they belong.<sup>[242]</sup>

In this philosophical-moral construction it can be seen how the contract theory undertakes a flight from improbability to absurdity, with counter-facticity as an intermediate stage: postulating a population purged of all historical, psychic and somatic qualities, to be kept available as guinea pigs for justice. It is clearly an ideology for countries of immigration, whose citizens must learn to consider their qualities and possessions as yesterday's dust: differences can be erased. Behind the veil of ignorance, human beings without attributes, without distinctions, without papers are to be gathered: a cargo of migrants, so to speak, who after a long journey are landed in a virgin land, exhausted and grateful for everything that promises in some way a new

beginning; moreover: a group of *encounter*, which makes its entry, naked, into Greater Philadelphia for self-experimentation. In any case, only individuals who have broken with themselves seem appropriate to perform the task assigned to them: the negotiation of a fair contract of coexistence. Only human beings, who have lost hearing and sight in relation to their situation in space, time, destiny and mood, would be fit to achieve the right of citizenship in a Rawlsian commune. It seems that, coming from the times of the French Revolution, the voice of the utopian Anarchasis Cloots, who liked to consider the names of nations (and *ipso facto* of all localities and properties) only as "Gothic labels", is heard again. It seems that the best philosopher of law has nothing against presenting himself as the worst sociologist, as long as he is given a free hand to erase the local qualities and conflicting colorations of coexisting cells of life: those, in the first place, by which coexisters are implicated in their concrete spatial configurations and local histories.

In a word, contract theory can no longer need coexistents as they are before the contract or at the time of the contract. It addresses human beings who, as sinners, inherited properties and, as penitents, are willing to start over again beyond their properties; one notes, in effect: we are on Protestant and Kantian ground. In this, Rawls' utopia is in accord with a certain theory of communicative action, which also has no application to those who speak outside idealized speech situations. This theory describes communicators as if their speeches were the consequence of an agreement to exchange sentences, which, having lost hope in their own chatter in the natural state, they had agreed upon with one another at the moment of transit to the contractual linguistic state. Here as There: First Theory for the Last Man.<sup>[243]</sup> The First Theory of the Last Man.

As far as political organicism is concerned, it loses, from the opposite side, the diversity of the original spatiality of the coexistence of human beings with their

and the like and so on. While the chimera of the contract brings together falsified and discolored individuals in an imaginary nexus, the phantasm of the organism links real individuals in a falsified, grotesquely simplified "whole". Also this explanation of social synthesis disfigures the human-spatial, psychospherical, conspiratorial and polemogenic qualities of coexistence, insofar as it subjects the conditions of accommodation, the distributions of tasks and the interpretations of the situation of human beings to a violent superintegration, as if their neighborhoods and forms of relationship were to be interpreted analogously to the cooperation of cells and organs in an animal body. The organicist ideology destroys, in its own way, the sense for the original spatialities proper to coexistence; it compresses neighboring houses, microspheres, couples, teams and associations, populations and assemblies, collectives and classes into a simplified hyperbody, as if the coexistence of human-like bodies produced a vital *compositum* of superior rank, a political Great Animal, which, if free outwardly, inside retains, proscribed in its place, its members, as if they were entrails, flesh and bones. Even more drastic is the imperative to the holistic tendency in the architectural metaphors, according to which individuals are to be embedded in the State like carved stones in a sumptuous façade. Nor does the simile of the board game, according to which individuals allow themselves to be placed, like pieces, by a sovereign player, improve things for those moved to one side or the other.

It is clear that the analogies of bodies and works of art are formulated in a spirit of expert mastery over objective totalities, for it is known that only specialists know how to build a house as a whole, run a ship as a whole, treat a body as a whole, weave a carpet as a whole, and command an army as a whole. Until such time as a kingdom of philosophers is founded to manage the *lege artis* states as a whole, we must be content with a kingdom of weavers and architects, or better still, with a kingdom of therapists. For the rest, liberal contract theories, like all counter-intuitive discourses, which humiliate *common sense*, are as expertocratically tinged as holistic ones, only their authors hover, rather, in an atmosphere of lawyerocracy. Experience teaches that most of the time contract theorists are interested in democratic forms only to the extent that they guarantee situations that are controlled by jurists, journalists of correctness and professors of moral philosophy.

The misery of organicism lies in the fact that its legitimate defense of justice in relation to the higher interests of the public thing most of the time turns into resentment against the idiosyncrasies of the smaller units, declared as "parts". Its typical tonality is that of an aristocracy deprived of power, which saves its hunger for superiority in the dream of pure service. As a rule, noble holists are willingly disposed to serve the public thing in the role of wise brains or useful stomachs, in the hope that also the rest of the organs will be kept in their place. If the reasonable sociological intuitions of holism are to be saved, an alternative point of view to that of associations must be developed: it is a matter of deducing from their own conditions the being-together, communicating and cooperating of the space-own multiplicities, which unfortunately still call themselves societies, without using for this purpose the anti-holistic crutches, with which individualists and contractualists stagger through the countryside.

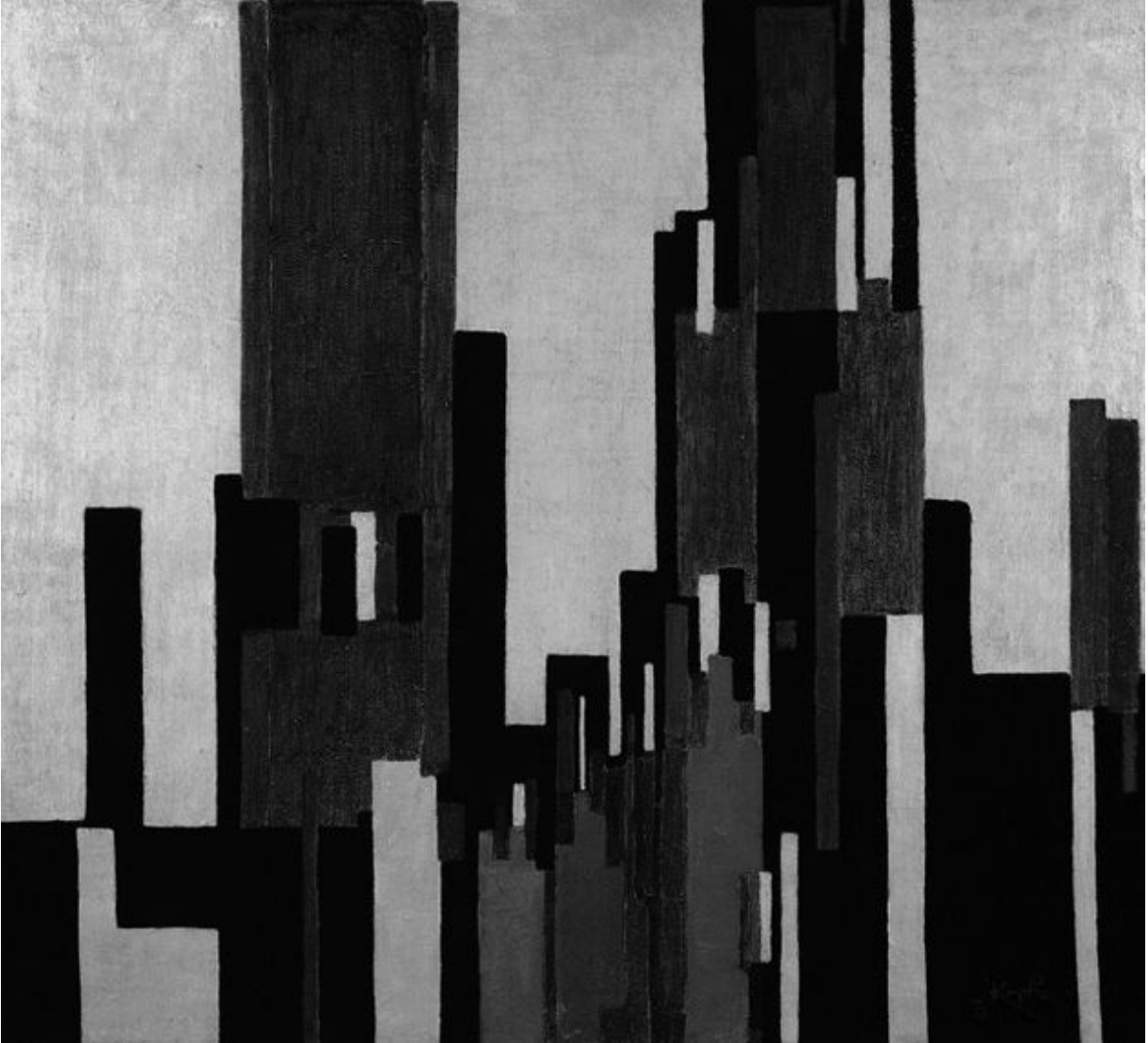
This could be done, for example, as is attempted here, with the help of a spatial theory of multiplicities, which approaches the enigma of social synthesis with a situationist, pluralist, associationist, morphological and, above all, psycho-topological arsenal of means of description. To this belongs the philosophical decision to conceive unity as an effect, and thus to disenchant any concept of "society" that would allow it to precede its elements. <sup>244]</sup> This would mean no longer seeking its model in the ontological unity of individuated living beings (until reaching, ascending, the Platonic animal-cosmos), but in the polyperspectivist unity of the common situation, lived at the same time by diverse intelligences, but always symbolized in different ways. Situations are conglomerates (in another sense: networks) of actors, reciprocally configured, without even one of them, for love of the so-called whole, being able to leave his skin and his brain.

A useful initial reference on the path to be trodden here can be found in the most philosophical of the German founders of sociology, Georg Simmel, who does not



In vain has he entered the annals of the social sciences as the promoter of a nontotalistic analysis of social units. To him goes back the initiative to transfer to "societies" the Kantian question about the possibility of the objects of knowledge in nature, and thus to promote a reflection on the internal cognitive constitution of human groups.<sup>[245]</sup> Simmel asystematically differentiates three "(quasi-)apriarchically effective conditions or forms of socialization",<sup>[246]</sup> the first of which he calls schematization: 'by it, the members of a group can only understand each other, in principle, according to their roles or status; the second he perceives in the partial non-sociality of the socialized beings; the third in the enlistment of individuals in the "organization chart" of "society" as if it were an integral of professionals, "as if each of the elements were predetermined for its place in that whole."<sup>[247]</sup>

The most interesting reservation for us against overstretched holism is expressed in the proposition that states "that each of the elements of a group is not only part of society, but something more besides".<sup>[248]</sup> As a general principle: "The apriori of empirical social life is that life is not entirely social..."<sup>[249]</sup> Following the author, the basis for this should be sought in the circumstance "that societies are conformations of beings, who are both inside and outside of them".<sup>[250]</sup> For individualistic sociologists it seems stipulated that the basic unit of these assembled conformations can only be the individual, the individual soul, let us say, of which it is worth "that it does not place itself in an order without at the same time finding its opposite".<sup>[251]</sup> Simmel's emphasis on the philosophically vitalistic differentiation between being-in and being-in-front anticipates Luhmann's fundamental theory, at first disconcerting, pleasantly anti-totalitarian and anti-consensualist, according to which real individuals are not parts of the social system, but belong to their environment. All the more reason to recognize in Simmel's reservation against sociology's total understanding of the individual a German parallel action to Gabriel Tarde's monadological turn in the cluster sciences.



František Kupka, *Blue and Red Vertical Surfaces*, 1912-1913.

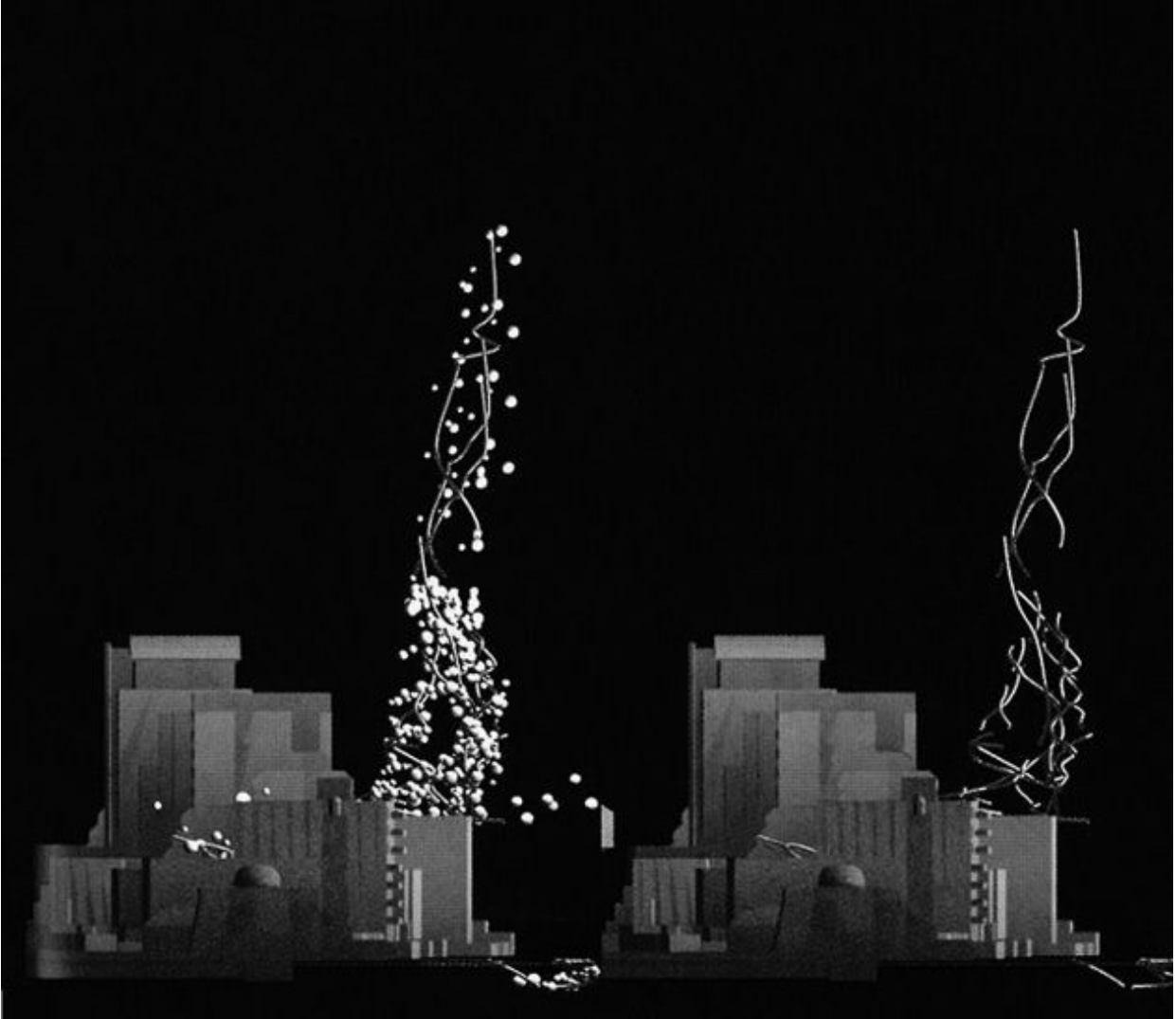
We can connect with Simmel's reference to the partial extra-sociality of the individual components of "societies" under three critical assumptions: first, the individualistic metaphysics of Simmel's doctrine of socialization should be rejected and replaced by a more radical theory of coexistence and association, as projected, for example, by Simmel's contemporary, Gabriel Tarde, in his 1893 work, *Monadology and Sociology*, never accepted by most guild sociologists. That text, the most philosophical text of the most philosophical sociologist of

the French school - we use an apt characterization by Eric Alliez - represents an ingenious neo-Leibnizian attempt to generalize the ideas of association so broadly that all empirical objects can be described as states of coexistence of something with something: "*toute chose est une société*", every thing is a society.<sup>[252]</sup> Tarde insists on this inversion of classical holism: 'the truth is, rather, that since the discoveries of cell theory organisms have become societies of their own style, into, as it were, Licurguesque or Rousseauian republics, exclusive and savage, or, better still, into religious congregations of a strange obstinacy, comparable only to the majestic and immutable singularity of their practices of faith; an immutability, moreover, which says nothing against the individual multiplicity and the power of invention of their members.'<sup>[253]</sup>

From here one could draw the conclusion that it is not licit, at all, to understand the being-something-more-than-society of individuals, insinuated by Simmel, as the ultimate intimate being-for-itself of an atomic point-person, as suggested by the metaphysics of the subject. If human individuals participate in an extra-social dimension, it is, according to Tarde, because they themselves are the results of pre-personal associations, of societies of cells and societies of particles, subordinated to modalities of common assemblage, which obey their own laws. In order to partially dissociate, outside of "society", human beings from their fellows, it is not, then, necessary to increase their selfhood in the way that the metaphysics of solitude does. They are partially dissocial or asocial (or, to use Tarde's expressions, presocial or subsocial) on the interpersonal plane, because on other planes and in other ways they are social, multiple and assembled. In other words: in order to be within a social nexus - that is to say, dedicated to a common field of *munera*, tasks, works, projects - individuals must have their specific immunity (their liberation from social service). What is currently called public health (better to speak of the biopolitical constitution of a population) is today's compromise between *communitas* interests and *immunitas* conditions.

It belongs to the virtues of the neo-monadological approach in the theory of society that by the attention it pays to the association of small units it prevents the spatial blindness inherent in the usual sociologies. From this point of view, "societies" are magnitudes that demand space and that only

can be described by an appropriate extensive analysis, by a topology, a dimensional theory and a "network" analysis (in case one prefers the network metaphor to the foam metaphor).<sup>[254]</sup> Tarde occasionally hints at a possible direction of such analyses, in an imaginary experiment: if the instinct of sociability of human beings were not diked by insurmountable limitations, coming from the force of gravity, sooner or later one would certainly see growing, alongside the known peoples in a horizontal line, vertical nations: associations of grapes-human-beings, which would rise in the air and which would only rest on the foot of a perpendicular on the terrestrial ground, without unfolding on it.

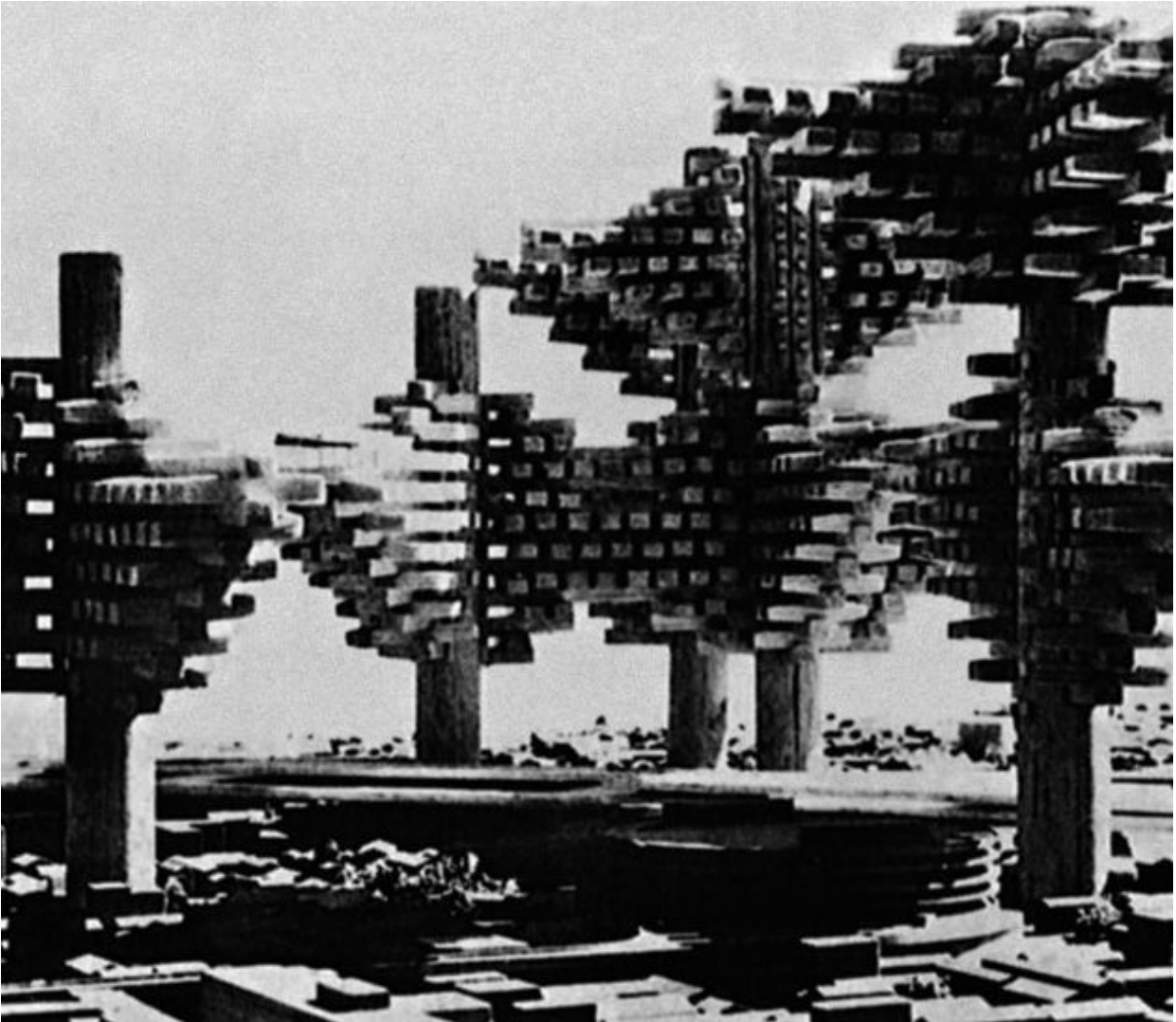


NOX/Lars Spuybroek, from the *Beachness* project.

It hardly makes sense to explain why this is impossible. A nation that would be as high as it is wide would far exceed the breathable range of the atmosphere, and the crust of the earth would not offer materials sufficiently solid for the titanic constructions of such vertical city development.<sup>[255]</sup>

With this consideration the analytic of association wants to make understandable why flat configurations of aggregates of the type of human "societies" (analogous to certain mosses and lichens) are distinguished by their imprecise contours. This provides us with a hint, according to which we have to deal (can we say for the first time?) with a morphologically attentive and spatially theoretically lucid coinage of sociology. We want to maintain the assumption that the

This passage is one of the few places in the social-scientific literature in which human agglomerations are interpreted with a sidelong glance at the static, formal and atmospheric conditions of the coexistence of human beings in space.



Arata Isozaki, *Cluster in the air, metabolic city*, 1962.

(The Tardesian imaginary experiment finds continuity in twentieth-century architectural utopias, such as Yona Friedman's neo-Babylonian height-anxious sketches for the "*Ville cosmique*," 1964, or Arata Isozaki's *City in the Air*, 1962; its reference to flat association is picked up in Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatics; it finds echo in Vilém Flusser's concept

<sup>256]</sup> According to these notes, "societies" appear as interconnected carpets. Their most important dimension always resides in the lateral extension).

If we want to continue working with Simmel's indication that "societies" are composed of beings who are both inside and outside their association, we must equip him with two additional corrections. It is true that the monadologic turn in Tarde's line already helps to dissolve the individualistic illusion in which members of "bourgeois societies" are reflected, so that from this point on we must analyze "societies" as compositions of compositions. But, in our opinion, it is necessary to extend it to a diadological turn, by which the principle of surreal, specifically human, spatial conformations appears in the description of the social context. It should be remembered that already decades ago Béla Grunberger, with his concept of the psychic monad, paved the way for such a turn towards the dyadic. For the psychoanalyst, the expression monad is to designate a "form", whose contents are provided by the coexistence of two, mutually involved in a strong psychic interaction.<sup>[257]</sup> According to this, the

"Societies" should not only be understood as communities of monads of high rank, as multiplicities of multiplicities; in our context they should be understood originally as multiplicities of dyads, whose elementary units do not constitute individuals, but couples, symbiotic molecules, homes, communities of resonance, as we have described in the first volume of our trilogy. What is called a bubble there is a place of *strong relationship*, whose characteristic consists in the fact that human beings in a space-canopy create a psychic relationship of reciprocal shelter; for this purpose we proposed the expression *autogenous receptacle*.<sup>[258]</sup>

The idea of a multiplicity of psychic self-receptions leads by itself to the expression *foam*; in relation to this, we pick up, in addition, Tarde's topological allusion to flattening

of human associations in order to achieve the heterodox image of a flat foam. Foams are rhizome-interior-space, whose principle of neighborliness is to be found, above all, in annexed lateral configurations, in flat condominiums or co-isolated associations. Multiplicity-spaces integrated by co-isolation are groups of islands, comparable to the Cyclades or the Bahamas, in which similar and autochthonous cultures flourish at the same time. However, the interpretation of "society" as a flat or horizontal foam should not lead to the conclusion that a complete collection of the leaves of the communal cadastre would provide the most adequate description of the coexistence of human beings with their fellows and others, however stimulating the partialization of space in the foundational books by analogy with the cellular theory may be. It is true that "society" can only be understood from its original multiplicity and spatiality along with its syntagms of interconnection, but the geometric spatial images of the property registers nevertheless do not provide the valid image of the coexistence of human beings with human beings and their architectural "receptacles"; no simple *container-representation* is appropriate to articulate the idiosyncratic tension of animate configurations within their aggregations. To have valid images, one would have to work with psychotopological maps, based almost on infrared shots of internal states in polyvalent hollow bodies.





Marina Abramovic, *Inner Sky for Departure*, 1992.

By staying with the meteorological and climatographic images, it could be said that the best panoramic images of the "society" would be offered by aphrographs or photographs of the foam from a great height. These images would transmit to us already at first sight the information that the whole can no longer be anything but a labile and momentary synthesis of a boiling agglomeration. They would provide us with external figures of the psycho-thermal relations.

within the agglomerations of human bubbles, comparable to the night shots of satellites of industrial nations, which, on cloudless nights, show us as irregular points of light in electrified agglomeration zones the coexistence of human beings and technical installations. An aphogram, diluting in height, of a "society" would place before our eyes the system of alveoli and the neighborhood of air-conditioned bubbles and, with it, would show us graphically that "societies" are polyspherical climatic installations, both in the physical and psychological sense. In the case of Modernity, very different temperature settings and great inequalities in the balance of animation, immunization and comfort level are manifested, which in the interior of the fields are transformed into psychosemantic tensions and social-political issues. In this situation, the political field should be analyzed with the help of fluid dynamics for semantic loads or vectors of meaning. What is social policy if not the formalized struggle both for the new distribution of comfort opportunities and for access to the most advantageous immunization technologies?

It remains, finally, to determine in more detail, from a spatial-theoretical and logical-situational point of view, Simmel's observation that the constituent elements of social groups are not only parts of society, but also *something else besides that*. Through the concepts of "bubble" and

If human beings can coexist in "society" it is only because they are already linked and referred to each other elsewhere. If human beings can coexist in "society" it is only because they are already elsewhere linked and referred to one another. "Societies" are multiplicities composed of spatialities of their own, in which human beings are only able to participate thanks to their psycho-typical difference, which they already always carry with them. Thus, in order to be "in society" in the typical human way, one must already bring a psychic capacity for coexistence. Without a prior psychotopic attunement, those gathered would not be reunifiable; or their associations would never be more than congresses of autistics, comparable to groups

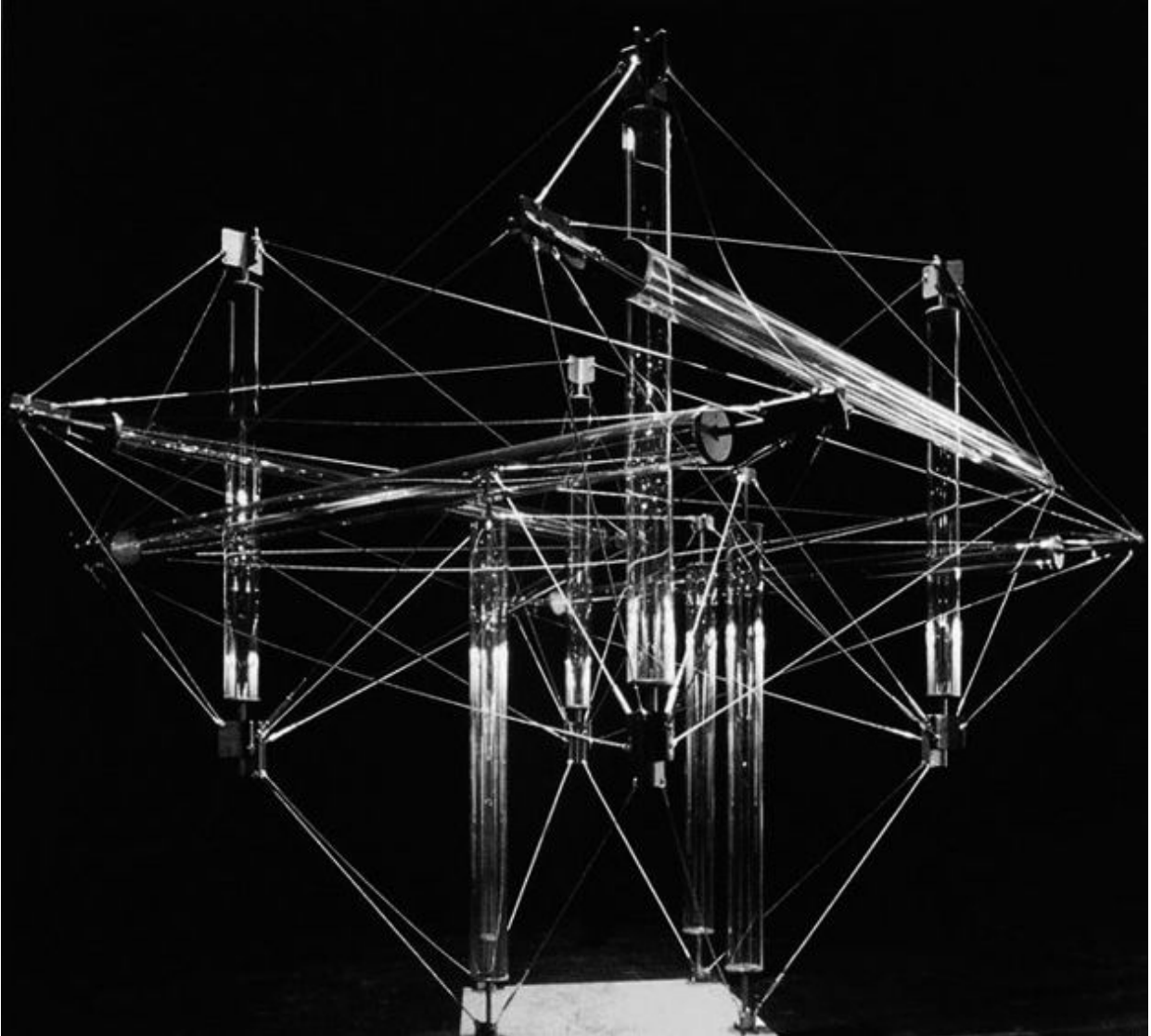
of shivering hedgehogs, as Schopenhauer characterized the "bourgeois society. It is only because there is a psychic shaping of space, aka communication, prior to social association, that participation in further gatherings is possible. If it were otherwise, every human individual, as René Crevel said, would have to remain encapsulated in himself, "like an old prostitute, who is already only a ruin to her corset". How, then, to explain the indisputable phenomena of spiritual transmission, "the richness of our undivided domains," the "imponderable, but real exchange"?<sup>[259]</sup><sup>[259]</sup>



North and South America (with Hawaii), taken on a cloudless night. Photo by NASA satellite.

In reality, individuals become sociable to the extent that by a kind of psychosocial airlock they put themselves in a position to move from a primitive dyadic space to the polyvalent space of "social" contacts, both early and developed, to enriched foams or networks, finally even to uncommitted ties.<sup>[260]</sup> However, as Simmel says in a spherological consideration *ante litteram*, their "sociability" is equally conditioned by the fact that people remain within the limits of the "measure of power and entitlement of the

<sup>261]</sup> Personalism provides the philosophical form in which self-controlled individuals offer each other guarantees of non-belligerence. Naturally, Simmel speaks here in the voice of the Kantian who follows his master in assuming that the point of a bourgeois legal order is to guarantee the coexistence of discretionary circles, each centered on itself.<sup>[262]</sup> With somewhat more sense for power relations, Novalis, a hundred years earlier, had realized that every individual is the center of a system of emanation.<sup>[263]</sup>



Stefan Gose/Patrick Teuffel, *Tensegrity Skulptur*, a composition with glass tubes from 3-4 meters in length.

Against the background of these considerations it is shown that Kant's definition of space as the possibility of being together has to be completed or replaced by its reverse, and why<sup>[264]</sup> it is being together that makes space possible. While in Kant's physics things only fill the pre-existing space (better, represented *a priori*) and subsist next to each other in the mode of reciprocal exclusion, in the psycho- and socio-spherical space those gathered together, by their coexistence, themselves form space: they are assembled in each other and form a psycho-social place of the type

of their own, by way of mutual shelter and reciprocal evocation. Once again, the difference between the simple welcoming receptacles of the physical conception of space and the autogenous, self-pumping receptacles of spherology becomes understandable.

If this difference becomes effective, the temporal connection between generations also appears as successively coexisting. If cultures are understood as spaces integrated by common model configurations, a concept of tradition emerges as a process of collective conservation of models over time. In traditional cultures, learning acquires the sense of accommodation to the existing model. In an inquiring culture, which, like the modern one, has opened up through progressive explanation, learning means, on the contrary, participating in processes of permanent revision of models. Every place of learning constitutes a temporary microsphere in the learner's foam.

# Chapter 1



## Insulations

### ***For a theory of capsules, islands, and greenhouses.***

Since the appearance of Daniel Defoe's novel *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: who lived eight and twenty years all alone in an uninhabited island on the coast of America... written by himself*, in 1719, Europeans have admitted that humans are beings who have something to look for in islands. Since that exemplary shipwreck, the island in the distant ocean serves as a stage for processes of revision of the definitions of reality in *terra ferma*.

To note this means to become aware of the asymmetry of the relationship between land and island. Usually, mainland culture and island existence are related as rule and exception; and the primacy of the rule is exemplified in the case of Robinson. The story of the simple Puritan, who created on a lonely Pacific island a microcommonwealth out of Christian-British clichés, has had over the centuries more than a thousand reprints, adaptations and translations, achieving a circulation that almost equals that of the New Testament: implying that it is indeed something more than a petty, insularly idealized gospel of private property. It offers a formula for the relationship of the self and the world at the time of the European conquest of the world.

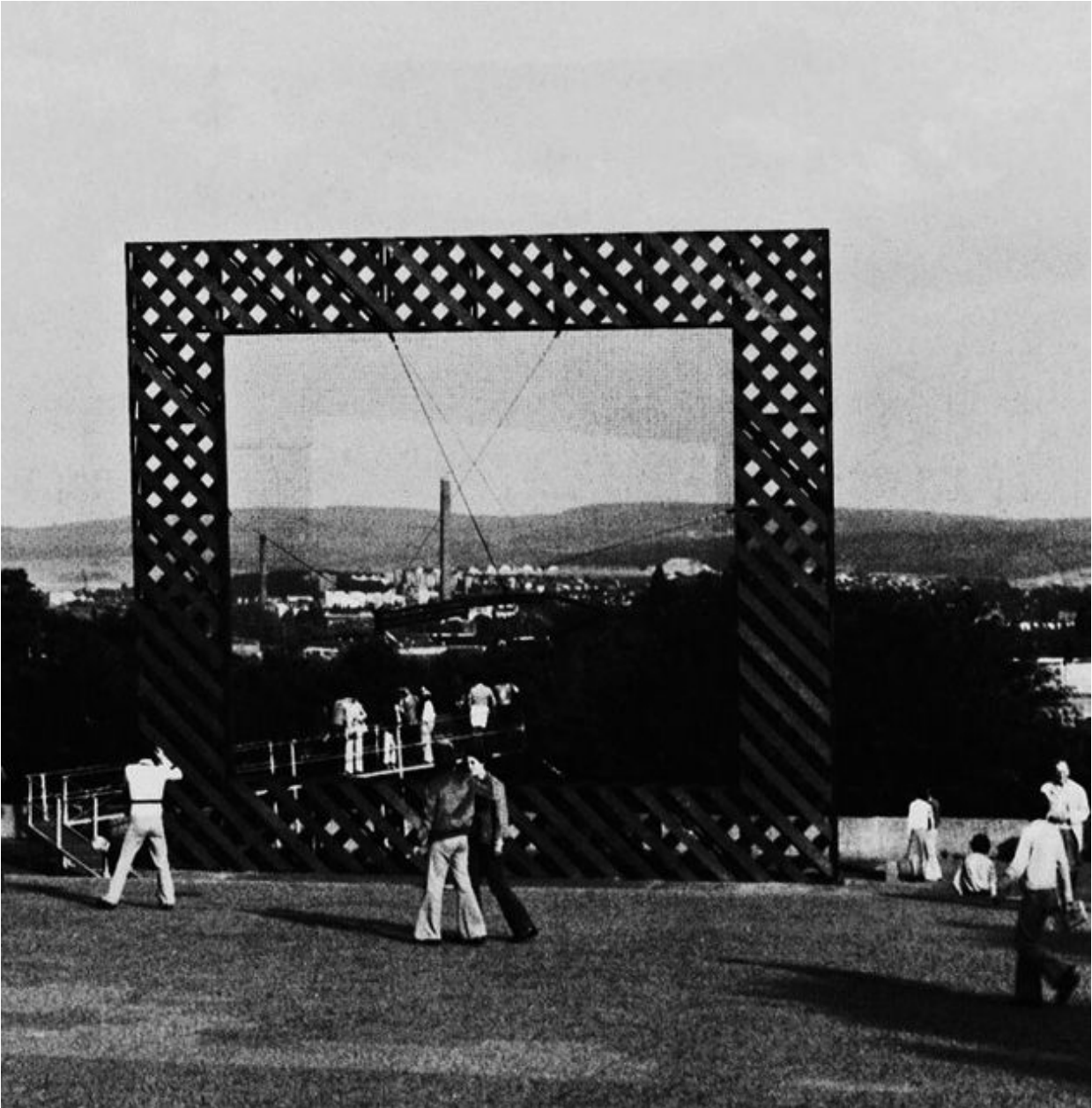
We will leave aside the usual dialectic of space, which relates world and island as thesis and antithesis reciprocally, in order to

overcome both in a tourist-civilized synthesis. What interests us is a spherological theory of the island, with which it can be shown how animated interior worlds are possible and how pluralities of world of analogous type form a block in the form of archipelagos or rhizomes of the sea. In an early essay on the *Abandoned Island* Gilles Deleuze established a difference between islands that are separated from the continental terrestrial context by the action of seawater and islands that arise above the sea by the underwater activity of the land. This corresponds to the difference between isolation by erosion and isolation by creative emergence. The stay of human beings on the island occupies the philosopher insofar as the island is nothing other than the dream of men, and men the mere consciousness of the island. This relationship is possible under one condition:

Let man go back to the movement that leads him to the island, a movement that repeats and prolongs the impulse that produced the island. So geography and imagination would form a unity. Of course, to the favorite question of the ancient explorers-"What beings exist on the desert island?"-one can only answer that man already exists there, but a strange man, absolutely separate, absolutely creative, in short an Idea of man, a prototype, a man who would be almost a god, a woman who would be almost a goddess, a great Amnesiac, a pure Artist, consciousness of the Earth and the Ocean, an enormous cyclone, a beautiful sorceress, a statue of Easter Island. This creature of the desert island would be the desert island itself as it imagines and reflects its primal movement. Consciousness of the earth and the ocean, that is the desert island, ready to restart the world. [...] it is doubtful that the individual imagination alone can rise to this admirable identity... [265]...

Islands are prototypes of the world in the world. That they can become so must be attributed to the insulating action of the liquid element, with which they are surrounded by definition. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre has rightly said of the islands that they are "compendiums of a small continent". It is the framing force that draws a limit to the island's overhanging impetus, as if these context-free surfaces were a kind of emerging works of art of nature, encircled by the sea as fragments of nature's display. As microcontinents, islands are examples of the world, in which an anthology of world-shaping units are assembled: a flora of their own, a fauna of their own, a human population of their own, an autochthonous set of customs and recipes. Georg Simmel's theory of the limit in his *Sociology of Space*, 1903, confirms with an external example the framing action of the sea:

The frame, the self-retracting boundary of a painting, has for the social group a meaning very similar to that which it has for a work of art. [...]: closing it off from the world around it and enclosing it within itself; the frame proclaims that within it lies a world only submissive to its own norms... [266].



Haus-Rucker-Co, *Framing structure*, 1977.

Thus, isolation is what makes the island what it is. What the frame does with respect to the frame, excluding it from the context of the world, and what with respect to the peoples and groups effect the

fixed frontiers, that is what the isolator, the sea, manages to accomplish with respect to the island. If the islands are prototypes of the world, it is because they are sufficiently separated from the rest of the context of the world to constitute an experiment in the presentation of a totality in a reduced format. Just as the work of art, following Heidegger, presents a world, the sea circumscribes a world.

The sea as an insulator makes a prototype of the world appear, whose main characteristic is the island climate. Island climates are climates of compromise, negotiated between the contributions of the land mass, together with its peculiar biosphere, and those of the open sea. It can be said, in this sense, that the true experience of the island is climatic in nature and is conditioned by the visitor's immersion in the island atmosphere. It is not only the exceptional biotopical situation, the almost hothouse-like separation from the life process on the mainland, that gives the islands their local coloring, it is rather the atmospheric difference that is decisive in defining the insular. The islands constitute climatic enclaves within the general air conditions; they are, to use a technical expression, atmotopes, which are configured according to their own laws under the effect of their maritime isolation. If island climate is a meteorological term, the expression climatic island represents a theoretical-spatial and spherological concept. The former admits as a given fact the special climatic conditions of the island, the latter introduces them into a genetic research, prompting to ask about the conditions of the origin and formation of the islands.

What from the genetic point of view climatic islands mean is hinted at by the Vulgar Latin verb, later Italian, *isolare*, since by its verbal character it suggests gathering information about the generator of the island, the insulator. According to the reflections we have made so far, only the sea, in principle, enters into consideration as a maker of islands, from which it follows that to speak of making in relation to this element has an unsurpassable allegorical character.

But it is questionable whether this observation can be continued to the end, since the activity of isolating as delimitation of a realm of objects and as interruption of the continuum of reality is a general technical idea, which suggests considering whether larger insular units may not also have been produced by intelligent makers and not only generated as the mere work of a-subjective agents such as sea, land and air. There are specific etiological myths of Antiquity, dealing with generations of islands, which show that this consideration expresses something more than technical *hybris*. We think of the well-known legend of the struggle of the Olympians against the giants, who had conspired to attack the sky in order to avenge their brothers, the Titans banished to Tartarus. In the final phase of the battle, when the giants, pursued by the Olympians, were retreating and fleeing to earth, a hurling of rock fragments began which produced islands, as Ranke-Graves points out in his sober annotations to Greek stories of the gods:

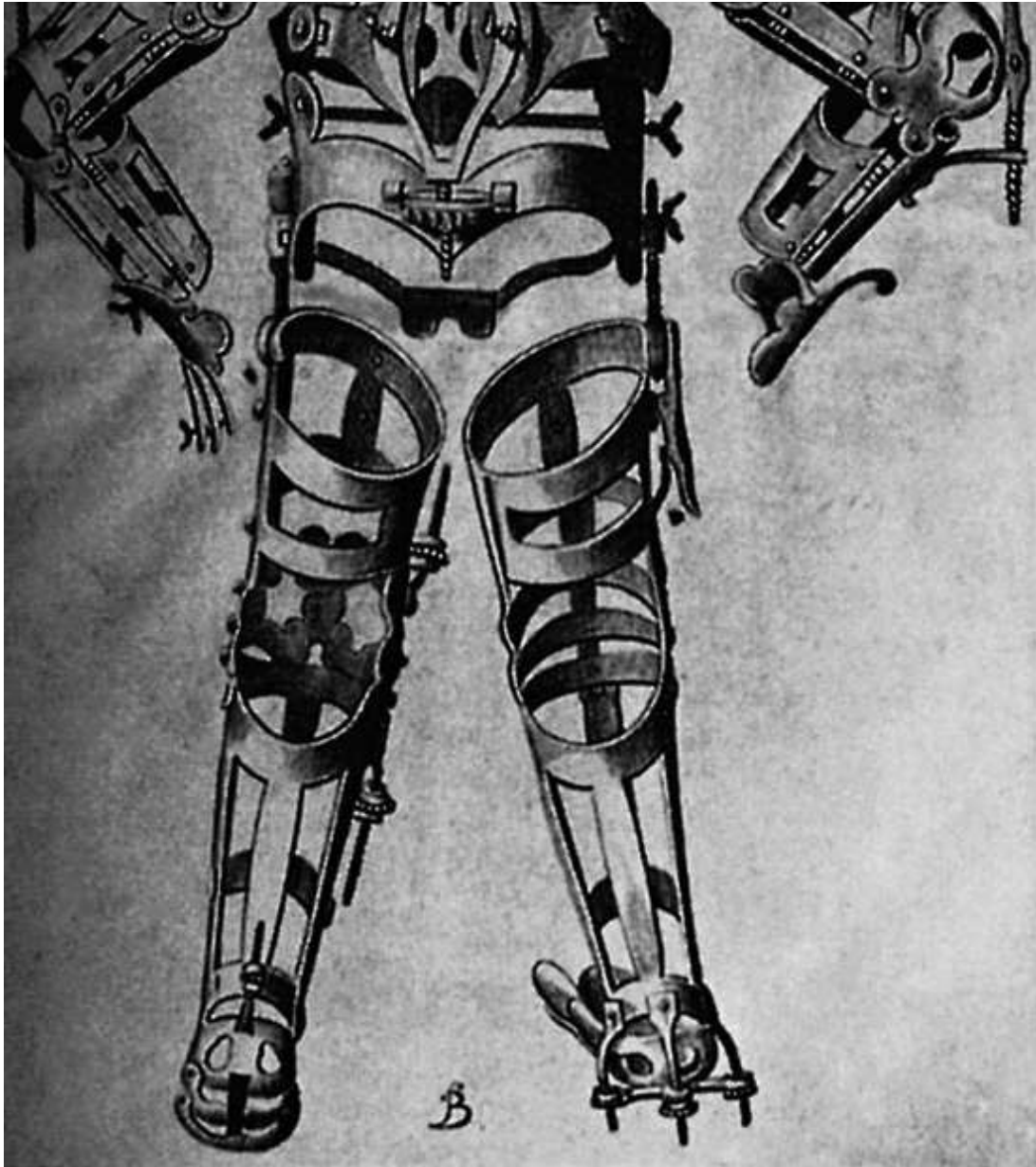
Athena threw a rock at Enceladus. The rock crushed the fleeing one. Thus arose the island of Sicily. Poseidon broke a piece of the island of Cos with his trident and threw it to Polybotes. The latter fell into the sea, so that the small island of Nisiro, near Sicily, under which Polybotes is buried, came into being.<sup>[267]</sup> The island of Nisiro, which is near Sicily, is buried under the sea.<sup>[267]</sup> The island of Nisiro is a small island.

It is instructive in this fable of causes that some islands properly represent tombs of giants or sarcophagus lids of enemies of the gods. It is even more impressive that they are described as projectiles that reached their stillness, as effects of very high launches and, consequently, as results of a praxis. Here it is no longer necessary to count only on the sea when it comes to naming the insulator. The actions of the gods can also produce islands, although now only as a collateral effect. We will have to wait until the era of early-Enlightenment utopias to see how the archaic launching of islands is transformed into a design of great political and technical mastery. From that moment on, it becomes increasingly clear to the citizens of the modern era that inherent in the so-called project of Modernity is a nesopoietic ideal, that is, the tendency to transfer the island, *he nésos* in Greek, from the register of the invented to that of the made. The moderns are intelligences that imagine and build islands, that come, so to speak, from a topological declaration of human rights, in which the right to isolation goes hand in hand with the equally original right to interconnection; which is why the concept of *Connected Isolation*, formulated around 1970 by the Californian group of architects Morphosis, expresses with insuperable laconism the principle of the modern world. The process of Modernity directs its

explicit force to the fundamental relation of being-in-the-world, the inhabiting, which now has to be considered as the original isolating activity of the human being, or, to quote the formula of the phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz, as "culture of feelings in the enclosed space".

We would like to describe, below, the three technical ways of explaining the formation of islands that have crystallized through the deployment of the modern art of isolation: first, the construction of separate or absolute islands, of the character of ships, airplanes and space stations, in which the sea is replaced, as an insulator, by other means, first air, then empty space; then, the construction of climatic islands, that is to say, hothouses in which the exceptional atmospheric situation of the natural island is replaced by a technical imitation of the greenhouse effect; and finally, the anthropogenic islands, in which the coexistence of human beings, equipped with tools, with their fellows and the rest, triggers on the inhabitants themselves a retroactive effect of incubator. The latter is a form of insult, whose model cannot be said to have been imitated and skillfully reconstructed by social engineering, although modern social states - which we understand as integral welfare capsules - have largely promoted the replacement of the original incubator by the collective construction of maternity services for rent.



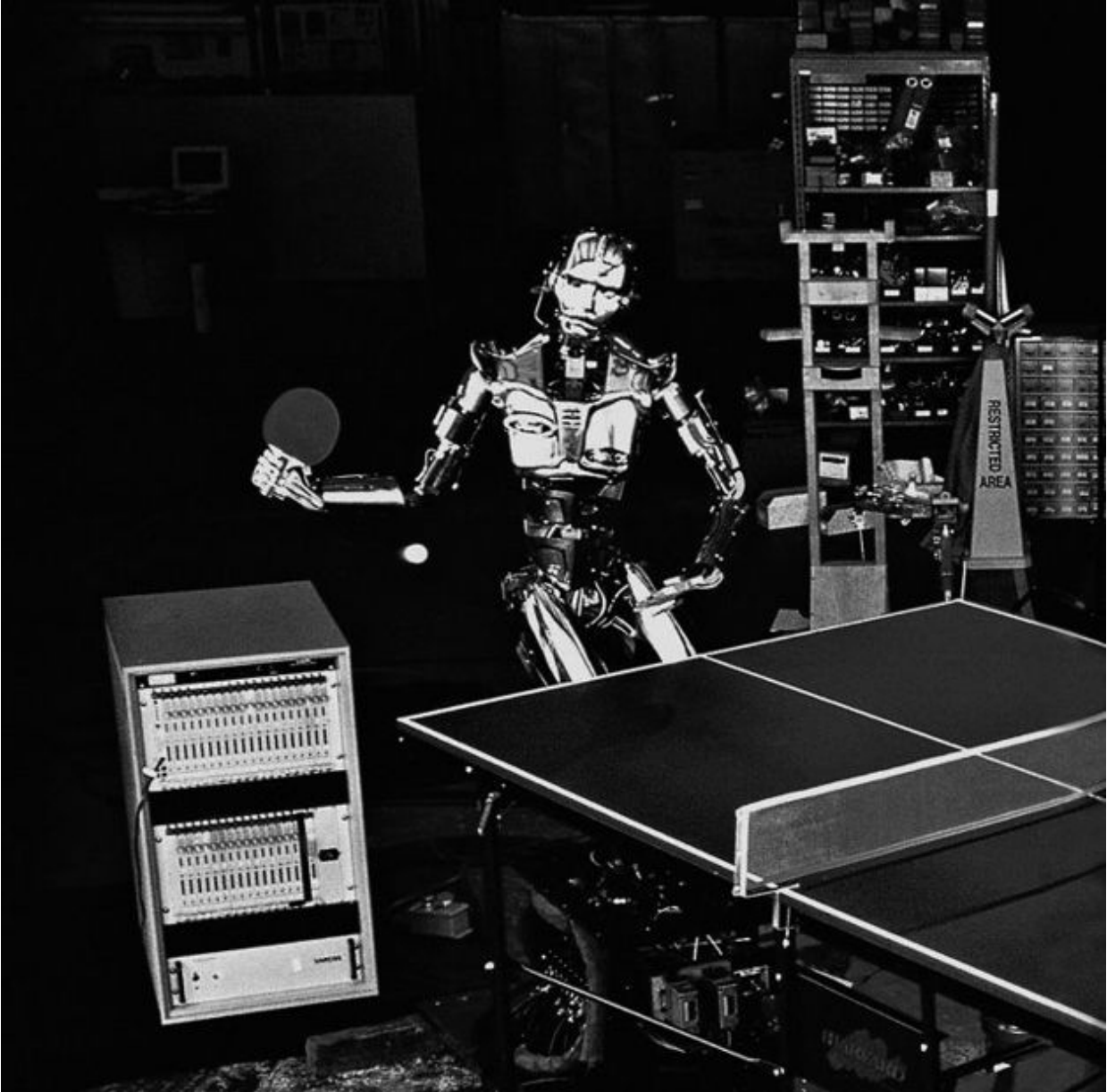


Hieronimi Fabricii of Aquapendente, *Total body prosthesis*, *Opera illustration chirurgica Patavii*, 1647.

The proposed classification of the islands follows Vico's principle: that we only understand what we can do ourselves. The technical making is essentially a substitution or a prosthetizing. Whoever wants to understand the island has to construct prostheses of islands that repeat all the essential features of the natural islands by means of point-to-point correspondences in technical replication. From the substitute form one understands, at last, what one has with the first form. Therefore, the



The development of the construction of prostheses - the core of the explanatory event - is the phenomenology of the authentic spirit. The repetition of life elsewhere shows how much of life was understood in its first form.



*Ping-Pong robot from Sarcos. It reacts to the muscular activity of your opponent.*

## A. Absolute islands

Absolute islands arise from the radicalization of the principle of the creation of enclaves. This cannot be achieved by mere pieces of land framed by the sea, because they only achieve horizontal isolation while leaving the vertical open. In this sense, natural marine islands are only isolated relatively and two-dimensionally, lengthwise and crosswise. Although they have a special climate, natural islands are enveloped in the currents of the air masses. The absolute island presupposes three-dimensional isolation, and thus the transition from the frame to the capsule or, to use the artistic analogy, from the painting on wood to the installation in space. Without vertical isolation there is no enclosure at all.

To be absolute, a technically created island must also dispense with the premise of fixity to a place and become a mobile island. Thus, the insurmountable relativity of natural islands is doubly conditioned: by the two-dimensionality of their isolation and by the immovability of their situation. An absolute, three-dimensional and mobile island requires a revision of the relationship with the element of the environment. It is no longer fixed in it, but navigates in it with relative freedom of movement, swimming or flying. The motto of Jules Verne's Captain Nemo, *mobilis in mobili*, brings to its most succinct form the mode of being of the absolute island: a laconic expression in which, with good reason, Oswald Spengler wanted to see the formula of life of the enterprising individuals of the "Faustian" civilization. The electrically propelled underwater hotel, *Nautilus*, emerged from the inventive spirit of the

the great misanthrope, embodies a first, technically perfect projection of the idea of absolute insularity: a prototype of a world of extreme enclosure and introversion, with its own organ and large library on board, an air-conditioned enclave capable of submerging, in permanent flight from human beings and ships, wandering and evasive, as if Robinson's forced landing on the empty islet had become a voluntary exile and the Atlantic island-prototype had been transformed into a navigating cavern, full of the treasures of great culture and the wise bitterness of an enigmatic hermit of the sea. The submarine, with freedom of movement, represents a complete insular prosthesis, which makes explicit and reconstructs the fundamental features of the insular being in its essential aspects. The three-dimensional island not only shows the enclave character of such a piece of space; together with it, one becomes aware of the principle of repression, by which the islands, as space-grabbing magnitudes, use their own mass to restrain the surrounding element.

However, submarines, as maritime island prostheses, are still related to natural islands, since they share with them the usual element. Absolute isolation is only achieved when the element of the environment is also changed. This is the case with airplanes, especially those operating at high altitudes, which must technically produce breathable air conditions inside, and space stations, which venture into the non-element, the vacuum. In these, the conquest of space is no longer carried out by means of repression as usual, but by the implantation of a body, which extends as master of its place in space, without any concurrence whatsoever. As soon as the surrounding element has been replaced by the void, the insular space-implant has to free itself from the antagonism of gravity, to keep completely to itself. Thereby, extension and repression become the same thing. In the void, the bodies freed from all competition are as large as their own will to extend reaches; and this is identical with their plan of

construction. Vacuum implantation means the continuation of the launch-island with astronomical technical means. Its principle is inscribed since 1687, when Isaac Newton, in his essay *De Mundi systemate*, performed the famous theoretical experiment of a stone shot, in which the projectile would accelerate so much that it would no longer fall back to earth, but would stabilize in an orbit like a natural satellite.

If isolation is to become three-dimensional and allow free navigation in the surrounding element, the framing of the island must no longer be effected by the meeting of the land and the sea at the margin of the coast. Absolute islands have no coastline at all, but external walls on all sides. A perfect hermeticism is demanded of them: whoever wants to go out of them into the environment must expect to go immediately into the void; bathing in the universe is only possible with the help of special suits, bathing naked in the void has a bad prognosis. It is decisive for the design of the absolute island, that the exceptional spontaneous atmospheric situation of the natural islands has to be reconstructed exemplarily in the rigorous exceptional situation of the closed artificial atmosphere. On natural islands respiration takes advantage of the spontaneous configuration of the climate, which occurs in the exchange between the sea air and the island biosphere; in the interior of absolute islands respiration becomes unconditionally dependent on technical air supply systems, to which underwater, aeronautical and astronomical research leads to ever more elaborate states of explicitness. The climate of the absolute island is only possible as an absolute interior, because such islands navigate in an impossible environment for the life of breathing beings, either underwater, or in oxygen-poor upper regions of the earth's atmosphere, or in the vacuum of space: in any case, in environments in which an evolutionarily stable coupling between respiratory metabolism and air environment is lacking. What is a surrounding element in the relative island must become inner space in the absolute island.

Whoever tried to breathe there without an air medium brought with him would drown in a minimum space of time, more precisely: he would die from embolisms produced by the vacuum.

From a philosophical point of view, the significance of astronautics is not to be sought in the fact that it facilitates the means for a possible exodus of mankind into the universe or that it is linked to the supposed need of human beings to expand the limits of the possible. We can quietly forget the romanticism of the exodus. If, from an ontological point of view, astronautics is important for a technically enlightened theory of the *conditio humana*, it is because it constitutes an essay in the organization of three categories that are indispensable to human power-being: that of immanence, that of artificiality and that of the ascending impulse. Manned space stations are anthropological demonstrative fields by virtue of the fact that the astronauts' being-in-the-world is only possible as being-in-the-station. The ontological significance of this situation lies in the fact that the station represents a prototype of the world to a much greater extent than any earthly island, more accurately: a machine of immanence in which existing or being-able-to-stay-in-a-world becomes fully dependent on technical world donors. The appropriate on-board philosophy would be Heidegger's theory of *Ge-stell*<sup>[\*]</sup> in a positive version. A space station is not a landscape, let alone a landscape, nor is it a biotope in the strict sense of the word, because so far only the cosmonauts and their microbial companions are biologically active crew members inside the stations; However, in the future, especially on board the international space station *ISS*, created between 1999-2004, which replaced *Mir*, there are plans to install small biospheric units, such as NASA's *Salad Machine*, a mini-greenhouse, equipped with a light, capable of producing carrots, cucumbers and lettuce for a crew of four members three times a week in an area of 2.8 square meters.<sup>[268]</sup> The current stations

environment that space technicians describe as a "space environment". "life support system" or *Environment Control and Life Support System* (ECLSS) as it relates to the human components of the station.<sup>[269]</sup> The ECLSS is a system for the control of the station's human components.

From here light is shed on nature conceived anthropocentrically in the old style, which, in a retrospective glance from the prosthesis, can be interpreted as a life-supporting system already found beforehand, spontaneously populated, of whose mode of functioning its inhabitants cannot get any physically appropriate idea as long as they live it "existentially", that is, move in it as intuition, surrender and ritual and metaphorical interpretation. Only he who abandons the system can learn to understand it from the outside point of view; the view from the outside is produced by the renunciation of cooperation with the accustomed and by the search for substitute forms. One can only appreciate astronautics in its proper measure if one recognizes in it - beyond the motives of the actors - a key discipline of experimental anthropology: it is the hardest school of the destructive procedure of naivety with respect to the *conditio humana*, because, by its radically eccentric substitutive configurations of the coexistence of human beings with their fellows and others in a common whole, it forces an inexorable course in the spelling out even of the smallest details. Insofar as it aims at a comprehensive, eccentric, radically explicit reconstruction of the premises of life in outer space, astronautics, as a pattern of the sense of reality, is a harder dimension than the hardest discipline so far of the sense of reality in dealing with the external: politics, whose definition as the art of the possible, however, remains valid for now for situations occurring on the ground. Compared to astronautics, politics, even when carried out professionally to the usual extent, is still attached to a sleepy, vague, fault-ridden milieu, in which speculators of issues and *containers* of collective confusion<sup>[270]</sup> can reach up to the offices

higher. The gap in explicitness between astronautics as the art of the possible in a vacuum and politics as the art of the possible on the surface of the earth is still very large at the moment; compared to the former, the current political office looks like a party-karaoke in which the competitors enter the scene as parties.



Astronaut Mark Lee floats outside space shuttle *Discovery*, approximately 270 km above the ocean.

The construction of absolute islands in space is a business doomed to precision, since there is no rest in implicit assumptions. Whoever bets on the separation of the island from



Every solid earth and earthly element around it must know that it can presuppose nothing. In a vacuum, only what is understood down to the last detail succeeds, including the technology with the help of which one climbs into space without air. Astronautics is the product of the multiplication of precision and daring. It combines levitation with extreme care. Nietzsche's prognosis that we, the navigators of the future, have not only broken the bridges but also the earth behind us<sup>[271]</sup> is literally concretized in the vacuum-nauts of space. This applies above all, to say it once again, to the essential core of the space-island, the life-support system, which can best be understood as a totally isolated atmotope or an integral chamber of metabolism and breathable air; to it belong units for the performance of tasks in the field of air, water and waste management.



Shannon Lucid checks fast-growing wheat in the cultivator-svet of a glass module.

As for the former, these are primarily systems for the preparation of breathable gases, for the control of air temperature and humidity, for air filtration against impurity residues and for ventilation. The latter is important for the safety of the cosmonauts, because under weightless conditions there is no spontaneous convection, the circulation of the air mass due to weight differences between the normal air and the exhaled air, so only artificial air circulation can prevent excessive concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> and heat in the breathing hood close to the cosmonaut's body. Long-term Russian cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev, who, in six space voyages, spent aboard the *Mir* space station about 20 months, in a conversation with the artistic director Andrei Ukhica in April 1999, alluded to some peculiarities of life on the station, including the need to protect astronauts, while sleeping, from stagnation of air in the body environment: "[...] there is that fan that takes care of the air circulation in the area of our face... if just one of the fans is not working properly the life of one of the crew members is in danger."<sup>[272]</sup> Without artificial air circulation the sleeping astronauts would bury themselves in an invisible sarcophagus composed of nitrogen and carbon dioxide.

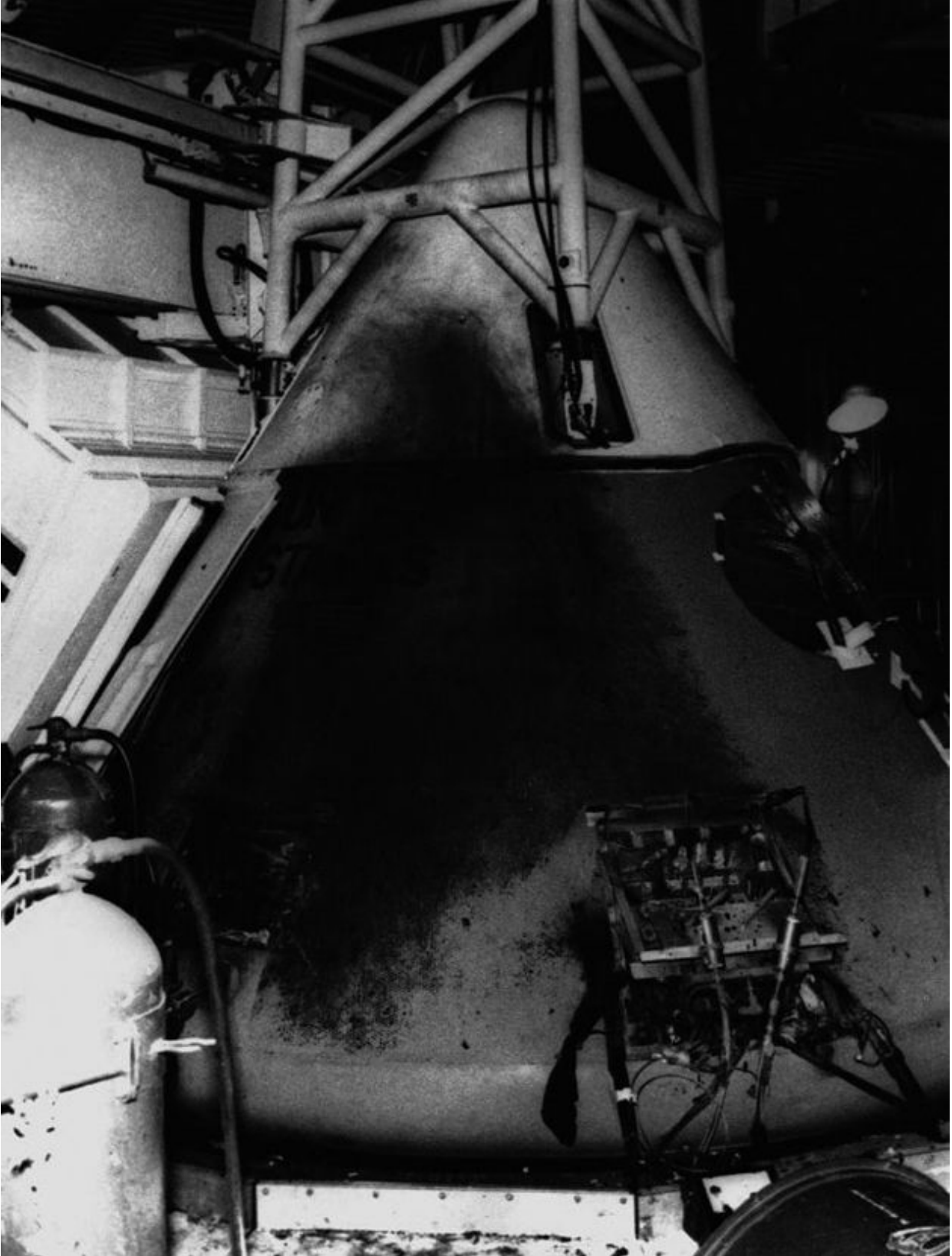


The *Columbus* space laboratory.

Among others, the fact that two fatal episodes in the history of space travel were caused by failures in the air supply systems, justifies that the astronauts' attention is especially directed to the artificial atmosphere in the pressurized cabins. In June 1971, after a visit to the *Salyut I* station, during re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere, three Soviet astronauts aboard the *Soyuz II* space capsule died as a result of a defective valve, whose malfunction caused air to escape from the capsule; the astronauts Dobrovolsky, Patsayev and Volkov, who were not wearing space suits, were exposed for twelve minutes to a vacuum, as a result of which they lost consciousness before dying of embolisms. The burial of the very popular dead (precisely on the occasion of their mission, the Soviet Union had launched a press campaign in praise of socialist astronautics and reported about it on television) on the Kremlin wall became a state act; although nothing is known of even a minute's meditation on the atmospheric conditions of human life. Earlier, in January 1967, in the United States, during a ground test for the Apollo program, three astronauts had drowned in a burning capsule when the atmosphere in the capsule, which was one hundred percent oxygen, was ignited by an electric spark and within seconds burst into flames. Since those events, no one involved in space aerospace technology could have any doubt about the importance of air supply systems on board the stations.

In the aerotechnical design of their habitable surface, astronauts are described as oxygen consumers and CO<sub>2</sub> producers or, more generally, as biological *black boxes*, material transformers, traversed by massive currents. The solid, liquid and gaseous substances flowing through the astronauts' bodies are moved as far as possible, in the interest of mass reduction, in circular processes, in order to stimulate the closing of the connection between waste management and

that of the inputs. In the *recycling of* air and water this has been largely achieved, while in relation to the management of food and excrement there is, for the time being, a large externalization factor to be reckoned with. The technical literature on astronautics shows that the Russians entrust the astronauts' excrement to the cosmos, while the Americans bring their own excrement back to Earth from space. So far, no interpretation of this difference from the point of view of the psychology of the peoples has been published; probably in the interest of the future peaceful joint work of the great powers in space research.



Accident in January 1967.

It is also clear that the semantic and psychological attention of the astronauts will continue to depend almost one hundred percent until a certain time, which is already foreseeable, on the external supply, since the on-board people's demand for meaning is *de facto* covered exclusively by the *input* from the ground stations. From this point of view as well as from the communicative point of view, all space stations so far satisfy the state of affairs of *connected isolation in a very pure form*. By the interconnection of the isolated bodies, the advantages of system closure are combined with those of system openness. This applies both to the professional side of the on-board stay, where the usually eight-hour working days were filled with prearranged scientific experiments, and to the "private" side, where the Astronauts listened to music or watched video films in their leisure time. During the fall of *Mir*, a whole video library was burned up in the Earth's atmosphere. It would only be possible to speak of autonomy or consummate isolation if there were an independent on-board semantics or an endogenous space-religion. This would be the case if on-board scientific faculties were to project autonomous research programs or if film or music studios were to produce art or entertainment broadcasts independent of Earth. In the case of prolonged stays, spontaneous religions and metaphysical schools could appear among the crew members. From the linguistic point of view, due to the prolonged weightlessness of the language, phonetic dislocations would be probable, leading to unknown dialects, perhaps even to stammering languages with their own character and to a new lyric, recited by floating tongues slipping into drunken consonants. Until such things appear, space islanders, those that have been and those to come, remain comparable to their distant ancestor, the imitator Robinson Crusoe, for, culturally, they and he create exclusively from the arsenal of meaning patterns they have brought with them. Needless to say that

conventional astronauts are far from being the pure consciousness of their island.

The implementation of an air supply system in the vacuum of space is anthropologically relevant because it is the critical case of constructivist behavior. It forces, in the exterior, to think and operate with absolute reliability down to the last detail. In normal construction sites, the builders have their "world of life" behind them and can presuppose an environment that supports them. In the spatial construction site this ontological comfort disappears. In order to establish the possibility of living there, a minimum "life-world" must be implanted in the non-life-world. This disrupts the normal relationship between the sustainer and the sustained, the implicit and the explicit, life and forms. The construction of islands is the inversion of inhabiting: it is no longer a matter of placing a building in an environment, but of installing an environment in a building. In the case of architecture in the void, what maintains life is an integral implant in the opposite of it.

This situation can be reproduced with the expression inversion of the environment or of the surroundings. While in the natural situation the environment is what surrounds us and the human beings are the surrounded ones, in the construction of the absolute island it is the human beings themselves who conceive and arrange the environment in which they are to live later on. This means practically: contouring the contour, enveloping the enveloping, sustaining the sustaining. The investment of the environment fulfills the technical seriousness with the hermeneutic motto: to apprehend what apprehends us. Consequently, the lifeworld implants in the void are not

"microcosm," inasmuch as the classical idea of microcosm at technically enunciated the repetition of the large world in the small. It implied that an unexplorable totality is reflected in another. Now it is a matter of technically recreating an explored environment to offer it as a dwelling for real inhabitants.



Against this background, it is clear in what sense the inhabited island can be understood as a prototype or model of the world. One can speak of the existence of a sufficiently complete world when minimum conditions of life support are met. *Life support* means exactly this: to satisfy the list of conditions under which a human life-world can be temporarily maintained in functioning conditions as an absolute island. (For the time being there is no talk of on-board reproduction, nor of the development of a cultural tradition peculiar to astronauts). Special spacewalk suits are a scaled-down version of such life-enabling systems. Sergei Krikalev noted that they resemble small spacecraft,<sup>[273]</sup> with the difference that the life-support system in the suit is intended for only a few hours. With the large spacecraft it shares the property of not possessing biotopic autonomy. (The *Mir* chronicle notes that in fifteen years of operation 78 astronaut sorties were carried out, with a total duration of 359 hours).

Through the transformation of the "world of life" into the life-support system, the meaning of explanation, applied to the ecological background, becomes visible. As, moreover, only terror - which will accompany us, together with astronautics, during the 21st century - demands, the void demands the exact spelling of the alphabet in which the implicit was written. In this sense, astronautics is equivalent to an ontological literacy, by which the elements of being-in-the-world can and must be written formally and expressly. The being-in-the-world on board is conceived in a new way as a stay in a life-world prosthesis, whereby the very protetizability of the "world of life" represents the real adventure of astronautics, or rather, that of the construction of stations. In analogy with the great biotopical-ecological project *Biosphere 2*, which since 1991 has been carried out, with varying success, in the Arizona desert,<sup>[274]</sup> one could summarize the human situation in the spacecraft with the expression *Being-in-the-world 2*.

The absolute island offers an experimental ontological organization in which hominism is shelved: that is, the humanomaniacal dispensing with the otherwise self-evident fact that the coexistence of human beings with their fellows takes place in an effective locale and that human beings never come naked and alone, but always carry with them an escort of things and signs, not to speak for the moment of their constitutive parasites, the biological (microbes) and the psychosemantic (convictions). Considered from a philosophical point of view, astronautics is by far the most important enterprise of Modernity, because, as a universally relevant experiment on immanence, it manifests what it means for someone to coexist with someone and something in a common space.

Before this experiment has not been retranslated to thinking close to the ground, no reasonable solution can be reached to the fundamental problem that classical metaphysics bequeathed to the moderns: the emancipation of the something. In principle, it is a mere terminological question whether the impoverished something is called matter or element or things or environment. Taking sides with the something can only be intelligent when it ventures to participate in the construction of absolute islands. From such islands it can be observed how the cohabitation of systems of things with human beings works. By the advanced explanation, machines and systems, which support being-in-the-world 2, develop so solemnly that they would have to be introduced into a space station constitution, if there were one. *Life-support* unit, communication systems, navigation facilities, power supply supports and laboratories: all of them should be treated as constitutional bodies and, analogous to human rights, should be placed under special protection of space law by a declaration of the rights of things and systems. On the sleepy old Earth, which is still lulled to sleep by truisms that have become false, most constitutions are formulated in such a way that they do not state where the nations in which they are in force are located. The place of validity of the constitutions is not the object of the constitutions: the pre-ecotechnical thinking presupposes it as a resource, which can remain unmentioned, because it seems sufficiently explicit for capable intuitions, not needed by

now of any commentary whatsoever. Seen in this light, traditional politics belongs to the age of the hermeneutic dream, in a time that was imbued by a self-consciously power-relaying-itself-inexplicable presuppositions. Conventional constitutions externalize the nation in which they establish an order; they ignore the non-human co-inhabitants of the nation who are necessary for humans; they have no eyes for the atmospheric conditions, in which and under which the coexistence of citizens and their equipment takes place. In world models of the type of absolute islands, such ingenuities are no longer admissible. In connection with islands in a vacuum, the question arises as to how long it will be before the experiences gained from their construction are transferred back to the organization of coexistence on the earthly firm lands, which are still assumed to be the natural *containers* of life. The knowledge about coexistence under external conditions in orbital position seems to be still far away from the traditional life worlds. Their re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere will not be long in coming.



R. Buckminster Fuller, *Tetra City*, project for a floating city.

We will cite two of the leading thinkers of earth stations, whose work already applies the principle of absolute isolation to the Earth as a whole or to specific local environments with mature metaphors and, in some cases, even with technically implementable models. In the first place we must mention R. Buckminster Fuller, who, with his 1969 *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth*, presented the theoretical and systemic contours for a global *management* of the Earth, based on the idea that the planet Earth is not much more than a "capsule, within which we must survive as human beings."<sup>[275]</sup> Fuller's theory of knowledge leads to an ethic of universal cooperation, embedded in a metaphysics of collective awakening. This, in turn, is based on an interpretation of the fundamental human situation, starting from an "extremely important fact, which concerns Spaceship Earth: that is, that no instructions for its use were supplied with it."<sup>[276]</sup> "[...] it therefore fell to the

The characteristic of the present is the rapid decline in the ignorant tolerance with which things have been treated, a decline brought about by the increasing scope of the consequences of great technology and applied science. The *feedback* of techniques provokes human intelligence to qualify itself for the tasks of the engineer aboard Spaceship Earth.





Olafur Eliasson, *Your Windless Arrangement*, 1997.

After Buckminster Fuller, the Danish object artist Olafur Eliasson must be mentioned here, whose many and diverse installations and assemblages offer the most lucid interpretation of the concept of environmental or environmental inversion to be found in contemporary art. Eliasson has shown himself to be one of the best on-board artists on the absolute island under construction, not least because of the exhibition *Surroundings Surrounded*, which, together with Peter Weibel, he staged in 2001 at the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe.<sup>[278]</sup> In the title of the exhibition the constructivist turn unmistakably appears: the natural environments shown by the artist are effectively already contoured contours, that is, natural phenomena interpreted and repeated by science and technology. We are not confronted with eco-romantically stylized totalities, but with implants of natures in the exhibition room or in the laboratory; we see imitations, prostheses, experiments, *arrangements*, through whose presentation two things are always emphasized at the same time: the natural structure or natural effect *and the* scientific-technical optic through which they enter into our interpretation. Moreover, the "surroundings surrounded" shown by Eliasson, such as the artificial waterfall, loudly sounded, famous in the meantime, the *Moss Wall* of 1994, the *Room for one color* of 1998, the *Room for all colors* of 1999 or the *Very large ice territories* of 1998, are not only presented, arranged and "surrounded" by the scientific-technical-artistic gaze, they are also "surrounded" by the scientific-technical-artistic gaze.

take advantage of the framing effect of the museum situation. Here nature behaves in front of the museum like the world of life in front of emptiness.



Olafur Eliasson, *The Weather Project*, London 2003. Photo: Jens Ziche.

The museum, indeed, can be described as a general isolator of objects: whatever is seen or experienced in it, it appears as an isolated artifact, whose presence seeks attunement to a specialized form of aesthetic attention. One understands, finally, why the phenomenology of the spirit, the museum, and the explanation



advanced go together. To know now means to be able to make explicit; to make explicit means to be able to expose. To Eliasson's most informative and humorous works belongs the wind installation *Your Windless Arrangement* from 1997, owned by the Malmö Art Museum, in which sixteen coordinated fans hanging from the ceiling show how even the wind can no longer be sure of not becoming an object of exhibition.

## B. Atmospheric islands

The explanation of the principle of isolation was driven to the maximum by experiences with the construction of absolute islands. However, artificial islands of relative character are equally enlightening for the investigation of model worlds, since they sharpen the look at the atmospheric variables of isolated media. One can speak of a relatively artificial island when its position is chosen not in the cosmic void, but on the surface of the earth or sea. In the case of floating artificial islands, the surrounding sea water is displaced by a mass implant: a procedure that can be observed on the occasion of the launching of a ship; also drilling platforms and other constructions supported on pontoons in the open sea fulfill the characteristics of the floating island. The capacity of repression or displacement of water is produced by more or less impermeable walls on board, which separate the inner-island world from the surrounding element. Since ideally watertight structures are not empirically feasible, waterway management facilities, such as ship pumps or filling devices for underwater air chambers, must be provided on floating islands.

Unlike floating islands, in the case of land-based islands, the displacement concerns the air element (to a marginal extent also the *root medium*, i.e. the flora and fauna of the terrain on which they are built). They delimit an enclave from the surrounding air, isolating it in it, and stabilize a permanent atmospheric difference between the inner and outer space.

This formulation could be used as a provisional and vague definition of the house, insofar as it is legitimate to start from the fact that houses, along with their functions as shelter, work space, sleeping space and meeting space, always have an implicit function as climate regulators, especially in the case of stone houses, which provide coolness in summer and warmth in winter. The association between the ideas of house and island is supported by the history of words: from the 2nd century A.D., the Latin *insula* designated, together with its fundamental meaning, the multi-story, isolated tenement house, most often inhabited by the poorest. To illustrate the undifferentiating mechanics of the late functioning of the great city, Spengler quotes a passage from Diodorus referring to "a dethroned Egyptian king who had to settle in Rome in a pitiful tenement house on a high floor."<sup>[279]</sup> In our context it would have to be said that this Egyptian Robinson had been thrown by imperial turbulence onto the beach of a crowded island.

The Roman house-atrio possessed outstanding characteristics as a climate insulator: on the one hand, due to the respiratory and heat-containing effect of the brick walls (whose width, 44.5 centimeters, was fixed by the legal regulations for air-dried bricks); on the other hand, due to the protected location and the ventilating function of the interior courtyards, covered with green (*atria*), and the columned courtyards, in which there were ponds (*compluvia*) that collected rainwater from the roofs (*impluvia*). In the houses of the wealthy, from the 1st century B.C., floor heaters could be found, which through ceramic channels conducted through the floors, and sometimes also through the walls, the hot air produced by an oven installed in the kitchen (hypocaust heating).

Atmospheric terrestrial islands, however, in the strictest sense of the word, they have only been around since the 19th century, when cast iron and glass construction led to the appearance of a completely new type of house: the glass greenhouse. Greenhouses of

are not just any building type of the 19th century. They constitute the most important architectural innovation since antiquity, because with them the construction of houses becomes an explicit climatic construction. One could recognize in them a peaceful prelude to the *aeromotors* unleashed by the gas war, which we have dealt with in detail in our considerations on the atmospheric foundations of the twentieth century.

[280] When glass houses are built, the building is erected with the indoor climate in mind: the visible construction serves primarily, beyond its own aesthetic values, as an envelope for a reformed air, which in turn is prepared as a medium for inhabitants of a special kind. Greenhouses are theme-architectures in which atmospheric facts are thematized, usually special climates for exotic plants.

The beginning of the glass age in architecture means the same as the beginning of the atmospheric age in special ontology. Just as around 1900 Georg Simmel asked, in Kantian expressions, about the formal and cognitive conditions for the possibility of human beings living together (this would today be termed a "post-national" question), so too, from the early 19th century, greenhouse architects sought the practical conditions for the possibility of acclimatization of tropical plants to Central European environments. They discovered the answer in the form of tempered glass buildings, which offered themselves, in a sense, as homes for plant asylum seekers. Naturally, the more heat-dependent plants had not come to Europe of their own volition as asylum seekers, they presented themselves as involuntary guests, as vegetative companions, as it were, to the Indian *homeboys* and turbaned Moorish boys of the colonial idyll, by whom ladies in the rich Northwest had their tea served.

However, the significance of glass architecture far surpasses its initial connection to imperial botany. Above all, the

The phenomenon of the glassed-in houses-of-heat does not refer to the winter gardens of pleasure, princely and grand bourgeois, which, with their temples of flowers and conservatories of pineapples and pineapples, their greenhouses of oranges and grapefruit, go back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Nor does the interest of the lords in season-independent fruits provide a sufficient reason for the excessive love of Europeans for greenhouse culture, however much the director of Louis XIV's kitchen garden, De la Quintinye, was capable of serving the monarch asparagus in December, lettuce in January, and even figs in June.





Superstructure to cover an elm tree at London's *Crystal Palace*, 1851.

In their greenhouses the Europeans began a series of successful experiments on the botanical, climatic and cultural implications of globalization. When in the 19th century the subjects of the tropical *Kingdom of plants* were called to the hothouses of Great Britain, at least a rapprochement on atmospheric matters was at stake on the part of the hosts. From the climatic point of view, the laws of hospitality were respected. Can it not be said that the multicultural society was tested in the greenhouses? When colonial botanists spontaneously gathered in their glass-covered biotopes plants of the most distant provenance, they did know what was due to visitors from the tropics, especially when it came to the queen species of the plant world, the orchids and palms, for whose accommodation the regal constructions under glass buildings, palm houses and orchid houses were, in turn, good enough. It is understood that also for the rest of the high plant nobility, such as camellias, houses of their own were built.

[281]

With regard to these guests a xenophilic climate prevailed even in Germany: when on June 29, 1851 it blossomed for the first time in Germany, in the palm house in Herrenhausen,

A fast-growing palm tree of the *Victoria regia* variety near Hanover was able to make a press release out of the event. The ideas of the air-conditioned artificial island were linked with those of utopian urban planning and orientalism, as, for example, during the construction of the Wilhelma near Stuttgart, begun in 1842, completed in 1853: a fairytale castle of glass and cast iron in Moorish style, in whose complex multiple interior motifs are united, which together produce a sumptuous effect of isolation: here, the engrossing force of the greenhouse landscape forms an exclusive symbiosis with the fascination of the princely pleasure island and with that of the paradisiacal garden.

It is not surprising that architects of glass houses were already tempted to experiment with the constructive potential of the new iron casting technique in the sense of monumentalism: first and foremost, the English greenhouse architect Joseph Paxton, whose *Glass Palace* in London's Hyde Park, built within a short construction period from July 30, 1850 to May 1, 1851, with a length of 563 meters, a width of 124 meters and a height in the central nave of 33 meters, represented by far the largest building space in the world. The owners already indicated that four basilicas like St. Peter's in Rome could fit in the area of this gigantic glass house, and seven cathedrals like St. Paul's in London. It is true that the *Crystal Palace* was not first intended as a conservatory, but as a gallery of a special kind, since a fixed plinth construction was to house the 17,000 exhibitors of the 1851 London World's Fair, together with its 6 million visitors: just in consideration of some tall old elm trees, whose preservation had been a requirement for the building permit in the popular park, it fell to the lot of the World's Fair Palace to also have a certain winter garden feature in its upper aisle.

This feature became the most important one when the *The glass palace* was dismantled at the end of the universal exposition and



was installed again in 1853-1854, in Sydenham, in improved proportions: this time as a *popular-indoor*, botanical and ornithological park, or, as explained in a prospectus by the *Crystal Palace Compagnie*, created to manage it, as a "universal temple" for the "education of the great masses of the people and the ennoblement of the enjoyment of their moments of recreation".

[282] This popular park was technically accessible to the masses by the Brighton Railway; in 1936 a great fire destroyed this much-appreciated but not undisputed building, which critics also admitted was a turning point in the history of architecture. The accounts of early visitors attest that the spatial experience inside the building produced an effect that in the 1960s would have been defined as psychedelic: "That gigantic space had something liberating about it. One felt sheltered in it and yet free. One lost the consciousness of heaviness, of one's own subjection to the body".

[283] Ventilation and aeration were achieved through a system of thousands of

The building was equipped with air valves in the side walls as well as in the roofs. To prevent overheating in the summer, Paxton installed damp canvas on the inner roof; during the other seasons of the year, a hot water heating system, which was dependent on a central heating plant with 27 steam boilers, ensured that the desired temperatures were maintained. It is clear from Paxton's propaganda writings how clear the "contoured outline" motif was before his eyes, even if the concept was still lacking.

That for Paxton it was already a matter of climate simulations and the attempt to introduce into the pavilion distant models of nature, especially the Mediterranean landscapes longed for by the English, is revealed by his project, presented in 1855 and never realized, for the *Great Victorian Way*, which envisaged a six-kilometer glass gallery through London. The project would have enclosed the entire center of the British metropolis with a wide glass ring-boulevard, while larger areas inside the ring would be laid out as artificial open landscapes, which, without

It could only have been done, no doubt, at the cost of sad neighborhoods of blocks of apartments, as happened with the openings carried out by Hausmann in Paris. The non-realization of the project is to be regretted from many points of view, among others, because if it had been put into practice it would have greatly facilitated Walter Benjamin's task of recognizing London, even before Paris, as the capital of the nineteenth century; just as, also, the passages provide less than the greenhouses the key to the "interior" principle,<sup>[284]</sup> of which Benjamin rightly emphasized that Modernity can only be understood in its light.

With its efforts to maintain the climate record of plant immigrants from southern latitudes, biologists, architects, glassmakers and orchid lovers of the 19th century not only became more and more explicitly involved in the practice of artificial climatic islands (the fundamental technical idea of which was already known in antiquity, as demonstrated by a winter garden installation found in Pompeii). They gave birth to a whole technology of cultivation, even more: a principle of space shaping and atmospheric control of space, whose deployment extends throughout the 20th century, to become since the beginning of the 21st century a global question for the way of life. Since the universal climate conferences of Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo, the principle of *atmo-management* has been recognized as a high-ranking *politicum*, however difficult it may be to take enlightened technical-climatic measures against the resistance of traditional rights to *ignorance*, in the sense of Buckminster Fuller (for it is precisely the great political powers that cling - for the time being - to the usual customs in the imperial use of space, resources and climate).

The historical-technical and *eo ipso* historical-cultural significance of glass buildings lies in the fact that with them the familiarization of the greenhouse effect was set in motion. Well known as an empirical phenomenon, for a long time, by landscape engineers and

The theoretical description and pragmatic generalization of winter garden managers began around the turn of the 18th to the 19th century, in a patent application in 1803 by the English architect James Anderson, who wanted to use the principle of the heat trap to build a two-story greenhouse. According to Anderson's plan, during the day the glazed surfaces of the upper floor would retain the sun's heat in the greenhouse air, which at night would be transferred to the cooler lower floor by means of an aeration system he had invented: an ingenious two-chamber system with far-reaching political implications. From then on, the place in the sun would become a question of redistribution of comfort.

Shortly thereafter, Thomas Knight (1811) and George Mackenzie (1815) formulated the theoretical foundations of hemispherical forms of glass architecture, demonstrating that solar irradiation could be optimally utilized for heating the atmosphere of the interior space by means of curved glass surfaces. The greenhouse builder and landscape engineer John Claudius Loudon made use of this as early as 1818 in his *Sketches for Curvilinear Hothouses*, creating one of the first examples of thermodynamically calculated greenhouse architecture with cast iron and curved glass in 1827 with his palm house at Bretton Hall in Yorkshire. In this "total clear space", together with the favorable light conditions, there was a form of solar energy utilization that was very advanced for the English latitude and the glass technology of the time. Dome construction (the reigning discipline of architecture since the days of the Roman Pantheon) received a strong impetus from him. The new materials not only allowed greater amplitudes of light, but also created new relationships between the shape of the dome and the interior covered by it. Loudon's stimuli in the field of hemispherical construction can be traced to the Great Winter Garden at Laeken, near Brussels, completed in 1876.



Greenhouse in the park of Laeken Palace, near Brussels, during construction, 1875.

In the 20th century, things got moving again in this area with the introduction of substitute materials for glass. The new, inexpensive, light-permeable polyethylene and PVC coverings triggered a shift towards intensive greenhouse plant cultivation in the late 1950s. Its most significant worldwide center is in China, which concentrates three-quarters of all greenhouse areas on Earth, 600 000 out of 800 000 hectares in total (according to 1994 statistics), almost exclusively in the form of simple low plastic tunnels, most of them close to large cities, used for intensive vegetable production. Japan, too, for the same reasons and with the same means, has become in a short time a great power in plastic greenhouses, even ahead of Italy and Spain.<sup>[285]</sup> In addition to this, in the United States, where

Numerous new types of greenhouses were tested, pneumatic constructions appeared for the first time, on a smaller scale and without support, of polyester domes reinforced with nylon mesh, which were supported by a slight atmospheric overpressure: a technique that for a time also played an important role in the construction of sports stadiums. Alongside the mostly primitivist innovations of plastic construction, traditional greenhouse cultures, which, as in the Netherlands, are based almost exclusively on glass, appear as noble antiques of old Europe. But whether they are vulgar plastic tubes or elegant glass buildings, the principle of reality is always included in all ships; plants are green capital that exploits the power of growth, supported by thermal and chemical *doping*. *Because of* their unilateral economic objectives and their monoculture installation, most greenhouse crops of this type are monosyllabic, with respect to their population dynamics, and biospherically infracomplex.



View of the roof structure.

This only changed when, due to the development of modern life sciences and basic ecosystem research, interest in concentrating complex biospheric assemblages in experimental sites could emerge. The best known paradigm for such an undertaking is provided by the large *Biosphere 2* project, which was put into operation in September 1991 at Oracle, near Tucson, Arizona, after extensive preparations,

although conceptually confusing, and four years of construction (1987-1991). If one had to characterize *Biosfera 2* in one word, one would have to call it a tribute to artificiality: a capsule-delirium, which goes beyond the normal greenhouse-constructions in many respects. In this case, the glass building is more than a climatic island; it serves as a terrestrial preliminary exercise for the construction of the absolute greenhouse in space. One becomes convinced of this when one realizes that Oracle's experiment is not content with recreating plant worlds in enclosed spaces; rather, it is about radicalizing both the principle of collection and that of isolation in an unusual, perhaps absurd way. Because of its location in one of the warmest areas of the Earth, the paradoxical greenhouse is not oriented, like its companions in mid-latitudes, to the heat-trap effect, which, ordinarily, is used for growth stimulation and as an aid to the elimination of winter; here, with a gigantic investment of electric current, cooling systems must be put into operation to prevent overheating of the installation. The necessary electric current is drawn from a nearby dammed water power plant; this causes annual costs of \$1.5 million. In addition, there is an emergency aggregate which, in the event of a power failure, helps to prevent the interior of the large capsule from becoming an uninhabitable hell for both plants and humans in less than an hour.



Biosphere 2.

*Biosphere 2* is an experiment in isolation and inclusion with a pronounced artwork character, with a strong complement of ideology-exoticism and metaphysics-gea - as befitting the ideas of the *sponsor*, Texan oil billionaire Ed Brass - but at the same time committed to scientific and technological goals. In its architectural design, *Biosfera 2* is a compromise between functionalism and historicism, the latter of which is particularly evident in the two glazed Mayan step pyramids that flank the complex. The beginnings of the enterprise refer to the atmosphere of the New Age philosophy, typical of the West Coast, and of NASA, in which until the 1980s aggressive plans for the colonization of the Moon and the planet Mars operated, so it is not surprising that in the initial phase of *Biosphere 2* the American astronautics administration belonged to its promoters.



In the greenhouse complex, which covers an area of 1.6 hectares, the reason for the intensive isolation is done justice by a large deployment of airtightness technology, starting with double glazing throughout and multiple silicone sealing of the windows, on doors secured with air locks; to this is added a sophisticated system of control of possible cracks in the circulation of water and air. What fundamentally differentiates the hermetic management of *Biosfera 2* from that of other greenhouses is the total control of the *root medium*, i.e. the soil, which in other places is only broken up, adapted and, if necessary, enriched, whereas here it is included in the hermetic construction itself. The entire system is raised on a concrete floor, covered over its entire length with welded, rustproof and corrosion-resistant Alleghanis steel plates, with particular attention being paid to the compactness of the junction of the floor plane and the vertical elements of the glass envelope. Both the glazing and the steel frame structure were designed by Peter Pearce and Associates. Pearce, who was a disciple of Buckminster Fuller, introduced to the company experiences in truss construction on the basis of standardized struts. In *Biosphere 2*, the principle of environmental inversion can be observed twice over, because it not only includes the ground and thus the integral encapsulation of a life world in an enveloping form, but the facility is also divided into a biosphere and a technosphere, so that the biospheric realm is continuously dependent on previous technospheric performances, especially energy supply, closed-circulation water management, atmospheric *management* and countless electronic implants.

As far as the motif of inclusion in *Biosphere 2* is concerned, it is clear that the island is a model world: it was an ambition of its builders to introduce into the pavilion a miniature of the natural biospheric variety, dispensing to a large extent with

The project also included five primary landscape types or biomes: tropical rainforest, savanna, mangrove swamp, sea and desert. To these autonomous living space models were added two living spaces for cultivation, the agricultural and gardening landscape, as well as a citizen colony, represented by a living area of 2,600 square meters for the first eight "biospherians", who from 1991 underwent a two-year experiment of confinement, evaluated as a total failure. From the debacle of the animal and plant biosystems, ants and cockroaches emerged as temporary winners in the struggle for survival.



Lung machine.

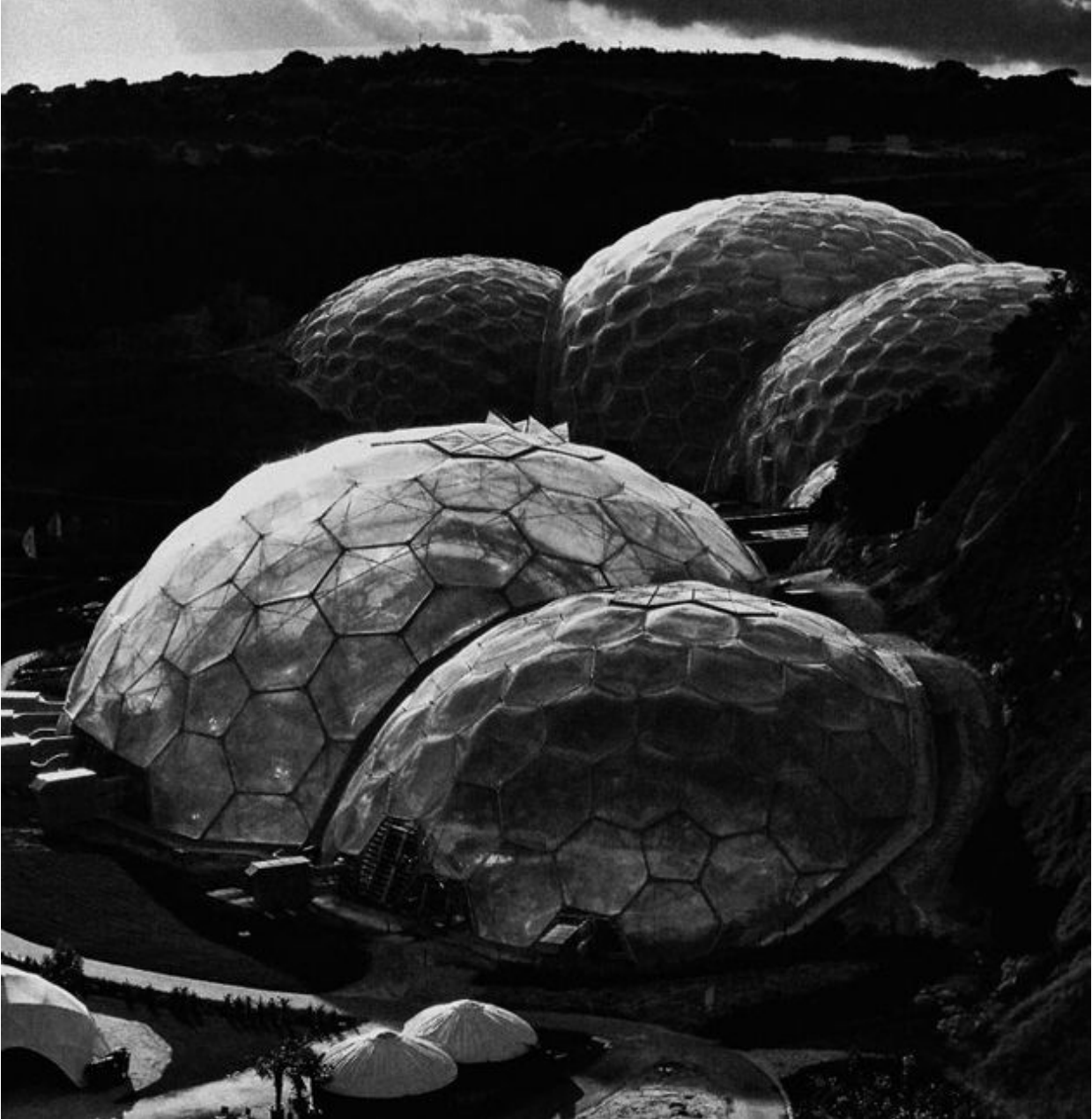
Isolation and inclusion mutually reached a pathetic connection in *Biosphere 2*, especially with regard to the possibilities and necessities of an extraterrestrial repetition of terrestrial living conditions. The motif of seclusion and autonomy could only be taken seriously, down to the last detail

The construction of an autonomous and humanly usable biosphere under the conditions of the spatial vacuum was on the horizon; the relative island had been projected as a preliminary exercise for the construction of an absolute one. The artificial world of life had to give an answer to the question:

"What happens when you put soil, plants, animals, and humans into a glass bottle and close it? Is there a self-regulating mechanism that maintains the life system?"<sup>[286][287][287][288]</sup>

It is clear that with this he was asking about the possibility of a *Life support system*, by which the export of biospheric comfort into the vacuum could begin; no longer as a mere and proven salad machine or orbital mulch board, but as a life-world machine in grand style. If approximately 3800 plant species were brought together in the Arizona bioworld simulator in an attempt at coexistence; if two gigantic mechanical lungs, driven by temperature sensors, of 1.7 million cubic feet in volume (for a total facility volume of 7.2 million cubic feet, equivalent to 204 000 cubic meters) were specially constructed for the management of the supergreenhouse atmosphere; twelve different water systems were implemented in the artificial biosphere, starting with the simulation of a saltwater sea of 250,000 liters volume, through the water-logging floors of the rainforest facility, to the drains, rainwater systems, human sewage and fire-fighting water facilities: all this always happened under the guiding idea of posing a critical case of isolation, as ontologically it can only be imagined in the extraterrestrial vacuum or on an Earth where the natural atmosphere had disappeared or had been made unbreathable by an environmental catastrophe.<sup>[287]</sup> However romantically motivated it may have been in its initial phase, the *Biosphere 2* project bears in its technical calligraphy the traits of an ultra-realistic philosophy of survival in an element not conducive to life. Its internal motto reads: After nature. These ideas could be dispatched

as spawns of a new kind of totalitarianism, which abandons itself to the void, or mock them as a complementary, utopian communism of the capsules, if global, irreversible, hardly governable trends in the dealings of technical civilizations with the terrestrial atmosphere would not allow to recognize that experiments on integral atmospheric and biospheric isolations possess a respectable anticipatory dimension. They have to be understood as an expression of a reasonable concern for the future terrestrial policy of biospheres.



Grimshaw and partner, *Eden Project*, Cornwall 2001.

*Biosphere 2's* experiences with the management of the atmosphere under consistent isolation conditions are not encouraging. Shortly after the entry of the first test equipment, such substantial imbalances appeared in the air composition that the system had to be opened several times and stabilized by external oxygen adduction. The social integration of the greenhouse team also left something to be desired. Under the pressure of the reproach that in the

As this project had confused science with *science fiction*, the decommissioning trials were abandoned after several attempts. New York Columbia University took on the task of developing a new scientific definition of the biosphere as a research laboratory and integrating it into the curricula of its Earth Department in 1996. Because of this semantic change of climate, the surrealist Oracle plantation passed from the vapors of geo-romanticism to the noble emptiness of academicism-USA.

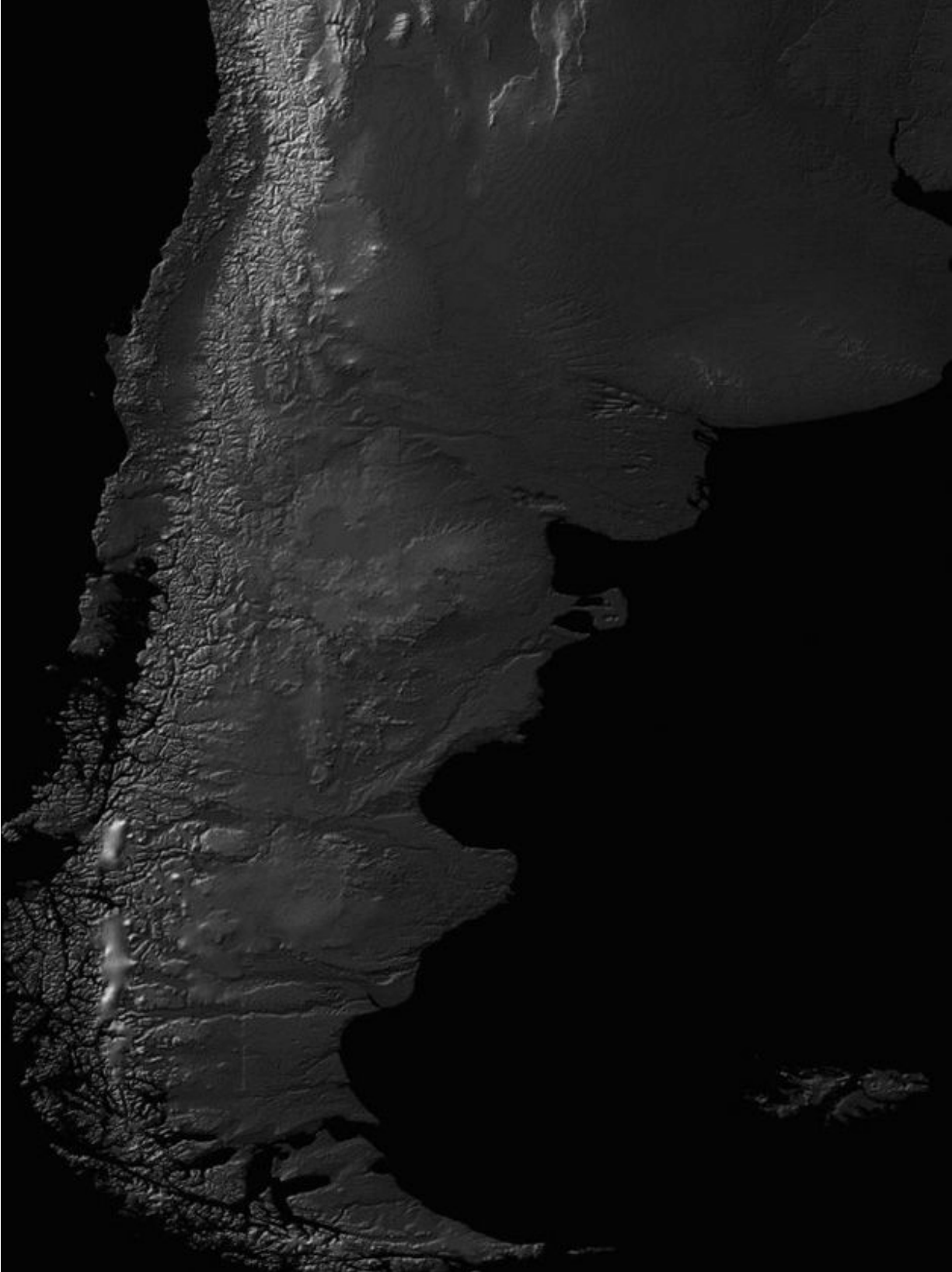
## C. Anthropogenic islands

If in the case of the absolute island the sea is eliminated as an environmental element and replaced by the void, while in the climatic island the atmospheric facts are reformulated, in the anthropogenic island it is the human factors that must be considered as variables. In these configurations it is a matter of understanding how humans become nesiotés or islanders; or, what amounts to the same thing, how island-dwelling living beings become human beings thanks to the unparalleled effect of their isolation. According to the current consensus of paleontologists, the African savanna is the area in which the hominization of an ancient species of arboreal monkey took place; consequently, that region has to be described in such a way that it can be understood as the repressed environment-element of the anthropogenic islands, which made nomadic life there. From this point of view, that grassy steppe appears as the sea from which the anthropoids emerge. Thus, the primary event of protohistory, the genesis of the human being, contains, above all, a topological mystery. In the appearance of the human being, the place has to explain the fact, the scenario of the event provides the key to what happened there.

The human fact emerges from a phenomenon of isolation, in which the role of the isolator remains unclear for now. How was it possible that in the midst of an environment that changed only imperceptibly, such enclaves emerged, full of a special life, which hallucinates, speaks and works? How to think this emergence, this separation, this secession, which leads to the human being? In any case, the demand posed by Deleuze of

that Nesiot, the exemplary islander, continues to maintain the creative impulse of islands and thus becomes pure consciousness of his place, is only realizable in anthropogenic islands; presupposing that we define the collectives of primates, incubators of human beings, as units of an insular type, and that we see in the human beings generated there the vectors of the creative movements that flow, mature and progress in their capacity to think. Moreover, together with the configurations of islands named by Deleuze, by maritime erosion and by terrestrial emergence from the sea, a third dynamic enters into consideration here: the insult by inclusion of groups or by distance-creating self-reclusion.



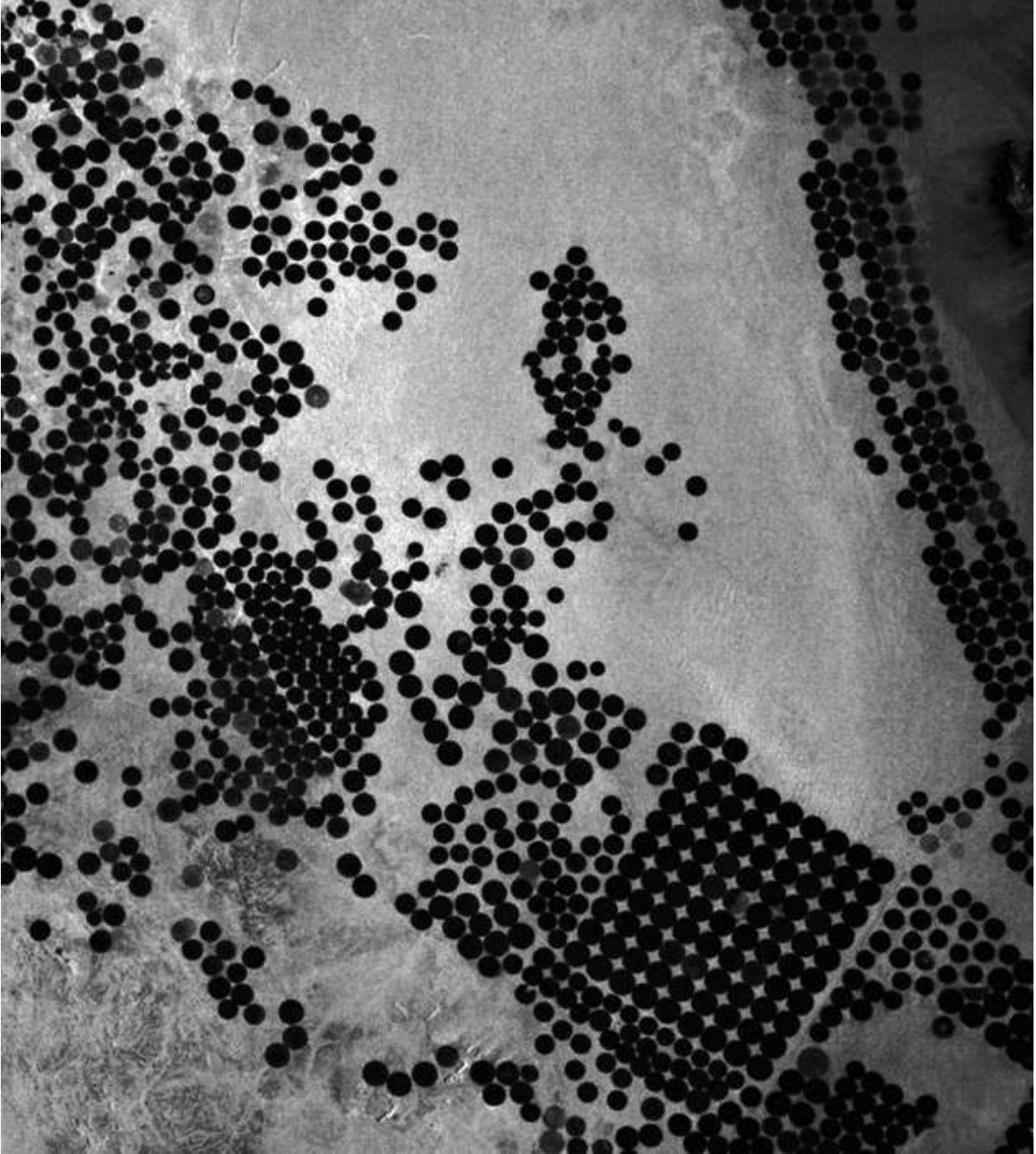


South America and Tierra del Fuego from the perspective of the *Mir* spacecraft.

Our purpose, to derive the human fact from the spontaneous self-inclusion of intelligent islands of unknown type -we will call them the islands of being-, could be considered achieved as soon as it is exposed in sufficient detail when and why the primitive coexistence of hominids with their fellows and with each other produces an effect of self-isolation, which prepares the scenery for the genesis of the human being. The topography of the place of the genesis of the human being will be registered in its exact outlines when it clearly defines how the event is linked to the place where it happens: the capacity of the ontological island to support human beings will then mean the same as the capacity of the nascent human beings to trigger by the mode and manner of their coexistence the ontological event, the world-effect. The inherited inability to be an animal links in this being-alive-in-despite-of-it with the inherited capacity to be-in-the-world. To imagine this presupposes an anthropological fantasy, which, beyond temporal graves, turns us into witnesses of an unprecedented event: it is as if two million years ago the ancient mainland was shaken by a long-lasting tidal wave, as a consequence of which thousands and thousands of anthropotrophic islands emerged: archipelagos composed of wandering hordes of primates, in which inner climates were formed, shaping human beings. From some of these pre-adamic groups developed the later *sapiens* lines in which the present species continues.

In order to understand what happened in the critical period in the African steppes, we have to describe, with extreme schematism but at the same time with minimum detail, what effects that tidal wave produced on pre-human living beings. It is a matter of showing that it was the inhabitants of the savannah themselves who, by their peculiar way of inhabiting space, triggered that convulsion, and how a greenhouse effect was produced as a consequence, with which the self-incubation of *homo sapiens* began. That shock provoked an insecurity that could only be compensated by a new

security: when the time comes, the latter will be designated as culture. If one looks at the dynamics of this insecure security as a whole, one gets the general concept of an immune situation. A proto-architectural adventure begins on the anthropogenic islands: and, indeed, because of the synergy of the animal construction of nests and niches and the hominid functioning in camps, until one distant day the now human requirements of space will have crystallized so extensively that a pressing stimulus to the construction of huts, villages and cities can be derived from them. We start from the thesis that architecture constitutes a late reproduction of spontaneous configurations of space in the group body. Although the human fact is based on a greenhouse effect, anthropic primary greenhouses do not possess, in principle, physical walls and roofs, but, if one could say so, only walls of distance and roofs of solidarity. The human being, the animal that has distance, stands on the savannah: thus he gets the perspective of the horizon. As inhabitants of a new kind of isolation, human beings install themselves in themselves.



Agricultural production areas in Saudi Arabia with water wells in the center, photographed from space.

The anthropogenic islands - as we shall see - are workshops of an unparalleled complex creation of space. The anthropotope arises from the assemblage of a plethora of types of space of specifically human quality, without whose simultaneous openness it would not be

The coexistence of human beings with their fellow human beings and with each other in a common whole is imaginable. The isolating movements of conditioning and installation imply each other by means of multiple reactive couplings, so that the sphere of groups of human beings configures, from the very beginning, a cybernetic space. But here cyberspace is not situated next to the space of the so-called primary and real; rather it is the real and the virtual that are linked to the peculiar "horizon" of reality of the human world. The human island is a space station that envelops us as our first "lifeworld". If in what follows we present a series of snapshots of islands, as if taken from high altitude, we always do so in the awareness that with the incipient repetition of the terrestrial "lifeworld" in the space vacuum a completely new look at the conditions developed in near-Earth space has been achieved. Cosmonautics serves contemporary philosophy as a radicalization of *epoché*. On re-entry into the "world of life" the optics of the theoretical glider registers a whole series of eccentric images.

In a minimally fully developed state the anthroposphere is determinable as a nine-dimensional space.<sup>[288]</sup> To it belong, as world-shaping contributions, each of them indispensable in its case, the following dimensions or *topoi*:

1. the chirotope, which includes the sphere of action of the human hands, the area of what is before them and at their disposal, the environment of action (manual action in the literal sense), in which the primary objective manipulations, the first throws, blows and cuts, the first characteristic effects take place,
2. the phonotope (or logotope), which generates the vocal bell under which convivals hear each other, talk to each other, give each other orders and inspire each other,

3. the uterotope (or hysterotope), which serves for the generalization of the maternal sphere and for the political metaphorization of gravity, and produces a centripetal force, which, even in larger units, will be experienced by those included in them as a feeling of belonging and a common existential fluid,
4. the thermotope, which integrates the group as the original recipient of the benefits of the sharing of household effects, which represent the matrix of all the experiences of comfort and because of which the homeland is sweet,
5. the erototope, which organizes the group as the locus of the primary erotic energies of transference, and puts it under stress as the domain of jealousy,
6. the ergotopo (or phallotopo), in which a paternal or priestly force of definition, with effects on the whole group, generates a *sensus communis*, a *decorum* (a convenience) and a spirit of cooperation, from which common works (*erga, munera*) are formulated, founded on necessity, and different labor functions are distinguished, up to the enrolment of the members in the maximum stress, war, which will be understood as the fundamental work of a community chosen for victory,
7. the alethotope (or mnemotope), by which a learning group constitutes itself as the custodian of its *continuum* of experience and keeps itself in shape as a central repository of truth with its own claim to validity and its own risk of falsification,
8. the thanatotope or theotope (or iconotope), which offers the ancestors, the dead, the spirits and gods of the group a space of revelation or a semiotic keyboard for significant manifestations of the afterlife,
9. the nomotope, which reciprocally links the coexisting ones by common "customs", through work sharing and reciprocal expectations, whereby, through exchange and maintenance of

cooperation, an imaginary tensegrity appears, a social architecture composed of mutual expectations, constraints and resistances, in a word: a first constitution.

## 1. The chirotope - The world at hand

The anthropogenic island is a place of metamorphosis: there the animal hands<sup>[\*\*]</sup> of the preadamites are transformed into human hands. Hominids become chiropractors, who by means of their newly acquired hands establish strange relations with things. Yes, the existence of "things," in the sense of manageable and public objects around us, is already a mundane reflection of the event that one day on the savannah certain islands of apes set out on the road to acquiring hands. Where animal hands remained, living beings as a whole were locked into limited, still animal repertoires of modes of grasping. Grasping with animal hands is only a preliminary step in the configuration of the world. Only when a hand grasps things, finds them manually or arranges them by manipulating them, does the transformation of what is and remains around it into something usable begin. This is, in all its simplicity, the first act of world production; with it begins the self-inclusion of the islanders. It leads to that ecstatic closure, which in twentieth-century philosophy would be called being-in-the-world. Whoever is in the world has tools at hand; where there are tools nearby, the world cannot be far away.

In the analyses of the useful [*Zeug*] in *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger has manifested himself as the first chirotopologist: we understand by such an interpreter of the fact that human beings exist as possessors of hands and not as spirits without limbs. In Heidegger's human being it has attracted the attention of observers that he appears to have no genitals and little sight: both



The more exquisite is his endowment of hands, because the Heideggerian hands know, by an ear imbued by the whisper of restlessness, what to do in each case: from this being-human-all-ears-all-hands he declares *expressis verbis*, for the first time in the history of thought, that the cosmic co-inhabitants of the world in which he lives are *at his hand in* the form of tools. In Heidegger's world, enlightened by restlessness, being-at-hand constitutes a fundamental feature of what surrounds the ex-sistents in their sphere of proximity. A tool is that which is within reach of the intelligent hand, in the chirotope: the tool for throwing, the tool for cutting, the tool for striking, the tool for sewing, the tool for digging, the tool for drilling, the tool for eating and cooking, the tool for sleeping, the tool for clothing. The Heideggerian human being is conscious, with respect to all these things, of what tasks they assign to his hand. What would a ladle be, if it did not give the command to stir; what a hammer, if it did not invite to follow the pattern of action:

"repeatedly hitting the same place"? In such a case, the lucid hand does not make you repeat it twice. In serious cases it is necessary to add the tool to kill, in non-serious cases the tool to play, in case of pacts the tool to give away, in case of accident the tool to bandage, in case of death the tool to bury, in case of wanting to designate something the tool to show, in cases of love the tool to embellish.



Sword blades that are polished by vibration between stones.

Among the tools of the populations in the chirotope there are, above all, three categories that deal with the separation of the human island from the element around it. In the first place we must mention the throwing tool, because it is thanks to its constant use that hominids were able to emancipate themselves a little from the strong pressure of the environment. As soon as the hand, which has become human, attached to an arm of an ancient tree monkey, transformed to meet the needs of the savannah region, learns to pick up objects suitable for throwing, usually stones of the same size or smaller, and to throw them at unwanted encounters or contacts - be they larger animals or strange fellow creatures - it offers hominids for the first time an alternative to avoiding contact by fleeing. As throwers, humans gain their most important ontological competence to date: the ability to *actio in distans*. By throwing, they will be able to take distance from animals. <sup>[289]</sup>

Because of the distance arises the perspective that shelters our projects. All the improbability of human control of reality is concentrated in the gesture of throwing. That is why the chirotope constitutes

the authentic and original field of action, in which the actors usually observe the results of their throws. Here an eye-follower comes into play, which checks what the hands are capable of doing; neurobiologists even claim to have demonstrated an innate capacity of the brain to target fleeing objects. What Heidegger called restlessness objectively designates, in the first place, the attentive uncertainty with which a thrower checks whether his throw is on its way to its target. Target hits and missed launches are practical truth functions, demonstrating that an intention set in the distance can lead to success or failure, with an unclear middle ground for a third value. Both in the case of a successful and a failed launch it is true that the true and the false, the first-born of distance, announce themselves.

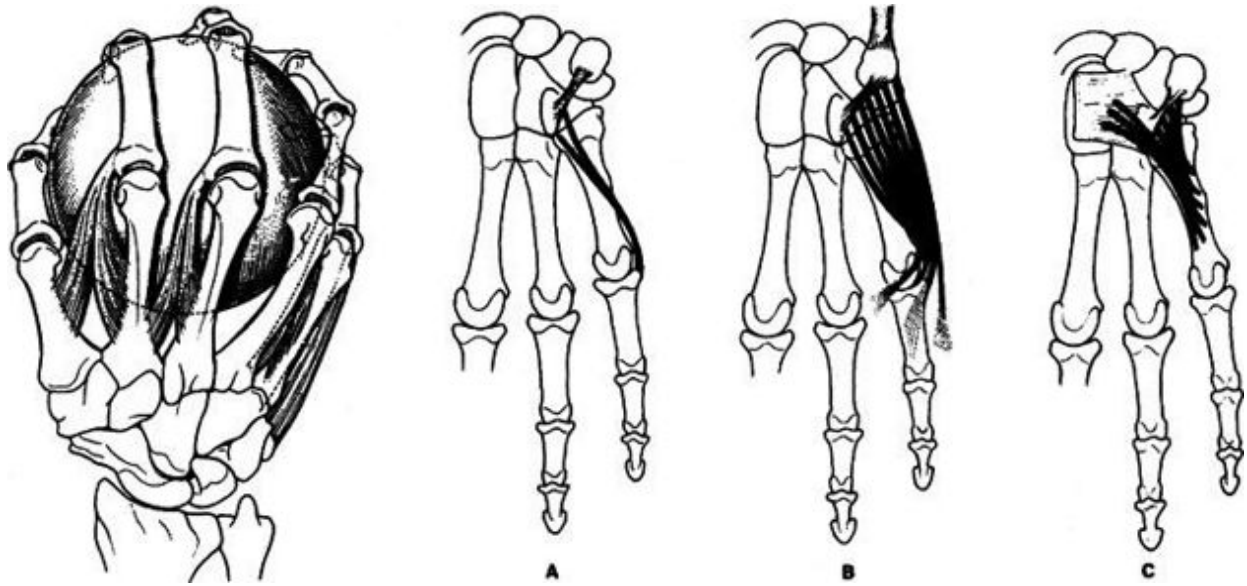
The paleontologist Paul Alsberg already described convincingly in 1922 the distancing effect that extends to many other modes of tool use. In the beginning, distance recognized the possibility, established historically and naturally, of a break with mere natural history; and it was precisely there that he believed he had found the solution to the "human enigma"; and we believe: rightly so. Indeed, insofar as the hominids created between themselves and the environment a sphere in between with weapons and tools of distance, they succeeded in breaking out of the prison of their accommodation to the body.<sup>[290]</sup> The distance animal *homo sapiens* insulates himself insofar as, as a thrower and user of tools, he emancipates himself from the somatic evolutionary pressure. As a result, it can venture into a progressive despecialization (according to some anthropologists: to stop there): a process for which Alsberg proposes the provocative term of *elimination of the body [Körperausschaltung]*. It is certainly impossible to understand the strangely refined (in the eyes of some anthropologists, even desolate and decadent) image of the body of *homo sapiens until one has a more exact idea of this evolutionary event*. The effect of the elimination of the body can be expressed by means of the image that the pre-bodily-

humans retreated behind a wall of distance effects, produced by their own use of throwing implements and tools. Manageable stones provide the material for the first "walls" that were erected by the hominid groups around them, walls, however, that were not built, but thrown. Thanks to the elimination of the body appears a living being that can afford to remain in its pluripotent, unspecialized, long immature and youthful biological endowment throughout its life: and all that because the inevitable adaptation of the body to the pressure of the environment was shifted to the tools.

The meta-utensile culture produces in its totality the effect of an incubator in which a living being can chronically enjoy the privilege of immaturity. Since Julius Kollmann, the biological basis of this effect is called neoteny: remaining in juvenile body forms and modes of behavior until the stage of sexual maturity (a phenomenon observed in numerous animal species, growing up in privileged environments). *Homo sapiens* arises from the synergy of intelligence and comfort. Michel Serres has summarized the anthropological consequences of this long-term evolutionary tendency in the expression *hominiscence*: he interprets the species' mode of being from its permanently adolescent constitution in becoming exploratory.<sup>[291]</sup>

Only two organs obviously do not participate in the elimination of the body (or only paradoxically): the brain, which develops both somatically and functionally at its own discretion, as it surpasses itself in achievements of incalculable complexity, and especially after the discovery of writing, enters into potentially endless processes of maturation and specialization, as does the hand, which, as the brain's closest accomplice, matures into a virtuous polyfacies. The hand is the only organ of the human body that becomes adult through proper education. It is the first and authentic subject of the "formation", as Hegel defined it: "Polishing of particularity,

<sup>292]</sup> To polish the particular means here: to abandon the lack of initial skill and to replace the naive mode of grasping with *savoir toucher*. The hand learns early how to grasp things, and does not cease to learn until the end. This is why the hand enters into action on the front line of reality as an advance guard of the human body, full of touch, eager for contact, capable of carrying, oriented towards success; while all the rest allows itself the luxury of remaining comfortable, protected behind the shield of the utensil, and enters a time of biological reverie, in which the intrauterine preserved in memory coexists with the permanent infantile and juvenile. The maturity of the hand implies "formation" in the dialectical sense of the word, inasmuch as, in each conscious manipulation, a moment of "alienation," of surrender to the object, correlates alternately with a return to itself, that is, to an accompanying sensation of touch. From this "double, active-passive fact" emerges the maturity of the hand as a unit of alienation in the other and return to spontaneity.<sup>[293]</sup> The experienced hand is educated as much by the resistance of the material as by the experience of its surmountability. The hand, inexhaustibly adept at the real, facilitates the luxury of comfort, to which the rest of the body figure of *homo sapiens* tends. Given that the island of human beings is a chirotope, when intelligent hands understand themselves with the useful, the islanders are manipulative realists, at the same time as hothouse creatures given to the luxury of comfort. On the one hand, they prove their efficiency as fighters for survival, armed with utensils, as cooperators conscious of their success, as astute planners; on the other, they are always unarmed inhabitants of nests, trembling ecstasies, adult fetuses, waiting in the night of the world and receiving the visit of the gods.



The ability of the hand to adapt to large, spherical objects.

After the distance effect of the throwing tool, it is necessary to emphasize, in second place, the anthropogenic effect of the striking tool; represented predominantly, also, by manageable stones and hard means, such as wood and horn antler. The hard means are significant because with them begins the use of utensils in the strict sense and *eo ipso* the history of Chirotopia. Where there is a utensil there was once a hand that took it. The hands armed with utensils carry out the first reality test, in order to make the experience of how the hardest material forces to yield to the less hard. The island Chirotopia - of which no Moor has so far reported and which only Heidegger saw protruding in the distance -, as an island of being, is about to rise out of its environment, since it is the scene of the first unveiling operations of being, the productions. To produce means to prophesy things with the hands.



Valie Export, from the humanoid sketchbook, 1974.

When hominids begin to polish stones with stones or to attach stones to handles, their eyes become witnesses of an event, of which there is no example in the old nature: they experience how something becomes a being-there that was never there, that was not there, that was not given: the accomplished utensil, the destructive weapon, the shining ornament, the comprehensible sign. As creatures of successful productions, the utensils provide their creators with the glimpse of a great differentiation: these newcomers to hominid space are the messengers that announce that behind the narrow horizon of the environment there is a space of expectation, through which something new, bearer of luck or misfortune, comes to us; something that one day will be called the world. Because of him, the Chirotopians begin to glimpse that they are islanders, surrounded by the unsettling, visited by the new, provoked by signs. They sense that the steppe, in which

They camp and wander, it represents the universal sea, which hides an excess of unseen, hidden and yet coexisting beings and things worthy of attention. In principle, the inhabitants of the island of utensils only indulge in this presentiment in exceptional situations: when they pass from fear to ecstasy. In their everyday situation they are content with the experience that the chirotope, the environment filled with what is at hand, the camp, the world of proximity, constitutes a quiet, illuminated, available zone, within which everything there is enjoys a gratification of familiarity.

The positive trivialization of what is permanently available will be conceptualized in 20th century anthropology as "downloading" and "realization of the background". A situation is said to be discharged when it transforms a sum of improbabilities into things that are taken for granted, and lays the basis, with it, of what are later called institutions.<sup>[294]</sup> In this sense the chirotope is the mother of routines. The unpredictable and unpredictable, which in principle accompanies production, is normalized by the customs of the creation and handling of utensils in the camp. However, it often happens that a tool becomes untamed and contributes its part to the fact that a chirotopian, for example, raises his hand against his neighbor; then the unconscionable manifests itself in action in the atrocity to which it lends itself. If this atrocity is immediately repudiated by the victims, it must also be rejected by the witnesses, since it is an attack against the peace of the routines. A deadly blow with the help of weapons shows that the availability of the tool cannot be explained entirely by analogy with the domestication of animals; in this category of tool there appear, so to speak, untamed properties of the domesticated matter, aimed at the disruption of domestic peace.

In the chirotopus the hands are socialized. Two hands alone are not enough, neither is one head: all chirotopic facts are constituted both poly-surgically and multi-cerebrally. The



availability to the hand of the tool in the first "lifeworld" is completed by the one-handed-one-anothering of cooperators who bring different manipulations to a common work objective. The anthropologist Peter C. Reynolds speaks in this context of

The characteristic of "heterotechnical cooperation" is that those who create in common anticipate in each case the actions of the others and perform the complementary one, appropriate to the moment. There are numerous tasks which already in the most ancient times can only be performed as polyurgical teamwork, and which presuppose, as multi-voiced scores, four or more hands. In symmetrical cooperations anyone is capable of adopting the role of the other; in heterotechnical ones each one contributes what he knows how to do better than others. Thus the chirotope becomes the matrix of an authentic social intelligence, to whose definition belongs a series of separations and recombinations of discrete operations. In the example of the common elaboration of a simple stone knife by the Australian Aborigines Reynolds arrives at a list of explicit conditions, which have to be fulfilled in order to bring the apparently simple purpose to fruition: "Specialization of tasks, symbolic coordination, complementarity of roles, collective fixation of the objective, logical sequencing of the steps to be taken in the work and one by one assembly of the produced parts."<sup>[295]</sup> According to Reynolds' observations, there is a special significance for the passage from hominids to the human chirotope that is added to the utensils with handles, which he considers as prime examples of the polyolithic object type: not only because with handles the principle of the produced grasp, that is, of the artificial manipulation of the thing itself, becomes a reality, but, even more, because they represent authentic composite utensils, the so-called "polyoliths," manageable combinations of stone with a multiplicity of other materials. Their prototype is the stone hammer or the stone axe, which, as the first cosmic trinities, are composed of a stone, a stick and a clamping element, for which purpose it is possible that the body of the stone is made of a stone.

beating or cutting has been shaped, in turn, using a second stone as a polishing stone.<sup>[296]</sup>

The coexistence of human beings with their fellows and with the other appears in the ancient chirotope as the original (social) synthesis of at least four hands and as the primitive (material) synthesis of at least three objects. Let us retain that the polyolith is the first material proposition, in which a subject, the handhold, is combined with an object, the stone, by means of a copula (the *join* or means of attachment); according to this, the primitive syntax - as the first logical synthesis - would arise from the operative categories, from the universals of the chirotopic maneuvers.

Since human beings in conditions of higher civilizational development are surrounded by artifacts everywhere, they reach a situation in which almost everything they touch is "second-hand": most of what is in their hands was held by others before them and coined the figure in which it is found by later users. In the conditions of the highest possible development of the chirotope, theoreticians will one day come to see that even hands, which have long since ceased to touch each other, can work together. Such a tele-cooperative handwork will be integrated by the multiplicity of eyes of the market. But for hands, hidden from each other, to produce things that make sense in other hands, an invisible hand has to direct from afar. No less than Hegel wrote a laudatory review of the discreet performance of the "*invisible hand*", in which he attested to its cybernetic virtues:

This assemblage, in which one does not believe in principle, because everything seems exposed to the free will of the individual, is, above all, worthy of consideration and bears resemblance to the planetary system...<sup>[297]...</sup>

Finally, the discovery of the sharp edge of stones and bones is important for the chirotopic reality climate. With it begins the history of the culture of cutting and material analysis. When the knife function appears, reason is set in motion as a dividing, portioning, dissecting power. The usual pattern

"cutting" finds in primitive knives its "chronic actualizer."<sup>[298]</sup> They provide the things of the world with the status of divisibilities. With their help the

ancient chirotopians become the living beings who can look inside bodies: they observe another living being, non-human, under the skin, plants in their tissue, fruits in the flesh, stones in the stratified and granulated. Their image of the world is co-conformed by the experience of autopsy, of penetration with one's own eyes into the normally hidden interior of compact bodies. The knives of the primitive chirotopians make death explicit: they dismember its vestige, the animal corpse, thus refuting the appearance of the indivisible totality of the limbs. A living body is a composite thing that has not yet found its analysts, its butchers, its pathologists. The cut creates the connection between quantity and violence, which is always at play wherever the aspect of divisible quantity is brought to the fore. Only with artificial and homogeneous objects, such as pasta or metal coins, do pure quantities come into view, which can be separated or added almost without violence. In the praxis of tearing apart natural bodies appears a first manifestation of what we have called explication in the introductory reflections to this volume: the bringing into evidence of what belongs to the background, or the making present and laying bare what is absent, folded and covered.

The knife-experience is reflected in the first lexicons. If human beings have a word of their own in each case for the beings and things that appear around them, it is because they use knives in their mouths. With their naming violence, they cut into pieces the animal-world, the savannah and its creatures: a procedure that cannot be accomplished without accompanying operative violence and without its permanent results. Each word offers a portion of the world. For a long time the opinion will be held that this will be served at the table the less bleeding the more cuts are made, when putting words, in the flesh of the world, there where it is articulated by itself, as if a supreme *God-trancheur* had previously cut it up, so that, when speaking prudently, human beings admit in their lexicon, in their repertoire of action, in their treasure of knowledge, with a minimum of abuse, the parts foreseen. Thus, the correct language would be the one that follows the cuts made in the existing and always separates where things themselves propose cuts and differences. The genera and species are so important for primitive thinking because they give the impression that in them were the objective portions of the existent; the real differences are perceived as the articulations of the existent. Still in Plato's thought

The old Chinese are convinced that human beings can only keep up correctly with the march of the world if they keep their words in order and preserve the art of true classification. The supreme distinctions follow the

"299] Just as the sacrificial knife butchers the animal in the places foreseen since ancient times, the distribution of the pieces is done according to the group's differences in dignity, rank and role.

## 2. The phonotope - Being within reach of the voice

Whoever reaches the anthropogenic island immediately makes an acoustic experience: the place sounds to its inhabitants. When the surrounding savannah is occasionally silent, the scattered camping sites of hominids and primitive humans seem like oases of noise, in which an exceptional acoustic state reigns. Although this is the most normal situation for their inhabitants. These islands sound constantly to themselves, they constitute *soundscapes* of peculiar character, they are full of the bustle of life of their members, of work noises produced by the handling of their tools and implements, of that murmur that must accompany all our representations. What is most present is the almost incessant sound of voices: of childish voices, which rejoice and whine, of maternal voices, which admonish, console, suggest, of the voices of cooperating men, who encourage, advise and assimilate, of the voices of the elders, who give orders, sentence, threaten, get angry. The primitive human island is an enveloping psychoacoustic bell, like a commercial zone animated by advent music. They configure their sonospheric context by the undulating presence of voices and noises, with which the group is impregnated as a self-receptive unit. It is necessary to remain in it to understand how it sounds, and to remain a long time to assimilate it in one's own existence as an intonation that is diluted in it, like a sonorous unconscious. The island of being is always emitting and receiving acoustically.

Only in the phonotope is the thesis that the medium is the message entirely true. In this space of self-sonorization, in which the permanence in it already includes most of the time the acceptance of its circumstances, the fundamental situation recognized by McLuhan that the reciprocal factual communication in a given medium already integrates the whole content of the communication is valid.<sup>[300]</sup> This fact will be shocking for whoever relates to the phonotope as someone arriving from outside. What many voices have to say to each other in their common language for outside observation is simply reduced to the fact that they have something to say to each other in the common language. What appears from within as information is only communication for external perception; whatever always happens vocally and aurally belongs to the typically group generation of redundancy. The group lives in a sound installation of absolute implicitness; in it, listening to itself is effective as a means of belonging-to-itself. This should not be interpreted as an objection against monotony in archaic groups, but as a reference to the fact that redundancy is the material from which *corporate identities* are composed. A phonotope cannot create any information by itself. It needs all its energy for the repetition of the phrases by which it is maintained in form and flow. In principle, and most of the time, it is not capable of being interested in extraneous tones. The message it sends to itself consists exclusively - to use a radio metaphor - in the tuning of its own program.

How the phonotopic synchronization of the ears is actually achieved can be observed in modern mass society in the example of so-called popular music and in the charts, which in principle only serve the purpose of providing the material for repetitions. One starts with a random piece, which reaches the ear, and, according to the results of the test, the need for an eternal return of the same successful thing is encouraged. The rest is acoustic autosuggestion. Seen from this angle, the modern mass audio culture offers an almost perfect reconstruction of the

primitive phonotope, with the difference that this represented, for the coexistence of human beings with their fellows in a world in gradual loss of security, an evolutionary necessity, an acoustic system of immunity, let us say, that helped the group to remain in the *continuum* of its own intonation, whereas today's auditory populism (quite contrary to McLuhan's paschal expectations) engages in a single regressive exercise, determined to plug the ears of the collective and make them deaf to information, to novelty, to what sounds otherwise.<sup>[301]</sup> How far this goes is shown, together with popular music (which, to speak once again with McLuhan, "turns the community into a single echo chamber"), by women's magazines, which specialize in capturing the so-called inner voices of female readers. They represent an anthropologically informative medium, because they constitute the printed versions of the totalitarian *gossip*. In them the confusion of communication and information is methodically sought; that is why now the non-new always appears as the very new, because the most current examples of the eternal return of the same must be valid as information. This ontology-of-women-in-the-washhouse presupposes, almost in accordance with the truth, that nothing new under the sun is possible. Nothing is yet known here about artificial light and its creatures, the innovations.

One must be careful not to misunderstand the phonotope effect - which unfolds over the group like an acoustic canopy - only as an unintended side effect of the social profile of noise and voice traffic. This canopy, under which the group sounds itself, delimits itself and thus in principle rejects everything else that sounds, serves at the same time as a psychoacoustic stage installation. Thus, to the phonotopic facts are often added demonstrative qualities, or, as Adolf Portmann puts it: a "function of representation and expression."<sup>[302]</sup> The self-tuning of the group is, in a sense, the inversion of the function of male birdsong, which serves for the delimitation of the breeding grounds and for the isolation of the singers in the center of their acoustic enclosure.<sup>[303]</sup> The group's self-tuning is, in a way, the inversion of the function of male birdsong, which serves for the delimitation of the breeding grounds and for the isolation of the singers in the center of their acoustic enclosure.<sup>[303]</sup>

The sonority of human groups has, in addition to its autoplasmic repercussions, a performative dimension, even a concertante and endotheatrical one; individual voices present themselves in it as inonations that intentionally enlarge the circle of collective sound. The representative function of the voice and the amplifying impulse of the producer of uproar are already materialized in primitive noise instruments: here, too, Modernity offers forms of explanation and suggestive equivalents, for example the noise of motorcycles, of which Portmann emphasizes that "it does not mean, without more, for drivers a hardly avoidable evil, but an acoustic manifestation of the driver, a self-amplification of that individual, a maximum enlargement of his individual or group sphere."<sup>[304]</sup> "Society" is the sum of its recitative songs.

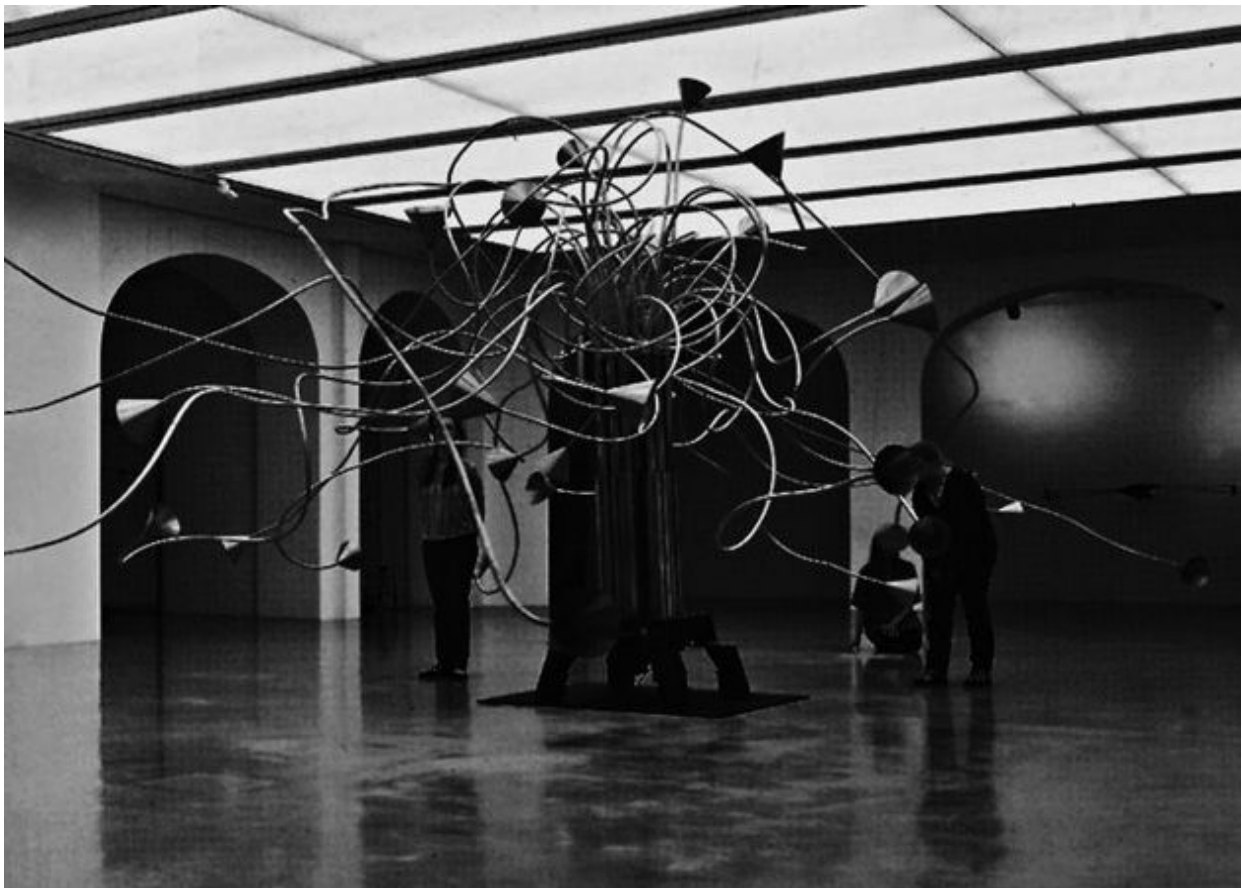


Bedouin homumi in front of the phonograph.

The phonotopic function, understood as self-affirmation of the group by the ear, is related to the promises, with which those who live together agree on their perspectives. In this sense, the sound panorama of the group offers something like an effective report on the situation, or an acoustic dossier.



permanent, with which those gathered manifest themselves as to whether they are in a high tone or in a low tone, or in neither. Evangelios and disangelios are, in the first instance, tonal or chromatic properties of messages. The enthusiastic feeling of being in high pitch expresses a primitive musical state, which does not hide its sense of representation. One could say of it what Nietzsche said of the primitive folk gods: that they represent means of self-indulgence. In them their believers celebrate the reasons for their being above: "One is grateful for oneself: for that one needs a God."<sup>[305]</sup> The immune group is convinced that it has many good things to say about itself; for that it needs a canopy of festive noise overhead.



Rebecca Horn, *The Tree of Turtle Sighs*, 1964.

Against this background, it is understandable why the "invention of the individual" in the so-called great cultures was only made possible by

the introduction of practices of calm and silence. Decisive for this were writing and the subsequent exercise of quiet reading. Individuality, which comes to discover its own imprint, presupposes that individuals can withdraw to islands of tranquility in which they fix their attention on a possible difference between the voices of the collective and the interior voices, among which one finally comes to distinguish itself as its own. The conventual *silentium* works with that difference to recognize the soft voice of God and the loud voice of humans. *In interiore homini habitat veritas*.

[306] St. Augustine insists that, after the caesura of the *silentium*, truth can only be found where things happen smoothly: next to the Platonic garden, the houses of God come into consideration here, above all. Those places blow the isotopic and isochronic bell of noise, under which the primitive group exists, and create a more articulated phonotope, with asynchronous profiles of noise and unequal distributions of noise and silence. There is no inner human being before he has been demarcated by books, convent cells, deserts and solitudes; only after the human being himself has become a cell or *camera silens* can reason with its soft voice dwell in him. There can be no reasonable self without acoustic isolation. Husserl's *epoché* still connects with that cultivation of withdrawal from group noise into one's own head. What phenomenologists call the bracketing of the naive attitude to life is, in fact, an active vacation from the prejudices and gesticulations that cause things to happen inside with as much noise as outside. What else is a firm conviction but a strong inner voice, firmly trained? Philosophical meditation reduces this doxic cry in me to silence. *Homo silens* is the custodian of psychic de-automatization.



Low-reflection (soundproof) space at the Fraunhofer-Institut für Bauphysik, Stuttgart.

The most important additional consequence of the *silentium-effect* is the separation of the public and the private. This differentiation, which served as a conceptual guiding pair for traditional political sciences, must be referred first of all to an internal modification of the phonotope, insofar as it distinguishes situations determined by familiar noises from others in which collective noises predominate. The private appears in this context as a

The space is an enclave of soft communications, free from the noise of the group, if not as a space of stillness and silence, even, in which individuals recover from the stress of the *sound of the collective*.

Its archetype appears in the monologue, such as the one that the 19th century poet, tired of human beings, keeps with himself in his nocturnal garret, realizing *at one o'clock in the morning* that the "tyranny of human faces,"<sup>[307]</sup> like the despotism of human voices, has disappeared, if only for a few hours. In general it is true: what is said *privatim* has to remain among us, no matter how much the first citizen *medium*, the *gossip*, insists on bringing to the squares what is said in a soft voice. In fact, gossip - a form of dictatorship of the collective - has the task of lessening the burden of secrecy of the private spheres in the public space. It is the pursuit of the murmur of the group with citizen means.

The antisocial tendency of individualism manifests itself in the desire to prolong the year-round vacation from noise. Conversely, the totalitarian tendency of groups never expresses itself so characteristically as in moments when it forces reluctant individuals to participate in singing. Nevertheless, the unfolded phonotope procures the play space for the concrete freedom of music. In its musical moments, listeners discover reasons for their coexistence beyond the group noise. Free music makes no promises that it cannot keep itself in its own sounding.<sup>[308]</sup> It has meanwhile individually educated the ear to such an extent that it is already capable of arbitrarily understanding any sonospheric situation as an acoustic installation.<sup>[309]</sup> [The music of the phonotope is a sound installation.](#)

That the public represents a modification of the phonotope is shown in European antiquity not only in the invention of the tragic theater, with its resonant choruses and masks, but also in the cultivation of public harangues, which serve to form the will in popular gatherings. What will later be called politics is, in principle, only a cultural form of speaking aloud: with the aim of bringing the body of the group, through the ear, by means of a penetrating individual voice, to the state of mind of the people.

either expressively in line with the *communis opinio*, which is expressed aloud in the speaker's report, or persuasively in order to change the mood of an assembled mass and move it away from its original disposition. It was Plato who first created in his *Republic* a type of politician, who was to act not only as a loudspeaker, but also as a receiver of soft, non-noisy ideas: with little success, as is well known, because the appearance of the non-noisy politician has not appeared until today. This would be a *contradictio in adiecto*, because politics, as the art of the possible in noise, is subordinated to the noisy side of the phonotope.

### 3. The uterotope - Caverns-us, incubators of the world

It would not be easy to say how long one has to have lived on the island to realize that the place has a secret. Is it the elders who protect it, or the sorcerers? Is it in the hands of the wise women? Do the rhapsodes have privileged access to it?

Or is it the logically unborn, the schizophrenic, who are closest to it? Although we do not want to talk about gynecological trivia, it is advisable to pay attention to female presences, if one wants to understand how the enclave comes to be formed. It seems that the secret of the island is a secret of space and a secret of women at the same time. Those who want to discover it must follow their nose for the particularities of femininity. *Odore di donna*: a secret of the kitchen, a connivance with the moon? Is the realm of women an extended home, a home from which promising fragrances emanate, an aromasphere in which those who pry into the food lift the lid of the same grills and pots? Or is one closer to the secret of the island when a young woman passes by, wrapped in her aura of pheromones, in her *promesse de bonheur* biologique? There is no point in soliciting information from the islanders, since they are products of the island's mystery, or at best its lyricists, not its explorers. Naturally they would agree that without the women, the mothers, nothing in their lives would work, if only because they take care of the young children and because they constitute half the sky, half the bed. From the point of view of the contributions of the feminine to the emergency

of the human island and its interior conformation, answers at this level are sterile.

Progress is only made in this matter if the concepts of woman and space are introduced in an unaccustomed biological and topological vision; it is then a matter of speaking of the female body, especially the maternal one, in geometrical or theoretical expressions with respect to the place of encampment. This change of perspective takes into account the fact that through the evolutionary acquisitions of the mammalian biogram, a radically new type of mother-animals came into existence: characterized by the "revolutionary" conquest of the female ventral space as an inward egg-laying zone. Thus a historically and naturally unique topological reality appears, insofar as the mother's body now becomes the ecological niche of the offspring. Through the internalization of the egg, the risk of laying in external nests is reduced and replaced by the internal risk of incubation, as well as by the new risk of parturition.<sup>[310]</sup> The success story of mammals shows that this transaction was advantageous. It resulted not only in new integral mother-animals, which harbor in themselves congeneric parasites, but also in new types of offspring, which grow up in the world with a higher bonding value and a sharper risk of separation.

The British psychoanalyst and evolutionary biologist John Bowlby has conceptualized the risk psychology of becoming human with his specifically hominid "evolutionary accommodation to the environment" scheme. He succeeded in showing to what extent the early stages of hominid and human existence depend, by their psychobiological design, on a close mother-child symbiosis. In Bowlby's concept of *attachment* crystallizes a broad understanding of the luxurious and vulnerable idiosyncrasy of the human dyad, as it has developed since the Pleistocene on hominid premises:<sup>[311]</sup> an understanding from which can be deduced, at the same time, an explanation of the increasing risk of psychosis and helplessness of the children of humans in large cultures and, even more so, in hominid societies.

<sup>312]</sup> If Hegel noted in his lessons on anthropology that the mother is "the *genius* of the child,"<sup>[313]</sup> it remains to be added, from the biotopological point of view, that the mother is the child's situation or, in Bowlby's expression: its environment of evolutionary accommodation.

To speak of the "mother" implies in human beings an *analysis situs*, because with the use of the expression one is obliged to say in which situation the child finds itself with respect to her: either *still* inside or *already* outside or, in a certain sense (but in which one?), in both situations at the same time. This refers to the fact that because of the internalization of ovulation and fetal development *in utero*, a new type of event has occurred: birth. As a consequence of the turning inward there is the proto-drama of the exit, a first coercion and aptitude to leave the maternal body, an early fatality in the choice of the path that leads outside, to the so-called freedom or to the open air. The fact of birth, like the *matrix* of all radical changes of place and situation, will produce unforeseeable consequences.

From here a characteristic of the anthropogenic island can be determined: it has to be the place where a change in the meaning of birth takes place. In the evolution of the sapients this has to become a biological event of metabiological meaning. It is clear that becoming mammals is not enough to reach the place of the human being. Mammals are born, human beings come into the world. The island of being provides the stimulating climate in which the being-born rises to come-into-the-world.

For the connoisseur of 20th century philosophy, it will be clear that here we are making use of the Heideggerian differentiation between the way of being of animals, fixed to the environment, and the ecstatic essence of the human being, configuring the world. The philosopher was not interested in how this difference should be thought, since he considered anthropological and genetic questions to be pre-philosophical, inferior, dogmatic. In



reality -like we try show from for some time ago-  
[314] the thought of Heidegger demands

precisely anthropological "substantialization", should the expression be appropriate, and we assert that this requirement is only satisfied by placing on launching a analysis of the difference topological difference, established with the human existence, as being-being-originating from somewhere. What is born only experiences, in the first place, the change from one element-environment to another: this is a lot, but it does not change anything in the definition of animal life. The birth of the mammal can always be compared to a transit from life in the water to being-there on land and in the air, as if every descendant in the mammalian line has to remake on its ownbecoming the original exodus from the sea and the acquisition of the land mode of being. But from a birth only emerges a coming-to-world when the environment in which the newcomer appears has become a world: a set or totality of things, which is the case. We will not expound here what what means philosophically the world; from a situational-theoretical point of view, it remains to be said that the world the position fundamental position designated as being-in-the-world means being-outside. Heidegger hinted at it with an ontologically discolored concept of ecstasy as being-being-being-in-circumstances. Whoever ex-sists stands outside in something, where, in principle, he cannot feel himself to be. In the case of human beings, the ontological eccentrics, being outside precedes dwelling in oneself; although the harshness of this diagnosis is lessened, as a rule, by the protective force of spherical alliances. When speaking of situations *in the world*, there can be no doubt about the priority of exteriority over any kind of dwelling, inclusion, envelopment and installation that fits oneself. Therefore, any theory of the elemental situation is also an interpretation of the primary trauma: that there is more exterior space than can be possessed, configured, abstracted or denied. Because this is so, beings human beings are condemned to indoor production.



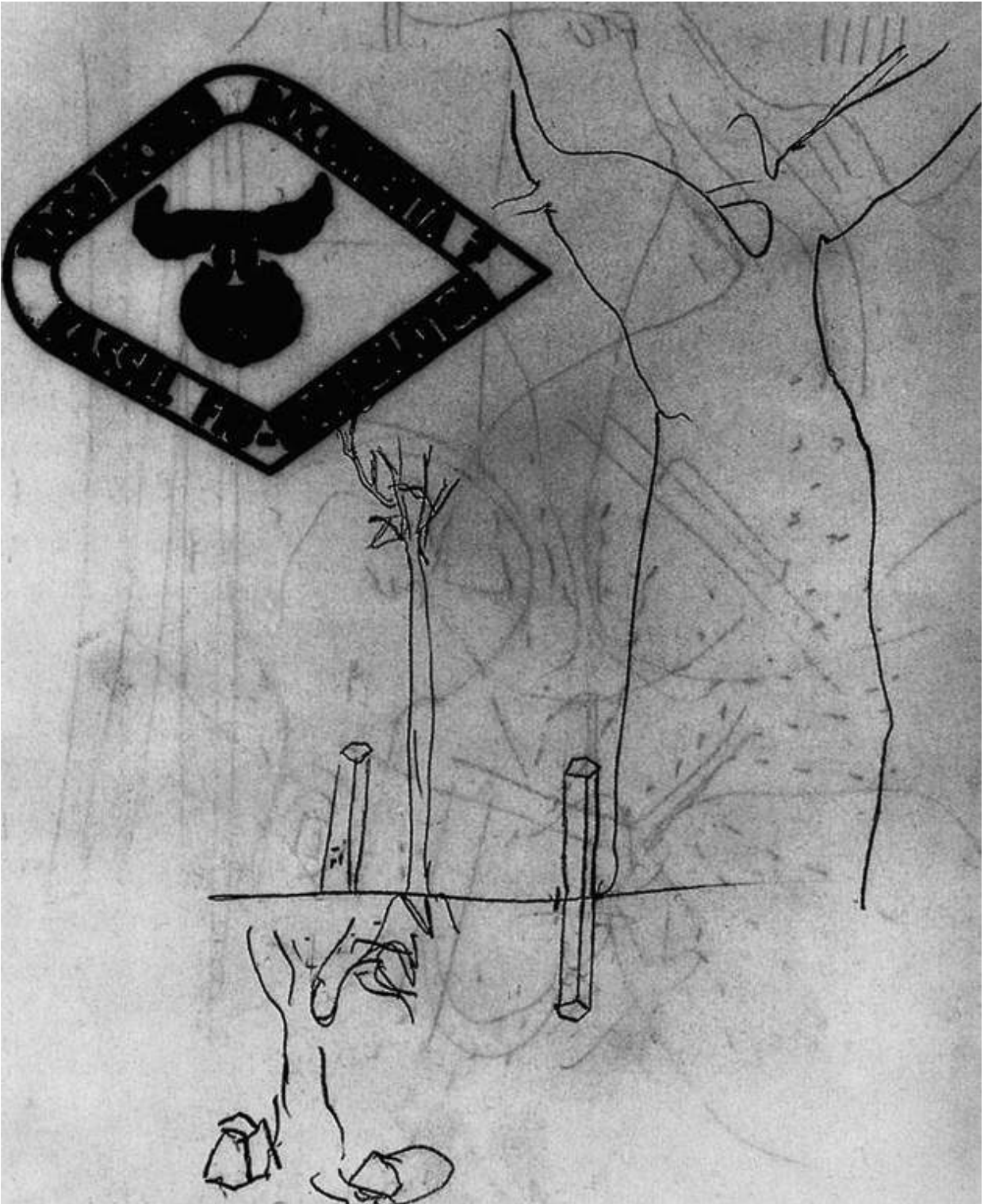
Jan van Neck, *Dr. Ruysch's Anatomy Lesson*.

If one agrees with this, one can venture the attempt to formulate theoretically-spatially the secret of the island. To be on the island now means: to be able to make use of the possibility of transferring inner situations. Transfers of this kind are possible when a real situation is reached on the outside that can serve as an envelope or receptacle for the repetition of interiority in another place. The phenomenon of transference (which was discovered by the

magologists and fascinologists of the Renaissance, radicalized by the magnetizers, and interpreted neuro-hermeneutically, as well as used as a *medium* of the therapeutic situation by the psychoanalysis of the 20th century) arises from an effect of inertia, triggered by the preponderance of past impressions over present perceptions. It presupposes for its development strong scenic differences between then and now. If these occur, as happens, for example, after relocations or evictions, remarriages or emigrations, the phenomenon of the repetition of the old scene in the new one can be reached: a phenomenon that in the usual psychological theories is described as projection of affects. It is not difficult in our context to rewrite transference as a reproduction of situations, emphasizing the fact that proto-transference takes place as a repetitive reproduction of an inner state in an outer situation. From this point of view, the paradigm of astronautics is informative, since it explicitly shows in a vacuum what human beings have always done in the terrestrial "world of life". The secret of the insularization of the human sphere consists in the fact that the co-existent in coproductive transference arrange a common interior in a common exterior. It remains to be considered that the transfers have, in principle, a collective character and only become individualized later, depending on means, language games and forms of inhabiting that reinforce the effect of privatization.

The communal work that leads to the creation of islands is carried out in such a way that those who live in common create from a shared scenic background of interior situations and reproduce them in a different exterior. This is how a strongly coherent group becomes a uterotope, that is, a staged metaphor of the mother's body. On a first reading, this is interpreted as a phantasm of kinship: as with the dogma that, as members of a nation, we are also children of the same mother. Let's not forget that Plato, at his most

In a sincere reading, when he makes Socrates expound the doctrine of the necessity of the noble lie, he wanted to take advantage of the uterotopic effect: what could he say to the discontented members of the city divided into classes, but that all citizens are offspring of the mother earth, which, together with children of gold, gave birth to children of silver and bronze, with the hope, perhaps legitimate in mothers, that their descendants would manage peacefully among themselves, in fraternal harmony and pity for the deep common past?<sup>[315]</sup> In a second reading, the concept uterotope designates a ghost-space, historically influential, which suggests that, as long as we remain territorialized in our own group, we will be the privileged creatures of the same cave: protosolidary beneficiaries of the same fetal state in the common womb of the group. The "depth" of a group corresponds to the very character of its collective function of Nirvana: its members converge in an imaginary common unreality or pre-reality, from which they are sent to the real: as carnal brothers, sharing a cavern secret, a celestial doom. The uterotopic *communio* is articulated both in primitive totemic alliances and in countless examples of magical and sacred confederation of the highest rank, until reaching that *communio sanctorum*, which in its totality is intended to constitute the bosom of Mother Church. When contemporary philosophers of religion occasionally express the opinion that "humanity" represents "at its deepest level a religious magnitude,"<sup>[316]</sup> they are making use of the possibility of transfiguring the entire species into an adamic uterotope.



Joseph Beuys, *7000 oak trees*, 1982.

Anyone seeking to find an interpretation for the tenacity of the feeling of belonging to ethical groups (including their chronic

The political form of the impossibility of becoming an adult should not forget to analyze the mode of construction of the uterotopes. They constitute the political form of the impossibility of becoming an adult. The uterotopic synthesis signifies the predestination of human beings to a common origin of an incomparable cavern (and the common fixation in it). The utopian synthesis, on the contrary, thinks of the predestination of human beings to a common path to an incomparable promised land. Uterotopia and utopia reflect each other as elitism of the origin and elitism of the future. They represent the two sources of manic consciousness; and *eo ipso* the two deepest motives of de-solidarization of the destinies of others. With this difference before our eyes, we understand that, unlike Marx and Engels, all history is a history of struggles between groups of the elect. To see this means to understand the reason why since the decline of martial cultures a double world war has been going on: a first-order war between various communities of choice for the origin; a second-order war between communities of choice for the origin and communities of choice for the future.<sup>[317]</sup> What was hitherto regarded as a choice between war and peace was, in most cases, in truth a choice between the first and the second war. It is not clear that there can be a third form of war. If there is, its front would be placed between the chosen and the non-chosen. Experience tells us that the latter recoil from solemn displays. They are content to contemplate the intrigues of the elect until their self-destruction is a fait accompli.<sup>[318]</sup>



Eva Hesse, *Untitled (Rope Piece)*, 1970, courtesy of The Estate of Eva Hesse, Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich. Photo: Paulus Leeser.

## 4. The thermotrope - The comfort space

The Romans invented the art of preventing chatter, while summarizing the presumed result in four words. Example: *ubi bene ibi patria*. In relation to our subject this means to explain once and for all the widespread inclination of human beings to prefer the homeland, deducing the homeland-effect from the feeling of well-being in one's own place. Ecumenical enlightenment, Roman style. Thus the connection between homeland and feeling-good becomes reversible. If you are in the homeland, you are doing well; if you are not doing well, you are not at home. If the homeland does not procure the *bene vivere*, it does not deserve its name; consequently, one can and must try other possibilities, either as an emigrant or as a destroyer of domestic conditions. In a speech of November 29, 1792 Saint-Just will explain: "A people that is not happy has no fatherland". Since then, the damned vernaculars of this land are on their way somewhere where they are happier. If the strength to break with the bad situation is lacking, the infamous vitiated-air-effect arises: fidelity to the misery that has engendered us. The genius of Martin Walser found the key expression for this: "A family is an alliance of misery. Such a thing is never abandoned."<sup>[319]</sup> The fundamental right to freedom of residence, formulated only in recent times, implies productive infidelity to the unhappiness of one's own condition. Human beings are not at home in a land or a country, but in comfort.

One of the reasons for living in isolation in groups is how a successful group procures and internally distributes a gain in well-being. However, it is only belatedly that we become aware of the fact that



that gain is not so much the effect of the place where the distribution takes place, as it is the effect of the distribution that makes us value the place. In the meantime we have to listen to many absurdities: who speak of beloved nations, of patriotic fields to be soaked with the impure blood of strangers, of the nomos of the earth, of the right of peoples to their own State and of the tree of freedom to be watered in each generation with the blood of patriots. Could not someone be a patriot who introduces confusion and disorder into the reasons for attachment to one's own place?

The most visible sign of the advantage of feeling at home in the group is the hearth, the place where fire is made; as the most ancient symbol of humanity, it is the clearest reference to the fact that human beings do not get along without a comforting element. The communally fed fire encapsulates the experience that there are natural protectors that bring advantages as long as they are carefully kept in sight. The power of fire is beneficial, assuming that the fire guard does not go to sleep. Handling fire involves an activity that lies exactly on the borderline between magic and work. This difference, at the beginning almost parity, is leaning in the course of the history of civilization towards the side of work, without the magic pole ever being able to be diluted. If in human action everything is regulated by equations between actions and their effects, it is evident that it is a question of work. The latter follows the path towards the result with as much rectitude as it understands the rules of its trade. It is true that what is called work is very often only a sterile pastime for a majority of "sorcerers in reverse," who master the art "of making little of much."<sup>[320]</sup> Was Nietzsche aware that he was thereby defining public service? As far as magic is concerned, it produces the opposite effect: the bewildering overabundance of effects as opposed to actions. Although it is not properly known how the art of magic (*zaubern*, in Germanic, Old English: to paint red) works, it seems to carry further than mere work could. Magic comes into play, in the form of genuine causal added value, when the success of certain

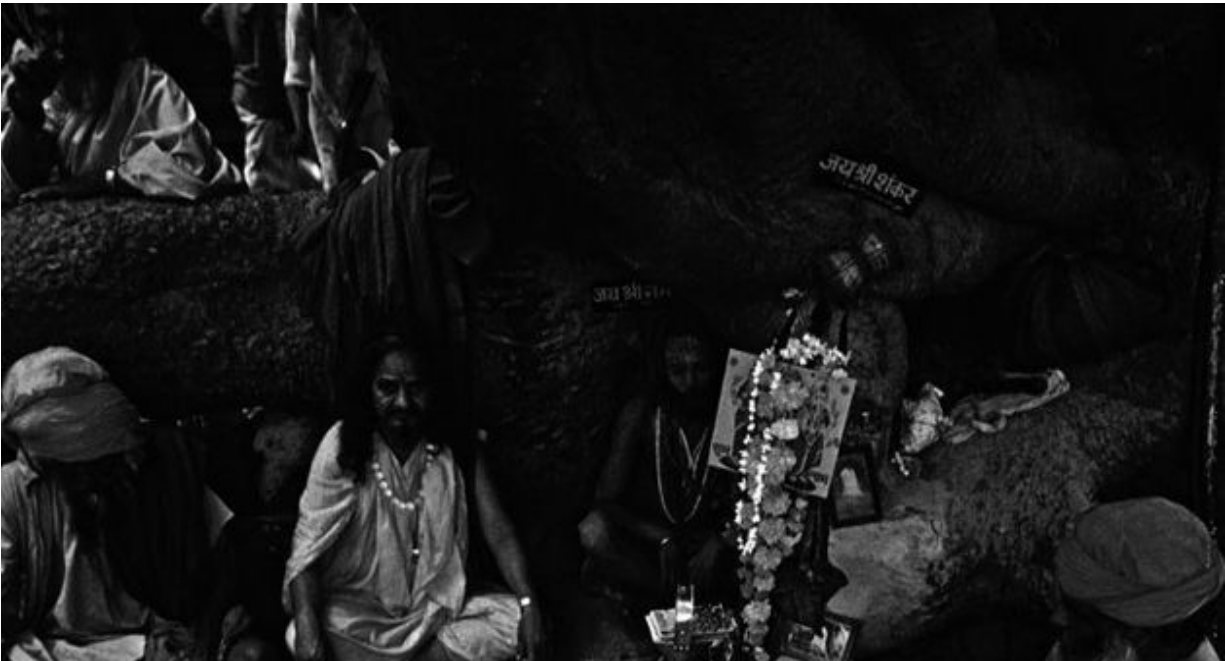
operations achieves the extraordinary. That is why magic is not always deception; the world itself encourages magical approaches to many situations in it, because it provides the experience that from time to time you get more than you set out to do. This is what the very old concepts of luck and power are all about. In the Antiquity, that plus that is noticed in case of very evident, amazing success, becomes visible in the figure of astute gods, powerful craftsmen, specialized in special effects (type Zeus, Hephaestus, Hermes), with whom, understandably, it is tried to establish alliances.

The most ancient form of this allied fortune is the hearth fire, in which the women work and which is kept by the priests. Two types of personnel, double promise of happiness. Fire is a household god with wide connections, and a household soul of sensitive presence. Since it has acclimatized as a bringer of advantages among human beings, the pyrogenetic myths refer its presence to a gift from the gods or the Titans to mortals: a gift, which becomes a permanent possession of those to whom it is given and which allows them entry into the cultural condition. Here appears for the first time the concept of "help for self-help". In the context of ancient Europe, Prometheus is the titan with the symptom of helper, the exemplary *sponsor* and friend of human beings. The one who delivers the fire

"pantotechnician" (*pyros pantechnos*)<sup>[321]</sup> becomes patron of kitchens, promoter of alchemy, enabler of ceramics and metallurgy, departer of comfort and advocate of the redistribution of light and comfort, in a word: the true titan of culture and, by virtue of these properties, the most distinguished saint in the calendar of enlightenment. As the facilitator of life and first giver of powers, as philanthropist and cause of rebellion against the idiocy of resignation to circumstances, he is the mythical protector of the thermotope.

With this expression, therefore, one does not think only of the area, in which those who belong to the groups feel the heat advantage.

The immediate fire: a motif, moreover, that could only gain weight in the post-African phase of cultural evolution, after the expansion of mankind into regions with markedly differentiated seasons and longer winters. It designates, at the same time, the circle, in which the advantages of everyday magic become evident. The inhabitants of the island Chirotopia are by nature thermotopians, as there is a synergy between what the hands achieve and the overvalue added by the homes. The thermotope is a space, in which, by continuous confirmations, expectations of success are worth; that space constitutes the primary sphere of comfort from very archaic early times, although only from the time of developed civilizations, such as that of the Romans, the cult of public fortune goes together with the cult of households. Where this happened most obviously is in the establishment of the household of the state in the temple of Vesta in the *forum romanum*, whose task it was to give proof of the unity of household and state (or of house and empire).<sup>[322]</sup> From it radiates the gospel of immunity, of *integrum*, to the periphery. The primary symbol with which the Roman Empire was presented was a domestic thermotope, taken to universal format, in which home and universe, island and continent, were to become one and the same thing.





The Nagas stay by the sacred fire for the duration of the kumba-mela, for up to two days. months.

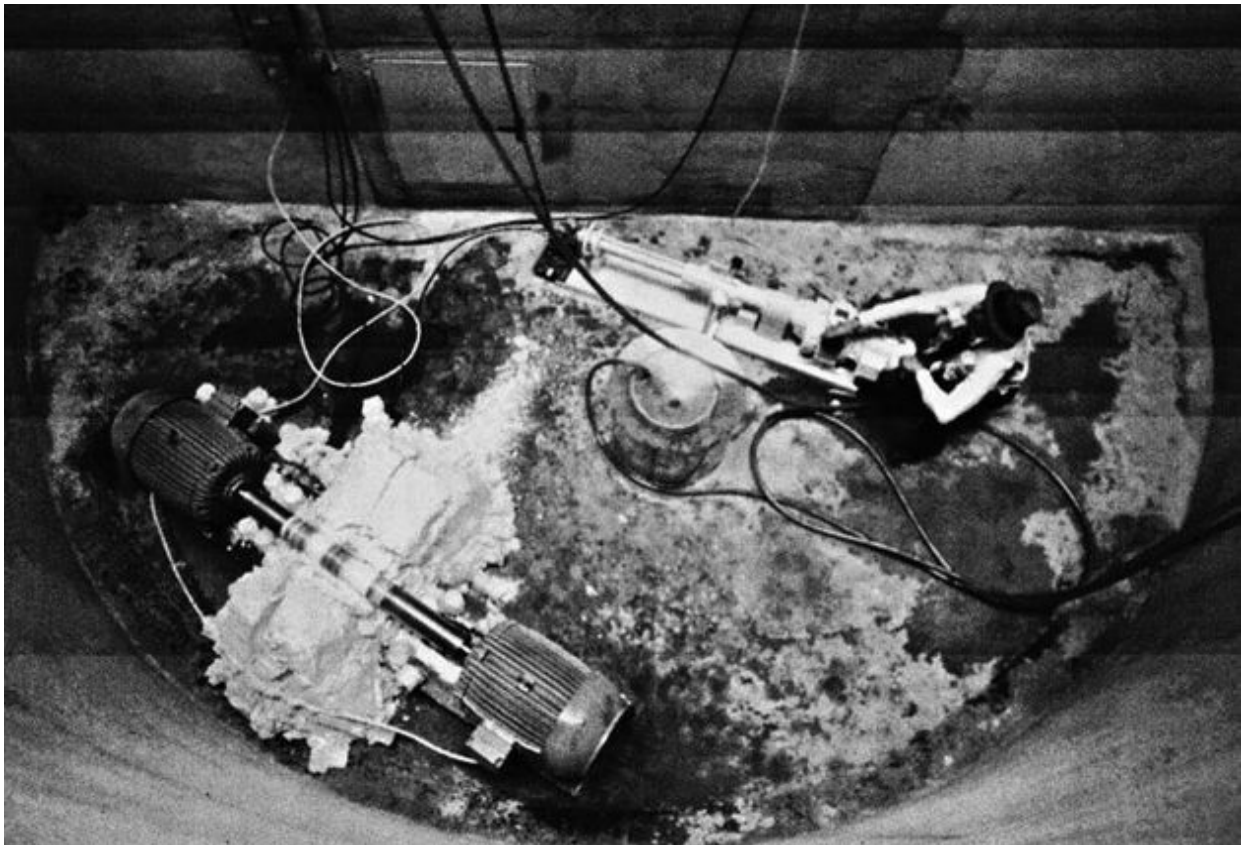
While Roman jurists and culture creators have politically generalized thermotopia, Indian Brahmins were interested in its hypostatization. According to them, the whole context of the world is to be understood as the change of form of fire. The profound effects of Brahmanic thought derive from the fact that it is sure of its pyrotechnical competence in the consummation of sacrifices to fire, and because from this strictly delimited circle it derives multiple metaphorizations. Just as the Roman Empire is summed up in a few

<sup>323]</sup> Its ultimate concreteness is reached in the figure of the renouncer, the *sannyasin*, who no longer makes sacrifices before external fires, but consumes his entire existence in a mental fire: the flame of Veda. That is why the renouncer no longer takes part in daily firings, offerings of fire and cremations; his corpse is no longer inhumed in the fire, like that of the spiritually untanned, it is buried because it would seem inopportune to burn again externally one who is already burned internally. In the absolute thermotope, not only are the advantages of a life in the proximity of the home shared out; a ritual competition is established for the advantage of all advantages: to become one, to unify oneself, with the home of being.

In other cases, thermotopic advantages are profanely defined. In stratified societies, the egalitarian gathering around the fire translates into the attraction for possessive advantages, all of them related to a place of preference. Then the exclusive features of the advantageous space appear with a crude profile: what in a smaller format creates inclusive solidarity, acts desolidarizing in a larger one. Advantages are precisely what there is not enough of for everyone. Other fires, other destinations.

"Warmth," writes Gaston Bachelard, "is a good, a possession. It must be jealously guarded and can only be made a gift of to chosen beings."<sup>[324]</sup> To be able to ensure the context of well-being of his own is what distinguishes the patron, the great lord. Within the scope of the advantageous space that he takes care of, those who depend on him feel that it is in their own interest to keep his secret; for this reason, all the groups that closely maintain the privilege of belonging bear one and the same name, never expressible: *cosa nostra*. If insular societies are understood as spaces for the distribution of advantages of uncertain origin, they formally have a mafia substratum: this is true even for a democratic world power like the United States, whose level of well-being is based not only on the achievements of its own economy, but also on its own economic performance.

325] When comfort has already established itself as customary, one does not ask where it comes from. The mysteries of redistribution are profound, and the graced cling to them, even if they already suspect that *ce n'est pas catholique*. Just as countless citizens and institutions accustomed to subsidies, from the bankrupt city of Berlin, do not want to find out in 2004 where the sums of money they are willing to continue to spend without earning them might come from, numerous citizens of the Gulf emirates are not interested in the solution of the enigma of how it is possible that they receive from the reigning sheikhs such high salaries for staying away from any salaried activity.



Joseph Beuys, *The Honey Bomb*, documenta VI, 1977.

Thus, it was not entirely correct to say that all history is the history of struggles between groups of the elect; it is also, by the same token, the history of struggles between groups of welfare.

If we are looking for a contemporary, morally acceptable alternative to the immoralism of cliques, clubs and clientele, we must think of the state welfare organizations established in the 19th and 20th centuries. The social state is the regional generalization of the thermotrope with technical means of insurance. Its achievements are based on the discovery of a cold fire (stoked by compulsory contributions), around which countless needy (relatively privileged, however) can gather. With national and communal systems of solidarity (in the United States we add to this the phenomenal voluntary services) it seems that modern societies have invented something like a meta-home, which helps many with a legitimate right to it, as well as certain ladinos, to keep their own fire alive. Such facilities for the redistribution of welfare opportunities operate for now exclusively in national formats. One could even go so far as to say that the postmodernized spirit of nations is already based only on solidarity funds and insurance systems, especially in Central and Northern Europe, where the world's most comfortable thermotropic institutions are to be found. Whoever wanted to transfer these conditions to the world society would first have to have solved the thermotropic paradox, and show how to put everyone before everyone else. <sup>326]</sup> Joseph Beuys' *honey bomb*, which symbolically connects humanity in general with the sweet life, hints at the extent to which such an aesthetic can be achieved.



## 5. The erototope - Domains of jealousy, rungs of desire

One has to have spent a whole season on the anthropogenic island to get a glimpse of how the inhabitants organize their life of desire. In principle, it is to be expected that human beings with marked uterotopic and thermotopic conditioning exist in an exciting climate, which provokes a high state of alertness regarding the advantages of belonging to it and the distribution of opportunities for comfort. This is why the island, in contrast to the tourist cliché of the moderns, is not a place to forget what others are doing. It is a good advice for those who want to orient themselves in the greenhouse of the island, to reinforce their attention to the affective practice of others.

We call the field or domain of insular-human desires the erototope, because erotic desire offers the paradigm of how affective competition in groups both stimulates and controls the desire life of those who live together. Erotic dominance is put in tension, as groups, by constant subacute self-irritation, produce a kind of suspicious-concupiscent attention to the differences among their members. From this arises a fluid of jealousy, which is kept in circulation and flow by inquisitive glances, humorous remarks, discrediting slander and ritual competitive games. In this dimension eros manifests itself, not as dual-libidinous tension between ego and alter, but as triangular provocation. I love you, I am turned on by your beautiful figure, if I can assume that another loves you and likes your beautiful figure enough to want to possess you. While Diotima of

Mantinea interprets in philosophical language the essence of the erotic as yielding to the attraction of the good, the topological examination underlines the stimulating irritation produced by the differential advantage that a neighbor could get, or already possesses, by privatizing an object of love.

[327] Thus, erotic processes in the group constitute the fundamental form of competition, triggered by the imitative observation of the striving of others for the acquisition of advantages of being, possessions and influence.<sup>[328]</sup> What will later be called the *sensus communis* is the participation in the alert climate of jealousies and antagonisms that float freely in the group. It belongs to the wonders - and justifications - of the democratic form of life, that it transforms the fundamental mood of rivalry, always alert, into civility and cooperative disposition, except in cases in which it itself, as *détente*, indulges also in its provocations.

Insofar as the anthropogenic island is no longer dominated by  
The earlier and more frugal, the more their inhabitants differentiate themselves from these points of view: from what one is more than the other, from what one has more than the other, from what one represents more than the other. Consequently, to the group's wisdom of life belongs a threefold management of jealousy. If the self-irritations of the group are to be kept at a bearable tone for life, the collective needs sufficient discretion for the differences of being, the differences of possession and the differences of status within it. Discreet is he who knows what it is that he does not have to be aware of. If one has moved for a sufficiently long time in the erototope, one perceives the subtle effort of the inhabitants to maintain their indifference to despicable differences, as well as their pretended impassivity to non-despicable ones. This has often been regarded as repression; it is the conscious silence that the king of the elves is among us.

However, it is to be expected that in all groups, occasional or  
occasional  
periodically, the fury of jealousy manages to win out over the

discretion. At such moments the desire to plunder and humiliate the bearers of advantageous differences comes out of latency; the hour of revenge sounds for the passion of redistribution. Then appears in all its splendor "that revolting mixture of lasciviousness and cruelty, which has always seemed to me to be the real "witches' brew," of which Nietzsche, in his book on the *Origin of Tragedy*, had ascertained that it constituted the essence of the primitive and repudiatory Dionysos, not yet tamed by Apollonian culture.<sup>[329]</sup> To prevent these irruptions, as fearful as they are secretly desired, of the affective plague, every erototope needs its school of correct desire, or, better, a morality that serves as a prophylaxis of the irritation of differences. Since irritated eros entails a feeling of attraction for the advantages of the positively differentiating object, this "love" manifests itself in the desire for a share of the booty and - if sharing is not possible - for the expropriation of the one who possesses it. The scope of objects of this love extends, almost in the same way, to the sexual partner, to the possession of house and land, animals and capital, spiritual and corporal privileges. From this first crude art of loving arises a culture of envy, which is accustomed to adorn itself with the honorific title of criticism.

The first lesson in the school of desire is taught through prohibitions. Here one learns what is necessary about the taboo and the thou shalt not. The calmer the possession, the sooner the escalation of desire is prevented. In the prohibition one perceives the presence of a third party, who has already appeared between me and you before we empirically met: this third party, who brings guarantees, turns me away from my naive desire for the other's advantages, just as much as the other is forbidden the exhibition of them.<sup>[330]</sup> But since neither prohibitions nor taboos can neutralize the attention directed to the other's good, but rather contribute to the focusing of desire on what is subtracted by them, advanced cultures have to proceed to an active disinterest of human beings with respect to the objects of their jealousy. This is achieved only if instead

The ideal nature of these goods allows unlimited partitioning and prevents any provocative private property.

From the relief produced by this elevation of desire lives to this day everything that in any way has to do with the spiritual. The ethics of the great cultures, both East and West, work with the irony that human beings who strive for the good lose the best. The angels, says Emerson, only leave us to be approached by archangels. If, indeed, there was in the twentieth century a betrayal by intellectuals, it was the reversal of irony. They began to scoff at the so-called best, determined not to miss out on their own share of the good things in use.

"Superstructure": you get my drift! Since then, the arena in which the distribution of the scarce goods of privilege takes place is against all that is the case. Since 1914 the Great Politics is the universalization of jealousy struggles without a higher level.

In Platonism, the gradation from sensitive, partisan and polemogenic love to spiritual, supra-partisan and irenic love is perceived in great detail. Stoicism, too, in its ethics of liberation from the multiplicity of needs, has repressed the temptation to take part in the struggles of appropriation with respect to everything. The Christian culture of monks was able to connect with this morality of athletes. The most mature figure of an ethics of disinterestedness has undoubtedly been reached in the Buddhist doctrine of affections and their liquidation by the sword of intellection. With its subtle analysis of the causal chain leading to pain-generating fixations, Buddhism attempts to emancipate at least a minority of human beings from the arena of desire and the feeling of inevitably being a loser. It was not by chance Friedrich Nietzsche who managed to see in Buddhism the most refined form of an affective hygiene: Nietzsche himself, to whom the analysis of resentment owes practically everything to this day. Thanks to him we know that the nature of the feelings of rejection consists in the bond of the loser with the object, with which he sees himself compared to the detriment of him; of the wound left by the

comparison flows the need, barely masterable, to humiliate the lucky object.

In a rough form, which has the advantage of clarity, the Jewish Decalogue, especially in its last commandment, had articulated a *stop* rule for the dangerous competition of desire, albeit only for its solid sexual and possessive aspects:

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not desire your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or his donkey, anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exodus 20:17).

In its concreteness, which reflects the small and medium existence of a cattle and slave owner around 1000 B.C., including its typical dramas, the tenth commandment makes it possible to recognize a principle of formulation of a general rule of abstinence of desires, which benefits the reduction of tensions in the erototope. It is therefore not incomprehensible that René Girard places a new anthropological interpretation of the tenth commandment at the center of the summary of his analysis of the effects of mimetic competition.<sup>[331]</sup> It is a pity for his own project that Girard hardly takes into account that, with his therapy of desire, disinteresting it from scarce polemogenic goods and diverting it to shareable sympathogenic goods, some non-Christian cultures have gone further than those of the decalogue religions; he also seems to ignore that Nietzsche's moral critique does not speak in favor, in any way, of a reintroduction of the violence of jealousy in culture. The author of *Zarathustra* was aiming at the synthesis of the achievements of the Buddhist psychology of abstinence and of the qualities of enjoyment of the world entailed in the versatile game of rivalry; with the aim of detoxifying the old Western erototope by this turn to an ethics of magnanimity.<sup>[332]</sup> Of the scope of this attempt, one can get an idea who is aware that the experiment of Modernity, as far as the conditions of consumption and competition are concerned, has led to an almost unlimited deregulation of the erototope. In no previous social formation has the systematic provocation of the desire for everything that others possess been so explicitly included in the motivation of behavior. The *fires of envy*<sup>[333]</sup> are connected in consumer society in energy circuits analogous to a power station. Also the political systems of democracy depend entirely on the unleashing of the distrust of all against all. Already in the *Kentucky Resolutions* of 1798, Thomas Jefferson had stated: "Free government is founded on jealousy and not on trust". If the theory of culture could ask a question to the 21st century, it would be: how does Modernity intend to keep under control its experiment with the globalization of jealousy (rivalries, antagonisms).

## 6. Ergotope

### Communities of effort and belligerent empires

The space in which the burden of tasks is shared cooperatively is called the ergotope: its inhabitants, the ergotopians, are united in communities of effort. The description of their activity offers the image of adults, *érga kai hémera*, the chronicle of the works and days of people who do not have it easy. At the beginning, the reason for participating in the indispensable common tasks is familiar, totalitarian-informal, based on the evidence of the situation or on the dictates of tradition, later on initiation rites, professional requirements, ties imposed by social categories; later still, it is the personal services, the edicts, the official centers, which take care of the registration in the ergotopo; in the end, what binds us to it are *mission statements* and the public opinion's orders of the day.

In this horizon the groups become communes; that is to say, units integrated by common *munera*. The ergotope configures a space, in which those who live together are involved in obligations and tributes; with the order of mobilization for a common struggle against the external enemy, as a standard of measurement and limit value of all cooperation. (Whoever is dispensed from these impositions is, in a precise sense, *immune*: without obligations, without work, freed for other priorities).

If ergotropic situations become more radical, we may once again find ourselves on shoals of galleys, condemned to rowing.

keeping up with the imposed pace. Killing ourselves to work in quarries, in forced labor in mines, in the *katorga*, the labor camps of death. At other times we are voluntary cooperators, dedicated to a common thing by enthusiastic consensus: communes for the construction of a cathedral, partisans of freedom, crusaders, finalists. Whether we are welded to one another by necessity, or whether a binding goal gives us wings, as long as we have a secure post of endeavor, we cooperate as laborers in the vineyard of *communitas*. The example of the galleys is instructive, because with it the concept of rhythmic socialism can be explained, in which social synthesis is carried out by synchronized movements. In this way, work in common is organized as a synergy of synchronized systems of muscles. Every galley slave is an obscure hero of labor.



Workers at a Japanese branch of Coca-Cola, performing calisthenic exercises.

Emerging from the archaic tradition of group dances, simple but varied routines and ceremonies appear in the great cultures in order to develop uniform movements in groups and masses. In his study on *Dancing and Training in Human History*, the American historian William H. McNeill has described various forms of "muscular *bonding*" and ritual and military cooperation, which are capable of creating an *esprit de corps* in performance collectives of heterogeneous composition.<sup>[334]</sup> With these rhythmic *bonding* techniques, euphoric, psychosomatically excitable group herds are called upon. Human beings have already had the experience early on that the rhythmic effort is experienced as a relief, and that the rhythmic expenditure of strength is experienced as a release of energy.

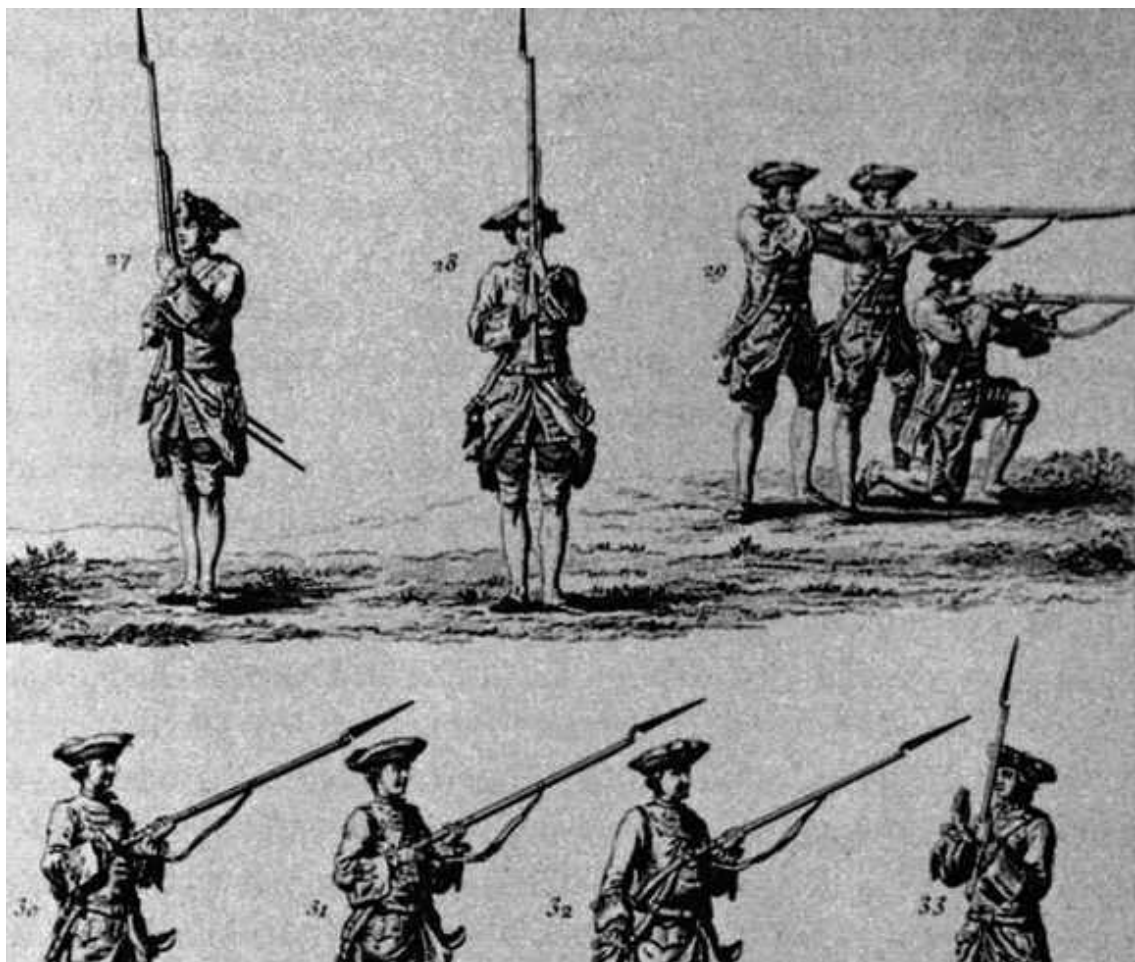


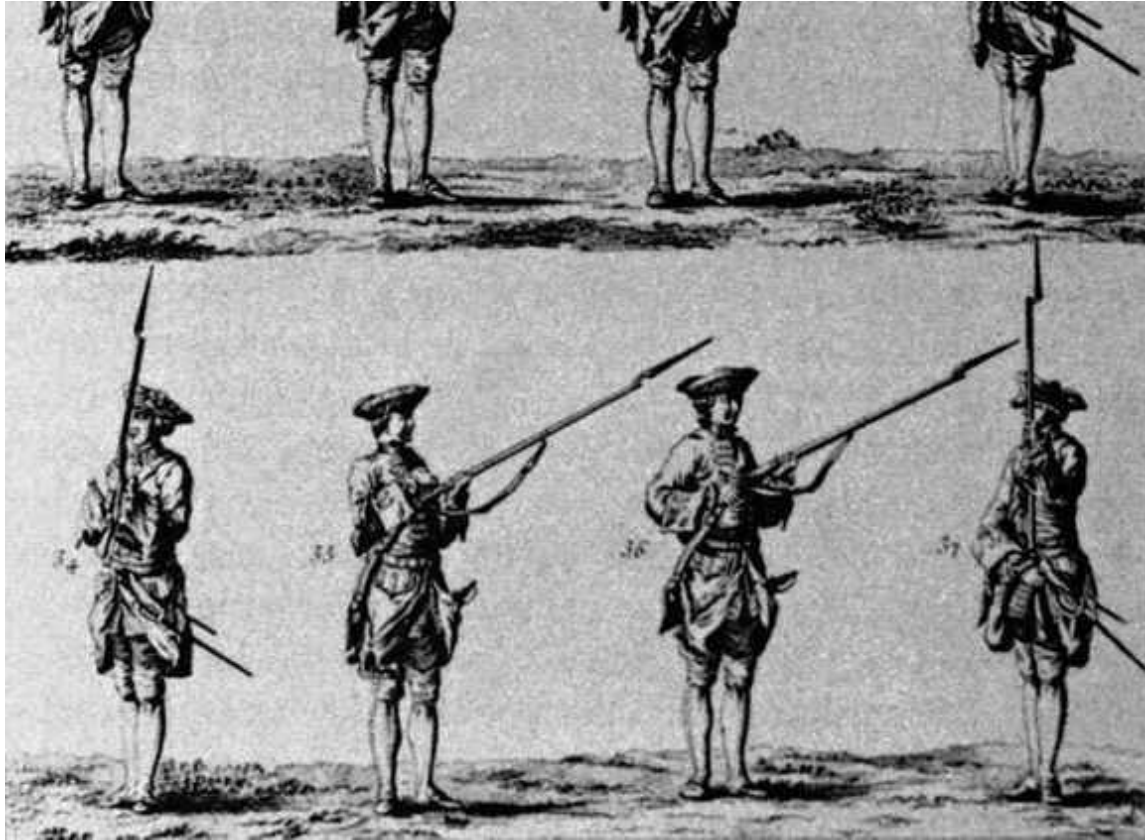
The common march away from the point of exhaustion. Following the example of the Macedonians, Roman troops used loud step marking for marches that demanded great performance. Certainly, the mechanical beat is only a substitute form for the shared rapture of the dance. When voluntary collective enthusiasm cannot be presupposed—for example, in masses of slaves in the lords' fields and in great imperial works, or in compulsorily conscripted troops, in modern times—rhythmic training is used by leaders as a consensus prosthesis: the beginnings of slave and military music can be traced back to such a ruse. Even Plato's *Laws* knew something of the consensus of muscles and did not want to leave neither the tonalities nor the rhythms of the State to the arbitration of honeyed sophists or tonal demagogues. The role of the flutes in the acoustic integration of the phalanx was recognized early on by the Greek generals; they started from the basis of keeping the troop together not only as a living wall of shields, but also as a special phonotope in motion: as if an army were a *war parade*, ecstatically unfolding on the battlefield. In the art of choreography the memory is preserved that choruses were originally movement groups under single stage direction.<sup>[335]</sup> The consequent organization of procedural unity and consensus in Modernity goes back to the war school of Moritz von Oranien, who from 1590 began to instruct Dutch mercenary troops with the aim of turning them into synchronized war machines; with a corresponding model effect on the entire enlightened militia of Europe and Asia. In the military-based political systems of Modernity, training is the true instruction of the nation.

When effort is detached from the group and becomes a matter for extraordinarily gifted individuals, athletics emerges. The first athletes who appear at the dawn of the great culture develop as experts in extraordinary efforts, of which only specially trained people are capable.

<sup>[336]</sup> The meaning of the effort and its classification in the real has been

ostensibly transformed: when rivals confront each other, what matters to them is no longer a work of common necessity of their group; the sporting agon is not a war, nor a harvest, nor the building of a wall. Rather, it is the sense of representing and surpassing their performances that comes to the fore here, even though cities (and in this modern nations do the same) often regard their athletes as their delegates and interpret their successes as collective deeds. This is possible because the ancient culture, especially the archaic pre-individualist culture of the Greeks, with its concept of *pónos*, of dignifying and virilizing fatiguing exercise, arrived at an abstract conception of effort in general, of effort *sans phrase*. This leads to the differentiation of the ergotropic collective into tense champions and relaxed spectators; from their own perspective, both participate in *philopony*, in the love of effort.





Military exercises with the musket.

Athletics transfers the principle of theater to bodily exercise, thereby creating a civilizational alternative to the warlike way of managing stress. Athletes are the first simulators of the serious or critical case. The invention of theatrical warfare belongs, without a doubt, to the most valuable civilizing achievements of European antiquity. When in 1896 the Olympic Games of Modernity began, the revival of Antiquity, which had begun in the 14th century, entered its remarkably delayed mass-cultural phase, divided into a Greek and a Roman path.<sup>[337]</sup> However, the civilized simulation of war in the Olympic stadiums did not succeed in preventing real wars, neither regional, nor so-called world wars. In the twentieth century, often, both in the stadiums and elsewhere, sport was practiced so viciously that it seems that it was not the détente of the critical case, but its other battlefield: the second submission of Greece to Roman dictate, this time as victory of the arena over the *stadion*.

In the ergotope, social synthesis by stress dominates. Therefore, the secret of the coherence of the group under stress consists in its ability not to collapse, even under the highest pressure. It can be affirmed that the explanation of this fact belongs to the key events of contemporary cultural sciences. It is inseparably linked to Heiner Mühlmann's work on the "*Nature of cultures*"<sup>[338]</sup> and Bazon Brock's analyses of the circular connection between culture and war. At the heart of Mühlmann's theory of culture is a radically ergotopic and ergonomic interpretation of the social nexus, for which he introduces the complex expression "Maximal- Stress-Cooperation" (MSC). What makes a group an effective survival unit is, according to this, the ability to synchronize its efforts in all-or-nothing situations, aka "critical cases".

Designating extreme moments of stress as critical or severe cases, or as states of exception, does not mean making use of secularized theological concepts, as Carl Schmitt's supporters repeat with their master. The state of exception is not the secularized form of the miracle, but the politicized form of a standard biological situation, to which the bodies of primates, and therefore of humans, respond with an innate, endocrinologically directed program of extreme energy release and syntonic solidarization. Its occurrence is detected by a cognitive scheme, the critical case verdict. Since it includes an intellectual and a moral aspect, it is affected by cultural variation. Therefore, stress does not mean the whole destiny: serenity in the face of danger is the specific opportunity of the human being. It supposes emancipating oneself from enrolment in false serious cases and from abandonment to the false commotion produced by the situation of struggle. There are old strategy manuals, such as that of the Chinese general-sophist Sun Tzu, which already introduce the virtue of avoiding the fight in the theory of the fight itself. In the West, we have the name of the Roman general Fabius Cunctator as a model of man's ability to

reasonable to refuse, even in the proximity of danger, the deadly invitations of stress programs.

The fact that human intelligence, like its previous animal forms, interprets certain threats as present and real triggers of extreme emotional-bodily responses, does not mean that the miracle, of which the theologians and aesthetes of the sublime speak, interrupts the normal. As corresponds to the evolutionary imprints of animal and human-archaic intelligence, the present danger is judged from the ontology of the critical case: the situation is interpreted as an interruption, by a peremptory threat, of the time limit granted to tranquility. The deep biological anchorage of the great stress reaction proves that the extreme is evolutionarily usual. It is true that the state of exception is configured within the human body as an innate expectation; but its triggering happens, however, by the verdict of the critical case issued by the decision center. In this sense, animals are already ontologists. The leading animal is the one who decides on the state of exception: if it undertakes flight, for example, it changes the position of the "cognitive energy switch"<sup>[339]</sup> in the rest of the animals, as it did before in itself, and gesturally declares the case of application of the categorical imperative of the cortex of the adrenal capsules: From now on, throw everything forward! In this situation the supremely real is offered in real presence. You are in front of your danger, in front of someone who can potentially cause your death, in front of your god and stressor. Whoever ignores this has no idea what it means to act in borderline situations.

As Mühlmann explains in an ingenious, highly formalized reconstruction, the secret of the ergotropic operation of the "cultures" consists in the regularities of the collective elimination of stress. The simple group shapes itself, in at least a three-phase process, until it becomes a subject of the great culture with a specifically territorial, temporal or imperial project.<sup>[340]</sup> In the pre-stress phase the groups develop

forming cooperating units with strong inside-outside unevenness, above all, following Mühlmann's explanations, by means of self-exhorting, self-edifying, self-enhancing communications, which Mühlmann summarizes as "*insider intimations*".<sup>[\*\*\*\*]</sup> We have already indirectly dealt with them several times here, since it is easy to understand that some of the dimensions of human insidership clarified so far, especially the phonotopic, uterotopic and thermotopic space, show a close relationship with the positive discrimination of the group-us: they reinforce, as a whole, the inclination of those who live together to cooperative union. Quite often - Mühlmann does not hesitate to call this practically the normal case - an a-sympathetic mixture of presumption, separation from the whole and aggression arises from this introversion of the cultural group. In his eyes sympathetic cultures, i.e. groups with a high civilization factor, are rather rare, while the anthropological average behaves "enviously, paranoidly and aggressively."<sup>[341]</sup> This fact was conceptualized in the 1930s by right-wing decisionist thinkers. Their political polemology sentences: since the human being is evil by nature he needs mastery; since mastery can only be exercised in closed political capsules of survival, directed against the outside, the war between the capsules belongs to the nature of things. "The *tendency* to closure (and, with it, to the friend-enemy grouping of humanity) is given with human nature; in this sense it is destiny."<sup>[342]</sup> It can be summarized by saying that paranoia is the critical case of *sensus communis*. In political capsules, such a sense of solidarity arises from the collective disdain of the enemy; and from the group's submission to the enmity effect. Enemy is that which is recognized, without concept, as the object of a necessary dislike (and of an inevitable confrontation).<sup>[343]</sup> [In the political capsule, such a sense of solidarity arises by the collective disdain of the enemy; and by the group's submission to the enmity effect.](#)

In the phase of greatest stress, the group merges into a hyperbody, in which a psychomechanics of life-or-death cooperation, reinforced by education, takes over. At

The critical case condition sounds for a "culture" the hour of truth; more precisely: the hour of its revinculation to the natural mechanism. It could be affirmed that the critical case is the authentic purpose of culture, for through it the self-centeredness of the group reaches its ultimate destiny or determination: to accredit itself as the object of its own preference. In the same place the naturalistic theory of cultures can begin its illustrative journey. It shows: it makes hardly any difference to the dynamics of cultural groups whether a population is attacked by a real aggressor or whether the stressor is internally imagined and projectively generated in the real. The reality effect is the same in both cases. Whoever equates reality with the imperative of war has a good deal of empirical evidence on his side, but is nevertheless subordinating himself to a hidden mechanism, insofar as there is a circular connection between realism and militarism: because of their ontological orientation towards maximum stress cooperation, which occurs in war, "cultures" have hitherto functioned time and again in history as self-triggers of the maximum stress reaction. They themselves create the reality they believe in, and they believe in the reality they produce. They understand the nature of belief just as little as they understand the nature of cultures.<sup>[344]</sup> [The nature of cultures is not as much a matter of belief as it is of belief.](#)

As Brock and Mühlmann have shown, to bring the mechanics under control would require a civilizing initiative of domestication of cultures, starting from the intellectual penetration into the explicit "nature of cultures". (Under the theoretical conditions of the beginning of the 21st century, to make culture explicit means: to set in motion the fundamental critique of heroism and to bring into evidence the modes of functioning of the paranoogenic "we"). According to this explanation it can be understood how it is that in the interactions of heroic systems interparanoia takes the lead. Thus, in the epoch of the increase of the frequency of collision in interparanoid traffic, war imposes itself in every line as the primordial cultural end of the peoples (or whatever one wants to call it, if not, to



aggressive-defensive comfort systems, which are intended to remain as political cocoons of silkworms).

In the post-stress relaxation phase there is an evaluation of the experiences made by the combatant population in the stress of war and - depending on this stress evaluation and self-evaluation at the same time - an examination of the rules under which the life of the group is to be organized after the fight. Post-war situations act as culturally constitutive periods. In them the *decorum*, the system of domesticated behavior, speech and organization, under which group life is shaped, is readjusted in the light of the relaxation of stress (in the shadow of stress, says Mühlmann). To put it simply: on the side of the victors a winner's *decorum* develops, which contributes heroically-culturally to the strengthening of group qualities conducive to success - exemplarily represented in Roman triumph rituals and their projection in imperial mass cultures, up to the New York confetti parades - while on the other side a loser's *decorum* is formulated in preparation for revenge (since it is decorous to strike back at the right time), in case of the "bad losers", or as an ethic of reconstruction and reflection on the reasons for defeat (since it is decorous to change, to become another), in the case of "good losers". The loser's virtue, hope, which is in the midst of resignation and revenge, can temporarily present itself so aggressively that it can infiltrate the victor's *decorum* - an effect without which the development of Christianity to become the religion of the Empire could hardly have been imagined - since

What is an empire, above all, if not a system of integration of losers? Magnanimity in the face of the vanquished is the imperative under which truly great empires flourish: it is not surprising that imperial ideologues have willingly mystified this recipe (Virgil's infamous *parcere subiectis*)<sup>[345]</sup> as

"universalism."<sup>[346]</sup> The often commented upon difference between Rome

and Jerusalem signifies the tension-filled coexistence of a *decorum* of victors and vanquished, usable by both sides, within Western civilization. (Another description of this fact would be that the universality of Christianity consisted in offering communion beyond victory and defeat). This difference, fundamental to all traditional cultures, between rules of victors and rules of vanquished, has since the end of World War II been molded into polyvalent syntheses; especially in Germany and Israel (partly also in Japan), forms of a hybrid *decorum* for victors-victors or vanquished-victors have developed, of which there are hardly any historical examples, and of which it cannot be said that lovers of clear conditions are satisfied with them.

Post-stress accommodation to the rule occasionally takes the form of a retreat to the civil and private; and then, for a period of time, the rule is imposed among individuals that they are no longer willing to let the rule be imposed on them by the collective any longer. This option can be observed, above all, in the longer-term pacified empires: already the ancient philosophical schools work with the individualistic effect, which developed in the Roman imperial peace. In the advice of enlightened losers, popularized stoicism stands out above all, which exhorted its followers to consider in everything the difference between what depends on us and what does not depend on us. This phenomenon is repeated in Modernity in the form of philosophies of existence and of life, whose civilizing sense can be determined by a comparison of the history of ideas: then as now it is a matter of healing the souls of the vanquished, under historical circumstances in which it is not possible to think of revenge. A good part of European philosophy between 1806 and 1968 is only comprehensible if it is understood as an uninterrupted accommodation of the loser's *decorum* to the circumstances of the time. What has been called the spirit of the times since Prussia's defeat by Napoleon is essentially the constant updating of the methods of

treatment of the public of the defeated. Since this is a task that each decade solves with new means, the spirits of the times follow each other like therapeutic fashions. Objectively, the "therapeutic society" already begins with the romantic return to nature as a coming god from below and from within. A glance at the literature of the time informs about the urgency with which it was needed in Jena and Auerstädt. In this respect, Romanticism was a prelude to existentialism. Insofar as the existentialists equated human existence with conscious failure, they could offer the defeated and declassed of all kinds a formula for elegance and sovereignty in failure.

Particularly decisive amendments to the *decorum* became necessary at the end of the twentieth century, since the most comprehensive proposal to date (after Buddhism, Stoicism and Christianity) had to be shelved in order to satisfy the losers. After the collapse of socialism, which sought to make the vanquished of all past history the victors of the future, a fundamentally new mode of decent defeat must be developed. When the republican pride of a Charles Péguy has been spent in defeats suffered in victory (*nous sommes des victorieux vaincus*), when the radical leftist romanticism *lotta continua* has been exhausted, when the militant fringe morality of *il faut continuer* can only lead, at best, to even more amusing Beckett stagings, and when the "narcissism of the lost affair" progressively loses its infectious force, new standards have to be set for the era after the radicalisms of the left-wing illusion. Binding rules for a post-communist *decorum* have not yet been formulated: although it seems that (along with the massive passage into the liberal capitalist camp) certain reissues of a "philosophy as an art of living" take over part of this epochal task. The sensible and prudent life is practiced, as in the time of Zeno and Epicurus, as an introduction to failure with one's head held high. Consequently, turns of phrase such as "art of resignation"<sup>[347]</sup> in the training plan. The

Therapeutic subcultures are dedicated to the promotion of a "human potential", strictly independent of civil and political ambitions. Other groups, especially academic *Manicheans*, reformulate their marginalization in a happy unemployment; they announce their defeats, posterizing them, like those of a guerrilla that remains vigilant in the underground: who speaks of winning, it is enough to deceive oneself with something. Offers of this type are summed up in the advice to keep expectations of meaning low so as not to become depressed by frustrated hopes. For the rest, the interested parties are left with the free pleasure of deconstructing, for who knows what for the umpteenth time, the so-called winner: the subject, the hero, the man, the author.

In all the bold and comprehensive syntheses of Zeno, Spinoza, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, which reorient the postmodern horizon, there is so much right that neither simple cultures of victors nor simple cultures of vanquished will be able to construct with their own means learning processes worthy of enduring in the longer term. Only a new civilization defined beyond victory and defeat would be in a position to virtualize the great stress reaction and the ontological anger of the critical case and to domesticate them, turning them into sporting quasi-case-criticisms. It would be, in almost everything, the opposite of what the current industry of victor fantasies knows how to say about the so-called globalization.<sup>[348]</sup> It would strongly contrast with the philosophy of power of the American conservatives, who after the

<sup>349]</sup> The philosophical foundation for overcoming the traditional logic of stress and the critical case has been convincingly formulated by Bazon Brock with the theorem of the case-critical-exclusive: in the emerging universal political culture, the interest in the non-appearance of the critical case has become more serious, more real, more compelling, than anything that traditionally counted as serious, real, compelling. The authentic community of effort consists, in the future, of human beings in the process of learning, from the most different cultures, who do not so much give themselves to the

energy triggering among their groups, as well as to isolate the situations that call for this triggering.

## 7. Alethotope - The Republics of Knowledge

It is not surprising that the anthropogenic island is a place where a light is opened to its inhabitants about the world and about themselves in it. It is the place where countless things fail to remain hidden; even though Heraclitus, with his laconic *ph'ysis kr'yptesthai phílei*: "nature likes to remain in latency," named a decisive aspect of the original distribution of the hidden and the manifest. The world is a clarified space: of that, at least, the inhabitants of the island of being did not doubt from very early on about their situation. But they also have an immediate certainty that not everything is clear. Probably, no, rather with certainty, only the smallest part of all that exists is open to current perception and knowledge. The clear sphere into which we have emerged is a spot of light in the midst of the circle of the unknown, unmanifest, unsaid, unthought. And in this circle of the subtracted is hidden, according to the conviction of the ancients, the ontologically essential, to the exploration of which the sages, those disturbing neighbors of our sphere, will have to dedicate themselves. The sensitivity for the truth of human beings develops from the intuition that between the clarified and the obscured realm of being there is a border traffic that is not easy to understand.

It is fundamentally two observations that inform on the essence of truth: at a given moment, from the enveloping unknown, novelties emerge to what is known and said; on the contrary, much of what has been known returns to oblivion, to the *léthe*, to implication. Consequently, truth is neither a

Neither a contingent certainty of facts nor a mere property of propositions, but a coming and going, an actual thematic scintillation and a sinking into the athematic night. As long as the middle between the two, the seemingly equal-eternal and present, claims all attention, no gaze remains free for the dynamic aspect of the event of truth. The necessary turning of the gaze to the temporization of truth has been carried out by thinkers such as Hegel and, even more so, Heidegger; whether with good results or not remains to be seen.

From a pragmatic point of view, the sensitivity of human beings to the difference between true and false is linked to the experience that statements and sentences can be right or wrong and false. To say that human beings depend on the success of their statements and sentences means as much as to state that they are affected by truth values, and that this already happens at a biological level. The certainty of correctness in the pitches and the confidence in the utterances is from the beginning a matter of life and death; that is why the "truth" had to be protected as the greatest good in the islands of the pitchers and speakers. The border traffic between the public-clear and the hidden-dark punches events, which "happen", pass and give food for thought. The difference between true and false propositions is based, on the contrary, on actions that end up successful (successful, appropriate, conclusive) or unsuccessful (unsuccessful, inappropriate, inconclusive). Thus, the manifest world is given from the beginning in two different ways: one, as a nexus of actions that we perform, and the other, as a connection of events that affect us. The double sense of truth, as becoming-patent in the event or in the result (in the is-good of the achieved intent) and as being-stated in the apophantic sentence, is as old as the human island itself.

We call alethotopo the place where things become manifest, as well as decipherable or figurable. The stay in it involves the risk of being influenced both by truths that are shown,

are understood and are still valid, as for errors, which only manifest themselves later as such and whose repetition is to be feared. From the first point of view, the alethotope resembles a warehouse, from the second, a place of execution or a garbage dump. In the warehouse one stores what is accredited as true: it is not for nothing that the German word for truth [*Wahrheit*] has to do with concepts such as assisting, guarding, protecting, preserving, defending, caring. In the place of execution, or in the garbage dump, on the other hand, what the group cannot and does not want to keep within itself, insofar as it is evil, defective, useless and void, is eliminated. True is what is kept for reuse. The image of the storehouse allows the following association: truths, before they can become objects of collection and keeping, have to be harvested and carried in an original gathering, very much in line with Heidegger's reference to the sense, very much naturalized in agriculture, of the Greek verb *légein*, to harvest, to gather, to gather grapes, to pick flowers, fruit, etc., whose substantivization in *lógos* produces the concept of reason and discourse in ancient Europe. From this point of view, the alethotope, as the field of cultivation of truth and the collection point of knowledge, is the authentic stage of human openness to the world. (From this it can also be understood why modern storage media already show only a marginal connection with human circumstances: because in them, as in all cognitive archives, a-subjective collections are made: heaps of information for no one).

Whoever lives on the human island becomes *ipso facto* a guardian of the *Lichtung* [forest glade], it matters little, in principle, whether one who is attentive or one who is absent-minded. As is well known, Heidegger has greatly accentuated the difference between good and bad guardians, but has treated as a negligible magnitude the difference between preservers of the field and enlargers of the field (or between meditators and investigators). But, regardless of whether one rather assimilates to the guardian pole



or the researcher, one can never elude the reference of human beings to truth and truths, because the commotion of the event of truth and its language games is founded in the *genius loci*. As a place, where "it happens", where where "it appears," where "it manifests itself," where "someone expresses it," where one "takes notice of it," where something unsaid cannot be made of what is said, where what is known and revealed is retained and transmitted, and where, at the same time, much, perhaps most, remains latent and unexpressed, the alethotope introduces its inhabitants into its chiaroscuro and places them under the pressure of having to satisfy the true. What is known with certainty demands to be kept in force, while what is uncertain, undisclosed, possibly to come, casts before it a twilight light and compels caution.

It belongs to the most general characteristics of human islands that their inhabitants are soon divided between those who are greatly affected by the tensions of truth, and those who rather avoid stressful cognitive situations. From this arises the almost universal differentiation of the groups into experts, who are personally committed to truths that are difficult to access, gathering, partly on their own responsibility, partly supported by the figure of the magician or the scholar, knowledge of the hidden, of the past, of the future, and into laymen, who manage to feel satisfied with the first-order evidence, with the collectively stored experiences and opinions, that is to say, with the idols of the tribe. In the first position we find the figures of the shaman, the priest, the prophet, the seer, the scribe, the philosopher and the scientist; in the second, those of the simple member of the tribe, the illiterate, the patient, the believer, the empiricist, the layman, the newspaper reader and the spectator of television duels. There would have been no

"society", no "people", no "culture", if, at least tentatively, it had not developed the features of a bicameral system of accesses to truth: whose first element represents a *House of Common Knowledge*, with the common wise men as

members, and a *House of Cognitive Lords*, where the wisest, the magicians, the experts and professors deliberate. Since the emergence of the so-called high or great cultures this organization has been embodied in institutions, which differentiate between the wise and the profane as between two peoples within the same population. This is explained, among other things, by the fact that high culture and written culture are synonymous in a broad sense; the monopoly of writing by the few and the illiteracy of the majority acted as eternal constants in the first three millennia of the art of writing. Even after general literacy was imposed, cultures, like the arts, were again divided into *high* and *low*. Even at the beginning of European Modernity, when Francis Bacon formulated the program of a researching and advancing "society", a monument was made to the bipartition of the alethotope: also in the model State of the *New Atlantis* there is an Upper House of knowledge, an elite university, dedicated to pure progress, called Salomon House, whose members, as in an order of cognitive chivalry, are obliged to keep strict silence with respect to certain unpublishable knowledge.<sup>[350]</sup> In the *New Atlantis* there is also an Upper House of knowledge, an elite university, dedicated to pure progress, called Salomon House, whose members, like in an order of cognitive chivalry, are obliged to keep strict silence with respect to certain non-publishable knowledge.

Under these circumstances access to more distant truths becomes a matter for experts, indeed, the community of experts provocatively distances itself from the commune of everyday sapientis and establishes itself as an aristocracy in its own right. The arrogance of the scribe is one of the most powerful facts in the history of civilization. This goes so far, that many of the rich in spirit established an anthropological difference, which separated the sages from the common mortals, almost as much as it separates the specific difference to human beings from the higher animals. It is enough to recall certain myths about the birth of the heroes of truth - Gautama Buddha, Lao-tse, Jesus - and historical accounts of the cult of the great of the spirit - Pythagoras, Plato, Confucius, Newton, Goethe - to be convinced of this gulf and its decisive effect on the collective realm of truth. The difference between the sage and the insipient mass is made, for all the

The most ancient ethnoepistemic ordinations, of a material hardness similar to that of the difference, in theocracies, between the king-god and the subjects, or to that of the differentiation, in religious cultures, between the purified saints and the people, contaminated to the point of intangibility. In the fragments of Heraclitus the contempt of the wise for the ignorant sounds louder than in any line of Hegel or Nietzsche. Among the archetypes of the priest of Apollo in Ephesus are also counted the astronomer-priests of Babylon, who spent their nights in towers observing the stars; it is not to be excluded that the proud resentment of the sleepless against the sleeping mass begins with them, an effect whose traces reach as far as the New Testament and the Christian monastic cultures; and to the Stalin era (when the inhabitants of Moscow, during the Second World War, consoled themselves with the idea that in Stalin's room there was still light long after midnight). The Platonic mitigation of the arrogance of wisdom, leaving it in a longing of its own, and the Stoic orientation to an ideal, which one approaches by constant exercise, managed to prevent the complete dissociation of the alethotope, although they took nothing of its radicalism from the opposition between the experts in matters of great logical-cosmological and technical interest, and the normal subscribers to probability in matters of everyday business.

Whoever lives on the anthropogenic island, by his casual or chosen situation within the alethopopoeia, is irremissibly introduced into a logomachy: in a constant struggle for the true and for the valid forms of its expression, in a permanent divorce between apparent and real knowledge, between true and false prophets. What Nietzsche observed about the great transitions in the history of ideas is true of these struggles for truth: "The charm of these struggles is that he who contemplates them must also struggle! Naturally, these are cognitive struggles of classes, from above: struggles of contempt of a logical clergy and of an aristocracy of the spirit, conscious of its

distinction, against popular opinion; but also of struggles of orientation in the camp of the wise men themselves over the legitimacy and capacity for success of their concepts and procedures. Think, in the latter case, of phenomena such as the Parmenides' break with the illusion of motion, supposedly discovered by them; of Plato's political-methodological attack on the Athenian sophists, with the aim of delegitimizing the formation of opinion on the basis of mere probability; of Diocletian's politico-methodological attack on the Athenian sophists, with the aim of delegitimizing the formation of opinion on the basis of mere probability; in Diocletian's politico-religious offensive against the soothsayers, interpreters of signs and *mathematici* (astrologers) in the juridical sphere of the Roman Empire; in the struggles between creationists and modern evolutionists for the interpretation of the beginnings of the world; in Fichte's phenomenology of reified consciousness and its derivations in the ideological critiques of the 19th century; in the positivist settling of scores with the "pseudo-problems" of philosophy and the descent of modern thought into everyday life; in the neo-skeptical criticism of the master thinkers and great theorists of the twentieth century; or, finally - to mention after the tragedies the satire - in the campaigns of denunciation of the neopositivist *scientists-mainstream* against the epistemological metaphors and conceptual experiments of the postmodernists, campaigns that, precisely because of their comicality, are instructive as warnings against the disposition, which continues to exist in the public, to submit to *bluff-systems* of the most diverse nature, either to the suggestions of some social scientists, or to the pretensions of naive and epistemologically correct scientists to know everything better than the others.

The historical alethotope splits call attention to the fundamental conditions of the division of knowledge in human populations. As long as, in coherent groups, knowledge appears in normal-asymmetric distributions and always occurs as co-knowledge of what others know and do not know, the alethotopic enclosure remains capable of balancing its internal differences to such an extent that no split in the exclusive cognitive parties is to follow. Not even the polarization of knowing

The differences between the knowledge of women and the knowledge of men, the differences between the knowledge of warriors and the knowledge of nurses, the contrasts in maturity between the knowledge of the world of a seven-year-old and the synthesizing gaze of a seventy-year-old, offer no reason for class struggles for knowledge and profound distancing of the groups of knowledge from each other. Only in polymitic and polymathic situations, especially after configurations of peoples from heterogeneous tribes and due to mixtures of all kinds coming from cities of commercial traffic, appears, in correspondence with multicultural and multicognitive facts and data, a strong mental stress, which so strongly breaks the alethotope, that from the diffuse inclusive all-knowledge of before, parties are separated, which become progressively opaque and incomprehensible to each other, and even, at times, contemptuous and threatening.

In Greek antiquity, the dissolution of the polymythic crisis led to a far-reaching event of cultural imprint: the secession of philosophers and scientists from their communes. These new-fangled sapientists separated themselves from the collective field of knowledge, ceasing to be incarnations of popular knowledge, as were still their predecessors, the ancient rhapsodes and iatromancers, the cosmovisionary singers and the physician-seers of the cultures of truth, prior to writing. They organized themselves into a group of intelligences, in any sense of the word separated, into a caste of logical and moral experts, who maintain much closer relations with those who, of foreign provenance, have the same interests, are equally isolated, equally abstracted, than with their compatriots. As an effect of this, already in the European and Asian Antiquities, the international of the bearers of superior knowledge arises, which constitutes a first ecumenical movement, composed of deterritorialized logicians, masters of ethics, patriots of humanity or ascetics alienated from the world. With them is articulated the phenomenon of meditative or academic pacifism: this inevitable fiction of a disinterested life, mortgaged to the "pure truth", which, as if purified by a death

social, repugnant to the fabrications of knowledge that takes sides. From the specific axiom of the *academy* comes "complete freedom... in the game of argument and counter-argument". It could rightly be stated, consequently: "[...] the soul of science is tolerance."<sup>[351][352]</sup> In the same way, it is the soul of science.

The sophistic effect is understood only as opposed to the search for pure or absolute knowledge. With it, knowledge clearly enters into the service of particular interests, whether as procuring before the courts or as *consulting* for warlords. Members of the House of the People not infrequently refer to the objective Upper House with a religiously tinged awe, which is codified as admiration: tribute is thus paid to the feeling that the sapient are a kind of living dead, closer to numbers and the stars than their fellow citizens. From time immemorial, the summits of the literate ecumene have bitterly quarreled among themselves and are doomed to struggles for feelings of superiority, influence and supporters. That the great spirits agree with each other was never more, from the beginning, than a fairy tale, with which the wise men maintained their clientele.

The initial postulate of science is its asociality; its self-consciousness arises from the break with the idols of the tribe, the cave and the market. It can only develop by the transformation of the fellow citizen scientist into an outsider, who speaks to laymen in the name of an external truth. The condition of its institutionalization is the submission of the layman to a dogma, which demands to believe that the scientific sapient has to be admitted into the society of normal sapients as a deputy of an extrasocial realm of being: let us say as a mandatary of numbers, triangles, planets, marine animals, microbes, tumors and the whole remaining universe of absolute facts. As the delegate of external truths and transcendent ideas, the accredited scientist gains authority in the collective, and even power, occasionally, as long as he succeeds in putting in

the powerful on its side. That is why science can never break more than *pro forma* with the fourth type of idols, those of the theater: in reality it increases the number of the idols of the theater and claims for itself stages, on which higher coturnes are cast than anywhere else. The elegant self-exclusion of the scientific sapient possesses axiomatic evidence for the public utilization of truth during the entire era of the highly cultural organization of knowledge; the tragicomic sainete of such convictions appears on stage in the efforts of the German mandarins to play the role of an academic intellectual aristocracy in the transition to the technical era; even in view of their equalization by the National-Socialist university policy.<sup>[352]</sup> Although the alethotope of the modern organism of science has differentiated itself into hundreds of discursive spaces or disciplines in its own right, when one speaks of a discretionary object in the sense of a -logy, the sender of all senders still emerges in the background: the extramundane phallus-light, whose representatives, the men and women of science, especially the mathematically and philosophically competent ones, remain among us. *Phallus locutus, causa finita.*

How deeply this configuration of the alethotope is imprinted on the conditions of knowledge in ancient Europe (and in ancient Asia) can be inferred from the fact that the persistent cultural crisis of the twentieth century did not succeed in completely dissolving the archetypal relations between experts and laymen. Despite a growing skepticism among the population towards science, little has changed both in the distribution of the two chambers and in the forms of their mutual relationship. Only a small number of contemporaries today manage to gain a proper understanding of the untenability of the traditional distinctions and the reasons for them. That, nevertheless, belief in science is waning on a broad front can be attributed in part to the endogenous corruption of the expert community. The embarrassing and never-ending struggles of experts in the field of truths

The supposedly external, they produce the sensation in a large part of the public that the truth is no longer what it used to be. The psychosocial value of the use of the expert: the possibility of submitting to his opinion and thus putting an end to doubts, is in frank decline. B. F. Skinner's lapidary thesis: "The people are not in a position to judge the experts"<sup>[353]</sup> has long since sounded as incredible as a Chinese *fortune cookie*. Even if the phrase were accurate, it would not change the fact that we are doomed to form our own judgment of the experts. Not a few contemporaries have understood that with the choice of the expert they themselves choose the outcome of the expert's report. Thus, in social conflicts of interest (not to mention all-too-human ones), the immemorial illusion that the truly wise are the deputies of external truths is pulverized. It is no accident that more and more cases of scientific falsifications are coming to public attention (according to pessimistic estimates, three-quarters of all published research results are manipulated). But what most profoundly affects the status of the institution of science is the dissolution of the Baconian scientific paradigm, dominant between the 17th and 20th centuries, which had established, with evangelical naivety, the natural alliance between scientific and human progress.<sup>[354]</sup> The Humanist joy of Baconian rationalism had to come to naught with the emergence of the scientific-military complex during the First World War on both sides of the Atlantic (although, fully, with the indelible stain of modern physics that the events of August 6 and 9, 1945 in Japan represented). Since then, modern civilizations have been looking for a new epistemic *social contract*, which takes into account the situation of the sciences after the loss of their independence and innocence. Now mistrust is already circulating in the Great Campus.

Towards the end of the century that has just ended, a kind of epistemological movement for civic rights began to take shape, aimed at bringing experts out of exile.



The question of whether this is possible, given the progressive esotericism of research - and the increasing privacy of the results - remains an open question, which could be of decisive importance. Whether, given the progressive esotericism of research - and the increasing privacy of the results - this is possible remains an open question, which could be of decisive importance. Indeed, the re-inclusion of experts would represent the most profound change in alethotopic relations since the emergence of the great cultures. Moreover, this change, which would free both truths and their transmitters from their eccentricity with respect to the societies that host them, would be nothing other - as Bruno Latour's profound analyses have shown - than the overdue consummation of knowledge about the real life of the sciences carried out by the sciences themselves.<sup>[355]</sup>



Rebecca Horn, *The Grasshopper Choir I*, 35 typewriters, hanging from the ceiling, type at different rates. A blind man's cane directs the choir, 1991.

As far as the defense of contemplation against social interference is concerned: contemplatives will have to demonstrate whether they really cannot be valid without appealing to external and aprioric truths. Here, too, the explanation separates the explanation from the implication. It is likely that in the pending reform the solitary contemplatives will not lose as much as they might

it may seem at first glance. The time may have come when the pleasures of asociality no longer need the subterfuge of truth.

## 8. The thanatotope - The province of the divine

The human island is a place visited and affected by life already dead. Where its inhabitants gather, subtle and obstinate signs of the absent become perceptible. If mortals are affected by the absent or transcendent, it is for two reasons, which, at a closer look, refer to completely different sources. The first of these we have just characterized in speaking of the emergence of new truths in the sphere of the collective's knowledge: from time to time there appear before us shoots of the hidden, of what remains "behind" the cleared horizon, in the form of new knowledge that testify to the continuation of the almost infinite march outward, upward and downward. Since "societies" never feel secure in the face of discoveries, inventions and occurrences, human beings can and must know that there are new truths that affect them fully in their lives. This establishes a first, ontological or aletheiological transcendence. It is very clear that our present thinking and knowledge, and that which has existed up to now, is an island in the sea of a greater thinking and knowledge; whoever considers this will understand that intelligence only exists in the unevenness: its element is its own more or less. Intelligence manifests itself in that it orients itself to that by which it feels itself surpassed (contrary to the foolish structural position of critical consciousness, which directs itself to the inferior in order to feel superior, and degrades the superior in order not to have to measure itself against it).

The second source of affection for the hereafter and the absent arises from the circumstance that human beings, according to an expression of the early Greeks, are mortals; and not only in the

sense that they have death before them, but, rather, that they have their dead behind them. The second transcendence is based on the fact that in the anthropogenic island, the ancestors are kept behind their backs, or behind the back of their necks, to use a more loaded image. In all cultures, the living images of the memory of the dead are transformed into interior and exterior *images* that regulate the traffic between the living and the dead. From this world of images a psychosocial institution is made, whose task is to orderly direct the return of the dead. When the dead are represented in an orderly manner, we speak of a cult; when their deregulated reappearance is observed, we speak of the apparition of a ghost. Cult and apparition have in common that both accentuate the link to the place of transcendence: just as the cult of the ancestors cannot take place anywhere else than in the proximity of the places that one had in common with them,<sup>[356]</sup> neither can the ghost depart completely from the places and territories of those visited. This will lead to the fact that, with the beginning of the era of empires and great cultures, the dead accommodate their areas of operation to the new geopolitical circumstances. For this reason, in the 19th century, telespiritualism and even the globalization of ghostly apparitions were introduced. A suggestive example of this is Maupassant's novel *The Horla*, which describes what happens when an evil spirit of Brazilian origin extends its scope of apparition to a house in Normandy: an early reference to the phenomenon of tele-infection; to the image of modern cosmopolitanism belongs the fact that some restless dead have learned to think globally and to appear locally.

The link to the place of memory, cult and spectral cultures is first and foremost felt in the small spatial dimensions of archaic, dispersedly territorialized collectives. That is why the climate of a human island is always co-determined, in principle, by being a zone of visitation [of the dead]:<sup>[\*\*\*\*\*]</sup> a thanatotope. Hundreds of eyes look avidly from the hills to the camp of the living; restless, the latter return the

gaze, scanning the horizon, with an indeterminate feeling that there is someone there, whose good intentions it is better not to trust too much. But, given that in early cultures the phrase "God is dead" fully governs in its first formulation "The dead is god", this dimension of the coexistence of human beings with their fellows and the other can also be characterized as theotopo or district of the gods.

The god of the archaic theotopo is still, fully, the ambivalent and difficult one, to whom is inherent the ambiguity of dealing with an undetermined representative of the other side. On the one hand, he addresses his own as an ally, as a conjured and consanguineous helper of his own clan; on the other hand, as the threatening, spiteful, unpredictable and demanding one. He is, in either case, the not-just-good, perhaps even an exterminator thirsting for revenge. The contract of the dead with the living inescapably includes delicate points. Certainly, the ambivalent charge, inherent in the spirits of the ancestors, is not only to be attributed to unconscious guilt complexes of the living and corresponding expectations of revenge; the early gods are more than liberated souls, staging a private *vendetta*; they constitute, rather, amalgams of souls of the dead and anonymous forces, evoked under cult names.<sup>[357]</sup> There are many human souls who, when they die, mingle with these forces and who, thanks to their *mana*, are charged with intimidating energy (which is why an anthropological deduction of the sublime would have to go back to these energies, summarized by Kant as the sublime-dynamic). In Yahweh, the ultra-transcendent god of the late monotheistic West, very clear traits are still recognizable, in principle, that show him to be a larmoyant, distrustful, easily angered and unbalanced patriarch.<sup>[358]</sup> This applies above all to the characteristics that belong to the functional circle of his bioforce: the biblical code word for it is "blessing" (*berek*), but he was always aware of the ease with which the blessing could be transformed into a curse. In the same way, the archaic Zeus

displays attributes that correspond rather to a paranoid potentate than to the presently perfect God of the ontologists. Both the one and the other are already unmistakable composites of personal soul and natural violence; to the mode of government of both corresponded a large measure of interventionism.

An archaic god, therefore, is nothing to believe in; he is a transcendent importunate who sticks to the heels of his own. His penchant for revealing himself satisfies the conditions of *harsessement* in a psychic register. He can only be kept at a distance by punctually fulfilling his demands. Nothing that then being-there meant being inside nothingness; it meant, rather, being surrounded by a quasi-personal sticky something, which from absence claims present effects. To the "world of life" corresponds a world of the dead and spirits, relative to it, which permeates, penetrates and maintains it in stress. In this regime the gods and ancestors are experienced as non-legacies, as invisible neighbors who enter and leave our house, as if our place of settlement were the natural target of their departures and razzias. Here one can speak of proximate transcendence: of a close and difficult contact, of a circle of fear and indeterminacy that surrounds the islanders at close range.<sup>[359]</sup>

It is in the nature of things that tombs constitute the providential portals for the traffic of proximity between the hereafter and the hereafter.<sup>[360]</sup> In the case of gods of that level nothing can be trusted except their indiscretion; it is almost always advisable to reckon with their resentment of the living: resentful feelings create a toxic proximity across the boundaries between death and life. As long as human beings have to contend with the realm of closeness of the beyond, it is not so much a question for them of accessibility and knowledge with regard to gods and spirits (as at the time when the concern about the "silence of God"<sup>[361]</sup> and other symptoms of the scarcity of presence and evidence began); they are driven, on the contrary, by the concern not to have too much indiscreetly

and continuously around him visitors coming from the invisible. Thus it is understood that a god in full possession of his spectral capacity does not yet need logically trained personnel to prove his existence.

The deduction of the evil of the gods cannot be satisfied with referring to the propensity of the offended ancestors to return. The evil and fearful, which comes from outside, is so important for the understanding of the spheres of human beings because it is included in a double way in the constitution of the cultural capsules: on the one hand, human beings have only been able to become the ontological islanders they are because, in a long evolutionary stream, they managed to free themselves from the noxious environment and retreat to the anthropogenic island (the sound capsule of comfort); on the other hand, this retreat never leads to total harmlessness; cultural encapsulation never confers on the sapient more than a partial freedom from needs and aggressions. The possibility of subjugation by the outside is always present; and, above all, by violence coming from within the group. In other words: the principle of invasion infiltrates the principle of distance; the struggle between the two tendencies determines both the history of organisms and that of cultures. It can be shown how human space is configured by the effort to assert the primacy of distance over invasion or to reinstate it after defeats.







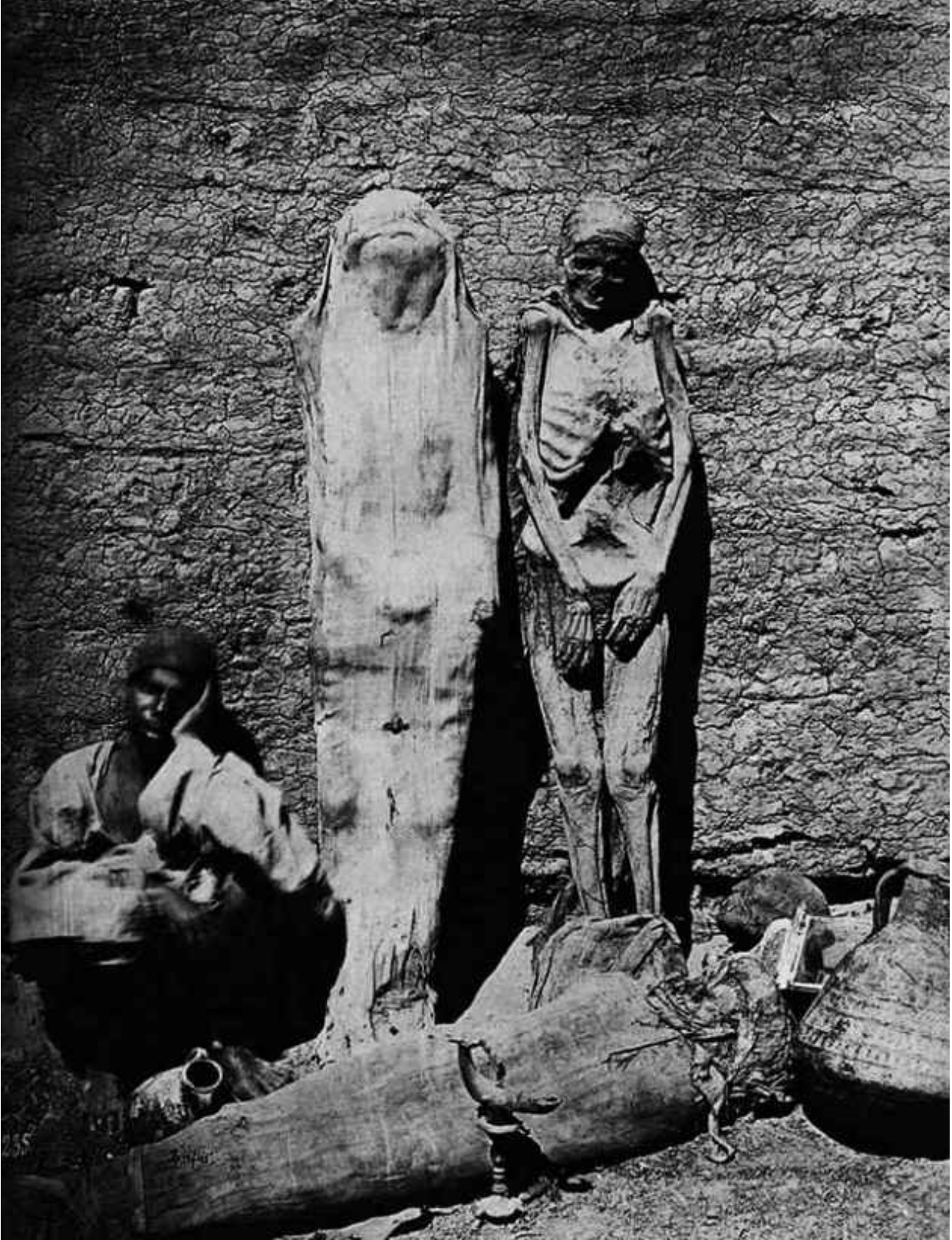
Aztec sculpture representing death.



Anatomical preparation: cyclopia probably gave rise to mythologies.  
corresponding.

The typical invasion stress materializes in three categories of intruders: on the one hand, in the ancestors and returnees, whose infiltration into the psyche of the group must be regularly reckoned with; on the other hand, in the natural catastrophes and aggressions, which break into the *physis* of the group; finally, in the new truths, which come from the inventions and discoveries of the renovators.

Since, inevitably, despite rounding in on itself, human space remains a space of invasion, it adopts the features of a cultural system of immunity. What are called systems of immunity [or immune systems] are innate or institutionalized responses to wounds or injuries. They are based on the prevention principle, which is coordinated with the invasion principle. Thus, "having experience" means, in principle, nothing other than the ability of an organism to anticipate invasions and injuries. When this foresight is translated into permanent defense measures, an immunity system formally arises, i.e. a defense mechanism, which neutralizes typical expected injuries. By means of immunity systems, learning bodies install in themselves stressors that return regularly.



Egyptian antiquities dealer with a mummy.

This corresponds exactly to the function of the theotope (which emerges from the thanatotope): the archaic gods are the introjected categories of invaders and injurers on which a given cultural group chronically relies. Each of the archaic divine figures explains an instance of stress, which gives a culture something to do. Gabriel Tarde, in his work *The Laws of Imitation*, has referred to the possible connection between the universal spread of bloodthirsty gods and the universal spread of bloodthirsty animals, in order to imply that, wherever primitive human beings were victims of wild beasts, the transformation of the fascinating wild beasts into gods of one's own culture was close at hand.<sup>[362]</sup> This would amount to a symbolic domestication of the wild beasts by their potential victim. And at the same time the xenopathic need of the primitive psyche is satisfied: the want-to-be-fascinated by sufficiently strange gods.<sup>[363]</sup> Similarly, catastrophe theorists have inferred the birth of the great sacrificial religions in the Near East from the hermeneutic-panic with which the primitive cultures of those times interpreted cosmic events, such as gigantic meteor showers on the earth and corresponding celestial phenomena.<sup>[364]</sup> From the terror of the stars arose formidable gods, who made their believers feel the abyss between the world of human beings and the beyond. This is why, for example, the Sumerian-Babylonian sign for "star" is at the same time the ideogram of God. As distant as a celestial body and as terrible as a god: these would be the conditions, then, that a sacred object must fulfill in order to act successfully in the affective register of religious masochism. From this extreme, the development of absolute objects would move towards less heteronomous god figures. Consequently, the drama of the process of civilization would be prefigured in the transformation of the gods of invasion and catastrophe into gods of creation and maintenance: a metamorphosis, which finally ended in the compendium of all partial positive gods in the monospheric constitution of the *unum verum bonum*. That

The establishment of the One constitutes the greatest document justifying the character of metaphysics as a system of immunity: starting from the fascinating xenolatry and the veneration of the carnivorous stranger in the local sacrificial cults, the hypnogenic exterior is progressively incorporated into the interior, until, in the end, only a super-dilated interior of its own remains: which, immediately, consequently, yields to entropy. Probably, the cult of the animal-domestic gods, which, like Apis, the sacred ox of the Egyptians, already show traits of gentleness and benevolence, signifies an intermediate step on the way to the imperial wisdom of the inclusiveness of the great culture. The domestication of animals precedes the domestication of the gods:<sup>[365]</sup> up to an *agnus Dei*, who allows himself to be sacrificed voluntarily out of love for reluctant human beings.



Morton Schamberg, *God*, ca. 1918.

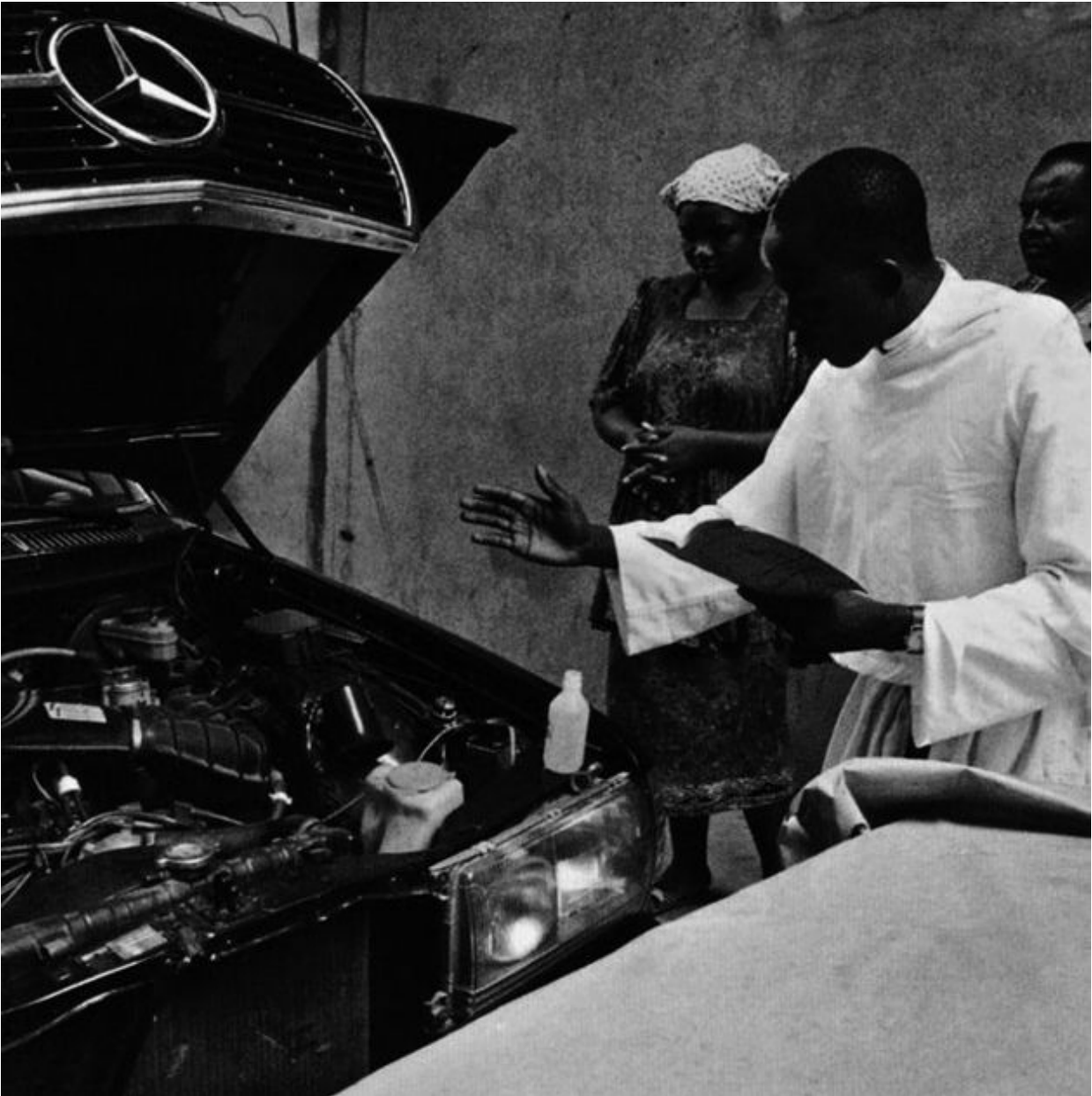
The trace of the cult of the stranger remains as long as the good god of the monotheists can be presented as sufficiently terrible; the propaganda in favor of the god of love cannot weaken, without further ado, the ancient *timor facit deos*. Only the god of the philosophers and of



the Neoplatonic mystics dissolves its trembling fascination into pure, if obscure, familiarity. It becomes a kind of reasonable irradiation from the background and fades away to become an idle god, which manifests itself as the unnecessary one. Of the xenotheistic mood of the ancients, in the *high culture* of Modernity, which no longer needs gods, only a formal remnant has remained: xenophilic chic and philosophical allolatriy.<sup>[366]</sup> Among the more recent god-bills after Nietzsche (whose Dionysos was sufficiently horrible), only the young Heidegger held to a dark, xenolatrous god, though only in the form of a residual god, of death.<sup>[367]</sup>

In order to keep the archaic gods, conscious of their hunting reserve, at a distance, the function of the priest appears in the primitive theotopos: as the border policeman of the sphere of the living, he is entrusted with the task of restricting incursions from the other side. The surest method of satisfying the ulterior ones, who demand their share, seems to have been oblation, which expresses almost an elementary idea of the archaic theotopians. All of them were accustomed to believe that the payment of a tax to the dead and foreigners belonged to their contracted obligations: the first delegations of treasury were, no doubt, the Paleolithic sacrificial stones, on which the apprehensive fear satisfied their tributes. But where there is obligation, choice cannot be far away. At first and for a long time the share of the dead was reimbursed in the form of food and fresh blood; as if it were evidence that specters and gods hunger and thirst. Later tributes to an exalted afterlife could be satisfied in the form of votive offerings and communions; charitable contributions also became customary; certain gods and goddesses seemed to listen, rather, to the dialect of self-mutilation of their admirers, for example the Great Mother of the Indians, who to this day allows homage to be paid to her by the sacrifice of the testicles of her worshippers (there are apparently still nearly a hundred thousand members of the caste of castrated holy men who live on the fringes of Indian "society"), but the gods and goddesses of the Indian goddesses are still not the only ones to be paid tribute.

as prostitutes, soothsayers and wedding dancers). Gods with the conviction of masters accepted more willingly the transformation of the offering into submission. Sometimes, the sublime seemed to find a certain suicidal gesture not entirely unpleasant in their own: a tendency that was adopted by radical sects and exploited as raw material for kamikaze asceticism. With the economies of the temples a first policy of redistribution of the contributive spirit was set in motion; the theotopo then becomes a solidarity fund, and, next to the primitive aid to the poor, it serves, not in the last instance, to the material foundation of the priestly estate. In view of these circumstances it is legitimate to say that culture is nothing other than the history of the internalization of the sacrificial offering.<sup>[368]</sup>



Leo Regan, Brother Emmanuel Patrick blesses a new car in Lagos, 1996.

The permanent linking of the "world of life" to the neighboring realm of the dead and the gods mobilizes capacities attached to border traffic. In modern diction they are called mediating dispositions or, even more anachronistically, aptitude for therapeutic professions. This designates the capacity to tune in to communications of the indirectly given. So many mediations, so many talents. When the dawn dawned among the Greeks

evening of ancient mediumism, Plato - as one who is already on his way and acquires a panoramic vision - offered a synopsis of the special theotopic talents and proposed to distinguish four types of affection for emissions from beyond. In the dialogue *Phaedrus*, Socrates begins to speak of the benefits of enthusiasm, thanks to which gifted human beings offer themselves as mouthpieces of the gods: gods who, of course, have long since not represented mere camp and tribal spirits, but have already become true gods of the people and have been elevated to a beyond of median rapture, to the Olympian semi-transcendence, let us say. It is a question, in principle, of the three fundamental mantic functions, which once seemed to depend on informational possessions: first, the faculty of seeing into the future and predicting things to come; next, the ability to find means and ways of healing in case of illness; and, finally, poetic inspiration, regarding which the ancients were clear that it could only be brought into effect by the whisper of the muses or of Apollo himself. (Thus it may be understood why poetry and music existed, at first, as theotopic institutions, and only after the emancipation of the spheres of the Muses from the religious cult did they become practices in their own right, with no direct connection to an inspiring and ordering beyond). Beyond the disciplines of ancient mediumism, Plato introduces a fourth enthusiasm, which he interprets as being moved by love for beautiful ideas, contemplated before birth and remembered throughout life. Since then, the fire of philosophical mania must be guarded in a special altar: in the academic desk, before which the logophilic community gathers.

There is no doubt that philosophy, as Plato conceived it, meant a decisive modification of human behavior in the theotope: it put into circulation a new, albeit minority, way and manner of giving solution to the neighborhood of the "world of life" with the world of spirits, now transformed into the heaven of ideas. For this reason, we must attribute theotopic qualities to the

academies, as later to the churches, in their original mode of being. The forms of knowledge, which will be cultivated in them, served the attempt to reduce possessions to convictions. Only Modernity has disenchanting, if not the world, then the academies.

As far as the Christian Church, the great theotopy of the West, is concerned, the idea was still alive in her for a long time that from time to time human beings, as means from a not too distant beyond, have special abilities such as clairvoyance, healing power or eloquence; what St. Paul had to say about these "gifts of grace" is limited to the requirement of their reasonable subordination to the worship of the Lord.<sup>[369]</sup> That also under Christian auspices the charisms are easily transformed again into evil possessions, is shown not only by the innumerable evangelistic sects, for which the United States, the paradise of manic communes since ever, is known and sadly famous; in them Christ is transformed into a successful demon with strong monetary powers, if he is not introduced into life as a miraculous healer in front of a camera in action. The relapse is also observed, year after year, in Christian pilgrims from all over the world to Jerusalem, who are disturbed by the scenes of the Passion and occasionally have to resort to the empathy of Jewish psychiatrists.

In many cultures, especially in those that did not undergo any paradigm shift in favor of monotheism, the idea of the mediating relationship of designated and chosen human beings with the other side has never lost its validity. Some African "societies" believe to this day that children who do not learn to speak, or who stop speaking until a certain time, is because they would prefer to be with the ancestors, so they can only be persuaded to live with the living by trying to convince them of the advantage of having been born.<sup>[370]</sup> In the eyes of their parents and curators these "dead-children" are not "autistic"; they live elsewhere, better acclimatized than among human beings, from

so that to settle them here you have to loosen the tie that binds them to the other side.

The idea that there may be evil spirits capable of penetrating the bodies of strangers is so widespread in many cultures that it is legitimate to regard it as elementary thinking. According to the believers, such an invasion serves to turn human beings into demons' automatons. Since intruders do not stop at the dead, the ancient Chinese sometimes sealed the mouth and anus of the dead with wax or jade plugs. In certain ancient Germanic tribes, the legs of the dead were tied behind their backs and buried upside down in order to make it difficult for them to return.

As we have observed, the interest of the living in the world of the dead is largely conditioned by the confusion of the two transcendences with which the human world is bounded: since human beings are not only neighbors of their dead, but also of the horizon, behind which, according to the most common assumption, unveiled truths or transcendent ideas are held, the idea that the two neighborhoods interfere, indeed, that they form one and the same space, may seem plausible to them. From this it follows for them that the dead enjoy access to the undisclosed; and, along with them, also the unborn, as the Platonic myth of the soul informs us. The idea that everything will become clear, at the latest, *post mortem* is based on the firm association between being dead and the attainment of a definitive knowledge.

Once the intertwining of the transcendence of the unknown with that of the dead has been consummated, the idea of evoking the dead in order to obtain information of the beyond-definitive imposes itself irresistibly. Indeed, according to this scheme, and given that the dead have everything behind them, they have a greater share in the truths that are in the past perfect: those who have lived as subjects have also lived in what has been objectively, in the essential, as metaphysics understands it, at home. In this very opportune confusion have their origin innumerable

necromantic practices, ranging from simple oracles of the dead to the evocation of the dead from the other world. The most effective example of the latter is offered by the appearance of the deceased Darius in Aeschylus' tragedy *The Persians*: rising from the realm of the dead, he reveals his theological interpretation of the Persian defeat (not caring, in doing so, to become, in so doing, the chief witness to the Greek belief in the unity of the afterlife of truth and the realm of the dead). In contrast, the greatest of the heroes often have to descend personally into the underworld to receive instructions there about their future destiny. Let us not forget that the foundational announcement of Westernism, the prediction of Roman domination of the world, was enunciated by the late Anchises to Aeneas, on his way to the orca: one day it would be Rome's business to rule the peoples, to respect the feelings of the allies (*parcere subiectis*) and to reduce (*debellare*) the proud (*superbos*).<sup>[371]</sup> [The Roman heroes, in contrast, have to go down to the underworld in order to receive instructions about their future destiny.](#)

From what has been said, it follows that the contours of the theotope are shaken when the forms of relationship with the dead or the methods of attaining knowledge change in a "society". Both of these things happen in contemporary civilization, which buries its dead in another way and achieves its truths in another way. Interest in the affairs of the other world diminishes in Modernity, first of all because the dead can hardly still be called upon for information about things to come; their opinion is certainly less useful when it is a question of establishing technical rules for the management of the world of the future. The world of the living and the world of the dead have become so dissimilar that the deceased, even if they wanted to, would have no advice to give to the living. Conversely, the ability to ask the dead meaningful questions has practically disappeared among contemporaries. For the pursuit of knowledge, the detour through transcendence has become superfluous. The immemorial confusion of the beyond of the dead with the ultra-empirical "reservoir" of ideas and truths that have not been revealed has been

disappearing without violence in the course of the last century, without the inhabitants of human space being particularly aware of it.

Thus, the twilight of the gods entails a twilight of the dead. The common destiny of the invisible is to become insignificant. We turn our gaze to the dead as to the dead without a will, to ancestors from whom there is not much to inherit either for better or for worse: discharged batteries that no longer fascinate us enough to enlighten us from the other side. Of the last undead, who swarm ghostly in their neurotic descendants, a psychoanalysis that has realized that it is more a funerary enterprise of parents and ancestors than a form of healing is concerned. The use value of the great dead, the classics of collective memory, is limited to the role of securing a common past for a group of civilized people. The past now serves as a base camp, from which the futuristic civilization departs to its projects.<sup>[372]</sup> The past serves as a base camp, from which the futuristic civilization departs to its projects.<sup>[372]</sup>

Whoever seeks epigraphs to the spiritual situation of the present must look at the current constitution of the theotope, configured by monotheistic representations in the Western world until the turn of the last century, and marked by its decadence since then. This is particularly true of the two religions in the museum, Judaism and Christianity, which have been condemned for some time now to act as stewards of the legacy in their own homes. In both it can be observed how a well-institutionalized religious tradition can successfully transform itself into the substitute religion of itself (with the plausible excuse that, in any case, the immanent original substituted is better than any secular substitute religion). That such administration need not be sterile is shown by the fact that, in the course of the twentieth century, Jewish and Christian theologians, in classifying heredity, made a discovery of which not much is said if the suspicion is expressed that it might become one of the most momentous facts of the age to come.





Study of the Talmud during diamond polishing.

It is about the discovery of a third transcendence, which would be neither that of the dead nor that of the hidden truths: the transcendence of the human other. Transcendence that is not directly affected by the inversion of the phrase "the dead is God" in the de "God is dead", more accommodated to the times, because the otherness of the other is not deduced, in principle, from theological or thanatological sources; although connections with classical transcendences continue to reappear, however (especially in the case of Lévinas and his school). In principle, it is based exclusively on its own idiosyncrasy, on the claim to pre-eminence and on the non-assimilability of co-existent existence. That God is also dead does not deprive the other of his secret, his inaccessibility, his moral right. It seems as if the evanescent contours of the historical theo-thanatopes were outlined behind, conceived of as churches,

God's empires or as chosen nations,<sup>[373]</sup> a space of succession, which would continue to support the metaphysical tensions of the zone of dead and truths of the time, now under non-metaphysical auspices: a space that, consequently, would have to be called xenotope.<sup>374]</sup> Whether this is sufficient to ensure a minimum level of spiritual openness in immanence remains, for the time being, an open question. In any case, coexistence with others belongs to the trivial endowments of existence, without this having so far given rise to exaltations, apart from the mystical outbursts of courtly love and the principles of the cult of the stranger in xenolatrous religions. Is it possible that it is precisely everyday thou-consciousness that becomes the cornerstone of a modified experience of transcendence?

Some Jewish representatives of the turn to xenotopic thinking make no secret of their skepticism in the face of merely formal pity for the other. They give little credence to the idyll of the dialogical one-with-the-other. From the outset, they portray the other, whatever the case may be, as the murdered one, who affects and distresses me with the question of how it is possible that I had something more important to do at the time of the crime than to help him. Here, xenology, which assumes the heritage of theology, substitutes the ancestor for the murdered neighbor. The affection for spirits takes on a new form, putting in the mouth of every victim a last question to his non-helpers: a demand for information about the reason for the unprovided help, for the obscured feeling of coexistence, for the willful blindness, for the resigned letting things happen. Dealing with ghosts translates into an examination of conscience, not from the inside, as in preparation for confession, but from the outside, as in a trial. The xenological interrogation insists that we delve into indifference and its motives: in the unwillingness to help, the inability to help, the being-bound-to-another-part, perhaps in greater or lesser tacit connivance with the violent.

If one wants to get a picture of the potentials of xenotopic thinking, one has to consider that with it one gets a new description of the great future of the theotope and *eo ipso* of the realm of the dead. A description that makes it possible to morally explain the zone of encounter with the other as a modification of the coexistence of human beings with their fellow human beings and the other: the other is the one to whom one always owes something, the one to whom one always feels somewhat guilty. This twist allows a retrospective look at the origin of historical religions in the bad conscience: a diagnosis that can be deduced from René Girard's analyses, which obviously seek to situate the reason for the disturbance in front of the other in the memory of real bad behaviors against him (which leads to a superficialized deduction of the fascinogenic ambivalence). At the same time, coexisting in the sharing of a world is explained as a partly reciprocal, partly asymmetrical relationship, of being-responsible-for-one-another and responding-to-one-another in an anthroposphere of already imprecise limits.

After Hegel, whose views on the structure of the struggle for recognition were developed philosophically and socially during the 20th century, a little-known Nietzsche provided with the phrase "The thou is older than the I" the decisive statement of moral philosophy since the beginning of the 20th century.<sup>[375]</sup> While Martin Buber wanted to place the I-thou relation alongside the I-that relations as an original comparable form, Max Scheler, following Nietzsche, has taught the primacy of the human disposition in dependence on the "sphere of the other": "Thou-ness is the most fundamental category of human thought".

<sup>[376]</sup> It is also new to point out more clearly than ever the extent to which coexistence involves not only the cooperation of the able, but also shared suffering with the already-not-able. "*Our society is also an association in our mortality.*" "*The suffering of the other is the origin of my own reason.*"<sup>[377]</sup> The burden character of the coexistence of human beings with human beings appears; with the side effect that it gains in profile the

The overburdening of individuals by their corresponding involvement in the needs and threats of others, both in the abstract and in the concrete. In this situation, the New Testament question "Who is my neighbor?" must be updated on a global level, this time in the sense of "Who should be helped?" or "Who should be placed first on the waiting list of the poor?"

In view of the progressive explanation of the coexistential facts, it is not to be excluded that the reverse of universalized moral responsibility comes to light: xenophile and Samaritan thinking is allied with an unscrupulous mediating pragmatism, which does not back down from any means to get the super-organized *lobby* of virtual and actual victims a place in the sun of subsidies. The humanitarianist strategy leads to short-term success when gimmicky images mobilize the feelings of those who are willing to help or when the addressee is approachable or chronically available because of historical guilt; as expressed, for example, by the formulation *white guilt, black power*. If victimological means of pressure are used too extensively, loss of sensitivity to the constant pleading of the other's advocates is predictable. Hypermoralism works in favor of this insistence and thus of moral entropy.

Whatever the staging of the tensions between the spokesmen of the cause of the murdered and the living or survivors: it cannot be prevented that xenology, too, the latest proclamation of anti-naturalism, will soon or late run up against the wall of biospheric facts. What one is accustomed to call after Husserl the world of life always encompasses, in reality, a world of life and a world of the dead: all attempts by cultures to discriminate the side of death do nothing but always raise the tension of absurdity under which civilizations lie. The more aggressively biopositivism is staged, the more paradoxical becomes the fact that it is true that death is carried in

to all of us. The rising *life sciences* represent the most recent version of this *management* of the absurd. Insofar as they claim to know everything about life, in order to take an even stronger stand for life, or for what they call life, they obscure the fact that biology, according to the nature of its object, is only possible as bio-thanatology, and the *life sciences* only as *life-and-death-sciences*. Whoever speaks of biotopes without taking into account thanatopes has sold out to disinformation.

It is uncertain whether human beings in secular cultures would cope with such a consideration. It is one thing to develop an *ars moriendi* for oneself and an art of farewell with respect to the next ones, and another to appreciate the participation of death in the vital processes in its just measure theoretically. Whoever conceives the Earth as the integral bio-thanatope of humanity gets, in any case, views of a totality that is rather monstrous than sublime. The organ of the monstrous has unfolded throughout the twentieth century in the form of ecology: the only authentic novelty, along with cybernetics and plurivalent logic, in the cognitive landscape of our time. It is the further consummation of the monstrous in the form of a science of balances and imbalances in vital processes beyond human perspectives.

When ecology and cultural theory meet they become possible strange propositions: it is now expressible that the capital function of all communication between human beings is "to deny intersubjectively meaninglessness and death."<sup>[378]</sup> Depth has its price. Since such things have been written, the human alliance against the outside is infected with ecological knowledge, the business of negation stands on weakened feet. As a result of the spread of ecology as a dominant way of thinking, sooner or later it will become clear to many that the last chapter of the history of the spirit belongs to the friction between the absolutism of the human and the indifference of biospheric processes with respect to the interests of the human.

human beings. Nietzsche's postulate, that a higher culture would have to provide the human being with a double brain or two brain chambers, one to perceive science, the other to perceive non-science, is confirmed in an unforeseen way. Indeed, human beings of the future have to reconcile their own vital impulse with the systemic vision of the biosphere, for which life and death represent only two aspects of the same event. This double transhuman knowledge shows the human-binding form of wisdom in biologically enlightened civilizations. Wisdom designates the *modus vivendi* that makes a knowledge suitable for life, of which, precisely because of life, one could not have any knowledge at all.

Assuming that the population of *homo sapiens* stabilizes on Earth towards the end of the 21st century at a maximum limit of 10 billion individuals, we would have a bio-thanatotope in sight, which, for a very civilized mortality rate of 1.5 percent, that is, a life expectancy of 75 years for the entire species, would result in no less than 150 million cases of death.

The "natural" *per annum*; this would correspond to more than seven epochs of National Socialist terror or thirty Hitler holocausts a year, or even four Stalin eras or three fatal Mao-Tsetungian reforms.<sup>[379]</sup> The monstrous thing about such figures is that they would belong to the statistics of a mankind at peace. Neutral events demand that one should deal with them in reasonable passivity, even if it were in the posture of the *homme révolté*, who also does not forgive nature to take its course. Faced with such situations, one must understand that it would be absurd to pretend to be responsible for them. If one wanted to sharpen again the worn-out concept of human dignity, its definition would read: take good note of these disproportions and act as if what is important were each additional day of life of each human individual.

## 9. The nomotope - First constitutional theory

Just as each group involuntarily generates its own self-enclosure in its own sound world, as if it kept hidden behind a fence of incomprehensibility, so is every cultural unit spontaneously isolated by its *modus vivendi* or its normative constitution. By this we designate a fact for which there is no simple and convincing concept, but of which expressions such as customs, culture, law and law, rules, relations of production, language games, forms of life, institutions, habitus provide perspectives of different nuances. All human insulating groups, which are accredited in generational processes, and therefore exist in their own time, participate in a little explored secret of stabilization, but whose existence is not difficult to understand: they generate in themselves an architecture of norms, which shows sufficient over-personality, greatness and resistance to torsion for users to recognize it as valid law, as binding statute and constrictive legal reality. This moral ether possesses, to speak with Hegel, the characteristics of objective spirit: it is pre-ordained to the individual, as something that is maintained, untouched, in the face of his arbitrariness, and which, like the names of the gods, the myths and rituals of a tribe, transforms itself stably, or only imperceptibly, transmitting itself from one generation to the next. Mortals come and go, the forms, the laws remain. At first it is, above all, the objectivity of the ritual that is experienced so strongly that it might seem that the

peoples were mere empirical *troupes*, assembled by the gods for the sole purpose of maintaining the forms. Pavel Florensky, the Russian priest executed by Stalin, held the dogma that the ordinances of Orthodox worship were older than the world.

For this way of seeing things, customs or institutions are a more real, objective and necessary dimension than human beings, who have to live in accordance with them. Plato's proto-images appear as institutions transferred to heaven, more luminous and real than any individual life, which is consumed under them. An echo of that objectivism surrounds even the train timetables of the German railroads, which, exempt from empirical delays, are displayed in the stations in their evangelical yellow-departures and white-arrivals, protected in showcases and illuminated at night, as if to testify that the stability of the world depends on the railwayman's devotion to the minutes. This profession of faith in punctuality has nothing to do with secondary virtues; it is a cool reflection of the metaphysical conviction that behind every fact there is a prescription and behind every prescription, the seal of a higher truth. So, therefore: *Omne ens est bonum*. How could anything be if it had not been entrusted, moreover, to be as it is? The officer offers the lady the right arm simply because it is done that way and not just because he carries the sword on the left, as the functional explanation implies. We write from left to right because according to the knowledge of the Greek immolator priests happy omens appear on the right side. Roosters crow at dawn because their day is synchronized with the rhythm of decent people: and the latter like, like their creator, the early hour work. The Stoics summed up the belief in the power of rules in the thesis that being and being-in-order mean the same thing. In 1949 Wittgenstein noted: "Culture is a rule of order. Or it presupposes a rule of order."<sup>[380]</sup> We call the field of action of such rules the nomotope.



Whoever stops on the human island observes that its group of inhabitants is subject to a local tension of rules: a tension that is of elementary significance for social statics. That the normative climate of a group is positively related to its stability, that is, to its ability to survive, is an early intuition of the sages and elders of all peoples: none of the archaic survival communities has ever been able to allow itself to take lightly its customs, its forms, its dogmas. Only the theory of contemporary society, systemic and deconstructively inspired, has learned to admit that every set of rules is within a network of tolerable exceptions.<sup>[381]</sup> Nietzsche, in his moral-critical analyses, deduced the *morality of custom* from its capacity to command absolutely, without any possibility of rejoinder: the meaning of all traditional demands for self-mastery consists in letting custom and tradition reveal themselves as unconditionally dominant.<sup>382]</sup> Gabriel Tarde has similarly noted: "The most despotic and meticulous government... is custom".<sup>[383]</sup> That which dominates unconditionally is valid as an absolute end, or as what is good, just and honorable beyond the opinion of specific commentators. Cicero spoke *implicitly* of the superiority of these values when he said that we are born for justice; *nos ad iustitiam esse natos*.<sup>[384]</sup> *Iustitia* does not only refer here, certainly, to the goddess of equidistance, who wears the blindfold over her eyes and the scales in her hand. In her name shines the archaic prejudice in favor of the legitimate power of forms, procedures, and customs in general. Seen in this light, the formalisms that structure the Roman judicial process are surrounded by an aura of inspired good workmanship, similar to that of the customs with which the truffle market of Carpentras<sup>[385]</sup> or the opening ceremony of the great sumo competitions in Nagoya are conducted. In one case as in the other, and in any similar case, it is a question of the authority, the donor of the background, of the social syntax. The relative calm of the background offers to our observation the mobility and colorfulness

of the figures. Only recent sociology has been able to bring to the fore that questions of systemic stability come into play in such considerations. Talcott Parsons listed the ability to maintain structures, *pattern maintenance*, among the primary tasks of any unitary social configuration. In our context we should speak of moral statics, since it is part of a sufficiently complete theory of human islands to be able to describe their consolidation by internal normative tensions.



Priestly ordination in Rome.

It should be made clear from the outset that in the case of such considerations we are dealing with strictly dated ways of looking at things: that they were probably not possible before the middle of the 20th century, after the repertoire of classical logics of form and architecture had been expanded by revolutionary new static principles, even in alternatives to thinking in static concepts in general. We think, on the one hand, of the

invention of the first *air structures* and pneumatic domes by Walter W. Bird, Victor Lundy, Frei Otto and other avant-garde architects, both in the United States and in Europe. Bird, Victor Lundy, Frei Otto and other avant-garde architects, both in the United States and in Europe, an architectural form that by means of a slight overpressure of the air inside the pavilion arrived at the principle of the self-supporting structure, without walls; on the other hand, in the *tension integrity structures* - called tensegrities, in short - developed by Buckminster Fuller: floating aerial creations, integrated by the internal tensions of a lattice, which dissolve the principle of the supporting wall and replace it with the consistency of the tensile stresses between bars connected by cables.



Theo Botschuijver/Jeffrey Shaw/ Sean Wellesley-Miller, *Airground*, 1968.

For a sociological theory that does not use the expression system contemplatively, but is interested in its operative development in the construction of machines, houses and institutions, these innovations are of importance because they make explicit, in a way

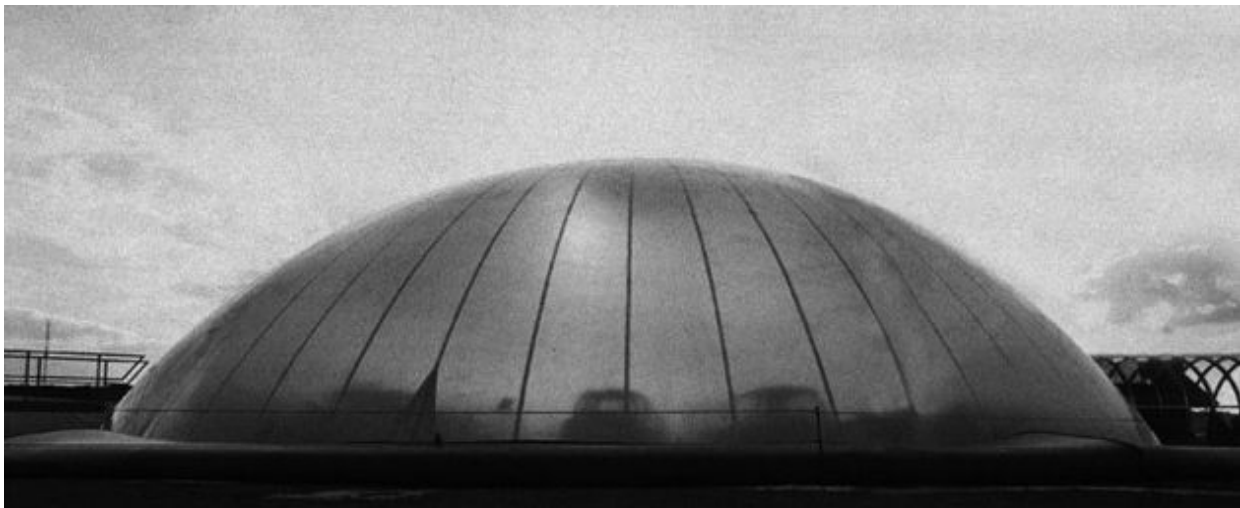
unprecedented in the history of ideas and technology, the sense of systemic structures, the security of structures whose stability is maintained by adaptation to the mobile. The explanation of the building and of roofed places by means of calculated statics leads, by both straight and crooked paths, to the explanation of the corporate and stable in general, and from there to the explanation of the institutional, state, systemic from its architectural and logical-formal side. Statics has become a First Science; *Ge-stell-Theory* [*Ge-stell-Theorie*], a primary ethics. It is a modern theory *par excellence*, insofar as it deals with earthquake-resistant forms and exceptional cases. It is not for nothing that one of the most important philosophers of law today, Pierre Legendre, speaks of law and the State as magnitudes that can only be sustained by means of a moral scaffolding or normative construction (*échafaudage, montage*).<sup>[386]</sup> If the two words, State and statics, come from the same source, may this remind us of the inner nexus between the two arts of construction, the construction of norms and the construction of buildings. But how to think *status*, in either case, since the logic of forms of modern architecture has arrived at conceptions of stability that are beyond anything that could be imagined by classical statics?



Axel Thallemer for Festo Corporate Design, *Airtecture Hall*, 1996. Air-filled roof beams and Y-shaped side supports, material: vitroflex covering.

To answer this question requires, in principle, a detour. Let us recall that, in its medieval use, the Latin expression *ordo* could designate both the suitability of a good organization in general and an Order as an individual, well-organized form of spiritual life. St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Ignatius: these and other proper names testify that the rules of an Order can be identified as the work of individual authors, so that these *regulae* appear as arbitrarily as any other syntax established by human beings. Nevertheless, they are intended to be and must be as effective as only a rule surrounded by the nimbus of what is necessary and zealously observed can be. Thus the *ordo* is at once the way of life and the set of rules on which it is based (systemists might go even further and claim that also "*circumstantial* contraventions of a rule" are a constituent part of *ordo-life*).<sup>[387]</sup> Thus, by analogy, it can be recognized that Plato's Academy was an Order,

for both his *Republic* and his *Laws* remained programmatic writings, which did not serve for the foundation of a real republic. Wittgenstein's fulsome remark does justice to the unfolding of the concept of order, since, with regard to given cultures, it emphasizes what is organized individually and concretely in the manner of an order, as well as highlighting the rule followed by the organization as such. This double meaning could be reproduced in these two phrases: "culture is a text" and "culture is syntax". From the point of view of the architecture of the communitarian, this would lead to the thesis: "culture is a building" and "culture follows a rule of space creation". Whenever the human island adopts profiles, a tension of rules appears that testifies that there is an internal regulation in force: rather imperceptible to its members (apart from exceptional situations), perceptible or surprising to outsiders, and a reason to reflect on the spirit of institutions and on the institutionalization of the spirit, for philosophers.



Axel Thallemer for Festo Corporate Design, *Airquarium*, 2000 (32 m diameter, 8 m high).  
It is stabilized by a ballast tank around it.

In the light of the above-mentioned architectural innovations, the most archaic human communities can be compared to overpressure domes or tensegrity domes. The principle of stabilization by reciprocal load or atmospheric pressure is at work in these domes. The

The integration of a group, its modelic stability, its symbolic reproducibility depends on its capacity to place its members under a repetitive, culture-enabling pressure. The generation of specifically group-specific overpressure, that is, of a pulling tension that unites the members of the group with one another and engages them in typified tasks, is achieved, in the first place, by means of preformulated expectations of all with respect to all and from individual to individual. The linguistic form of which is intimidation, as well as escalation to threat in case of conflict and disappointment. Therefore, collectives have not been adequately described as long as it is not shown through which channels the rivers of orders flow within them. To their moral structure belongs an agreement on who orders whom, and who and when is authorized to threaten whom. Sovereign is the one who holds the right to threaten. A threat is defined scientifically and strategically as "armed advice";<sup>[388]</sup> sociologically it would be described as a recommendation reinforced by sanction.



Yutaka Muraka, *Pneumatics in Pneumatics*, World Exhibition in Japan, 1970.

From the point of view of Buckminster Fuller's new logic of forms - or, better, from the perspective that can be gained by his moral analogies - "societies", both primitive and developed, are tensegrities of expectations, i.e. multiplicities of housing conditions and regulated actions, which are consolidated by intimations and threats. In this context it is striking that the widespread way of speaking of "expectation pressure" is based on a borrowing from a surpassed statics, because normalized group expectations do not manifest any pressure character, but act by traction, [\*\*\*\*\*] insofar as the call of ambition and self-esteem, as well as mimetic temptation, can be ascribed to this mode of force transmission. Only in the face of manifest threat do analogues of pressure come into play, which are therefore reserved for the state of exception. Culture is, in principle and most of the time, the non-leaving-free of the tensions created by the tractive effort, by which the members of a collective bind themselves to the group's own regularities. The validity of law and custom within the group exerts a permanent self-stressing stimulus on the members and places the collective in a symbolic vibration, which can best be compared to the endogenously stabilized body temperature of a warm-blooded living being. What blood warmth brings in organisms is produced in social units by stressful issues. Since groups are always projecting something, be it jobs or parties, wars or elections, and since they constantly feel provoked by something, be it natural catastrophes, enemy actions, crimes or scandals, they constantly subvert the thematic material they use, in order to agree on their conjuncture or, rather, on their immunity situation or their stress status. With the help of its current themes, the group measures its own fever; by its fever it recomposes its operative unit as a provocative context, endogenously closed.



The collectives are agitated in a continuous, internally generated excitement, which makes normative stress their normal tone. It belongs to "the hidden health"<sup>[389]</sup> of groups that they most often do not notice and barely thematize their nomotopic background tension: only in their anarchic margins do they sometimes speak, with precarious expressiveness, of the revocation of obedience to norms and of the will to perform.<sup>[390]</sup> Even ancient China was no exception to this rule, even though from the point of view of outside observers it seemed to bow to an unparalleled despotism of customs; to the Chinese mode of being-in-the-world belonged a training to consider one's own disciplinary tension as the most normal thing in the world. Between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, Western visitors perceived something similar in the implacable formalism of Japanese customs. The repression of normative stressors to the subliminal occurs because the group embeds its expectations of action in routines.

A routine is the form of the expected effort, emptied inside by repetition and thus made imperceptible. In his fundamental anthropological theory, Arnold Gehlen has shown the outstanding importance of standardized expectations of effort, summarizing them in the concept of institutions: understanding by institution the permanent compromise achieved between loads and unloads; the institution is the prototype of a "stabilized tension".<sup>[391]</sup> This concept of institutions can be interpreted as a plea in favor of keeping order unconscious, in which a conception of the unconscious directed at the latent, not the repressed, comes into play. (But just as the personal unconscious knows of a return of the repressed, so the latent, of a return of the paradoxical). It is true that, according to this way of conceiving things, individuals have to devote their entire existence to the orders in which they live, but, at the same time, these orders spare individuals the effort of expressly deciding both for themselves and for a personal choice. Insofar as they burden,

unload. In so far as they discharge, they release energies for a new engagement in common tasks or *munera*. Here again the fundamental importance of the concept of rule comes to light, for it is the objectivity of the rule that frees both individuals and groups from the misery of formlessness, as well as from the demand for constant originality.



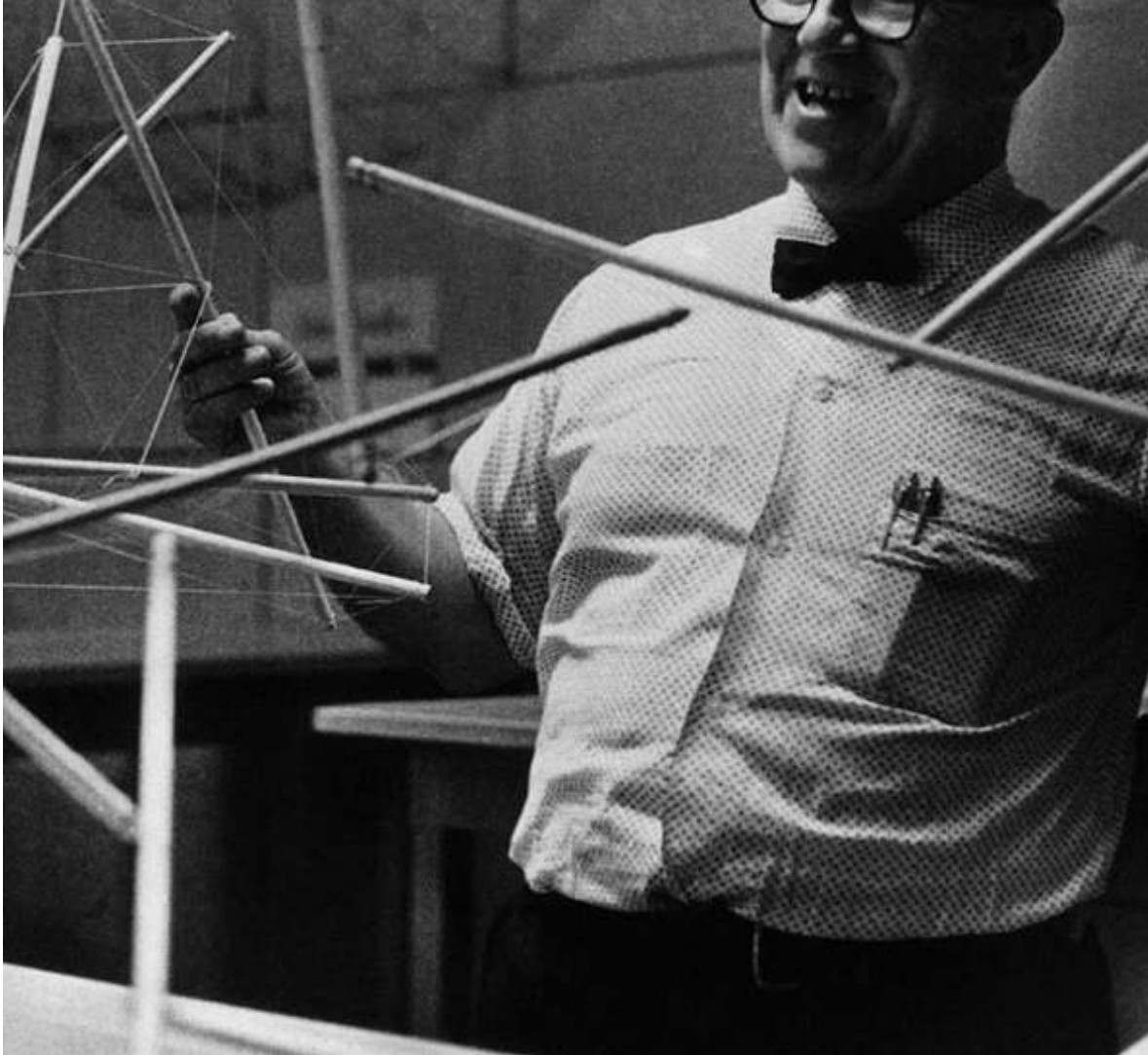
R. Buckminster Fuller, *The Neckless Dome*, 1950.

But, however much Gehlen's theorem of institutions, as effective powers of order in the background, corresponds to a widespread mood in the twentieth century, which prefers to represent orders as discrete infrastructures and the guardians of order as functionaries, who best fulfill their function by serving and keeping quiet, it only allows for a skewed perception of the fundamental nomotopic relations. That is, the nomotope

also possesses most of the time a visible side, contrary to the propensity to conceal power and dominance in deaf routines. As a self-impressive, self-intimidating magnitude, the group, insufflated by norms, lives from the performative force of rituals and its impulse to manifest itself. In this impulse is the source of political majesty. It is, above all, the legal system which, since the days of the Romans, has displayed a peculiar theatricality. Just as power cannot manage without its epiphanies, be they festivities, oaths of office, military parades, symbols of sovereignty or embarrassing protocols, neither can the law without a precise staging of its ceremonial; especially in the case of jurisdiction, which in its procedural rules of play constitutes a compromise between instruction of a cause and theater. Both serve to make visible the authority, creator of order, which has always been not content to give individuals a motivational push in the back, unconsciously, so to speak. Every culture has its Tarpeian rock. At the time when in Europe the legislative power, the power that gives laws or stages them, most clearly showed its dogmatic potential, in the 17th century, it spoke unreservedly of law as a "theater of truth and justice". From his dogmatism he derived a capacity for rigor and severity which he claimed to be seen by all; and which, after the implosions of the superego in the second half of the 20th century, can only be perceived as an incomprehensible scandal or as a petulant vestige of the era of the personalist regime. Only a few ancient-European doctrinaire theologians retain a sense for "majesty."<sup>[392]</sup> They would have to be the first to understand by <sup>393]</sup> Even kings are admirable when they graciously renounce to destroy us. From the decadent products of the horror of majesty there developed from Romanticism the political aesthetics of the risk of life, which was mystified by the philosophy of the bourgeoisie, after

Burke and Kant, as the capacity of the human mind to judge about sublime or thrilling objects. Nevertheless, the allusion to the habitualized and almost unconscious side of staying in the rule space has a good objective foundation. The objectivity and background character of the rule avoids the misunderstanding that the "customs" or laws had to serve the self-expression of individuals. What is modernly called expression only became possible against the background of symbolic institutions, which became obvious (therefore also incomprehensible) and cultural automatisms: either because it assimilates them (gets something to possess it), or because it stimulates the rebellious differentiation against them. For the world of expression the rule applies that individuals must disagree with the rule in an original way. When Mephistopheles explains: "laws and jurisprudence continue to be inherited like an eternal illness", he is already speaking as a bourgeois expressivist, who thinks that form is something that grows from the inside out (and that bothers us as a case of "alienation" when he wants to assert himself as an autonomous fact). In the chronic conflict between obedience to the rule and the manifestation of one's own inclinations, Mephistopheles, in accordance with the new spirit of the time, adheres to the second option.





R. Buckminster Fuller with a tensegrity model at Southern Illinois University, 1958.

If one follows Goethe's demon information, he does not disguise that he is fully included in Modernity - in a cultural enterprise that has undertaken the adventure of the permanent renewal of the rule - unimpressed by the Romantic and Catholic appeals to the stably fixed. What is attempted here is nothing less than the overcoming of the tradition of maintenance by the tradition of learning. In this is concealed the idea, monstrous to all conservatives up to Gehlen, that customs, institutions, laws, syntax and ways of life are something that can be changed as soon as they can be made better;

presupposing that the transformed rule is also understood as a rule that is in force. It is precisely this pragmatic conception of law that the conservative fear of subversion did not want to realize until yesterday: it seemed to him that any conscious divergence from the traditional, from the norm and from the fixed installation (Nietzsche says: from the "age"),

The "sanctity" and "indisputability of custom")<sup>[394]</sup> already included the rejection of order in general, and that this heralded the worst: the general strike against form, the rejection of rhythm, of tone, of the institutional foundation of the world. From an "open society of the interpreters of the constitution" nothing good is expected in social circles. Consequently, true conservatives lament the loss of the strong state or, more decently, of the order of the father, the son and the signifier.

But because of this suspicion and this longing for the majestic, the essence of the establishment of rules in the modern nomotope is misunderstood: life under the existing rules of a community, precisely when it claims to be modern, wants to be something other than a mere "unlimited delay in the scope of validity of the law";<sup>[395]</sup> it no longer intends to be consumed by existing circumstances just because they are circumstances. If it does not pray to the god of the *status quo*, nor kneel *a priori* before the established and the state, it does not thereby fall into the anarchy of *management* that walks in a vacuum. Modern life wants the "rule of order", which it follows, to be understood as the expression of a process of optimization in which it itself participates: hence the fundamental revisionist mood of the new times; hence also the new interpretation of this rule in expressions such as accumulated "social capital" and "radii of trust" to be actively expanded.<sup>[396]</sup> With all this, the citizens of the present also continue to be interested in formal securities in which they can live as never before in any age that believed in the *ordo*. On the contrary, more than any past civilization, they raise questions of security at all levels and develop their immunities as articulately as possible. By

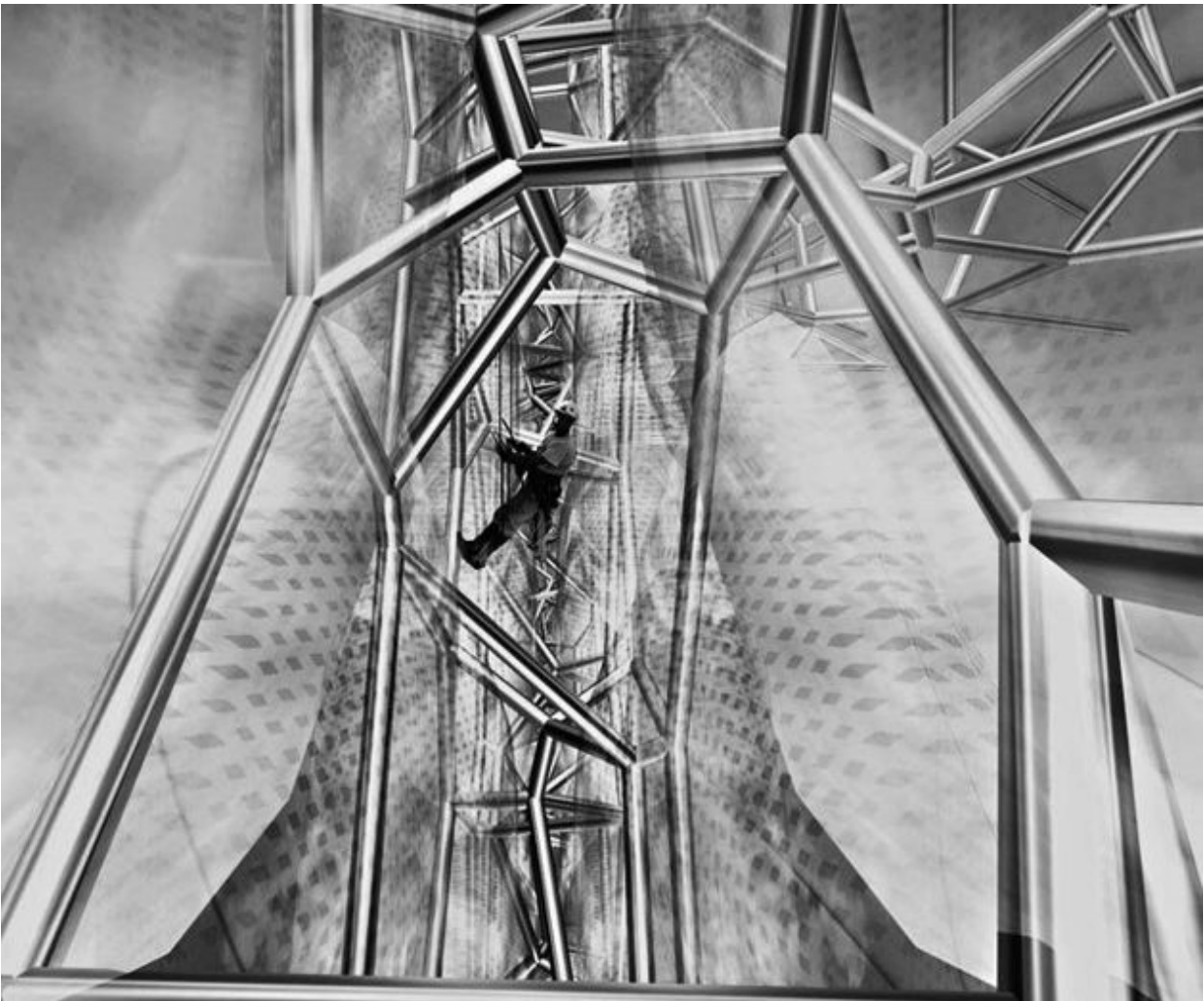
however long the road from the absolutism of customs and forms to their liquidation in functional expressions and spontaneous creations of rules may have been: the active supporters of modern civil society, aware of the costs, walk it all, in spite of themselves, as if it were the *curriculum humanitatis* in general.

In the developed Modernity the nomotopic facts are presented as a number of political and private dietary proposals, which prove their effectiveness as working hypotheses for the coexistence of the collective. One could use the Tardesian expression "*moral-mode*" for this, assuming that by fashion we also mean the epidemic imitation of what is reasonable and practical. Modernity no longer wants to know anything of a numinous foundation of law (of the mystical self-exaltation of imperial administrations during the last two millennia). Nor is it contradicted by the fact that among us those hypotheses are enshrined in the quasi-majestic diction of a constitution. If the circumstances are closely contemplated, it may be observed that also constitutions, at their core, are occasional inventions and compositions.<sup>[397]</sup>

The tensegrity of human coexistence in the nomotopic field of no longer static and no longer statized associations is particularly evident in the complexity of the division of labor. Without the tractive effort coming from remoteness, whose effectiveness is shown in law and custom, it cannot be understood how it is possible for human beings to resist the temptation to self-supply in small units and commit themselves to a profession in a collective of division of labor, which, as is known, only sustains itself when many others do other complementary things to a sufficient extent, until from the differential relations of activities in divergent tension arises the market effect and, with it, the exchange society. What is called the market is a construction of expectations, which are assembled into one another,



integrated by teletensions. The "system of needs"<sup>[398]</sup> acquires its mechanical qualities through the complementarity of concrete productions, which are coupled to one another from afar. As if it were a moral construction of entanglement, tensegrity-exchange creates new demands on the *ethos* of those who participate in the market: not only demanding from them guarantees of product quality and security of payment, including the loyal use of currencies, but, even more, elevating the calculation of the needs of other distant beings to a way of thinking and living.<sup>[399]</sup>



Facade climber in foamed tensegrity.

Probably, the ability of human beings to exist in larger social units could not be explained without the effect of the

civilizing tensegrity-exchange: exercising interest in the interest of others produces the anthropologically highly improbable circumstance of solicitude for the distant, to which later moral teachers will add the even more improbable recommendation of love for one's neighbor. When the passage from the concrete to the abstract, from existence in small groups to the imperial format, is to be consummated, in addition to the metaphors of kinship and dwelling,<sup>[400]</sup> the ethical-commercial techniques of tele-arrangement always come into play, in order to make possible an initial form of "universal *ethos*". Among the ancients, it was Aristotle who dealt most explicitly with such connections; presupposing that one can present our theory of moral teletensions within the *polis* and the *space-inter-polis* as a new description of the Aristotelian analysis of the civic reputation of men and the regulative power of prestige.

From the bourgeois solicitude for the distant, as a chronic interest in the interest of others, the so-called categorical imperative develops in the era of German Idealism: a formal intimation or warning, which, beyond any closer information about the content of its duty, impresses the following rule on its addressees: you should only want the things that you can want others to want as well; and this to satisfy the universalist motive: all others, and to correspond to the rationalist commandment: all others who are capable of accepting reason, and are willing to do so. After Kant, the human being responsible for his actions is the functionary of his own capacity for judgment and, as such, subject to the obligation to think correctly. Intelligence is obedience to the commands inherent in the capacities, or, in the language of the eighteenth century, the faculties of the mind. The solicitous mothers of the bourgeois era expressed this in words of similar meaning:

a talent is also a compulsion! That is why they deposited their impetus believer in his creature as a mission; with the result that the influx of gifted children catapulted the civilizational process forward. Since these investments have become sporadic,

or no longer appear, the modern nomotope is overpopulated by the depressed and the pampered, abandoned by duty and disappointed by want: there is in the landscape a mood of collective amorphism, a formlessness, which loves to explain itself as political disenchantment (and which moralists lacking theoretical means like to interpret as "nihilism"). Insofar as Kant conceived duty legalistically, he formally sanctioned the individual as the universal citizen or as the moral subject of globalization, more precisely: as the participant in the world market, for whom interest in the interest of others, in a dis-limited nomotope, would have become second nature. The Kantian imperative offers the extreme formalization of the belief in the moral productivity of teletensions by division of labor. It expresses, at the same time, the assumption that the reasonable individual would be the imaginary total human being, representing the species in his own person and abiding by the mission it entrusts him to fulfill himself.

After the transformation of German Idealism into German System Theory, the categorical imperative appears reduced to the proposition: act at all times in such a way that others may adhere to the results of that acting. In a negative version, this results in the precept: you must not be in need of others. <sup>401]</sup> The prohibition of self-sufficiency serves to shift the emphasis from the division of labor to communication, for which the latter expression is to be understood coldly, to a certain extent, as entering into relationship-with-one-another (and not as agreeing-with-one-another). It is evident that this concept of communication is much more sensible than that of the consensus-idealists; it is recognized that it possesses an ironic dimension when one thinks that also the fact that the sheriff gives or enters into relation or makes contact with the traces of the evildoer is a case of communication; likewise that the grave robber gives or enters into relation or makes contact with the offerings that

relieved a pharaoh of the journey through the realm of the dead. Here emerges a concept of communication closer to the model of parasitism than to understanding between people with equal opportunities. Although, given that, as Michel Serres has shown, the uninvited guest, for his part, must regularly endure visitors or communicators who invite themselves but at their own expense, and these, in turn, who eat at their own expense third-order parasites, and so on, the social field can also be understood as a network of self-serving contacts with the contributions and ways of life of others.<sup>[402]</sup> Perhaps what modern biologists call the environment is nothing more than the list of parasitizable directions from a given location (or the list of parasites whose visit one should be prepared for).

Alongside the "system of needs", already well described since Adam Smith and Hegel, which is integrated by the exchange of complementary contributions due to the division of labor, we must take into account a system, so far little considered, of parasites, connected one after the other, which serve for the consolidation of the set of "stabilized tensions", called *status quo*. At its base we observe the nesting of embryos in their mothers: they are the most compliant hosts; in the broad center develops the so-called world of labor, as an integral parasite of the biosphere, which carries forward the unilateral attack of the productive human worlds on the resources of plant and animal life, which Marx, in a Sunday twist, had described as "At the top is the tax system - the grandiose parasitism with which the modern State of redistribution invites itself to the banquet of society - as the guest who decides by law that he receives the largest portion. The integral communicator knows how to make contact with any salary transfer, with any cigarette, with any service provision among citizens. Conclusion of the systemic one: without the tensegrity effects of the

"communicating needs" and parasitized parasitisms, no differentiation of subsystems.

## Summary

The air of the island makes free: with the emergence of the anthropospheres of the savannah, self-framing units emerge, which acquire ontological significance as greenhouses of human beings. Living beings with the incomparable characteristic of openness to the world are attracted to these greenhouses.<sup>[403]</sup> They could be described as plantations in which *sapien-like* brains and hands are cultivated and programmed. Until not so long ago as little was known about the climate control and maintenance of such greenhouses as about the *operating instructions* of Spaceship Earth. The classical impertinences and vaguenesses, which have been handed down under the name of politics and morals, respectively, provide only tentative guidelines for effective cybernetics of large greenhouses. Since only the civilizational path is still open, we must rely today on making explicit the operating conditions of the anthroposphere, subject to intuitions and metaphors.

In a synoptic retrospective look at the three types of islands produced, which have been discussed in this chapter, we recognize that the two mentioned first, the absolute islands or space stations and the relative islands or greenhouses, are nothing other than self-representations of the ontological type of island in amplified models. Space stations are informative because they presuppose the critical case of environmental inversion: as implantations in the void of living spaces they project the secret of humanity's place into the universe. They are the most significant exterior locations of the anthropogenic island, for they demonstrate, in the cosmic critical case, that human beings, wherever they may be, have a place in the universe.

are found, they must enjoy the privilege of inner space. Whoever wants to remain a human being is obliged to comfort, even in the universe. What is true of cosmonauts is even truer for the inhabitants of the Flusserian "low box"<sup>[404]</sup> on the ground of the Earth.



Morning aurora over the eastern U.S. states photographed by the space shuttle *Columbia*. Bottom left Indianapolis. Cincinnati, Dayton and Columbus are located in the center.

As well as the irruption of the space station, the construction of greenhouses also marks a break in the ideas about the relationship between human beings and the so-called external nature: with them, at last, nature manifested itself as the non-external, as a neighbor in the republic of beings, although, at first, exclusively in the form of "vegetable cooperatives".<sup>[405]</sup> Finally, the twentieth century, by the association of astronautics and ecology - see *Biosphere 2* or *Noah's Ark Number Two*-,<sup>[406]</sup> made imaginable the entry of the human being into the *ensemble-greenhouse*, so that the premises for an adequate anthropo-topology are already given: if one adds the manned station and the inhabited greenhouse one

obtains the place that explains its inhabitants: the human island. The place of human beings must be imagined in such a way that it appears, on the one hand, as the implantation of a "life-world" in a non-life-world, and, on the other hand, as a biotope in which human and non-human symbionts coexist as greenhouse companions. One of the oldest logical fallacies of the anthropotopians is that they could not fail to conceive of nature as an external power: in reality, the relevant nature had already been introduced with them, all along, into the interior of the anthropic greenhouse.<sup>[407]</sup> The anthropotopians were not able to stop conceiving of nature as an external power.

Since the concept of an island is linked to the displacement of an element of the environment, the question of what is the environment on whose shore the ontological island rises must still be answered. The repeated indication that the hominid groups, on the way to becoming human, moved on the background of the savannah and from there set out to secession in their nine-dimensional domain, can only be taken as provisional information, because the expression "savannah" belongs to another order than that of the anthropogenic island. That is why it is not topologically-humanly informative. In fact, the displacement, repression or elimination of an element of the environment that the groups that are becoming human do not refer to their natural habitat, the African savannah, but to their own traditional animal mode and way of being-in the natural environment.

If the *sapien-types* emerge from their own environment it is because they create, first, an inner world of greater bewilderment in their own company. They weave themselves into a magical world, woven of symbols, tensions and internal meanings. Displacement produces an increasing transposition from relevance of the environment (as sources of nourishment and natural enemies) to relevance of one's own world: to jobs, signs, jealousies, to competitions of status, comfort, common tasks, to questions of truth, needs of expression and numinous imperatives. The further the emergence of the human island progresses, the more



animal bewilderment recedes in a space of innate or acquired relevance, there is an increasing capacity of free alertness for the perception of global circumstances.

This is what idealist philosophy meant in its heroic epoch when it spoke of nature itself opening the eyes of the human being. It could be said, paradoxically, that the element of the environment, disturbance, is displaced by the appearance of the island of alertness and truth: the human island climatizes itself by surpluses of vigilance and by the far-reaching perceptions they generate. The attention of its inhabitants is provoked by infinitely more differentiations and incidents in its own sphere than by events in the external environment. Whereas the animal and plant life that surrounds it is composed of constrained intelligence, on the ontological island a type of intelligence emerges that could be characterized as free or ecstatic. To make the paradox perfect: anthropic ecstasy is the displacement or repression of animal constriction. That is why human islands are worlds, that is to say: points of concentration of being or reservoirs of success. In them the immemorial *liaison* between alertness and truth; or between intelligence and success is confirmed. Ontological islands are places where the open displaces the constrained. In phenomenological language this means that here the alert spirit emerges from an element of bewilderment.

The human sphere goes back as far as it pushes back its own animal premises. To be human means the innate incapacity to remain animal. In metaphysical expression, this yields the thesis that we are on the island of the idea, which, by virtue of its infinity, pushes into the background the finitude of empirical environments. According to this, the infinite would be an enclave within finite circumstances. It would open as an abyss upwards, as an interruption of a life that has to maintain a perspective of something more-than-life. Let him who can understand it understand it. However it is expressed, the islands of human space are outposts in the face of the open.

With these statements about insulation, which makes human beings possible, we have paid tribute to the demon of the explicit insofar as it is indispensable for a contemporary theory of the human fact. If it is a matter of describing the climatization of inhabited space, one cannot avoid presenting the anthropogenic climate with thematic impertinence and determining its components with sufficient analytical detail. In doing so, it is shown that neither moral nor physical climatic factors can ever be accepted simply as given, but only serve for human use after special modification and adjustment; this is self-understood in the case of cultural additions to the elementary; in the case of natural ones, it still remains to be shown how they too only enter our radius of action after specific "assimilation." Hegel even went so far as to say of the common air that it is not directly usable by human beings as it is; in his *Philosophy of Right* he notes, in passing, with his typical reserve in the face of the immediate:

"Even the air must be obtained, inasmuch as it must be heated."<sup>[408]</sup> This laconic annotation must be retained as the crystallizing nucleus of a philosophy of culture as the production of atmospheres.

Let us add that the production of the atmospheric does not mean only the design reworking of existing models or a secondary curatorial activity: it is the original production, by which human facts are called into existence. In the language of the 19th century one would say: the anthropogenic climate is the basis on which the human being appears as a superstructural effect. Our expositions have *implicitly* demonstrated why, in relation to our objects, it no longer makes sense to differentiate between base and superstructure, as it seemed convenient to do both to the primitive materialisms and to the subtle ones of yesterday. We now know that, in circular causality, the epiphenomenon of one of the dimensions is, in each case, the basis of the other, and vice versa; only the will to attack, that is to say, of practical simplification, generates the impulse to establish foundations, from which apparent consequences could be deduced. In reality, the consequences are more fundamental than the foundations.

We have tried to show how it was acclimatized behind walls of The greenhouse effect, thanks to which human beings became "pupils of the air"; of an air in which there is now something more than the danger and the habit of the animal life of the savannah. According to the presentation made, the greenhouse of beings

The human being is the nine-dimensional structure, which unfolds along the fundamental things of the human space of action. It must be assumed that it describes the minimal complexity, without which belonging to the anthroposphere cannot be adequately understood. What is proper to this theory of the human sphere - to which Husserl had pointed with the inappropriate concept of "lifeworld" - is shown in the fact that through it the relation between the implicit and the explicit is accessible to explanation. It is, therefore, in a movement, first noted by Hegel in his theory of reflection and specified by Luhmann in his theory of the system's own latency. Since then, the implicit appears under a double aspect: as something, on the one hand, that is capable of explanation, and that embodies, on the other hand, a value of its own, which cannot be measured only by the norm of explicitness. Even where explanation could be given, it remains only a regional possibility; it cannot, and must not, be made effective everywhere.

Looking at the nine dimensions, it is understandable that, from a cognitive point of view, "society" constitutes a field of places with unequal explanatory tensions. Where they reach high values, theories can be articulated that express forms of compromise between acute awareness of danger and lustful specialization: a characterization that holds for all advanced theories of the present. Intelligences operating at places of the same level of explicitness can be described by their situation in cognitive isobars; one could say that they are placed before the same tasks or "works" in the advancement of the intellectual framework, to which effect the expressions work and task are best clarified by the demand for explanation. Needless to say that this puts an end to any idyllic concept of enlightenment that does not take good note of the resistance to processual explanation. To presuppose, as a general rule, a convergence of knowledge and interest is still only possible for naivety. The increasing improbability of advanced theory corresponds to the rising disaffection produced by progressive explanation. See

understands that what Freud called repression constitutes a small segment of the field of improbable and unpleasant articulations.

For the reformulation of the theory of society in the language of space-multiplicities or foams, the topological description of the anthropogenic island is of far-reaching importance: for every single cell in the foam is now to be understood as a micro-insulation, which carries within itself the complete model of the nine dimensions, closely folded. This cellular analysis manifests itself as a task that in no way detracts in complexity from the challenges of the investigation of large composite bodies. Multidimensional cellular sociology repeats, in its own way, Gabriel Tarde's axiom: *chaque chose est une société*; considering that the expressions *chose* and *société* not only designate the composition of the "thing" of smaller units, in any individual formation we must now add the divergent tensionality within pluridimensionality. Like cells or cells in the foam, every household, every couple, every resonance group, already constitutes a miniature of the whole anthropotope. Moreover, every cell and every consortium of cells, aka culture, are imbricated in a fluctuating multiplicity of unilateral and reciprocal imitations, of crossings and mixtures, in which no fundamental homogeneous form can be identified. (Not only every "culture" is a hybrid,<sup>[409]</sup> as is each of its cells). Just as Elias Canetti, in his laudation of Hermann Broch,<sup>[410]</sup> had called for individuals to be understood as wanderers between breathing spaces, so atmospheric analysis must describe the cells of the dynamic foam in their ceaseless oscillations on the axes of the nine dimensions.

This way of looking at things gives rise to a new understanding of the contributions of implicit knowledge. We have noted that all human beings are latently sociologists, but that, as a rule, they see no reason to be manifestly so. In the meantime it can already be understood why the move to the manifest is usually superfluous. The stay on the anthropogenic island includes

a more or less developed ability to navigate in the dimension of the nine *topoi*, which has long been *implicit* in everyone's mouth under the labels of "experience", "reality" or "reality".

"world." Just as most children grow up imperceptibly within the complexities of the syntax of their mother tongue, every average islander, by his mere participation in the life games of the primary group, acquires the competence to move with sufficient security in each of the anthropotopic dimensions. Being-there means understanding the entire syntax of the anthropotope: understanding that understanding is another matter. What Heidegger in *Being and Time* had stated about the chirotope or the world at hand: that, because of its everyday familiarity, it shows, with non-discursive clarity, the fundamental feature of *openness*, can be claimed *mutatis mutandis* of the other dimensions. The adult inhabitant of the anthropogenic island perceives at a glance its internal disposition and tensionality. The most improbable has become for him the obvious; for the inhabitants of the ontological island the implications of the basic situation are folded, at first, into an unimpeachable compactness. The tool at hand, the sound space, the generalized maternal world, the sphere of comfort, the realm of desires and longings, the cooperations with others, the requirement for truth, the affectation for the gods and the tension for the demands of the law: the whole folding of the hypercomplex, in which they move calmly, easily orienting themselves, appears to them almost as a smooth surface, on which, in principle, it does not seem necessary to waste a word. When the institutionalization of the monstrous has been achieved in the daily cognitive complicity, most human beings conform to the most accustomed points of view: who can reproach them? They are wary of explicit talk about the things of life for understandable reasons. In all cultures, outside the witches' laboratories of theory, one is put on guard against unnecessary reasoning; for with the explicit comes the storm. In the light of the achievements of the *esprit de*

*finesse* it would be natural to affirm that it is impossible for human beings not to be wise. Goethe: "Culture has neither core nor shell / It is everything at once".

That human beings, however, either as individuals or epidemically, spoil the *sapiens* level demands a theory of self-deprecation. Such a theory would provide the supplement to the annotated history of ideas.

## Chapter 2

# Indoors "Architectures of foam".

## *Foam architectures*

**Socrates:** *There was in me an architect whose development was not consummated by circumstances.*

**Phaedrus:** *How do you know?*

**Socrates:** *By an intimate propensity to build that darkly unsettles my thoughts.*

Paul Valéry, *Eupalinos or the architect*



## A. Where we live, move and be

### *From modern architecture as a way of explaining the stay*

If one had to explain very briefly what modifications the twentieth century has produced in the human being-in-the-world, the information would read: it has architecturally, esthetically, legally unfolded existence as a stay,<sup>[\*]</sup> or more simply: it has made dwelling explicit.<sup>[\*\*]</sup> Modern architecture has dismantled into elements, approaching it anew, the house, that attachment to nature that makes human beings possible;<sup>[411]</sup> the city, which used to arrange the world in a circle around it, has moved from the center, transforming itself into a site within a network of flows and rays. The analytical "revolution", which constitutes the central nervous system of Modernity, has extended this also to the architectural envelopes of the human sphere, producing, by the arrangement of an alphabet of forms, a new art of synthesis, a modern grammar of the creation of space and a transformed situation of existing in the artificial environment.<sup>[412]</sup>

The expression "revolution of space", which Carl Schmitt used to describe the  
for the political consequences of the transition to the era of air dominance,<sup>[413]</sup> would have to be objectively reserved for that event, if we had not called for the concept of revolution to be abandoned, because it constitutes a flawed, kinetically misguided and politically disorienting description of processes of

explanation. What Schmitt had in view belongs to a complex of phenomena that we have described as the explanation of airspace by gas terror, the air weapon, *air design* and *air conditioning*,<sup>[414]</sup> such complex constitutes the compendium of procedures (aerotechnical, artillery, avionic, pyrotechnical, photographic, cartographic), the sum of which produces what is called air sovereignty or space dominion in the third dimension. Its pursuit in electronic technology leads to control over telecommunications, alias "mastery of the ether", with the consequence, often commented upon, that space is temporarily relegated to the background in favor of a primacy of time. But only those who allow themselves to be overly impressed by the declamations that have been circulating in this sense since the 1920s can cling to the idea that "thinking space" in general has since been superseded. As early as 1928, the English narrator E. M. Forster put this phrase into the mouth of a character in his post-historical science fiction story, *The Machine Stands Still*: "You know we have lost the sensation of space. We say 'space is erased,' but we have not erased space, we have erased the sensation of it."<sup>[415]</sup> The thesis of the primacy of time is one of the rhetorical forms in which intimidation by Modernity is clothed. Whoever surrenders to it risks missing a key event in contemporary thought, which is discussed under the title of the "return of space."<sup>[416]</sup> Michel Foucault: "Perhaps the present era will be, first and foremost, an era of the space...".

The real "revolution of space" of the twentieth century is the explanation of the human stay or delay in an interior by the machine to inhabit, the design of the climate, the planning of the environment (up to the large forms, which we call collectors), as well as the exploration of the neighborhood with the two inhuman spatial structures, anteposed and associated to the human one, the cosmic (macro and micro) and the virtual one. In fact, in order to make explicable the stay of people in inhabited places, it was

nothing less than a reversal of the relation between foreground and background is necessary as far as the conditions of human dwelling are concerned. Put in Heidegger's perspective and tone: being-in-something-absolute had to be dislocated before it could be expressly thematized as dwelling-in-the-world. While habitations traditionally constituted the sustaining background of vital processes, in the cutting air of Modernity the inversion of the world<sup>[417]</sup> also reaches the "vital-worldly" existence. The obviousness of inhabiting no longer manages to remain in the background. Even if we do not always plan houses and dwellings in a vacuum, they will have to be formulated as explicitly in the future as if they were the closest relatives of the space capsule.

From this follows the definition of architecture of Modernity: it is the medium in which the explanation of human habitation is processually articulated in interiors built by human beings. According to this, architecture represents since the nineteenth century something that in the decade before the March Revolution of 1848 would have been called a "realization of philosophy." To speak again with Heidegger: architecture consummates the localization [*Er-Örterung*] of being-there. It is not content to be the pawn, more or less concerned with art, of the human construction of habitations, whose traces can be traced back to the archaic *arrangements* of campsites, caves, and huts. It reformulates the "places" in which something like dwelling, staying and being-with-itself can take place, under conditions of high self-reference, high money mediation, high legaliformity, high interconnectedness and high mobilization. Of these places we now know that they can no longer be thought of only as the here and there in a "world of life". Under current conditions, a place is: an enclosed and conditioned portion of air, a locale of transmitted and actualized atmosphere, a node of hosting relations, a junction in a network of data flows, an address for entrepreneurial initiatives, a niche for self-relationships, a base camp for expeditions into the environment.

a place for work and living, a place for business, a regenerative zone, a guarantor of the subjective night. The further the explanation progresses, the more the construction of dwellings resembles the installation of space stations. The dwelling itself and the production of its receptacles becomes a spelling out of all the dimensions or components that have been assembled on the anthropogenic island, originally growing together; in this, the decomposition of completely agglutinated living conditions, and their rational remodeling, can be taken to the limit value of the repetition of the human island-world, in general, in an apartment for a single inhabitant.

It is, above all, the modern mobility of traffic of people and goods that has created radically different conditions of perception and design for everything that concerns the human habitation. It is only since part of humanity, first affected by the Industrial Revolution, has made its way to work in Europe and the United States, freed itself from its agrarian condition, and converted to a semi-nomadic, multi-local *modus vivendi*, that one can appreciate how full of conditioning was the old way of living in the villages and domains of the agrarian epoch. All the knowledge we carry in us about dwellings and customs, coming from the ancient inventory, reflects a habit of inhabitants in homelands, political homelands and regions, which was profiled during the ten-thousand-year reign of sedentism, and whose formal and material sediments are presented in the form of house, village and city architectures, historically transmitted. This universe belongs to a detained life, which, because of its shrinking into narrow field delimitations and tiresome rhythms, was not able to give an adequate account of the reasons and conditions of its habitational behavior. It never had a sufficient reason for it, not to mention the lack of means.

In this matter, the current era not only has the advantage of the explicitness; the angle of reflection has changed sufficiently to provoke chronic, analytically productive attention to

questions of habit and habit. Today it can be calmly said that life in sedentism happened too slowly, too bent on itself and too oriented to the model of the plants, to be able to manifest itself in its forms of inhabiting with the deterritoriality essential for theoretical knowledge. As long as the sedentary condition of the world remained in power, Varron's saying that the countryside was of divine origin and the city, on the other hand, a human-made attachment, circumscribed the entire horizon: this meant that only city dwellers who consider their city residences as a second home, while honoring their country villas as their patriotic home, can know what it means to be at home. The city-dweller has to believe that in reality he is only a plant that has moved from one place to another; and plants do not live anywhere, they take root (and plants with duplicate roots are, in fact, somewhat hybrid). Only since the appearance of modern traffic conditions - understanding traffic as an explanation of mobility and telemobility - did real architectural, technical-transportation and existential alternatives to the post-neolithic habit of inhabiting emerge, alternatives that managed, at last, to bring light to the eternal chiaroscuro of sedentarism. Now it is possible to positivize skepticism towards everything adhered to the ground; the concept of uprooting acquires sonority and can be presented as a demand. From this historical point of view, it is possible to express that the traditional dwelling in the so-called patriotic homes does not represent at all the universally valid norm and proto-figure of staying in a place, as, even in these times, certain pietists of dwelling teach. This lingering is the tenacious, but surmountable, way of staying in a place of human beings to whom it retains something.

# 1. The living-room; stopping place and storage place

Since Modernity has elaborated special architectural forms to assist human beings in situations in which they are restrained, it can be said in cold language what are essentially living quarters. It belongs to the characteristic comforting gestures of Modernity that it was able to create, for travelers with no immediate link, the architectural forms, never seen before, of protected stopping places and air-conditioned waiting rooms, as if it cared to admit that human beings find waiting too ungrateful not to venture into the attempt to lessen their hardship with a minimum of comfort. With sufficient freedom of abstraction it can be recognized that, in principle and most of the time, houses are also places to stop; more precisely: waiting rooms, in which time is spent until the arrival of a precisely foreseen event.

It is no insoluble enigma to know what it is about in the case of the most ancient waiters: the house of the Neolithic human being is a waiting room in which its dwellers remain until the moment arrives in the fields next to the village for which one has taken the trouble to wait: the instant in which the planted fruits are ready to be consumed, stored and sown again. As far as we know, it was Vilém Flusser who topologically contextualized and formally wrote down this apparently trivial observation, but never before formulated *expressis verbis*. Houses are waiting rooms in stopping places. It was not by chance

that this occurred within the framework of a speculation on the metamorphoses of the space of life, produced by the discoveries of the most distant cosmic space and virtual space.



Bus stop in Aachen, "The Claw", designed by Eisenman Architects, realized by JC Decaux. Photo: Christian Richters.

Houses are stopping places for retained life, and offer a place for the irruption of time in space: this expression is the explanatory figure of the most recondite obviousness regarding the stay of the human being in habitations. Since it returns from the deepest reserve, it constitutes the deepest penetration or understanding in the history of the reflection on building, dwelling and the housed life. From the point of view of the philosophy of culture,

It is anthropologically fruitful, because it interprets sedentarism as an existential waiting for the agrarian product (which, *pace* Heidegger, means neither the careful treatment of the useful, nor the forward march towards death). In addition to this, Flusser's thesis contains therapeutic perspectives, because it unites the diagnosis of the fundamental mood of retained life with a hope for a change of mood through new offers of movement. Until now dwelling has essentially meant: not-being-able-to-go-outside. How much can the human being, an inhabiting being, still not become when he experiences that dwelling means being able-to-be-here-and-wherever-else-else?

When *more rustic* houses are inhabited, an interior climate develops as befits a retained life, marked by a uniform resignation and an imposed confidence. In this situation, boredom is the tonality in which the being plays its pieces. As with all popular music, one must be born into it to find it bearable. That, from the point of view of depth, it has to be in order what in any case could not be changed even if one wanted to: that posture in front of the totality of the facts that signify the world constitutes the characteristic of life in cultures that build terrains. Whoever, from the point of view of the history of civilization, is looking for the source of the "primacy of the object" can be sure of it here. As long as one is at home in a form of the world, in which *summa summarum* nothing of all that is the case can be changed, real things and their intertwining, which constitute the given circumstances, have absolute priority over mere objects of desire. This constitutes, psychologically, the matrix of manic depression or of dejection illuminated by small hopes. In this situation, the knowledge that counts is always tinged with submission to what irremissibly exists thus-and-not-otherwise. Sedentary life has been moving in this mood for an entire era. Indeed, whoever cultivates something has



to know how to wait; those who do not succeed must be ready to start over again and again.

The year of the peasants is an agrarian advent. Its psychic result is the religious experience of time: by thinking in concepts of sowing and harvesting, the union of coming and complacency for it acquires its nature, with which it links all typological thinking with its dual of promise and fulfillment. Whatever grows in the fields of becoming: it will always be asked, with reason, from what sowings the harvests come. By their fruits ye shall know the sowing. In the ancient sedentary world, to think or to be wise in broad contexts means nothing else, in principle, than to pay attention to all the facts concerning careful maturation.

Here it must be remembered that the Old High German word *bur* does not only mean house, room or cell, but also the cage in which the poultry is kept; in Swedish it means arrest. In the word cage can be ascertained what possibly happens to those arrested by the growth of plants. Whoever agrees to wait for the plant has to settle in a cage in which slowness dominates. That is why the first house is a machine to inhabit for a long time. As a detention center for the care of the maturation cycles, the labor house creates the unmistakable attachment of the inhabitants to the built-up land. From this arises, as its first metaphysical surplus value, the worldly trust in nature as repetition. In that regime one knows at every moment what one is there for; the event, because of which the general situation is endured, will always remain the same. One goes through the year to celebrate the sacrament of *physis*, this time equal to all.

Thus, to dwell means, at first, to exist pending the harvest in a grain season. Once a year the grain train passes and stops before us. If we have so far remained alive, it is because we have the privilege of the station and remain within the scope of a fertile journey. Once the cargo has been brought in

a new cycle of waiting begins, secured by the reserves of the last harvest. If the train ever fails, because of a bad harvest or political unrest, scarcity dominates and throws into misery those who do not know how to wait. As soon as the connection between living and waiting is disturbed, as traditionally happens in periods of military crisis and systematically since the Industrial Revolution with its consequences of the deagrarianization of life, it can happen that those who exist lose their orientation in the decisive pleasant moment of the harvest. What happens if summer arrives and there is nothing left to harvest in the fields? In his analytic of boredom,<sup>[\*\*\*]</sup> Heidegger evocatively described this threatening possibility:

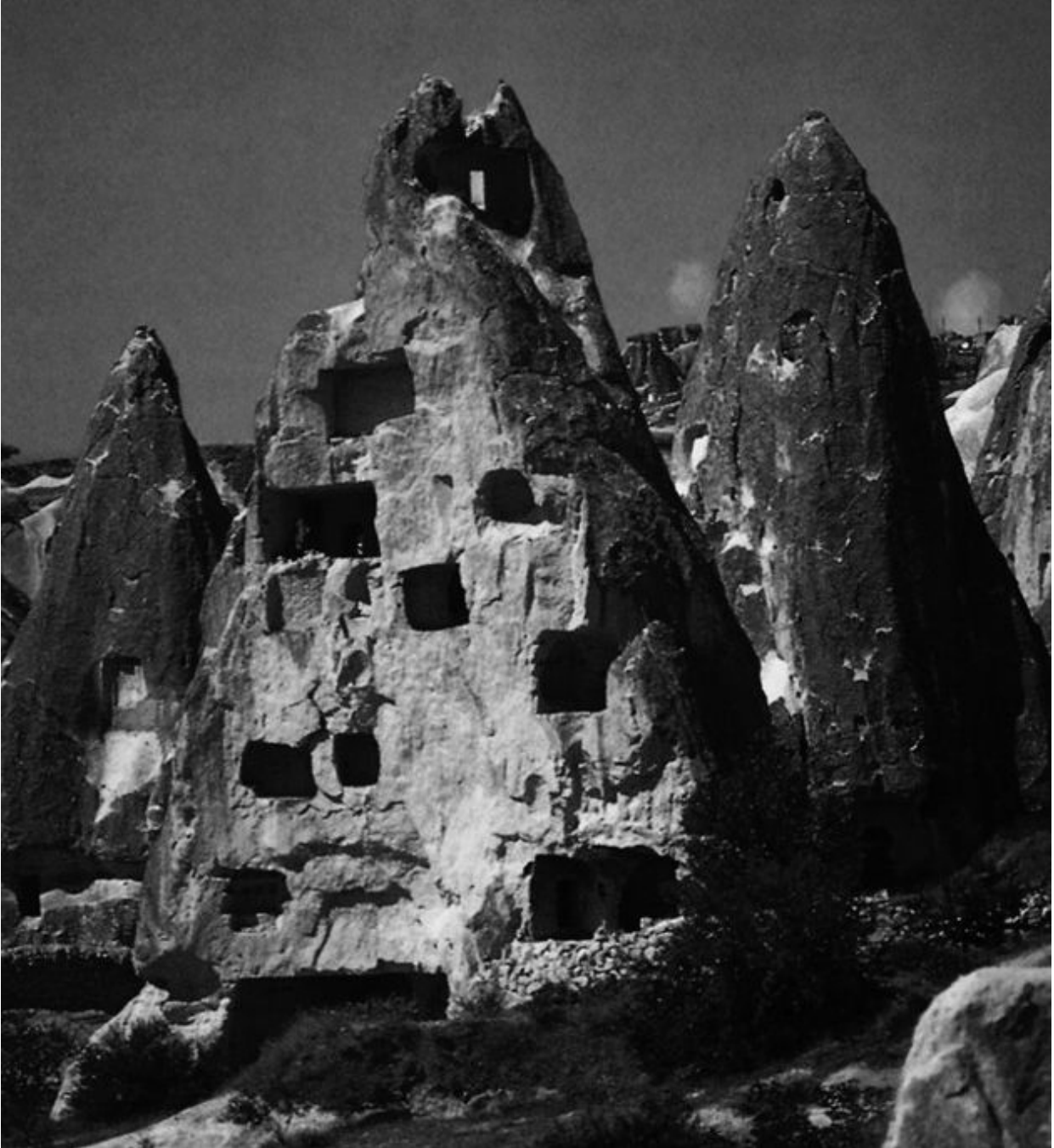
This *long becoming of the moment* manifests the moment of being-there in its absolute indeterminacy, never determinable. This indeterminacy imprisons the being-there. but in such a way that it, in all that long and elongated moment, can no longer conceive that it is *retained* in it and to it. [...] Becoming long signifies a *disappearance of the brevity of the moment*.<sup>[418]</sup>

What Heidegger thematizes here is the terror of unemployment, which shows itself as having-nothing-to-do. The brevity [or entertainment] of the moment only has a chance to lord it over our experience of time when we are involved in that fertile instant, which tells us by itself what to do now. The categorical imperative of agrarian ontology: be interested in the harvest! can only be followed as long as there is a reasonable tension between foresight and fulfillment.

According to this, the house of the first peasants would be an inhabited clock. It is the birthplace of two types of temporality: of the time that goes to meet the event, and of the time that, as if going in a circle, serves the eternal return of the same. Houses are differentiated from huts, with which they have long remained closely related, and often so similar as to be confused, by their belonging to the first project: the connection of sowing and harvesting. It is true that the house contains the primitive hut and surpasses it insofar as it adopts its functions: shelter from sleep, protection from the weather and insects, provision of a sphere of retreat for the sexual and of a sphere

of comfort for situations of heavy digestion. On the contrary, the hut can never contain the house because it has no harvest project and exhausts itself in providing shelter day by day. (Hence the attraction of existence in the hut for civilized people, exhausted in projects, who swarm during their vacations in *camping* tents and caravans, withdrawn in *containers*, which do not force their inhabitants to wait for a product, and in which they can barbecue, watch TV, copulate and forget the gross national product). As for Heidegger's famous excursions to the Todtnauberg hut, to call it that is false, because in reality it was a granary dedicated to the supply of crops from the unusual. From the hut on wheels in the twentieth century, the caravan, which Flusser has hailed as a sign that we have reached the end of the new stone age, is the result of the twentieth century: a knave who would raise any aesthetic objection here. [\[419\] The caravan is the result of the](#) caravan, which Flusser has hailed as a sign that we have reached the end of the new stone age.

The time linked to houses is divided into waiting time and maturing time, foresight and real present, from which later epochs deduce the duality of the chronic and the cairetic, including bitter weeks, joyful feasts. Just as in the house, as such, time is divided into two modalities, the domestic regime does so according to its type of construction: next to the house for waiting, in which human beings reside, most of the time in a state of relative poverty, the storehouse is built, the house of abundance, where the edible value is kept, the possibility of the future, the collective liberation from hunger and need. This force field, in which provisions, gods and power, together with its war machine, mingle, will configure in the time of the citizen empires the energetic center of the city.



Tuff promotions prepared for dwellings in Cappadocia. Here, next to the dwellings, there are dovecotes, granaries, cavities, pantries and tombs.

Both forms of building correspond, each in its own way, to the temporal structures of the domesticated being-there. The provision house is a grain clock, which runs for a whole year and conveys to the collective of users a promise of survival from

The houses of dwelling fulfill, above all, their condition of waiting machines. To the bicameralism of the houses of time corresponds a bipartition of the paths and movements that belong to the first domestic habitation: on the one hand, paths that lead from the fields to the house of provisions and that serve for harvesting, gathering, storage; on the other hand, paths of return from the provisions to the house, which are used for distribution, dispersion, consumption. In the former, what is public and common is produced: which is why to this day publication is linked to the essentially beautiful gesture of the increase of common property; in the latter, what is domestic and private: which is why the bringing home of objects that have been procured outside counts among the original gestures of the enriched return to what is one's own.<sup>[420]</sup> (To this are added third roads, which lead from the houses to the fields and from the fields to the houses; it is a question of those that later will be those that lead to the place of work and bring back, ungrateful roads that serve, with other means, to the pursuit of the expectation of income).

Those who have privileged access to provisions find it easier to think that living has to mean more than waiting for the next harvest. The full storehouse inspires the overflowing spirit of philobathic, eruptive lords, friends of starting campaigns, who can keep baggage and feral entourage. They make expeditions to increase their radius of action and manifest their eccentric energy, while the peasants, those of mud, with their eyes always fixed on the future of grain, can do nothing but follow their condition of waiting and sedentarism. Since the existence of the agrarian surplus value and its sanctified unequal distribution, "societies" have been divided between the quiet ones, who are still and serve, and the restless ones, with broader views, who make up stories. The latter are the first to elaborate projects beyond the year. In contrast to the link to the place of those who develop their work in the countryside, at the food level and in a state of waiting, there is the mobility of gentlemen

well stocked, supported by sufficient provisions to live expressively and aggressively. In their case, the wait for the maturity of the grain is extended to the wait for the maturity of the victory, beyond season and year. In later world circumstances, waiting for results and figures in general is conceived in a new way as project time and business time space.

The peasant world knows only the advent, not the project; its reason arises from meditation on the useful plant and its cosmic analogies. Only by the fact that sowing takes place, the investment procedure is already prefigured in the peasant universe, with which the introduction of the idea of profit takes shape in time; even if this idea of profit still remains discreet and in the background. For the agrarian world, which today has almost collapsed, and in principle only for itself, Heidegger's observation may be valid: that caution or economy [*das Schonen*] constitutes the "fundamental feature of dwelling."<sup>[421]</sup> Thus speaks the last prophet of being-as-plants at the end of the past sedentary era. By a retrospective glance at his gigantic work it is understood that he was the proto-ontologist, transferred to the end of his epoch, of the opening and vegetative growth. In the midst of productions, investments and bombardments without number, the greatest thinker of ancient Europe, hesitating at the limit between the world of growth and the world of project, continues to conceive the unspectacular appearance of maturity as the archetype of the decisive event.

Being-there, understood from the peasant mode of lodging, evokes the fundamental state of mind of indebted patience, according to which individuals as well as families and peoples are to be understood as beings-in-waiting. In waiting, its *ethos* is imprinted on the life retained in it: that it is to be left unused for something that has greater ontological content and greater temporal power than itself. In this regime, the individual life, as a calm consumer of its own time, becomes consumed by a superior magnitude, no matter whether it carries the

name of families, peoples, gods or arts. This outlines the fundamental situation of the traditional metaphysical sentiment: he who waits for things to ripen thinks irremissibly of a harvest of a superior type, in which he himself is awaited as a ripe grain. The wisdom of *homo metaphysicus* is in the motto: "harvest and be harvested".

## **2. Receivers, habituation facilities**

With the explanation of the stay as waiting for what matures, the work of technical reconstruction of the element in which human beings live, move and are has entered its first stage. From this a second stage develops, whose characteristic sign appears as soon as the waiting for what matures is extended to signs that announce what is approaching and happening next to us.





Tatsumi Orimoto, *In the Box*, 2002.

Modernity has projected the receptive waiting for signs in technical devices, such as radios and telephones, whose existence makes it possible to say retrospectively what human houses have always been from another point of view, namely: stations receiving missives from the unusual. Heidegger, to whom the phenomenology of dwelling still owes most (along with his successors Bollnow and Schmitz), has defined the connection between dwelling and waiting for signs of the unaccustomed as the matrix of religious or contemplative receptivity:

Mortals dwell as long as they wait for the divine as the divine. Hopeful, they blame them for the unexpected. They await the sign of their coming and are not ignorant of the signs of their lack... In misfortune they still await the grace subtracted.<sup>[422]</sup>

Translated into more profane expressions (and disregarding the fact that it is a paraphrase of Hölderlin's poetic theology), this results in the statement: that human beings live in such a triviality that only it allows them to differentiate the non-trivial. This differentiation is not made by a theoretical judgment, but by the willingness and capacity of life structured by customs to undertake something with the unaccustomed, if nothing else than to wonder and talk about it. In a first reading this means that human beings, enclosed in their habitats, are seeking to free themselves from triviality. This scenic universal extends to modern apartment life, where sitting there, in one's own place, goes hand in hand with waiting for someone to call. This suspicion, often expressed, has a kernel of truth: the fall of the first man through original sin is identical to the sedentary way of life. Those affected understand that they lead a life other than the one for which they were created. However, hardly anyone can remember what "something else" would be. God and the nomads can still do what they want, they are *totaliter aliter* for the sedentary.

A burden of domestic life is that it remains given to poverty of stimuli. When it generates surpluses of meaning and expression they flow to the oracle, to ornament, in interior and exterior images. In its fertile moments, life at a standstill produced frescoes on the ceiling with falls into hell and cascades of naked women. In other times the waiting life specialized in the construction of cathedrals, stopping places or monstrous stations, forcing heaven to accept human passengers. The institution of hospitality, codified in many cultures religiously, goes back to the possibility of receiving the guest in one's own home as a sign of the unaccustomed, if not directly as a "messenger-sign of the divinity."<sup>[423]</sup> Has there not been a time when a nondescript newcomer really became the announced savior? But, since the appetite for signs through guests cannot be satisfied alone, innumerable mantic systems offer their services to endow life with the necessary plus of signs. The fewer experiences sedentary people have, the more the extraordinary serves them as a staple food. Human beings do not live by bread alone, but by any sign that something is happening anywhere. When the day comes when the signs from beyond the grave have already

are not acceptable, they are replaced by newspaper news, editorial news and weather signs.

In a second look, it is shown that it is necessary to make dwellings explicit in a much more radical sense than as receivers. The function of the receivers is to classify what arrives as meaningful and not meaningful, and thus to prevent the mental implosion that appears when everything or nothing is informative. In this sense, dwellings are ontological therapeutic stations for beings who may fall ill of insufficiency of meaning: filters against nihilism, sanatoriums for the treatment of disorders of the significant apparatus. From the point of view of this onto-sanatorial understanding of dwelling, Heidegger and Vilém Flusser coincide, who, as pioneers of a hermeneutics of the lack of homeland, took, in fact, different paths. While Heidegger believed to see in the lack of homeland an epochal fate of the "modern human being", but which one cannot perceive without regret or, in any case, without a note of heroic meditation, in case of giving it a positive turn, Flusser, in his reflections on his own fate as a Jewish emigrant, opted for the demystification of the homeland or the homeland soil, even more: for an aggressive concept of existence in the lack of soil, in general. This choice is supported by an argument from the philosophy of information:

The homeland is considered as the relatively permanent place, the dwelling as the changeable, relocatable one. The opposite is correct: one can change one's homeland or have no homeland at all, but one must always live no matter where. Parisian *clochards* live under bridges... and, as terrible as it may sound, one lived in Auschwitz.

I built myself a house in Robion to live in. At the core of that house is my accustomed desk with the accustomed apparent clutter of my books and papers. Around my house is the town, to which I have become accustomed, with its customary post office and its customary weather. Around that environment everything is becoming more and more unaccustomed: Provence, France, Europe, the Earth, the Universe... I am immersed in what I have become used to.

I am immersed in redundancy in order to receive noises as information and to be able to produce information. I am immersed in redundancy in order to receive noises as information and to be able to produce information.<sup>[424]</sup> I am immersed in redundancy in order to receive noise as information and to be able to produce information.<sup>[424]</sup>

Robion, Flusser's Provençal village, has good prospects of entering the history of ideas as a counterpoint to Todtnauberg, because it has gained well-deserved honor as a model village in the explanation of the dwelling by the new logic of the intimacy of the home. Just as we spoke earlier of the inversion of the world in the context of a topological reflection on ecology and cosmonautics,<sup>[425]</sup> in view of the Robion-effect we should now speak of an inversion of dwelling: according to which dwelling can no longer be valid as a function of the homeland; being-in-the-homeland is, rather - it is belatedly understood - a secondary effect, as understandable as it is problematic, of dwelling.



it (Stanislas Zimmermann/Valérie Jomini), *living unit*, it design, [www.it-happens.ch](http://www.it-happens.ch), 2000.

In the light of the semio-ontological analysis, the dwelling appears as a redundancy generator or as a habit machine, whose task is to divide into familiar or unfamiliar the mass of signals that arrive "of the world," candidates for significance. In this sense, the dwelling is an agency for the determination of usable signals. One cannot be at home before an almost unconscious unity is formed with one's own four walls and all that furnishes them. Thus, the dwelling only makes its dwellers properly capable of existence insofar as it provides them with the first differentiation that makes a difference: that between the usual and the exceptional, between what remains in the background as familiar and what stands out because it is unusual. Thus, to the primary functions of inhabiting belongs that of providing inhabitants with habituations (although habituations, on the other hand, are older and more general than the sedentary mode of building houses). In this sense, modern dwellings constitute explicit installations of *abotargamiento*, which produce the *background* for sensitizations. Modernity means: also the background becomes a product, the obvious becomes a victim of scarcity, the customary is decomposed into a field of articulated tasks and technical projects.

But the fact that a dwelling (in which we live now) can only appear in a series of dwellings (in which we lived before) is something that only becomes perceptible in times of intense movement; just as it only becomes evident later that all transfers begin as transfers of space and dwelling, before becoming transfers of affection or projections. One has to have moved often to understand, from the third, fourth, what the first mode of dwelling was: an involuntary habitualization; a letting oneself be dominated by the *milieu* and an original tonalization by a state of mind. Heidegger described this with the enormous expression "state of throwing" [*Geworfenheit*], an expression that supposes a profound and covertly ironic inclination of thinking before the first blow of chance. It is now understood

why the later and more conscious dwelling will proceed to choose itself its acclimatization contexts, and to accept or reject the proposals of acclimatization materialized in a new dwelling. Consequently, the subsequent dwelling acquires more and more traits of self-design. Thus, repetition can be the matrix of invention. Aesthetic awareness must be counted among the consequences of moving, insofar as it promotes the capacity to bracket phenomena. The philosophical virtue alone of being astonished at how something is, and that it is, testifies to the inability of the vigilant intelligence to really get used to something, whatever it is: it discovers that, in the intelligent, the installation in the house of the world stumbles upon an immemorial reserve, which cannot erase any routine. Already the first immersion maintains an aura of incredulity. The astonishment it produces de-automatizes the transfer. To never consider repetitions as completely guaranteed is the beginning of wisdom.

### 3. Submersion and immersion

The explanation of the stay by means of the waiting room and the receiver of news, or else, by the machine of habits, called dwelling, approaches a third step, easily reachable from the second one: Flusser has already put into play a possible formulation for this advance, when he wrote that he was *submerged* in redundancy. With the metaphor of submersion he brushed against the radical stratum of human territorialization in situations, habituations and everydayness. The investigation of everything that has to do with the human mode of residence can only reach a degree of expressiveness, analytically satisfactory and sufficiently striking, if it leads to an analysis of the submerged situation: an enterprise to which, in our opinion, Paul Valéry's reflections of 1921 on the essence of architecture as a modulation of immersion, comparable only to Hermann Schmitz's later attempts to re-found a phenomenological situationism,<sup>[426]</sup> and to the dialogues of Ilya Kabakov and Boris Groys on the theory and aesthetics of installation, have contributed most, in addition to the singular witticisms of the young Heidegger.<sup>[427]</sup>



Ilya Kabakov, *The toilet*, exterior, 1992.

The highest aesthetic degree of clarity that seems attainable with regard to the explanation of houses as submersion devices was achieved, in our opinion, in Kabakov's puzzling installation, *The Toilet*, from the ninth *documenta* in Kassel in 1992, for which Jan Hoet, the curator in charge, had originally proposed the *leitmotif* "The House". Kabakov worked on this installation with an effect of deception, produced by the fact that behind the title "toilet" there was no anal tawdry, no pornographic scene or any other dirty secret of the bourgeois world, but a simple dwelling, such as had been typical for the citizens of the Soviet Union between the fifties and the seventies.





Ilya Kabakov, *The toilet*, interior.

The idea came from autobiographical motives, but was more or less inspired by the conditions of everyday life in the Soviet Union: Kabakov's mother, as he reports, in order to be close to her son even during his training, had taken a job as an administrator at the art boarding school where he was studying, and, as there was no regular housing available, she had to move into a functional space in the school, a youth toilet transformed into a cloakroom. For that reason, the toilet-house became for the young artist the prototype of Russian social housing, that mythical place of crowding, in which, from the twenties on, bourgeois individualism was to be extinguished and the new Soviet human being was to be generated. The mediocre squalor of such surroundings recalls, at the same time, the traditions of the Russian communitarian spirit, in which, as

Kabakov assures us, shared misfortune was sometimes experienced as the

"bliss of general poverty." "Soviet power was received like a snowstorm, like a climatic catastrophe." "Despite all the poverty and bad dream character of life at the time, we had the sweet feeling that everyone lived like this, that all of us inhabited a single communal dwelling...."<sup>[428]</sup> In his commentary on this, Groys made the observation that dwellings can also serve as metaphors for art collection, because they are *per se* collections of objects gathered by their dwellers under private viewpoints, most often banal, inscrutable to outsiders: they thus represent spontaneous exhibitions, which only differ from collections in art galleries by the fact that their visitors have to be acquaintances of the dweller/collector, who are allowed to visit by personal invitation. From this point of view, says Groys, the *toilet* became not only the concentrate of *documenta 9*, but one of the most convincing metaphors of the contemporary art system.

The alienation of the everyday dwelling in Kabakov's installation and in Groys' system-theoretical commentary makes it clear that, in their normal form, dwellings are anti-exhibitions that function as private collections. The exposed dwelling is a private collection transferred to the public space, the collector's museum of non-artists. In doing so, this installation explicitly stages Flusser's redundancy machine, the filter of the world, which selects the accustomed and unaccustomed. What is decisive now is that this interior can only be accessed by *entering* it as a spectator: a gesture which is the normal case in museums and exhibitions, but which is strange in the case of dwellings, since these are used for dwelling, for a being-there in such a way that one does not have to observe or notice anything, or be surprised by anything. Normally, with the entry into the dwelling itself, the observer behavior ends for its inhabitant, and in its place appears a diffuse participation, a letting oneself be carried away and let oneself be surrounded off-center.

Dwelling is usually de-systematized, because its meaning consists precisely in generating habit and triviality. If the dwelling emerges in the museum, the entry into the dwelling or the immersion in it as such is surprising: the emergence of the habitual dwelling in the museum turns the visitor's immersion in it into a theme. The only thing missing is to expose the dwellers with it in order to carry out the total exhibition.

But that the being-in, as being-as-submerged in the environment of the dwelling, becomes capable even of presentation: that is what signals a leap in the process of explanation of stopping-as-being in dwellings or in any other configuration of environment. Whoever entered the *toilet* was involved in a kind of dwelling-as-if. He was participating in an experiment with temporary immersion in something that for others signified the habitual situation, its form of submersion. The visitor's entry into the *toilet* was an ontological exit: the change from the artistic situation to the non-artistic situation took place in the art itself; or, to speak again Heideggerian, it was located [*er-örtern*] in the work.



Luis Molina-Pantin, *Escenificación n.º 2*.

Installation thus manifests itself as the most powerful instrument of contemporary art for placing submerged situations in the viewing space as a whole; in this it also surpasses the analogous arts of the stage or the arrangement of animal enclosures in zoos.<sup>[429]</sup> According to Kabakov, the usual high esteem for the image, which was understood as an invitation for the viewer to enter the situation depicted, can now only be assumed by installation in the present. He does not exaggerate by describing this as a shock or disruption of the normal conditions of display. Whereas the traditional art exhibition predominantly showed extraordinary objects, framed or placed on pedestals, the installation presents the submerged and the submerging at the same time: the object and its place are represented at the same time; it thereby creates a situation that can only be sustained by the viewer's entry into the submerging and *eo ipso* by the dissolution of the object and its place.

of the frame or the break-in of the pedestal. The unframing of the work invites the visitor to abandon observation and immerse himself in the situation. This illustrates both the complicity between the art collection and the dwelling and the opposition between the two: if the average observer expects the art object to impress him and move him to plunge into the unusual, the dwelling on display promises the opposite situation to the exception: at most, one is puzzled by the fact that everything is normal, and precisely that produces immersion in banality. It is a triviality made explicit, with respect to which one never knows exactly whether one can relax in it or not. Immersion in the explicit banality is an impression that is not felt as an impression. We move in the ontological terrain of the twentieth century. As if he were a philosopher of the phenomenological school, Kabakov assures us that the "really suggestive journeys" of contemporary art are situated in the ["430\]](#) How could it be otherwise, if "revolutions" are, of course, the fact, explanations of the implicit? In this context it is necessary to understand the observation made by Groy: "The praise of banality is always ambiguous..."["431\]](#).

Already in 1921 Paul Valéry had put forward similar views, when, in a chapter of his essay-dialogue *Eupalinos or the Architect*, he evokes together the figures of Socrates and Phaedrus in a dialogue of the dead, so that, with the example of architecture and music, they discuss the principle of immersion or submersion-in-the-work. Socrates' considerations on the being-immersed and being-enclosed of human beings in environments built by them begin as a paraphrase on the Simmelian dualism of self and opposite:

I like to chat about the arts... A painting, dear Phaedrus, only covers a surface, that of a painting or a wall... But a temple, when we enter it, or even the interior of that temple, constitutes for us a kind of full grandeur, in which we live... We are, we move, we live in the work of a human being!... We feel impressed and overpowered by the conditions he has chosen. We cannot escape it."["432\]](#)

This reflection emphasizes two aspects at once: on the one hand, it insists that in the given case the enveloping is the sublime; on the other hand, it stresses that the surrounding represents an artifice and not a natural environment. Evidently, we are not speaking here of the sublime-dynamic of Kant, who describes nature as a superpower, but rather

of the sublime-artificial, by whose presence everywhere a human work can be experienced as a sublime environment.

Valéry's Socrates jumps with one sentence to the center of modern aesthetics and confronts himself bluntly with the enigma of the total work of art. Since the latter, in accordance with the ambition of the avant-garde, is extended to the entire environmental surroundings, the possibility of examining it in the "bourgeois" posture of observation from the front disappears for the observer. In view of the temple I am in, to be-in-the-world means directly to be-in-the-work-of-another, indeed, to be consumed by the artistic magnitude. Is it just a coincidence that this Socrates uses expressions that recall the speech of St. Paul -former maker of tents and theaters- before the Areopagus of Athens about the God in whom we live, move and are? <sup>433]</sup> According to Valéry, the same could only be said of a second genre of art, music:

To be within the work of a human being like a fish in water, to bathe completely in it, to live in it, to belong to it.<sup>[434]</sup> To be in the work of a human being as a fish in the water, to bathe completely in it, to live in it, to belong to it.

Did you not live in a mobile building, endlessly renewed and rebuilt in itself, totally given over to the transformations of a soul, which was a spatial soul? [...] did it not seem to you as if you were surrounded like a slave who had fallen into the hands of the distributed presence of this music? [...] were you not enclosed with it and compelled to be there, like a pythia in the chamber full of vapors?"<sup>[435][436]</sup>

The explanation of residence by the theory of the submerged work of art thus leads directly to the discussion of aesthetic totalitarianism or voluntary enslavement to an environment created by human beings. In both cases the reference to the aesthetics of the sublime immediately opens the way.

There are, then, two arts that enclose human beings in human beings...in stone or in air...each of them fills...our space with artificial truths...<sup>[436]...</sup>

What is Modernity, in this sense, if not an experimental disposition of things to demonstrate that from the sublime to the banal there is only one step? It is true that, at the time Valéry was writing down these reflections, the cinema screen, the fundamental medium of the emerging mass culture, which was to become the medium of subjugation, was still in its infancy, but it was already resolutely on its way to preparing *arrangements for* dreamlike, immersive, mass-consumable, mimetic experiences. It was working on the enslavement of the eye and on making the organ of distanced observation one of immersion in an immersive, dreamlike, immersive, mass-consumable experience.

almost tactile medium. At the same time, at the Bauhaus in Weimar, under the label of design, a complete intervention in the context of daily residence had begun to be managed. Not only music is demonic territory, also the design of space, like architecture before it, refers to the trivial uneasiness of belonging, permanently or occasionally, to an environment shaped entirely by human beings. These arts make explicit the stay in places with the help of immersive assemblies, which are nothing other than proposals of enslavement for consumers of the total situation. By them, dwelling is explained as a welcome submission to the environment. Insofar as dwellings are immersive assemblages or installations, they define existence or being-there as a plastic task. The installation is the aesthetic explanation of submersion. This is shown, among other things, in the fact that submersions participate in the two fundamental values of aesthetic judgment: of submersions in the pleasant and banal, they are said to be beautiful or habitable, of submersions in the horrific and disturbing, they are said to be sublime or uninhabitable.

This explanation of the room could be productive throughout the 20th century to the extent that immersive design—alias interior architecture—was limited to the living spaces of individuals and few people, families and cooperatives. The immense and ever-growing popular literature on interior design, stylish living, renovation of old houses, luxury kitchens and bathrooms, air conditioning, light culture, furniture design, and vacation home shows how broad is the front on which the message of self-chosen micro-media immersion has reached its audience as the authentically therapeutic maxim of the second part of the twentieth century. An entire industry of the interior is poised to arouse and discriminate such claims. It is significant that submersion consciousness quickly depoliticized after 1945 and withdrew from sublime collectivist spheres, as if human beings never wanted to listen anymore as there are arts "that lock human beings into human beings." It is as if the collective memory had preserved the intuition that the larger the units composed by immersion in the communitarian are formatted, the stronger the totalitarian temptation is. Although isolated artists, as long as they are surrounded by sterility and horror, continue to experiment with the sublime habitation, their exercises are not the same.

are now limited to the private format, if at all, to a subculture.

When one day we will be in a position to reconstruct how the demons of the twentieth century were unleashed, we will emphasize the attempts of the totalitarian guides to extend the submerged situation of housing to the total situation of the people and the collective. Classical totalitarianism was the synthesis, made from above, of housing and total work of art.<sup>[437]</sup> The state, taken over by a faction, imposes itself as a total installation and demands unreserved immersion from the citizens. As formats of passage to these submersions by the whole, the "parties" functioned in the East, in Germany the army. This gave rise to the annoying super-communal dwellings, which were staged as popular or socialist collectives. After their demise, the totalitarianism of habitation has become allied with liberal mass culture. They now appear in the tendency to homogenize the building materials markets and to make all DIYers of living spaces choose from the same chromatic assortments of tiles, shelves, switches and mattresses. The building materials markets are the primary purveyors of Western post-totalitarianism. Their message is clear: Don't live with the whole anymore! Make them yourself, alone or with a few others! But remain recognizable and behave in a similar way! That everywhere one is surrounded by furniture that looks so similar as to be confusing seems to be a lesser evil for those involved. By contrast, installation art, as Kabakov developed it after his emigration from the USSR, could only be understood as opposition to Soviet totalitarianism; its appeal remains in that it feeds ironically on the majesty of its dismantled opposite.



## 4. Housing as immunity systems

From the analytic of immersion and submersion we move on to a fourth explanatory figure of the stay, by which human habitation is explained as establishing oneself within a system of common and personal immunity. This almost hygienic dimension of the original existential conformation of space can best be explained by a phrase, which in principle does not sound plausible, from Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*: "In its germ all life is well-being".<sup>[438]</sup> The thesis is acceptable when it is linked to the intention of introducing topology as the base discipline of immunology. From this point of view, the installation of places for an achieved being-with-me is a preventive measure that anticipates the probable disturbances of well-being in the divided self-sphere. Therefore, Bachelard's topophilic ontology must be interpreted as the foundation of a well-positioned theory of life; or, better, as a theory of staying in a eutonic place. We should not be confused by the fact that this contradicts critical conformism. The scandal of a theory of happy consciousness in the midst of the cult of the unhappy is diluted as soon as it is admitted that a positive theory of the integral position is a whole dimension richer than a critical theory, which takes shape as a symptom of a disorder of the capacity for participation. What matters to the theory of the integral position is to explain what and why the well-being of the installed person with himself and in his quarters possesses temporal and objective primacy over alienations. It explains why resentment manifests itself most of the time as envy for the

place: whoever desires the humiliation of others wants to see devastated the place where they would be whole with themselves.

From here we arrive at a dynamic definition of the dwelling as a spatial system of immunity. This interpretation exceeds in a whole dimension the functions of the four walls themselves as a waiting room, as a generator of redundancy, as a creator of habit and as a submerging situation. From the immunological point of view, dwelling is a defensive measure by which a sphere of well-being is delimited against invaders and other carriers of discomfort. All systems of immunity claim a right of defense against disturbances that need no justification. When they are questioned it is only because among cultural beings the formats of common immunity zones are not fixed *a priori*.

In principle and most of the time immunity is conceived (albeit under other names) as a social fact; one could go so far as to look for the criterion of social coherence in the automated cooperation in an immune commune. Traditionally, it was the family and the tribe, then also the city, the community of faith, the village, the party, the company, the entities that wanted to serve as an operationally effective immunological unit, and obliged their members to modes of behavior corresponding to the standard of immunity achieved in common: the last of these has been called solidarity since the nineteenth century. Traditionally, whoever departs from what is designated as a community of immunity and solidarity is called a traitor. The scandal of the modern model of dwelling consists in the fact that it addresses itself above all to the isolation and relational needs of flexibilized individuals and their life partners, who no longer seek their *optimum* immunity in imaginary and real collectives, or in cosmic totalities (and corresponding ideas of house, village, classes and state). <sup>439]</sup> In them the latent layer of meaning of the Roman expression *immunitas*, as non-cooperation in communal work, is released at the immediately higher level. Thus, can one

already say that modern "society" is a collective of traitors to the collective?

If houses of the modern type are ways of explaining the immunological quality of residential complexes, is it not to be expected, then, that in the architecture of incipient Modernity the debate on a correct definition of the immune space will be opened? Are not the houses of our time to become material symbols of the struggle between the interests of isolation and the demands of integration? Are they not, then, the houses of this era the manifestos of a civilizing project that places on the agenda the new formatization of units of immunity and integral spaces? It is only true that, since the conditions of housing and business try to liberate individuals who live alone, the connection between immunity and community must be thoroughly reviewed. Just as in the era of "bare life" life is defined as the successful phase of a (biochemical) system of immunity,

"existence" now means the successful phase of a one-person household. The Roman juridical expression *integrum* did not designate only the unsullied state of natural conditions of life protected by law; it also alluded to the fact that the incolumity of the whole "thing," of a household or of a public good, was itself already a result of struggles and measures taken: that which in its idiosyncratic and healthy consistency, so to speak, seems to exist by itself, can only be as it is because and when it enjoys the privilege of resting in itself under the sharp sword of the law. (In another terminology this was called the dialectical connection between law and violence). The *integrum* is a composite state of affairs of life or a rhymed whole, in which things belong to each other as house and yard, skin and hair, man and mouse.<sup>[440]</sup> Those doubleformulas conjure up the protective spell that guarantees peace to a gathering; they evoke the common roof of immunity, which protects a community. The so called "all" enjoys, then, of the benefit of a power delimiting, congregating, complete.

Considered from this point of view, the right to the incolumity of the domestic sphere constitutes the sphere from which the juridical culture of ancient Europe originates and on the basis of which it develops. The institution of the right of the master of the house configures the latent ideal of all immunity; supposing that it is interpreted as the power of decision on the admission or non-admission of the stranger in the sphere of one's own; for which one must always conceive one's own as a composition of immunological effectiveness of one's own and not one's own. <sup>441]</sup> Immunity implies a preventive force against the violating force: it internalizes before protecting. The law of space, the heart of private law, protects the associated life as a set of activities, involved one in the other, of several lives, that precisely where they are consumed must be able to develop by themselves; and "by itself" inevitably means: within its own limits and to the exclusion of the other.

Immunity, as local aseity, arises from the praxis of good limitation: it constitutes the critical case of inclusive exclusivity. No universalist propaganda can change anything there: even the One God, whether he is called Jahweh or Allah or Paternoster, is primarily an expeller. When he promulgates invitations to all, they are invitations formulated under rather repellent conditions. Nothing that everything could find a place in it. There may be many dwellings in the Father's house; but, because of their high price, most of them are empty. As a spirit of immunity, the One, which by its form is addressed to all, signifies the quintessence of selectivity.

Intuitions of this kind were present in Nietzsche when he presented to his friends a proposed formulation for the new categorical imperative after the death of God. Be yourself a new beginning in your own strength! Be yourself an original game that plays itself, "a wheel that moves by itself, a first movement, a holy saying-yes!"<sup>[442]</sup> With proposals of this kind the transposition of theology into immunology is *implicitly* fulfilled; and *eo*

*ipso* the emancipation, within certain limits, of finite egoisms. The yes to self draws the outline of the affirmer's real space of life, recognizing the fact that no sphere of self-affirmation can be all-embracing, and that, even if not in the same place, there will always be enough space for the other and the others, who also want themselves. Every yes local to itself floats in a foam of limited analogous self-affirmations. "And he who calls the self healthy and holy, and egoism blessed, truly that one also says what he knows..."<sup>[443]</sup> What Nietzsche, a failed seeker of a bearable place for himself in the world, did not explain here was certainly how the empirical place of renewed and legitimized egoism is usually its dwelling, understood as the immune spatial self-extension of the human being who remains happy with himself. That it is to be rather a small space can only be surprising at first glance.



Figures on the pediment of the imperial palace of the Forbidden City in Beijing. They serve to protect the building from harmful forces.

It was Marshall McLuhan who later divulged the secret of dwelling in modern conditions, insofar as he explained it from a situation of completely transformed immunity. The literate human being, says the media theorist, no longer finds it necessary "to consider his house... as a cultic extension of his body,"<sup>[444]</sup> because he no longer co-utilizes the universe, its divine foundation and its supposedly universal legaliformity, as a system of personal immunity. For this reason he also no longer has to equate the house with the cosmos; world order and lifestyle are separated. Whoever, supported by the media, dwells in a house in Modernity, has replaced the vague psychosemantic immunity systems of religious metaphysics by his own, highly legally and climatically isolated cells-habitats (as well as by anonymous solidarity systems). The

Modern housing is a place to which uninvited guests are practically never admitted. The *toxic people*, and, if possible, also the bad news, must be kept out of it. The dwelling is becoming consolidated as a machine of ignorance or as an integral defense mechanism. In it, the fundamental right to pay no attention to the outside world finds its architectural support.<sup>[445]</sup> In the home, the fundamental right to pay no attention to the outside world.

The dwelling of the modern is the extension of the body through which its preoccupation with itself, converted into a habit, and its defensive position, transferred to the background, are expressly exhibited. It makes explicit that living organisms do not subsist without seeking enclosure within themselves. Housing thus becomes part of the nuclear process of modernization: it articulates the emergence - or the becoming explicit - of systems of immunity, as well as the experiences of self-referent units with larger associations (of which even the largest will be much smaller than the whole). It materializes the fact that human openness to the world always corresponds to a complementary turning away from it.

It is time for the immune house at night to fulfill its task as the guardian of sleep. Insofar as it forms the protective environment of sleep, the house becomes an accomplice of the acosmic needs of its inhabitants. It constitutes an enclave of the absence of the world in the world: a nocturnal *integrum*, secured by roof and wall, door and lock. The house, which is an envelope of sleep, provides the purest proof of the connection between immunity and sealing of space. It embodies the unity of geometry and life, utopia topically realized: as a timeless projection of the interior as being-still-within.<sup>[446]</sup> It guards the night, humanly shaping and regenerating, in which no plans are forged for the daytime world.



Japanese sleeping on a tatami mat with a winnowing mat, headrest and hibachi (fire point), ca. 1870.

The natural transcendence of the night is first articulated in the architectural forms of the bedrooms, which are offered as designed environments of tranquility. Here, the skin-self is extended to a bed-self; surrounded by a room-self in a house-self. The clearest sleep occurs in an acosmic onion. In the house at night lodges homelessness; also "we, the detached ones," find even here an umbrella over our heads: an umbrella for which we are not to wish, for now, that it is full of holes and open to the outside.<sup>[447]</sup> Since the nidifications<sup>[448]</sup> in the four walls, which are called our own, do not



The house, which guarantees nocturnal immunity, has no size requirements. It demands neither the pharaonic construction of pyramids nor the building of cathedrals. Perhaps the "small house," for which some contemporary architects strive,<sup>[449]</sup> is first and foremost the explanatory form of the nocturnal being-as-consort; and, with it, a response of architecture, for historical human beings, to the ahistorical hut. At the center of the small, acosmic, immune house is the bed: that simple technical aid to sleep, which has contributed more than anything else to the humanization of the night. Thus, there is much to be said in favor of interpreting "ultimately" dwelling as the prototype of the possibility of sleep itself. In this sense, the bed is the center of the world.<sup>[450]</sup> The bedroom of real human beings is not, "as Hegel says... (a) crystal in which a dead man is lodged";<sup>[451]</sup> nor is it a Gothic tree of life, rising to the "organic excelsior";<sup>[452]</sup> it is the envelope of acosmism in human form. In the homeless it may be observed how the need for sleeping space approaches the minimum; a cardboard box over the head may suffice to signal the sleeper's demand for space. From the most famous of the homeless this saying has been handed down: "Foxes have caves and birds under the sky have nests; but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head."<sup>[453]</sup> What does that mean? He who is sustained by a spherical hyperimmunity (*et non sum solus, quia Pater mecum est*),<sup>[454]</sup> at bedtime can renounce even the minimal comfort of the children of this world; he does not demand a bed of his own, but he does demand a paradisiacal covering.



A cardboard box as a bedroom: homeless in the 1980s.

When the house functions as a roof donor for the night, the primordial scene of the *integrum* is consummated. It then becomes evident that worldlessness is a local attribute. Every dream is anyone's dream; every absence of consciousness is the absence of a consciousness limited to a fragment of the world. There is no dream of the world because the world has no eyes that it could close as everything; just as there is no house of the world in which everything was with itself.<sup>[455]</sup> The directive hyperbole of classical metaphysics, the assumption that the cosmos is a house, ended with the passage to explicit inhabitation. It is recognized that the metaphysical reflex of seeking immunity in the omnienvolent was a luxury that only the poorest, the homeless and uninsured of Antiquity and the Middle Ages could afford. The powerless live in hyperboles, the strong occupy territories and abandon them again. Every dwelling, as the fulcrum of a finite living-power, generates exclusivity; every

punctual self-assertion produces interruptions of communication and denial of the environment. This is its affirmative virtue, its selfishness (its "ego-mania"),<sup>[456]</sup> and its normal diagnosis, at the same time. The crisis of the soul of the world passes through the dwellings. Even God, if he is taking sides with life and not an empty mask of totality,<sup>[457]</sup> cannot gather everything into himself. These words are hard for the romantic of the limitless. Who is capable of hearing them?

## 5. The machine to inhabit or:

### The mobilized self-self-space

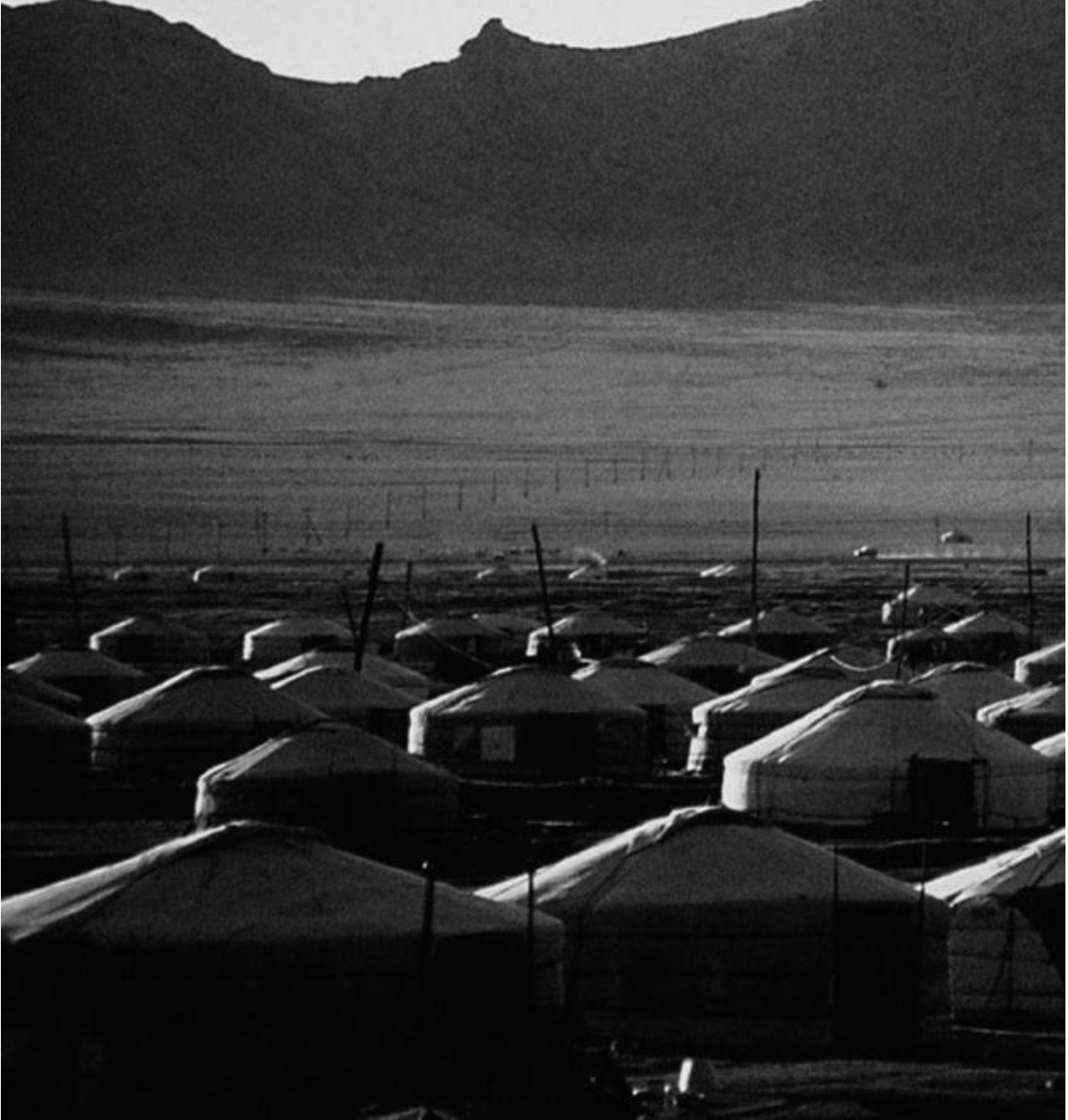
This leads to the fifth step in the explanation of the dwelling by modern construction technology: the engineer's definition of the dwelling as a *machine for inhabiting*. This unfortunate expression, which Le Corbusier introduced in the early twenties in the discussion on the reform of architecture, provides the key concept for an explanation adapted to the times of the domestic activity of people living alone in the city and small families mobilized. In that nothing can change the defamation that the sentimental criticism of architecture has made of this expression. An expression that summarizes the technical models that correspond to the *stand of art* in matters such as being-with-me, time management, habit configuration, climate design, immunization, management of ignorance, self-complementation and co-isolation. In it is condensed the twentieth-century attack on traditional forms of sedentary apathy. Le Corbusier's 1922 programmatic demand outlines the new path: "The first obligation of architecture in a time of renewal [...] is [...] the revision of the essential elements of the house."<sup>[458]</sup> He believed that the most important step on the way to the *new spirit* consisted in awakening the

"spiritual disposition for the series."<sup>[459]</sup> The epochal formulation is found in a writing of the early 1920s, in which it is said, "One must consider the house as a machine or a

instrument for living [...] a house conceived as a car and accommodated as a car or a ship's cabin."<sup>[460]</sup>

The rebellion of the traditionalists against the analytically advanced conception of architecture as the preparation of mobile *containers* for human habitation was not long in coming: in 1927, on the occasion of Le Corbusier's contribution to the architectural exhibition in the Weissenhof colony in Stuttgart, the critic Edgar Wedepohl found that life in such a "nomad tent of steel and concrete" might be attractive to intellectuals, but that such human beings should not be allowed to impose their tastes on society as a whole. The latter would also continue in the future with its sights set on a dwelling with the right to more solid expectations. Houses of the dwelling-machine type would not be "firmly and consistently locked to the earth...rooted in the ground...."<sup>[461][462]</sup> The machine type of dwelling would not be "firmly and consistently locked to the earth...rooted in the ground..."<sup>[462][463][463][464]</sup>

If one were looking for proof that aversions sometimes converge with intellectual penetrations, here is a concrete one. Inherent in the idea of the machine for inhabiting is the program of diluting the apparently immemorial alliance between house and sedentary lifestyle and freeing the inhabited space from the environment. Sometimes this program consciously links up with the prehistoric form of the nomadic tent, which was only loosely coupled to its environment. (The distrust of the traditionalist domestic against the house-tent is only surpassed by the aversion of conservative aesthetes to the artistic pretensions of modern architecture, as they seek to transform the building into a great sculpture). What Rudolf Arnheim has described as the "dignity of the immobile"<sup>[462]</sup> in traditional architecture is now the victim of the imperative of lightened change. In the course of explanation, the moment has been reached when the house not only remains the stopping place where mortals await the seasoning of the product or the launching of the project: it must itself become the vehicle, which, to speak with Bloch, is there "ready to depart."<sup>[463]</sup> The principle of reversibility is introduced into the construction of dwellings.



Yurt nomad colony in Mongolia, 1997.



Steven Brower, *U-town*, 1998.

The dwelling machine is unequivocally a concession of the symbol of persistence to the "absolute character of movement of the world" in the age of money. Just as, according to Simmel, the meaning of money lies in the fact that it "passes from hand to hand," so the meaning of the dwelling machine lies in the fact that it facilitates the movement, the circulation of the inhabitant. Insofar as it provides him with lodging here, it already reminds him of the imminent departure to another location, to another parking lot, to another climatic option. Like money, the machine to inhabit is "*actus purus*, so to speak," continuous "self-alienation outside any given point, and thus constitutes the polar opposite and direct negation of all being-for-itself. <sup>464]</sup> The postmodern currency, stability through liquidity, is already fully articulated in the idea of *machine à habiter*.

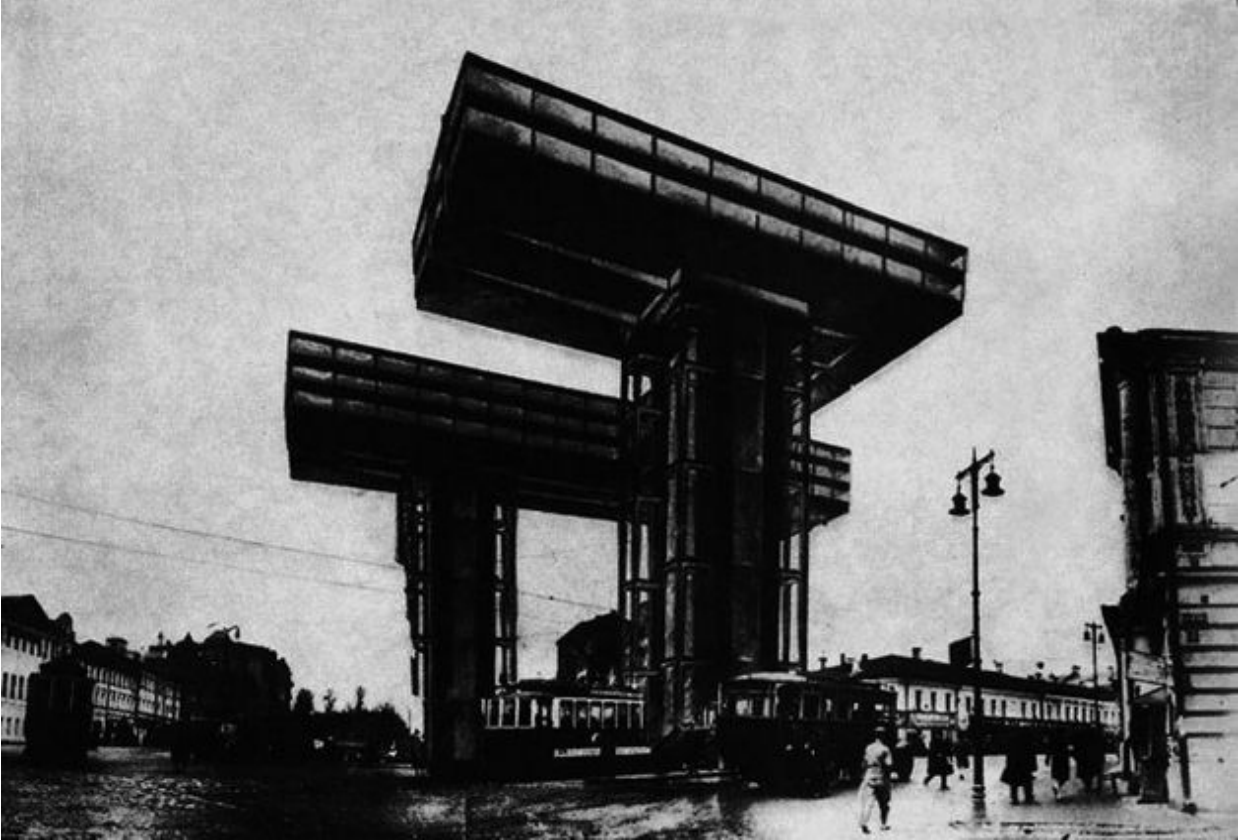
With the vehicle-house the symmetry between building and dismantling is elevated to a pragmatic ideal. The building is now presented as a hypothesis. When it is built with artistic quality it articulates the pretension of achieving a perfect form of provisionality; although the form seems definitive, the location remains

revocable. In such spaces the inhabitant can become a hitchhiker of himself; the owner is a passenger who makes the compartment elegant. The decoration is nothing (because it is oriented to the sedentary and comfortable), the design is everything. The objection that it is not firmly locked to the land adequately demonstrates the novelty of the house-vehicle hybrid: its being-there signifies no marriage or link to the land, but a simple parking in a sealed area. Lissitzky has programmatically articulated in his writings on architectural theory the antigravity tendency of the new mode of construction:

One of our ideas for the future is the overcoming of the foundation, of the attachment to the earth...(this) requires the overcoming of the force of gravity itself. It requires the floating body, the physico-dynamic architecture.<sup>[465]</sup>

For the illustration of these theses he referred to his project *Der Wolkenbügel* [*Der Wolkenbügel*], 1924, as well as to Leonidow's project for a Lenin Institute in Moscow, whose nucleus, together with a skyscraper-library for 15 million books, was to consist of a great sphere-auditorium for 4000 people, floating in the air.<sup>[466]</sup> The new human being arises from the sum of Soviet power plus levitation. Le Corbusier's frequent allusions to the automobile and the ocean liner—including the Futurist assertion of the equivalence between the temple of the Parthenon and a perfect carriage—are not only testimonies to a love of geometry and a fascination with Platonic abstractions, as could often be found in the pioneers of the new architecture; they imply the correct understanding of the definition of the new houses as vehicles. Consequently, it is necessary to understand, in the first place, the building plots as parking lots; or as docks (a conception that would later manifest itself especially in the case of large residential complexes, where the apartments were built as *container units* placed one on top of the other in vertical garages or stacked boat cabins, not always in consonance with the predominantly sedentary needs of a neighborhood that could not recognize itself in the equation of parking and dwelling. If one wanted to form a common supra-concept for the new type of dwellings and their corresponding vehicles, one would arrive at the expression sociomobile:<sup>[467]</sup> village car and group container at the same time.

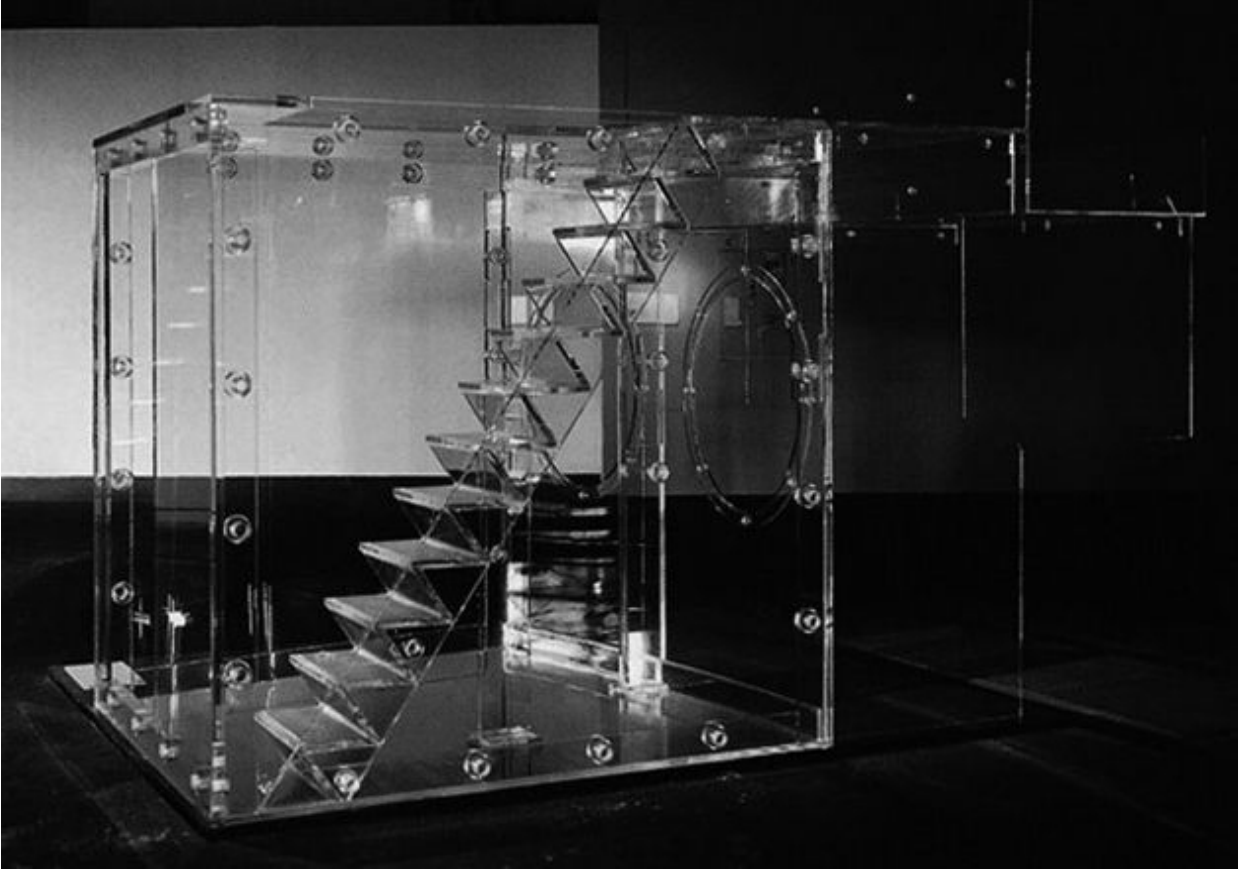




The Lissitzky, *The Ironing of the Skeletons*, 1925.

For the new way of explaining dwelling, the link with the idea of the vehicle and the transportable *container* is also of transcendence because both analogues are reversed to single-story dwellings: if not inevitably, then for pragmatic reasons. Vehicles have no foundations or warehouse, containers have no cellar. In this way, the *machine à habiter* rejects the imposition of understanding dwelling as residing in a house, that is to say, in a multi-story structure. The autonomous, analytically prepared housing unit appears - almost dogmatically - as a kind of stackable *bungalow*, in which the movements of the dwellers' lives have to take place exclusively horizontally (excluding some more ambitious projects of one-room dwellings with high ceilings and a gallery above). It is therefore understandable why a lover of the house, like Gaston Bachelard, complained about the modern dwelling of

If the human being's dwelling is indeed to translate his soul's "form", its accommodation in single-story units signifies the beginning of the end of the vertically complex soul. If the human being's dwelling is indeed to translate his soul's "form," his housing in single-story units signifies the beginning of the end of the vertically complex soul. Can the soul "expand" ("I know nothing about it") as long as it has to be content with rented apartments? Bachelard's ideas may be considered an expression of bourgeois nostalgia; in any case, he is joined in this by Sigmund Freud, for whom, from a topological point of view, the psyche was a three-story configuration. What will happen to the inner crypts when the contemporaries of the Bauhaus and the *bungalow* culture no longer know at all what a cellar closet is, in which a corpse could be kept?<sup>[468]</sup> Perhaps it will not be without interest for future developments in psychoanalysis how human beings will deal with the idea of the unconscious when they no longer have the experience of a house with cellar and storeroom present.



Carsten Höller, *Casa-comuna*, 2001.

From the subsequent development of the "dwelling machine" motif in the twentieth century it could be recognized early on how the formula, which in Le Corbusier's case remained rather rhetorical, led to precise materializations in numerous foci of contemporary housing praxis.<sup>[469]</sup> Its earliest maximum form, from the point of view of engineering technique, appears in the 1927 sketches of the young Buckminster Fuller for his *Dymaxion-House*, which, indeed, was the first true flat-space dwelling machine ever conceived. At Fuller's legendary lecture to the Architectural League of New York in June 1929, its president, Harvey W. Corbett, presented the model of the novel house as the result of an unprejudiced reflection "on that careful type of machine, which answers perfectly to the purposes of a dwelling."<sup>[470]</sup> It would allow a glimpse of the possibility that "we may come to know dwellings

as automobiles for traveling," as "a machine with the value of reusability, which can be assembled anywhere." "If you have lived a few years in such a house and want to set out on a tour of Europe, send a note to a laundry; they will call you, pick up the house, wash and clean it, iron and reassemble it, and when you return it will be in a new house."<sup>[471]</sup>

The engineer's house is subject to the principle of assembly: it will no longer be built by masons, it will be installed by fitters. It is no longer inhabited in the European sense either; the house is filled with a choice of living space. As a living machine, it is at the same time a moving machine; and it demonstrates its independence of context. The neo-ontological thesis that a house constitutes an artificial midpoint between human beings and nature, which, by its essence, should act in a conciliatory manner, loses its validity.<sup>[472]</sup> The mobilized house thinks as little about the reconciliation of its inhabitant with the environment as an automobile does about the reconciliation of the driver with the road. Where once there was nature, now there must be infrastructure.

Fuller's lecture begins critically-temporally ("[...] I came to the conclusion that building is responsible for almost all our ills";<sup>[473]</sup> "In the mode of dwelling today... women are much more enslaved than in his time the crews of the Roman galleys")<sup>[474]</sup> and ends with the praise of standardization and serial thinking, even with the apotheosis of mobility: now it is a matter of consistently raising the house from the ground. The new building, which serves the plausible improvisation of a living space for mobile human beings, is to be hung from a central mast, thereby discarding traditional statics and bidding farewell to cubic traditions, along with the dogma of right angles in walls, windows and doors. The floating house would only remain in contact with the earth by the anchorage of the mast, without, in spite of its light weight, having to renounce stability against storms and safety in the face of earthquakes. (Let us remember that four months later, in October 1929, in

his Buenos Aires conferences, Le Corbusier praised *expressis verbis* the house raised from the earth and placed on piles [*pilotis*], *la boîte en l'air*";<sup>[475]</sup> a decade earlier, the Russian poet Velimir Chlebnikow, who died in 1922, in his radically constructivist *proposals* had demanded: "To build houses in the form of trellises, into which transportable glass houses can be fitted."<sup>[476]</sup>



R. Buckminster Fuller in front of the second model of the Dymaxion House, 1929.

The house designed by Fuller had to thank its stability to a novel framework, mainly composed of tensile stresses: an early reference to the concept of tensegrity, with which Fuller would become the founder of a trans-classical statics; extremely strong piano wire was used to tie down the loads; in addition, metal and rubber tubes under air pressure would be used for additional bracing ("[...] They could almost let an airplane fly...").

477] Air-filled floors cushion sound and gently catch falling children. Doors composed of balloon silk, inflatable, open and close by pneumatic mechanisms. There are no more hidden storage rooms; no more space separations that convey the message: don't walk through here, fall through here. The *indoor* movements of the inhabitants are ergonomically typified and optimized; all the steps and maneuvers in the environment, calculated in detail, already take into account the need of the *subjects-dymaxion* for efficiency and energy savings.





Dymaxion Deployment Unit (DDU), 1940, Kitchen-Model of an emergency accommodation awaiting the bombing of British cities.

Moreover, by the lightness of its being-there type and by its agile aggregation of analogous forms, the house becomes a plea for the dissolution of the old collectivizing city, indeed: a beacon for the decentralization of the republic, for the unschooling of society and, not least, for the self-teaching of the *child-dymaxion*, of that first generation of visitors from the future who "are not do-not-that children."<sup>[478]</sup> (It is impossible not to recognize here the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright.) In addition to this, the new house is presented as a machine for the emancipation of the housewife. If the traditional dwelling meant for the latter a veritable galley bank and an irremissible environment of stress, the new one is transformed into an ample technical aid for domestic tasks; both outside and inside it is oriented towards lightening. Emancipation conforms to levitation; both are testable with the scales. "The total weight of the house amounts to approximately 6000 pounds. The costs of the materials used would command, according to current estimates, about 50 cents per pound."<sup>[479]</sup>

Because of its alliance with mobility, the new mode of dwelling must lead, according to Fuller, to a healthy break with the traditional psychology of the citizen "masses". The *Dymaxion-house* must



The new style of dwelling became the means of transportation of a human being who wants to know that he has left behind the last vestiges of European feudalism and, with them, the dogmatism of the foundations and the belief in the importance of the walls that characterized them. Thus, the new style of dwelling became a means of "demand for movement."<sup>[480]</sup> (In *On the road*, Kerouac will formulate a generation later that the "only noble function of our time" consists "in being in movement.") At a time when barely 20 million automobiles were on America's roads, Fuller dreamed of garrisoning the country with as many as 100 million *Dymaxion* homes. He later declared that he had never believed in the realization of his project.

The link between house and vehicle in Buckminster Fuller's utopia-habitat is not limited to mobility virtues. In fact, the *Dymaxion* project already implies the concrete trend towards the sub-urbanization of cities, without which it is difficult to understand modern mass consumer society, especially in its American-American variant. Since the 1930s, in the mass culture, driven by jealousies and rivalries, the primary scenarios of consumption or fast food cells - to take new forces conjuncturally - are single-family homes in the suburbs, which only by motorization could be connected to shopping malls. Fuller's project prophesies exactly, then, although in an intelligently distanced way, the trends of habitation and lifestyle, which began to impose themselves, however, from his time: he advocates a house, all of it projected as a comfort machine and whose first virtue consists in leaving its inhabitants' hands free for consumption. The Fullerian variant of utopianism belongs to the multiple manifestations of that "conspiracy against the city" that, according to the diagnosis of the urbanist Richard Plunz of Columbia University, New York, characterized the fate of cities since the economic crisis and its dissolution in the New Deal.<sup>[481]</sup> The "conspiracy against the city" is a manifestation of the "conspiracy against the city" of the New Deal.

The history of twentieth-century architectural forms now shows that the interpretation of the house as a vehicle did not want to develop in the direction indicated by Buckminster Fuller's *high-tech* hanging containers. When housing and automobiles did indeed come together, on the one hand, motorhomes emerged, as units made up of minibuses and furnished *containers*, or caravans towed by automobiles; on the other hand, numerous subcultures of *mobile homes* were formed (especially in the United States, based on prototypes dating from the mid-19th century)<sup>[482]</sup>, complete houses, raised from their foundations, which could be transported in articulated trucks to new sites, where, after short work on the installation of electricity, water, sewage and telecommunications connections, they could immediately function again as autonomous housing units. The mobile home is defined as an itinerant architectural monad, which has become congenial to its inhabitant, because both the house and its owner refer to the freedom of choice of the context. It represents a deterritorialized *container*, which neither demands nor endures essential neighborhoods. Nor does coexistence escape explanation: commune and environment can be separated from each other like sexuality and procreation. The concept of proximity is emancipated from its trivial spatial interpretation, long before the internet created a new mode of televecinity.<sup>[483]</sup> Sometimes, when a tornado destroys a colony-mobile *home* in Florida or Oklahoma, television images show the owners standing by the wreckage of their homes as drivers of cars that would have been involved in a massive collision on a highway.

The explanation of dwelling by analogies with the vehicle has been carried out a second time, so to speak, in the shadow of the avant-garde: in a space without theory and without art: misery analyzes in its own way the elementary structures of dwelling. In a world in which flight and deportation became mass phenomena, they had to be tried out on a large scale and in large numbers.

improvisations of temporary living quarters. Thus appeared the world of concentration camps, which, in any assessment of the twentieth century, must always be counted among its main symptoms. They constitute the malign compromise between unwanted mobility and forced immobilization. And yet, even with the minimalism of its barracks, this type of housing is subject to the anthropological imperative of habitation. Despite their varying degrees of harshness, the camp worlds can be compared with one another as places of crowding of "superfluous human beings", where reductions of the culture of dwelling to elementary and very provisional endowments are experienced. Here it is clear that the reduction of the living space to an almost empty *container* is not necessarily an aesthetic refinement. Flusser's shocking annotation: "one lived in Auschwitz" is a descriptive phrase; it articulates a limit value of the stay in a dwelling machine that serves as a waiting room for death. As existential time without quality was made explicit in the twenties of the twentieth century as being-for-death, so, since the forties, the stay-in-something without quality, as *being-in-the-container*.

## **6. *Management* of addresses, consumption site, regulation of the weather**

Insofar as "dwelling" in a concentration camp subtracts from the occupants the free choice of place and annihilates the autonomous "person", a new dimension of the explicit stay appears *ex negativo*: by affirmation of the being-there to a given place, dwelling is defined and deployed as a residing. To choose a residence means to commit oneself to the maintenance of an address; he has an address who affirms himself as sender and is available as addressee. In both respects the modern inhabitant invests part of his energies in the place of residence as a place of enterprise. In doing so, today's address holder follows a habit of the aristocracy of ancient Europe, which was willing to pay almost any price for the privilege of residence. Educated in zealous attention to appellations of origin and auras of names, it was immediately obvious to the nobles that the address is the message. Also under capitalist premises the affirmation of place and rank by the display of an address remains a profitable business objective, since it plays with the wild card among the values of mobilized society, accessibility, both actively and passively.<sup>[484]</sup>

The modern home is defined as an address when it makes its inhabitants accessible for services, deliveries, network offers and when it provides them with the means to act as a sender of orders and messages. The address is a primary investment, by the

that the actors of the business world demonstrate their capacity for them and their social claim. As an investment in a social place, the address is part of the fixed capital. The more clearly the residential value of living becomes apparent, the more those who offer *housing facilities* have reason to recommend their objects from the point of view of their traffic capacity. The highest premiums are enjoyed by housing units that combine all the advantages of *privacy* with all the options of *access*. Where this is offered, the residence is both a perfectly isolated egosphere and an easily accessible point in the network of multiple *on-line-communities*. It is a connection point for obscuring the outside world and admitting reality *on demand*. In view of such provisions the refined twist of "smart home" means more than just a propaganda phrase. Dwelling made explicit in the direction of intelligence makes the dwelling an agency: site and crossroads for agents, negotiating artificial programs, interacting with human end-consumers.<sup>[485]</sup> The "smart house" is a place of interaction with human end-consumers.<sup>[485]</sup> The "smart house" is a place of interaction with human end-consumers.

Bill Gates called his *Cyberhome* housing project near Seattle an "(almost) omniscient house"<sup>[486]</sup> Built of glass, wood and silicon, it is intended to serve primarily as a relaxation machine for him and his wife, providing their common environment with a maximum of "entertainment possibilities". *Intelligent toys make* the house an environment of experiences. Whoever walks through the Gates villa moves in an electronic envelope that at any given moment positions and introduces him or her to a personalized aura of light, music and operating options. The house continually knows everything it needs to know about the visitor in order to be available to them. Like a digital submarine, it is ready day and night to play, to satisfy the desires of the inhabitant, all the songs in which the word *yellow* appears. On the walls are embedded monitors that make available to the observer any image from the archive of the universal history of art. "To inhabit means... to have access."<sup>[487]</sup>

Let us note that the post-agrarian and no longer artisan-gremial housing conditions are almost generally distinguished because they are built (at least for the salaried part of the household) on the separation of the workplace and the dwelling. Here appears a new aspect of explicit dwelling, by which it is expressly determined as non-working. In the terminology of the political economy, the activities of this sphere had been transcribed as

"reproduction of the commodity labor-power". The sociology of the society of sensations emphasizes, on the contrary, contemporary dwelling as a means for the representation and regeneration of identity; as well as the role of the dwelling as a base camp for incursions into the scene of sensations. The dwelling is increasingly unequivocally qualified as the place where individuals surrender to their vocation of self-realization in pure immanence. Self-realization is a camouflaged expression for self-consumption. The most relevant event of life is determined here as an incentivized flow of sensations or experiences; that is, as an accumulation and waste of enjoyable differences in the flow of time. Dwellings are sites for entrepreneurs of sensations, that is to say,

"machines of desire, which maximize sensations per unit of time."<sup>[488]</sup><sup>[488]</sup> [The following is a brief summary of the results.](#)



Shigeru Ban, *Curtain Wall House*, 1995.

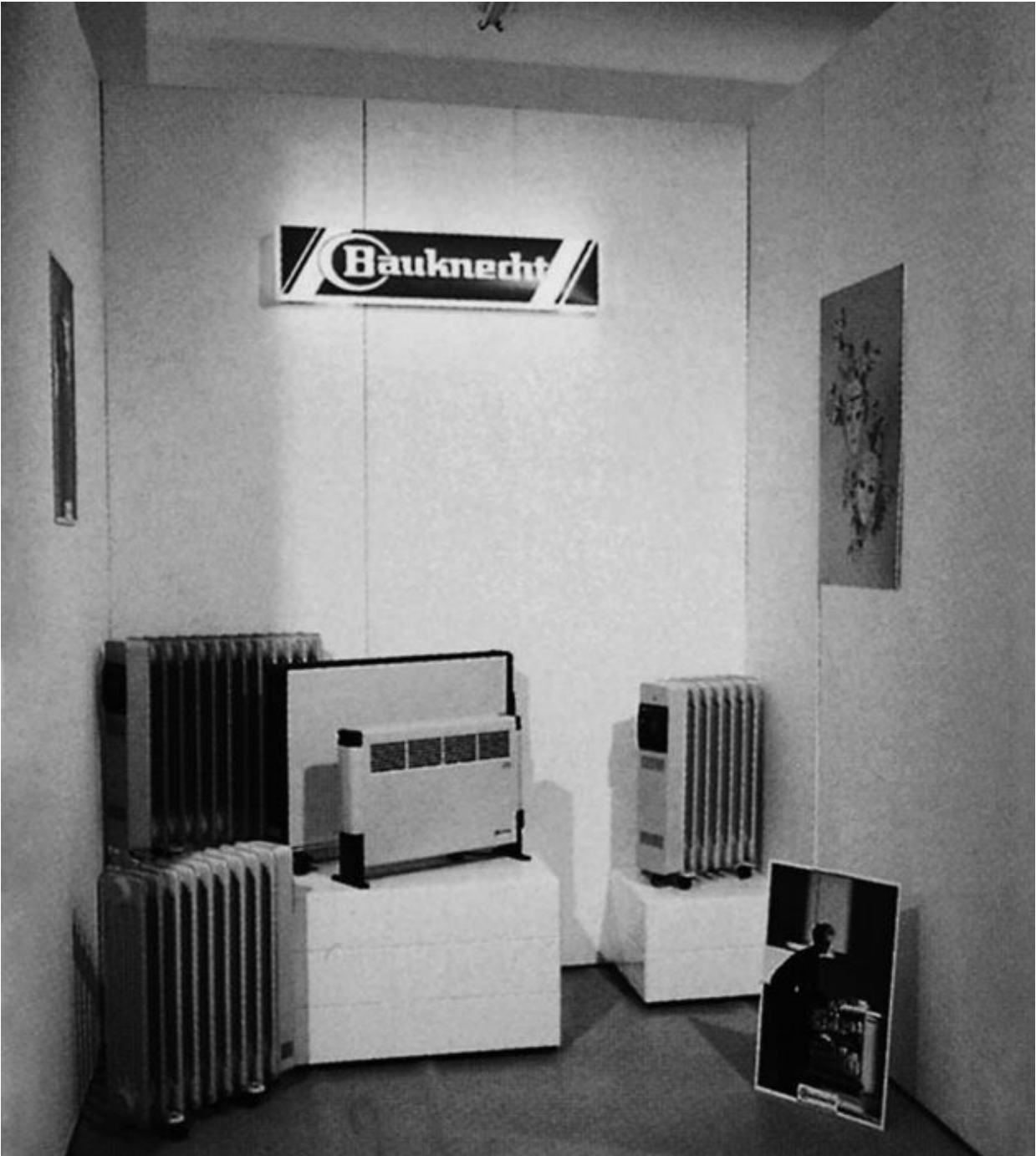
Finally, modern building culture has ensured that the almost inobjective physical content of all buildings, the air

enclosed, may have become a *sui generis* theme. Air constitutes, in the presentation we are making, the last aspect of the explicit housing culture of Modernity. The thesis can be ventured - on the background of the explanations we made with respect to greenhouses -<sup>[489]</sup> that all contemporary dwellings not only have climatic installations (in our degree of latitude in the form of heating, in more southerly zones in the form of air cooling systems, moreover), but are climatic installations. It is striking that the *air conditioning* phenomenon has not aroused the interest of cultural historians and sociologists until now. Only sporadically appear references to the outstanding significance of the cooling of living and working space for the opening to civilization of the hottest and most torrid areas of the Earth. Historian David S. Landes emphatically deduces the southward movements of population in the United States and the establishment of industry in those latitudes from the extensive use of *air conditioning*.<sup>[490]</sup> Here Hegel's acute observation on the uselessness of natural air for human purposes comes to the fore.<sup>[491]</sup> As for the architects of Modernity, they not only became aware of their responsibility for the psychosocial comfort of a living unit-remember the concept of Le Corbusier's "psychic ventilation," they also increasingly understand that their product possesses, along with the visible architectural structure, an atmospheric reality of its own value. The authentic living space is a sculpture of air that its inhabitants pass through like a breathable installation. Not a few of the great architects of the twentieth century took advantage, in this sense, of the turn of their art towards macro-sculptural thinking.<sup>[492]</sup> To the extent that building bodies are once again understood as plastic spatial magnitudes, the perception of hollow spaces (*les creux*) as realities with their own value, which also demand configuration, increases. And just as, since the 19th century, greenhouses have been built solely because of the climate that is to prevail in them, some of the most important masters of



The most important spatial creations of the 20th century are based on an explicit art of air and climate.

In view of the housing practices of the last century, it jumps out of the fact that the practical definition of the machine to inhabit - already because of the numerical relations - was to become rather a matter for do-it-yourselfers than for architects. The massive implantation of *machines à habiter* takes place -if we disregard, for the moment, the construction of colonies centrally directed in socialism- in the miserable inflationary neighborhoods, located at the edge of the big cities of the - so called after 1950- Third World, where gigantic villages of amorphous-additive surface arose, close to the architectural zero point, improvisations with casual materials such as tin, cardboard, straw, mud and wood, often without access to minimum opening urban services such as electricity and sewage, self-built receptacles for the mastery of the permanent state of exception, testimonies both of the indestructibility of the human need for habitation and of the archetypal creativity, with which, even under the most precarious conditions, the longing for the hut, of that first architectural articulation of the need for the interior, manifests itself.



Guillaume Bijl, *Heating stand*, 1990.

Such forms show that the modern association of home and movement does not only take place under the sign of travel. Rather, it is flight that forces human beings to incessantly invent new compromises between dwelling and mobility. The

The halting flight of countless uprooted people creates circumstances in which the neolithic equation between dwelling and waiting unexpectedly comes back into force. If the speculatively over-strengthened expression "end of history" has any empirical meaning, nowhere more so than in the light of these phenomena. Whoever has landed in cities of shantytowns, favelas, *bidonvilles*, lives in the quasi-impossibility of having a project, or a past that would promote a future. In these stopping places for disoriented and disinherited human beings, the old peasant balance between patience and expectation has been broken; here only the diffuse hope of the arrival of foreign help dominates, without the perspective of a product that matures by itself, that liberates and allows to lead an existence in one's own time.

## **B. Cellular construction, egospheres, autocontainer**

***For the explanation of co-isolated existence by means of  
the apartment.***

*Behold, the hour is coming, and it is already coming, when you will disperse  
each one of you to his own....*

Gospel according to John 16:32

Anyone who studies the history of recent architecture in its connection with the ways of life of the mediatized society immediately recognizes that the two most successful architectural innovations of the twentieth century, the apartment and the sports stadium, are directly related to the two broader socio-psychological trends of the time: the liberation of individuals, living alone, through individualizing housing and media techniques, and the agglomeration of the masses, equally excited, through events organized in large, fascinating constructions. We do not emphasize, for the moment, that the affective and imaginary synthesis of modern "society" is produced rather by mass media, that is, by telecommunicative integration of the non-gathered, than by physical gathering, while the operative synthesis is regulated by market relations.

# 1. Cell and world bubble

The modern apartment - also referred to in the literature as a one-room dwelling or, with greater pretensions, as a one-room dwelling <sup>[493]</sup> embodies the tendency towards the formation of cells, in which we can recognize the architectural and topological analog of the individualism of modern society. For the interpretation of individualistic aspirations, let us here settle for a statement already noted by Gabriel Tarde in the eighties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: "The civilized human being of today aspires properly to the possibility of renouncing human support."<sup>[494]</sup> In the development of apartment construction, it can be seen that nothing requires more conditions than the seemingly natural expectation that one person should be entitled to at least one room or one head to at least one living unit. Just as Soviet modernism was condensed in the myth of communal housing, which was to act as the hallmark of the New Human Being, fit for the collective, so Western modernism concentrates on the myth of the apartment, where the liberated individual, flexibilized in the flow of capital, devotes himself to the care of relationships with himself.

We define the apartment as an atomic or elementary egospheric form and, consequently, as a cellular bubble of the world, from the massive repetition of which individualistic foams arise. No moral evaluation is attached to this definition; it contains no concession to the Catholic and neoconservative critique of the times, which has nothing to say about the contemporary trend towards *single-culture* beyond the stereotypes of reproach.

Augustinian of indifference and egoism; new is only the scathing suggestion that the modern egoist, the modern egoist, would be subscribing to the *Daily Me*. We also stand apart from the fact that concepts such as that of a "spatial minimum of existence" are introduced; to speak of a minimum is, practically everywhere it is done, a failed description of the idea of cell-habitat or of atom-"world of life", around whose definition the passion of modern reflection on dwelling revolves.

To approach the apartment phenomenon, one must perceive its close connection with the principle of the series, without which one cannot think of the transition from construction (and production) to the era of mass production and prefabrication.<sup>[495]</sup> Just as, according to El Lissitzky, constructivism represented the point of transition from painting to architecture,<sup>[496]</sup> so serialism, the point of transition between elementarism and social utopianism. In serialism, which regulates the relationship between the part and the whole by means of exact standardization, so that decentralized manufacture and centralized assembly become possible, lies the key to the relationship, characteristic of Modernity, between cell and union of cells. Just as the development of the cell takes into account the spirit of analysis, insofar as it consummates the regression to the elementary level, the construction of houses on the basis of such elements signifies a combinatorial or, better, a form of "organic construction", with the aim of creating, on the basis of modules, architecturally, urbanistically and economically sustainable ensembles. The fact that the stacking of numerous cellular units in an architectural complex was intended, from the beginning, to be more than a casual or mechanical addition of elementary units, shows the great variety of constructive forms, with which the architects of Modernity have responded to the provocation of modular construction. From Le Corbusier's 1922 plans for a villa-house, flooded with light on all sides, as well as from his projects for skyscrapers in the form of a cross (1925), star-shaped (1933) and diamond-shaped (1938), a path full of bifurcations emerges which

leads to the sculptural stacking of cells in box-like structures, such as the 1972 *Nakagin Capsule Tower* in Tokyo by the Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa. The vertical agglomeration of capsule units here becomes an aesthetic phenomenon in its own right. Other architects have stacked the housing modules in forms similar to a mushroom or a tree. The two apartment towers in Chicago's *Marina City*, with their distinctive domed balconies, rise sixty stories above flower-shaped plants. Although larger complexes are necessarily formed by the addition of elementary units and occasionally appear as if they were mere stacks, they always possess certain idiosyncratic macro-sculptural values; in any case, the syntax of an apartment house forbids the mere stacking of units, because these would not function or be accessible without communications through corridors, stairs, elevators, and conveyor systems.

The apartment as a living cell represents the atomic plane in the field of habitat conditions: just as the living cell in the organism constitutes the biological atom and, at the same time, the generative principle (Swammerdam in the 17th century: *Omne vivum e vivo*; Virchow in the 19th century: *Omnis cellula e cellula*), modern apartment construction develops the atom-habitat: the dwelling of a space, with the inhabitant living alone, as the cellular nucleus of his private bubble of the world. By the return to the cellular unit, the living space itself is brought back to its elementary form.



Kisho Kurokawa, *Nakagin Capsule Tower*, Tokyo, 1972.

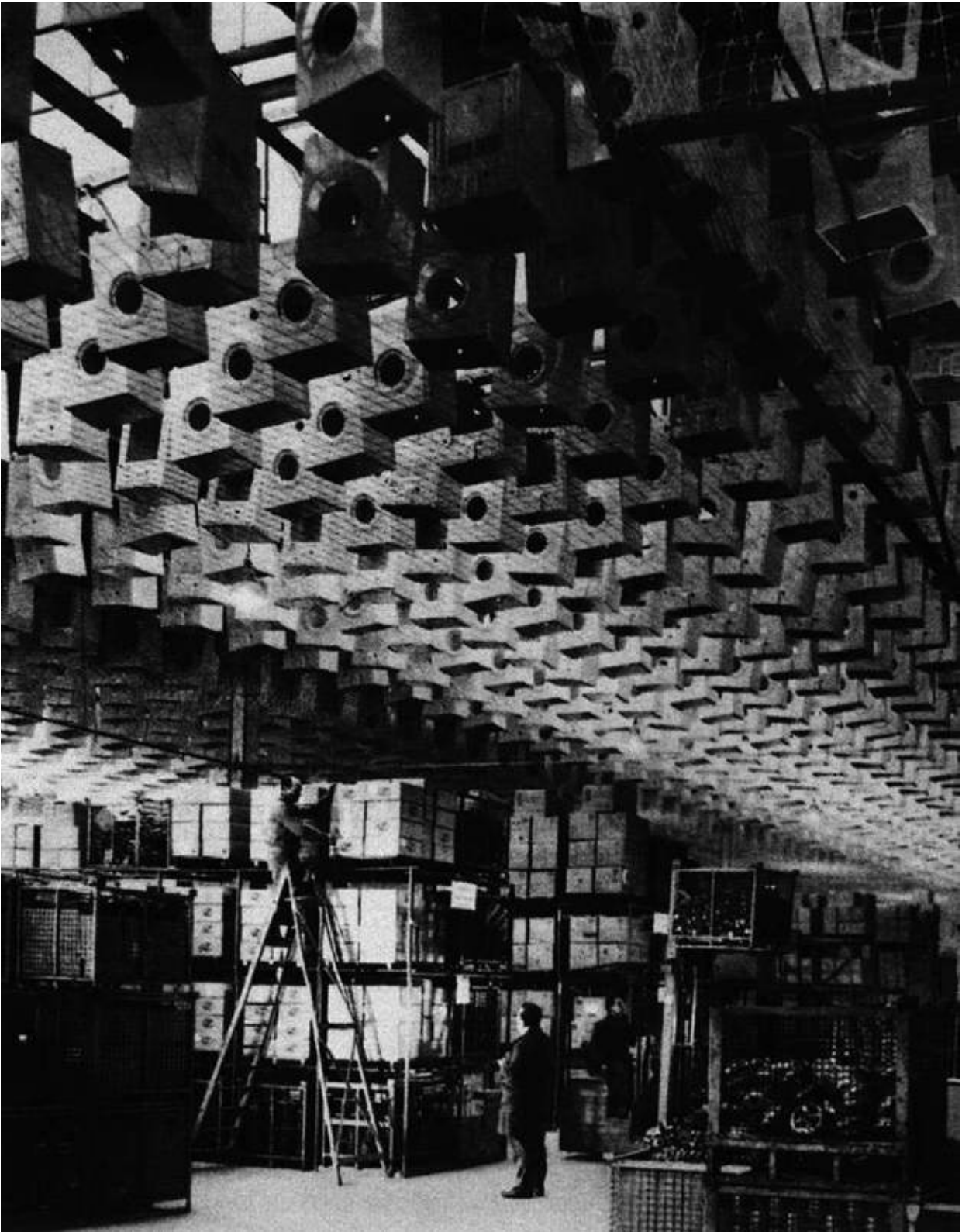


Modifying an expression of Gottfried Semper, one could call this "spatial individual."<sup>[497]</sup> It is no coincidence that apartment architecture developed in historical simultaneity with the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger: both here and there it was a matter of the anchoring of the reflective individual in a radically explicit world milieu. Existence in a one-person dwelling is nothing other than the being-in-the-world in a particular case or the re-submersion of the subject, previously purposely isolated, in its so-called "lifeworld" under a spatio-temporally concrete address or domicile. The architects' new awareness of dwelling and the philosophers' precise discovery of the worldly premises of the submerged being-there are simultaneous and current antidotes to the situation-blindness inveterate in the culture of rationality of ancient Europe.



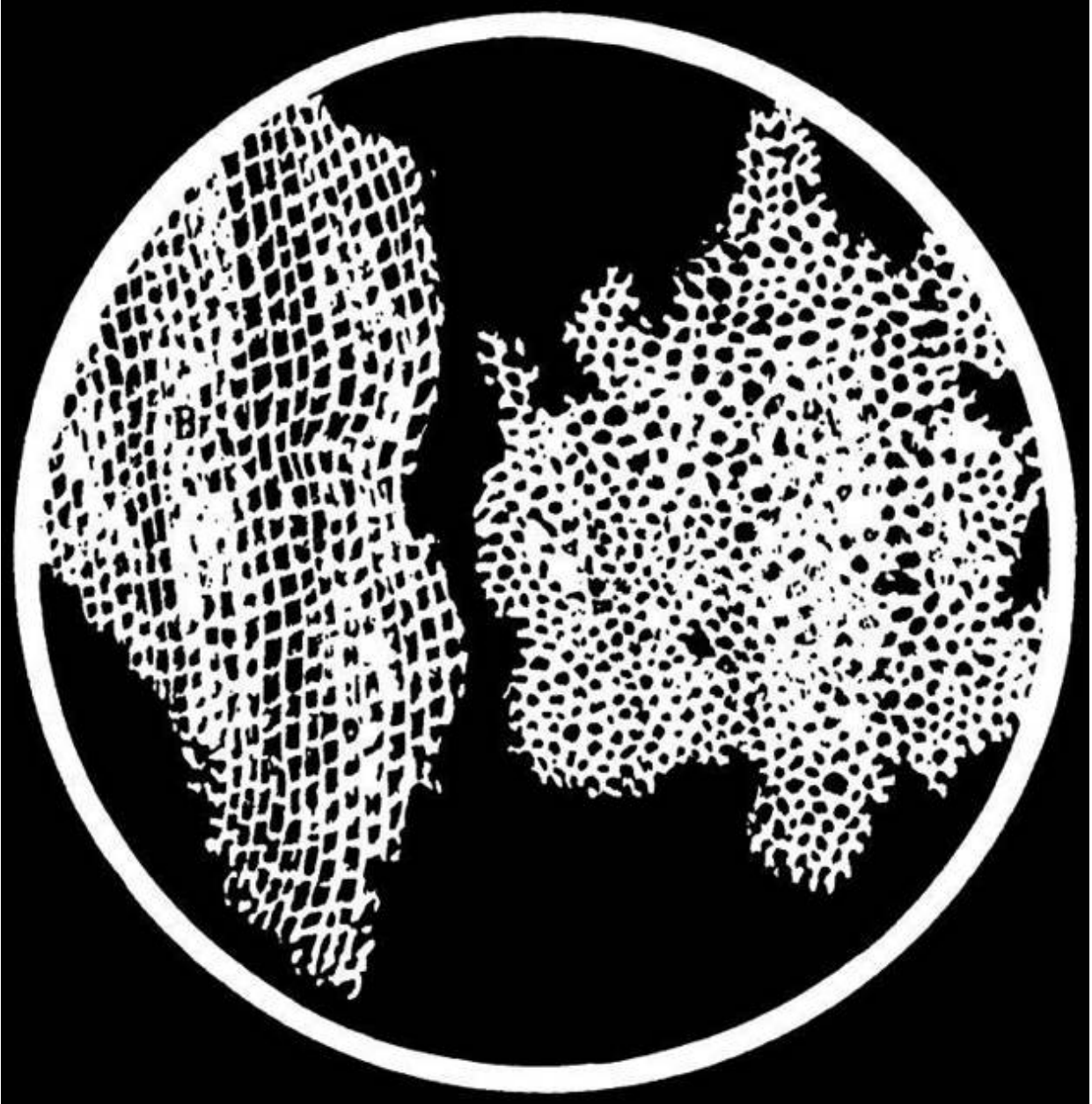
Marina City, Chicago.

The modern re-approximation of the architectural concept of cell to that of microbiology did not happen, moreover, without a certain historical legitimacy: when the British physicist Robert Hooke, in his work *Micrographia*, 1665, introduced the biological concept of cell to describe the compact arrangement, discovered under the microscope, of delimited empty spaces in a piece of cork, he was inspired by the analogy with the rows of monastic cells in a convent.



Hanging washing machines.

With the access of modern architecture to the idea of a housing unit, ideally and archetypically reduced, the concept of the cell [or cell], after its productive exile in microbiology, returns to its starting point; charged with a surplus value of analytical precision and constructive mobility. The emancipated dwelling-cell formulates a whole program of minimum architectural and sanitary conditions of autonomy, which have to be fulfilled in order for it to be valid as formally satisfying the state of affairs required by the power-to-live-alone. Consequently, in a complete apartment the means for a circadian cycle of self-care must be available: sleeping space, bathroom, toilet, cooking space, dining table, clothes storage, air conditioning or heating, power outlet, mailbox, telephone, media cable or antennae; thus, as the bathroom as a wet cell shows, the habitat-cell is itself composed of cellular units.



Robert Hooke, *Micrographia*, London 1665. A piece of cork as seen through a microscope.

The individual bubble in the housing foam constitutes a *container* for the relations with oneself of the inhabitant, who settles in his housing unit as a consumer of a primary comfort: to him the vital capsule of the dwelling is useful as a scenario of his self-pairing, as a room of operation of his self-care and as a system of immunity in a field,

contaminated, of *connected isolations*, aka neighborhoods.<sup>[498]</sup> From these points of view, the apartment is a material copy of that surreal function of container that we have described as an autogenous receptacle.<sup>[499]</sup> The apartment is a material copy of that surreal function of container that we have described as autogenous receptacle.<sup>[499]</sup>

The aphyrogenous character of apartments arises (on the plane of built architecture) from the fact that the "one-space dwelling" is usually found in houses arranged according to a general plan as aggregates of typified housing units. The apartment house (or the *unité d'habitation*) represents a social glass-space or a rigid foam body, in which a multiplicity of units are stacked or piled one on top of and next to the other; and these forms share with the labile foams the principle of co-isolation, that is, of the separation of space by common walls. From this arises a neighborhood problem, characteristic of older type apartment houses: the insufficient acoustic insulation, by which the illusion of autonomy of the living cell is unwelcome. As a co-isolator, the common wall is responsible for the fact that the reciprocally isolated often do not reach sufficient acoustic immunity. In the social foam, the insulating effect, which every individual cell claims for itself, is lost by the compactness of the accumulation of cells. The consequence is unpleasant communications. Starting from this observation, the recent architecture of apartment houses has recognized the necessity of its task to limit as much as possible the stress of coexistence of the units-connected *isolation*. When this is not solved, apartment houses often manifest themselves as incubators of social pathologies, for which Le Corbusier provided *ex negative* the formula, when he noted that what matters in a building is "psychic ventilation". An architecturally successful housing unit represents not only a piece of enclosed air, but rather a psychosocial system of immunity, which is able to regulate, as appropriate, the degree of its impermeability to the outside. "Psychic ventilation" implies that the isolated immune units are infiltrated by a breath of animations.

community. How much this can be lacking is shown by the notorious satellite cities of the post-World War II era, which tended to render their inhabitants helpless and psychosocially stifle them at the same time. The infamous blowing up of the Pruitt-Igoe high-rise buildings in downtown Saint-Louis on July 15, 1972 - a date that architectural historian Jencks assessed as the zero hour of postmodernism - must be understood, first and foremost, as an immunological declaration of the bankruptcy of vulgar modernism in architecture.



Pruitt-Igoe before blasting in 1972.

That the massive addition of cellular units has in itself broad sociological, or rather sociomorphological, implications is an observation that reaches back to the 19th century. Karl Marx, in a well-known passage of his study *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* of 1852, shows the fundamentals



Marx emphasized that, with his popular dictatorship, Bonaparte represented a class and its needs not yet sufficiently articulated: "the most numerous class of French society, the *plot farmers*."<sup>[500]</sup> What Marx emphasizes in this "immense mass, whose members live in the same situation, but without entering into a different relationship with one another,"<sup>[501]</sup> is, above all, their dispersion and their inability to deduce a common interest from the similarity of their situation:

Their mode of production isolates them from each other, instead of bringing them into reciprocal contact. Isolation is fostered by the poor French means of communication and the poverty of the peasants. Any isolated peasant family is almost self-sufficient....

The plot, the farmer and the family; next to it, another plot, another farmer and another family. A large number of such units constitutes a village, and a large number of villages constitutes a department. Thus, the great mass of the French nation is formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, as a sack of potatoes, for example, forms a sack of potatoes.<sup>[502]</sup>

The context makes it clear that Marx argues here as a phenomenologist of foam *ante litteram*, insofar as he considers the symmetrical units of peasant-parcel multiplicities as assembled in an additively configured collective: the expressions village, apartment and potato sack provide unmistakably aphrological metaphors for structurally weak agglomerations of cells. They are to illustrate that such a configuration is incapable *tel quel* of manifesting class stance or subjectivity, and why; whereupon, according to Marx's point of view, only a "revolutionary" class and full of will to power would be in a position to respond to its own political and immune interests. In these considerations one can unmistakably perceive echoes of Hegel's structural thoughts, however much the author of the *Fundamental Lines of the Philosophy of Right* might have scoffed at the idea that a

"simple atomistic heap of individuals" (§ 273) could achieve by its own means a legally ordered existence or even a constitution. A

The "heap" penetrated with class consciousness, however, would have already traveled at least half the way to a reasonable constitution. The author of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* has hardly any illusions about the length of the road; he takes a hard look at the conditions which, in the interior of any isolated unit of the universe of plots, procure obscurity and isolation:

Land ownership [...] has transformed the mass of the French nation into troglodytes. Sixteen million peasants (including women and children) dwell in caves, a large part of which has only one opening, the other only two, and the

privileged only three openings. Windows are to a house what the five senses are to the head.<sup>[503]</sup> The windows are to a house what the five senses are to the head.<sup>[503]</sup> The windows are to the head.

If there was a reason to note the "idiocy of country life", it was, *materialiter*, the scarce number (also conditioned by the French taxes on windows) of openings in the peasants' sheds; *formaliter*, the isolations, which prevent the inhabitants of the plots from carrying out the transition from the mode of being of a class in itself to that of a class for itself. Absence of windows represents scarcity of communication, enlightenment and solidarity. From this point of view, the plot-dwelling peasants constitute a para-proletariat; like the industrial proletariat, they face the task of moving from an isolated, apolitical mode of existence to an organized, politically virulent one. This is equivalent to the program of transforming the "potato sack" into the party, or, to speak urbanistically, to the demand to transform the agglomeration of caves enclosed within themselves into a national workers' colony, communicatively insufflated, yes, even into an international communal dwelling, extensive to the class. Where once there were isolated caves there must now arise political movements, militant unions, alliances for the class struggle, conscious of their interests: solidary foams, we would say, and with the aim, moreover, of expressing that, in a systemic sense, the aforementioned workers are neither a historical subject nor a "mass", but an immune alliance. The Marxian discourse is based on the assumption that the expression "class" describes the authentic collective format of the parcelled peasantry and that, therefore, with the emergence of "class consciousness" and a corresponding aggressive or "revolutionary" policy of interests, the decisive advantage of immunity for those belonging to this "class" could be achieved.

Here we show how the socialist theory of the 19th century discovered the epochal theme (which it failed to specify, however, because of previous false conceptual choices): that assemblage of immunity and community, in which the "dialectics" or the circular causal interaction between the self and the stranger, the common and the uncommon. In the contaminated and irretrievable concept of class consciousness is still hidden a reference, not thought through to the end, to the fact that, precisely in the era of increasing individualization, parcelization and opportunities for isolation, what may matter to individual cells is to solidarize with a larger unity of people situated at the same level, in order to optimize their representation of interests. Let us note that the expression "community of the people" conceals an analogous problematic: an expression that is also adulterated and

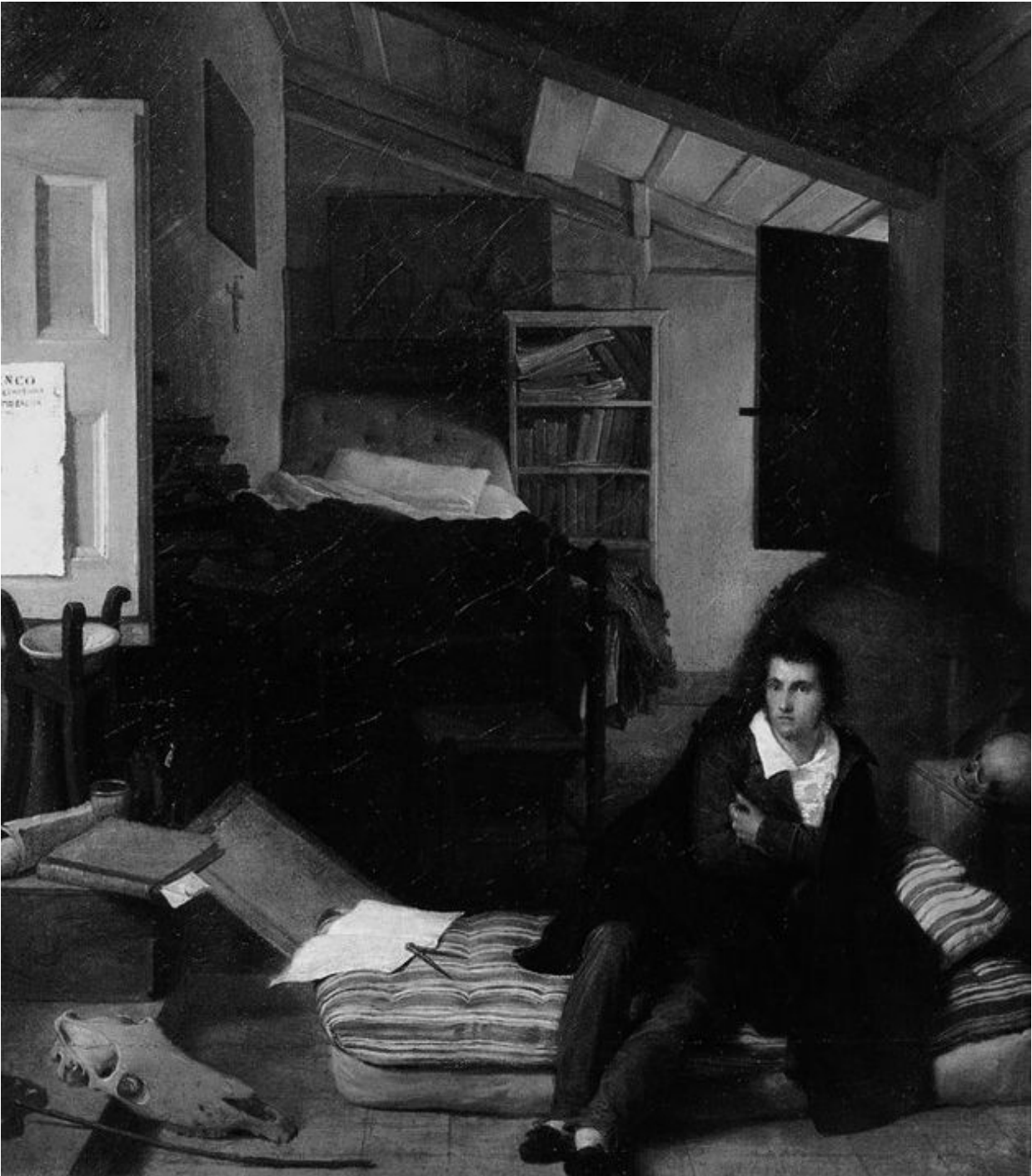
Could it not be that the concept of interest as such (especially in combinations such as national interest, class interest, company interest, resident interest) has always been a disguised metaphor for immunity advantages only attainable communally?

## 2. Self-pairing in the habitat

*... I contain multitudes.*

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

As an elementary egospheric form, the apartment is the place where the symbiosis of family members, which since time immemorial have constituted the primary living communities, is overcome in favor of the symbiosis of the individual who lives alone with himself and his environment. It is beyond doubt that with the transition to the contemporary monadic dwelling there is a profound cessation in the ways and means of coexistence of people with their peers and the rest.



Tomaso Minardi, *Self-portrait in a garret*, ca. 1813.

One could speak of the crisis of the second persons, who are now installed in the first. This is reflected in the most recent ethical theories: indeed, the "other" can only be discovered as a real other -a central motif of contemporary moral philosophy- in

an era in which the self-doubling of the self and the multiplicity of virtual inner others have become epidemic. It is only now that the abyss between the narcissistic other of self-reflection and the transcendent other of real encounter or misencounter is becoming generally and publicly apparent. The whole "conglomerate of vital mechanisms" - to recall Hermann Broch's formulation, which evokes traditionally developed spherical global situations of familiar coexistence and indistinct totalities in a state of somnambulistic association and symbiotic seminarcosis <sup>[504]</sup> falls during the 20th century into a centrifugal force that disperses individuals, separating them into cells of their own world and active-passive micro-totalities. From this point of view, socioanalysis by disintegration and isolation runs parallel to psychoanalysis by self-exploration in an artificial dyadic situation.

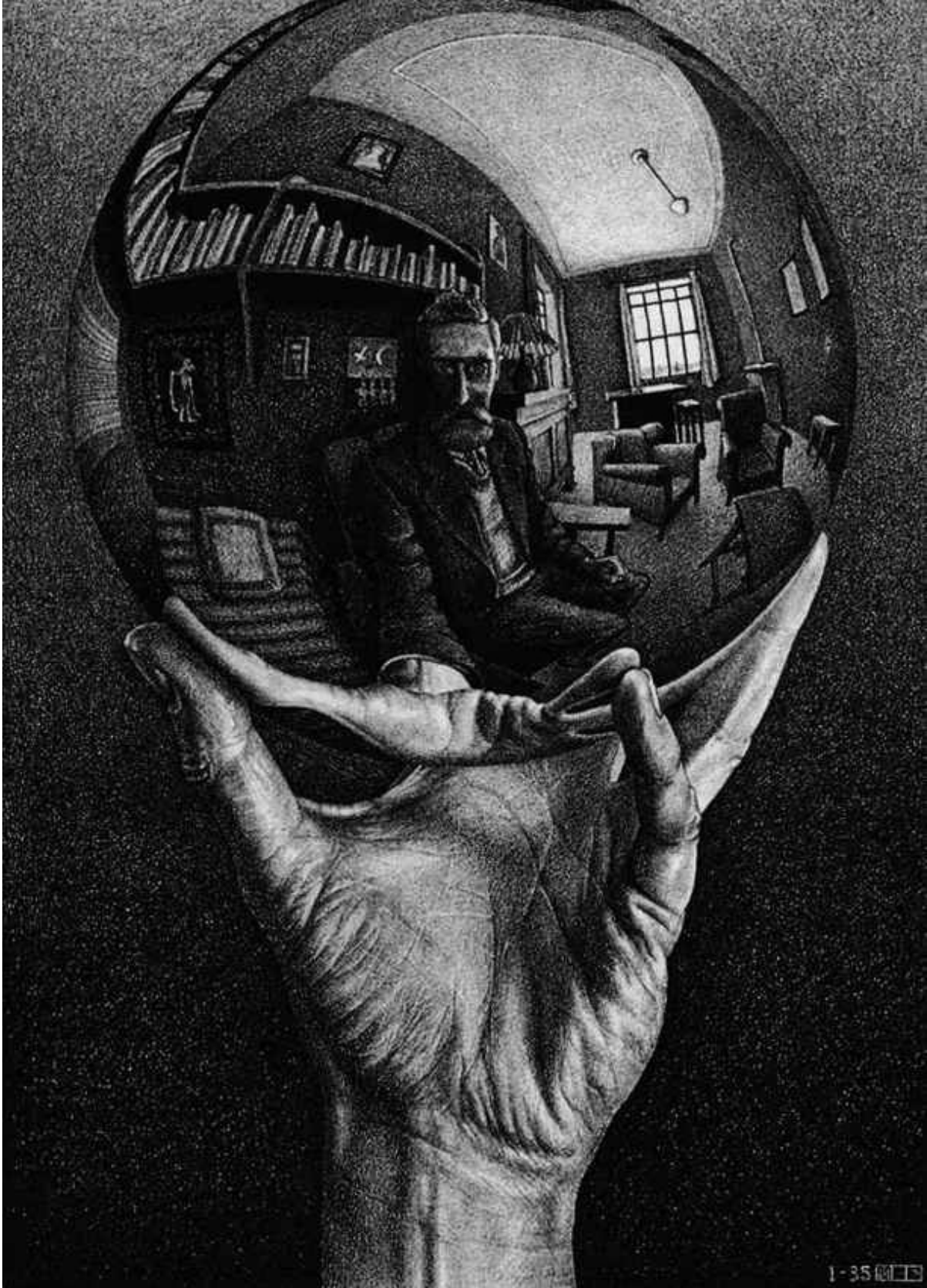
One can speak of the existence of an egosphere when its inhabitant has developed elaborate habits of self-mating and moves in a constant process of differentiation from itself (i.e., in a process of "living"). Such a way of life would be misunderstood if one would only want to assimilate it to the characteristic "living alone", in the sense of lack of companionship and lack of human complementation. Considering things more closely, the non-symbiosis with others, which is practiced by those who live alone in the apartment, must be interpreted as self-symbiosis. In this, the form of the couple is fulfilled by the individual, who, in a continuous process of differentiation of the self, incessantly refers to himself, as if it were the inner other or a plurality of sub-selves. In these cases, coexistence shifts to the constantly changing situations in which the individual experiences himself. For the realization of self-pairing, one must presuppose the means that we have designated as egotechniques: these are the usual mediating supports of self-complementation, which allow their users a permanent return to themselves and *eo ipso* the formation of the couple.

with himself as a surprising inner companion. It is not by chance that programmatic *singles* often insist that living alone is the most entertaining form of existence they know. In fact, the liberated individual, by virtue of his endowment of mediations, always has the possibility of acting as a self-companion. "A man alone is always in bad company": one might think that the singles and *singles* culture of the twentieth century has been an experiment to contradict that quip of Paul Valéry.<sup>[505]</sup>

As we illustrated in the first volume, the individualist illusion, which in Modernity was to be solidified in an ontology of separation, could only become suggestive in the course of the modern evolution of the media. The egotechnical media have contributed to this, which have shaped in individuals new routines of returning to oneself: first and foremost, the techniques of writing and reading, with the help of which historically innovative procedures of inner dialogue, self-examination and self-documentation have been exercised. As a consequence, *homo alphabeticus* not only developed particular exercises of self-objectification, but also others of reunification with himself through the appropriation of the objectified. The diary is one such egotechnical form, self-examination another. In our reflections on the history of human faciality, in general, and of the relations of interfaciality in ancient Europe, in particular, we have referred to the as late as decisive introduction of the mirror into the optical self-relations of European human beings, underlining, in doing so, the contribution of this paradigmatic egotécnico utensil to the transformation of sensible reflection into another in so-called self-reflection.<sup>[506]</sup> In the everyday life of the modern apartment dweller, as in that of most other contemporaries, the gaze into the mirror has become a regular exercise, serving uninterrupted self-adjustment.



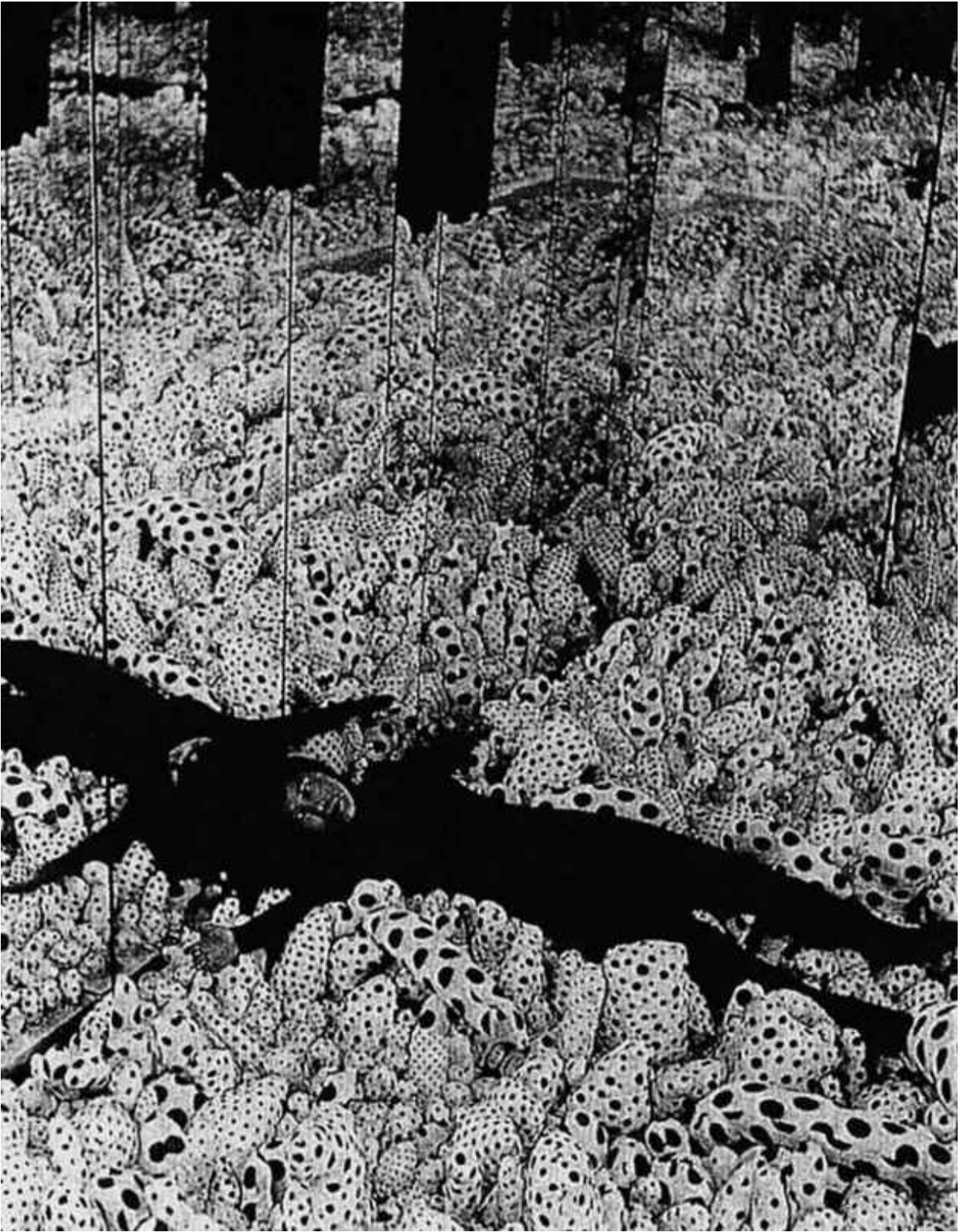




M. C. Escher, *Hand with Reflecting Sphere*, 1935.

Individuals in the individualistic regime become punctual subjects who have fallen into the hands of the power of the mirror, that is, of the reflective, self-complementing function. More and more they organize their lives under the illusion that they could perform, without a real other, the role of the two parties in the game of relationship in the bipolar sphere; this illusion is becoming more and more concrete in the course of the European history of means and mentalities until it reaches a point where individuals themselves are definitely considered as the first substantial thing, and their relations with others, as the second accidental thing. A mirror in every room of every individual is the vital-practical patent at this point.<sup>[507]</sup>

The expression aut symbiosis is to manifest that the dyadic structure of the primitive sphere can be formally re-exercised by individuals under certain circumstances: namely, when, and only when, they have the necessary mediating accessories to fully adapt themselves to situations oriented towards self-complementation. What in the metaphysics of everyday life is dealt with under the concept of independence, from the spherological point of view is revealed as a virtualization of the dyad through self-pairing, self-care, self-complementation, self-modeling. From this perspective, the apartment can be understood as a workshop of self-relationships; or as an asylum for indeterminacies. In it does not develop - as in the cells of late medieval monks or nuns - the duplicitous oneness (bi-unity) between God and soul, but rather supports the pairing of the individual with himself (uni-binity). This means a psychic operation that draws on the experienced difference between the individual's actual state and the plethora of his potential states. That can only arise in the long run when a relatively compact continuum of moments of self-observation and self-adjustment has become determinant for the life-form as a whole. This corresponds to the state, anticipated by Elias Canetti, of a "society in which every human being is painted and prays before his image";<sup>[508]</sup> only here individuals, with the help of numerous means, make equivocal images of themselves. Was it a coincidence that the young Le Corbusier, after a visit to Certosa d'Enza, near Florence, was attracted by the way of life of Christian monks? "I would like to inhabit all my life what they call their cells,"<sup>[509]</sup> he noted on his trip to Italy in the year 1907. The monastic dwelling units, which had enraptured the budding architect, were arranged as double cells, with one room outside and one inside: from the young visitor's point of view, an ideal model for the housing of workers of higher pretensions or for student accommodations, in keeping with the times.



Yayoi Kusama, *Infinity Mirror Room*, 1965.

Placed in a cultural-historical perspective, Le Corbusier's fascination for monastic constructions seems well motivated; for it is true that in the early medieval monastic cells the first germs of the modern form of the subject had appeared. In those habitats for self-recollection took place the original accumulation of alert attention, from which - after the inversion of the fundamental metaphysical orientation from transcendence to immanence - modern Western-style individualism was to develop. Attention or alertness is the psychic currency with which the presence of relevant differences is paid for, both in the case of the monk and the qualified consumer. Just as the monastic cell materialized extramundane ascetic individualism, the contemporary apartment culture, along with its ego-technical apparatuses, supports intramundane hedonistic individualism. This presupposes the incessant self-observation of the individual in his process of metabolic assimilation of both nutritive substance and situations in all their aspects. Individualism is a cult of digestion, which celebrates the passage of food, experiences and information through the subject.<sup>[510]</sup> Where everything is immanence, the apartment becomes an integral toilet: from any point of view, what happens here is under the sign of final consumption. Eating/digesting; reading/writing; watching television/opinion; replenishing/engaging; exciting/relaxing. As a micro-theater of self-symbiosis, the apartment envelops the existence of individuals who aspire to experiences and importance.

Since it is both stage and cavern, it accommodates both the individual's exit to the stage and the return to insignificance. This can be easily explained by the typical stages of the self-care cycle that the subject-apartment runs through in its script for the day: beginning with a morning *toilette* unit, consisting of evacuations, washings (with more pretensions: a whole sequence of balneological self-care), cosmetic attentions and dressing (with more pretensions again: discrete acts of investment

clothing). Cosmetic autopragis offers, even at a relatively simple level, a universe of differentiations, which enjoy a high self-value in the consciousness of the users; because of this, the facial self-image can approach the pole of the work of art. (Baudelaire foresaw this in his *éloge du maquillage*, when he said of the beautiful woman that, as an image of the gods, she had to be gilded to be adored: *elle doit se dorer pour être adorée*). Something analogous happens with the choice of dress, which encompasses many micro-universes of nuances and gestures; here the combination becomes a design task, the choice becomes a self-project. Indeed, in the developed society of experiences, the individual qualifies himself as a creator who claims the copyright for his own image. The individual sees in the direct and indirect successes of his appearance the psychosocial gains that come from his clothing strategy.



Edward Hopper, *Room in New York*, 1932.

With breakfast - or whatever you want to call the first nutritional gesture (with pretense: the inauguration of the daily food cycle) - the activity of self-care addresses metabolic needs, which, as a rule, does not happen without maneuvers in the realm of the stove and the kitchen. The apartment kitchen is the miniature of a chirotope, in which, thanks to the presence of the corresponding tools, the proto-practices of lighting the fire, cutting, chopping, transferring, placing on the table, etc., are routinely executed. In the gestures of preparing-something, the self-pairing quality of life on one's own is particularly evident: the one who provides for oneself from one's own kitchen plays *eo ipso* the double role of host and guest, or cook and diner, and thus manifests

that in certain acts of the *souci de soi* is also included a *gift de soi*, a gift of the self to the self, in which the intentions of the donor towards the recipient are revealed. Thanks to the progressive explanation of metabolism given by modern biology, the possibility of developing self-care in a food-critical perspective is placed in the hands of the self-sustainer. Here, along with gastronomic quality, dietetics is increasingly taken into account; to the means of nourishment are added the means of food supplementation, the mild drug *fitness* gains its place in the self-care household; the means of life [food] become means of life enhancement; self-feeding approaches self-medication. With the obligatory equipment of stove, sink and refrigerator, the technical supports of the autonomous function of the kitchen, even the smallest apartment today represents an efficient thermospheric unit. Together with sanitary standards, it is these elementary gastrospheric magnitudes that define the concept of comfort in a modern living unit.

In many cases, with the first food gestures, the individual from the apartment begins the entry into the phonotope, the universe of noises of the collective. The fast of noises is broken with an acoustic breakfast, either with a self-chosen early music or with a radio or television program. This anti-silence shows how those who live alone take their daily mundanization and resocialization into their own hands, co-deciding, by the choice of media, on contents and dosage of the input of reality. Something similar was before the eyes of Hegel of Jena when he noted that reading the newspaper early in the morning was "a kind of realistic morning blessing";<sup>[511]</sup> with the nuance, in this case, that the reconnection to the group noise of the private subject, desocialized at night, is still carried out through the cultural technique of reading, that is, of admitting external voices into the inner monologue and polylogue. Thanks to the media-audio, the cell of the one who lives alone can become something that from the historical point of view seemed impossible, that constituted a contradiction in itself even: in

an individual phonotope. This characteristic consists in the fact that the capture of the individual by the sound of the group is undone and is replaced by the discrete admission of certain noises, sounds and spoken texts. From the original complete attunement of the group by the group now rise innumerable individualized sound bubbles: auditory microspheres, in which a relative freedom of listening has become a reality.<sup>[512]</sup> (This tendency is sharpened by the union of CD players or portable cassette players with headphones: a technique of isolation that amounts to the introduction of the acoustic micro-apartment into the public space; one could also speak of an acoustic diving suit). Modern society vibrates in sound foams in millions of cells; as far as the innumerable, competing hearing collective is concerned, one has rightly spoken of a *guerre des ambiances*.<sup>[513]</sup> And the coexistence, which has become normal, of fifty or so TV programs can hardly conceal the fact that, according to its phonotopic mode of action, television is nothing other than a visually enlarged radio; with the difference that in it the freedom of choice of program is technically better supported than in the search systems of radio.







Kurt Weinhold, *Man with radio*, 1929.

It is rightly asserted that postmodernity is a by-product of remote control. The remote control represents the key technique for controlling the admission of sound and image, and *eo ipso* the admission of reality, into the egosphere. If one considers that a being of the *homo sapiens type* becomes what he hears, the transition to the optional auto-tuning of individuals signifies an anthropological caesura: both external and internalized auditory pressure, of which psychoanalysis had offered a partial periphrasis with the concept of superego (concerning the moral aspect of the super-tuning of the individual by his collective), dissolves in the tendency to one's own choice of auditory environment. It is true that there will always be also in the individual constituted individual-

phonotopically, levels of inner and outer hearing, in which what is heard involuntarily precedes the chosen listening.

The extension of the apartment as an individual phonotope represents, together with the telecommunicative links, the most important contribution to the mediating completion of the dwelling unit. It ensures that the cell, while satisfactorily fulfilling its defensive functions as an insulator, as an immune system, as a dispenser of comfort and distancing, remains a space of the world. Open to the world, yet far from it, the auditory egosphere allows entry to particles of reality, noises, sensations, sensations, purchases, findings and chosen guests. Its practical implementation is guaranteed by radio and television, against which the mass media have moved into the background.

For the computer and atmospheric modeling of the egosphere, the audio-media are only equaled in importance by the telephone, which, because of its quality as a two-way medium, represents one of the most efficient instruments for linking to the world from the reserve. Compared to the most commonly used one-way media (radio, television, newspaper, book), the telephone possesses a double ontological privilege: not only does it transmit (most of the time) calls coming from the real, but it also places the caller, if he picks up the device himself, in a simultaneity (experienced as real) with the caller: it places him at the same height-of-being with the actor of the call from afar. Because of this effect of immediacy it was legitimate to describe the telephone as a biophone:<sup>[514]</sup> no one can call except a life. Someone at the apparatus: that is always a distant life that makes itself present, a voice with a message, perhaps even with an invitation. Since it can be accessed by calls, the apartment is deprived of the "unity of the place" and, conversely, it is linked to a network of virtual neighborhoods. Therefore, the effective neighborhood is not the spatial one, but the telephone one. From the immunological point of view, the telephone represents a new ambivalent acquisition, because it introduces into the cell-home a channel for dangerous infections coming from the cell.

(In this context, there is no need to speak of the Internet, since, in principle, it only implies the continuation of the telephone with visual media). After the simultaneity of emission and reception of communication has been undone by writing, the telephone makes it possible to overcome the coincidence of place.

Calls at a distance infiltrate the principle of local call (more precisely: the world-generating effect of mouth-ear coupling); with the consequence that, at last, the secret of spherical resonance, preformulated in certain religious discourses,<sup>[515]</sup> achieves a technical articulation. In retrospect we can explain to what extent every formation of spheres implies from the outset the "surreal factor": that the communicants in a human place always already exceed the merely spatial. To use a philosophical language game from 1900: telecommunication technology accelerates the loss of spirit in life. It stimulates the inflation of telepathic effects, if we understand by them the psychic collateral effects of accessibility from afar. The procedures of self-matching of individuals in individualism have precisely as a presupposition that in the course of their lives the telecommunicative mechanisms become solid routines: only then isolation is not experienced as loneliness; it makes possible the linking of the individual soul with other relevant absent ones and their more or less attractive distant signs of life.

Premodernity was dominated by the evidence that the most interesting messages came from a great absentee called God; their bearers were the saints, priests and prophets. Modernity bet on distant senders, such as the genie and the stock market reporter. Perhaps this was what constituted the great characteristic of existence in metaphysically ambitious civilizations: intelligence detaches itself from the primacy of local communications and participates in the transfer of the semantic flow from near life to distant life. That is why being-there now means

swim-in-signs that come from afar: signs that are backed by great senders. Under this effect, the great classical cultures were able to flourish as writing cultures: the voices of the classics impose themselves on written supports to the following generations of the literate. Metaphysics begins as telesymbiosis; in it, thanks to disciplined readings, late intelligence can cointelligently couple with early intelligence. I am accessible by distant sender life; distant and past life remains legible by us.



Eric Fischl, Still Life (*Bananas with Knife*), 1981, courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY.  
York.

The modern apartment lifestyle, supported by the telephone, introduces the phase of trivialization of these achievements. If the harvest of life accessible from afar was collected for a long time still under the total supremacy of extramundane individualism, when the pairing of souls was cultivated.

individual with God or with the absolute, the current secular individualism proposes, as has been said, the pairing of the individual with itself; whereby the individual, as the other-of-itself that always remains unknown, has the role of a residual absolute. (Obviously, this position can also be ascribed to the real other.)<sup>[516]</sup> Every self that turns inward could find itself sufficiently transcendent to itself. It is enough for it to think of itself as a composition of manifest and latent individuality to know that the investigation of its own latency constitutes a profitable content of life. As long as he continues to be interested in himself, the discovered individual follows the track of the *individuum absconditum*. (Note the extent to which mass culture is based on the premise that most individuals have no reason to be interested in themselves, so it is good advice to stick to the life of the stars. Definitions of a star: a) interesting amplification of the lack of interest of others; b) agent of the diversion of the admirer's attention from himself).

In no dimension of life does this appear more clearly than in sexuality, which in the individualistic regime is often organized as apartment-based sexuality-survival, that is, as research in the space of erotic inner possibility. It is clear that the transition to so-called free sexuality in the second half of the twentieth century is inextricably linked to the gain in discretion of the apartment culture or, at least, to the security provided by one's own room. The much-discussed phenomenon of chemical contraceptives, which since the sixties of the twentieth century have been available to women, including single women, only supports the tendency, evident since the twenties, towards an affirmative eroticism of those who live alone. The apartment constitutes a miniature erototope, in which individuals can follow the impulses of their desire, in the sense of wanting to-experience-also-what-others-have-already-experienced.

It represents an exemplary scenario of existence, because in it you can

the consumer relationship with one's own sexual potential. But if the lover (*erastes*) and the beloved (*eromenos*) coincide in one and the same person, even this centaur is not spared the elementary experience of lovers, that the object of love only rarely responds in the same wave.

In autoeroticism, as in bipersonalism, the law manifests itself that in the trance of choosing a partner, the majority are doomed to be wrong: since as a rule one does not get what one wants, one takes anyone else instead, and, if necessary, oneself. For this reason, the apartment is also a studio for the reworking of frustrations; more precisely, a test cell in which the desire for a real or imaginary opposite becomes a desire for oneself, as the most plausible representative of the desired other. In this paradoxical circle arises a self-satisfaction with offensive tendencies. Apartment onanism, perhaps already prefigured in monastic cells, stages the complete triple relationship between the subject, the genital and the phantasm; from which it follows, moreover, that masturbatory sexuality achieves, indeed, a pragmatic shortening of the procedure, but not a structural simplification of the interpersonal bigenital operation.



Charles Ray, *Oh Charley, Charley, Charley, Charley, Charley*, documenta X, 1997.

Consequently, the erotopic characteristics of the apartment can best be explained by analogy with the brothel: just as the suitors go around it looking for an available sexual partner to, after reaching an agreement, retire with the object of their pre-love to a hidden cell, the apartment dweller chooses himself as the close other and uses the solitude of his dwelling unit to do so with himself. Self-pairing is consummated here with the nuance that the individual, as self-pretending, approaches himself unceremoniously. As one well-known example shows, this can go as far as the promotion of self-favors. The American feminist, masturbation activist Betty Dodson thought, in her early 1970s *bestseller Sex for One*, that she could claim academic honors for her unwavering commitment to the cause.



of onanism, declaring, after convincing herself of the unrealizability of her desire: "[...] after fourteen years of unique studies in this field I have awarded myself a doctorate in masturbation."<sup>[517]</sup>

Just as in every relationship that has become too easy there is a tendency to depauperation through routine, masturbatory self-companionship learns to know the tedium of monotony. Individuals cannot always congratulate themselves for their self-provoked excitements. The self-indulgent way of life finds its limit in onanistic tedium. Recent literature on *single-stock* makes it clear that the sexuality of those who live alone is marked by the need to elude self-monogamy. Even Betty Dodson, who prided herself on her hours-long sessions with the vibrator, declared that she occasionally sought out penises. But surveys among *singles* leave no doubt that many are unwilling, just for the sake of that predicament, to endure the disturbance of their cell's peace by a permanent companion.

Along with its chiro-, thermo- and erotopic characteristics, the modern cell-habitat also adopts the features of an ergotope, in that its inhabitant makes it the scene of his or her sporting self-care. This transformation of apartments into private gyms is encouraged by modern society's tendency towards *fitness-oriented* lifestyles, which demand constant concern for fitness from their adherents. From this point of view, the structure of self-pairing is modified in such a way that the individual exerciser dissociates into trainer and trainee, to bring both together in a coordinated course of action. In this, training apparatuses (fixed or detachable) can take on the role of the manifest third party in the objective organization of the self-relation; in other cases it is a matter of exercises without apparatuses, on the floor, with which the exercisers engage in their gymnastic monologue. Existentialism has been explained somatically: from the philosophical formula, that being-there is the relation

that relates to itself, a version, understandable to all, according to which to be-there means to remain-in-form, has arrived on the market.

Finally, one must describe the apartments as external sites of the alethotope: in every individual life, however detached it may be from the general, there is a residual interest in truth, if only because of the demand for words that help individuals to stay connected to the signs of the times. Whoever exhibits a moderate consumption of media reaches, as a rule, the cognitive existential minimum, usual in our way of the world, which implies the license to choose and to participate in the public debate. Those who aim for more strive for an orientational knowledge that can be used for broader navigation in unclear circumstances. In alethotopic self-relationship, individuals act informally as self-teachers, whose concern is to maintain a certain degree of accommodation to the cognitive and scientific status of "society"; as minimal autodidacts, they strive for idiosyncratic participation in the publicly accessible resources of the cognitive *souci de soi*. It may be true that under current cognitive-theoretical conditions learning can only be interpreted as an enlightened *management* of ignorance, but in the so-called knowledge society, more or less demanding contemporaries have to take care of the constant updating of their deficits. Since then, positive information has, above all, the meaning of calibrating more realistically the proportions of the unknowable and the unclear. In passing, information progressively acquires a function that corresponds to that of brands and fashion items: isolated particles of knowledge are worn, just as sunglasses, expensive watches and baseball caps are worn. In Japanese youth culture, since the 1980s, a large scene has emerged that worships meaningless specialized knowledge. <sup>518]</sup> These young people have understood that knowledge does not prepare them for life, but it does prepare them for radio or television competitions.

For those who live alone, their sources are usually magazines from the world of the stage or fashion, as well as reference books that from time to time are added to the domestic collection. For many, the addition of a new book to the community of objects that populate the home is still an event. To the charm of apartment life belongs the circumstance that in it one can devote oneself without witnesses to the undistorted accounting of one's own unmistakable ignorances.

## C. Foam City

***Macro-interiors and urban congress buildings make explicit the symbiotic situations of the crowd.***

If the proposition "Everyone is an island" has almost become true in modern metropolises for the majority of the population, how is it possible, then, to continue to think of the "society"? While the agencies of the analysis of the real work on a mere exposure of individuals in their own domiciles, the agencies of social synthesis devote themselves to the task of articulating the general forms under which the insulates are joinable in interactive units. That is why the expression "Communication" has an evangelical tone in all contemporary discourses: it is the redeeming word of those who seek salvation in bonding, more precisely: in symbolic exchange and transactional commitments, whereas once upon a time, during the long Marxian century, it was expected from "work", its distribution and recombination.

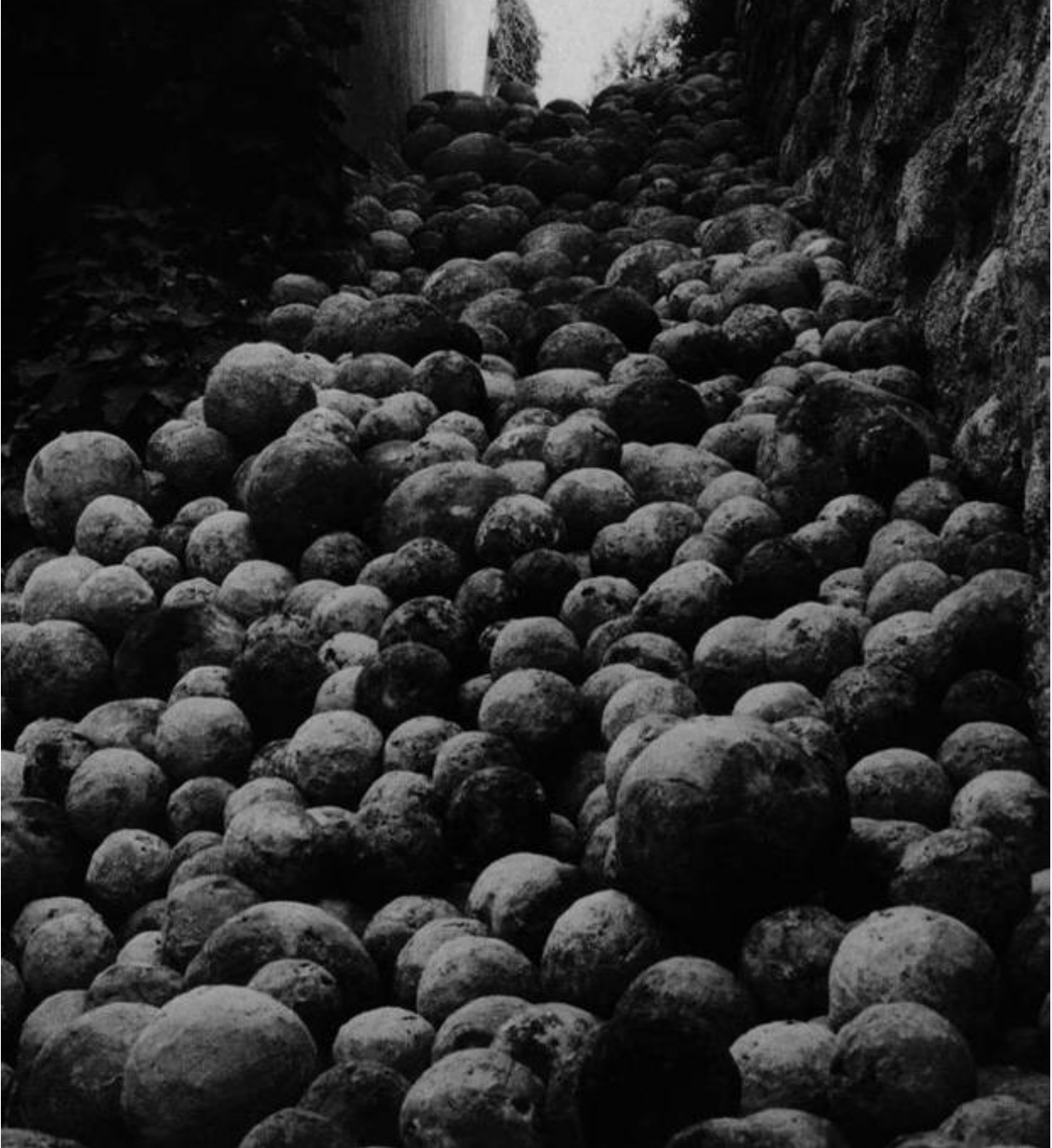
Each one is an island: this seems bad news to conservatives, to whom the idea of surpassing individuals in preceding or intentionally constituted collectives still continues to give wings; good news, on the contrary, to those who claim to see in it the guarantee that the shared rapture in malignant enthusiasms for the so-called whole cannot be reached again: because, as a general rule, the islanders are less usable by the totality. However, whatever may be in each case the kind of

insularity of individuals installed with themselves, it is always a matter of co-isolated and networked islands, which must be linked to contiguous islands, momentarily or chronically, in medium-sized or larger structures: in a national convention, a *love parade*, a club, a Masonic lodge, a corporate collective, a shareholders' meeting, a concert hall audience, a suburban neighborhood, a school class, a religious community, a crowd of motorists in a caravan, a deliberative assembly of taxpayers. If, both in their episodic concentrations and in their enduring symbioses, we describe these assemblages as foams, it is to formulate a statement about the relative compactness of co-isolated conglomerates of life or alliances: a compactness that will always be greater than that of archipelagos (which otherwise offer a conclusive metaphor for insulating multiplicities), but less than that of masses (in which misleading associations of physically rubbing groupings of units, like pasta, sand, and sacks of potatoes, come into play).

That false images can make history is shown by the modern political concept of mass, whose metaphorical origin, the idea of a conformable and effervescent "mass", in Latin: *massa*, pasta, heap, shapeless matter, has made possible for two centuries the most pernicious suggestions. When revising the vocabulary of the twentieth century, it will not only be necessary to remove from circulation the expression "mass", but also to remove it from the vocabulary of the twentieth century.

revolution, but also the concept of mass.<sup>[519]</sup>





Jean-Luc Parant, *Les Angles*, Villeneuve-les-Avignon, 1985.

The co-isolated foams of the individualistically conditioned society are not mere agglomerations of neighboring bodies (sharing separations), heavy and massive, but multiplicities of worldly-vital cells that rub against each other loosely, each of which, by its own amplitude,

corresponds to the dignity of a universe. Cautiously, the metaphor of the foam makes us observe that there is no total private property of the means of isolation: at least a wall of separation is a common possession with an adjoining cell-world. The common wall, always seen from one's own side, constitutes the *minimum* inter-autistic. Everything that goes beyond this, can already be considered as a symbiotic phenomenon.



# 1. National Assembly

When one has become convinced that the *modus vivendi*, i.e. the pace of development, of modern "society" is based on a double act - the decomposition of social conglomerates into complex individuated units and their recombination into cooperative wholes - it jumps one's eyes to what extent in the formula

The "entry of the masses into history" also articulates an architectural problematic. In correspondence with the uncluttered aggregate state of their symbionts, modern collectives have to set themselves the task of producing the spatial conditions that support the isolation of individuals, here, and their gathering into cooperative, multi-cephalic ensembles of contemplation, there. This calls for new approaches in architecture.

Already during the French Revolution it had become clear that the activists of the revolt could only have recourse for their meetings to buildings of the *Ancien régime* or to the public space of the cities, especially the squares in front of large buildings. What would one day be illustrated by the misleading term "architecture of the revolution"<sup>[520]</sup> had already been designed before 1789 in its most suggestive parts: think of the controversial *House of the Agricultural Guards* (*Maison des gardes agricoles*) by Claude Nicolas Ledoux, dated between 1768 and 1773, the *Cenotaph of Newton* by Étienne-Louis Boullée, from 1784, or the *House of a Cosmopolitan* by Vaudoyer, from 1785. That these projects, without exception, remained on paper was not so much due to adverse circumstances as to their own speculative logic: the times were not yet ripe for the

emancipation of the sculptural conception of space and geometrical formalisms.<sup>[521]</sup> The

The revolutionary processes of the Great Days thus took place in buildings and public squares that had nothing to do with the events they housed. The best known example: the assemblies of the Estates General, convened by Louis XVI at Versailles, where at the beginning of May 1789 some rooms were rearranged in the wings of the palace for the sessions - at first separately - of the Estates assembled in a meeting. When on June 20 the nearly six hundred deputies of the Third Estate, who, in the meantime, had assigned themselves the clearly insurgent title of "National Assembly" (claiming for it the prerogative of voting on taxes), found it closed (presumably because of preparations for the great joint session of the Estates under the presidency of the king, scheduled for the 23rd of that month) the *Salle Menus-Plaisirs*, assigned to them, they moved without further ado their deliberations, following an indication of the deputy Guillotin, to the nearby *Jeu de Paume*, a building which, like its predecessor, had hitherto been fully devoted to its destination within the realm of the royal *plaisirs*. There they took the famous oath not to disperse before the constitution of the kingdom had been worked out and rested on firm foundations. It is remarkable in that solemn promise, the first speech act of the bourgeois seizure of power, that it had as its object the oath of those assembled over the assembly itself as such; it could leave no doubt as to the supremacy of the political content (whose concept was forming precisely then) over the local and architectural form (which remained to be determined or constructed, case by case): "The National Assembly... resolves never to disperse and to assemble wherever circumstances permit..."<sup>[522]</sup> To the sovereignty of the first *Assemblée*, which continued its work until September 30, 1791 (to be supplanted by the Legislative Assembly, which, for its part, on September 20, 1792 was to yield to the Convention

National), belongs from the beginning the freedom of *ad-hoc* determination of the meeting place: a procedure that in the terminology of the subversives of the twentieth century will be called change of function or purpose. Of which use already had to be made a few days later, when the *Tiers État* improvised a meeting in the church of St. Louis in Versailles: this is the historic session in which a large part of the clergy joined the Third Estate; then, in the autumn of 1789, again, with the transfer of the National Assembly to the *Salle du Manège* in Paris, the riding school of the Tuileries, which was hastily arranged to meet the needs of the constituents. In May 1793 the Assembly, already as the National Convention, moved to the Tuileries Palace, where, in the meantime, according to plans by the artist Gisors, a plenary hall in the form of a semi-elliptical amphitheater with 700 seats for the deputies and 1400 seats for spectators had been fitted out. At the same time, the planning imagination of the architects did not remain inactive: since 1789 numerous projects for meeting buildings worthy of the National Assembly were drawn up, as a rule on the occasion of academic competitions, most of them in heroic-classicist style, not a few already in monumental dimensions,<sup>[523]</sup> as if the Republic could only manifest itself in the decor of a Roman Empire: the line that goes from Étienne-Louis Boullée to Albert Speer, by the way, leaves nothing to be desired in terms of clarity; the totality of the political liturgies of which the European fascisms made use were prefigured practically in all their details - with the exception of the radiophonic techniques of mass appeal - by the practices, projects and stylistic models of the French Revolution.

In the light of these processes, an event could be defined as "revolutionary" as something that has a "place", despite the fact that, at the beginning, according to the state of things, it takes place exclusively in an inappropriate place. The meetings of the new magnitudes of political action, of the first *Assemblée Nationale*, of the *Assemblée*

The legislative and the National Convention and its commissions, on the one hand, the clubs and parties, the sections and the forums of discussion, on the other, were translated into as many revolutionary demands for space, which at the beginning had in common only the embarrassment that they had to be established in the architectural substance of the old order, assigning to it a heterodox function. Exemplary for countless analogous processes was the fate of an empty convent of Dominicans, called Jacobins by the people, in the rue Saint Honoré in Paris, which, after the transfer of the deputies from Versailles to the capital, became the meeting place of the Breton club, later "Society of the Friends of the Constitution", the central ideas of patriotic radicalism and mother cell of hundreds of cuttings in the province, about whose explosive spread Camille Desmoulins could write as early as February 1791: "In the expansion of patriotism, that is to say, of philanthropy, it seems that... the club or church of the Jacobins is called upon to hold the same primacy as the Roman Church in the propagation of Christianity..."<sup>[524]</sup> The fact that the emerging power group identified itself at once, both actively and passively, with the name of its meeting place, shows something of the power of the spirits of the place over those assembled; and, vice versa, makes clear the independence of the new constellations of forces from the traditional local semantics. In any case it could be said that here, as in countless other places, there was a transfer of authority from the clergy to the more eloquent representatives of the people: an overcoming of Christian zeal by the impulse of patriots imbued with humanity.

Similar mechanisms acted temporarily in favor of the more moderate forces around Barnave, when in July 1791 they left the Jacobins' club and to corroborate their secession settled in the neighboring monastery of the Feuillants, which, like that of the Jacobins, was only a few steps away from the *Salle du Manège*. When on July 13, 1793 the populist and Sparta enthusiast, Jean-Paul Marat, was assassinated by Charlotte Corday,

members of the Convention and of the "revolutionary sex", the women of Paris, prepared lavish funerals for him. After the funeral chapel in the church of the Franciscan monks, popularly called Cordeliers, his heart was buried separately in the crypts of the convent, while the body was buried in the *Jardin des Cordeliers* (from where it was transferred shortly after to the Pantheon); these ecclesiastical buildings had served since April 1790 as clubhouse and party headquarters to the "Society of the friends of human and citizens' rights"; the vase with the heart disappeared at the end of the *terreur* under unknown circumstances.

However the symbolic weight of such quarterings and occupations in the traditional space is valued, it is certain, in any case, that neither the events nor the speeches and gestures between 1789 and 1795 resembled from any point of view the constructivist phantasm of a new beginning on a *tabula rasa*: there was never an empty "republican space" in which the men of the moment could have moved as creatures of a future world. In the Revolution almost nothing remained as in the old days, but in them. The operative qualities of the insurrection generally manifested themselves in the form of new distributions of roles, subversions and changes in the function of the existing. To this corresponds the observation that the Revolution built almost nothing, but renamed almost everything.<sup>[525]</sup> These political speech acts, of which, in keeping with the nature of things, none was as momentous as the change of name and the transformation of the Estates General into the National Assembly, are often accompanied by changes of dedication, of which the two most politico-symbolically ambitious led to the installation of a national pantheon in the votive church of St. Genevieve: a sort of national archive for the ashes and nimbus of great men;<sup>[526]</sup> and subsequently, to the transformation of the Louvre into the first great national museum, in which were to be installed together for their last resting place the treasures

527] In any case, some innovations in the field of abolition are striking: after the figures of slaves were removed from the pedestal of the statue of Louis XVI in the Place des Victoires in Paris as early as 1790, during the popular uprising of August 10, 1792, the same was done with the statue.<sup>[528]</sup> At the height of the Jacobin rule, the "public space" was emptied of personal monuments of the monarchy; they were temporarily replaced by statues of liberty and republican allegories; in numerous places, improvised altars of the fatherland, next to the obligatory trees of liberty, refer to the martyrial civil religion of Jacobinism, which imposed on its followers the obligation of self-sacrifice with as much energy as almost no monotheistic missionary religion had achieved at the height of its expansionist impulse.

With the nationwide change of function of feudal or clerical halls to accommodate the meeting needs of the representatives of the Third Estate (Paris alone, with its 48 revolutionary sections, presented an enormous demand for places of assembly, deliberation cabinets, courtrooms, administration offices and prisons) the space demands of the *nouveau régime* were far from being satisfied. Already in the first year of the Revolution the need was recognized to create large meeting places, in which not only the representatives could meet, but also the represented, the mass of the people themselves, who on festive occasions had to be provided with the opportunity to gather physically in well-ordered forms as the presently present plenum of the new "society," that is, as a sovereign national people. The fact that this - in view of the demographic and geographical conditions of France, which then had about 25 million inhabitants - was at best only possible in the larger cities and only approximately, did not in any way diminish the mobilizing effect of the ideal of the republican plenum of the mass. The nation of

The polis, which had constituted itself as the ideal address of itself, wanted, at least occasionally, to be with itself and with each other in a single place, and to celebrate, so to speak, the whole of itself, without considering the fact that modern society is constituted asynodically: its first and most important category is that it no longer constitutes a unity capable of reunion. This is radically different from ancient democracy, which was completely transgressed by the requirement that the *polis* had to persist as a reunifiable magnitude (with the incorporation of women, children and slaves).

Under the effect of the assembly enthusiasm, the ancient models of buildings for large gatherings immediately - we would say inevitably - came to the fore: with the amphitheater of the Greeks as with the circus or the arena of the Romans, European antiquity made available two accredited models for large gatherings, whose formal perfection made it possible to recover them even after an interruption of more than 1500 years. In retrospect, it seems a prophetic exercise for the Academy of Paris to call a competition for public buildings in the early eighties: in 1781, for a *Fête publique*; in 1782, for a circus; in 1783, for a *ménagerie* in an arena; similar motifs were at the basis of competitions in 1789 and 1790, although at that time there was hardly any thought of a concrete realization. (In any case, the *Ancien régime* had flirted with the idea of the old arena as an absolutist festive stage: in 1769, on the occasion of the Dauphin's wedding to Marie Antoinette, a gigantic building in the style of the Colosseum was built on the Rond Point of the Champs Elysées, which served as a place of popular entertainment for a decade, before it had to be demolished because of its dilapidated state). The academic *concours* still moved fully within the fascination with the late-absolutist ghosts of the people's government. They enjoyed the license to dream, more or less without consequences, of great receptacles for the agglomeration of the people.

passively-jubilant subjects before the spectacular representations of power and art of the kingdom.

Only after the outbreak of the Revolution could a model arena and amphitheater for the generality of the "masses" be occasionally realizable and politically virulent; as perceived, above all, in the great festival of the Federation - of the confederations of patriots who had united for defense against counter-revolutionary intrigues - held on the day of the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, July 14, 1790, on the Champ de Mars in Paris.<sup>[529]</sup> The "masses" of the "masses" were the first to be able to see this model.



De Machy, The Feast of the Federation in Paris, 1790: The Arc de Triomphe as a point of reference.  
gaze attraction.

With this mass demonstration, the largest in European history since the days of the Roman *Circus maximus*, the French Revolution's closest approximation to the enthusiastic idea of a real and comprehensive popular assembly took place; it seems that on that day 400,000 people crowded into the improvised circus stands around the site of the festival, at the center of which Talleyrand



(Only one event, which was not far behind, could compare with the feast of the Federation in terms of the number of visitors: on the occasion of the first flight with his oxygen balloon of the physics professor Charles, on December 1, 1783, it seems that more than a quarter of a million Parisians crowded into the gardens of the Tuileries to witness the greatest sensation of their time, the overcoming of gravitation).<sup>[530]</sup> In the person of Talleyrand was consummated, in just one historical hour, the transformation of the priest into the master of ceremonies of the "masses"; more precisely: the birth of the media politician as *showmaster* and *regisseur* of consensus. The point of attraction of the gaze of the festive assemblies on the Champ de Mars consisted of a colossal triumphal arch, made of cardboard, wood and plaster, with whose erection the militant republic of patriots unmistakably announced its interest in the victorious symbolism of the age of the Roman emperors. In view of this massive reference to Rome, the idea might occur to one that the Napoleonic victories of the following decade were only the execution of what had already been demanded by the expediency of the societies of patriots since the beginning of the Revolution: is not a victory always a rapprochement of the real to the demands of the phantasm? Undoubtedly there still converged in the scenes of the Champ de Mars the elaborate ceremonial competence of absolutism, supported by the habitualized cultic magic of Catholicism, even if both the one and the other were treated in the semantics of the festival itself as abolished or repressed magnitudes. To what extent this gathering was singular for the gathered themselves is inferred from the oath pronounced by Lafayette on behalf of the federates of all the *Départements*, which reinforced both the unity of the French among themselves and the fusion of the population with their king (who, for his part, swore-perjured, it is understood-fidelity to the nation and to the law); as if what mattered in that direct popular gathering was to commit the assembled to their actual coexistence and, even more, to their

imaginary to remain together after the return to the situation of not being reunited; later it will be said: to their national solidarity. Moreover, there is hardly any other situation at the beginning of political modernity in which the equation of sociability and somnambulism, formulated by Gabriel Tarde, would possess such a radical validity as that first anniversary of July 14; the exercise of the French in such situations can contribute to clarify how it is that Bonaparte found himself with a "nation" so unaccustomedly disposed to hypnosis, mobilizable and inflammable.



*Oath of the King, Queen, Nation, on the Feast of the Federation, July 14, 1790, unknown artist, 18th century.*

Shortly after that enthusiastic event there emerges in the discourses of the early socialists the momentous question of whether those compendia of the totality of the nation in an ecstatic we did not mean a deception of the bourgeoisie with possessions to the dispossessed strata of the population. Since that question was well posed, both semantically and politically, the next one hundred and fifty years of European social policy

belonged to the critique of the international workers' movements of the assembly fraud and the fallacy of the kinship of the bourgeois nations. Indeed, the phenomenon of inclusion-illusion, which conceals real hard exclusions, had suddenly appeared on the ideological scene. With its systematic denunciation begins the epoch of suspicion. Since then, critique intends to signify the unmasking of the present false universality in the name of an authentic universality, presumably to come. It is against this background that the concept of class could become one of the first line in the later discourses of those who lost the Revolution: in the future, in the face of the pseudo-inclusiveness of the concepts of nation and people, it would have to represent the true (though still vague) collective, competent for any creation of real value, of the impoverished workers together with their intellectual allies against ideologues and exploiters in the service of capital.<sup>[531]</sup>

The modernity of the spectacle of patriotic worship on the Champ de Mars in Paris (which was imitated in all the major cities of France with similar large gatherings in improvised stadiums and which until the eighth year of the Revolutionary calendar, i.e. 1799, was followed by numerous similar celebrations, and occasionally adding agonal and sporting moments) consists in the fact that, with it, the configuration of the multi-headed capital crowd into a present "mass", as an architectural, organizational and technical-ritual task (later also a juridical-assembly one), passes to the stage of explicit development. The preparation and realization of the Federation Festival of 1790 and its subsequent events made it evident that the "mass", the "nation" or the "people" can only be given as subject collective insofar as the physical gathering of these magnitudes becomes the object of a methodical staging, ranging from the mobilization to participate, passing through the scenic direction of affections in the stadium and the fixation of the attention of the "mass" by means of a fascinating spectacle, to end, at the end, in a

dissolution of the crowd controlled by citizen guards. There is no dough without a container in which to shape it; there is no "dough" without a hand that knows what it is kneaded for.

The Federation Festival of July 14, 1790, from which both *de facto* and *de jure* the modern "mass" culture as a staging of events derives, is informative because it already presented in exemplary and definitive forms the relationship between public, spectacle and place of assembly. In the *défilé of the* citizen guard through the gigantic field, as if it were an indoor circus, and the patriotic mass celebrated by Talleyrand it became clear that in collective liturgies of this type of crowd organization one must count on an omnipresent mastery of ritual; and that also the newly assembled sovereign, the public present, precisely because of its numerically overwhelming presence, has to be content with the role of observer and animated acclaimer. This means, conversely, that the organizers of the great gathering must know to what extent they themselves are responsible for the success of the affective synthesis, that is, for the collective enthusiasm. Given that the reborn circus, as a political focus and as a fascinating collector of masses, constitutes a machine for the production of consensus, it is necessary to ensure by means of a scenic direction of the ritual that all the events within it are of elementary evidence. Whoever does not understand the text must understand the action; whoever finds the action strange must be captivated by the colorism of the spectacle. The sonospheric fusion takes care of the rest. It is true that in this situation the so-called sovereign can never immediately take the floor; but he can, nevertheless, applaud the appearances of his representatives, moreover, he has the open field to become himself, through his shouts of jubilation, a *sui generis* acoustic phenomenon-we. When a discreet attunement is not possible, also the collective shouting leads to psychopolitically relevant results. The quasi-nation, gathered in the stadium-circus, experiences itself in an acoustic plebiscite, whose direct result, the jubilant noise over the heads of the people, is the "we-ness" of the crowd.

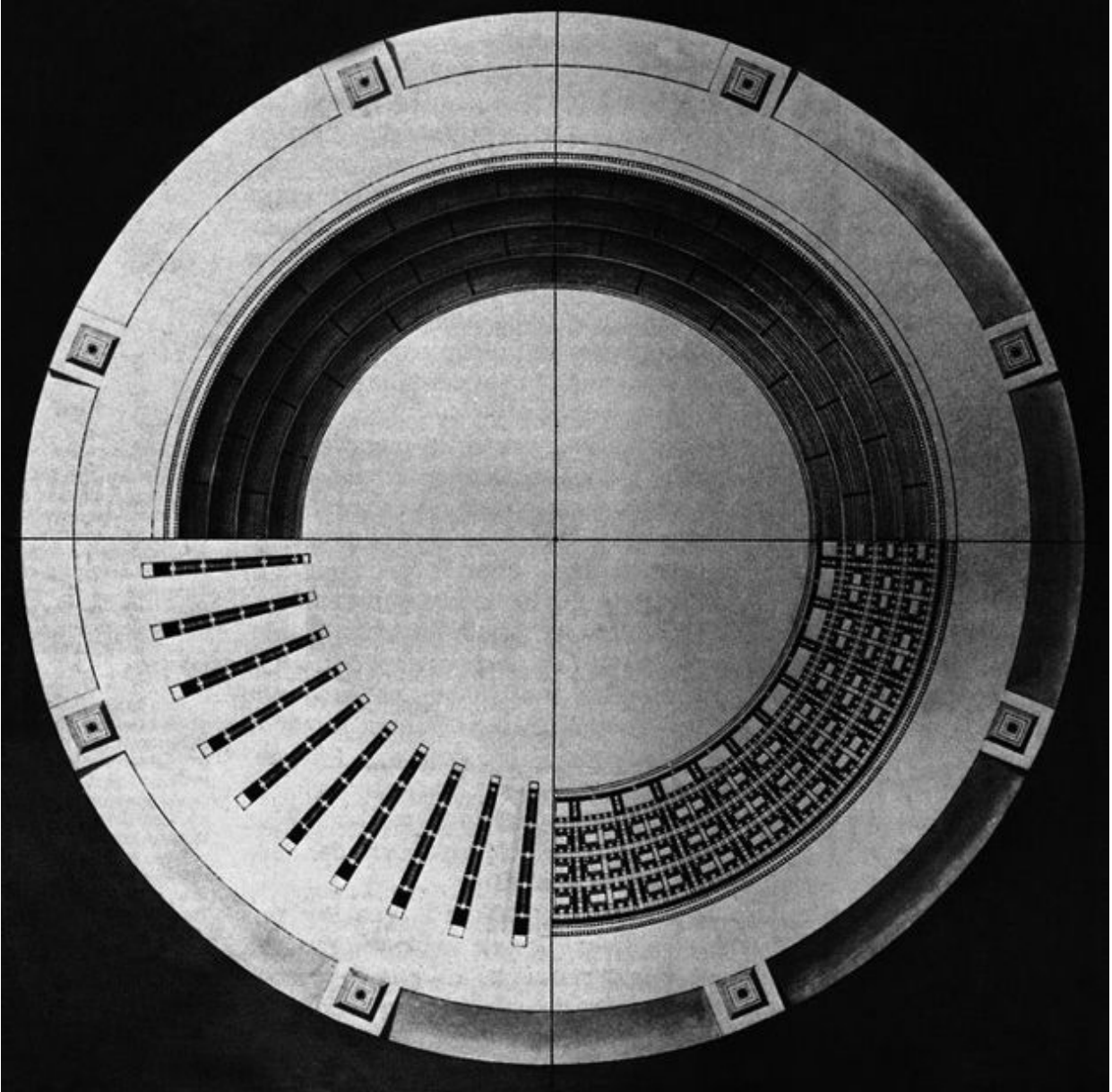
of all, it emerges as an emanation from those gathered to return to the ear of each one. The autopoiesis of noise resembles a realization of the commonplace by the *vox populi*. Such a shouting, not yet differentiated by any modern tuning facility, renders the rhetoric of specific speakers superfluous. On the way to mimetic infection, the shout of one becomes the shout of the other; in any case, two or more sides of shouting are formed in the stadium. When in place of the shouting appears the musical coordination, space is made for the political hymn. As the history of the *Marseillaise* and other national anthems shows, the common chant insinuates the transformation of the crowd into a chorus; according to other points of view, it even liberates the truly choral nature of the community, underlying the everyday prosaic relations of the human being.

[532]

As far as architectural receptacles for the great revolutionary concentrations were concerned, the rededication of feudal and ecclesiastical halls was evidently not enough: nothing less than the para-Renaissance repetition of an ancient, hitherto inaccurate form would suffice if the nascent "mass" culture of Modernity was to connect with that of European Antiquity; and it had to do so to satisfy its demand for large buildings for quantitative aggregates of human beings.

The imperative of the building for the large gatherings of the age of sovereignized peoples results, not least, from the experience that open-air mass gatherings - in the twentieth century often in the form of parades or demonstrative processions - have a high potential for escalating violence, whereas architecturally enclosed assemblies, even under roof, offer a great situational advantage for civilized developments.[533] But since it is hardly possible to reactivate a form without also bringing back into play, at least mediately, the contents originally attached to it, the modern interest in ancient "mass" *containers*, the

amphitheater, arena, circus, is expanded in a popular renaissance, in which, together with the architectural forms of the corresponding types of event, the struggles, the competitions, the drama of differentiation, which discriminates between victor and loser, return; only death can no longer be welcome in the modern stadium, as it was in the ancient arena.<sup>[534]</sup> It has rightly been remarked that Modernity has revitalized, in remarkable simultaneity with democracy, the two ancient institutions of tragedy and Olympic athletic competitions. <sup>535]</sup> The orator of the Revolution, Danton, conveys that as early as 1793 he himself encouraged the organization of Olympic Games on the Champ de Mars with a view to national pedagogy. Before him, Gilbert Romme, co-author of the calendar of the Revolution, had already proposed in 1792 the celebration of French Olympics in leap years. When such patriots speak out, they do so with recourse to Romans and Spartans. It is not for nothing that Brutus, Caesar's assassin, is the hero of the moment. How long will we have to wait until the gladiators of the arenas of yesteryear join him?



Étienne-Louis Boullée, project for a coliseum.

In view of these "mass" *containers*, which bridge the architectural gap between the old models of "mass" culture and their modern repetition, one of the structural problems of contemporary society becomes apparent: however much it may be true that it can only be organized acephally and asynodically as a whole, the demand for cephalic and synodic instances remains deeply rooted in it: in the ghosts of the capital or general assembly of society even both are unified (in



In any case, it is worth asking whether such an assembly, impossible in reality, would at least be simulable in a panoramic or philosophical text, so that, in the case of an affirmative answer, there would at least also be a principle of explanation of the remarkable authority of philosophy in the phases of Modernity devoted to totality). The juridical-state fiction, popular among republicans, of a seizure of sovereignty by the people, who would assume their rights as successors to the king, puts within reach, if it were realizable in practice, the reincarnation of the cephalic function in a popular plenum. It would not be long, moreover, before the thinkers of the Constitution and the jurists of the Third Estate realized the potential for violence in such ideas; in the tumultuous scenes of the popular uprisings of July 14, 1789, August 10, 1792, the massacres of September and the innumerable violent episodes in Paris and in the provinces, it became clear where a literal interpretation of the theorem of popular sovereignty would lead. Only by strict limitations on the freedom of assembly and coalition could the mob be prevented from literally appropriating the dogma that was in the air: "All violence comes from the street".

These limitations speak in favor of a quick grasp by the possessional bourgeoisie of its first lessons of violence; even if the populists of the first hour polemicized the incomplete realization of the *égalité* by the "new lords" and threatened the patriots without too much enthusiasm with terrible actual implementations of the philosophy. Already the Constitution of 1791 undertook the attempt to repress the meetings in which a present multitude wanted to articulate itself as a popular political society and, with it, as a partial personification of the sovereign. The Constitution of the Directory then directly prohibited all open-air meetings as riots: a prohibition that remained in force throughout the 19th century: legal premises of the impatient quietism (or orderly radicalism) that would characterize French culture from the end of the Napoleonic era onwards.

<sup>536]</sup> Indeed, under the rule of the Jacobins the belief, solid in principle, in the truth-expressive power of the organization of "masses" was losing ground; it had been too often experienced how easily a crowd of *enraged people* gathered in public squares could become, at a casual cry of indignation, a "mass" rushing forward half-blind. Canetti has called *poden masses* [*Hetzmassen*] the energized heaps to which an intention has been implanted,<sup>[537]</sup> which, like sansculottic packs, would leave their calling card on lampposts. If there was an astuteness of reason in the Revolution of 1789, it was the realization, always partial, of its principles; only in this way did it maintain a certain resistance against the incontinent postulates of universalism from below. Whose hour sounded again in the early twentieth century, when the European fascisms, in solidarity with each other as an international of nationals, imposed the unity of street and State and brought to the order of the day the implementation of the total egalitarian inclusion of a people in itself, in each case.

## 2. The collectors: For the history of the stadium's renaissance

It can be affirmed that modern totalitarianism is a product of the consensus of the stadium: in an agitated phonotope, in which a hundred thousand voices place a bell of noise over those assembled, the phantom of unanimity arises, which infests since then demagogues and social philosophers. In it a sonorous *volonté générale* is created: a plebiscite of noises. In view of these circumstances, Gabriel Tarde's thesis is literally justified: that the social state of the human being is a hypnotic or somnambulistic one. The shouting of the crowd in the stadium is directly coupled to it, because from the impression of the spectacle comes the mimetic excitement, from the excitement the sonorous gestures, and from its return - massively amplified - to the ear the commotion, which is almost equivalent to a conviction. When Elias Canetti described the "mass as a ring"<sup>[538]</sup> he was not simply characterizing the visual and architectural conditions of a stadium, but also the acoustic fascination that, coming from the gathering, hovers over it. Like the Athenian generals, the modern stage directors of the consensus also know how to appreciate the capturing power of music. Wherever all the elements that contribute to such an experience must be present, the means of phonotopic synthesis must not be lacking. If they are given, the event is also guaranteed, the enthusiastic fusion of the crowd. From that moment on, one really knows what it means to have been there. Whoever was "there" will testify that the event as such provided a kind of truth. It is

already demonstrates, at the same time, how to place strictly ritual reins to the crowd in the container of the people. Between 1790 and 1798, the arena recovered in the Parisian Champ de Mars, and numerous other analogous constructions in the province, are put to the test again and again with pomp and glory. From the ritual fascinogenic and from the operationalized collective self-hypnosis emerges the material from which the cathedrals of the post-Christian commune are made. Since then, modern "society" has at its disposal a self-persuasive medium of great performance capacity: a collector, with which it is possible to carry out, both organizationally and psychotechnically, the task of the direct gathering of large numbers of human beings, should it arise again.

For our context, it is sufficient to ask the question: why did it take more than a hundred years for the culture of

The modern "masses" rediscovered, on a broad basis, the arena or coliseum effect, the fusion of the public in view of the narcissistic-narcotic spectacle. Very summarily, the answer could be that nineteenth-century "society" knew best how to evade this imposed general task, since the popular-democratic horror was still too deeply rooted in the witnesses of the Revolution and its heirs. When the "mass" came on the scene at that time, it was, as a rule, in ceremonially controlled forms.<sup>[539]</sup> Only with the turbulence of the early twentieth century did the impulse for large gatherings and concentrations manifest itself again, and with them, at the same time, the demand for architectural collectors for large numbers of physically congregated human beings.

The passwords to the history of collectors are called Olympic Games, Russian Revolution and Fascism. What unites this heterogeneous trinity is the common challenge of developing great interiors for present and mobilized multitudes, in order to manage their capacity to react by means of staged illusions-point-center. It is true that at the height of Modernity the art of social synthesis was only exercised even as

if it were an indirect one; but this does not exclude that the direct meetings of the multitude in their symbiotic hours claim the intervention of the most explicit organizational knowledge. This is pragmatized in the exploitation of the great collectors. Since the emergence and establishment of such macro-interiors it could be known that the type of construction analyzed by Walter Benjamin, the passages - in which he sought the profound idea of the nineteenth-century interior: the paradoxical synthesis of intimacy and the public world of the commodity - no longer plays any key role in the understanding of space-creating processes in contemporary society. As far as their mercantile dimension is concerned, passages have been replaced by shopping centers on the outskirts of urban complexes or by pedestrian zones in city centers: recent architecture now only takes them into account as historicizing quotations.<sup>[540]</sup> (The shopping environment completed in the early 1990s at the renovated Leipzig main station is - like the arcades of Potsdamer Platz and similar buildings - a suggestive example of capitalist historicism staged in an ultramodern way). As far as the space-creating powers of the twentieth century are concerned, the abstract constellation of stadiums and apartments is more significant than anything else. While the former make possible the compactly isopathic, individual-space-annihilating foaming of the multitude into large containers, the latter go hand in hand with the civilizational tendency toward the discrete foaming of "society" into egospheric conglomerations of cells.

In these trends there is a general rejection of the "society", which - to speak Hegelianly for a moment - could be described as a dialectic of modernization. While in the process of modernity the law of the differentiation of subsystems irresistibly imposes itself on the process of modernity, time and again positions are taken in the opposite direction for the salvation or reestablishment of the function of the center. It can be observed as often as one wishes that we have been moving for some time now in a form of

world in which the projection of the illusion of totality and central point to a king (and his logical advisors, the philosophers or wise masters) only seduces the naive; but the position of king as such, the phantasmatic place in which the whole would self-transparently know what it is and wants, will not be abandoned without a struggle. Resistance in favor of the middle ground develops its own centers, and attractors proper to the great multitude. The Champ de Mars in Paris, the Olympic Stadium in Athens and the buildings that succeed them all over the world: Bayreuth's Festival Theater, Moscow's Red Square, Salzburg's Felsenreitschule and Cathedral Square, Berlin's Reich Sports Field, the grounds of Nuremberg's Reich Party General Assembly - in all these toponyms the recentralizing and synodalizing tendencies are exemplarily reflected, without which some of the most powerful and problematic politico-cultural motivational currents of the first half of the 20th century cannot be understood. In such places, agents appropriate to their function of simulating centralism dominate: a task, in view of which the limits of politics are diluted in beautiful and sublime arts. Perhaps it is not superfluous to recall this, after the positivization of the lack of middle ground in postmodernity has broken down the historical climate, in which new centrists believed that the plausibilities of time were on their side. During a specific historical juncture, the longing for the center was allied with the desire for plenary reunion. Although this did not mean the assembly of the totality in the literal sense -whether it was imagined republicanly, popularly or by class-, the call of the meeting, nevertheless, reached wide elites, who liked to appear: those photogenic successor groups of the good society. Where the latter are lacking, those who want meetings resort to custom-made troupes.

The history of the international Olympic Games of the modern era has been investigated in considerable detail on the occasion of the celebration of their centenary in 1996 and presented in popular synopses, so that a recapitulation is superfluous here. Significant for our context is the fact that with their reintroduction and popularization, the Olympic Games have given a great deal of importance to the Olympic Games.

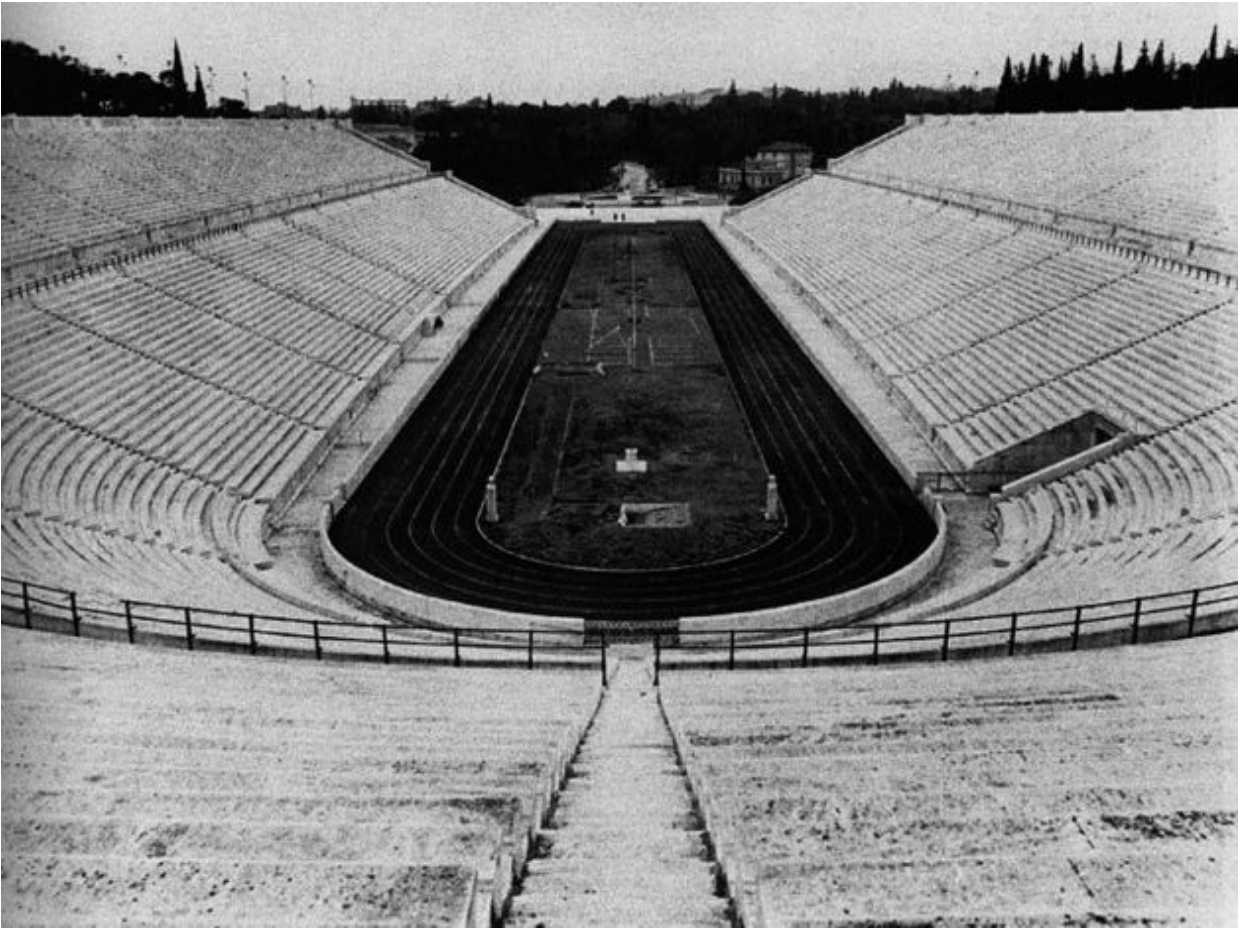
The "Olympic idea" not only gave modern sports ideology its supreme instance and the ritual that motivates it the most; it also reinforced the attraction of the physical concentration of the masses, no matter how much they were concentrated. The "Olympic idea" not only provided modern sports ideology with its supreme instance and the ritual that motivates it to the maximum; it also reinforced the attractive force of physical mass concentration, however depoliticized, internationalized and centrally fractured it might be.

The Games series showed for a century how unsuitable the conventions of historicism were for keeping in check the Renaissance impetus of the modern demands of the arena. Only at the beginning of the whole, bourgeois-cult and neo-aristocratic motifs managed to stamp their mark on the modern sports movement. The excavations at Olympia, carried out between 1875 and 1881 under the direction of Ludwig Curtius, had brought the original Olympic sites of the Games into the light of day; The Panathenaic Stadium in Athens was also demolished in the middle of the 19th century and used as a venue for national "Olympiads" (refereed by university professors), before it became the site of the first international Olympic Games in 1896, thanks to the patronage of a patriotically oriented Greek millionaire, and with the participation of 295 athletes, exclusively male, from thirteen nations. It is doubtful that these first Games were to the liking of their organizers. Pierre de Coubertin declared in his memoirs that the "Olympic horizon", in its true meaning, only showed itself to him after a visit to Wagner's Bayreuth. The sports games he had in mind were to be analogous to the neo-aristocratic enclave represented by Wagner's festival site, and, like the latter, to act from the sublime counterworld into the real world, pedagogically instilling modesty. Just as in Bayreuth the revival of tragedy had been achieved from the spirit of music, so through the Olympics a revival of athletics (in keeping with the competitive spirit of economic society) was to be achieved. Coubertin's confessions acquire weight as a diagnosis of the times, since they unequivocally express a fundamental feature of culture

of modern "masses": the replacement of the European renaissance of art and philologists by a globalized renaissance of the stadium and athletes.

At the next Games in Paris, in 1900, there were already 1077 athletes from 21 participating nations at the start, including 11 women for the first time, who competed in golf and tennis, much to the chagrin of the androphile purist Coubertin. However, this numerical ostentation was not significant for the public perception of the Games, because they were only held as a collateral program of the Exposition Universelle de Paris -another myth-collector of the 19th century-, spread over 162 days, without the city of Paris having made available a suitable stadium. The venue for the championships was the facilities of the Racing Club de France in the Bois de Boulogne. Only the Olympic venues of St. Louis, in 1904, surpassed in penury those of the Parisian Olympiad. If the revived - or, as Coubertin liked to say: reinstated - Games had been only a continuation of the Grecophilia with other means, they would hardly have overcome their pitiful beginnings. Admittedly, disciplines such as the discus throw would have fallen into oblivion had they not been recalled by works of art such as the statue of the *Discobolus* of Myron in the Roman Thermae Museum; indeed, neither was the repetition of the marathon at the Athens Games of 1896 anything other than a literal quotation from sources outside the libraries, stimulated by the Grecian Michel Bréal. However, the architectural forms and exercises of Olympism quickly acquired a meaning of their own in the modern context. Before long, old-style Greco-Romanism no longer had much to say in the development of the athletic renaissance.





Panathenaic Stadium.

Already in the London Games of 1908, with the Shepherd's Bush stadium, an iron and concrete building, adapted to the times, which offered about 70,000 seats, an architecturally advanced, cult sporting construction burst onto the scene. This first true Olympic arena removed any doubt as to whether Modernity would adopt the Roman oval as the canonical form for the design of its most significant collector: of the Greek stadium, built in a U-shape and requiring an open side, only the name would remain in the future.<sup>[541]</sup> As for the cultural modernization, and the modernization of the Games as a special *event*, it was not until the Los Angeles Olympiad in 1932 that all the final results were concentrated for the first time in a two-week period; as opposed to the previous Games, which were spread over two weeks, it was not until the Los Angeles Games in 1932 that all the final results were concentrated in a two-week period.

three to six months and were doomed to both media sterility and lack of impact on the general public (excluding the Athenian Games of April 1896, which lasted ten days). In the meantime, the cult formalities were also established almost in their entirety (Olympic flag and Olympic oath, from Antwerp, 1920; Olympic fire, from Amsterdam, 1928; Only the relay of the Olympic flame from Olympia to the venue was delayed until the Berlin Games in 1936, as a symbol of the transmission of athletics from the Greeks to the Germans), Olympism no longer needed any pretext to enter the scene definitively as the central point of worship of the athletic renaissance.

The Californian Games, overshadowed by the world economic crisis, with which the introduction of monumentalism and spectacle into the Olympic movement began to become unlimited, were a strong push forward. Its central stage was the *Coliseum*, enlarged to 105,000 seats, by the architects John and Donald B. (For the 1984 Games, an even larger monumental complex was built in Los Angeles under the same name, but exclusively with contributions from private sponsors). Anyone who wanted to interpret the signs of the times could see in the assignment of the name the decisive reference to the dynamics of the "mass culture" of the twentieth century: the formal overcoming of the Greek stadium by the Roman arena, or rather, the irruption of the second critical case in the simulated peace of the sporting event. In the New World, Boullée's visions of a *Cirque nationale* had materialized, with a delay of 150 years. Since then, the Olympic collector has become a psychopolitical machine, whose primary function consists in producing victories and winners, and in making the spectators witnesses of a differentiation that really happens: that between the first and the others.<sup>[542]</sup> The Olympic collector has become a psychopolitical machine, whose primary function consists in producing victories and victors, and in making the spectators witnesses of a differentiation that really happens: that between the first and the others.

The division of a collective into winners and non-winners becomes the central sacrament of the modern cult of the event. With it, the rapport with the winner becomes the fundamental exercise of social affectivity, lessened by a certain consideration for the classified (in this sense it can be affirmed that the invention of silver and bronze medals testifies to the civilizing function of sport). In addition to this, both the Olympic stadiums and the others reveal themselves as the preferred places of worship of modern bio-religion: scenes of the delegated suffering of athletes, which represents the popular dream of the transformation of the trivial body into a statue capable of superhuman performances. The generalization of the motif "second critical case" determines since the time of Olympism all the fascinogenic forms of mass culture; at the base of it is, as has been said, the reduction, inspired by Rome, of drama to the clear and precise differentiation between victory and defeat. From this other critical moment depends not only the growing psychologization of sport, in the sense of its approach to psychological warfare, but also its direct link to the policy of prestige and order of the States and to the profit system of the organizers of *event-events* (in naive times: of sports clubs and federations).

The potentials of mass culture, latent in the renewed Olympism, were fully unfolded, for the first time, at the 1936 Summer Games. When Oswald Spengler, in the first volume of *The Twilight of the West*, noted that "the difference between a Berlin sports ground on a big day and a Roman circus was already very slight in 1914,"<sup>[543]</sup> he had anticipated events; since he died in May 1936, he was unable to live through the fulfillment of his prophetic diagnosis.

If these Games, which were held at the Reich Sport Camp at Grunewald, have entered history as a triumph of the organization, it was not only because of the resolute commitment to them through a campaign of sympathy and respectability of the regime.

National Socialist. At the Berlin event the tendencies, already evident since Los Angeles 1932, to the neo-heroic-monumental and narco-narcissistic mass spectacle were consistently pushed to the limit. Despite the ritual of the torch relay from Olympia to Berlin, introduced by the chief organizer Carl Diem, there could no longer be any doubt about the general trend of the Games: the definitive submission of the Grecophile beginning to the Romanizing aftermath. The first contribution to this was the gigantic and festive stadium project of Berlin architect Werner March, which had emerged from a comparative study of analogous constructions of antiquity and modernity. The stadium constructions of Jan Wils in Amsterdam (1928 Olympic Games, distinguished with a gold medal for architecture), of John and Donald B. Parkinson in Los Angeles, of Ernest Ernst Parkinson in Los Angeles, and of John and Donald B. Parkinson in New York (1928 Olympic Games, distinguished with a gold medal for architecture). Parkinson in Los Angeles, Ernst Otto Schweizer in Nuremberg (1927) and Vienna (1931), as well as Umberto Constantini in Bologna (1925-1927), had convinced March of the architectural potential of visible reinforced concrete skeleton construction.



Olympia-Stadion with the Reich Sports Field, 1936, by Werner March.

After Hitler, who was a stranger to Olympism and who intensely felt the ridiculousness of "bodily exercises", had been angered by the modernity of March's projects, Albert Speer was commissioned to correct the external image of the stadium in a monumental sense, especially by means of carved stone coverings, which were to line all visible concrete surfaces and building elements, and create an aura of martial inaccessibility.<sup>[544]</sup> Speer, supported by the theory

Hitler's view of the ruin value of the great buildings, he temporarily abandoned himself to the reverie of how, after centuries or millennia, his architectural works would rise up as majestic vestiges: the imitation of the colossal Roman constructions was no longer just a vitalist gesture, as would once be appropriate for a "young democracy", now for a "national revolution", but also a tragic and sentimental program. Of course, the Berlin stadium was not just about "making history": for the time being it was content to be the largest stadium in the world, which it temporarily achieved with its 110,000 seats. Thanks to its pseudo-Doric atmosphere and its setting in a landscape composed of ceremonial sites and bare towers, it was supposed to transport the visitor into a state of sublime humiliation and a socially idealistic disposition to renounce personal projects. Never before had a sports facility been conceived as a machine of collectivization and subjugation to such an extent. Whoever entered it had to forget all hope of individuality. Whoever succeeded there would never again be a private person. The figure on the winner's podium would be a pure emanation of a source of political and racial energy.

It belongs to the informational ironies of 20th century cultural history that the first high point of the athletic renaissance was organized under National Socialist leadership; and thus was, moreover, in good hands, as even skeptics acknowledge. The objective competence of a fascist organizer for such a great event came from the convergence between the synodal core of National Socialist ideology and the Olympic *pathos* of bringing together in a distinguished place the athletic elite of the world's youth together with a performance-hungry public. The cult of the *Führer*, which corresponds intimately with the idea of a popular plenum, can be made philosophically plausible as a figure of the death of the old Western centrism: since the people are already always gathered in the *Führer*, the *Führer* can bring the whole, or almost the whole, "people" to him to celebrate a feast of

homogeneity. Fascism is based on a semi-modern interpretation of the concept of sovereignty of the people; in the sense of a sudden legitimism from below: the people emanate from their dark center to man, in whom they believe they are all with themselves. Since it is one who is all - and who claims to be all for all - those who gather around him can indulge in the idea that their psychic gathering is already also the consummate proof of sovereignty. Marx's well-known remark to Ruge (in a letter of March 1843), that the philistine, the petty bourgeois, is the raw material of monarchy, should be reversed in this case: the monarch or *Führer* is the raw material of the philistine. Olympism, for its part, is founded on a semi-modern interpretation of existence, which makes use of the suggestion that all power comes from the healthy body. Since it is the athletes who permanently push the limits of human capacity for performance, all who witness this can imagine themselves as participating in the realm of the sovereignty of the body. Spontaneous Fascist-like legitimism is mirrored by Olympic-coined biological-popular aristocratism. The relative modernity of both - or, rather, their modern counter-modernity - depends directly on an extensive and professional use of collectors.

In the Olympic constructions of Berlin, whose program and dimensions are born of the project - fixed in its general lines since 1934-1935 - of a "Reich Sports Field" [*Reichssportfeld*], it can be appreciated to what extent the National Socialist neo-classicism is marked by the adoption of Greek forms through the Roman *imperium*. The Greek trinity of institutions, consisting of democracy, tragedy and sporting agon, was transcribed by distributing the field into sports venue, mass meeting place and theater, without the unwitting visitor ever realizing the parodic character of the installation: it was too much, for that matter, the power with which the attributes of the neo-imperial architecture of subjugation had been staged. Justice is only done to the "*Reichssportfeld*" if one recognizes in it a Las

National Socialist Vegas: a proving ground for the total rendezvous. Not only was the Roman Colosseum evoked in this complex as a "wrestling arena", but also the Greek tragic theater was ostentatiously repeated, in this case in Dietrich Eckart's 22,000-seat open-air theater (the Great Theater of Dionysos in Athens could seat up to 17,000 spectators); In addition, the Olympic stadium was directly attached to a gathering place of monumental dimensions, called the May Field [*Maifeld*], in which the typically Fascist transformation of the agora (or rather, the absolutist *cour d'honneur*) into a parade ground was consummated; it is no coincidence that this part of the complex was the only one in whose planning Hitler took a personal interest, since it suggested Nurembergian analogies.

[545]

What unites some collectors with others, here cited according to historical models (stadium, theater, meeting place), is the autologous quality of the events for which they were designed. The meetings are not held in them to represent a program or a repertoire; the program itself is subordinated to the imperative of the meeting, and only constitutes a pretext for the convocation of the multitude for the consummation of their being-together. When Germans gather to represent the whole that is called Germany, the only subject of those assembled is, inevitably, being German. It belongs to the rules of the game of such synodal delusions that, comparable to an idealistic system, they only speak of the unity that they themselves present and represent, at the same time. Monothematism is directly transformed, and not only in the case of national revolutionaries, into autothematism. What has been called totalitarianism is a result of the submission of the collectors and of the big media that they drag, that is to say, daily press and radio, to the thematic greatness of the organizer. The latter can ask of his citizens, quite successfully, to have no theme but him. That, nevertheless, numerous participants in the assemblies of the party, especially among the groups which had been brought from everywhere, had been



The sensationalist historiography on the Nazi era willingly conceals the fact that the speeches were often boring, talked about other things and mocked chaotic circumstances behind the scenes. We do not know whether the characterization of Goebbels' speeches as "Humpelstilzchen's story time", [\*\*\*\*] as well as the renaming of the Propaganda Ministry as "the center of the Reich's desire for notoriety" [\*\*\*\*\*] were customary already at the time of Nuremberg.[546] It is a confirmed fact, on the other hand, that the performances of Wagner's *The Master Singers of Nuremberg*, highly appreciated by Hitler, as a prelude to the general party assemblies, took place, at first, before empty squares and before personalities of the National Socialist party, asleep and ill-disposed towards culture. Limits of the enthusiastic community. In the "city of the party's general assemblies" there already existed at the time of the Berlin Games two large and successfully exploited facilities for mass liturgy exercises, the Luitpold Arena and the Zeppelinfeld, both in the form of a colossal rectangle, each with a rostrum side similar to the Pergamon altar: facilities to which a third one, the Marsfeld, with extreme measures of 1050 by 700 meters, was to be added.[547] There is no other place in the memorial landscapes of Modernity where the counter-modern theory and praxis of the gathering spell have been so expressly materialized as on the grounds of the NSDAP assembly in Nuremberg; nor any other place where the festival character of National Socialism could be so clearly palpable with the hands. While both the European fascist movements and their Anglo-American offshoots everywhere represented the rebellion of the enemies of differentiation and practiced psychosocial opposition to the inherent flexibilization of citizen-client-subjectivities (formerly: decomposition of the autonomous personality), the National Socialists reserved for themselves the right to stage the most ostentatious agony of political centrism. Driven by a

The German Global Games were a misguided and desperate investment in the now obsolete pretension of believing that the total collective, i.e. the people of the national society, as the case may be, could be brought together and summoned as it were. In the pontifical stages for the Nuremberg September festival, held a total of six times (each with a specific theme) from 1933 to 1938, both in the constructed and the planned ones, one can recognize how far the genius of misguided investment can go. Hitler's function, which was at the same time the secret of his success, consisted in the fact that he knew how to take his role as director of the festival of the illusion of the meeting fanatically seriously; his only indisputable talent manifested itself in his ability to formulate in the sense of his synodal mystique the successes of the National Socialist movement, surprising for himself. Thus, he had shouted to those gathered in Nuremberg in the Post-Olympic "honor party assembly", in 1936:

How can we not feel again at this hour the wonder that has brought us together... As we meet here, we are all filled with the marvel of this meeting. You do not all see me, nor do I see each one of you, but I feel you and you feel me! It is faith in our people, [...] that has opened our eyes and united us, wanderers.<sup>[548]</sup>

This goes beyond the usual religious hermeneutics of success, with which the successful intimately endorse their awards. Hitler's meditation draws its mystical sparkle from the pure fact of the meeting, as a massive and really happening event. With it, the word success becomes synonymous of meeting; and meeting, of self-expansion of the *Führer* in the present audience. Whoever seeks the truth in "subjectivities of higher categories" can easily feel satisfied in the case of this immanently staged super-we. The complementary text was recited by the spokesmen of the people's groups incorporated en bloc, as for example Robert Ley at the ceremony of the oath of allegiance of the Political Directors at the Reich party assembly, with the theme of "Greater Germany", 1938, who addressed Hitler as follows:

Before you again stands this united German people. The workers and peasants, the citizens, students and soldiers, all of them have made their entrance into the great sphere of this cathedral of light...<sup>[549][549]</sup>

Of course it did not escape the organizers of Nuremberg, as they peered through the self-hypnotic veil, that also these convocations of the "united German people" remained highly selective representative meetings: a few

hundreds of thousands, who were there for approximately 70 million Germans. From there arose, as in all great events with a generalizing inclusive tendency, the need to complete the synodal totalization with total mediatization. And precisely there, in the coupling of the great event with its transmission by a temporally proximate or synchronous mass medium, is based the information - crystallized since the National Socialist period and forced since then - on the organizability of symbiotic "masses" within modern macro-interiors and the media advertising connected to them.



Media Centre in London's Lord's Cricket Square.

That the collector tunes in to a multitude gathered by the arenic medium-presence is the necessary, but not sufficient, condition of the confirmation of the requirement of general captation: the connector, the means of linking at a distance, whether as an alliance of bureaucracy and mail, or as a mass medium of print or radio, must be added so that the fiction of integral social synthesis becomes operative through organized events. When collectors and connectors function in the same direction, great

The collective performances of a nation's format can fall into the simultaneous excitement sought by the festival's direction. Yes, even spheres of synchrony of planetary extension can emerge episodically, as happened, for example, exemplarily, in the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games or in the case of singularities, such as the funerals of Diana, Princess of Wales; like the live transmissions of the fall of the Twin Towers in New York, on September 11, 2001, or the national ceremony in memory of the victims at the New Yorker Yankee Stadium, a few days later, in which some twenty clerics of Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths set themselves the task of interpreting before a billion spectators the global significance of the death of 6000 victims of the World Trade Center attack (later corrected to approximately 2800). Such expansion to near-universality is possible only because actual meetings are broadcast, and broadcasts, in turn, produce new meetings. Considered from this point of view, Hitler's war was the continuation of the festivals in a different medium: Games which, according to their cult sense, meant from the beginning, first and foremost, feasts of compromise between the living and the fallen Germans, supposedly cheated of victory, in World War I. As has been noted in ambitious interpretations of Nazi ideology, the German corporate identity *designed by* Hitler, Goebbels & Co. had a core of the cult of the dead. For known reasons the "General Assembly of the Peace Party", planned for the first week of September 1939, could not take place; little by little, the subjects captured by national ideas came to understand that the time of festivals had passed. In their place appeared the lasting capture of German public opinion, in all its communal, business, association and neighborhood organizations, by the stress of war cooperation and the media-generated enthusiasm of the phase in which the news was of successes.

### **3. Discrete synods:**

#### **For the theory of congresses**

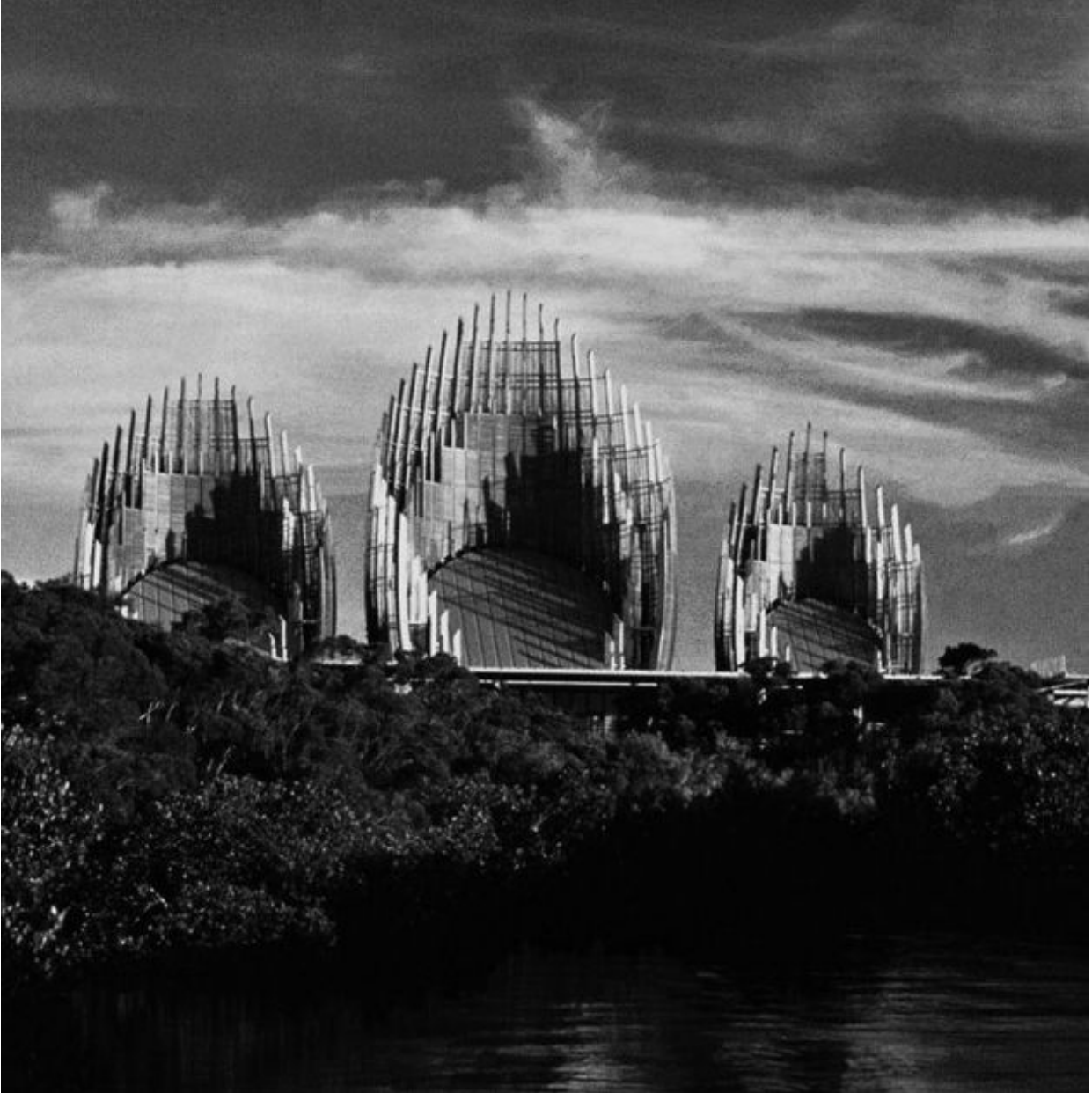
Of the six major collectors of the new Forum Germanicum in Nuremberg: the three parade grounds (Luitpold-Arena, Zeppelinfeld and Marsfeld), the planned German Stadium, the Old Congress Hall (Luitpoldhalle) and the monumental New Congress Hall, of which an incomplete torso was preserved, only the last one can be ascribed a certain modernity; not so much from an architectural point of view, since it was once again a grotesque transposition of the coliseum, as from a sociological assembly perspective, since the type of congress building contains *per se* the response of Modernity to the demand for discreet meeting places for social groups. In the gigantic construction, which combines the elements of the arena, the concert hall and a Wagnerian bureaucracy, the dysfunctional character of its dimensions is also striking, since a congress building, even under National Socialist assumptions, only makes sense when (in addition to the numerous Nuremberg stages for worship and the distribution of orders) it also provides places for deliberation and discussion: a purpose that can only be recognized with difficulty in the preserved fragments.



Fragment of the new Nuremberg Congress Pavilion by architect Albert Speer.

The new congress hall is best understood as a party opera house, which has gotten out of hand because of its excessive size; it is also a machine of intimidation and acclamation: here, the customary election by the general assembly of the party chairman would have to be replaced on a large scale by the ritual, exercised in the Luitpold hall, of the "proclamation of the *Führer*", and here the political directors would have had to listen to Hitler's cultural speeches. However, it represents a hypothetical engagement with the imperative of the gathering of competence around an objective theme. With it one comes to understand - slowly - that modern "societies" are discrete thematic biotopes, whose normal form of administration is constituted by everything connected with the congress; and although Speer's colossal Caesarist construction does honor, above all, and once again, the theatrical imperative, it adds a step, nevertheless, toward the

A customary modernity, which supports episodic symbioses, the fleeting meetings of its colleges of experts and interest groups with a corresponding offer of meeting places, halls, pavilions and conference halls. If one dispenses with large-collector buildings such as stadiums and museums (also transit collectors, stations and airports), contemporary architecture has to deal, first and foremost, with the space demands of the congress society.<sup>[550]</sup>



Tijibaou Cultural Center, Nouméa, New Caledonia, Renzo Piano Building Workshop, 1991-1998.

How little the present, actually existing "society" knows of its own multicentric, polythematic, intensely congressional constitution, is something that can be deduced from the fact, among other things, that there is not a single sociological analysis, adequate to the rank of the object, of the gathering life of the "society" spumified into associations, corporations, clubs, companies and



societies: the vast archipelago of congress centers, trade fair facilities, assembly venues, meeting hotels, club centers, association premises, *containers* for company employee meetings and customer promotion, weekend academies, cadre schools, advanced education centers, as well as pavilions and sheds for corporate meetings: all this constitutes a *terra incognita* for the average perception of "society" in "society".



Lingotto, Turin, Renzo Piano Building Workshop, Fiat headquarters, 1983.

In contrast to the organized overvaluation of universities, there is a spontaneous undervaluation of the congress, due to a lack of perception; hardly anyone realizes that the effective learning processes of professional groups, subcultures and decision-making elites have long since taken place in a circus of extra-academic meetings, whose invisibility is certainly only a collateral effect of the disinterest of the

"society" by its actual constitution. At most, in some *public-relations* agencies and *event-management-service* companies, in firms organizing trade fairs or speakers' bourses, in trend-analysis offices, as well as in the few chairs of professors of business economics, solicited for meetings and able to feel rhetorically satisfied, materials for a future science of congress and meeting are gathered; while academic sociology, as usual, discusses the performance capacity of theories of action or systems, and expounds interpretations of the classics. At most, *multi-milieu* studies punctually maintain contact with the self-spatializing realities of multifocal "society," oscillating in discrete rhythms of gathering. In view of the manifestly asynodic constitution of the whole, the organization of the innumerable discrete symbiotic situations remains the great unthought-of and unnoticed of sociological attention. [\[551\]](#)



Lingotto meeting room, Turin, Renzo Piano Building Workshop, 1983.

The passage to a differentiated culture of the collectors presupposes that in the face of a crowd present, whether it has fifty heads or fifty thousand, the pretensions of a deeper symbiosis, such as that in which religious communities or popular collectivisms and their respective ideologies of gathering are supported, are avoided. The practical wisdom of the current culture of the meeting and of the *event* consists in the fact that it limits itself to advising, at its level, the symbiosis of the day and of the hours of schools and communities of interested parties, without approaching those gathered with heavy over-interpretations of their connection.

Since the 1950s, the objective and neo-objective style of congress, which has been taking shape since the late nineteenth century, has become imperceptibly generalized also in countries previously devastated by political holism. For, although "society" in its totality, thought of in the singular as world society, or in the plural as the population of nation states, represents in all circumstances a magnitude not capable of coming together (and therefore only totalizable in the media and in the imagination), the numerous subordinate social ramifications, such as parties, citizens' associations, federations, circles, corporations, clubs and professional organizations, are, for institutional reasons, characterized by the motif of the periodic meeting. It can be said that everything is capable of congress except the whole.





Container terminal in Bremerhaven.

If the South German Orthopedic Society comes in 2002 for its annual meeting, for example, to the Baden-Baden festival hall (a year earlier it was at the Wiesbaden fair), it is enough for the president to greet those present, assuring them that he is happy about their presence in large numbers; in no case will he reflect on the fact of the meeting as such, let alone mention the miracle that brought them together at that moment; instead, he thanks, naming each one, the organizers and helpers behind the event, without whose efforts it would not have been possible. If Daimler-Chrysler's shareholders are gathered for the

In the general assembly in the Hans-Martin-Schleyer-Halle in Stuttgart, Jürgen E. Schrempp will refrain from saying that he is the vine and they are the clusters, even though those present are as substantially united by their shares in the capital of the company as only a Christian community in the mystical body of the Lord could be. The cold synodals have understood that their episodic gathering in the gray symbiosis of a day's assembly contains in no way more truth than their normal dispersed way of life; neither the minutes of conspiracy around a common interest in the opening speeches of the meeting (for example, in the form of a resolute declaration of hostilities against the reform plans of the Ministry of Health), nor the minutes, which are never lacking, of remembrance for members dead since the last meeting create any *communion* from above, nor do they produce any supreme unity of stress, united in struggle. The votes on the proposals presented by the leadership are manifestations of the analysis of interests carried out by those gathered and not emanations of a collective yes-self common to all. Whoever has signed up and has come, *ipso facto* recognizes a situation, in which those who have the competences and those who win by distribution of surpluses work chronically on the optimization of their games of success.

## 4. Foam City.

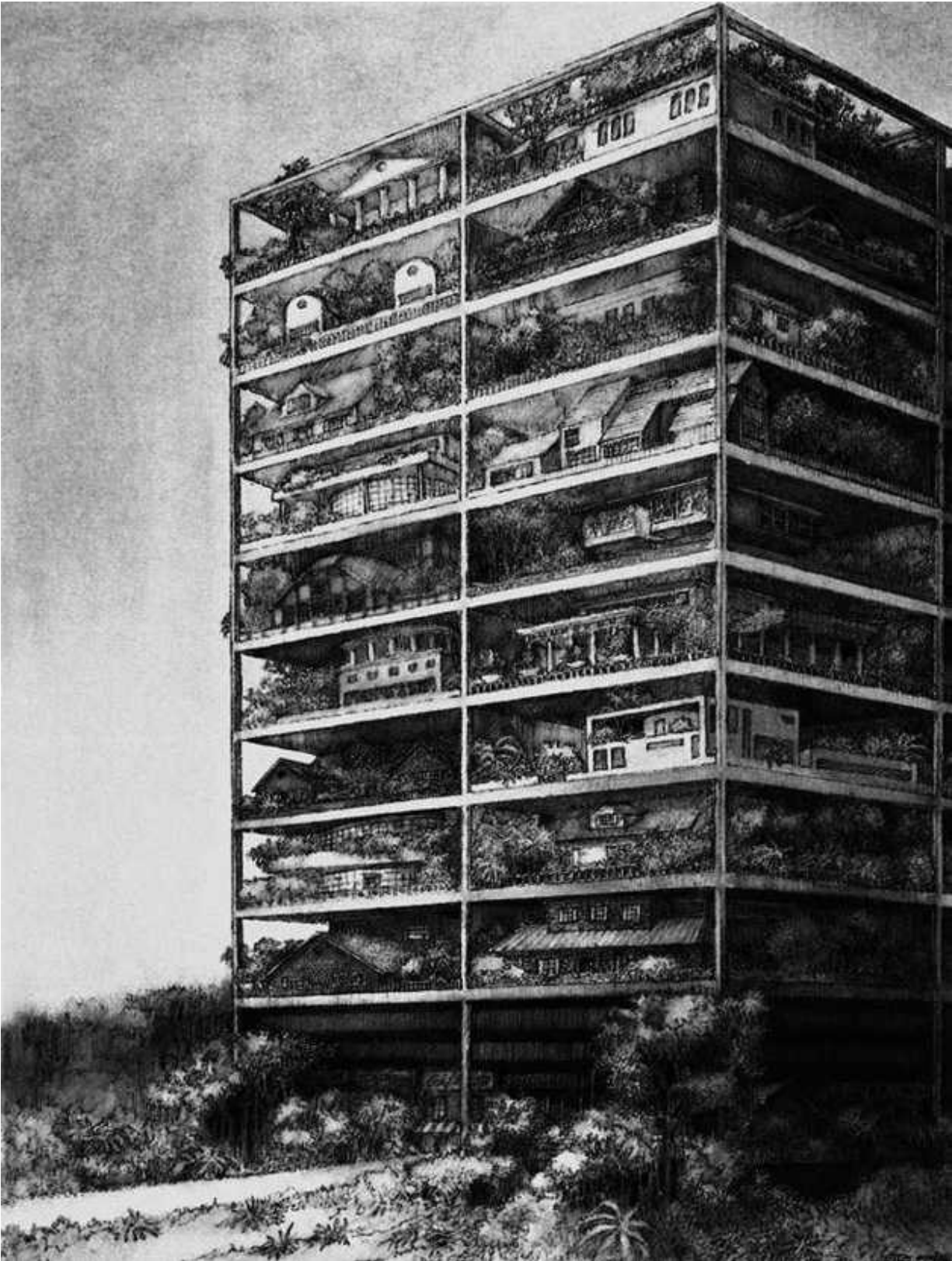
### On urban multiplicities of space

Against the background of the explanations of the architectures of assembly, the topological peculiarity of modern cities becomes visible: they are defined, on the one hand, as sites of collectors designed for collectives that can be assembled; on the other, they house apartment complexes that serve as housing capsules for small families or those who live alone; and, finally, they house the numerous facilities of the world of work, in which most city dwellers secure their economic bases of existence. For the task of shaping a common space on the three poles of city life (work, housing, public space and collector), the expressions of traffic and communication have been imposed in urban planning literature, as if to reduce the city phenomenon to the generalities of change of place and data flow. Since the electronic impulse has reached theory, this has led to fictions such as the virtual city, the *online-territory*, the *City of Bits*, *Cyberville* and similar metaphors of decorporealization. The more advanced the model, the more it vaporizes the actual city, turning it into a phantasmatic jumble of knots of telematic networks. E-urbanism overcomes the materiality and density of the civic space in angelic processes of large traffic lines. The most representative characteristic of urbanity is sought in the flight from physical location and in the dissolution of inclusive situations.

(*disembedding*). Consequently, such discourses on the propertyless city of tomorrow appear regularly in the company of a decentralizing romanticism and a mystique of immaterialization. All these sub-euphoric theorems have in common that they petulantly overlook (or to put it more accurately: that they render athematic by a conceptual choice not stimulating perception) the citizen in cities, the atmospheric-active agglomeration of own and peculiar dispositions of space (in our terminology: the foam character of urban condensation complexes).

According to its real-surreal spatial constitution, the urban macro-spume can only be understood when it is seen as a meta-collector that brings together places of gathering and non-gathering. The proper function of the metropolis consists, evidently, in guaranteeing the coexistence in neighborhood of centers and non-centers; not in the form of a super-center, but as an agglomeration or stacking of discrete spatial powers of the collector, business, housing and outdoor configured surface. The meta-collection from which today's city emerges has nothing to do with people who may be gathered or isolated. It is about places, that is, about ready-made spatial inventions in which people perceive or do not perceive opportunities for gathering and make use or do not make use of opportunities for communication.





SITE (Alison Sky/Michelle Stona/Joshua Weinstein/James Wines), High-Rise of Homes (project), 1981.

If in the topical or utopian thinking of the last half century there has been something like the adventure of a new urbanism -names like Buckminster Fuller, Nicolas Schöffer, Yona Friedman, Eckhard Schulze-Fielitz, Paolo Soleri, Peter Cook, Ron Herron and, above all, Constant bear witness to this-, the accent of their projects was placed on the attempt to transfer the factual cities to literally metaphorical meta-cities, that is, elevated and piled up. In the fundamental gesture of evasion of the ground of these fictions of the new city, we should not only recognize the utopianism of an acosmic and semi-mundane fantasy, which is content with the design of parallel realities; rather, the will to rethink, by means of large model-structures, the multifocal and polythematic metropolitan space has in many cases an analytical and theoretical-modelic character. Not infrequently it is at the service of a concrete, albeit indirect, interpretation of reality. Most of the time the pioneers of these approaches are chaos theorists *ante litteram*, who, after the failure of the centrist rationalism of old Europe and the aversion that holism-control came to produce, experiment with fundamentally new procedures in order to better understand the synthesis of "society" in spaces of concentration.

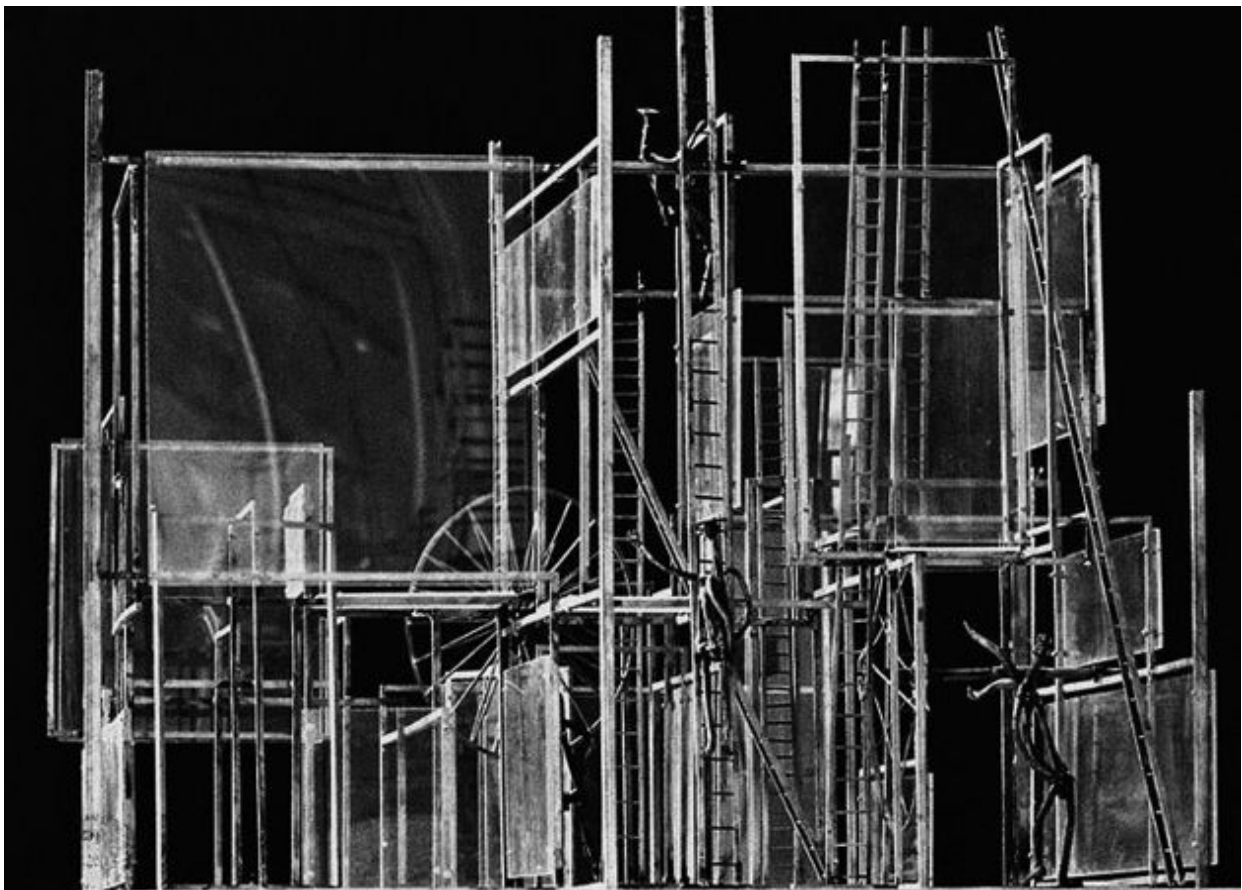
The new description of urban space is produced on stilts: on the citizen landscapes of the *status quo*, which are hopelessly renounced, rise, on high systems of pillars, the new spatial articulations, radically artificial, in which the urbanites of the future will have to live their coexistence with their fellows and with things. The pillars and supports contribute to overcome with a leap to the height the question of the ground, no longer solvable on the real surface of the earth. Consequently, great projective energies are invested in the idea of the tower; this no longer represents among the new urban planners the architectural form of the feudal will to power or of the ascending metaphysical movement.

of existence;<sup>[552]</sup> insofar as it simply abandons the old substance below, it bears witness to the caesura between history and posthistory. There is no longer any architecture of isolated spaces not yet built, of outbuildings, of rehabilitation. It is a new free approach in height, a new configuration in layers in the vertical, a post-historical architectural self-determination of the great builders over the nightmares that have remained from all past generations. There is no dialectic between ancient building and high-rise building; only a succession that seems like a superimposition. After the first seizure of space by the alienated society and its tragic real estate, which we know as the developed cities, the land has to be urbanized a second time and occupied by superimposed construction, this time in the air, whereby building on pillars becomes the technology-base of the *posthistoire*. *Une autre ville pour une autre vie*.



Ingenhoven, Overdiek und Partner, RWE building in Essen, 1997.

In the innumerable drawings, plans and models of Constant (civilly: Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, born 1920) - whom we highlight as the most important analytic and visionary of the second city culture - for his great project, obsessively followed, *New Babylon* (1960-1970), the supports have a frankly historical-philosophical meaning: they are to emphasize explicitly-spatially the secondary stratum of existence, the posthistorically liberated, creative-radical life of desire, on the fully automated basis of the old factors earth, labor, metabolism.



Constant, *New Babylon*, labyrinth of stairs.

In the new world above the second Babylon - in the name we note the typically postmodern positivization of complexity and its political consequence: ungovernability - the era

of materialism is closed: the neo-Babylonians are *existentialists-fluxus*, living in a world after alienated labor. Their contact with reality occurs exclusively on the construction of environments, atmospheres and mobile spaces. They prowl the hanging gardens of madness: combative, congenial, co-delirious. That is why the old cadastres have to yield to a new "psychogeographic" description of space, to a description that is no longer oriented to land surfaces, plots, national borders, but only to the expressive actions of the inhabitants, to their moods, their works, their installations.



Housing for non-sedentary women in Tokyo, 1989.

Despite all his concessions to utopianism, Constant is first and foremost an analytic of polyatmospheric "society". His point of departure is the irrepressible atmosphere-generating quality of human dwelling practices. Since his utopia, following

the social fantasies of the Situationist International, conceives the new "society" as a form of coexistence of happy unemployed, in his city the atmospheric *milieu* of coexistence, which everywhere else is otherwise considered only as a by-product, appears for the first time as the main product. (Guy Debord, with whom Constant had cooperated since the late 1950s, had spoken in 1957 of urban "neighborhoods of mood" and "realities of feeling.")<sup>[553]</sup> The Neo-Babylonians are the first inhabitants of an explicit apheropolitical structure: creators of a city that unfolds on earth as an exuberant nomadic colony of artists on stilts and consists exclusively of receptacles of atmospheres and reversible individuated environments. The content of that city is the art history of its citizens. As far as its forms of appearance are concerned, the idea that Constant foresaw the post-historical junkyard aesthetics of *Mad Max* prevails.

The neo-Babylonian apheropolis - shown in its entirety in 1974 at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague - visualizes with the gesture of exhibiting non-authoritarian models (that is, not intended to be realized) a possible urbanistic form of that "social plastic" that Beuys had postulated in his metapolitical discourses. Mark Wigley notes, in view of the polemical interference of the Situationists in the events of May 1968:

The atmosphere becomes the basis for political action. The accessory, apparently ephemeral, is mobilized as an active sentinel in the concrete struggle. As the phantasmatic endpoint of such struggles, *New Babylon* is a gigantic *jukebox* of atmospheres, which only a completely revolutionized society knows how to make use of.<sup>[554]</sup>

Constant's conceptual experiment on the coexistence of creative paradoxes in the space of collective flow leads to the result that every human being is not only an artist, but, more precisely: an installation artist; and this due to the fact that the spontaneous emanation of *ambiances* or environments charged with meaning is identified with the consummation of life. The apheropolitical irruption produces the effect that the neo-Babylonians are no longer to remain under the coercion of the old construction and old atmosphere (a fact that was discussed in earlier theories under concepts such as alienation and independence of objectifications of the spirit, among others by Georg Simmel, who had characterized the coercive character of the fact of being born of the human being within a compact symbolic receptacle as a "tragedy of culture"),<sup>[555]</sup> but would be free to start always anew with the construction of their environment, without being subject to previous sediments. The premise for this is the abrogation of the classical principle of reality together with its

ontological aggregates: the primacy of the past and the dictatorship of scarcity. In order to think such things Constant had to give abundant credence to the Marxist fantasy motif of liberation from the chains of productive forces, leading to the suppression of all alienated labor. *New Babylon* wants to create an artificial paradise in the form of a planetary climbing garden for constantly creative mutants, which would give a new meaning to the expression inner world space. Such a paradise or garden not only offers a total interior, in which all spaces are air-conditioned, atmospherically and artificially illuminated; the stay in it would mean the same as the being-there within an architectural rhizome, which constantly drifts in a meandering and unpredictable way. Naturally, there are no longer any problems of energy and environment in it either, since their externalization is presupposed: a massive remnant of pre-ecological, nature-exploitation thinking, tinged with Marxist humanism. Existence here has the sense of being-in-the-installation, without a fixed room and without the need for a homeland, in constant unplanned movement, generated by chance.

This drifting behavior (*dérive*), which, together with confidence in the next step, arises from contempt for grand plans - the antagonism of the situationists with the Cartesian Le Corbusier is obligatory - anticipates elements of chaos theory. But if the principle of the growth of this hypercity is the rhizomatic formation of chains, its connection with serial construction, with the use of modules and with standardization remains obscure: just as its relationship with repetition, mimesis and innovation in the indeterminate generally vanishes; here the myth of permanent creativity continues to act, inhibitory. All the more clearly it becomes clear that the basic unit of the great urban form must not be the room or the apartment, but a quasi-macromolecular unit, which Constant calls the sector.

Constant's monomaniacal-constructivist models have to be recognized as having broad analytical qualities, because, despite their futuristic jargon, they are to be interpreted more as a description of the *status quo* than as a project for the future. Their strength lies in the fact that they fully describe the mode of being of urbanized society from its acephalism, asinoidy and mobility. Thus they can do justice to the multifocal constitution and poly-mospheric temper of the modern city better than any theory hitherto extant. Constant's comments highlight the evolutionary character of the modern city.



The weakness of the project lies in the fact that, despite its accentuation of multiplicities, it has no valid concept of the city as a meta-collector. The weakness of the project lies in the fact that, despite its accentuation of multiplicities, it lacks any valid concept of the city as a meta-collector; thus it misses the potential for the collection of urban space, the connection of places of gathering and cooperation with places of separation and immunization (literally: of non-participation in the *munera* or tasks of the collective). To our understanding, in *New Babylon* one finds no allusion either to the collectors of mass culture or to the usual world of work; all the more strikingly, the unilateral expansion of a kind of space hitherto known only from museums or artistic environments. A planetary *documenta*, mobilized and long-term located.



Gerald Zugmann, ZAK - Academy of the Future Coop Himmelb(l)au, C-Print.

Despite all these weaknesses, *New Babylon* possesses descriptive strength with respect to the *life-style* conditions that since the 1970s have been dominant in the welfare regions of the Earth: it anticipates a world without lasting bonds and populates its

interior spaces with human beings, for whom the progressive relaxation of the *liens sociaux* and the shift from the existential standard of the economy of scarcity to experiments with abundant resources were a given. What in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century was a radical left-wing romanticism of the "intense life,"<sup>[556]</sup> with the establishment of *civilization-life-style* has become normal for countless First World citizens.



Dutch Pavilion at the Hannover Expo, 2000.

Insofar as *New Babylon* attempted to think through to the end the equating of city and world, it achieved the closest approximation yet achieved between the three types of insular reality of the space station, the greenhouse and the human sphere;<sup>[557]</sup> one becomes convinced of this as soon as one compares the advanced individualistic character of the neo-Babylonian, bohemian-bourgeois artist population with the almost tribal programs of the first

In Constant's project, Earth is seen as nothing more than an old-world base for a multicultural space station (founded monocivilizationally, it is true, on Western expressive luxury). Only as much of the old nature is retained in it as can be incorporated into a vast hothouse. Naturally, in a realized *New Babylon* there would also be animals and plants; but only as co-inhabitants of the integral interior, not as an autonomous biosphere or external green world.



*Blur Building*, Elisabeth Diller + Ricardo Scofidio, 2002.

Traces of Constant's impulse can be recognized in the Dutch contribution to Expo 2000 in Hannover: in a transparent, even faceless multi-story building, a sequence of superimposed biotopes is housed on six levels of 1,000 square meters each, as if they were tenants in their apartments: an effective embodiment of the Dutch *motto* of the World Expo: "Holland creates space". As a hybrid form between botanical garden and large dwelling, this ingeniously extravagant building, a kind of vegetal elevated house, offers a commentary in keeping with the times on an expanded concept of dwelling as the accommodation of a biotopic multiplicity in conditions of high urban concentration. Perhaps it can be deduced from this

The thesis that the discourses on the "multicultural society" will remain without object as long as the awareness that the authentic matrix of multiplicity is to be found in the diversity of biotopes does not emerge. Polybiotics achieves its materializations in advanced architecture. From them it can be deduced that, in the future, "natures" or biomes will be found less "outside" than in the great greenhouses of a civilization that has become conscious of its tasks as host of biotopic complexes.



Max Peintner, *The unbreakable force of attraction of nature*, 1970-1971, pencil.

In the 20th century, the trend towards the housing of nature or biotopes in urban constructions goes beyond, in many places, the traditional forms of the "city park" or the greenhouse. The theme of encapsulation is gaining in scope to such an extent that it ventures into the integration of more and more complexes.

558] The modern city (and cityscape) is increasingly becoming an operational unit of the triad, discussed above, of space station, greenhouse and human island. At the urban pole of the trend are extended interiors such as Jon Jerde's *Ceiling Show*, installed in the 1990s on Freemont Street in Las Vegas, whereby an entire city thoroughfare is transformed into a nocturnal world of light and sound experiences for a passerby *wow-audience*; at the opposite pole one has to contend with indoor hybrid landscapes such as those embodied by some *indoor* ski slopes and indoor golf courses in Japan and elsewhere. One should be wary of regarding such examples as curiosities only. In both cases, contemporary architecture has moved beyond both the old European idea of the human-congregating pavilion and the utopia of the grand interior (of the Benjamin passage type) and classical collector forms. Not only do the new environments-vivencia parody the old conceptions of city and countryside, they also seem to mock modern concepts such as "lifeworld" and "nature protection," whose spatial blindness is now immediately apparent.

To these macro-interiors is inherent for now a certain frivolous trait that barely hints that such constructs could mean preliminary exercises for the critical climatic case.

Could it also be true for Europe, in the not too distant future, what a frivolous commentator already stated at the end of the nineties of the 20th century: that breathing is too important to continue to do it in the open air? Do the citizens of the coming centuries in the rich nations really have to prepare themselves for a farewell to the atmospheric dula? Today I would like to listen to the commentary, in 2102, of a collaborator of the European Ministry of Air and Space Atmosphere on a work, which by then would have long since become mythical, by the New York architects Liz Diller and Ricardo Scofidio: an atmospheric dome.

architecture in Yverdon-les-Bains, on the shores of Lake Geneva, entitled *Blur Building*, which became the distinctive sign of Expo 2002 in Switzerland, and which the voice of the people called, without further ado, "the cloud",<sup>[559]</sup> since - with great technical display - it invited the visitor to a walk on a long footbridge through an artificial plastic spatial structure made of pulverized lake water. Despite having been branded by some critics as frivolous and censured as wasteful, the misty building, made of water dust, which with changing weather showed itself in the most diverse moods and colors, was greeted by most visitors to Yverdon as a very ingenious introduction to the art of walking on clouds (with raincoat, of course). Certain specific visitors might even have understood that there, under that fragile form, they were faced with a technically pondered attempt at a macro-atmospheric installation; or rather, given that walkable clouds, like installations in general, are not to be experienced in the manner of an encounter, that they were invited to an immersion in a climatic sculpture.

It can be deduced from the popularity of the object that it opened its visitors to an intuition of future issues of *air design* and climate technology. It would be good if the contributor to the above-mentioned Ministry would report on what is the spatial and climatic history for which the Yverdon experiment set a precedent a hundred years earlier.



# Chapter 3

## Upward thrust and mime<sup>[\*]</sup>.

### *For a critique of pure humor<sup>[\*\*]</sup>*

*I was lucky: during my life I have seen the human condition change.*

Michel Serres, *Hominiscence*

*There was a time when poverty was the [...] determining factor in everything; evidently today it is no longer so [...]. The problems of a society that lives in superabundance, that does not understand itself, may be serious; they may even endanger its wealth. But surely they are not as serious as those of a poor world, in which the simple commandments of necessity do indeed exclude the luxury of misinterpretation, but in which, unfortunately, no solution can be found either.*

John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society*<sup>[560]</sup>.

# 1. Beyond hardship

Conservatism can be defined as the political form of melancholy. The conservative syndrome, which took shape in Europe after 1789, was determined by the fact that it had arisen from a retrospective look at the irretrievable goods, ways of life and arts of pre-bourgeois times. Among its presuppositions was the certainty that it could never become the dominant opinion. It acquired its elegiac tones by highlighting the habit of counting on the darkest constants in human nature. He is a conservative who refuses to stop believing that the good and the noble are bound to place and unrepeatability; for the vulgar, on the contrary, the principle of the majority and mechanical repetition suffice. Such a reserve obliges those who have nothing to gain from the maniacal history of the new. This way of feeling will be cultivated by those who do not want to be confused in any way with the usufructuaries of future circumstances. If in the optimistic *mainstream* there is talk of constant improvement in living conditions, the conservative takes cover. Assuming the best in the future: doesn't that already mean looking in the wrong direction? Fluctuating between resignation and abhorrence, the conservative contemplates the progressive spirit in the midst of his hustle and bustle and waits for entropy to act. According to his conviction, progress is never more than the acceleration of the flight from the good, which, unattainable, remains behind us. Tocqueville already described the type of the biemensado detractor of his own

time, worried about him, for whom the bad was inseparable from the successes of the new.<sup>[561]</sup>

Whoever, as a conservative, pretends to elevate himself to the level of the

If one were to go on from here to anthropological generalizations, one would have to learn to associate the idea of "humanity" with the adjective "incorrigible". If one had undergone this exercise, one would see human beings of all epochs passing through the earthly stage with an escort, always equally long, of defects, needs, burdens. Then one could no longer even speak of a "return of the tragic": we are inevitably embedded in it as in a fabric of first and second nature. If the moderns express their conviction that they are on the way to optimizing their immunity status and their arts of life, the trained conservative raises his eyebrows. Unimpressed by the self-publicity of the new times, he is unwilling to make any concessions to optimism. The history that is happening may mean a step forward, but never progress. The great theater of the world is the eternal feast of death due to the lack of heat differences; whoever postpones it appears as the true retarder.

It is not surprising that genuinely conservative sentiment enjoyed its best days during the first half of the 19th century, in that "complex period of maintenance",<sup>[562]</sup> to which historians have rightly ascribed the title of the Restoration Era. These were the seemingly tranquil decades of bourgeois romanticism, in which the defenders of what had been could

to surrender for the last time to the illusion that it was possible to take refuge from the dissolving force of progress. At no other time was it so close for so many to look with sorrow at the past and, without faith in improvement, at the future. "Part of your reservations, not your slogans," goes the motto of conservative skepticism. The truth about the situation was only melancholically expressible for its adherents: he who has not lived before the social question knows nothing of the sweetness of life.

When conservatism adopted cultured manners, it invented the "sad science" of the human being and his economic conditions, which since the beginning of the nineteenth century has been the continuous undercurrent of all the discourses of modernization. It is sad science that goes to the foundation of the material conditions of human oppression. In 1849 Thomas Carlyle coined the expression *dismal science* to provide the concept, better, the tonality, to the young discipline of political economy, as represented by the "most honorable Professors" Ricardo and Malthus.<sup>[563]</sup> The expression was captivating as long as the still unpopular theory about the "wealth of nations" seemed to be, at the same time, the science of the insurmountable reasons for the economic precariousness, enduring forever, of the great "masses". In Ricardo's law, later called the iron law of wages, these were classically formulated: the "natural price of labor," beyond which no supplement seemed possible, would be that "necessary price" which enables the workers both to maintain their class and to reproduce themselves "without increase or loss." According to this understanding of things, the "society" administered in the liberal-capitalist mode had to remain forever divided between the happy few who, as *landlords*, moneylords or factory owners, take advantage of the wealth-creating mechanisms of unequal exchange in apparently free markets, and the majority of the unhappy who, without any well-founded hope of changing their situation, remain stranded in the proletarian or agrarian-pauperist condition. As a "sad science," political economy is a school of enlightened cruelty, since it educates its followers to resignation in the face of the supposed legalities of mass poverty. Nineteenth-century liberal theory defines the poor as those who cannot be helped even if one had the best will to do so.<sup>[564]</sup>

Let us note that when one hundred years after Carlyle the ambivalent conservative Adorno returned a coined the expression "sad science"-believing himself to have originally reversed the title of

Nietzsche *Fröhlicher Wissenschaft* [*Fröhlicher Wissenschaft*]-followed a vision whose gloominess far exceeded the facts of industrial pauperism. What mattered to the philosopher was to apprehend a forced context, which not only plunges the many unhappy into the obfuscations dictated by penury, but also deteriorates from its base the existence of the actual and potential happy ones.<sup>[565]</sup> According to the author, even the most fortunate are not spared the disfigurement of the world by the abstraction of exchange; in it everything would be "similarly coined". Life itself is deteriorated by the subjection of all things to the expression of price. Considered from this angle, the early Frankfurt Theory, disregarding its utopian impacts, offered a final form of enlightened conservatism; one could also say: of the pessimism of those who have been saved. The elementary event of the twentieth century, the overcoming of mass material poverty in the First World, still did not echo in it. It was permeated by the conviction that economic wealth will never suffice to dissolve the poverty complex to which the human species has been inclined since the rise of the archaic states, with their caustic regimes of nobility and priests. It taught, consequently, that all enrichment of the multitude could only lead to misery in new garb, just as enlightenment never means anything else under capitalism than the change of form of deception. If there was an idea in the old Critical Theory, which can be called critical in spite of these mediocre exaggerations, it would be found in the assumption, however insufficiently founded, that behind the empirically depressing phenomena of *homo pauper*, there hides a "nature" polarized in the opposite direction. Adorno's formula of the "memory of nature in the human being" referred to this reserve. If, at times, his dark picture of the world could be perceived as surrounded by a golden border, this was because the author allowed the idea that the blissful experiences of a pampered childhood were included in a few moments to resonate

moral dispositions worthy of generalization, though not capable of generalization in practice. In what follows we will address the question of whether it is possible to give an active twist to this demurely romantic insinuation. The answer is affirmative. The path to it leads through an affirmative understanding of the concept *Verwöhnung* [pampering, comfort, comfort, well-being]. To walk it, it is necessary to establish a theory of constitutive luxury, rather than an anthropology, which had already been called the philosophical one, perhaps somewhat hastily.

After the collapse of socialism in the Eastern European group of states around 1990, it has become customary in recent years among journalists and commentators on the history of events, when looking back on the "short" 20th century, to use Eric Hobsbawm's formula, launched at an opportune moment: the era of extremes. In quoting it, he *implicitly* professes the opinion that the fundamental content of that epoch consisted in the duel of totalitarian ideologies of the ethnic-nationalist and socialist-internationalist type, and in the successful defensive battle of democratic capitalism against these two heterogeneous bloodthirsty twins. That is why it seemed that the nuclear process of the century was coextensive with the duration of the Soviet experiment and that its trail of violence would have to end at the same time as the definitive cauterization of that delirium. (In view of the new confrontation that emerged between the capitalist world of welfare and the networks of simplistic hatred, we know that this assumption was hasty). Nevertheless, the change of the *age of extremes* cannot be made any more plausible than is appropriate for such an extremely summary thesis. For historians who direct their attention not only to the cataracts of events and excited discourses of the twentieth century, but also to the long-term waves of both the material and symbolic culture of the West, it is of greater importance today that the *age of extremes*, despite both its massacre and its excessive discourse systems, has in terms of its decisive events been primarily an epoch of constant processes.

Despite fundamental recessions, this serves, above all, in view of the accumulation and propagation of life-improving instruments in the First World. For the inclusion of the "masses" in the distribution of wealth, the great flow was directed - generally under constant pressure from the moderate left - in directions that are still valid today: quite a singularity from the historical point of view. The tendency towards the improvement and participation of the most

The poor in the hitherto privileges of the rich was supported by the seven continuous effects of modernization: relentless scientific research, technical invention never discouraged, the growing attractiveness of the entrepreneurial way of life, the steady expansion of a health care system on a welfare basis, the inclusion of an ever-increasing public of customers in economic and cultural consumption, as well as the consolidation of the professional and legal immunity of individuals through elaborate labor law, especially of women in a profession, and, finally, the establishment of a largely specialized, even ubiquitous, insurance system.<sup>[567]</sup> The effects of these reforms of average living conditions over a number of decades were added in modern nations, beyond the rapid change in family structures and mentality, to an abrupt extension of life expectancy, coupled with a simultaneous plummeting of birth rates;

<sup>[568]</sup> but, above all, they led to a historically unparalleled expansion of the free spaces in the temporal *budget* of individuals.

The synergy of progressive factors created a situation in which individuals are invited to take themselves seriously in an unusual way. In the secular individualism, which coats inside the situation of almost omnipresent well-being, everyone, as long as he or she escapes depression, is condemned to accept that he or she is important: and being important means being able to establish oneself as an absolute end in oneself, even if there is no god who is interested in individuals today or post mortem. The social field explodes, creating tens of thousands of platforms for the entry on the scene of individualized ambitions. In the majority, taking oneself as important leads to the decision to have fun alone or with others. With the elevation of amusement to a motive of life that affects all social strata, the biopolitical-psychopolitical phenomenon formerly called proletariat is disintegrating: the working class, anchored in misery, for which the production of offspring, *proles*,



pointed out the only horizon for the future. The industrial working class, divinely depressed, disappears from the scene: that imaginary central subject of the nineteenth century, of which the losers of the revolution of the last two hundred years, who were incessantly radicalized to the left, affirmed the worst and hoped for the best.

Anyone who is still too impressed by the jargon of militancy and the romanticism of discontinuity fails to recognize that the fundamental event of the twentieth century can only be interpreted along the lines of a principle of constancy: what in diachronic perspective constitutes the decisive content of that epoch is the evasion of modern "society" from the definitions of reality of the era of material poverty and its spiritual compensations; definitions which, as stated above, were effective even in the early liberal doctrines of political economy, in order, in the course of the twentieth century, especially since the 1950s, to loosen, at last, their grip on the mentality of the populations of the First World.

In this context, early stereotypes, such as that of the The terms "consumer society", "living society", "*fun society*" and the like take on a diagnostic meaning of the times: conceptually inert, but not without purpose, these expressions allude to the enormous fact that the climate of reality of the Contemporary Western "society"-probably for the first time since the establishment of memory in our space of tradition-is no longer determined primarily by issues of poverty and by the psychosemantics of need, along with its religious and metaphysical superstructures, despite the efforts of the miserabilist International. Whatever the alliance of modern hardship advocates, *credit-human* psychologists, expressionist-traumatists, *ascetic-vanitas* and academic visitors from the land of persistent poverty may adduce,<sup>[569]</sup> in order to announce objections against the superabundance event: it can no longer be denied with sufficient grounds that

the irritations of today's "society" are created, almost without exception, by its wealth.

Already at the end of the 1950s, shortly after the first crystallization of the phenomenon in the United States and Western Europe, John Kenneth Galbraith said, in a clear-sighted way, that the great problem of the "affluent society" consists in its inability to cope either conceptually or psychically with its own novelty, with its emancipation from the primacy of penury, not to mention the political interpretation of wealth.<sup>[570]</sup> Consequently, it is not enough to declare that the *affluent society* does not yet understand itself; we must expect it to provide completely disfigured representations of its unusual state, indeed, that its interpreters of the moment reject as a macabre imposition any attempt to articulate its current status in neutral and descriptive expressions. Whoever pretends to speak to the rich "society" of its wealth - and of its moral implications - can only be a tactless positivist, lacking the delicacy of feeling to understand the tensions involved in standing apart within welfare. However much the

If the "society" of opulence [affluence] were to learn how to deal virtuously with its rapidly habitualized wealth (in this context one must interpret the *prima facie* scandalous squandering of the public treasury as a joyful participation of the State in abundance), it remains in its exercised self-representations in the categories of the poverty-universe. The "affluent society", unconvinced of itself, uses to observe itself clearly adjusted optics of hardship. Any failure to comply with the norm is registered: whoever dares to elaborate other descriptions of it than the usual politically and humanistically correct crisis balances, would be suspected of cynicism; whoever on innumerable internal fronts does not recognize the precariousness that cries out to heaven, is quickly identified as an agent of social disintegration. To speak in positive terms of the widely disseminated, though rigorously unequally distributed wealth of the First World War, would be to be suspected of cynicism.

World: wouldn't that mean immediately inviting one's eyes to turn away from the tragedy at the gates of luxury? Wouldn't that mean closing one's eyes and ears to the residues of misery that remain stubbornly inside the comfort zone? At best, an interpreter who would be impressed by the facts of superabundance would be diagnosed as naïve and seduced by surfaces.

But what if the decisive repression of our time were really about well-being itself? What if the denial of effective comforts were the *leitmotiv* of all public discourse in the world of superabundance? What if the industrial secret of the Does this mean that today's "society" consists in the permanent actualization of fantasies of hardship for the "broad middle class"? This does not necessarily mean that contemporary civilization knows how to protect all its members from accidents, diseases, misfortunes, poverty and experiences of failure: this would be an infantile perspective on the relationship between income and destiny. The dramas of the present, however, most of the time follow scripts that can no longer refer to the old representation "Suffering under society", neither in its version of exploitation theory nor in its version of alienation theory.

Nevertheless, the inertias of sociological pessimism and its older predecessors continue to act overbearingly: of a pessimism whose definitions of reality must be checked, as in former times, in the struggle for the existence of a majority of hopelessly poor households. Disregarding the great material caesura, this diagnosis has not changed much in the last fifty years: if anything, the administration of apparent scarcity has solidified into corporate routines. No one for whom the exercises of professionalized complaint have not become second nature can reach a high position, neither in the nation, nor in the autonomous regions, nor in the municipalities. For this, the well-supplied have to fish in the deep waters of the "tradition of the oppressed". Whatever it is that

is said in the public space: the lie of misery writes the text. All public speeches obey the law of re-translating the luxury that has come to power into the jargon of misery.

Despite this concordat of the "society" of comfort with the old and venerable misery, there are many indications that the process of generating superabundance has meanwhile been introduced into the capillary structures of society as a whole. According to recent assessments, from the 1980s onwards, in the Federal Republic of Germany just under 10 percent of the population could be classified as relatively poor, while the majority of the population had to be considered rich in a broad sense, although the expression, of course, according to the laws of the game of the

The term "Rhenish capitalism" usually designates rather modest conditions of wealth.<sup>[571]</sup> Even if the worsening of competition in world markets were to increase the poorest segment of "society" to 20 percent (a figure that may already have been clearly surpassed in the United States, which is more prone to discrimination), there would still be a historically unparalleled level of prosperity on the larger side of the divide.<sup>[572]</sup>

As far as subjective judgments of reality are concerned, in the vast majority of people they diverge dramatically, of course, from those classifications and quantifications. The difference between statistical well-being and felt lack of comfort is as great as it has rarely been before, even where no radical left-wing filter clouds the results. Throughout the West, especially in Central and Western Europe, an amalgam of private satiation and public jeremiad is observed towards the end of the 20th century, reflecting a depressive-explosive pseudo-satisfaction alongside an often strongly depressive approach to life. This syndrome of simulations of need and fantasies of hardship, identified by the *feuilleton* as "high-level complaints" (one could speak of miserabilism-belcanto, if the voices of the protagonists were better), will undoubtedly be highlighted in a future

historiography of culture as the strong feature of the present culture; just as Simon Schama, in his great work on the seventeenth century in the Netherlands, already spoke of an era of the *Embarrassment of Riches*.<sup>[573]</sup> Then the oxymoron of the rich lifestyle made its appearance for the first time in the bourgeois world.

The poor, sumptuous-humble, that since then - in the most diverse conjunctures - submerges the consciences of the well-to-do in continuous alternate baths of pleasure and displeasure within their own well-being. In view of these phenomena, it is natural to sharpen activist, or rather, sadistically, the concept of contentment for the present, as proposed by Galbraith in a recent study on the reasons for the saturation, prevented from lachrymation, of Western "societies": *contentment* is

"highly motivated opposition to change and reform".<sup>[574]</sup>

As widespread as the hypocrisy of hardship is nowadays in the rich "society", it cannot yet be called totalitarian. There are, for the time being, pockets of opposition, in which well-off human beings speak openly of their wealth. Some of them even seem ready to draw moral and atmospheric consequences from it: he who does not deny his wealth will sooner be able to consummate the turn of the designs of existence from the resentment of the rich to the obsequious virtue of the rich. What Nietzsche called the free spirit naturally means the rich spirit: and all real wealth is manifested by the primacy of giving, economically, morally, erotically, culturally.

From here follow suggestive analogies for the theoretical interest in wealth as a phenomenon and source of *ethos*: also among theoretical intellectuals the miserophiles constitute the overwhelming majority, while the friends of wealth exercise the function of evanescent exceptions. But, insofar as the traditional ontology of seriousness and penury in the field of current feelings of life was factually infiltrated by the experiences of the well-being of the "masses" and its climatic-existential consequences in the Western spheres sensitive to the

theory and its *partners*, in many regions of the world a need is developing for concepts that would be able to help articulate the awareness of the diminished weight of the world.

Whoever expected this from contemporary philosophy would be disappointed in every way. If the thesis of the origin of philosophy in astonishment ever possessed a good foundation, the singularity of the great rupture with the axiom of the poverty of the "masses" would provide an unparalleled stimulus to reflection. That practically nothing of this is noticed in the contemporary practice of philosophy - with the exception, in certain aspects, of the Nietzschean wing - thematically nothing, stylistically even less, demonstrates well that the question of astonishment is based on weak foundations; probably since always.<sup>[575]</sup> At most, in Herbert Marcuse's now yellowed 1955 philosophical contribution on Sigmund Freud, *Pulsional Structure and Society*,<sup>[576]</sup> there were some first allusions to the transformation of the reality principle in the direction of what was paraphrased in the jargon of the time as a "non-repressive culture". The point of Marcuse's considerations lay in the overcoming of the seemingly eternal opposition between the reality principle and the pleasure principle in an ordering of "society" that would be free from the curse of repression of drives, yes, of any repression in general. There is little to discover in that essay regarding a concrete analysis of contemporary welfare conditions, despite the fact that it emerged at about the same time as Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*. Marcuse's socio-psychological speculation brushes only very distantly against the real event of the time in the psychological field: the replacement of the *homo pauper* - whose motivational situation was quite adequately described by drive theories - by the affluent human being, whose situation has to be interpreted by means of a theory of appetites, options, moods and flows of desire.

<sup>[577]</sup>

The contributions of later sociologists have also proved almost completely sterile on the critical question; presumably the representatives of that discipline could not publicly admit the existence of a "society" of abundance without becoming themselves suspected of exercising a demoralizingly perverse, superfluous science. Since the sumptuous social sciences are condemned to simulate social utility, they can speak of anything but the luxury that sustains them and whose blind apex they personify: also and precisely in the forms of *sociologia militans*. It would therefore be unrealistic for the time being to expect from this side a satisfaction of the need to interpret the conditions of opulence. Similarly, recourse to political knowledge does not help either: the right cannot go to the bottom of things, because it is not bound by any interest in them; the left would not want to, even if it could. (Needless to say that both sides offer lamenting supports, which sing different texts for the same melodies: the elegiac genre has migrated from music to the self-staging of corporations, not without leaving its mark on the national soap opera). Although innumerable testimonies to the great levitation have been gathered in the literatures, arts and life-form experiments of the twentieth century, virtually nowhere has there been a systematic enhancement and explicit elucidation of the phenomenon of opulence.<sup>[578]</sup> The aesthetic proofs of the entry into the *big easy* are abundant, an authentic theory of distension and impoverishment is lacking.

It seems that the turn to non-penury is for many too broad, too amorphous and too torrential to be approached by theory in a *straightforward intentio*. Inherent in it, at the same time, is an unpleasant side, as if whoever addresses it openly would have to make a profession of pampering for comfort in his own person. Whoever admits to being completely pampered in this sense (and who is not in our latitudes?) would not have to admit, at the same time, that he no longer understands anything of what for the

majority of the members of the human species has determined the coordinates of the real during the last agro-imperial millennia? Lack of lack seems, in the meantime, much more shameful than open poverty. Misery still wants to assert itself as a distinctive characteristic of the *human conditio*, while wealth is perceived as a crown of foam on the original lack. Wealth, then, that in every instant could be reconverted into the penury that existed before it. When misery constitutes the basis, welfare can never be anything other than a superstructure phenomenon. A powerful romanticism of bankruptcy suggests that the impoverished return to the foundations of being human. Certain nostalgics, who dream radically-conservatively beyond the modern world, yearn for a purifying catastrophe, an *apokatastasis* of the misery from which we came. They wish for the restoration of that state of lack, in which the original human exemplary circumstances supposedly developed.

When miserabilism takes off its mask, it summons to the ranks of the friends of being and declares war on the lesser quality of being. In spite of Veblen and other tentative essays, within the "society" richer there is at the moment no convincing theory of rich existence: excluding, perhaps, the incommensurable interventions of Nietzsche and Deleuze. Most of the time, the rich also can't think of anything about their situation except acquiring art collections, imitating the minor princes of the 17th century; they are also occasionally seen browsing through picture books; and if next to them they have art historians ready to serve them as court flatterers with outstretched hand, this corresponds to the well-known model of provincial feudalism. With good reason it can be affirmed that the lack of adequate theory responds to the state of the thing itself. If there was ever a context of obfuscation, it should be sought in the current conspiracy against the perception of the most obvious. Of the revolution



The conservative ideology of the first half of the twentieth century has given rise to a needy reaction towards its end: as if one wanted to save one's soul by taking refuge in misery and its means of reversibility. With it a new type of ideology is announced; a modal ideology, which does not express any idea, but an urgent hurry: it is a question of falsifying, going backwards, freedom in need and wealth in poverty.

The reason why the blockade works so well can be clarified, in principle, by socio-psychological references: those who, in general, have it appreciably easier will be inclined to look away from the presuppositions they privilege. Does it not belong to the definition of pampering for well-being that it can remain silent about its own premises? Indeed, if it were to run up against its limits, it might be demanded of those who indulge in such a situation of well-being that they recall the advantageous circumstances, or even meditate on their moral content. Is it not characteristic of life in luxury that the embarrassment of investigating its origin can be avoided? Now the eventual doubts about its perpetuation can simply be left to the wind. Luxury is best protected by denying that it is luxury: it always wants to present itself as the satisfaction of the minimum need.

It may be added, of course, that in matters of this type, it is always there is a dose of evasion magic at play: what is not to be endangered cannot be spoken of in words that are too precise. Acquired aversions add their own: in the ears of countless members of transitional generations, the voices of their parents resound, reminding the younger ones how much better off they are compared to them, who endured greater burdens and harsher trials in another time. The psychological mechanism of using early relief to open the valves to private feelings of hardship continues to play a role. As soon as the pressure drops, the reservoirs of past needs are emptied (or transformed into places of worship), consciously disregarding the overall situation.

The effect without which neither the outbreak of therapeutic cultures after the Second World War, nor the flourishing of academic Marxisms and other expressions of sumptuous radicalism could be understood. The overflowing victimhood of the established welfare era can only be interpreted by blindness to the situation of the newly freed from burdens. It is enough, indeed, to subjectivize the concept of poverty to make its contours extend to infinity.<sup>[579]</sup> Such subjectivations quietly presuppose generalized wealth in order to deny it out loud. In this respect, the *low culture* has reached the standards of pampering for the well-being of the *high culture*: since the 1950s, countless new privileged people have been able to afford the "luxury of pessimism" that Nietzsche had once diagnosed in Schopenhauer. Discomfort in culture has been transformed into well-being in the embarrassing situation.

Certainly, the citizens of the post-war era in the prospering West are more or less confusedly conscious of the fact that they enjoy a greenhouse effect of comfort, especially if the center of gravity of the alert history of their lives falls in the time span between 1945 and 1990.<sup>[580]</sup> As older observers confirm almost in unison, in that time span the characteristics of the great reorientation were steadily imposing themselves, though not without setbacks. Also during this period, the material symbols of quasi-general non-poverty came to the fore. The new *liaison* between the purchasing power of the "masses" and the frivolity of the "masses" and the frivolity of the "masses" leads, on the broadest possible front, to a change psychosocial state of mind. Even in the lower strata of the middle bourgeoisie, ostentatious consumption of fashionable luxury, table and mobility can be stipulated as a characteristic of socio-industrial lifestyles; the cult of the automobile reflects the participation of all social strata in aggressive, not infrequently self-destructive expansion techniques.<sup>[581]</sup> The strong dilation of leisure time affects the *modus vivendi* of all subcultures and levels of

income. Countless are those who take advantage of their surplus waking leisure time to elaborate their moods, their talents, their illnesses, their subjective victimhood and their private metaphysics; those who live alone or in company invest enormous amounts of attention, judgment, knowledge and *savoir faire* in the improvement of their homes and second homes; the reconversion of the urge to move into sport, music, tourism and countless types of leisure activism reaches a level for which there is no model in the history of civilizations. Even when it happens, as today, that the affluent North is forced to leave the "cocoon of the happy post-war decades" - the expression comes from Pascal Bruckner - and to accommodate itself to turbulence, the level, which steps backwards bring down temporarily or during longer phases, is still incomparably high from a social-historical point of view.

With regard to empirical perception and interpretation  
In the moral of the great change, it would be necessary to listen to the majority of human beings of the second post-war period as epochal witnesses. Those who, at the end of the Second World War, paid attention as observers of American-American and European-Western realities, had the opportunity to perceive the consequences of the preceding era, still predominantly marked by economic hardship and psychosocial precariousness, and then to compare them, feature by feature, with the relaxed definitions of reality of the following period of continued growth. The last phases of famine in the Western world overstressed the era of both world wars and the agitated stages of the Russian experiment; with prohibition in the United States, the twenties set in motion a belated and sterile insurrection of the old feeling of seriousness of life, which had been coupled with a great rejection of consumption and relaxation. The continuum of obscuration passed in the West through the depression phase of the thirties - then New York's Central Park was a slum composed of stores and shanties, kept alive

The United States had to work through the commitment of charitable and communal institutions until the aftermath of the misery of World War II, including the beginnings of the reconstruction phase. After the great crisis of 1930, Franklin D. Roosevelt could see that one-third of the U.S. population was underfed and under-clothed; as late as 1962, Michael Harrison, in his classic study *The Other America. Poverty in the United States*,<sup>[582]</sup> estimated the poverty factor at more than 20 percent.

Against this background it is understandable why in the first half of the twentieth century it seemed natural, and perhaps even legitimate, to yield to the temptation of inertia and continue to use the pessimistic languages of the nineteenth century, together with their utopian equivalents -almost as obtuse-, however much these were presented as the science of a better future. The dominant discourses after 1918 can be referred, with few exceptions, to an alternative as superpowerful as it is sterile: either one resignedly submitted to the eternal laws of mass poverty, which only seemed to admit a small number of winners in the evil game of competition, or, with militant audacity, one dreamed ahead, advancing towards a rich and egalitarian end of history, which would be near as soon as the productive forces of "society" fell into the right hands. To sink into the conservative melancholy of paralysis or, with self-hypnotic optimism, to make the leap to "revolution" (imitating Leninist delirium and fanning the hope of a coming opportunity): this seemed to be the choice that the historical camp of the time prescribed to its interpreters who considered themselves realists. That this required a decision between two options that were completely surpassed was something that few were aware of at the time. What was considered the avant-garde was also mocked by false scenarios. Precisely the early Frankfurt School, which became hegemonic from the 1950s onwards in Germany and later in the USA as *critical theory*, had become entangled between these two deceptive poles.

to propose a combination of leap and paralysis with consequences that go as far as the most recent German pessimism. Only a small minority of intellectuals was able and willing, since the twenties and thirties, to safeguard, beyond utopia, beyond despair, the reference to the contemporary economic, legal and technical facts, in which - by incessant accumulation of isolated, barely perceptible, inventive, operationally efficient steps - the event of the time, the first break in the circle of misery for the many, became effective.<sup>[583]</sup>

The psychodynamic and mental side of that historical caesura is not

nowhere did it occur to any diagnostician of the time that in the present generations nothing less than the detachment of the concept of reality from the immemorial dogmatics of the serious, heavy and necessary was taking place; in which (according to the hints of the logician and interpreter of Hegel, Gotthart Günther) the sediment of an insufficient traditional understanding of "being" in the framework of bivalent thought has always been hidden. On all fronts the black novels of positivism were still being written. Both in the left and in the right camp, intelligence collapsed before the real as the dominant, the grandiose, the terrible; only minimal aesthetic circles managed to subtract themselves from the cult of reality and its paralyzing consequences. Very few realized, with Musil, that a serious rival to the sense of reality had emerged in the form of the sense of possibility, which today reaches its form of explanation crystallizing in the realm of the virtual. Who would have been willing to admit that a mutation of the experience and concept of the real itself was underway? The message of the century found no herald. It should have prayed: we have risen from the real; or, less pathetic: we shall henceforth remain at a distance from the real.

The enrichment operation is so vast, so full of counter-currents and paradoxical effects, so complicated in ambiguities and exceptions, so overshadowed by questions so beset by external costs (to the point of suggesting that there would be an arms race of misery with welfare, impossible for the latter to win in the long run), that, except for certain conceptual achievements, half a century later it still cannot be appreciated in its full development. It was all the more difficult to understand what was happening at the time, when it was first taking shape. None of those who after 1945 turned their attention to the "free market economy" phenomenon or commented on the penetration of household appliances and fossil fuels into the modern way of life would have been able to judge the significance of these objects for the redefinition of old European fundamental concepts such as "nature", "reality", "freedom" and "existence". On the contrary, there would hardly be any philosopher of that time who would have been willing to note that practically the whole traditional vocabulary of his discipline was beginning to become historical with the appearance in the "world of life" of telephones, internal combustion engines, radar devices, calculating machines. The old European ecology of scarcity may have been losing ground, but the belief in the primacy of necessity and the burdened nature of existence still held sway in the Old World. The habit of being poor and unsuccessful was not relenting in its grip on states of mind. Wealth came like a thief in the night.<sup>[584]</sup> The thoughts of the rich were elsewhere.

Today it is gradually becoming recognizable that the denial of levitation constitutes the constant of the most recent history of ideas. Wherever relief or lightening sought to be introduced into theory and morality, the great majority of thinkers - above all the exegetes of the extremes, both left and right - retreated to the terrain of the weighty "real," which hides beneath the surfaces of everyday life and which

they never tired of evoking under the harshest names. While unloading or lightening sent out its signals everywhere, the extreme realists indulged more unrestrainedly than ever in the cult of depressive thinking. Walter Benjamin ventured into the image of the angel of history, who believed he had a single catastrophe in view, who incessantly heaps ruin upon ruin; thereby he created the image-test for the disorders of view of a century obfuscated by radicalisms.

[585]

It cannot be said that his contemporaries did better: they referred to the struggle of races and the laws of blood, to exploitation and sharpened class struggles, to trauma and unconscious productions, to the ignored body and necrophiliac aggression, to the mechanization of life and the domination of apparatuses, to the lack of resources and the second law of thermodynamics, to the acceleration of traffic and globalization of the economy, to chance and undomesticated events: but, above all, to catastrophe, and again and again to catastrophe. Those are the lofty seats where the consciousness that had deserted the real reigned, sovereignly suspicious. No tiger's back was too wide for the realists not to have wanted to ride on it. Whoever considered himself at all a thinker had to lord it over the real and inaugurate a triumphant discourse on its characteristic principle. Just as Bacon had taught that one only masters nature by obeying it, so the realists of the twentieth century represented the doctrine that one only masters the real by submitting to it. Any intervention in the real was doomed to stand out in competition with other harsh fictions of reality. The suprematism of realism became the logical style of the time. In the race for the most explicit highlighting of the real, the ontological variants of pornography had to emerge: never has naked reality been looked more deeply into the entrails. What were called ideologies were, in fact, but fictions of the real, intoxicated by their hardness, their

coldness, its obscenity? In order to pass as lacking in illusion, the strong spirits rushed into the cult of the cruel goddess Facticity. She was seconded by a no less cruel ally, Decision (inasmuch as one recognizes the essence of appearance in betting on a single option and letting the alternatives die). With unspeakable contempt, the realists, the right-wingers, the writers of hard facts, looked at what they considered the liberal effeminate rabble, who refuse to learn the lessons of cruelty: if it is a question of planing planks of the future, so much the worse for the shavings. Countless intellectuals have given themselves up to the conviction that only big businessmen, gangsters and dictators have looked into the depths of reality; only the mimesis of crime allows thought to enter the historical arena. Whoever fails to participate in the enterprise of reality as a ruffian of horror has not understood anything of the rules of the game at all.

But what if the philosophically relevant event of the  
If, consequently, what it was all about was to make a profession of lightening as of an evangelical caesura? Of understanding tragic realisms as hypnosis by black *kitsch*? What if crawling before the harshest definitions of reality had been the characteristic sign of the most futile opportunism -which today is again seen at work in the intellectual inspirers of American realpolitik-, as if one had long thought about the essence of crime, coming to the conclusion that it alone determines the meaning of being: in the beginning it was crime? What if the free spirit had to abandon the devotional images of the facts, to which there is supposedly no alternative, if it wants to find its way back to the open? What if the characteristic of reactionary thought consisted, from then on, in its alliance with the force of gravity in order to deny anti-gravitation?



## 2. The fiction of being-of-lacking

In view of these issues, it is easy to understand why, in the course of the twentieth century, it would have been more difficult to hold on to the fundamental assumptions of classical conservatism (insofar as its constitution is that of a conservatism of misery, a Catholicism of lack and a denial of wealth). To the extent that the covert, yet omnipresent message of the facilitation of life materialized in the minds of subsequent generations, the interpretation of the world in the light of the prejudice of lack was placed in an implausible position. Its weakness could only be compensated by an increased deployment of pessimistic abstractions; and by a reinforced importation of negativities. In this ideological context a second exploitation of the periphery is reached, this time in favor of the masochism of the center. The habit of importing, cheaply, misery as raw material and of processing it into high-value admonitory products for the domestic market is to this day virulent among the activists of indignation.<sup>[586]</sup> In order not to have to acknowledge the unheard-of events in the First World, the Pessimist International calculates the hardship of the Third World against the recent wealth of the West and deduces a negative balance; yes, it even refers originally the welfare of the First World to the poverty of the Third World, in order to make its prosperity of life seem the result of injustice (both economically and politically) against the southern hemisphere. Thus it manages to make its own life circumstances, along with its evident abundance and pampering or self-harvesting dynamics,

are not thematized as too guilt-ridden. One always remains ecstatic in the face of the misery of others; often to such an extent that one can no longer decide whether in this turn towards the not-self and not-here it is a question of seeking help from afar or of hypocrisy at home.<sup>[587]</sup> The representatives of this way of thinking behave as if they had discovered an unknown law of nature: that of the conservation of miserogenic energy. The conservative spirit of misery, denier of well-being, has, especially since the 1960s, invested great efforts in the devaluation of Western wealth, inasmuch as it demonstrated the unsustainability of the methods hitherto used for its acquisition: the international debate on the "limits of growth" was of transcendence, as is well known, because it translated the classical economic pessimism (to which all types of fundamentalism have lately given company) into the language of ecology, thus attracting, in this way, an alternative youth.

The most ambitious effort of indigent conservatism in the face of the turn towards a welfare civilization consisted, however, in placing the conceptual foundations of the ontology of lack deeper. This could only happen by making lack a kind of negative essence. It was a matter of detaching it from economic data in order to place it, as deeply as possible, within the human essence, yes, within the very heart of subjectivity: the originally dissociated, despoiled, over-required psyche. When the aim is to judge human existence from the point of view of its determination as lack, it cannot be a matter of a factual, casual and reversible deprivation of a great majority of real persons of material and symbolic goods; what really matters is now to be presented as a constitutional or biocultural aprioric need of *homo sapiens*.

The memory of this ingenious maneuver, seemingly successful in principle, the pre-dating of human poverty before any concrete historical and social manifestation of commodity deprivation,

opportunities and resources, is linked in the annals of the cultural sciences to the work of Arnold Gehlen, a scholar who is not offended if he is considered - before Niklas Luhmann - as the most astute of the self-confessed conservatives of the twentieth century. According to his position in the recent history of ideas, Gehlen is a young right-wing Hegelian, who declared as his personal task the empirical or anthropological materialization of philosophy. In Gehlen's approach one can see a German path to pragmatism; his motto is skepticism in the face of the vanishing of the

"His distinctive sign: contempt for the credulity of intellectuals in words. From the typological point of view, Gehlen's intelligence can be described as Jesuitical, since it owes its greatest possibilities to an attitude, almost reformist, exercised in the face of the solidity of the opponent, of conservative resistance. Even the paradoxical title of avant-garde conservative, given to Luhmann by Italian interlocutors in the 1970s, can be effortlessly transferred to Gehlen, almost a generation older. When it comes to the most successful modernizers of the pessimistic syndrome in the twentieth century, his name deserves to be mentioned even before those of Freud, Lacan, Adorno and Carl Schmitt.

It will be useful for what follows to examine in detail, and to analyze in its coherence, the fundamental operation of conservatism reassembled with Gehlenian methods: the determination of *homo pauper* by means of a deepened anthropology of lack. In doing so, it will be shown how an analytical apparatus of great modernity was expressly placed at the service of conservative moods and commitments hostile to the lightening of things. In order to construct the active, reflective, culture-creating human being as a profoundly poor animal, in spite of all his creative potentials, Gehlen resorts to conceptions that at the time of his first systemic configuration, the late 1930s, belonged to the most advanced ones, and which to this day have not been understood in all

and from all points of view: starting with the Nietzschean expression, fruitful without limits, of human beings as

The "non-determined animal", all the way to Scheler's onto-anthropological thesis of the "world-patency" (a motif that in Heidegger's lecture, *Fundamental concepts of metaphysics, world-finitude-solitude*, of the winter semester of 1929-1930, was to play an outstanding role). Gehlen, moreover, introduces into his enterprise the concept of action from the transcendental tradition, and, along with it, the concept of risk from contemporary philosophy of existence, the concept of position from decisionism, the concept of symptom from psychoanalysis. To this are added a series of biological insights of exciting novelty, such as Julius Kollmann's conception of neoteny - the phenotypical fixation of juvenile bodily conformations - or the sensational thesis of Lodewig (Louis) Bolk, presented in 1926, of the primary retardation of human ontogenesis, as well as the retention of fetal characteristics in the adult morphology of the human being.<sup>[588]</sup> If there is in Gehlen any idealistic remainder, it is shown in a scrupulously cultivated anti-biologism, which goes as far as the denial of effective instinctive endowments in *homo sapiens*: an exaggerated position, which he was forced to revise in a later phase of his work.

All these determining aspects are synthesized in Gehlen's strategically central theorem of the human being as a *being-of-deficiencies* [*Mängelwesen*]. This expression is not only to designate the

The biological "negative endowments" of *homo sapiens*, with all its non-adaptations, non-specializations, non-developments and so-called primitivisms;<sup>[589]</sup> also recalls the high load pressure under which, according to Gehlen, this animal, in dire need of protection, disconnected from the environment, deprived of instinct, organically lacking in resources, without an innate inner guidance, would be inclined from the very beginning. The author never tires of highlighting the biological impossibility of this living being with ever new twists and turns: affected by a "unique lack of means", this animal, which has no inner guidance, has no inner guidance.

creature, "considered as a natural being," is "hopelessly maladapted";<sup>[590]</sup> is "incapable of life in any sphere of truly natural and ordinary nature";<sup>[591]</sup> a result of a "normalized premature birth";<sup>[592]</sup> threatened by "virtual inner tensions", extremely high,<sup>[593]</sup> and endowed with a dangerous potential for helplessness and self-destruction. Once these diagnoses had been formulated, the appeal to the patriarch of the anthropological-hereditary mode of consideration, Johann Gottfried Herder, could not be delayed. Gehlen openly claims him as his "predecessor" and takes from him a bimember fundamental proposition about the human being, which reads: the "character of his species" always and everywhere consists of "gaps and lacks";<sup>[594]</sup> although by his linguistic genius, as well as by his culturally and institutionally creative capacity, the human being transforms his original plundering into a privilege. After this you can follow the program and the confession of principles:

Philosophical anthropology has not taken a step forward since Herder and, in outline, it is the same way of looking at things that I want to develop with the means of modern science. Nor does it need to take any step forward, for that is the truth.<sup>[595]</sup>

It can be shown without much effort that this suggestive portrait of *homo sapiens pauper* is impregnated with an ambiguity, the highlighting of which dissolves the meaning of the whole construction, in such a way that, after that, it can also be interpreted as a plea for the opposite. When Gehlen, following in the footsteps of Herder, speaks of *homo sapiens* as a being of lack, he presupposes a history of the weakening of the human being or the predecessor of the human being, which, according to his own assumptions, can no longer be interpreted as mere natural history. Evidently, the poor and weak human being in Gehlen's portrait must constitute the starting point of a grand narrative of primordial lack and its equally primordial compensation by means of cultural capacities. Within this scheme it remains completely obscure, however, how a living being could have arrived by natural evolution at its initial deficiencies. From a natural history of the ancestor of the human being, such a dramatic dowry of despoilment cannot be deduced. Nature left to itself knows no successful transmission of maladaptations or deadly weaknesses; at any rate, risky specializations of the peacock's plumage or the deer's antlers type, effects that cannot be spoken of at all precisely in *homo sapiens*, which, as Gehlen never tires of emphasizing, is unspecialized and

juvenileized in the most striking way. Thus, if biologically and culturally motivated development later led to results such as those produced in the primitive human being, its evolutionarily favored properties cannot be interpreted as spoliation; on the contrary, they would have to possess preponderantly qualifying or, to speak with Darwin, fitness-enhancing virtues.

It is absurd to describe the primordial scene of the formation of man as the appearance of a creature incapable of life, who - as soon as settled in the surrounding world - would have to withdraw immediately into the protective shell of a prosthetic cultural armor in order to compensate for his biological impossibility. The refinement of the somatic image offered by *homo sapiens* must in fact be thought of as dependent on a stable long-term trend, which could only succeed on the basis of an assemblage of biological and cultural factors. This developmental pull can only be understood as a self-strengthening incubator effect, which turns both the young and the adult individuals of the species into beneficiaries of a comforting, cerebralizing and infantilizing tendency. This is imposed without, in the long term, specifically undermining the evolutionary opportunities of this highly incubated, neotenually risky living being. The success story of the *symbolic species* could not have turned out as it appears in retrospect today if, in accordance with its fundamental feature, it had not led to a productive assembly of somatic refinements and psychoneuro-immunological and technical strengthening.<sup>[596]</sup>

If one reverses at this point the series of conditions of the being-and-becoming-so of the human being, recognizing the evolutionary success of human morphologies, the indications for anthropological evaluation show *eo ipso* an opposite tendency. The human being does not turn to culture and its institutions to transform himself from a biologically impossible being into a creature somehow still fit for life; rather he proceeds from the circumstances of his generation and education in such a way as to take advantage of his singular privilege as an incubator even in his most intimate endowments.

somatic, in its cerebral capacity, its sexuality, its immune structures, its nakedness. Its strength is expressed in the privilege of its elevated fragility. In other words, *homo sapiens* is not a being of deficiencies who compensates his poverty with culture, but a being of luxury, who by his protocultural competences was sufficiently assured to survive in the face of all dangers and to prosper occasionally. It must be admitted that the sapiens had to limit themselves most of the time, for understandable reasons, to the realization of a small part, rather robust, of their cultural potential, in order, when the occasion arose, to venture into typically specific luxury developments.

*Homo sapiens* is a fundamentally pampered intermediate being, polymorphically sumptuous, capable of multiple overcoming, in whose formation genetic and technical-symbolic shaping forces have collaborated. Its biomorphological diagnosis refers to a long history of self-plastic refinement. Its opportunities to be pampered come, by inheritance, from afar. At the same time, it remains equipped with a completely animal tenacity, moreover, endowed with a capacity to persevere to the end under the most miserable circumstances. To describe the characteristics resulting from all this as "endowment with deficiencies" is an idea that only occurs to an interpreter when he sets out to provide reports of *homo pauper* himself - dogmatically presupposed - in the earliest conditions, despite the fact that from the categories of the theoretical apparatus itself, contrary evaluations were already insinuated. Therefore, Gehlen's *cordial entente* with the Weimar pastor Herder is more than a coincidence in the history of ideas. Their common idea of the human being as a being of deficiencies satisfies the new need of bourgeois pessimism to replace the dogma - unsaleable among the cults - of original sin with the much more attractive thesis of original deficiency.

The most plausible basis for the inversion of  
The clues established by Gehlen is with his own conceptual means.  
That *homo sapiens* cannot be a being of

The fact that Gehlen's system is not only lacking, but from the outset embodies a luxurious formation, is comprehensible in every way as soon as the two most important concepts of Gehlen's system are subjected to a closer analysis: on the one hand, the idea of world-patency,<sup>[\*\*]</sup> with which the author entered the horizon of the philosophy of his time; on the other, the category of discharge,<sup>[\*\*\*]</sup> which represents, without doubt, Gehlen's most fruitful contribution to both philosophical and empirical anthropology: in it one of the few truly original conceptual configurations of the cultural sciences of the twentieth century is recognized. Since both concepts were brought into the closest connection by Gehlen himself, they can legitimately be discussed here in a common path.

From its patency of the world it develops in the human being - following Gehlen's fundamental assumption - an existential complication, for which there is no biological example: since he lives, experiences and reflects more than any animal, the human being is a creature who is not only occasionally overtaxed, but also structurally overburdened. Its fundamental constitution, from the sensitive side, is called flood of stimuli and, from the pragmatic side, risk pressure. Since the human being brings with him no innate coupling to the environment, at least not for the totality of circumstances, which he always has to manage amidst self-established engagements with the environment, his being-in-the-world has the character of being-immersed in a "field of surprises."<sup>[597]</sup> "In the light of this consideration, the patency of the world is fundamentally a *burden*."<sup>[598]</sup> By this is said - although not expressed by the author - that the fundamental feature of *homo sapiens'* experience of the world and behavior with it consists in a superabundance of perceptual impressions, as well as of possibilities of experience and action, and not at all in a preceding spoliation and poverty. Because of its subspecialized, multiple adaptive or "open" nature, an excessively impressionable receptivity is produced, on the one hand, by



the other, an extremely broad spectrum of options for action, ranging from the trivial middle ground to the improbabilities of art, asceticism, orgy and crime. If there could exist in beings of that type something like an early attachment of a sense of lack, it would reside in the embarrassment before one's own wealth: a problematic that for the reason of daily life is expressed by the cliché "torture of choice", *imbarazzo della scelta* and the like; with greater theoretical ambition, the same can be captured in figures like "reduction of complexity".

The human being is

The "burdened" by its plasticity in the sense, for example, that millionaires have to bow to the necessity of having to manage their wealth.

These observations are reinforced by Gehlen's explanations with respect to the innovative category discharge: an expression that articulates the most important aspect of a general economy of existence. If it can be said that being-there is indeed, in principle, a paradoxical being-charged - and, as has been said, because of the richness of human being's sensory and pragmatic extatism - the task of discharging mechanisms is to reduce the primary tension by richness; starting with the model configuration of perception and with the automation of courses of action, to the normalization of future expectations by rituals and the exclusion of unforeseen events by technical routines. Simplify yourself, human being, become calculable! Gehlen realistically assumes that life, both somatically, psychically and socially, follows the inclination to settle into operating conditions of well-tempered banality; conditions that are described, psychologically, as habituations and, anthropologically-culturally, as institutions. Discharge is, according to this, a mechanism of saving: it constitutes a procedure for locking out the temptation to self-waste. Its capital effect arises from the immunization against immediacy, be it that of the excessive expenditure of energy in spontaneous acting, or that of the flood of riskily de-automated perceptions.

In a certain way, it establishes a first system of pragmatic immunity, which defends against infections of the psyche by an excess of unassimilable stimuli and prevents the expenditure of psychic energies in ecstatic openings to the field of action and perception.

In such a profile of the concept it is clear that unloading has nothing to do with the administration of shortages: it is competent for the management of wealth, which requires domestic economy and investment sagacity. Just because the element of the human being is too much, simplifications, restrictions and habituations become necessary, which stop wastefulness at a low level, in order to have the saved energies available for higher, symbolically more ambitious enterprises. In this process of graduation, the surplus motive is perceived both primarily and secondarily. After Gehlen has done his part - almost successfully - to declare the human being poor already at the elementary level, the denied wealth of the beginning is announced again in his exposition of the more developed psychic economy of *homo sapiens*; yes, after it was modeled by the civilizational discharge mechanisms, in the form of economized action potentials, which only at higher levels truly impel to its realization. But, just as in the case of the first wealth, which arises from the world's patency, Gehlen succeeds in describing the second as a burden and negative factor as well. The psycho-economic keyword for the second wealth is called liberation, which also entails a problem of inversion: it is self-understood that for the strict anthropologist only serious seating will do. This procedure is explained in the example of the contemplative life of charismatics, who are sustained by the "societies" around them, or in the way of being of artists, whose fluctuation between mastery and anarchic license presupposes tolerance on the part of the world they share. Both types of liberated existence are to illustrate that everything depends on connecting the abundance of energy achieved by discharge with ascetic regulations, be they

The anthropologist looks with concern and disgust at the de-regulation of the artist's existence in the anarchist subcultures of the twentieth century. Gehlen fears that if artistic anarchism were to make school in general, the symbolic reproduction of "society" in its institutions would soon be ruined. Like Dostoevsky's grand inquisitor, the anthropologist is convinced that freedom represents an excessive demand, for which only the few are prepared. For all the others, who are not capable of the asceticism of the true elites, a consistently organized heteronomy is imposed. Gehlen, who is decidedly conventional, advocates discipline with respect to the many.<sup>[599]</sup>

Thus, even with an eye to the human dynamic of discharge, it becomes clear that one cannot speak of an original problem of lack; what really demands interpretation and explanation is the absorption of surplus energies and their diversion to more ambitious processes. Gehlen remains faithful to his pessimistic impulse also on the upper rung: just as he has interpreted as an original burden the worldly pathos of the luxury being that is the human being, he also explains as second-order burdens the energies saved and released, which are available for the higher and broader. For these he formulates the suspicious recommendation to spend them in the service of objective forms; even if they were magical rituals, however questionable their empirical successes may be. Better to serve an empty form, as long as it has the strength to impose itself, than to lose oneself in the freedom of the amorphous and in the lack of commitment of mere experiment. This could not be said more clearly by any member of the Roman congregation of faith. Evidently, it is not, then, a being of deficiencies originated by evolution that worries the anthropologist; it is the being of luxury that is the human being, whose constitutive mime and capricious protuberance are disturbing to him to the utmost.

### 3. Lightness and boredom

*If our moods are the models of our philosophies, tell me then, Edwin, in which one is truth poured?*

Friedrich Schiller, *The walk under the linden trees*

Bringing Gehlen's paradoxical construction of the poor human being back into the context of his time, a sensitive connection appears with the epochal movement of the lightening of life in the *affluent society*: a movement that, in another nuance (and against the background of modern solidarity systems), should be defined as a transition to a first successful network of highly individualized constructs of immunity. It cannot be mere chance that the central expressions of modernized conservatism, discharge and liberation, are more apt than any others to conceptualize the subjective reflections of the great levitation. They are, indeed, its time captured in thought.

With the appearance of the completely legalized "society", floating in routines of optimization, driven by money, a "state of the world" has come into effect, to speak once again with Hegel, whose main characteristic consists in a perceptible change of the contexts of seriousness and existential proportions of weight. But since the levitated "society" has not yet found the correct concept of its own adventure, of the discharge that reaches all its semantic and material states of affairs, or that, where it has found it, it does not know how to use it in the right sense, it is exposed to the temptation to speak both of its great achievements and of new evils, and both of its innovative conquests and of unparalleled precarious situations. Also with regard to its moods, marked by liberations, the "society" is in uncertainty in its exit from the universe of poverty; when it refers to its unusual relief it wonders whether it has not moved away from

properly from the true path, difficult as it is, and dictated by hardship.<sup>[600]</sup>

As if unsettled by stimuli of a similar kind, Hegel wrote in January 1807 in a solemn tone, diagnostic of the times:

For the rest, it is not difficult to see that our time is the time of birth and transit to a new period. The spirit has broken with the previous world of its existence and representation [...] it dissolves one particle after another of the edifice of its previous world, its crumbling is hinted at only by isolated symptoms; both the lightness and boredom that spread through the existing, the indeterminate presentiment of something unknown, are indications that something different is at work [...] The beginning of the new spirit is the product of a broad revolution of multiple intellectual forms, the price of a path intertwined in diverse ways.<sup>[601]</sup>

If Hegel is wrong in anything, it is in considering lightness and boredom as harbingers of situations to come: in reality they are the new things that have appeared. They constitute early traces of the transition to a barely recognized floating of being and a fading of time, detached from fixed goals, which provide the new epoch in general with its tonality. It must be understood that we are not speaking here of the aristocratic *spleen*, which had flourished under the *Ancien régime*; it is not the melancholy palate of the *douceur de vivre* at an advanced hour. The expressive turn of the The "propagation" of such moods "by the existing" already speaks of bourgeois dispositions. It betrays the philosopher's concern for the solidity of the transformed world circumstances in the liberal camp. No matter how much he acknowledges himself to be a supporter of the new constitution of the world, in which substance wants to be developed as subject, he does not allow any discretionary mode of subjectivity to be valid as representative of substance. It must be a serious intellectual form capable of representing the laboring subject, which must be at home in the new post-revolutionary situation, installed by a freedom that would have come to itself in the *medium* of law. The romantic modes of light and dull consciousness have only the meaning of symptoms for Hegel: they must constitute nothing more than a morbid *intermezzo* between two solid moments; the older would be embodied by Catholic substantialism, already overcome, and the new must belong to post-Protestant freedom within the rule of law. All in all, lightness and boredom represent an intermission, to which as much time must be allocated as fermentation and transitory fever require for their fruitful work: even the terrorist excesses of the French Revolution had to be passed as necessary stages in the curriculum leading to the Rule of Law.



Bernardino de Sousa Pereira: First attempt to fly the hot air balloon by Bartolomeo  
Laurenzo de Gusmão before King John V, 1709.

But what if what is fermenting does not think of returning to rest after a successful effervescence and, once it has risen, wants to assert itself as a mode of existence in its own right, lighter, freer, more frivolous? How are we to understand that the *capriccio* is no longer content to be a musical genre or a literary tonality and wants to become an aspect of the bourgeois *modus vivendi*, a style of use of money and of seating of feelings and inclinations? What if the mongolfiers, which took to the skies of France during the *mode au balon* before the Revolution, were not mere whims doomed to fall (a similar aeromachine, the Charlière, fell to earth in August 1783 at Gonesse, near Paris, and was attacked by panic-stricken peasants with pitchforks and scythes, to end up being "killed" by a soldier by a rifle shot)? If these devices of whimsy signified, rather, the ambition of the moderns to settle in the airspace? Had not Voltaire already sent in

1752 to the hero of his novel, *Micromegas*, on sunbeams through space, thus alluding to the intention of the Enlightenment to take possession of the vertical? He was merely an emulator of Francis Bacon, who in 1624, in his utopian narration of the island *New Atlantis*, had prophesied the imitation of the flight of the bird by means of appropriate machines.<sup>[602]</sup> The theatrical machinery of the Baroque had also discovered the dimension of height, making Mercury float in the air above the heads of the audience with his talar wings, Fortuna with her sphere. Whether they were ecclesiastical or secular plays, in their final essential apotheosis, the aerial space had become a stage above the stage.<sup>[603]</sup> The optical illusions of the ceiling paintings of the same period invited the public to navigations in the vertical. All these occupations of height space could no longer be cancelled out. Even the dances of the pre-revolutionary period let it be recognized that the floor could no longer claim any longer, without further ado, its former rights to the attraction of bodies; in place of gravitational steps arose a culture of leaps and floating movements.

Around 1750, an aphorist could have asserted that anti-gravitation, elegance and the machine were the great trends of the time. The phenomena spoke for themselves: had not the entire 18th century raved, poetically and technically, about "air-air-ship-art", about *navigation aérienne*, about Daedalus machines and aerostatic balloons? Had not the eve of the French Revolution really arrived the moment when human beings felt ripe to emancipate existence from the sad habit of its heaviness and to snatch from the gods their last privilege, pure whimsy? With the successful exhibition of a hot air balloon performed by the Mongolfier brothers on September 19, 1783 in the courtyard of the Château de Versailles in the presence of Louis XVI, the official sign for the beginning of levitation was given: an event surrounded by jubilation, in which a lamb, a rooster and a duck were the first animal inhabitants of the Earth to enjoy the pleasure of

(The lamb was installed in the royal pens and carefully cared for throughout his life, as a witness of progress deserved). By that time the politics of antigravitation had made the epochal leap and, in the form of republicanism and aerial navigation, of aesthetics and therapeutics, of industry and long-distance traffic, was on the way to creating its own means and machines. Had not Jacques Alexandre César Charles - the first human being to have climbed to a height of 3500 meters aboard an oxygen balloon on December 1, 1783 - declared the following day in the *Journal de Paris*: "Nothing will ever equal the instant of joy that seized my existence when I felt I was leaving the earth"? The crowd below was also ecstatic at these pioneering acts and celebrated the aerostats as the real heroes of the moment; they had intuitively understood that this was also their business. It seemed that humanity, represented by its vanguard in the baskets under the balloons attracted by the sky, had found a way out of its self-blameable inability to fly. Jean Paul made the aeronaut Gianozzo live in the basket of the balloon, and watched his hero, like a pragmatic humorist, spend the nights, sleeping, at altitude. Just the fact that this observer, freed from the lower world, had to break the back of his neck when falling during a storm, reveals how the poet, recoiling from his own co-discovery of anti-gravitation, takes refuge in the last instant in the icaric cliché, conceding a last evil word to gravity. Still a hundred years after the first ascensions of the mongolfiers and charliers, Nietzsche, in the *Gaya ciencia*, will apostrophize the free-thinking friends of experimental life as "we, aeronauts of the spirit". Thus, he who does not want to speak of the upward impulse must also keep silent about Modernity.





Balloon meeting in the Alps.

To appreciate Hegel's anti-romantic (and anti-grave) anger at its true value, one must recognize in him a precocious figure of modern conservatism. He is motivated by the accurate perception that the so-called romantics, the new light and dull, the all-rounders and floaters, those metaphorical entrepreneurs and aeronauts in ironic space, are no longer willing to let their levitated spirits, gliding above any aimless enterprise, be regarded only as pathological provisionals to be abandoned as soon as solid conditions have been returned to: a fact that was confirmed, moreover, by some spectacular conversions in the *curricula vitae* of the "subjectivists" who played with everything at the beginning. For Hegel, the sharp point of the

Romantic attack is in that with him the lightness was consolidated by itself. The philosopher clearly perceives that here it is necessary to set in motion processes of revision of the weights and measures of the old serious weighting. He also bears in mind that in the modern mode of experience boredom is emancipated as a phenomenon with its own value: inner time is dislodged from rickety carts with objective goals, so that an impetuous loose consciousness emerges, liberated from finality, in a positive sense without work, which advances from whimsy to the conjuncture and back to whimsy: one might call it the discovery of the great vacations from the spirit of crossed-out final goals. It is not surprising that a thinker like Hegel, who could only make intelligible everything he considered truly valid from an explicitly conceptually achieved end, should recognize in such approaches nothing other than displays of a fickle arbitrariness over the objectified world. In the manifestations of the levitated spirit, which, so to speak, plays divinely with itself and with the element of the world, he sees only an "insubstantiality" which, as he teaches, inescapably takes the helm into its own hands.

<sup>[604]</sup> However broad the kinship between irony and dialectic may be, Hegel intends to fix the active restlessness, which is the self,<sup>[605]</sup> to the serious circular movement and to the laborious production that knows where it is going. That is why freedom has to endure being equated with the understanding of necessity: as if it had emerged from substance for an insolent second, only to immediately sink back, as if stricken with regret and vertigo, into necessity, legality, self-limitation. The effervescence of the living can never be allowed to become an aimless floating; never can the upward impulse follow its own line. Inadmissible for Hegel is also the romantic short-circuit between pure experience and the meaning of existence, as Lord Byron articulated in a letter of 1813 to his fiancée: "The great goal of life is sensation, for

to experience that we exist, even if it is amidst torments". For the thinker, such movements and commotions can only be those of bad finitude; whose psychological trace is the sick self, which flees from its indolence and lack of world by taking refuge in boasts and intensivism.

In fact, however, the dissolutions of the self-conscious lightness were only possible in the horizon of a "society" which, thanks to its accumulation of welfare, science and technology, was already on the verge of leaving the realm of history as hard work and struggle: a state that was anticipated with great pregnancy and manic precocity at the desks of early Romanticism. Novalis's poetological doctrine of the empowerment of the casual could only have been drafted in a context, in which - as a consequence of the Kantian and Fichtean caesura - it was already possible to bid farewell to the dictum of external objectivity as an overthrown prejudice. After the fall of the ontological *Ancien régime*, new tones are heard:

All the vagaries of our life are materials out of which we can make what we will. He who has much spirit makes much of his life - any knowledge, any incident would be to him who is full of spirit - the first member of an infinite series - beginning of an infinite novel.

Humanity is a humorous role.<sup>[606]</sup> Humanity is a humorous role.<sup>[606]</sup>  
Humanity is a humorous role.<sup>[606]</sup>

The precocity of such sketches should not be used as a reproach against them. Nor can one confuse the vengeance of the real, unleashed time and again, with a refutation of antigrave tendencies, however much conservatives may gladly integrate such a thing into their vision of the facts: they have always believed in the fall, not in the flight. If Icarus falls into the sea, it is they who have always known it. Pessimism manifests its weakness, its kinship with the vengeful spirit, when it pretends to be right in the face of enlightenment. No more take-off permits, then, for those who imitate Icarus? Freud's well-known link between erection and the "overcoming of the force of gravity" still hints at the belief that behind such insurrections the force of attraction of the Earth has the last word.

What had in fact been implanted at the highest level with romantic irony and its art of taking all things lightly was the questioning of the traditional concept of reality together with its foundation in a monovalent surpassed ontology; this not only ends in the crisis of "Western teleology",<sup>[607]</sup> but in the liquidation of the concept of reality of the great culture. The most visible technical procedures for this are aeronautics, which uses upward momentum, and astronautics, which opens up access to weightlessness for terrestrial bodies.<sup>608]</sup> The time has come for ontological pessimism, which has never been able to speak of anything other than the necessary One. The new era is that of the distension of subjectivity in the face of the venerable definitions of the world of seriousness. With it begins the infiltration of lightness and ambiguity into the monotonous heaviness of substance. Freedom is more than necessity understood: it is the division between loading and unloading forces.

At this point it becomes clear where the interests of a pluralistic spherology empirically lie: what matters to it is to approach with new means of description the reconstruction of co-subjective or surreal spaces of animation. Thanks to the concept of unloading, the climatological interpretation of a polyvalent reality can be undertaken, the focus of which is directed towards the animation of vital-worldly cells by means of antigravity tendencies. From this point of view, Modernity appears as an expansive and transcultural levitation experiment: with the accent placed on the foaming of the real thanks to the introduction of moments of upward impulse in the gravity complex. It must now be admitted that the concept of civilization is premised on anti-gravitation; it implies immunization against gravity, super-gravity, which has paralyzed human initiatives since ancient times; it protests against immovable mountains. Following the impulse to an explanation in accordance with the time of the techniques of immunity, it is necessary to make explicit now, for its part, the turn towards lightening.

Having secured in outline the deduction of collective stress cultures and their legal development in the *decorum* of groups - we refer once again to the forward-looking work of Bazon Brock and Heiner Mühlmann - the civilizational sense of anti-stress moments must also be elucidated. The empirical triumph of the anti-grave currents can be deduced from the observation that in all fields encompassed by the market mechanism and by inventive revision, lack has become a scarce commodity. If it were otherwise, there could be no competition for the administration of the resources of penury, drive, need: neither at the material level, nor at the symbolic level. It is well known that in the developed sphere of consumption it is supply that abounds, while needs susceptible of demand increasingly present themselves as scarcities.<sup>[609]</sup>

Because of the antigrave effects of the superabundance of means of civilization, which, in spite of all the backlashes and annihilations of values, have been incessantly accumulating for two hundred years, a process of revision of the concept of reality has been set in motion that demolishes the matter of the solid, heavy, inescapable. Starting from the definition of foam given at the beginning, we must describe the totality of the modernized social field as a multi-chambered system, composed of upwardly driven cells - *vulgar* "lifeworlds" - in which the symbionts enjoy antigravity effects, thanks to the means of weightlessness accessible to them. Symbiotic spaces are constituted co-comfortably, co-frivolously, co-deliriously, most of the time co-hypocritically and co-hysterically as well. That is why they are not safe against mimetic infestation and the irruption of paranoid epidemics. If we attribute to climatology such a great existential importance it is because, for philosophical reasons, it is necessary to ask beyond technical air conditioning and optional modifications of physically concrete breathing conditions: what gives food for thought is the tempering of the being-in-the-world in general, the mood

Of being-there between the poles of aggravation and lightening. Would foam now mean: air to breathe in an unexpected place?

Admittedly, the discoverer of the exploratory moods of the world in the philosophical context, Martin Heidegger, established completely different signs for the valuation of the light and heavy (in this view, a relative of Gehlen in the avant-garde-conservative spirit). However contemporary Heidegger's perceptions of the discharging flows in the climatic domestic economy of modernized existence may be, by both habit and *pathos* he clearly spoke out against levitating tendencies and deduced the dignity of existence - still entirely within the heroic sentiment of old Europe - from the letting-itself be rolled up in the hard, heavy, necessary. Like Hercules at the crossroads, the true philosopher chooses the uncomfortable solution. Although, as in Gehlen, this vote has a voluntarist tone: once again, whim anticipates necessity. What matters this time to the heroic thinker is to overcome convention by spontaneity. Although this only means that a discoverer (better: an explainer) cannot be forced to draw the consequences.

"progressives" of its discovery.

The choice in favor of concentration, seriousness and heaviness - against a background of acute and profound insights into the validity and omnipresence of existentials such as dispersion, lightness and indecision - cannot necessarily be deduced in any way from Heidegger's own phenomenology of states of mind. Considering things more closely, it is shown that the ponophilic, effort-friendly, lightness-averse assessments - in Heidegger as well as in Gehlen, Schmitt and the like - are entirely decisionistic and prejudiced in nature; if anything, they can be anchored in the *decorum* of the old European heroism. These protagonists of realism in the disenchanting world possessed a sharpened awareness that, under the conditions of their own time, dispersion is a phenomenon more

than concentration. By analogy with this, it should have become clear to them that lightness is a whole dimension richer than seriousness, indecision than decisiveness, and, finally, to touch on the hot core of current affairs: that lack of commitment encompasses a more complex field of situations, stances and existential opportunities than commitment.

Only a spontaneous choice can force us to intervene in a conflictive point of reality. Necessity does not force, it is we who choose a difficulty. Mussolini had understood this when he defined *fascism* as a horror of the comfortable life. In the unlimited popularity of sport, which even before 1914 attracted the attention of the diagnostician of the times, Oswald Spengler, the truth about the present time is articulated: in it the imperative necessity has been replaced by the chosen effort; passion is followed by hobby; the game has surpassed work, and what is presented as work is the superabundance that has put on a serious face; the work offices could already long ago be called work simulation offices. Whimsy leads from the rope everywhere to the necessary. Only for the sake of the customary ontological form do the liberated forces allow themselves to be tied down and play the fool as much as necessity wants; they pretend, as they should, to serve the most solid and inescapable ends.

The decisive information about the reversal of the signs between light and heavy comes from the worlds of expression in which the popular neo-athletic disposition to effort is clothed: precisely because civilized, technically discharged forms of life practically never seriously demand any more of individuals to reach their limits - so that *summa summarum* are chronically discharged from the great stress reaction in the face of real risk to body and life - many of them opt for an intentional recharge, though not because they believe in the necessity of their gamble, but because, in a latent-ironic way, they claim for themselves the right to increased efforts and risks;<sup>[610]</sup> one could speak of an endogenous appetite for critical case: heroic programs, operating in a vacuum, want to remain occupied with other contents;

Nor can they, with their liberation, become accustomed in the long run to arbitrariness. They do not admit, without further ado, their farewell to necessity. That is why, in sport, in consumption, in entrepreneurship, and recently also in social activism again, a conjunction of work and play has been reached that leads to completely different results from those that Schiller and Marcuse managed to anticipate.

Starting from a similar spirit of deliberate self-charging, fundamental ontologists have claimed for themselves the right to be used by the most important matters of temporized being. Heidegger astutely spoke of the "inescapable": the price of renouncing the charms of contemporary dispersion for the alliance with the pole of heaviness did not seem too high to him. By the gesture, it is comparable to Simone Weil's Christian eagerness to grieve, which manifests itself in the doctrine: "Immediately after conformity to death, conformity to the law, which makes work indispensable for the maintenance of life, is the most perfect act of obedience that has been given to the human being to fulfill."<sup>[611]</sup> Which means: since bodily work is a daily death, it would have to become the spiritual center of social life. It is not necessary to be a psychoanalyst to realize how in these gestures are at work derivations of primary masochism, which manifests itself as thrifty rage, turned inward, or as eagerness to be strictly subject to oneself.<sup>[612]</sup> Nietzsche: "The human being feels authentic voluptuousness in allowing himself to be forced by excessive demands."<sup>[613]</sup> It is difficult to deny that the phenomena appear composed as in an Adlerian jargon, where it is not so much a question of organic inferiorities, which demand to be compensated by high performances, but of existential states of mind of insignificance and superfluity, which by the flight to the indispensable postulate their opposite.

High-performance sport and the lofty philosophies of the 20th century have in common that sense is only made of both when they are understood as statements about the levitation *booth*.



Both the deliberate striving for records and victories and the arbitrary choice for compromises and new burdens testify to how much liberated life itself has to worry about the investment of its surplus of meaning. When there is no imperative need in sight anywhere, individuals can and must choose for themselves their critical cases on discretionary fronts. Sport and commitment are emanations of a profound arbitrariness, in which effort is placed at the service of the superfluous. Lightness takes gravity on its shoulders. The fact that high stakes are often surrounded by an aura of sacred seriousness is something that only allows us to recognize the reverse side of the choice freed from reality. When car racers crash or paragliders fall, the tragic end and the lightness are usually respectfully compensated for. Did not Nietzsche's Zarathustra bury with his own hands the jumper who had made danger his profession?

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One can indirectly form - in the mirror of theory - a concept of the enormous progress represented by the event of levitation if one compares Hegel's occasional diagnosis of boredom and lightness as epochal symptoms of incipient Modernity with the radicalizations that Heidegger, in his phase of culmination between 1926 and 1930, knew how to give to the themes of dispersion and boredom. That with both motifs he brushed the core of the mood of the time was as certain to Heidegger as he was possessed of his vocation to return, transformed, from the descent into modern non-seriousness. As a sufferer of emptiness he will be able - such was his conviction - to show the way up; from the immersion bath of the reflection on the inevitable dispersion it has to be continued forward towards new forms of recollection and commotion for the work that it is necessary to complete inescapably. The lecture of the winter semester 1929-1930 on the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* is known, above all, for its sensational phenomenology of boredom, of which it is not exaggerated to consider it as the most profound theory of the present which was

capable of producing the twentieth century. Whose nucleus occupies, according to Heidegger, a levitated existence, and its most relevant characteristic is the impossibility of being completely apprehended by anything. The human being is experienced as a hollow and light form, not attached to any content that fills it; far and wide nothing in sight that raises existence to the dignity of the real.<sup>[615]</sup> Here the unbearable lightness of being is conceptually exposed, which at this point is called: "necessity of the lack of necessity". The expression offers the first clear philosophical diagnosis of the developed consumer society. As so often happens, the conservative spirit is on the pulse of time insofar as it allows itself to be enlightened by that which it rejects. (Max Frisch: "It was not pain, necessity, as I had feared before; it was only emptiness, and that was worse, it was about an existence of carpet shakers.")<sup>[616][616]</sup> The conservative spirit is in the pulse of time as it allows itself to be enlightened by that which it rejects.

There is no escape from the discomfort of lightening: since in the disarmed existence the internal judgment of critical case is lacking, the subject feels exposed to a banal discharge. His lightness hurts him in a curious way; or rather, he feels disturbingly separated from what could hurt him. He is indifferent to himself; and rightly so, because, as he lives at present, nothing he undertakes can be real. The unmoved life is bored. Boredom <sup>[\*\*\*\*\*]</sup> means: one experiences one's own time as an inner dilation, which is particularly noticeable because it is not filled with meaningful actions. It is experienced as a torturing duration before the appearance of the next event that undoes the stagnation. Paradoxically: an hours-long wait for a train in a provincial station. But the lack of emotion goes much further. The animal without a mission gropes in the fog; many things are possible, none convincing. Since nothing impresses me, I try many things. I throw myself into action, I dedicate myself, artificially enthusiastic, to the unpostponable, which seems to say to me: Attend to me! If you are looking for a fighter of the first rank, here I am! If I observe more

617] Even commitment manifests itself as a form of dispersion. Insofar as it distends the sense of time into a faded expanse, the lack of emotion truncates concentration on essential purposes. It becomes impossible to concentrate on an action. Even if one still manages to kill the time of superficial boredom, the time of deep boredom remains within existence. This is why it loses the characteristic of its existentiality: the capacity to unfold itself in a plausible work. Uneasiness grows, until the self loses all profile; but Heidegger does not intend to stay halfway. What was active existence must now become profound boredom. Boredom, which is the impossibility, embedded in the midst of life, of having a project.

If one understands oneself fully as a child of dispersed and lightened time, and feels, moreover, intimately as a loser who has nothing left: then *one* is so bored that *one* can no longer even say who is the one to whom this deprivation occurs. Just as great anguish produces the deprivation of the world - and, by contrast, reinforces the reference to the miracle of *something being* - so deep boredom produces the deprivation of oneself. *On the contrary*, it can make what has been subtracted sparkle: the concentration of time in meaningful action.

With this descent to the ultimate dispossession Heidegger touches upon a pathological limit value of discharge, in which the discharged loses the feeling of his own existence, so that he experiences himself as an intimate-indifferent fact. My own characteristic I can now describe as total absence of being. In the deepest boredom there are already only circumstances in which no self-inhabits; the deepest boredom is the really existing non-existence. The pain of the lack of pain thrones in it. Like a negative Atlas, nonexistent existence has to bear the total weightlessness of the universe. It is unbearably light, a world of the

that my heart has been amputated from time, my vital have-something-to-do-now.

Certainly, the philosopher would not have imposed *this descensus ad inferos* on his listeners if he had not believed that he could ignite in them the spark of re-ascension. The sense of meditation was clearly dialectical, he had to release the "positive force of the negative" in order to return from lassitude to an effective commotion by the now so-called inescapable. So also in Heidegger, as later in Sartre, commitment is preceded by a radical lack of commitment; with the difference that the German master constructs existence capable of commitment and action by taking a detour through revival from the deepest boredom. It may be added: in the German form of the boredom of 1929 hides the German form of the defeat of 1918. Naturally, the innermost being abandoned in emptiness by the industriousness of life, described by Heidegger, is a symptom of a loser, as it presents itself in a population in which the orientation to the gratifications of success and victory has disappeared. Thus, in these theories there also resonates an element of tragic advice and care for the troop; along with a breath of revenge at the highest level. Many are the vanquished, few are chosen to turn defeat into a victory of a special kind.

The turn must lead from remaining empty in the discharge to a new charge for something epochally important, necessary; it bets on the therapeutic value of giving oneself importance. From the revelation of futile nothingness in empty time, being-there ascends to an acute exacerbation of existence in the time of action. It is a pity that Heidegger illustrated his meditations a short time later with a false example. He could have given a correct one if he had followed the ["618\]](#) This did not enter into his determinations and projects. It would have presupposed the change of the character of his profession and demanded the retraining of the prophet in

intellectual; it would have required admitting that moderns have to renounce the pretended mandate of necessity.

## **4. *Your private sky* - Thinking about lightning**

While the projects of Gehlen and Heidegger are characterized by the effort to refuse the anti-gravitation and decontraction of modern conditions of life in the consumer "society", with the development of constructivism and functionalism, after 1945, a new paradigm of thought has appeared, of which its belonging to the era of levitation can be perceived from the very beginning, both chronologically and stylistically. Whoever wishes can recognize in the constructivist turn the contribution of California to the most recent history of the spirit; understanding under California, as once under Schwabing, less a territory than a mental disposition, which can be found as much on the American Pacific coast as in Illinois or in Bielefeld. It is above all through the manifestations of the philosophical mentor of the constructivist current, Heinz von Foersters, 1911-2002, who has not without reason been called the Socrates of cybernetics, that the affinity of the new approach with the developing levitation is palpable. His argumentative and dialogical procedures end directly in a critique of serious or heavy reason.





Joseph Beuys, *Levitazione in Italia*, 1973.





Charlotte Buff, *Trans-formations XXV*, magazines, networks, 1992.

Von Foersters' decisive intervention consisted in a clarification of the process from which the "ontological" illusion of heaviness arises. He gave the proof - prefigured in Fichte's philosophy - that the weight of the objective is the result of a hidden, uncomprehended externalization. Objects become overweighted when they are placed on the scales of the reality test without the counterweight of the subjective. If a weighted object is counterbalanced with an unweighted subject, the balance plate inevitably tips on the side of the object. This weighing procedure constitutes the fundamental operation of the classical doctrines of substance and monovalent ontologies. In them, the subject is defenseless before the block of the objective and supposedly possesses only the option of submitting to the given: a gesture that is presupposed in the classical theories of knowledge, when they reduce knowledge to a

reflection of what exists in a subjective medium. With this arrangement, human beings can cover up the fact that it was they themselves who claimed for themselves the lack of weight and for objects the heavy weight: weight is the lord, and whoever as a human being wants to participate in the lordship has to present himself as the representative of the force of gravity. Unless a way can be found to distribute the weights differently.



Jeffrey Shaw, *Waterwalk*, 1969.

If the observer, together with his differentiating activity and his responsibility for the differences chosen by him, is explicitly reintroduced into the event, it ceases to be a *quantité négligeable*; it returns to the stage as an active magnitude in its own right among other magnitudes (especially when it has machines with whose help even the physically heaviest objects can be moved). The weight of things is a construct that is formed in dealing with them; as such, it is tactically modifiable. It must be recognized, then, that human beings encounter their pre-decisions in everything they do. After the constructivist turn, he must know that what is called gravity and lightness can only be an effect of balancing or non-balancing of weights and counterweights.

From this follows the moral maxim of constructivism: to demand in everything the visibility of freedom and the explicitness of elective decisions. Whoever joins this path does not have to put up with any externalization; he will no longer grant any authority to statements that refer to an objective exterior. Propositions containing the element "there is..." will be translated into statements beginning with "I suppose that...". Von Foersters' not too categorical imperative reads: "Always act in such a way that the number of possibilities increases."<sup>[619]</sup> It does not occur to Cybersocrates to consider the wealth of alternatives as a burden. When there is a majority of options in sight, even the most painful situations appear to be therapeutically correctable, at least in the sense that an unlivable construct of reality can be replaced by a less unbearable one.<sup>[620]</sup> When an external reality is affirmed, intellectual good manners demand afterwards that the name of the author and the year of appearance be added, together with a mention of the number of the edition in question. The barter of comfort for necessity is openly accepted as the business basis of the modern experiment.

Constructivist thought wants to protect itself against the fate of the doctrines of emancipation known up to now (against the

dogmatization of one's own ambitions and, with it, against the approach of bona fide criticism to the Jacobin pole) by maintaining a reserve against oneself. This can only be achieved by constant training in self-distance or self-lightening. Von Foersters dialogical humor is related to Luhmann's concept of ironic reason, which for methodical and moral reasons forbids itself to become serious in matters of its own. "Self-critical reason," Luhmann says at a prominent point, "is ironic reason."<sup>[621]</sup> The antigrave dimension of irony will be sufficiently embodied by a culture of theory as soon as it "can change its own belief in reality, i.e. begins to disbelieve in itself."<sup>[622]</sup> By warning against the autosuggestive moment, which is inherent in every form of belief in reality, Luhmann - like an early romantic who would have matured after the lessons of the twentieth century - reaches a position that can be understood as an antithesis to Heidegger's voluntary immersion in *fatum* grave (naturally also as a protest against moral rigorism, that overflows of good faith in itself, and against the fascisms of lefts, in which it is too little repaired, that appear in universalist dress and always know until in the smallest detail what they want, what they are and what they need the human beings).

The discovery of levity, which materialized in the twentieth century in the systems of forecasting existence, is doubly significant for the theory of spherical relations: on the one hand, as an object of analysis, on the other hand, as a presupposition of its own appearance. Only when levity has become thematic can animated spaces of coexistence be described under the aspect of gravitation. After the establishment of the atmospheric as a category - as an ontological-public dimension - all human facts are presented *sub specie* of discharge. Antigravitation can now be understood as a "more fundamental" vector, better than the tendency directed against the fundamental dimension. This makes it clear: without the journeys to the sky of the non-heavy sense culture

would be impossible. While realist seriousness always claimed to be and to know what is the case, realist thinking of the future has to start from the idea that antigravitation is more serious than anything the consensus ever formulated on the so-called fundamentals.

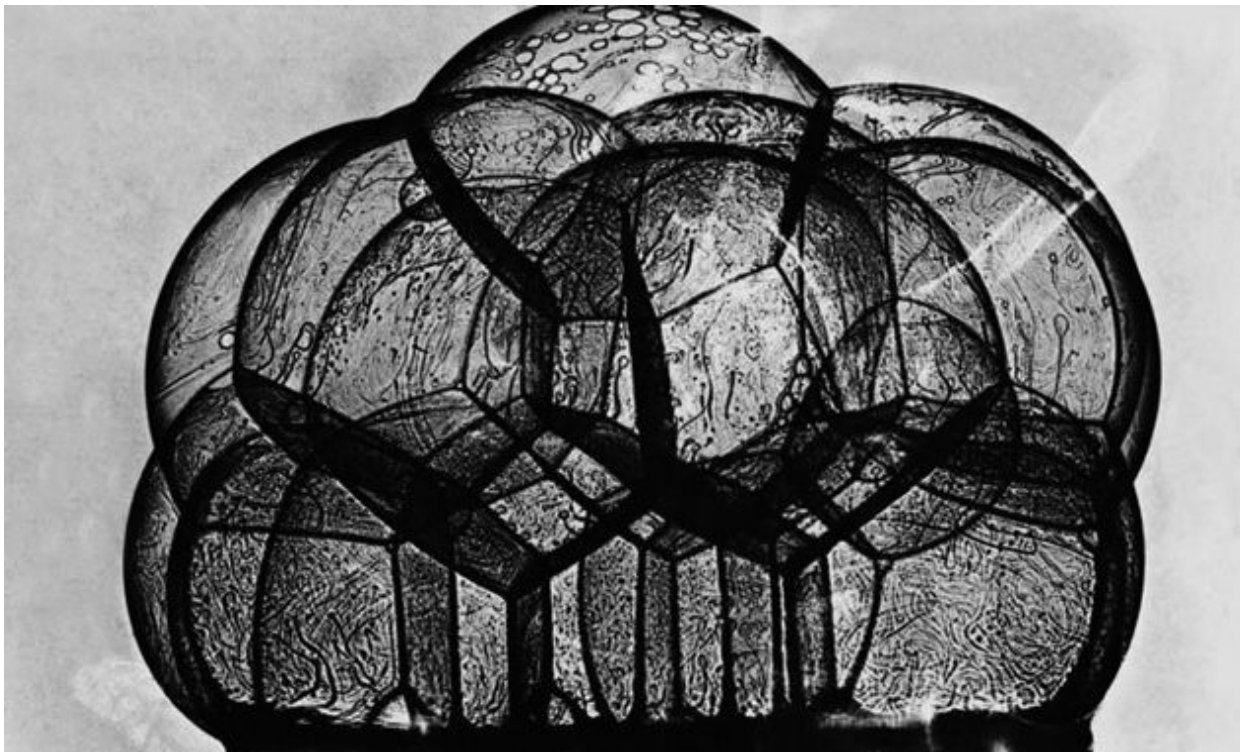
This transforms the representation of human history with respect to both the style and the object itself: while conventional "universal histories" are content to accompany the wanderings of "cultures" and ethnicities through the territories of their internal needs and external stressors, what matters to a spherologically informed historiography is to recall the moments of upward momentum, of excess and free drift in the interior of anthropogenic islands; and, indeed, because it is now known that, in general, one never has to deal with beings of lack in the midst of their hardships, but with beings of wealth, designed for pampering, the luxury of intimacy, infantile privileges, unloaded phases of wakefulness and the accumulation of stimuli. The ominous expression *conditio humana* reflects the fact that these creatures of wealth had to face during the broadest trajectories of their historical existence the problem of a forced undervaluation of themselves. How much they had to unilaterally undervalue themselves to ensure their survival; how many of their potentials they had to give up to support themselves in their daily lives; how many false descriptions of their nature - from original sin to endless greed - they had to endure to fulfill the task of accommodation to the most different circumstances of the world! One key expression for this is "becoming an adult," another "internalization of sacrifice," hypertrophy of the sense of reality at the expense of the sense of possibility a third. A universal history of light sense would offer proof of how under the pressure conditions of poverty realism countless discharged cells and climatic islands are formed everywhere, each with its own secret of uncapping. Undoubtedly, the survivability of cultures is based not only on the stability contributions (unilaterally accentuated by Gehlen) of their

symbolic organizations or institutions, but, as much as in them, in the work of subterranean levitation, barely perceived by the usual theories of culture, thanks to which the inhabitants of the anthropogenic island create their breathing spaces. These processes seem to be hidden under a surreal title: the invention of air by breathing.

With the help of the category of unloading and of the empiria explored by it, it can be shown that the principle of reality, so called since Freud, is not only shaped by the experiences that adolescents achieve in dealing with the hardness, resistance and unavailability of objects. Also responsible for the entry of the real into the life of the intelligence are the lightnings that are discovered in the handling of things: the possibilities of overcoming resistance, of overcoming obstacles, of delaying difficulties, of giving another meaning to deficiencies, of rejecting imputations of guilt, of reformulating reproaches, of manipulating norms and patterns, of infiltrating tasks, of substituting losses, of cushioning pain and of avoiding frontal encounters with what can only be lost. To this must be added the awareness of the ductility of concepts and the need for interpretation of norms; completed with the understanding of the tendential preeminence of cunning over drudgery and of ruse over method. To the level of reflection is added the recognition of the changeable character of all relationships.

All this brings together, by places and times, a differentiated arsenal of anti-gravitation arts, which could be called *Escapology* alluding to the album of a pop star.<sup>[623]</sup> Equipped with their local set of lightening techniques, human beings of the most diverse cultures face the task of subtracting themselves from the weight of the world as widely as possible; and to bear what has remained. It is a question of discovering as ontologist the brave soldier Schwejk. The remainder of being heavy, of which it is not possible to get rid of, appears as spurs of the real in the bubbles of discharge, the cultures, the air-conditioned spaces of

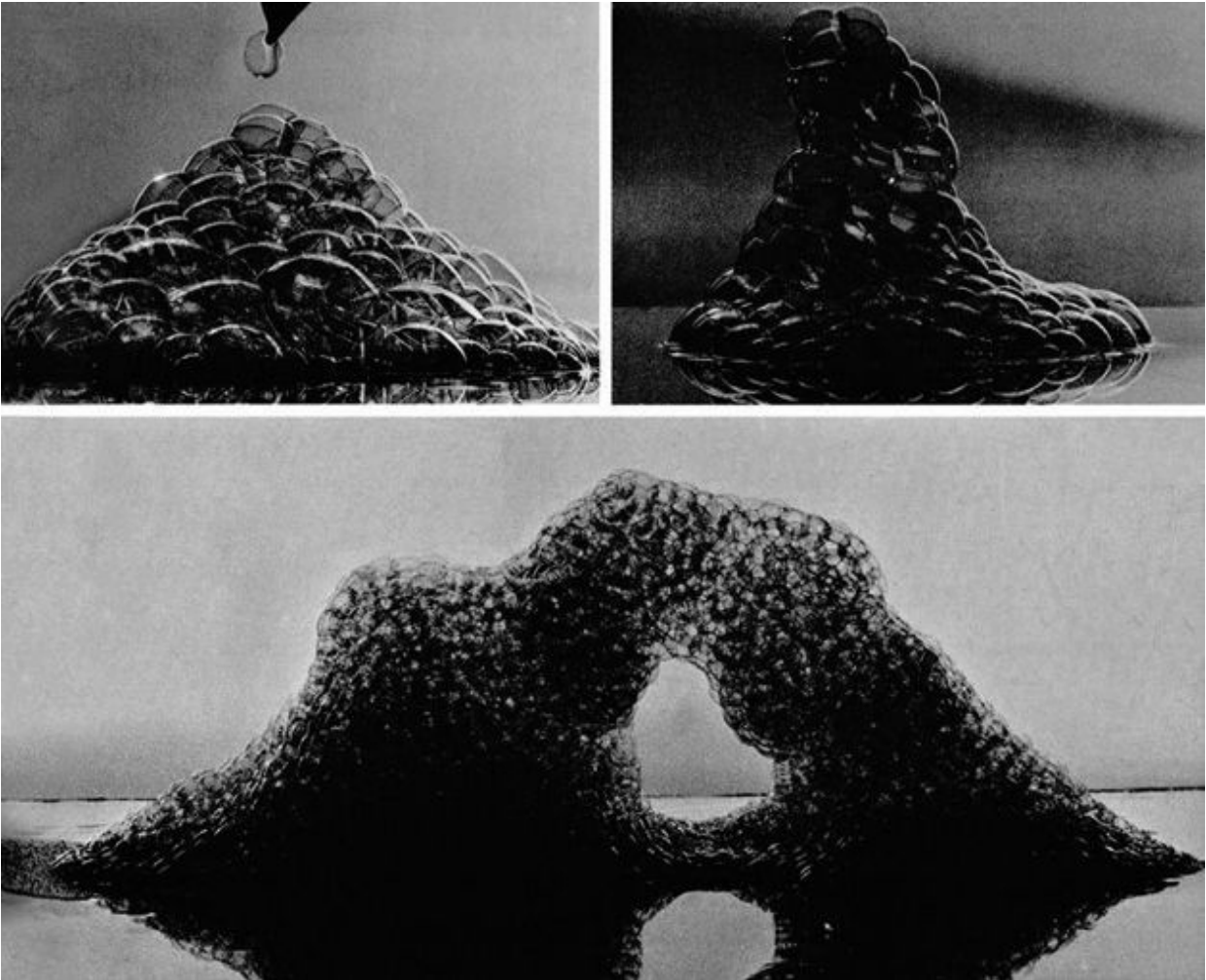
illusion, thermotopes and fields of cordiality. As a rule it is apprehended by means of religious interpretations: venerating the burden or identifying oneself with the super-powerful. Where it is possible to identify wrongdoers, one resorts to rituals of revenge, later to criminal law; where the real appears as an enemy, one accommodates oneself to it by means of hard inner and outer exercise.



Walter Bird, Foam model. Emergence of polyhedra in the interior of a package of bubbles.

However, one must take into account the fact that the real in trivial situations can only be experienced as a remainder, while the other, more considerable part only penetrates the mental representation imaginatively, for example through threat scenarios. Some civilizations have created the role of the official advocate of the real, endowed with the attribution to plead against the effects of the discharge taken too far, as soon as it seems to him that the collective is in danger, due to its exalted administration of the illusion. Since the nineteenth century Europe has known, alongside the neo-Roman tribune of the plebs, the intellectual, who

He speaks on behalf of the proletariat, still mute; also the tribune of catastrophe, who warns his fellow citizens of the disgraceful potential of their own behavior. It is a characteristic sign of the twentieth century that its intellectuals have devoted themselves inflationarily to intervene on behalf of the real. Extremism, inseparable from the style of Modernity, was, it is understood too late, a sumptuous form of realism. Realism is the current form of the belief that catastrophe is always right.



The spontaneous development of relatively stable constructions in foams semi-dry.

Let's retain: without the driving gases of lightness cannot be formed  
nor be maintained at form a bubble of  
(sur)reality



habitable. *Under your private sky* would be the spherological answer to the question: where do you really stay.<sup>[624]</sup> The word "private" here does not mean the confinement of the individual in an illusion conceived for him; it shows that the real inhabiting takes place under canopies, which, naturally, only cover a small segment of the whole. The format is the message, the piece of the real is the real.

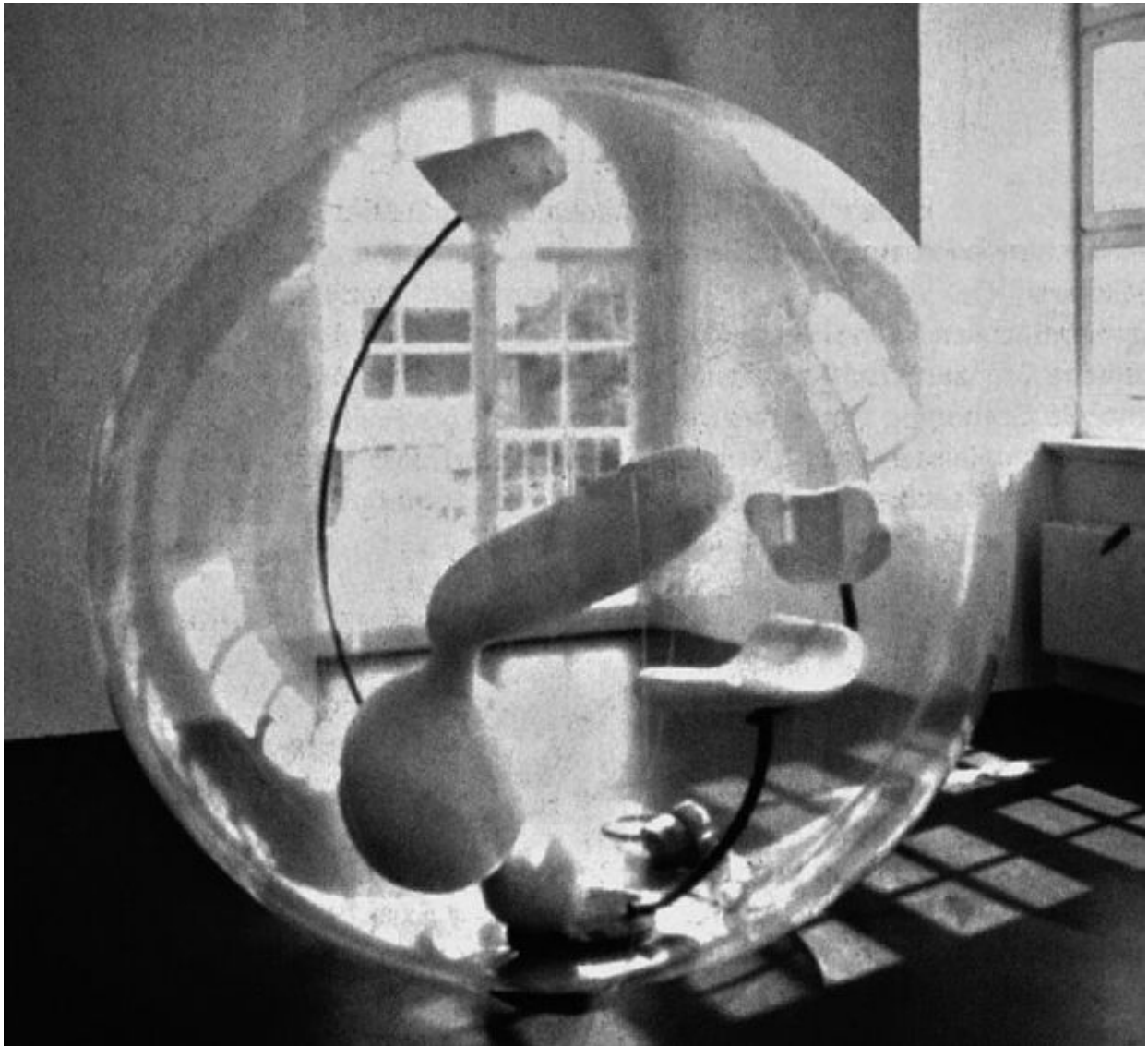
This establishing-itself under an own-common sky - both formally and materially representable by the umbrella principle -<sup>[625]</sup> leads to successes as long as the imaginary systems of immunity maintain a minimal illusion or an affirmation of one's own field of animation. Unnecessary to show how from this point of view religion rubs against poetry. (Unnecessary also to explain once again why Marxism, with its boast of a superior understanding of base and prose, involved a direct destructive attack on human resources.) What Jacob the Liar achieved in the Warsaw ghetto - supplying the environment with news that was better than the real situation - was always achieved by storytellers and curators of regenerative rituals. <sup>[626]</sup> Perhaps every achieved life (achieved means always: in spite of circumstances) is an oscillation between exo-realism and endo-realism. Just as depression corresponds to prose, so hypomania corresponds to poetry.<sup>[627]</sup> In the same way.



*Ars Electronica 82 – Sky Art / Sky Events*

Ars Electronica 1982, Sky Event.

The fantasy is *de facto* always in power. The fact that in 1968 it could be explicitly reclaimed shows that the levitation issue managed for a happy moment to gain general understanding.



Dorothee Golz, *Hollow World*, 1966, documenta X 1997.

(To the genius of Walt Disney, on the other hand, we owe the drawing of the bridge between hypomania and infantilism: in his comic-universe he managed to make explicit the principle of adjoining reality and turn immersion in *kitsch* into a safe process of evasion. The impetus for the introduction of *reality-on-demand* is not, of all things

The same is true for the old Europe, a privilege of American dream-making, but a domain in which old Europe has always achieved extraordinary things). When the particles of upward momentum rarify beyond a certain point one arrives at manifest depressions. That show that the resistance against the pressure of the real has been broken. That human beings remain in a position to activate their space-shaping potential presupposes the balance of forces between gravitation and antigravitation. From a theoretical point of view, it follows that without an explicit concept of upward impulse, the original aphrogenic activity of the human being cannot be articulated.

In view of the spherical imperative made explicit, early "pneumatic architectures" (e.g., Walter Walter's Radome prototype, the W. Bird on the grounds of the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory, 1948, Frank Lloyd Wright's *Rubber Village Fiberthin Airhouse*, 1956, or Frei Otto's *Aufblasbarer Pavillon* [Inflatable Pavilion] from the Rotterdam exhibition, 1958, as well as the numerous similar projects by Victor Lundy, Buckminster Fuller, Archigram and others) which since the 1950s belong to the most intelligent and elegant innovations of modern space-shaping art possess, far beyond their practical function, a theoretical-cultural symbolic value (or perhaps one should better say: A universal symbolic value of niche technique and capsule technique).[628] The air that is breathed into the pneumatic dome is part, at the same time, of the tectonic medium that provides the construction with tension and amplitude as well as habitability. The pressure of the upward impulse is used as *agens* of the stability of the space; the condensed breathing *milieu* acts directly as a vault conformer. Transferring the architectural model to the psychosemantics of human space provides the most suggestive illustration of the upward momentum dynamics of anthropospheric cells and cell groups.

Above, in the passages on the uterotope and the thermotope[629] we have formulated the thesis that all history is the history of the

struggles between welfare communities; with the concession that for the expression welfare, which refers rather to material and emotional comfort, the concept of choice can be used alternatively, in which the accent falls on thymic, *vulgar* narcissistic preferences of one's own being-so. Well-being and choice have in common that their subjects feel themselves to be recipients of privileges, which have been promised to them both materially and spiritually; either by a discreet patronage, or by the somehow supposed obligatory contribution of the environment, or by a metaphysical alliance, thanks to which a celestial protector or a transcendent principle of immunity is allied with the collective.

In what follows we will show that the principle of patronage, as an agent of positive predestination, is a premise without which the existence of beings of the psycho-immunologically sensitive species *homo sapiens* could not be plausible. On the other hand, that premise does not represent a universal, since there are innumerable exceptions to the rule of the special demand for the patronage of individual life; perhaps even more exceptions than regular cases, exceptions that are specified in both written and unwritten chronicles of poverty. They fill the black books on the life of infamous, underprivileged, superfluous human beings. As we show how the principle of pampering acts by the patronage of the mothers of human beings in most successfully led lives, vague outlines emerge of a universal history of lightness, of which we have stated that it includes, at the same time, the climatic history of the anthroposphere with all its innumerable local efflorescences in individuated series.

## 5. First levitation

### For the nature of the upward thrust

*I think they are made of water; they have no expression. Their  
faces sleep like light on still water. [...]  
The soles of their feet are intact. They are pedestrians of the air.*

Sylvia Plath, *Three Women*

In order to implement a non-pauperistic anthropology, it is advisable to examine with greater precision the heat center of evolution, the special configurations of the mother-child space in hominids and early humans. The main characteristic of which is the often commented tendency to prolong the infantile and juvenile phase in processual unity with a radical precocity of the moment of birth. For the interpretation of this phenomenon, some paleontologists have argued that the children of humans, if they came into the world with a degree of maturity analogous to that of primates, would need 21 months of gestation; something that (along with other biological contradictions, especially of a neurological and endocrinological nature) is excluded, because the shape and width of the opening of the pelvis in female *sapiens* makes birth necessary after 270 or 280 days at the latest. This entails the generalized risk of a very premature expulsion of the fetus to offensive external environments.

To express the implications of this fact as dramatically as they are to be presented according to their monstrous content, it should be said, without ambiguity, that in human beings normal birth has the quality of an interruption of pregnancy dictated by nature. In the script of human existence it is stipulated that we spend three sevenths of the bio-psychologically indispensable phase of gestation in the environment of the maternal organism, the other four sevenths in a situation of

stable niche, for which it is best to use the expression "stay in the exo-uterus": a twist that would have to replace the half-true expression of lactation period. The differential between the two states creates a transference dynamic that can never be carried through to the end. We always play a game: 9 versus 12; or endo-gestation plus exo-gestation, which together produce the conditions of entry into the world. No one remembers, everyone is marked by it. No concept can be made of the enormity of the "place in the world" of the human being until an explicit intellection of the two-stroke movement of childbirth is achieved, moreover, of its virtual pluritemporality, which factually means its inconclusibility. On this, and on its enormous neurological and symbolic-dynamic implications, depends the eccentricity, open to morbidity and demanding expression, of the constitution of human existence up to its last ramifications.

The being-in-the-world begins in *homo sapiens* with the fact that that newborns arrive with a non-transferable demand for the repetition of the uterine position on the outside; the absolutism of the infantile demand or need has here the form of an order dictated by helplessness. In this respect, being able to obey is the concrete concept of adulthood. The surrounding world, as a rule the biological mother supported by surrogate mothers and The "nest attendant" must also be prepared to take on the role of a living incubator and place the newcomer in a well-tempered protective space, in principle fundamentally bipolar, the peculiarity of which is that it guarantees a continuation of the pregnancy in an environment that is clear from the outside world and interactive.

With this we can contemplate the proto-scene of human mediality. One is here the necessary *medium* for the immaturity of the other. For a period of time the waking world has to behave as if it were the accomplice of a fetal dream. The born-until-the-end has to interact with the born-not-until-the-end of

so that from the envelopment and complacency of the fragile companion emerges its animation: an invitation to the open air, a stimulus to the discovery of the world, a camaraderie on the way in the first chapters of experience. The willingness of human mothers to take on this normal-surreal task finds support in the innate and acquired behavioral pattern of mammals: according to a beautiful metaphor of sociobiologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, the evolution of parenting in higher living beings follows the path of the "milky way".<sup>[630]</sup>

Everything speaks in favor of characterizing the specific dedications of the first human mothers to their offspring as a form of biological patronage: on the one hand, because the maternal-human quality of transmission of life and life opportunities happens, in fact, most of the time, through fully individualized investments in outstanding and preferred offspring for herself in each case; on the other hand, because this special patronage dedication does not obey in any way a biological automatism, but can only act when the mother has accepted and given her yes to her child, as such, in a psychosomatic act of adoption. Only when she has done this will she be able to mobilize all her existential energy to the full in favor of her offspring. Human mothers can only carry out their mission, often positively followed, of total patronage in favor of their children because their dedication is more than a biological program: it represents, rather, a commitment - perhaps the original form of any committed intervention - and can only be gauged at its just price, consequently, against the background of the equally possible refusal of commitment. To understand this, one has to get used to the irritating truth that in the anthroposphere, even in the case of natural parenthood, adoption takes precedence over biological kinship. Even natural parents have to accept their own child as a child in order for it to become in the psychosocial sphere what it already appears to be biologically. Only the acceptance of the child as one's own destiny and task



potentially infinite turns the biological mother of the human child into an anthropogenic mother and *eo ipso* - in our terminology (borrowed from Dieter Claessens) - into a patron of her child.<sup>[631]</sup>

As a result of the overlap of the biological relationship of the gestation with a psychogenic promise of guardianship, the animal mother is transformed into a human mother; and that mutation would not be the risky enterprise it is if a whole plethora of improbabilities and counter-arguments did not have to be cushioned and circumvented before the natural possibility of human motherhood crystallizes into a case of successful co-animation and motherhood. Feminism's rebellion against the age-old cliché of the excessive demands of motherhood and the scientific elucidation of female participation in evolution - we refer once again to the epoch-making work of Sarah Blaffer Hrdy - converge on at least one point: that both parties have highlighted, as forcefully as was necessary, the improbability, randomness and historical variability of the "good mother" phenomenon. According to Hrdy's nuanced studies, mothers' investment in their children most often occurs when an overall calculation of acceptance has led in them to a positive outcome. Since this, factually, quite often turns out to be negative, the option of child abandonment, even child killing, however shocking this may sound to modern ears, belongs to the oldest realm of maternal attributions. To the absolutism of infantile need and demand corresponds on the maternal side the absolutism of the possibility of acceptance or rejection: a fact of which the most ancient cultures, in their myths of the dark and devouring mother, as well as in the innumerable stories of the *noverca* (stepmother), knew how to make a more realistic image than the Christian-bourgeois Modern Age, in which God is represented as one-dimensionally merciful and mothers as disinterested by nature. Along with the rejection of inversion, which may well be interpreted as a form of later abortion, in the pre-human evolutionary series there are also clear signs of

genetic opportunism: for example, when a primate mother whose offspring has been killed by a new herd leader tries to sire another offspring with the killer as soon as possible.

What in the past decades was described, and occasionally also denounced, by feminist critique and biological research as an ideology of solicitous maternalism, historically conditioned, "patriarchally" codetermined, according to its civilizational content has been an attempt of cultures to break that absolutism of mother-affection - elsewhere we have called it the Judgment Seat of the beginning -<sup>[632]</sup> by means of a kind of separation of powers between mother and culture in favor of the offspring. Insofar as it attempts to balance the dictatorship of unavailable maternal feelings by a normative rule that strengthens the psychic and physical chances of survival of the rejected child, the civilized human group recognizes its surrogate-motherly competencies: for this reason, moral opposition to the abortion of unborn and the abandonment of born children is the most important indication that a civilization takes itself seriously as such. It does this to the appropriate extent, when if necessary it considers itself capable, in relation to the life to come, of being more ratifying than an accidentally non-ratifying individual and more maternal than an accidental natural mother, who lacks, for whatever reason, the strength and willingness to take on her task.

In this sense, civilization is synonymous with the capacity to adopt. To raise the phenomenon to a categorical level, civilization would thus be the prototype of the functions of the mother: <sup>[\*\*\*\*\*]</sup> that is (according to Hrdy and Wilson), of all the animating, sustaining, educational returns to be invested in the offspring, which can be detached from the biological mothers and transferred to third persons or institutions: from wet nurses and assistants in the family, through the services of ecclesiastical diakonia, to the abstract systems of compensation, in which

implies the modern welfare state. In this context, the custom of abandonment or ex-position of the child can be understood not only as a forced escape valve against the excess of children among the poor; it also shows the awareness that even unwanted newborns should have a last chance to find a new parent. The deposition of children on church steps, which was practiced in the Middle Ages, includes the recognition of Mother Church as an adoptive power. If in the Spanish-speaking world, as well as in Italy, the name Foundling is relatively frequent, it is because Catholic priests, in the absence of a family name, used to baptize thus, because of their situation, the children abandoned at their doors; casting, in the Catholic way.

We are approaching a new definition of the civilizing process, whose key mechanism is the progressive development of technical and systemic alternatives to the first maternity. Civilization shows that, to a certain extent, maternity means a protectable function. The anti-naturalism of the civilization process is based on the metaphorization of motherhood: it is the substitute for the mother force in action. This way of understanding things rests on the assumption that the evolution of the species is stimulated, first of all, by the feeling that the core of the lack is to be sought in the scarcity of allomaternal potentials. The process of substitution culminates in Modernity, where, thanks to the transition to the *affluent society*, it has been possible to achieve a massive liberation of women from their traditional role definitions; with it, a fundamental revision of the immemorial stereotypes of the meaning and function of motherhood has taken place.

The civilizational content of the current era results in incomprehensible if it does not recognize, first of all, a broad experiment on the protectibility of maternal functions: linked to the salvation of the offspring in the face of the Molocista pact between war and culture.<sup>[633]</sup> Thus, a comprehensive theory of the economy of the

culture presupposes, together with the category of discharge, a general concept of prosthetics. From this point of view, the original prosthesis would be the person who seconds an active mother as allomother. If it is true that allomothering capabilities always represent the most precious commodity in a culture, it is natural to assume that the need to create symbolic and technical equivalents for deficient surrogate mothers motivates civilizational evolution as a whole. Since committed mothers most of the time take the task of being-rich-for-the-child very seriously, they are by nature interested in everything that facilitates their role. Irrespective of all philosophy and psychology they understand that the maintenance of that original simulation is of decisive importance for the life chances of their offspring; they feel that the justification of life by the upward drive is intimately connected for the child with their own balance of happiness and unhappiness. Given that the availability of allomaternal services is known to be scarce already from the beginning and, in general, constitutes the opportunity for easier access to that first, intuitively irresistible concept of wealth. To be rich means in principle: to be able to promise a mother access to sources with great flow of allomaternal energies.<sup>[634]</sup> He who in this sense cannot make rich is not rich himself.<sup>[635]</sup> We define wealth as the ability to engage in such an explanation. It may be that the greatest adventure of civilization consists in making motherhood explicit and, with it, a good part of what life means.

In previous considerations on the uterotope and special forms of neoteny in humans we have characterized the maternal solicitation effect, first of all, under the aspect of the niche technique; in doing so, the accent fell on the fact that the human mother-child space - unmistakably continuing prehuman-hominid traditions - possesses the characteristics of a microgreenhouse, in which a spontaneous, long-term tendency to refinement of human morphologies and rewarding of the most intelligent variations is at work. In the context

We must now place the representation in a more complex dimension, insofar as we now add the proof of how the hominid and proto-human mother-child field is already developing as a self-breeding space. self-creating space o thermotope psychic thermotope. The result is the molding and perfection of the mother-child field in its deluxe, humanly enlarged version. The selective tendency at work in it releases nothing less than the event fundamental event of anthropogenesis: the conquest of childhood. As is known, in the meantime in *homo sapiens* not only somatic and psychic configurations of the young (*neon*) are overcome in the morphology of the adult: in correspondence with the neotenic scheme (from the Greek *teínein*, to distend, to extend), propagated among mammals y domestic animals, even among small reptiles, such as the well-known axolotl; rather, the species becomes progressively infantilized as a whole and, as far as its life forms are concerned, comes to be placed under the sign of of the adolescence prolonged y from the capacity of permanent learning . The fundamental evolutionary line of anthropogenesis can only be understood when one recognizes in it the succession of positive couplings of pampering effects, which quantitatively widen and qualitatively intensify the mother-child space. In a way unparalleled in natural history, these self-reinforcing tendencies result in a life form of immature maturity or mature immaturity: the biocultural matrix of human luxury. The defense of childhood is the essence of culture; assuming that it is accompanied, at the same time, by the defense of culture against the abuses of the infantile. It is impossible that the neotenic tendency (which at the cultural level produces what Michel Serres calls *hominiscence*) would have prevailed if it had not been confirmed, channeled and saved by a control of success. This control enforces what in psychoanalytic terminology is called the reality principle. In this context it is shown that under this expression it was always necessary to understand already *implicitly* the compensation of the principle of luxury, which dominates in the mother-child field, with the principle of burden and effort of the group laws: since the call for pampering and comfort does not

knows no inner measure, it had to be equipped with ergotropic and nomotopic counterforces. Considered from this point of view, "cultures" are locally successful attempts at luxury *containment*. When they succeeded in being traditionally transmitted, they in fact demonstrated that they were in a position to limit the risks of infantilization by means of stabilizing norms (understandably, this resistance to pampering and comfort forms the field of phenomena on which the anthropologist Gehlen's attention was to be focused).<sup>[636]</sup>

It is therefore no coincidence that primitive cultures show gerontocratic traits almost without exception: the unsustainable infantilization of the anthroposphere could only be evolutionarily compensated by a complementary presbyterization. Since the mother-child sphere constituted everywhere the driving subversive focus of reality, it was in the interest of the groups to balance its arbitrariness everywhere by cultivating the authority of the elders. Through it, knowledge about the normative and ergotropic burdens of an accredited context of life will be transmitted. In the Old World, the elders are recognized as capable of governing because they are incapable of changing their opinion; the weight of the world hangs originally on the stubbornness of age. It was only Modernity that undid the gerontocratic parentheses around the cultural hothouses and embarked on the adventure of a rejuvenation of civilization almost without reservation: including the level of normative and logical orientations.

In the given context, it is easy to understand why the current trend towards the juvenilization of culture represents the psychosocial imprint of the "society" of superabundance. Only such a formation has been able to afford to attack the classic *containment* of the luxury of infantilization through the rigidity of the elderly. Today, for the first time in the history of civilization, the light-heartedness that surrounds childhood and innocence is no longer consciously repressed by the seriousness of the elderly. Since then, the scales have been tipping towards the childish side, no matter how much the

The conservatives of our time are concerned with filling the serious saucer with heavy weights, not ultimately with bad memories, with the threat of critical cases and loads-as-ifs. This indicates that the evolutionarily acquired orientation to the game of exchange between loading and unloading in the domestic economy of *homo sapiens* is rapidly dissolving.<sup>[637]</sup> For today's "societies" this situation is, to say the least, disconcerting. On the contrary, the opportunities that arise therefrom for a contemporary theory of culture must be described as inspiring: through the decompensation of adult culture, the connection between the greenhouse effect, conditioned by the welfare situation, and the release of infantilism in general becomes comprehensible for the first time in explicit expressions. In the new light, human history manifests itself as a conjunctural report on the *stand of* levitation; it deals with the progress in the consciousness of pampering and well-being.

The starting material for all the series of transformations of luxury in local cultures and for its explicit development in contemporary civilization is to be sought, as has been suggested, in the second half of the human gestational phase, in which the infant, if its evolutionarily preconfigured needs are more or less adequately corresponded, as the *junior* pole of the mother-child field, remains in a niche situation, analogous to that of the womb. It is there not simply as a jewel in its case; it evidences from the outset the characteristics of existentiality, in that, progressively emerging from the pre-existential dream, it can be induced to understand itself as allied to a co-existent being, endowed with powers and treasures. The intimate proximity to riches generates the experience of easy access to an abundance of which one cannot see how it could be exhausted. From this position grows an affective prejudice about the world, which, if not traumatically disproved by revocation, sediments into a fundamental mood of carefree freedom of access to treasures and treasure.

opportunities. The first being-in-the-world implies the impossibility of being poor; at least where mothers, in turn, avoid the risks of pauperism and, in relative psychic independence from external circumstances, maintain intact their capacity to be-rich-for-the-child.

Already in this pre-concept of wealth there are resonant traits imprinted; wealth here means attention and solicitude of the "world" with respect to subjective necessity: it includes the possibility, which can be constantly resorted to, of the dissolution of bodies into communications. This is why wealth is experienced as material transcendental and pure generality; it can be placed in the background as an "there is" that has no contrary. It acts, thus, as a condition of possibility of the world, without more. What is called free air is the dimension of richness in its existential reflection. As the background behind all backgrounds, wealth supports all figures, even that of determined lack and concrete deprivation. As an absolute upward impulse it opposes all burdens: each one separately and all in common. As a non-reducible surplus it breaks the point of all deduction and local reduction. It gives tone to the existence immersed in resonance with the prejudice, tired of repeating itself, of being provided always and irrecusably with more than what is necessary. Since to wealth belongs a giver and a there is, it is a semi-personal and semi-material "principle" at the same time; that is why it gathers in itself the advantages of the donation and of the finding. It is chance and property. One could say that it is punctually possessible and alienable, and yet it remains beyond all possessibility and alienability.

Whoever is familiar with the history of philosophical thought will realize that in this existential portrait of the original richness there have converged moments of what tradition called the *hypokeímenon*, that which is at the base; a concept dear to both grammarians and ontologists, because it expresses the function of the substance or subject: to serve as the support of properties and as the foundation of events. Its classical names



are God, nature, substance, form, matter, will or human praxis. In the given context it is a support of displaced quality: on the one hand, because wealth, understood existentially, constitutes, as a primary means, a hybrid form of something and someone, and is subtracted from the ontological-cosmic interpretation (concretely: for a mother to be experienced as a patron she has to offer a cosmic gift and give herself); on the other hand, because this support never acts only as a support for a burden or a firm support for a complement. The wealth of the beginning is material superabundance and personal dedication; it acts as an actively uplifting instance and as a pole of resonance in an animating neighborhood.

As long as the being-there feels in its first mood-configuring situations that it belongs to a richness thus interpreted, one must determine its mode of being as sustaining.<sup>[\*\*\*\*\*]</sup> The richness that sustains is called upward thrust; the sustaining that becomes fundamental mood is participation in levitation. One can examine the potential of these statements by comparing them with Heidegger's opposite formulations: in *Being and Time* he speaks of the fundamental feature of human being-in-the-world as throwing; an expression in which not only is to be seen an enormous metaphor for the ex-position or abandonment of existence in the random field of the coexistent. One also perceives in it the reference to an impulse forward and downward. Thrownness is the dispersing-descending tendency that is established with existential ecstasy, understood semi-conservatively, semi-modernly; it designates the immersion in groundless contingency, in the face of which the existent only manages to determine itself by its decision to accept the randomness assigned to it. In the conception of throwing, its belonging to the ontology of lack cannot be ignored, although, as we have seen, in Heidegger it is not a question of an economic or material lack, but of the absence of real need and lack of inner concentration on an inescapable work. If in the

Heidegger's youngest beginnings of antigrave tendencies are to be attributed, rather, to a repertoire of gestures charged with insolence: to a petty holding back and joining, to a rigid paralyzing oneself before the impression of supposedly higher calls, later also to a self-supporting leaning, which is negotiated under the password leap, and of which, in case of an attempt at consummation, it becomes clear that it can be anything but a movement upwards. The fundamental tragic tone cannot be overlooked: he who speaks of throwing himself down pays tribute to the inequality of beginnings. In the word resonates the experience that there were innumerable who were ex-posed from the beginning to a fall into disadvantages, which can eventually be corrected, but never compensated for.

As far as the existential constitution of support is concerned, such forced turns are strange to it. When there is no plunder at the beginning, no compensation is demanded. As long as wealth itself is the sustenance, existence does not have to earn anything more. Its first information is the feeling that there is enough at one's disposal, and more than enough; it follows that one can relax, at least for the time being. Since the existence that accompanies wealth is not threatened by the revocation of gifts, it does not need to protect itself distrustfully by means of an original self-effort. It is not exposed to the premature convulsion of fear, nor to the imperative of control of oneself and one's environment. The sustained life is not poisoned by the reproach of an overburdened sustainer that it is too heavy and must please show itself less obtrusive. In the case of real sustaining the sustained is convinced of the strength that passes from the sustainer to itself. Just as letting oneself lie down on a bed, when it is without struggle, can lead to the fundamental mood of serenity [*Gelassenheit*], it is plausible that the confidence in the lifting strength of the arms that hold me up is reflected in a mood of sustaining. Which includes the conviction of the omnipresence of the

antigravitation. Thus the upright gait of *homo sapiens* is not a mere physiological product of evolution among others; it embodies the somatic molding of the dimension of upward momentum, which already acts in hominids as a pre-reference to the sustained being-in-the-world.

From this point of view, human upright walking can be interpreted as an open hieroglyph of lightness. It is the proof that levitation has passed its evolutionary test. Because of its experience of extrauterine gestation, to which is added the extended phase of demands as a small child for maternal and allomaternal transport services, in the body of *homo sapiens* there is installed such a high measure of antigrave information that, as it grows, it becomes more and more confident in its own uprightness; to end up becoming the most suggestive emblem of *human positio*: a structure in which the most improbable posture has become obvious. In his typical bodily attitude the whole program of *existence-sapiens* is already formulated: human beings are exactly those beings in whom the almost impossible becomes everyday, the practically unsustainable becomes secure stability, the seemingly unattainable suddenly becomes omnipresent ether. *Homo sapiens* celebrates daily in his upright bodily constitution a feast of negentropy.

The economic paradoxes of the essence of the human being require  
a renewed critical look at the legaliformities, supposedly known, even trivial, in reality still misunderstood, that act in the mother-child-space of prehuman and protohuman living beings. If one takes the results of evolution as intended, it becomes evident that there must have been a mechanism in its course that drove the increase of improbability as an uninterrupted success story: one could call it a power plant, which made enough power available for the release of luxurious dispositions. This is the only reason why it could have begun to happen that certain (we may assume: maternal and allomaternal) forces of

The upward lift introduces islands of antigravitation into the animal world of the force of gravity. The place that shapes human beings is the one in which the upward mecha nistic impulse acts as a fundamental force. A patron, it is now understood, is not only a well-to-do person who invests a part of his fortune in the patronage of artists in order to raise his own prestige, like that Gaius Cilnius Maecenas, who consolidated his magnificent *adresse* as *amicus Caesaris* by engaging the poets Horace and Virgil, through generous support, to sing of Octavian as Augustus. The original patronage manifests itself in a mother or mother-in-law taking on the task of being-rich-for-the-child, often independently of her own endowment of material resources. The patronage function must be defined as a resonance connection and an upward impulse. From it comes the affluent life, the enriched life, the life apprehended by antigravitation.

When Hegel, in his Anthropological Lessons, qualified the mother as the "genius of the child," had before his eyes the psychic process in which the pre-subjective life, thanks to the encounter with the genius-mother principle, is endowed with personal subjectivity; if the process is subjected to a closer analysis it is shown that this bi-unitary animation is identical to the giving of the primordial impulse-upward gift. In idealism, the awareness of that gift was translated into a conviction, however over-interpreted, about the gift of freedom, understood as inalienable superiority of the subject over all kinds of external coercion: nothing can be so difficult or heavy that it would not be bearable for the subject, as long as he is filled with the security of wanting what he must. This may be considered a metaphysical exaggeration and a misleading transfer of the principle of levitation to wanting; the motive that does make sense in idealism lies in the belonging of the essence of the human being to the upward-impulse dimension. In it the there is and the you can are united with the it-will-help-you, but above all with the it-goes-well, which makes the horizon leap. From this linkage arises trust

in which the most improbable thing happens as something that, as soon as it is realized, is already understood by itself.

These considerations show that what Gehlen calls unloading can be appreciated for what it is worth if it is understood as a moment of a more complex lifting dynamic. It is decisive for the total picture that the unloading of the sustained is only made possible by the increased load of a sustainer. Nietzsche's axiom that every higher culture rests on a foundation of slavery draws civilizational consequences from this observation. But the concept of slavery is still too humanly thought out in Nietzsche, its transformation into machines and social systems is left uncomprehended in this turn. The anthropological counterpoint to Nietzsche's thesis would be the statement that there can be no life in upward impulse without the help of pampering patrons. If one starts from the fact of gestation through mothers, both prenatal and postnatal, the distribution of burdens made possible by culture leaps to the eye. Here it is clear how the mechanotic discharge passes from the donor to the recipient. But mothers are not only the caryatids in the armature of the edifice of civilization. It is true that without the unilateral commitment of the pamperer to the pampered the process of levitation would not be set in motion; but it would not be possible to maintain such a commitment if the sustainer were not herself sustained; on the one hand, through the home-founding alliance with the father (marriage is a contract for common discharge); on the other hand, through the collaboration of allomadres, among which can be counted the network of relatives and friends, including the older children themselves; and finally, through aid organizations and communal forms of solidarity, such as those that first came into existence in the era of metaphysically moderate altruism and, later, with the establishment of the welfare state. In general, it could be said that without the unloading of the burdened, successful motherhood is not possible.

But the greatest contribution to the "support of the supporter" effect is made, beyond all external supplements of strength and cooperative aids, by "mother nature", acting through the concrete mother. Through a plethora of innate dispositions she provides a foundation of bio-automatisms that intercept the pressure of permanent assistance tasks. The latter would be unbearable if it were to be overcome by a free will, left alone: but, from the first *bonding* effects, through the triggering of lactation, to the elevation of kinesthetic and empathic capacities, women who have given birth are supported by whole arsenals of inner sources of strength. It is these automatisms in the energy center of the mother's body that spontaneously execute a good part of the maternal work, as long as the triggering factors are not hindered by acquired inhibitions. It would not be indecent to note that one secret of the good mother's success consists in letting the mother-machine in her work unhindered. When this effect becomes effective, the mother floats above the mechanisms that make her position bearable; the mother-person is then a levitating superstructure above the mother-animal that is herself.

Who could deny that we are close to the generative pole here? of *humanitas*, of the possibility of gratitude towards the sustainer? The mother herself participates in it when she reaches the point where she understands her being-burdened as luck. Then she knows what otherwise only warriors know: that it is a privilege to be able to exert oneself. The *optimum* of carrying capacity would presumably be reached when a perfect synergy between mother nature and mother culture (*aka* law, welfare and parental authority) is reached. Let us admit that this is a case which, however attractive it may seem as a general, almost natural rule, empirically only happens in rare circumstances.

## 6. Neolithic mother catastrophe

The most decisive event in the psychohistorical development leading to traditional world conditions consists in the emergence of the chronically overburdened, slowly consumed, preoccupied mother: a phenomenon that can be traced from the first peasant women of the "Neolithic revolution" to the "doubly burdened" women who exercise a profession in the industrial "societies". In mothers in this situation it can be observed how permanent over-demands discompose the dynamics of upward momentum in the mother-child field. When this happens, the energetic balance necessary for sustained support is lost; with the result that, in a world increasingly determined by the lack of help and means of upward impulse, motherhood can feel like a burden that is difficult to overcome and, at times, even a curse. The words addressed to the woman by the angel in the Genesis narrative of the expulsion from Paradise unmistakably express the feeling that in human women there is no longer any blessing for childbirth and what follows.<sup>[638]</sup> The curse of the angel has historical-philosophical weight. Insofar as it determines female misery as an emerging phenomenon, it reflects the tendency towards the proletarianization of mothers in the emerging sedentary "societies".

One can summarily realize the causal mechanisms that led to this state if one considers together the three fundamental moments of the sedentary way of life: together

the transition to labor-intensive forms of soil cultivation, above all the assurance of life through the stockpiling of provisions and the population increase thus made possible. This triad of tendencies constitutes the framework in which family reproduction had to be transformed, tending towards the proliferation of children: reinforced by religious systems that imposed as a task the metaphysical exaltation of the numerous offspring (insofar as it was possible within the limits of the symmetry between progeny and future). Perhaps the idealization of the numerous offspring signifies the irruption of counterfactual thinking in culture. What was a curse wants to pass as a blessing from then on: the fundamental figure of the edifying, which only much later will be diluted again by the "to think dangerously". It could be that with this twist began the split between maternal realism and paternal idealism, which appeared as a trace of dominance within historical families.

In any case, the situation of women as mothers becomes precarious, as a matter of principle, in the agrarian world of life. If we take as a basis the standards described by the psychoanalyst and paleontologist John Bolwby of the relationship between mother and child, evolutionarily acclimated since the Pleistocene, there appears, beyond the intrauterine gestation of nine months and the extrauterine gestation of twelve, a space of time of four or five years in total, in which the small child is constantly dependent on a great display of care and the permanent proximity of maternal or allomaternal figures; Even after that time, the child's attachment to care is a persistent psychosocial imperative. The fact that in such a regime the frequency of births must be kept permanently low, no matter by what means, is self-evident, since from the woman's point of view, the danger to be avoided by antonomasia is the over-demand for multiple care. Here, the second, premature, surplus, troublesome child appears as the guest through whom evil arrives. This is why in the labels



The earliest informal forms allow for any reaction to this invader: traces of such ways of feeling can be found even in the modern claim to the right to abortion by the unwilling woman. But precisely the *worst case* pointed out here, the simultaneous solicitation by very close births, develops with the agrocultural ways of life, becoming the standard situation of married women. The general situation, after the transition to agriculture, it is true that it allows to materially assume the invasion of children in the families of peasants and lords and to feed the numerous guests with the help of the additional product of the cultivated lands, but the psychic care of the invaders turns out to be permanently problematic. The best known symptom of this precarious, systemically conditioned situation is the Benjamin-effect: only the last child in the series experiences the fullness of the dedication that should properly belong to each one, assuming that the mother was not too exhausted to pamper the youngest after fulfilling this duty to the others. The *mysterium iniquitatis* thus breaks into every fruitful family; because of it, sibling resentment can become the universal power in the background.

It follows that in the prolific family of the Neolithic, the invention of the

the unconscious that drives the history of civilizations as we know it: its first and permanent content is the unbearable envy of the underserved individual towards the closest mime rivals, the brothers and sisters; its motor is the unending demand for justice, which means: the impossible redistribution of maternal wealth. There is no fight here for an oedipal privilege, as a historically uninformed cultural-historical psychoanalysis never tires of repeating. What has to be fought for since then as something unattainable is completely normal maternal care, but exceptionally made extensive. It is not a question of incest, but of resonance, not of a genital desire for the mother, but of free access to the one who spoils, not of a rivalry with oedipal content, but of repressive competition.

fraternal. When the bond of the first intimacy weakens too much, the children isolate themselves from their own mother. The dispute, kept hidden, revolves around the scandal of experiencing as scarce what was never meant to be scarce.

All economies are since then potentially and currently compensatory: they express one scarcity by another. In the peasant strata of the great cultures practically every child has more or less reason to worry about the promise, proverbially made and almost irretrievably broken, to participate in levitation. What has been called the spirit of utopia arises from the ineffable demand for equal attentions for all; that would mean the reestablishment of the social synthesis from the spirit of a brotherhood beyond envy. The motive emphasized by Freud of the death of the father is, in reality, of an accidental nature. What gives content to the effective unconscious is the annihilation, as intensely desired as it is unconfessable, of the brother or sister, who are directly guilty of your impoverishment and procrastination. It is not by chance, then, that the biblical narrative of the original crime deals with the murder of the brother: in that context the idea that it could be the father who takes away some of the preference due to you would be impossible. The broadest delusions of spoliation refer to rivalrous *pears*; the paranoid believes the *alter ego*, and only him, to be capable of the worst, and certainly because he has already done it to himself. The delirium is at bottom empirical. As far as mothers are concerned, under these conditions they are forced to be the stronger, fairer and, finally, harsher sex in the inevitable injustice. They have to manage the lack that they themselves are; they stifle the cries to which they cannot simultaneously respond. This fate inevitably affects them as soon as they enter into the very likely situation of facing, during their fecund vital phase, and beyond, the consequences of their over-demanded fertility.

From the psycho-historical point of view, the history of the cultures of lack is implanted with the turn towards the manifest abundance of children, because only since then could the state of mind of non-sufficiency be consolidated across the entire breadth of a civilization in a large majority of individuals. Excluded from this are not only the lucky children of the poor, but above all the descendants of the primitive nobility, whose self-assertive attitude is not only shaped by a *training* of arrogance in keeping with their social position, but also finds support in a *continuum* of aura of maternal and allomaternal wealth. Nobility: this means psychoeconomically enjoying greater opportunities of access to allomaternal resources. These constitute the first psychically active concept of treasure. At the same time as a relative proletarianization of overburdened mothers - a tendency that is only partly compensated in the courts by their elevation to the authority of matrons - new psychological types of children emerge in the peasant and bourgeois estates: on the one hand, the subordinates, who grow up in a climate of fear of rejection and allow themselves to be proletarianized by their own parents; on the other hand, those stimulated by ambition, who have tasted the bitter sweetness of the rewarded life and devote themselves to their tasks with a fundamental state of mind composed of hunger, aggression and expectations of happiness.

In a world of shortages, which has the concept of treasure, the first forms of the idealism that allows human beings to make abstraction of their real situation are developed. The concept of idealism appears here as broken already as it sounds after Nietzsche's interventions: it designates neither the height of a sovereign feeling of self, nor the conviction about the primacy of the sphere of ideas, but a syndrome composed of interconnected illusions, by means of which an unbearable reality is surrounded with an envelope of reinterpretations and transfigurations. Because they support one another, illusions arrive in flocks; when they are skillfully intertwined,

Together they constitute a *collegium* of suggestions; an author with a sense for order and succession can unite them into a system. What is a system of thought but a treasure for people without treasure?

By nature, it is the mother who offers herself as the first object of idealization; not because she herself demands exaltations, but rather because the children, who remain obscure as to the true nature of their unpredictable progenitor, need for their own stabilization an edifying image of the Great Mother. It may be that the dynamic core of idealistic abstraction consists in the impossibility of seeing one's own mother as a small, helpless, exhausted creature. If there were goddesses, how would I put up with the fact that precisely that woman was not for me the closest thing to a goddess that one can think of?

## 7. Mime in the symbolic - The era of celestial treasures

The psychological achievements of the metaphysical era can be summed up in the fact that in it the well-being or the mime becomes capable of symbol. The symbol can be defined by its psychic use value: to think something absent as present and to imagine as available something missing. In the universe of symbolism there predominates a mode of experience that believes that the fullness of the real is present in the signs. That is why during the symbolist epoch the destinies of wealth are linked to its imaginations; the signs of wealth lead to the wealth of the sign. In this regime, to be able to make oneself an image of treasures and powers means already to be rich and powerful in a certain way; he who knows and is in a position to say what abundance means in its essence also possesses it himself in a certain way. If someone has a concept of the fullness of substance, he cannot be excluded from participation in its attributes. On this point, symbolism and Catholicism are synonymous. Where else could the belief flourish that he who approaches in the right disposition a scattered bone of a saint can be convinced that he has met that saint in real presence? Catholic realism is the continuation of totemism with other means; it transfers the *mana-principle* to the era of philosophical-theological categories. In this order there is no concept that is not part of treasures, nor any name of beings in which a current does not flow from the origin. But above all he who possesses a sense of that which is high, ecstatic and above, participates himself in the raptures of the

verticality. In the era of the treasure symbol or the logicized *mana*, being and thinking are, in fact, the same thing.

Metaphysics and fairy tales have in common that they make the true hero reach the goal of his desires through orderly detours. One gets an idea of this as soon as one goes to the bottom of the metaphysical form of desire: it is the same intense desiring that leads - in the manner of symbolic participation in the sought-after fullness - the desirer to the goal, before he has taken the first step. In the symbolic space every treasure seeker is found in the end by his treasure. It is certainly no coincidence that the last high symbolist in the old European tradition, Ernst Bloch, has elevated the search for treasure to the form of the world process. In him, the search, thanks to an anticipatory reverie full of content, capable of action, was to be transformed into a clear production. In fact, he who discovers the New World has to feel with sufficient force the attraction of the legends of El Dorado, southern and western, to understand the signs of the mature time and to make his irruption. Whoever conquers the air must have dreamed of flying long enough to risk the altitude with the first flying apparatus that comes along. Whoever desires collective wealth must have critically-economically reached the root of power-being-rich in general. That is why nothing is achieved by mere treasure-hunting; the goods of fortune have to be produced, in any sense of the word. World history is for Bloch a long fermentation of wealth emanating from the foundation of the world that has not yet found its alchemist; it executes the imperative *enrichissez-vous* at the level of the species; its *agens* and *medium* is the enlightened discontent. Naturally, the "identical being-identical, not alienated (anticipated by the symbol), of existence and essence in nature"<sup>[639]</sup> can only be realized at the end of history: general wealth is postponed. It would only be true and real as the consummated *telos* of all productions, and all its anticipations here and now must contain a moment of non-truth. That is why the system

Bloch, who places at the beginning the dream of a rich life, and places at the end, on the contrary, the fullness of this richness, is still imprisoned in the patterns of the old European theology.

If, on the contrary, fullness is placed at the beginning, one passes into a mode of thinking in which lack can only be introduced epigenetically; it appears, then, as the remainder of the bad, as *privativum*, as an effect of spoliation, as a diminution. In the system of the original thought mortals live completely under the protection of their first immunity; they do not need to search, since they have already been found. For them everything is included to the end in circles that grow incessantly. In any case, it is not well known how the human being of Modernity has to manage to connect with these edifying original conceptions without deserting his time. Even in the remnants of nobility that remain today, the magic of origin has lost its effect. The knowledge that holists possess a better status of immunity than modern human beings proves nothing in favor of the possibility of becoming holists again. It remains to be meditated: the pleromatic defense does not deploy its protective umbrella against disease, lack and impairment, but against the trauma of insecurity experienced in the absence of upward momentum. It aspires to the overcoming of what does not offer confidence by means of confidence, insofar as it re-establishes to a greater extent the homeostasis destroyed on a small scale. As long as the magic circle retains its regenerative force, everything that falls into its lot can be interpreted as teaching. Moreover, in the shamanism of totality, disturbances serve as a necessary chapter in the learning path of the soul called to study its incommensurability; the whole contour of life is collected in an inner space, which forces the plunderers to become co-producers of plenitude. He who has bathed in the river of origin is covered by the impossibility of being poor, like Siegfried by the dried blood of the dragon.

While, because of the post-Neolithic agricultural turn, in the first cities, kingdoms and empires a fundamental state of mind of permanent lack was acclimated - only partially compensated by the glory of the god-kings and by their aura of majesty, which invited imaginary participation in it -, in the oppressed populations multiple systems of myths developed - more precisely: schemes of inner image production and prefigured reverie, later described as

"The question remains open whether the genetic connection, assumed here, between the first sedentary civilizations (along with their bifocal arrangement of dominant city and servant countryside) and the emergence of paradise-fantasies can be considered a genetic connection. It remains an open question whether the genetic connection, assumed here, between the first sedentary civilizations (together with their bifocal arrangement of dominant city and servant countryside) and the emergence of paradise-fantasies can be corroborated by results of comparative mythology; it is certain only that in most of the great cultures, which were based on the synthesis of agriculture, crafts and writing, a symptomatic linkage can be observed between representations of a postmortal existence and fantasies of free access to a world of fabulous fulfillment. In the very widespread garden-utopias, moments of transfigured rusticity are compensated by attributes of the civic way of life. When the totality of the world is recreated in the form of a garden, the riches of nature and culture converge consonantly in a limited space.

We could speak of a first form of configuration of the  
The new stylization of human existence as a metaphysically codified treasure hunt would depend on it. In the treasure phantasm the prototypical images of power and its opulence, as established in primitive royal cultures, are united with inner intuitive patterns of fulfillment and sustenance, which, in connection with the above considerations, we assume to refer to experiences with maternal and allomaternal mime potentials, however deficient they may be. If material treasures act as



attractors for the consciousness is, in the first place, because they are pleasant messages materialized; they embody pleromatic masses from which radiates the promise that levitation will one day occur. The treasure-seeker is promised that the upward impulse prevails in the end. By means of treasure-fantasies a manic corrective is introduced into the fundamental depressive mood of primitive imperial cultures. A treasure, surrounded by dreams: that is the prototype of the pampering power that the fullness of the possible keeps at its disposal and that of its own. Thanks to its evidence, the archetype of wealth, which was revealed pre-objectively in the sovereign mother, acquires an objective form. Now it is only necessary to say where the treasure is buried. The report of tradition is solemn: die and you will find it.

It is now understood why a treasure can be both substance and person at the same time; of this unfolding, figures such as the maidens of fortune or modern fortunes still bear witness, who in their dedication to their protégés unite personal epiphanies with material flows of goods. This can be seen, for example, in the popular book of *Fortunatus*, the prototype of the lucky child, presented with a magic bag, whose irruption into rich life was narrated by European authors between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries. The irony of the classical tales of superabundance is noticeable when the general business conditions of the international metaphysical traffic are taken into account: believers have to suppose in the Lord of the garden, the Father God, the inexhaustible possibilities of pampering that they experienced in the case of empirical mothers, most of the time only indirectly. As a rule it escapes them that the royal pleroma only shines, as they have it before their eyes in real and imaginary splendor, because they themselves have contributed their share to its exaltation. In the midst of taxes, services and dreams they surround the Lord with the aura of the force of attention, of which they wish him to favor themselves. Without knowing well what awaits them, the people remain willing in the class society as the Lord's mother. At the same time the people must raise their eyes to the Lord.

to their great ones, as if these, for their part, were the mothers of the people. In these relations of desire the psychodynamic *social contrac* of the metaphysical era is articulated.

In a first reading it is the Lord, if he allows them access to him, who provides his own with a share in his superabundance. This is why the return-to-sustainability through wealth constitutes the fundamental gesture of the narratives of paradise in monotheistic cultures, even if, by their narrative form, they deal rather with a forward-going-towards-abundance. Among numerous examples of rabbinic narratives about the messianic time, let us cite a passage in which we can observe the Judaization of the Hellenistic-Roman motif of the Golden Age:

The rabbis taught: there is an abundance of grain in the field, on the top of the mountains (Psalm 72, 6). They said: one day the grain of wheat will rise like a date palm to the top of the mountains. Perhaps you think it will be hard to reap it, but: a wind like the wind of Lebanon will gather its fruit, murmuring; the holy one, praised be he, will unleash from his treasure chamber a wind that will undo its fine flour; each one will then go to the field and bring home the palms of his hands full for his food and for the food of the people of his house [...]. One day a grain of wheat will be equal to both kidneys of a great ox [...]. The future world is not like this world; in this world one has to work hard to harvest the wine and tread it, in the future world one will gather a single grape in a cart or a boat, place it in a corner of the house and serve oneself from it as from a great cask; its wood will burn under the pot. There shall not be any grape that does not reach thirty measures of wine (Kethuboth 111 b).<sup>[640]</sup>

It cannot be overlooked that in this legend of the messianic state (perhaps even eschatological) is present the tendency to return to the poor and exhausted nature in the profane time the lost competence of pampering. Under the signs of wheat and wine appears an archaic delirium of wet-nurses: everything overflows, everything is breast. The re-established mother nature cancels the drama of weaning, stops the fall into poverty and returns to take her own to heights where gigantic grains grow and the wind plays the role of miller. It is decisive that such images return the imagination of the clients, before work, to a state, in which they involve the saints, the God of Israel, in universal allomaternal services. In end-time dreams of that kind, God is not represented as the lawgiver, but as *sponsor* and *pamperer*. Otherwise it would be incomprehensible the idea that the human beings of the messianic time would no longer do the work of harvesting with their own hands, but would find the flour already ground in the fields; just as the work of the winegrower could be dispensed with because the grapes would be immediately transformed into

barrel. In the spirit of the allomaternal mime, it evokes a nature that at any time provides ready-made products.

Precisely this shortening of the path to the result, bypassing the intermediate steps, which include work or alienation, constitutes the essence of mime. The dream of income without work serves as an ideal for all dreams of levitation and consumption:<sup>[641]</sup> is always to be reckoned with when it comes to expenses. For popular are always only the expenses or the efforts of others. Messianism means hope in a state of the world in which work would be completely externalized: either because it would be taken over by a totally untied or, what is the same thing, entirely proletarianized nature, or because it would be completely transferred to machines or to an underworld of the damned. Messianism would be, according to it, a conception to postulate the recovery of the maternal mime force at the level of an entire people. That is why it is important to note that in this delirious economy the Messiah cannot be immediately the patron of his own. Before, his supporters would have to have enriched him sufficiently for him to be in a position to return the wealth accumulated in him to nature, until nature, for its part, becomes the allomother of the clientele.

In this reading of the texts of waiting for satisfaction, messianism is shown as the matrix of an original accumulation of mime capital in heaven. That its center of gravity is placed, first, in the oral, alimentary utopias, must naturally be referred to the renewal of the mime contract in the postnatal mother-child field, ideally deployed. It may not be mere chance that some of the most profound thinkers of Judaism in the twentieth century granted a great, if distorted, messianic force to the process of capital, because it would potentially be in a position to satisfy all members of the "society", especially to those hitherto reduced to misery; the fact that Walter Benjamin supposed only a "force

weak messianic"<sup>[642]</sup> shows that he too, as we have already noted, despite his Marxist orientation, remained a conservative-misery to the end.

Utopias of orality can only be overcome by utopias of prenatality. How this is expressed, as the case may be, is shown by Moses Maimonides, 1135-1204, in a treatise on the *Sanhedrin* of the Mishnah, a collection of Jewish laws, in which he deals with the popular representations of the delights of the afterlife of the righteous.<sup>[643]</sup> With frank contempt Maimonides refers to the conceptions, in his eyes grossly materialized, of those interpreters who believe that the righteous earthly life will be rewarded by a stay in the garden of Eden, where there would be unceasingly food and drink in superabundance, together with beds of silk, houses of precious stones and rivers of noble wine. According to the opinion of other popular teachers, in the days of the Messiah the earth would produce fine garments, already woven and ready, and would provide the elect with freshly baked bread, which would come straight from the earth. As in all versions of objectifying utopia-abundance, the ultimate good is found in the profusion of the constant supply of goods, the production of which is advanced either in nature or in invisible workshops. Against this robust representation of ultimate things, Maimonides formulates a philosophical utopia of a-corporeal enjoyment which is only granted to the metaphysically formed intellect after separation from the mortal sheath. In that alternative promise the emphasis shifts from objective to pre-objective satisfactions. In accordance with Platonic traditions, Maimonides speaks of the purely spiritual bliss of the soul, which consists in the presence and constant recognition of God. The contemplative intellect is conceived here as a body without organs, let us say, constituting a pure consciousness, without having to worry about its conditions of preservation. According to tradition, the pure intellect is thus presented as a substance separable from the body. Such a self-self, without a body, corresponds to a pre-oral state, in which the modalities of nourishment can

remain in the background, while the alert foreground belongs to a subtle consciousness, jubilant at the noetic coexistence with the great Other (who does not yet maintain distance as a real Other). As such, the presence of God already signifies antigravitation. What in philosophical codification is presented as opposition between materialism and idealism, embodies, from the level of depth psychology, the difference between object-relation and object-communication; from the poetological point of view it designates the difference between oral utopia and prenatal utopia. The cut between intrauterine and extrauterine gestation motivates both the most concrete and the most sublime symbolizations of the longing for sustenance.

Since Christian eschatology assumes in many aspects the heritage of messianism, it is not surprising that a similar dynamic of fantasy is at work in it with respect to the last things. What is also important to it is to encourage the reestablishment of the conditions of fullness. To her style belongs, as in the popular Jewish models, a crude physicalism, for whose motivation the reference to the fact that the conception of the body in the oral stage can best be expressed in visions of nourishment is appropriate. Which refer to ingestion of, and participation in, a flowing richness. In the fifth book *Against Heresies* of St. Irenaeus of Lyons, apocryphal words of Jesus are quoted, transmitted by disciples of John, the disciple of the Lord, which if they were authentic would demonstrate the presence of the crudest utopias of superabundance in the midst of the good news of the Gospel. The guiding idea of the para-Jesusitical discourse is that the good works of the pious cannot be rewarded in this time of the world, but only in the era of his return, but then a hundredfold upward:

The days will come when vineyards with 10,000 vines each will grow, and in one vineyard 10,000 branches, and on one branch 10,000 shoots, and on each shoot 10,000 clusters, and on each cluster 10,000 grapes, and each grape will produce 1,000 liters of wine when pressed. And when one of the saints takes a cluster, the other will cry out to him: I am a better cluster, take me and praise the Lord for me! Likewise one grain of wheat will produce 10,000 ears, and each ear will have 10,000 grains, and each ear will have 10,000 grains, and each ear will have 10,000 grains, and each grain will have 10,000 grains.

grain will yield 10 pounds of white, pure flour. And so all other kinds of fruits and seeds and herbs. <sup>[644]</sup> And so on.

Here, too, an anticipatory nature is fantasized, the richness of which exceeds all possible demands. In such a paradise the modern ideology of desire would not be satisfied, neither in its psychoanalytic nor in its consumerist form, because in the midst of superabundance there would be no room left for persistent tensions of drive and object. It would be necessary to warn those concerned that in such a beyond-abundance nothing can be bought. The aforementioned phantasm addresses the situation of need of a clientele that dreams of first and last satisfactions: not of a vacation of transcendent experiences. The heaped-up figures of abundance have, naturally, no sense of calculation, but act as cratophanic hyperboles. They praise *via eminentiae* God, the one who pampers. It is hardly necessary to say that the planet Earth, even in a state of transfiguration, would not be large enough to support even a vineyard with the aforementioned properties. The abundance to which this period of prosperity bears witness is to be understood epiphanically: to have a concept of God means to praise him, here as everywhere; to praise God rightly means to describe as limitless his power of care and attention. In place of the mean mother has appeared a nature in a permanent state of drugged relaxation. From the psychological point of view we should certainly speak of an enthusiastic defense of hunger, more precisely: of the hallucinatory longing for the reestablishment of homeostasis, which allows the pre-subject to lower his tension of desire, turned into trauma, to the level of zero. The liberation from the spell caused by the object of the waking world by reducing the tension of existence to nirvanic zero is accepted in this psycho-economic space as equivalent to bliss or freedom.

Classical religious metaphysics thus constitutes a paradoxical circle of desire: it functions on the premise that it excites the desire to be with God to the maximum, while at the same time implying that what is desired can only be found in a state free of desire. This is accepted as the perfection of immunity against chance: against the exterior, which violates the integral form of one's own life, as well as against the interior, which humiliates out of necessity and dependence. It is clear that trauma is apprehended here as a metaphysical talent; he who does not carry it with him does not go far spiritually, because he lacks the extremism provided by the original wound, and perhaps only by it. For this reason, in all these disciplines it is necessary to stimulate, in the first place, the sense of anti-gravitation, the repulsion of the real: the human being must be eradicated from the probable and oriented to the absolutely improbable, to the impossible.

This is best accomplished by means of intense images of ascension to heaven and attractive invitations from on high. From heaven, irresistible gratifications, transfigurations and haloes beckon. After the total mobilization of the soul by the illusion, the presuppositions under which the evocation of prenatal communion can proceed are fulfilled. This, by nature, lacks images; it leads to floating homeostasis, allusive in metaphors of oenological-oceanic distension. Some schools of wisdom stand before such perspectives; others shatter even that horizon. They interrupt the search in positivism, which cannot be differentiated from nihilism, the product of disillusionment with everything.

Examples of this way of thinking, calculating, speaking and feeling are *adducible ad infinitum*; together they constitute a universal library of homeostatic dreaming. It would be *eo ipso* the compendium of the knowledge of historical mankind about ascensions to heaven, together with the calculations of the corresponding sacrifices. In it would appear at what prices the seekers tried to achieve transfiguration: here the basis of exchange of fanaticisms is in view. In addition to the Jewish and Christian representations of the end of time, the analysis of the elaborate phantasmagoria of paradisiacal gardens in Islam, which differs from the conventional oral and prenatal utopias above all by the heterodox addition of sexual utopias, a motif that has become interesting nowadays, must be confronted, since the psychodynamic enigmas of the Islamic-terrorist cult of death give food for thought to the West (to that West which, from the point of view of its fanatical detractors, perhaps also envious, represents the empire of really existing pornography, and *eo ipso* a deeply hurtful parody of the Islamic popular heaven).<sup>[645]</sup> In this panorama one cannot miss allusions to the delights of the Pure Country, around which the adepts of popular Buddhist-amida have developed a whole universe of imaginations and spiritual exercises. The context would also call for an exposition of the

teachings on the attainment of immortality in the alchemical doctrines of esoteric Taoism. Additional variants of examples of actual ornamentation of heavens, paradises, transfigured worlds and other metaphysical or para-metaphysical characterizations of the levitation space are unnecessary for our considerations: the necessary materials for a comparatology of the afterlife can be found in the mythographic and scientific-religious literature.<sup>[646]</sup>



## 8. Immanent desire, Faust novels and the democratization of luxury

For the rough notes, here traced, of a history of the mime and its zigzags, in what follows the displacements to transcendence and the various eschatologies of distension (including the Freudian myth of the death drive) are of lesser importance than the re-descent of the imaginatively codified desire for luxury and overabundance into earthly contexts and mundane operations. It is now a question, in a word, of the constitution of the modern world through the transformation of the ascent to heaven into a horizontal exodus, the geographical symbol of which is called America. To this effect contributes a change of accent of unlimited consequences: from transcendence to immanence and from asceticism to expression. Thus, the so-called sky ceases to serve as a projection screen of limitless desire; the new screen opens into the vastness of what is humanly and terrestrially possible: instead of transcending upward, the modern soul learns to cross the oceans. "Even the air becomes horizontal."<sup>[647]</sup> The sense of the infinite is retroscendently articulated; it reaches ever wider and deeper into earthly optional spaces. The whole beyond is now sought already in the hereafter; what was heaven becomes a technical problem.<sup>[648]</sup> The shift is effected by the reversal of the direction of know-how or can-do from rhetorical-scholastic operations to technical-engineering and entrepreneurial operations. Hence the interest of the Modern Era in figures of

character in which the *belle alliance* of desiring, being able, having, doing and enjoying is realized.



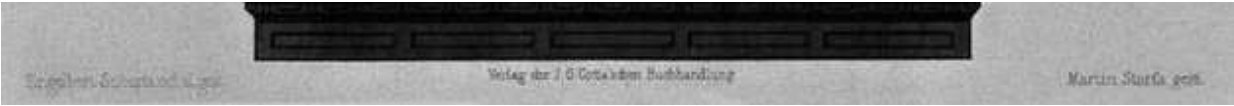


Illustration from a 19th century edition of *Faust*.

In this context it seems appropriate to outline once again the meaning and importance of the figure of Faust. In her crystallizes a tendency that we call retroscendence of the mime: with Faust the modern activist subjectivity of consumption and experience enters the historical-motivational stage. Stimuli, like motors, also have their history. The timeliness or prematurity of this debut, which is presented to us in the so-called popular book - *Historia von Doktor Johann Fausten / dem weitbeschreyten Zauberer und Schwarzkünstler [History of Dr. Johann Fausten, the wandering magician and necromancer]*, published in 1587 by Johann Spiess in Frankfurt am Main - is revealed both by the historical circumstances and the internal, almost utopian vectors of the text. Here the search for treasure, cognitively and sensitively, becomes an inner passion for the world. That Faust's book came at an opportune moment is shown by its success; that it has inherent premature traits follows from the fact that the here proclaimed new human being, the magician-type of sage, who by study, business and fraud becomes powerful, only by a semi-technical path achieves his successes in principle. Indeed: that Faust's longing should have sought alliance with the accomplice of desire, Mephistopheles, betrays more than all the rest the historically limited *stand of* the powers of mime and attention. However, one only approaches the figure of the devil when one recognizes in it an advertising prospectus of a new powerful pamperer. The latter gives a glimpse of a hitherto unheard-of imperative:

you have to increase your capacity, even if by necromantic means! It is the will to be able [\*\*\*\*\*] that will distinguish the operative and operable human being of the Modern Era from the ontological human being of the Middle Ages, who overcame and solidified his impotence in metaphysical images of the world. By the turn to the being-capable-of-acting - prophetically articulated in Francis Bacon's humanist plenipotentiary thought - the project is announced.

unloading. With its factotum-properties, the technically powerful spirit, good-evil, do-gooder-evil, qualifies as the hidden allomother instance of the human being of the Modern Era.

This circumstance cannot be stressed enough: if Mephistopheles embodies in the book of Faust a figure of great modernity, it is because he offers the "new man" completely mundane and completely technical, though still technical-diabolic, ways for the realization of desire; if this figure is more realistic, it is only because he already establishes regulatory circuits between demonic supply and human demand: after the demon has shown what is now within reach thanks to him, desire ventures into a wide front of unknown audacities and expands the market of good devilry. This constitutes the analytical content of this tale of alliance between the sage, eager for satisfaction, and the demon, willing to make concessions. Although the new realizations of desire are openly revealed as criminal actions, they have the reader's sympathy because they ensure the principle of redistribution. Being criminal they are also just; they are just because they check the eternal and unjust miserliness with pampering and gift, though only in an exemplary case. This popular book knows the *modus vivendi* of the exuberant doctor:

D. Fausto did not lack food and provisions. When he wanted a good wine, the spirit would bring it to him from the cellars, wherever he wished; as he himself once said, he would very much mistreat the cellars of his master, the Prince Elector, and those of the Duke of Bavaria and the Bishop of Salzburg. Thus, he also had daily stews, for he mastered such a magic art that, as soon as he opened the window and named a bird he liked, it came to him through the window. Likewise, his spirit brought him from all the surrounding manors, from the courts of princes or counts, the best stews, all completely princely. He and his groom were splendidly dressed, and the clothes for this he had to buy or steal for him his spirit in Nuremberg, Augsburg or Frankfurt at night, because at night the shopkeepers were not accustomed to be in the store; and with the tanners and shoemakers it was the same thing.

*In summa*, it was all stolen or borrowed material [...].

Dr. Faustus thus lives an epicurean life day and night; he does not believe that there is a God, hell, or devil.<sup>[649]</sup> *The doctor is a man of the devil, but he does not believe* that there is a God.

With this narration we have entered a world in which a very bearable lightness of being is assured as long as it is others who work: there is still no question of relations of production. The narrator of *history* leaves no doubt as to how the Faustian plunder of the great future is to be carried out: the customary exploitation of the people by the great lords is followed by the innovative exploitation of the lords and artisans by exceptional human beings, whether they be sages, artists or company directors.

The fascination that for centuries emanated from the original figure of Dr. Faustus - and of which only a refined glimmer remained visible in Goethe's sublimations - consists, then, in an extensive and intramundane promise of pampering and comfort. Since this promise was indeterminately addressed, a good part of the bourgeois intelligentsia of all subsequent generations could feel appealed by it. The fascinating thing is perceptible even after centuries: Faust is the man who in the middle of life discovers the trick of all tricks: the short way to wealth, without work, and, with it, the leap from desire to enjoyment.<sup>[650]</sup> He is the protagonist of the bourgeois demand for the means of pampering and well-being of the present and the future. His metaphysical lightness, more accurately: his postponed interest in the salvation of his own soul is what opens for him access to unlimited sources of comfort and enjoyment. In doing so, he provides an infectious model of how the sad work of self-preservation could be ended at a stroke. Thanks to magical methods he advances by leaps and bounds towards results, without having to endure the long march through production and honest toil. His discovery - the pact with the devil is its symbol - consists in the fact that also on the plane of adult desire one can demand and find satisfactions as complete as would otherwise only be possible in the symbiosis of the small child with the committed mother: assuming that he has a very powerful pampering *partner* at his disposal. Faust indulges in the broad regression that nevertheless leads to the adult goal.

The scandal of Faust's existence has, then, a name: immoderation in well-being. It directs the open rupture with the old European traditions of the moderate, prudent, self-restrictive life, as articulated by the ideas of *sophros'yne* and *moderatio*. If there is a Faustian sin, it is the constitutive sin of the Modern Age, insofar as it consists in the rupture with the system of the old European modules. With it begins not only the infiltration of an infinite yearning in finite circumstances, but also the practical de-limitation of traffic and consumption. In both cases the dynamics of the process of capital already appear, reflected in the subjective qualities of a relentless exploration and an insatiable appetite for experiences. Faust's maxim disavows measure and *ordo* because it is no longer determined by finite and satisfiable needs, but by unrealizable desires. To this corresponds that the amusing doctor travels as much through the newly unbounded world as only otherwise fixed capital does in the form of loaded ships through the seas of the world; he can no longer, nor does he want to, drop anchor anywhere, because his desires no longer have an end; he cannot invite the instant to remain, since he himself projects himself as an unstoppable current, without an outlet into the future. [651] Even the airspace is no longer safe from its irruption. The Faust-ideology implies the pronouncement against the limits that obedience, poverty of resources and lack of entrepreneurial spirit had drawn; and if the means that procure pampering and comfort for Faust are still to be described *pro forma* as depraved, one cannot overlook, however, the liveliness of the encouragement to those effects during most of the bourgeois epoch. The interest in sin and disinhibition determines the market originally. When such things are going on, public attention is focused on the plus of life.

It was only after the threshold to the *affluent society* was clearly crossed in the West, starting in the second half of the 20th century, that the fascination with the figure of the unbridled sage suddenly faded away, probably because human beings lost

with the growing real consumerism the feeling of being able to learn something from Faust's symbolic licenses and audacities. Konrad Adenauer no longer needed to ban *Faust*. With the invention of consumer credit we have all moved ahead of the time of work and are already living in the future of desire: it is no longer necessary to explain how the credit card has rendered the diabolical pampering companion superfluous. In the developed consumer system, to the "register of human rights is added the right to regress."<sup>[652]</sup> In the developed consumer system, to the "register of human rights is added the right to regress."<sup>[652]</sup>

With all this, the name of Mephistopheles represents the discovery of a figure of transcendence. The diabolical pact is the figure of an inexpressible contract, whose content is total care, as if it were that of a mother. While levitation uncovers intramundane playgrounds, it cuts the reference to the afterlife. Thus the eyes of subsequent generations of Europeans will be opened to their secular opportunities. In contrast, the morality of the story was not given much consideration from the outset. Although the spoiled man, after the end of the 24-year term, was left with the prospect of the eternal pains of hell, the affectionate public was no less interested in what happened in his forays into the consuming human being, freed from chains: the epic feasts, the luxury raised from the table, the escapades with love affairs both above and below, the travels of the second Simon Magus through the air and in space (in which the vertical takes on an aerotechnical sense), <sup>[653]</sup> the reports on the infernal beyond, the vicissitudes during the journey to heaven, now transformed into a manned space flight, the amusing-evil adventures of the necromancer in princely courts, the pranks with monkeys, peasants and students: all this describes a circle of events that deserve to be experienced and described. Faust's return to the world is punctuated by overflowing anecdotes about wine orgies, food orgies and bacchanals. In repeated passages crystallizes the multi-episodic structure of modern narrative prose, which draws its protagonists into the broad plane of experience. Thus contributes the early modern novel,



as the first journal of being, to configure the form of the subject, insofar as it defines the hero as a machine for narrating sensations per unit of narration.

As far as the ominous pact with evil is concerned, it testifies to a gain in realism, because total pampering and flattery, in the case of non-lactants, can now be openly represented as exploitation of a third party. Exploitation that is only possible thanks to usurpation and rebellion. Whose justification, however ambivalent it may be, can be drawn from the fact that one clearly thinks of the plunder of great lords, of whom one cannot dismiss the suspicion that they themselves are exploiters. The intellectual figure of exploitation of the exploited represents, as has been noted, a prior version of the principle of redistribution, without which the participation of the modern state in the economic results of society could not be legitimized. In this sense, the Faustian devil, along with figures such as Robin Hood, Fortunatus, Eulenspiegel and others, should be designated as a precursor of the social state, inasmuch as the primacy of self-service is not considered in him; he is a mystical ancestor of social democracy. Since in his transactions it is rather a question of displacements of wealth from the old to the new possessors of treasure than of direct taxation, he anticipates the stock exchange rather than the treasury.

As a thief and concealer in one person, Mephistopheles illustrates the state of affairs of expropriation most explicitly. He adopts the viewpoint of the enlightened kleptocracy, in that he traces wealth to the point where it can be stolen as a finished product; the modern fiscal state, which by virtue of law takes year after year out of the pockets of those who are said to earn more than half their income, can link up with the kleptocratic standard. It was reserved for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to replace the product in the production process and to rewrite the treasury as capital; to assume, consequently, larceny in the labor contract itself, after which it will be called exploitation. From here we can formulate the premises under which the authoritarian fiscal state

The early bourgeoisie is transformed into the permissive social state of Modernity.

With the establishment of the routines of public charity during the twentieth century, the adventure of the present, the passage to the "society" of levitation, enters its operative phase. <sup>654]</sup> The formula takes up Schumpeter's suggestion that the real achievement of capitalism consists in the popularization of access to exquisite goods: progress in the economic field does not mean that the Queen of England can buy as many silk stockings as she likes, but that the sales clerks can afford such stockings.



Jean-Antoinette Watteau (?), *Label for the art dealer Gersaint*, 1720.

Democratizing luxury: we will have to get used to the idea that this project, strongly contested from the beginning, is much earlier than the 20th century; as well as to the idea that Modernity cannot be more than the most recent form-process of the paradox from which we come: since *homo sapiens* has stepped onto the stage of evolution.

claims the almost impossible as something natural and normal. In the moralizing literature of England one finds from the middle of the eighteenth century indications that there began to be public discussion - perhaps for the first time in the history of class "society" - of the imitation of luxury by the poor; at the same time, reason was found to complain of the "demoralization of manners", generated by the infection of the lower strata by the unseemly appetite to imitate the rich. Since then, the issue of levitation has had, especially among economists, loud-mouthed advocates who, contrary to the luxury-phobic traditions of an entire era, defend the advantages of high, even wasteful, consumption. Typical of the emerging bourgeois affirmation of wealth is the lavishly ornamented sign (Dutch: *uythangboord*) of workshops, stores and merchant houses, which from the 17th century onwards became a popular artistic genre.

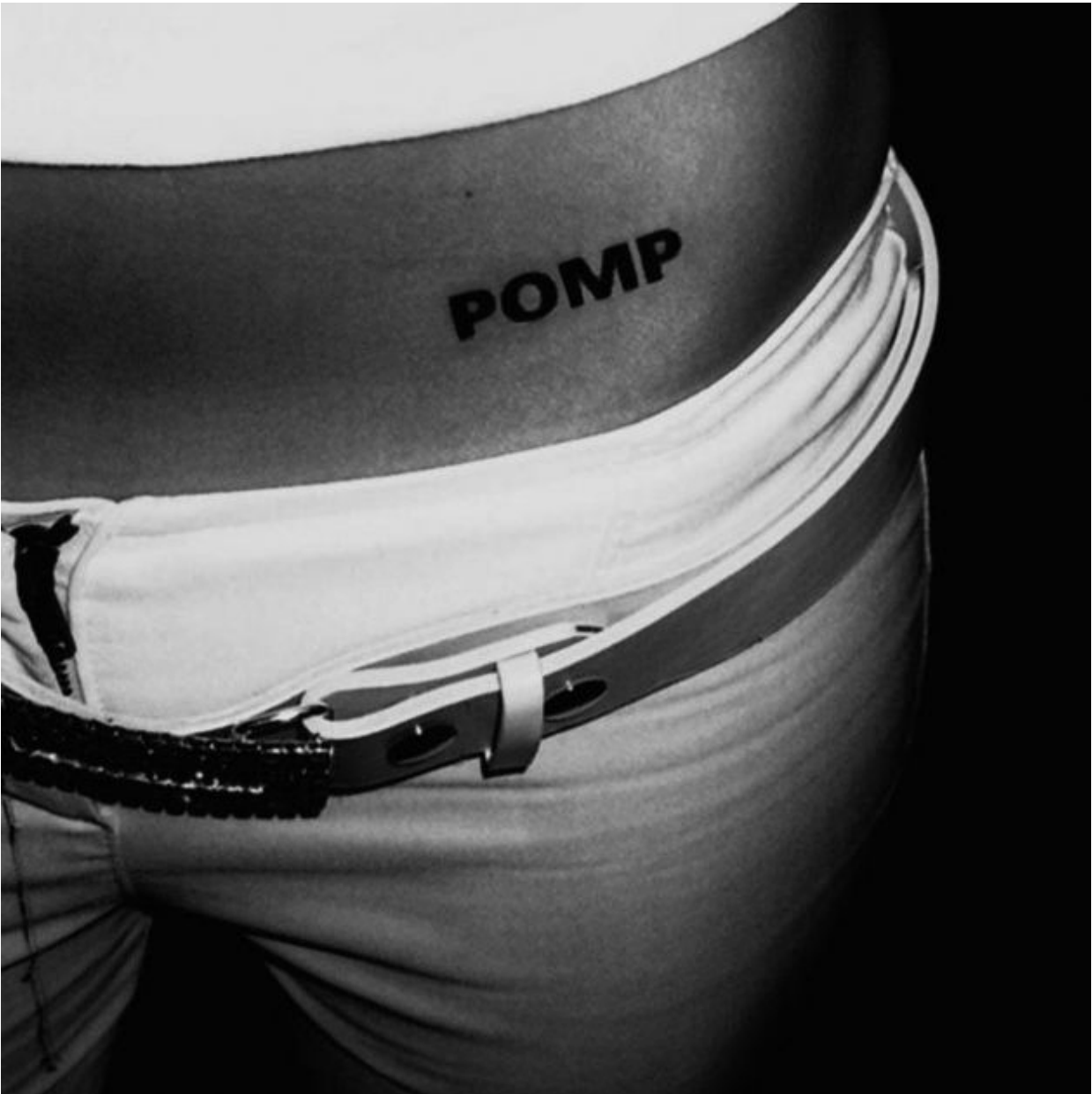




Young consumer in *design-shirt*, who quotes the premises of the system.

It may be that in the pleadings of the first apologists for luxury in Holland and England we hear for the first time functionalist arguments, politically and morally intentional. Mandeville's famous theorem, that private vices, as long as the law restricts them halfway, become public virtues, inaugurates metamoral reflection on moral facts; because of its successes, it cannot be abstracted from the image of mental modernization. The science of the collaboration of human beings in social systems acquires profiles of satire without laughter. In Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, 1714, it is said: "Pride, *Luxury and Pride must live/ While we the Benefits receive*"<sup>[655]</sup> Mortal sins are neutralized by turning them into factors of production; vice ascends to territorial advantage. What is called social order is the collateral benefit of the sum of selfish actions. The profile of the

science of vice and its epidemic spread: it will soon be called political economy.



Joe Miletzki (State University of Design, Karlsruhe 2003), Proud of Merchandising Products.

Already in the 17th and early 18th centuries there was a large body of empirical evidence for such couplings; already at that time, for example, the connection between luxury consumption and

aristocratic-bourgeois eroticism, as well as between trade in exotic means of enjoyment and new consumer fashions. Nor was what Sombart has called "the association of (old-style) feminism with sugar" hidden from contemporary observers of economic practices in the field of transition between noble and bourgeois civilization;<sup>[656]</sup> at that time one spoke of the "domain of women" as the soul of demand; by this one obviously always meant always that profligacy of luxury goods and grandiose objects.<sup>[657]</sup> On this point, the bourgeoisie of Holland and England—the nations most threatened by the wealth of the time—no longer had anything to learn from the aristocrats of old Europe.

For the first time in recent history, bourgeois households had accumulated sufficient prosperity to be able to embark on adventures in the field of taste and aesthetic heresies in domestic markets. The well-known Dutch tulip mania, from 1636 to 1637, testifies to the power of whimsy to rise to mass delirium by mimetic infection: then the lady Pecunia began to bring her lovers in droves under her rule. The love of that flower, as regal as it was popular, was coupled with a maniacal frenzy for money: stock market speculation reached its peak in that mania and burst (like the *new-economy* bubble) after two feverish years.<sup>[658]</sup> No wonder that from all the pulpits of Holland and Great Britain, at the same time, people began to cackle against the dangers of the consumer society. No sooner had the citizens, as parishioners, become well-to-do, than they had to listen in the churches to the threats of their preachers who, as a reward for their abundance, held out to them the prospect of a new universal flood. The Anabaptist exhortation: Do penance! seemed suddenly to be addressed expressly to the *nouveau riche*. Welfare became synonymous with temptation.<sup>[659]</sup> And how could it be otherwise, if the clergy of the incipient bourgeois era were confronted with a secularity which believed that its

The task was to infect "society" with the *happy contagion* of the demand for the superfluous.<sup>[660]</sup> The task was to infect "society" with the *happy contagion* of the demand for the superfluous.



## 9. The *Empire* or: The greenhouse of comfort;

*the mime scale open upwards  
Attention. I am expected.  
Day and night will follow at the station.*

André Breton and Paul Eluard, *La nuit intrautérine*

The thesis that the fundamental event of the twentieth century consisted in the abandonment by the *affluent society* of the poverty ontology's definitions of reality acquires more precise contours (after these retrospective orientations to the species' evolutionarily acquired potential for upward drive and its metaphysical drift in the epoch of scarce maternal energies and scarce allomaternal reserves). If it is valid, it must be possible to show that in recent times the general conditions of maternalization - that is, the sum of maternal and allomaternal benefits per child, plus new opportunities for self-maternization - have been completely modified in comparison with the conditions of reproduction and upbringing of the agro-precarious and early industrial world, in the sense of a recovery of large surpluses of pampering, which flow into the individuation of innumerable individuals. We even dare to affirm that with the beginning of pedagogical Modernity in Romanticism and, above all, with the entry into the almost totally all-motherly State of the 20th century (which is completed by a new environment of means with a mime-protective, encouraging and passivizing tendency), a historically unparalleled psychosocial ecology of the field-(allo)mother-child has appeared. The new circumstances lead to the explanation of early childhood by means of developmental psychology and to the explanation of mature childhood by means of elaborated public instruction. (To both is added, since the sixties, the explanation of procreation by means of birth planning and reproductive medicine, supported by the complementary explanation of sexuality with the help of the psychology of "object choice", of couple orientation and of pornographic liberality).

These statements attain sufficient plausibility insofar as they break with the tradition of thinking of the State as a father. The facts of sociocultural Modernity are ordered in a

coherent model from the instant that statehood, including public services in their totality, refers to its generalized quality of all-mother; just as modern culture does not leave the father, in total, more than what remains for the male imitator of the all-mother role, the *almus pater*, the breadwinner and *sponsor*, obliged to pay (only psychoanalysis is committed to the father as to a species in extinction). This point of view can be held without hermeticism since the western states, with the exception of the United States, which remains heroically committed, no longer present themselves as a priority under their police and military tasks. Thus - according to Tristan Tzara's statement - not only will the architecture of the future be intrauterine, but the whole vital project of the human beings of the wealthy nations will be assimilated to a stay in an incubator.

As we have shown, the socio-technical core of Modernity consists in the explicit protection of maternal benefits. The

The "epoch-making conception of the artificial mother"<sup>[661]</sup> is not just a whim of alternative medicine, mocked by a presuicidal Swiss writer; it is the hidden, but easily recognizable to an unprejudiced eye, business principle of the welfare society. The State - now forced into "bureaucracy"<sup>[662]</sup> or the politics of pampering - since its reform as a welfare and assistance agency, functions as a metaprosthesis, which places in the hands of concrete maternal-prosthetic constructs, social assistance services, pedagogues, therapists and their innumerable organizations, the means for the fulfillment of their tasks.

With these observations we not only do justice to the existential definition of wealth in the horizon of corporate democracy, to the fact that it makes levitation possible for the many. We also manage to understand the systemic necessity of the fiscal state, which under all circumstances must fulfill its mission of being-rich-for-the-children: in this sense, it is a plastic social figure of explanation of allomaternity (although, over and above its

It is also easy to understand its paradox, which appears in the fact that the richest State, in the exercise of its legitimate allomaternal functions, often clientelist and socially-bureaucratically overstretched, also produces the greatest number of ungrateful pupils; and finally, it is also easy to understand why this seems to conform to a strict systemic logic. By its complex task, as an educational State, as a State of comfort, as a thermal State, as a therapeutic State,<sup>[663]</sup> as a relevant provider of infrastructures, background securities and warm distributive illusions of giving to all what it has and can, the political apparatus of the "society" of affluence awakens in innumerable passive-aggressive individuals the feeling that, in the midst of general abundance and universalized kleptocracy, they do not get enough. Modernized lack is overabundance ameliorated by optical illusions; it generates in the recipients of cold pampering and care a resentment that, under analogous circumstances, would necessarily appear in any imaginable clientele. It is true that the favored accept what they manage to receive (the State's dough is the mother of *coolness*), but that does not stop them from accusing the donor of meanness, ignorance, impotence and waste in favor of the wrong beneficiaries. One should not be impressed by popular anti-statist ways of thinking: it is precisely the widespread ingratitude that testifies to the potential for success of the cold systems of affluent society. The *affluent society* is the first social arrangement that allows itself the subjectivization of the lack of need in discord.<sup>[664]</sup>

After what has been said, we are in a position to go beyond the negative definition of the *affluent society*. What has so far been represented only as an abandonment of the mental and material conditions of the world of lack can now be expressed positively by saying that the "affluent society" forms a total work of art of the automimic: a work that shows a

The trend towards the inclusion of ever greater numbers of participants, with the simultaneous widening of the gap between inside and outside. Integral pampering is determinable as an amalgam of freedom without struggle, security without stress and income independent of the work performed;<sup>[665]</sup> it is possible to speak of partial pampering as soon as participation in one of these functions is guaranteed.

Since the turn to the welfare of the "masses" inside the big greenhouse, the equality between human rights and comfort rights has been in force. To be recognized as a human being means here: to be taken seriously again, finally, as a virtual and actual subject of attention and pampering. The concept of recognition now reveals its longest-hidden consequence: the reference to the perception of the other as an equal partner and rival at the buffet of overabundance. It is now better understood why this represents a morally ambitious gesture: fighting for the human rights of others has the consequence of wanting to open up to them the entrance to the effective space of pampering; and this means welcoming them as rivals. There is no doubt that the struggle in favor of the possible selfishness of the other is an authentic form of generosity: it is based on the recognition of the equal mime rights of those so far wronged. The same concept of justice, placed under the umbrella of opulence, implies the participation of the subjects of law in the advantages of the welfare system. To this end, the legal defense of the persecuted constitutes an important first step; but the other implications of the discourse on human rights unfold only when the subjectivity of the other advances to the point where it becomes capable of competition or rivalry in the fields of consumption. "Infinite justice" means endless pampering; it designates the unending task of liberating the manifestly poor and impoverished from their precarious situation and opening up access to the world of abundance for them as well: an objective that is not formulable without paradoxes. For who really wants to help

others to become competitors for the enjoyment of scarce goods?

Whoever is already in the field of economic privilege is introduced into the currents of the refinery of desire, which elaborates and channels the aspiration of the many in innumerable directions. Since the process of pampering has no immanent limits, increments and differentiations are registered on an open upward scale. The form of subjectivity in the welfare system is determined by a lifelong apprenticeship in pampering, whose former configuration was presented until the collapse of Prussian neohumanism after 1945 under the fragile title of "training" [*Bildung*]; its more recent characterizations are articulated, rather, as a demand for procedures that enhance the *personality* of consumers.

The consequences of the introduction of the concept of mime in the moral field are far-reaching. They illustrate certain ethical intuitions which, since the discourses of the *amour propre* of the moralists of the 17th century, have been awaiting their explicit sharpening. Indeed, justice without generosity is resentment; generosity without the will to proliferate the pampering remains selfishness. Freedom means, therefore, to be able to assent to the selfishness of others. Of course, the finiteness of freedom is now shown by the fact that even the generous person must sooner or later defend himself against the expansionism of the freedom of others. If, to speak once again with Spinoza, we do not yet know what the pampered body can become, we do, however, foresee what conflicts are announced between the already developed subjects of pampering and the pretenders to future participation in the means of pampering. The mildest signs of these are the waves of migrants demanding access to the great hothouse.



John M. Johansen, *Floating Conference Centre*, 1997.

If most of the participants in the *opus magnum* of modern life arrive from the stage of modern life, and from their role in it, at completely different conceptions, especially when it is

They ascribe to the "social" wing and cultivate critical judgment on the prevailing bad circumstances, the reason for this is to be found in the fact that the system - conceived as a socio-thematic tensional construction - is maintained almost exclusively by permanent communication about its fictions of problems. This ensures that the real situation and the state of mind are never congruent (except, perhaps, exceptional synchronizations of both through the stress of war). The objective mime, which drives the system in the exercise of peace, is subjectively musicalized on a wide keyboard. Thus, in the media-driven *tensegrity*, the attention of the actors is fixed by the current issues of irritation in each case; it continuously serves the motives of collective discontent and urgent claims on the fronts of the most acute deficits. As it continually increases, luxury is doomed to translate into the language of lack. As has been shown, necessity teaches speeches, while luxury is only allowed to articulate itself indirectly. (Whoever seeks an explanation of the much-talked-about "silence of the intellectuals", which is noted after the end of the Cold War and utopian socialism, I would have it at hand here: it defines that true intellectuals are too intelligent for such translation tasks and, even, perhaps, a little too honest).

As long as the actors in the system identify with their roles and believe in their texts, they have no global perspective on the greenhouse of welfare and the bases of its functioning. Expressions such as pampering, lightening, luxury and discharge must naturally be banished from their self-descriptions: the dominant semantics obfuscates them through formulas such as freedom, security, recognition. (In fact, what matters to individuals on the threshold towards the welfare system is their own *empowerment*; the second step of emancipation asserts claims to participate in the flow of comfort.) But when the inhabitants of the hothouse of overabundance have been

If the theory in the midst of life is always the improbable, the theory of pampering in the pampered is the most improbable. If the theory in the midst of life is always the improbable, the theory of pampering in the pampered is the most improbable.

In addition to the ethnological-anthropological comparison, there is only one possibility to put the invisible-overvisible whole before the eyes and to become aware of its primary functions and tendencies: aesthetic estrangement or extrapolation [\*\*\*\*\*]. The turn towards aesthetic seeing is a form of mime that can bring the gaze back to mime. In fact, reflexivity and mime are inseparable. If, from an epistemic point of view, the great theme of the twentieth century, as Luhmann said, was called reflexivity, it was also because the great event of the twentieth century in Western latitudes consisted in mime as a mass event. Thus, what has been called the becoming-reflexive of Modernity is fulfilled only by the becoming-thematic of Modernity's quality of mime. We realize the aesthetically uncanny perception of the situation when we move in social space as visitors in an installation. The observer who becomes aware of the situation understands that he or she is walking through an exhibition formatted more broadly than the normal museum: an exhibition that, for one, cannot be delimited from the normal sphere of visibility.

Such a contemplation requires only one presupposition: that the totality of circumstances can no longer be designated by the concept of nature. This concession is easy in a completely urbanized scenario. But if one is no longer "in nature", neither in the first nor in the second, how then to call the artificial-enveloping? The concept of the total work of art would be imposed if it were not taken over by the aesthetic ideology. Also the expression

The term "social plastic", coined by Joseph Beuys, proves to be a useful suggestion, although it should no longer be reserved for situations arranged by artists, but should be referred to the total space in which welfare privileges are distributed and desires are elaborated,



subjectivities are differentiated and immune alliances are developed. Seen in this way, the first universal installation "welfare society" is *de facto* a plastic or social sculpture, co-modeled by its participants. After this extrapolation, even Beuys' statement, scandalous to so many, that all human beings are artists (in the original horizon, an example of egalitarian *kitsch*) becomes usable again, because it is appropriate to define the voluntary and involuntary cooperation of the inhabitants of the space of overabundance in its installation, reconstruction and air-conditioning. Every artist is a client, every client is a human being, everything human is projected for the mime. To the lady Luxuria the moderns say: *fecisti nos ad te*.





*Party de espuma, 2001.*

It is not by chance, then, that hybrid expressions such as "social plastic", "great museum", "integral installation", refer to the super-greenhouse "society"-of-welfare with the help of turns of phrase borrowed from the aesthetic sphere. If we are obliged to resort to such figures, this happens, as we have hinted, for a double reason: on the one hand, because aesthetic extrapolation offers one of the few, if not the only, possibilities of objectifying a context of life that supports oneself and by which oneself is penetrated; on the other hand, because as far as the whole system of the current arrangement of life is concerned, that inner space of the world of well-being, which rewards its critics with large editions and its detractors with scholarships, it is an artificial, intelligent and inclusive configuration, which, from any point of view, is so improbable that in it the opposition between art and non-art no longer makes sense.



Michael Elmgreen/Ingar Dragset, *Elevated Gallery/Powerless Structures*, fig. 146, 530 x 575 x 340 cm, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 2001, photograph by Andreas

Szlavik, courtesy of Klosterfelde Berlin.

Inasmuch as the life forms of the *affluent society* embody the prototype of artifice, it is not plausible to pay more attention to individual objects, highlighted as works of art, than to any unhighlighted objects. No individual object can be more worthy of consideration than the entire installation; consequently, the exhibition of works of art will be rivaled by the exhibition of artifice that has hitherto remained outside the concept of art, and even, ultimately, by the exhibition of the exhibition site itself. This may mark the beginning of the era of self-referential museum buildings, indeed, of the self-referential configuration of space in general; the containers are demonstrating ever more clearly their claim to primacy over their contents.

The last step in the de-limitation of the concept of art leads to the identification of the system of society and the system of art, beyond all the interpretations of the idea of the total work of art. If someone has crossed this threshold, for him there are no more than images of an exhibition. After entering the integral space of artifice, philosophy is also transformed into a praxis of exhibition curatorship: what was theory becomes the conditioning of the exhibition space for the universal exhibition. Through it, the superstitious "welfare society" is explained as a habitable object of exhibition. If we want, according to Olafur Eliasson's formulation, to surround what surrounds us ("contour the environment"), we have to apply the procedure of the reversion or inversion of the environment<sup>[667]</sup> to the luxury greenhouse in its entirety.

This is why the museum of contemporary art - better: the *expanded museum* <sup>[668]</sup> was able to develop into a privileged place for the self-representation of the system. In it - and hardly still in the universities - the encounter of intelligence with the facts of the artificial world takes place.<sup>[669]</sup> The philosophically curated museum of the present possesses the strange capacity to show the permanent end of art by its decline into the artifice of the superinstallation. It is the only place in the system in which its primary quality can be observed as such: to be the installation of the enveloping or the artificial "total situation."<sup>[670]</sup> As soon as one moves into it as a visitor-observer, the

Indeed, the "society" of well-being shows the characteristics of a total installation; it configures a sphere of artifice that does not let its visitors leave it: while it transforms visitors into inhabitants (who immediately forget that they are visitors), it surrounds them with an unbreakable network of offers of comfort and other motives of permanence. Conceived contemplatively as a dead-end exhibition, the hothouse of luxury is the true *continens*; it constitutes the *periéchon*, the existent-in-environment, of what older metaphysicians up to Jaspers and Voegelin suggested that the world is

contained in it, like the image in the frame or the creature in the spirit of the creator.

To stay in the hothouse of well-being means to be included in the distribution flows of the means of pampering, animation and levitation. The common house of luxury is the artwork of dwelling and production, comfortably air-conditioned, immunized by rights of protection and enjoyment, branching, in the form of homes, businesses, subcultures and collectors,<sup>[671]</sup> into millions of micro-installations of a relatively unburdened life. In this frothy aggregate, churned by innumerable vectors of imitation, one can distinguish *milieus*<sup>[672]</sup> or zones with similar endowments of goods, procedures and patterns of affection; these are the zones of strongest mimetic assimilation. Ilya Kabakov's *Toilette* in *documenta 9* offered the example of Russian communal housing, as it existed in millions in the realm of actually existing socialism: its exhibition in Kassel signified a triumph of artistic praxis, which prompted the elaboration of copies of *milieus* or complete situations.



Ocean Dome in Miyazaki (Japan), interior view.

The *milieus*, reconstructed or in original, form homogeneous foams within a landscape of very different types of foam. Some of them can be represented *live* in party assemblies, where the *milieus* of the citizens of state profession and of the guildophiles come together; others are organized around subcultural magazines and fairs, whereby the stabilization of the *milieu's* own patterns is guaranteed. The world of professional Elvis impersonators - it seems that there are more than 40,000 in the world - meet annually in different cities of the United States; Harley Davidson riders from beyond and beyond the Atlantic constitute networks according to the most reluctant rules; rose growers of all nations live retired behind the invisible walls of a well-organized delirium. What to say about the strangely coherent worlds of the caninophiles or the friends of the *haflinger*? Who can be understood, at the same time, in the subcultures of golfers, chess experts, horse osteopaths, *body-builders*, *mountain-bike* riders, *swingers*, young democrats, hang-gliders, paleolinguists, lacquer fetishists, freshwater aquarium lovers, tango fans, collectors of comics, model airplanes and old silver?

Who has before his eyes the circles of readers of contemporary authors who, with the pleasure of connoisseurs, read novelistic phrases such as: "Aquarius women are always punctual" or "Aquarius women are always punctual"?

"Tennis teachers are the slimiest" or "I said it would be too dark to play badminton" or "He interrupted himself and kissed for a very long time her perfumed flesh. And she fell back into ecstasy"? In any subculture the general laws of assimilation dominate, in each in its own way. Nothing so equates individuals with one another as a common hobby or whim, to which each is separately devoted. Everywhere it goes: the whim requires the whole human being.

When we use the expression subculture here, we refer to porous foams, through whose conductive walls circulate

the typical accessories, themes and warnings of the world or scene of the moment. Such circulations are strictly limited in scope: to the existence in the space of whims or moods belongs the fact that one does not know in a heap of bubbles what is going on in the others; most of the time one does not even realize that other zones exist. In this respect, Tarde's observation about the "porous pile-up of elements, the capital connection of which consists in not contradicting each other," is apt.<sup>[673]</sup> In these webs of inter-ignorant relations there is nothing socially-architecturally false: the scenarios stabilize, thrive and drift, split and produce offshoots, making use of their right to overlook the existence of the others. Moreover, the stage-foam presupposes the isolation of the concrete bubbles from one another, because otherwise no positive self-discrimination, no satisfaction by exclusivity, can be achieved. For individuals multiple linkages are the obvious, concrete subcultures are best reproduced in the monothematic. The "society" is constituted multi-micromaniacally, without being able to experience it in a grouping center; it has no organ to realize how many systems of delirium, how many cults of catacombs, how many escapisms it harbors; it constitutes a half-blind aggregate of democratic occultism.<sup>[674]</sup>

Thus, the imperceptible total work of art that "integrates" (i.e., that allows them to coexist side by side in a narrow, inter-ignorant space) all subcultural foams can only be seen - and, moreover, only metaphorically - when the form of the museum is transferred to the system as a whole and one moves into it as a visitor. What "capitalism" is,

The "West" or "the world of well-being" can be experienced by visiting, for example, Ilya Kabakow's *Dream Clinic*; a stay in Eurodisney can also be very valuable propaedeutically. In the attitude of the observer, and only in this attitude, it becomes counter-intuitively possible to experience what the superinstallation is all about. Otherwise, one inevitably remains in realism, together with its



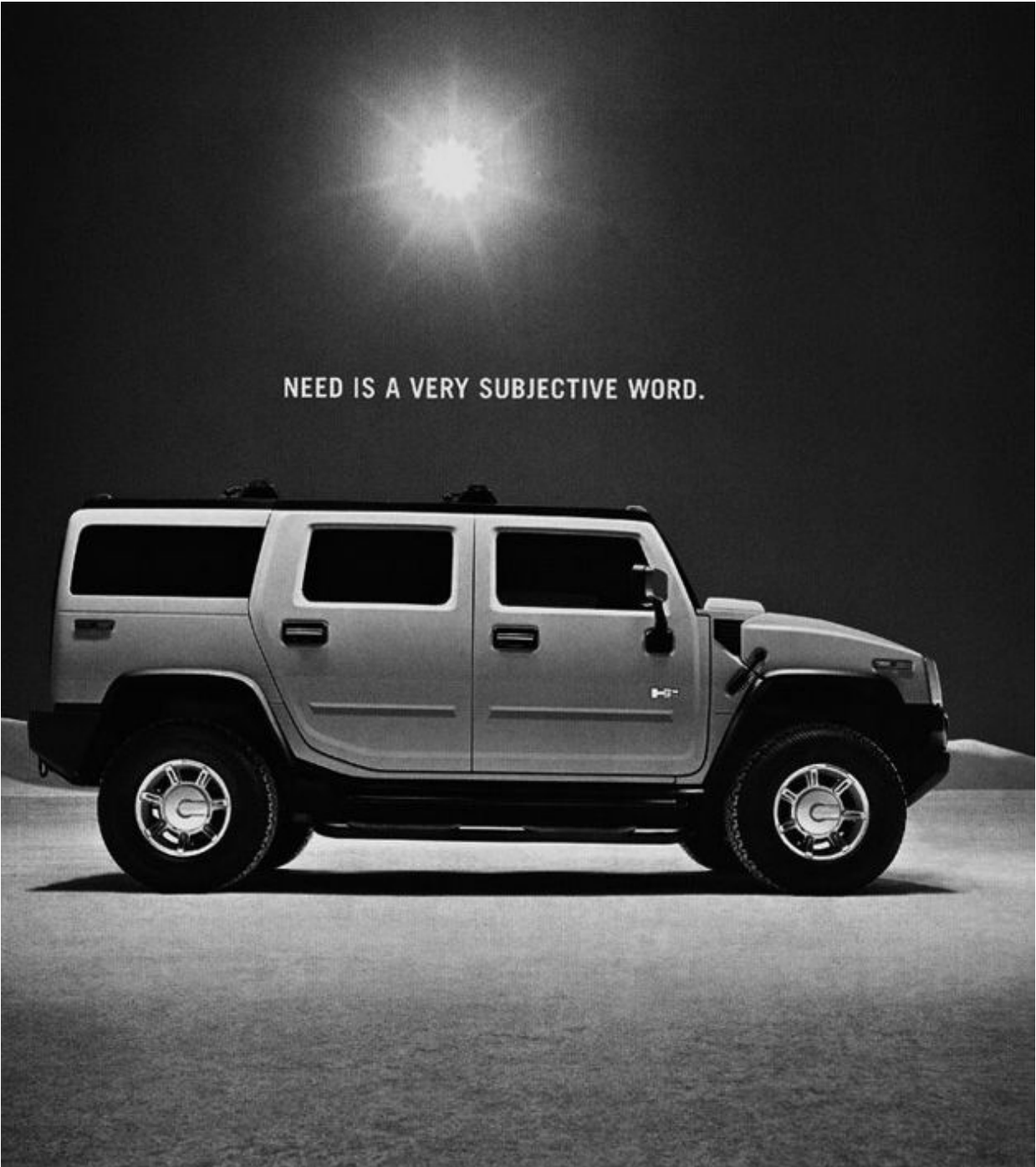
critical supplement. From whose perspective it is still considered impossible that the motives of unloading, entertainment, refinement and pampering play the main role in the current configuration of the world; it will continue to be convinced, as it has been until now, that our main enemies are called today as before penury and lack; and that the real is graspable only in the tonality of preoccupation. The strengths of the conventional perspective must be recognized: whoever wishes to refer exclusively to the themes that circulate both in the public space and in the academic corridor of the super-greenhouse, will inevitably come to the conclusion that our civilization constitutes - congenial, in this, with whatever

The system lives on its previous "reality", marked by misery - a gigantic network of deficiencies, defects and catastrophes, in which only here and there the last islands of order, still respected, offer precarious possibilities of survival. Since the system lives on its fantasies of lack (and already, certainly, in its most liberal self-descriptions, not only in the radical left-wing, gothic-alarmist and theoretically horrifying overreaching), it tends to portray itself as a conservatory of misery, depression and crime.<sup>[675]</sup>

If one adopts the posture of observers, who stroll around the democratic-technical installation with a visitor's ticket valid for one day, one can calmly experience that all of it serves the progressive mime or pampered progressiveness of the inhabitants; and that the endless public discourses on problems, shortages, needs and their corresponding development and compensation programs, including the saga-moral and satire, are nothing more than codes or keys for ever more extensive mime strategies. The popular acceptance of the capitalist complex way of life can only be understood on the basis of the positive concept of pampering. With luxury comes justice. Perhaps the sense of

"justice" cannot be explained *materialiter*, at all, without the phantom of equality of the many in the face of luxury. As soon as the basic political inputs have been incorporated into the *installation-empire*: legal security for visitor-inhabitants and

freedom from extraneous political domination, the mime function comes to the fore. It belongs to all comfort that it can only be conceived of in ascent; consequently, he describes the given level as lack of comfort and unacceptable impertinence, and claims its elevation as the most pressing demand of human rights. Hence the moderns' bewilderment in the face of recessions and their readiness to consider the end of time near because of minimal losses of real income.



General Motors Hummer SUV advertisement.

By the same token, the infantile condition is established in the real; it translates neoteny into the register of cultural functions. As we have seen, both infantile condition and neoteny possess a vector of expansion. As long as it tends forward, creation cannot

The mime continues to advance, the struggle for ways to achieve it is incessant. Whoever has managed to enter the mime system, whether by immigration or by birth, participates immediately in the distribution of the current means of upward impulse. As much as this always and in every culture constitutes the fundamental relationship, only advanced Modernity has made pampering explicit. In Austria, the city of Vienna spontaneously gives the parents of newborns the first infant kit: in clear recognition of the fact that it is the parents who are the first to need the first allo-prohynchus. In this case, as in all other cases in the large greenhouse, the rest corresponds more or less to the norm. It is not so much a national peculiarity that is expressed in this gift, but a local gesture that could be repeated anywhere in the international of comfort. The parties in the empire of opulence are defined in as many national bubbles by the fact that they suggest polemic programs regarding the distribution of wealth, thus creating in the public, supported by the sensationalist press, the feeling that the distribution of the means of relief is the most serious thing. This impression is not unfounded: in a nation like the Federal Republic of Germany, more than half of a gross social product of more than two trillion dollars (for the year 2000) passes through the redistributive hands of the Great Alomadre. That is why redistribution chronically generates the critical case. The mime will not so soon abandon its children. That all history is the history of struggles between mime groups: this observation remains valid for the turbulences in the integral greenhouse.

In his book *Homo sacer*,<sup>[676]</sup> received with great expectation, Giorgio Agamben has made the shocking proposal to think of the totality of the system in the form of a concentration camp. By this Agamben means a closed place whose inhabitants are reduced to the characteristic of "naked life. Naked would be a life whose liquidation does not imply any pregnancy, since it is already excluded from the protection of law. In our context, the field can

be effortlessly identified as the illiberal variant of the large installation: it represents unequivocally a case of immersion of human beings in the work of human beings. This concept of the whole is also achieved by aesthetic extrapolation, in the sense of an aesthetics of the sublime, of course, accentuating the effects of enclosure and nakedness or helplessness, and largely deadening the components of well-being, immunity and freedom.<sup>[677]</sup> The hyperbole of the integral concentration camp becomes more bearable when related to the hyperboles of the museum without exit or of the total installation. Through both figures, that of the camp and that of the integral museum, the fundamental macrospherological idea is realized that there is no view from outside the whole of one's own context of civilization. Whoever wants to explore it must move in immanence like a Parmenides in the amphitheater.<sup>[678]</sup> (Let us note that in the *Spheres* project we always work with the semi-metaphorical, non-hyperbolic idea of the greenhouse, of which we are convinced that, because of its defining characteristics, it not only apprehends the situation of Modernity and postmodernity, but also includes the *continuum* principle, which allows us to draw a line from archaic to contemporary forms of life).





Rebecca Horn, *Cornucopia, Séance for two breasts*, 1970.

The self-installing installation transcends political and social units such as States, Nations, Peoples and national Economies and brings them together in a World-City of a new type not yet described in essential aspects. It constitutes a landscape composed of cultural greenhouses, pneumatic domes, in which, by means of effective *slogans-insiders* and motivational suggestions, innumerable subculturally differentiated microclimates are reproduced. The oscillation between space-climates within the installation is generally organized as tourism, occasionally also as therapy, artistic experience or humanitarian intervention. For this purpose, one can simply think of installations-greenhouses, in which

differently tempered and humidified pavilions border each other. In the interconnected *dome-milieus*, upward driving forces of the most varied kind are at work, forces that await a more exact analysis. An ethnologist appearing in the archipelago of inner *milieus*, of teams and associations in the great hothouse would have to describe a compact aggregate; composed of thousands of emitting sources of hypnosis of happiness and excitation foci of manic inductions. It constitutes a chaotic froth, constantly churning itself anew, composed of counter-phobic spiritual exercises, entrepreneurial gospels, future-driving development projects and time-consuming dreams of revenge. These dispositions and practices generate a warp incessantly intensified and reconditioned by an extensive mindset industry (or whatever you want to call the psychotechnically reformulated religions of success). They all belong to the motley arsenal of mania in the age of its technical reproducibility.

The most plausible self-descriptions so far, although too formalistic, of the large installation as a whole, are presented in concepts such as "consumer society" or "society of living". Alongside them, popular concepts such as "consumer society" or "society of experience". "risk society," "opportunity society," "knowledge society," can also claim a moderate descriptive force; even an overdone pun like "McWorld"<sup>[679]</sup> cannot be completely denied all meaning, since it alludes to the multilocal, carefree and corrupt character of the superinstallation. It makes clear that global brands represent universals in the universe of money; and in the given case, a universal of culinary vulgarity.

In a sharpened project of contemporary media theory, such as Norbert Bolz's *Consumerist Manifesto*, the large installation is described as a *comfort-zone*, whose transnational neighborhood is composed of the collective of those with purchasing power. They realize the human nature made explicit, through the



consumption of objects, signs and times of life; consumerism is humanism thought through to the end. It alone, it seems, holds the key to the kingdom of peace, because it prevents, through the *pax 'omica*, warlike interactions between states open to trade. The consumerist *way of life* certainly has the disadvantage that the peace of the market demands few nerves from human beings: they lack the feeling of critical case, which promises liberation from boredom. The art of moving without weariness in the universal labyrinth of commercial passages, animation centers and portals demands of individuals, therefore, to interrupt the banality of comfort by means of new incessant inventions of irritations.<sup>[680]</sup>

In the realm of capital every possible opposition is a creature of the very situations against which it is directed. From this insight Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, in their essay on the new *world order*, have proposed the expression *empire* for the global super-installation.<sup>[681]</sup> This "empire" can only be thought of in the singular and has a strictly ecumenical character. That is why, supposedly, it is no longer confronted by any external enemy: in any case it could turn against itself and be overthrown by the rebellion of its components. It is understood: the discourse on *empire* is religiously motivated; and the universal success of the book can only be understood in the light of this diagnosis. Indeed, it picks up, suggestively rather than argumentatively, the suspended traditions of the Christian theology of history and materialistically sounds its apocalyptic motifs. Since for Spinozists and Deleuzians no goal beyond becoming is available, in them the empire of capital, which is entirely of this world, confronts the counter-empire, also worldly but distinct, of dissident pluralities or alternative expressionisms. The greatest difference is also the most ambiguous: it formulates a disparity on which everything depends, but which, considered in the light, cannot be consummated: paralysis is programmed. Despite the agitated discourse on opposition and

radical contradiction, the *empire* and its dissident *multitude* are one and the same thing.

Whoever has the history of religious reservations in the face of earthly imperial configurations at his fingertips immediately recognizes that *empire* is a pantheistic parody of the Augustinian contrast between *civitas terrena* and *civitas Dei*. The analogies are broad: just as often the Church could hardly be distinguished empirically from the world it sought to oppose, so too the *multitude cannot be* clearly differentiated from the world of capital from which it wishes to detach itself: except by the intimate certainty that convinces the adversary of the circumstances of its ardent militancy. Only a mystical decision allows the members of the *affluent left* to know that they are still even left-wing; in the same way that only a terminological decision allows those who are unsuccessful to affirm, often, that they are exploited and marginalized. The introspective observation that they feel in themselves a pure being-against serves as a point of support: since the enemy *against which to rebel* no longer has profiles, the being-against affection has to satisfy itself: *this being against becomes the essential key to every active position in the world...*<sup>[682]</sup> *De facto*, the *against-men*, along with their membership in the oppositional church, are ambivalent clients of the given, like all other contemporaries. The intensely declared enmity to the *empire* is directed against an instance incapable of manifesting hostility, because the empire, in its positive aspects, is and wants nothing other than the opposing multitude, while the multitude, in its impulses and compulsions, embodies at once the dark side of the empire. After the times of open sabotage have passed (the class struggle, too, by its methods, is the child of time), the time would have come for dissidents to desert; but, since, as we hear, there is no longer any outside to which it would be possible to retreat, desertion outside the system leads nowhere (*desertion does not have a place*).<sup>[683]</sup> Insofar as it wants to be

completely different, the other is the same; as long as it wants to be somewhere else entirely, it remains where it is.

Negri and Hardt's essay on the capitalist world system and the rebellion of life against it signals the logical end of the leftward evasion that had been set in motion by the losers of the 1789 revolution. In a retrospective look at a two-hundred-year escalation, carried to the extreme, the law of the overbidding of July 14 becomes transparent through its frustrated lovers: when the bourgeois revolution fails or does not suffice, left radicalism arises; when left radicalism fails or does not suffice, the gnosis of militancy arises.<sup>[684]</sup> Such a gnosis can no longer fail, it becomes implausible.<sup>[685]</sup> The gnosis of militancy is a gnosis of the left.

The imperceptible hyper-plasticity probably finds its most ambitious formulation in Luhmann's abysmally flat idea of "universal society" [*Weltgesellschaft*]. Despite its belonging to an extremely formalistic discourse, the expression is permeated with a utopian vibration, since - for methodical, not moral reasons - it takes upon itself the adventurous enterprise of extending a unitary conceptual cover over the inner worlds of the global welfare system *and* its misery-ridden peripheries. In so far as he speaks enigmatically of universal society (and refuses to pluralize the word "society"), the attentive sociologist wants to give the impression that also in systems theory there must be at least a single verbal gesture referring to the whole. This can be interpreted as if the Bielefeld master did not want to deny the countless excluded of the earth the right of semantic citizenship in the one "society," even though no one knew better than he did that under no conceivable circumstances can an effective universal unity be achieved.

What we describe here as the abandonment of the model of reality of the ontology of lack, from the social-historical point of view, is linked to two historical ruptures in the social and mental structures of Europe and the New World. It is no exaggeration to designate them as the deepest fractures in the history of post-neolithic humanity: the rebellion against lack is accompanied, on the one hand, by a rebellion against the ontology of lack and, on the other, by a rebellion against the ontology of lack,

the end of the traditional agricultural way of life, after the massive imposition of the industrial-citizen lifestyle determined by the financial economy; on the other hand, the end of the era of female hyper-fertility and the sharp fall in birth rates in all the unglamorized countries; thus Japan, Germany, Italy, with a birth rate of 0.9 percent, and Austria and Spain, each with 1.0 percent, are among the countries with the lowest birth rates in the world.<sup>[686]</sup> Of the group of welfare nations only the United States can count on growth due to the combined effects of immigration and high birth rates in the Latin-Asian segments of the population: at the price of the marginalization of the descendants of Europeans. It is true that the *link*, which is the foundation of modernity, between prosperity and the decline in births appears in multiple modulations that occasionally go as far as a reversal of the trend, but it cannot be completely denied.<sup>[687]</sup> While the shortage of children in some European nations, not least in Germany, is sometimes interpreted as an expression of "lived pessimism" - one speaks of a biological refusal to reverse the trend - it should be seen, in general, above all as an opportunity for more intense dedication by educators to each of their offspring.

It is obvious that both of these caesurae manifest an immediate connection with changes in the mother-child field and, with it, in the existential background of the forces of upward impulse; that in them is hidden the opportunity for a radical unfolding of abstract potentials of allomothering and self-propitiation must be expressly shown. Eric Hobsbawm has remarked on the first caesura:

The most dramatic and far-reaching social change in the second half of this century (of the twentieth), which separates us forever from the world of the past, has been the decline of the peasantry. [...]. In the early eighties, only three out of every hundred British or Belgians worked in agriculture. [...] In the United States, too, the share of the agricultural population was no larger. But in the long run, this decline was less surprising than the fact that this tiny fraction of the labor market was still able to flood the United States and the rest of the world with unprecedented quantities of food. [In Japan [...] the peasant quota fell from 52.4 percent of the population in 1947 to 9 percent in 1985. [...] In Finland, a woman who was born the daughter of peasants and was a peasant in her first marriage could still become a cosmopolitan intellectual and political personality during her middle phase of life. When her father died in 1940 in the winter war against Russia, leaving only the mother with the young daughter in the family possession, still 57 percent of Finns would be peasants and forestry workers. On that woman's forty-fifth birthday barely 10 per cent were already so.<sup>[688]</sup> In the same year she was a Finn.

It is obvious that discourses of this type refer to the topic of cultural revolution; in any case, on closer examination, it becomes evident that here again we are not dealing with a "revolution", neither in the political nor in the kinetic sense of the word, but with the consequences of explanations. In this case we are dealing with an explanation of plant and animal fertility that most spectacularly affects the practices that have existed up to now; produced by modern agrochemistry in alliance with molecular biology and the explosive increase of agricultural productivity by means of machinery and economic-business methods of rationalization, as well as by the passage, as problematic as it may be, to massive animal exploitation in the developed system of meat capitalism. In fact, through these explanations of fertility - which constitute the technical background of so-called biopolitics - the present conditions were brought about, in which 2 to 3 percent of a working population not only feeds the rest of the nation, but still achieves a surplus for export. The unintended consequence of this was that most of the population could be freed from the vital context of agriculture to become available to the world of industrial wage labor, a process usually transcribed by the expression "urbanization." Social historiography has made great emphasis on the fact that this transition meant for many, initially, the change from agro-proletarian penury to industrial-proletarian misery; from today's point of view, these diagnoses have also become historical.

For the current development of the multiplicities of desire, the liberation from the bondage to the countryside marks the decisive caesura, since for the majority it is accompanied by the shift from the subsistence economy to the financial economy; it effects the leap from a way of life, stagnant in frugal necessities, to a *modus vivendi* directed by desire, oriented toward luxury objects and comforts of even higher quality. With the liberation of the countryside (and its rediscovery as a vacation landscape) begins an era, in which desire is the first obligation of the citizen. Since then, only the human being with limitless desires and capable of precise choices fulfills his vocation of developing consumer subjectivity. In the hothouse of luxury it is by no means the "bare life" that determines the form of the subject, but the possession of purchasing power in connection with mobilized appetites.

To the image of the new belongs a strong upward social mobility, based on a considerable increase of

opportunities in the professional biographies of individuals. The Multifocal "society" offers a thousand *milieus* to approach them, ten thousand stages to appear in them, a hundred thousand stairs to ascend them. Every *milieu*, every stage, every staircase constitutes a micro-universe of upward momentum. The forward and upward mobility is based on the traditional disposition of the lower classes to orient themselves to the ways of life of the well-to-do. The conviction, which has always been widespread among the poor, that they too would certainly make a good figure as rich people, is not ultimately responsible for the social upward impulse: a mistaken judgment, based on the assumption that being rich represents the pursuit of the normal life, determined by necessity, on a higher scale; but before the actual ascent to the welfare state one cannot realistically imagine a preference-driven way of life in multidimensional spheres of choice. And, vice versa, the well-to-do, because of the addictive effect of pampered lifestyles, always have plausible reasons to fear that they will fail miserably as poor people; hence the main reason for their fierce determination to defend the possession states. That the well-settled often fear annihilation at the thought of impoverishment shows how little they believe, in their own affairs, in the blessings of the welfare state, which they claim, with respect to others, to have removed the risks of poverty.<sup>[689]</sup> The concern of the pampered gains force in the nightmare that one day the incessant replenishment of the means of pampering might come to an end. In this anguished image is hidden a confused concept of the fragility of the hothouse of luxury, in which, as in a ripe foam, the life games of affluent democracies develop.

## 10. Luxury Wind Rose

### Vigilance, liberated humor [\*\*\*\*\*], light sexuality

*I'm not exactly in favor of suffering, but I'm not in favor of happiness either. I am...  
in favor of my mood and in favor of always being able to have it.*

Fedor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*

Individualism - one could also say the modern refusal of individuals to internalize their social status - necessarily dominant in the superinstallation, heralds a psycho-historical transformation that can be compared to the new die-cutting of a form of soul by a great religion: its importance lies in that it produces, on a large scale, the liberation of non-specific attention. The individualist wave is probably best understood as a form of luxury of being-in-the-world. The individual is the one who claims privileged access to himself as the possessor of experiences. From this follows the mission of the ultimate consumption of oneself. The ethics of individualism gives its clients the advice to consider their existence as a unique and unrepeatable offer. While everything around is full of not-selves, in the form of it or in the form of you, the self knows immediately that it is singular. What exists only once appears immediately as worthy of worship. That each individual in the hothouse of well-being can behave with himself as a singularity follows from the mutual potentiation of three general tendencies that are responsible for the climate of individuation in Modernity.

In the first place, the sharp fall in birth rates in the industrial and post-industrial nations produces conditions under which the competition, previously for almost everyone bloody, of the excessive number of children of the traditional families of peasants and artisans for the scarce resources of motherly love disappears. Since, after a ten-thousand-year malignant oversupply, children have become real scarcities, it could not fail to happen that

a high investment of maternal and allomaternal energies in each of the offspring would become a normal case again. Although the high quota of female professional activity absorbs a part of the new opportunities for more intense dedication to each child, the social and scholastic state functions of the large hothouse largely counterbalance these losses. It is striking, moreover, that contemporary psychology - as well as the science of religion - has so far hardly reacted to this psychohistorically unique state of affairs: the vast majority of those born today in the super-establishment are expressly accepted and welcomed children. In their case they can be spared the traditional compensations of inopportunity: above all, they are no longer confronted with the problem that used to be discussed under the concept of redemption (later acceptance of the rejected life). What this must mean for the current socio-psychological tone of a "society" is as little analyzed as the long-term cultural consequences of the new phenomenon.<sup>[690]</sup> The circumstances suggest the conclusion that a historically unheard-of luxury of motherhood and education has become a general standard and extensible to the whole of civilization (beyond most of the spectrum of social strata, including inequalities between *milieus* and nations).







Martin Kippenberger, METRO-Net *World Connection Lüftungsschacht* (ventilation shaft), German Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2003.

As usual, the almost impossible is perceived as a matter of course in the climate of the anthropogenic island and serves as a starting level for higher demands. In the superinstallation, training phases up to the age of thirty are no longer exceptions, and the subjects of such formative investments are hardly aware of being privileged by their extended maturation time. In a way that was unheard of in the past, the child-poor "society" surrounds its permanently adolescent offspring with a wreath of

and admiration, in which are very often interwoven strands of bad conscience and fear of the future, especially in the subcultures subcultures scourged by the guilt of reproduction. In all social strata the welcome child shines in the eyes of its progenitors as precious as a mouth-blown golden ball placed as a Christmas tree crowning.

The second major trend responsible for the individualistic turn is the increase in labor productivity, which over the last 150 years has led to a spectacular decline in the weekly, monthly and lifetime working hours of the vast majority of people in the professions. If around 1850 the working hours of workers, clerks and office workers still amounted to about 4000 hours - almost half of the hours in a year - in Germany and comparable countries the annual working hours of wage earners fell to 1700 and less on average around 1900; including extended training times and early retirement, this means that the working phases in the life *budget* of individuals have fallen back to a third of what five generations earlier still seemed to be the human destiny outside the *leisure class*. In connection with these changes, we conventionally speak of an increase in leisure time. In reality, this cliché of free time conceals a state of affairs that is not easy to perceive and has great anthropological consequences: it could be paraphrased as an explosion of self-attention. Its immediate consequence is the general submission of life to the alternative of boredom or amusement.

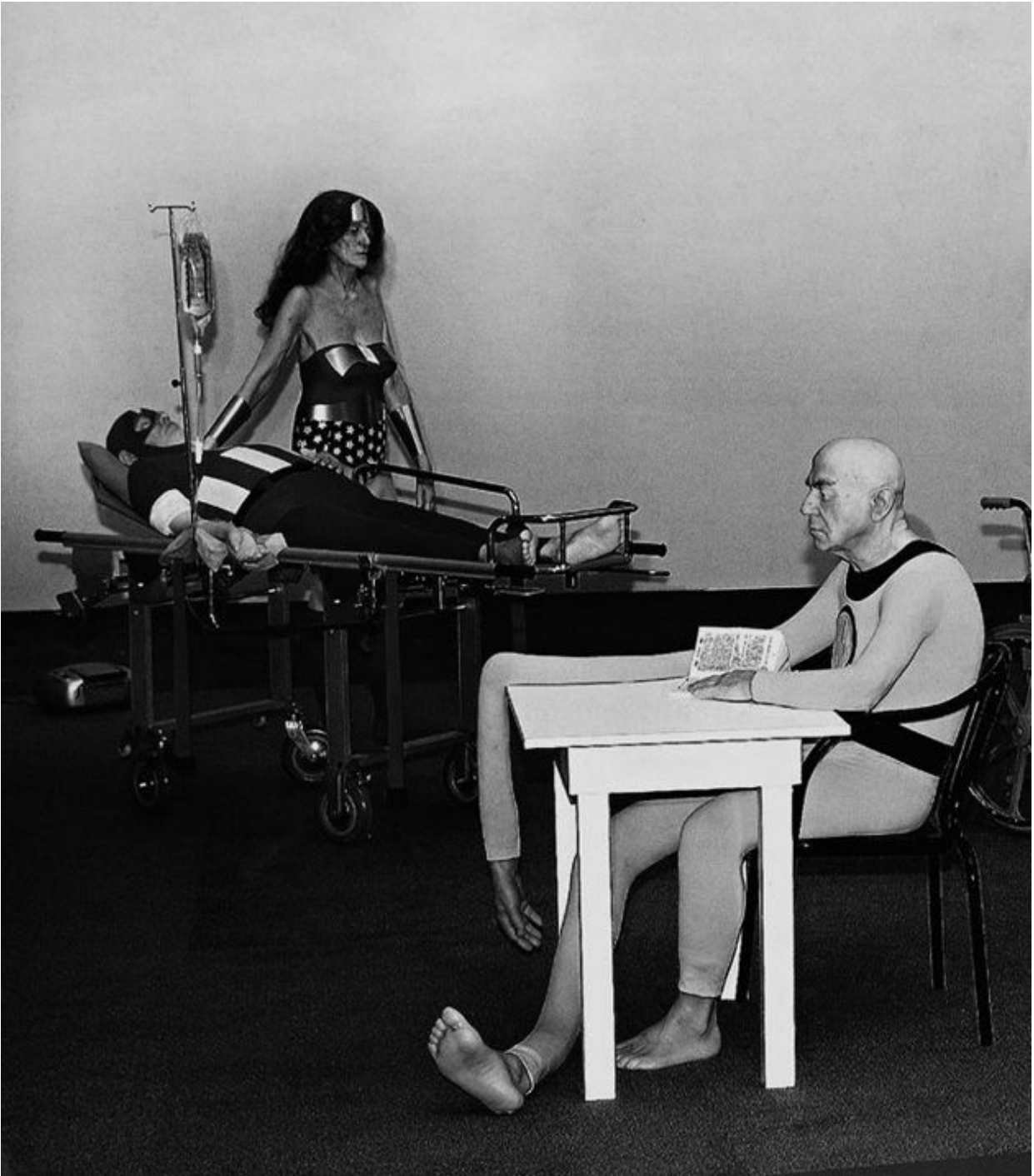
The actualization of human luxury potentials is more closely linked to the massive emancipation of individuals in their own time of life than to any other enrichment movement of the twentieth century. To put it bluntly: the event of the past epoch, which ultimately decided on all changes in morals and ways of life, was the radical increase in the average personal ownership of waking time outside of periods devoted to work and household chores. The time of

free waking time is the crossroads in the compass rose of luxury tendencies. What is called free time means in fact the explanation of waking times by activities and non-activities, which, because of their arbitrary, reflective and experience-oriented character, are appropriate for directing the attention of the actors "inward". Under "experiential society" is to be understood a system that frees individuals to meditate both on discretionary sentient presences and on concrete outcomes of existence here and now. The clouds pass, the books are silent on the shelves, I am doing so and so. The vegetative comes to the foreground, inner states are surrounded by attention, the elusive obvious flashes into the inner subject. "Now, occasionally, you feel and breathe well in the light of weariness."<sup>[691]</sup>

Also numerically impressive is the most recent expansion of the phases freed for self-attention (and for its massive annihilation by amusement). If we deduct 8 hours of sleep daily from 8760 hours in a year, as well as an annual work time of 1700 hours, we are left with an average annual balance of 4140 available waking hours for the inhabitant of the super-installation. Assuming that a good part of these are taken up by routine acts of daily attention to oneself and one's family and commuting to the workplace, there remains for most contemporaries a residual leap of self-referential time much greater than in all known historical circumstances.

From it are fed multiple dimensions of luxury, which now firmly belong to the image of existence in the super-installation. In the contemporary *way of life, the first thing that stands out is* an enormous degree of luxury of mobility. Almost every contemporary life participates to an unknown extent in the power of transportation. Modern bodies are defined - along with their self-operating constitution - by their ability to overcome distances and perform arbitrary movements. This is so far-reaching that today the concept of freedom can no longer be defined without reference to the right to

kinetic waste and tourist whim. The extent of kinetic luxury is inferred from the sociological-circulatory observation that two out of three motorized traffic movements are linked to non-economic and non-professional purposes; *je bouge, donc je suis*. It remains to write a critique of pure evasion. The lifetime mileage count of an average worker or employee in the most motorically and touristically active nations of the welfare system exceeds by around 2000 four times the *leisure class* balance of the 18th and 19th century, despite the fact that the latter was engaged in the exquisite sport of globetrotting. Add to this the customary ergotropic practices, which are exercised in the form of countless types of sports, physical exercises and gymnastics, dances, parades and movement therapies, and the picture emerges of a civilization that vibrates in an unparalleled sense of kinetic luxury.



Gilles Barbier, *L'Hospice*.

In the empire of non-work in wakefulness, a system of luxury of morbidity of unprecedented scope has also differentiated itself. Very close to the purely self-referential movement, being sick has become the most common interpretation of the opportunities to

<sup>692]</sup> Civilizing diseases contribute to this diagnosis no less than manifest psychopathologies, drug addiction disorders and sports accidents, which closely follow the diversification of sport into hundreds of subcultures (which is why the trauma and accident surgery departments of hospitals are today veritable sociological seminars). The multimorbidity phenomenon shows the expansion of being-sick into a universe of luxury in its own right. It shows that ailments can be cultivated like decathlon training. Even when illness does not define the *modus vivendi* par antonomasia, it remains omnipresent in the background as a permanently addressable possibility: without it, *fitness* scenarios, diet and *wellness* cultures, the inward-turned and well-organized worlds of rest cities, balneological refuges and coughing castles perched high above would not be thinkable. (A hundred years before Thomas Mann let it be explained to the aulic counselor Behrens in the *magic mountain* that he was an old employee of death, Balzac described the type of the broad-breasted hostess of places of cure of Auvergne, who knew how to wait, maternal and skillful businesswoman, for the death of her guests.)<sup>[693]</sup> The same is true of the wellness culture, the wellness culture, the wellness culture, the wellness culture of the spa towns, the balneological refuges and the wellness castles situated high above.

The great entry into morbidity is accompanied by innumerable specializations of medical and therapeutic services. At the upper end of the product scale are refined hermeneutics of illness which instruct their patients to take their ailments as an opportunity; the accident shows a second face when it is interpreted as an act of self-care;<sup>[694]</sup> the dialogue about neuroses and hostilities in the face of life produces in countless people the reward of being-problematic. In the clinical archipelago (in Germany alone there are 4.2 million employees in the "health system") extensive regulatory circuits of luxury of self-harm, luxury of therapy, luxury of care, luxury of insurance and luxury of discontent are coupled, each with its own indispensable, diatonically ascending lament-bass of badness

to the worst; integrated by the systemic need to hide the pampering character of contemporary morbidity *management* behind a thick veil of humanistic patronage and minimal scientifically-naturally founded requirements. Because of its pathogenic implications, reference may also be made, at this point, to the image-transmitted luxury of cruelty in the culture of the present, whose sources and habit patterns admittedly go back relatively far in the history of European painting.<sup>[695]</sup>

Finally, in the moral sphere of the *affluent society*, a new kind of victimological luxury has developed. To the imposition and ramification of which a media alliance composed of corporate associations, law firms, cultural sciences, and moral folklorists contribute what is necessary. Fancy victimologies are based on the discovery that the moral sensitivity of public opinion in the super-installation is a symbolic resource that can be managed materially. Since after the Enlightenment heroes are now only possible as victims, ambition has to take the roundabout route of victimhood. This applies to individuals as well as to corporations and states. Countless are those who vie with amateur and professional media for the privilege of being able to present themselves as victims in various scenarios: better yet as super-victims, as the attacked of the attacked, as the Jew of the Jews, as the outcast of the outcasts, as the damned among the damned of this earth. The prominent also participate intensely in these mechanisms, like the late Princess of Wales, whose great popularity in the women's press was based fundamentally on her carefully cultivated quality as a

"dominant victim". Even international powers do not shy away from resorting to victimological awards: the political behavior of the Bush administration in the United States of America since September 11, 2001 testifies to the historical *novum*, that a superpower would decide, given the occasion, to present itself as a super-victim: a posture that entails incalculable political risks, not to speak of the



moral disproportions. With regard to expected gratifications, in the atmosphere of offensive sensibility, a hyperbolic function has been generated in order to optimally present one's own existence in the light of the harm suffered. This habit can be compared to the custom of the anti-Jacobin *muscadins* of 1794 of shaving their necks *à la victime*, to show their solidarity with the notables beheaded during the Terror; but it is more than just a short-lived vindictive fashion: starting from the United States, where *victim speak* has become common parlance since the 1970s, the aggressive sensibility of victimhood status cultures is noticeable in the climate of the entire hothouse of well-being.<sup>[696]</sup> It is clear that a culture of long-term resentments here takes forms that we cannot yet judge how they are to be compatible with the rest of the ecosystems of moral sentiment in the hothouse of pampering. We do not yet know all that bodies are capable of in resentment.

But it is understood that these phenomena, in addition to psychological motives, have solid economic motives. Together with taxes for the treasury and social security contributions, the process of victim compensation becomes the third pillar of redistribution; it increases as it intensifies the momentum of the lawyer-doctor-crazy. World fame has been well earned by an American plaintiff who put her wet dog in a microwave oven to dry it, and then claimed astronomical compensation for her annealed pet from the company that had built the device, with the memorable argument that the manufacturer had not warned her of the risks involved in keeping mammals in microwave ovens on. This fact can be considered as the paradigm of a new intelligence of the design of the claimable matters. The incessant invention of new syndromes of illness and injury, delimited with pseudo-precision, is stimulated by the need to fix the victimized claimable circumstances. A very promising blossoming of victimhood is,

for example, the recently appeared *economy-class* syndrome, which is to provide the legal-medical-craic prerequisites for claims for damages against airlines in the event of thrombosis of the lower extremities of passengers on long journeys. Since the 1990s, other proven symptoms of various applicability, together with dissociative disorder (in which remnants of the old hysteria are hidden), are chronic fatigue and multiple personality: both embody the medical form of the postmodern farewell to the illusion of the culprit.

When the fundamental mood of victimhood joins the alarmist mood, a wide field opens up for an admonitory bibliography that places the bearer of the alarm in the bag of topics in case it achieves the desired success in terms of attention: In the face of the pernicious deposit of heavy metals in the brain and the inevitable decay of humanity's intelligence; in the face of microbial globalization, through which pathogens of unknown aggressiveness spread; in the face of the belated psychic consequences of the abuse of youngsters by overprotective mothers, who force their offspring into enemas before going to bed; and in the face of gigantic meteors that maintain a direct course to the Earth. In the realm of alarmist *entertainment*, numerous subspecies that feed the public's appetite for horror with a select menu of causes of death have been differentiated, composing a kind of source-book *gothic*.<sup>[697]</sup> Thanks to such features, in the *culture of fear*, uninterrupted false alarm has become a way of life not only in the United States.

Surveillance surpluses are to subjectivities what fossil fuels and solar energy are to the machine systems of the hothouse of luxury. Free waking times are the ferment for vaulting and enlarging agglomerated micro-maniacal spaces. From their reservoirs can be drawn displaced quanta of subjective energy for the enlargement of cultivable fields, beginning with the simplest pleasures. Because of its surplus nature, there are innumerable activities, to which

lacks all character of work and production, which can be trained as reasonable efforts; when this happens, its passage to the form of competition is advisable; all divertimento becomes the object of championship soon after its introduction. When it has become sufficiently organized, it also releases its specific pathologies, which, in turn, can be attended to by corresponding trainers and therapists. The high expenditure quotas in all fields show that in the case of surveillance it is a real luxury. The significant privilege of the possessors is to undertake little with their wealth. In this respect, the postmodern possessors of extensive waking leisure time often behave like the lords of yesteryear, for whom nothing was as far away as the idea of building something on the basis of their inherited privileges.

But even the little that flows in the activism of moods and whims already produces an incomprehensible and irresumable diversity. To achieve an overview of the effects from an abstract point of view, one must begin with the statement that wealth is only wealth for a vigilance, or a state of wakefulness and attention, that values it. Since the luxury of vigilance represents the key function of all luxury, it forms the central nervous system of consumerism and the leisure industries. Moreover: it hides within itself the crypto-spirituality of an apparently de-spiritualized age, as it provides the matrix of all nuanced activities. Only meditative subcultures realize the irony of the treasure hunt: that in the awakened consciousness of the seeker is already the treasure assumed in the objects. There are few individuals who are clear that the luxury of reflection and meditation - becoming attentive to being attentive itself - is the fundamental form of culminating experiences.

The fundamental current of vigilance flows towards objects whose presence is experienced as satisfaction in noticing them. The life of the vigilant world yields the surpluses of attention and trainable capacity for judgment, without which there is no refined care of self, no higher metabolism of the

experience; yes, while the working life was above all artisan, it also took advantage of the added value of refinement, inherent in the libidinous reaction couplings of highly skilled vigilant executions. This can be observed today in numerous fields of extended investment of vigilance. All forms of the culture of remembrance - the core of the old concept of European civilization - live from the utilization of surplus waking times for the embellishment of interior and exterior images of the past. What has been known since the nineteenth century as historicism is a further effect, perceptible throughout the culture, of the channeling of enormous quanta of free time into the ornamentation of attractive pasts; satisfaction at the fact that even something is known of other times rounds out the subculture of rememberers in itself. Along with the proponents of the religion of art, the historicists were the first to devote themselves to the task of reformulating their mood or disposition of mind into a universal necessity, better, into a spiritual staple for the many.

Cultures of decadence are possible because the luxury of wakefulness is preferably articulated as the luxury of morbidity.<sup>[698]</sup> When one meditates on morbidity, weakness manifests itself as a trainable state. At high degrees of collective liberation for loss-of-form exercises, impressive results can soon be observed in a sufficiently pampered population: thanks to a circular reinforcement there appears, alongside the rapid exhaustion of the young, a vague epidemic tedium for everything in the old.

Cultures of negativism are possible because in the media of the unsuccessful more free time can be invested in the description of discretionary objects under the filter of envy. A large part of what appears in the *feuilletons* as criticism and commentary could long ago be better specified under the rubrics of luxury of malignity and luxury of denigration, whose psychic use-value consists in the fact that it satisfies the demand for gestures of an empty being-above (formerly a monopoly of the *Spiegel*, today almost standard general).

Cultures of resentment are possible, and they thrive as never before, because the meeting of frustration and free time means that much attention can be specialized in holding grudges for humiliations; the ever-watchful jealousy of intellectuals produces incessantly shifting inquisitions against the heresies of success. It remains undecided whether these forms of luxury redound to the benefit of total culture, whatever that may be. From the optimistic point of view, it can be observed how resentment stimulates the metabolism of aggression by means of fantasies of humiliation rich in ballast material.

The decision to interpret the phenomenon of luxury from the surplus of free surveillance brings with it the advantage of not having to dwell on anecdotes and enumerations in the presentation of the various coinages of the luxurious design of life; as can still be perceived in the most significant achievements of ancient historiography: in the classic costumbrist histories of luxury parade dresses, jewels, floral compositions, buildings, furniture, delicacies, *maîtresses* and servants, without any superior point of view being derived therefrom (excluding that of well-being, with its capricious exacerbations). It is learned, not without interest, that a French sybarite of the eighteenth century, by the name of Verdelet, prepared himself platters of carp tongues, each of which cost 1200 livres and involved the death of 2000 to 3000 of those animals; his model seems to have been the Roman Vitellius, whose compositions of pheasant and peacock brains, flamingo tongues, mackerel livers, and moray milk became legend<sup>[699]</sup>.

Based on the irruption of vigilance, we possess a criterion that illuminates more adequately the existential qualities of the superfluous than any objective concept of wealth and waste. At the same time, it becomes clear that the investment of

The "time and money" in a sector of preference for action and enjoyment represents a case of free whim. The victory over necessity can be anchored in the concept of luxury itself; and this means, as said: at the point of intersection between well-being and vigilance.

When whimsy or humor is elaborated in exercises and is expanded in ramifications, series and individuated tufts, it generates a gravitation of its own type. One could say that virtuosity is nothing other than a superfluous waste, retained by the cultivating gravitational force of repetition.

The reference to its source in vigilance brings luxury closer, moreover, to the "aesthetics of everyday life," of which it has recently been possible to show that it belongs to a "luxury of the second order," exemplarily embodied in the demand for tranquility, emptiness, simplification, and authentic feelings.<sup>[700]</sup> Since the phenomenon of vigilance precedes the bifurcation of attention and distraction, it encompasses the two characterizations of aesthetic theories that ascribe to one of the two poles.<sup>701]</sup> Moreover, since it also precedes the contraposition of attending-carefully (*religere*) and neglecting (*necligere*),<sup>[702]</sup> vigilance can converge in stable cults, but also in improvisations. As the matrix of both religions and profane distractions, free vigil is allied both with regularities and with the unrepeatable.

Aesthetics extended to the objects of everyday life is - as a mass cultural phenomenon - an invention of the 20th century (its original forms in the Dutch mysticism of home life go back, as we have hinted, at least as far as the 17th century); it cannot deny its provenance from the discharge or distension that is actually happening. It would not be imaginable without the massive expenditure of available time in the perception and refinement of objects and contexts in an environment. What is called taste, beyond the bad and the good, is the extension of oral vigilance to the most different spheres of judgment on sensitive presences.

Without the luxury of freely available surveillance and its lasting investment in cultivated fields, there would be none of the things that have been observed for several decades in the field of "housing culture" and its non-stop development at all levels of popular and elite design: there would be no culture of bathrooms, kitchens, floor coverings, materials and colors. There would be no

*air design*, no expedition into the realm of aromas;<sup>[703]</sup> no refinement of sense for ornaments<sup>[704]</sup> (ornaments are outstanding life-time absorbers), no special taste for furnishings and decor, no pleasant straying into the universe of antiques. Without free-sailing surpluses there would be no feeling for the form of expensive pens and carriages, no sense for space-climate, for harmony between old and new, for compatibilities between accessories and contrast in the *arrangement* of the surroundings. And, above all, there would be no glance beyond the framework of the company, no sensation or feeling of the change of landscape and slippery horizons, of the change of climate and atmospheric chromatism; there would be no meta-need to put an end to the frivolities of need, no turning towards the values of pure "being", no longing for the desert, no evasion, no fasting of experiences.

Needless to say, all literary and musical culture depends on the opportunity to use waking moments (vigil, vigil, candle) to read, listen, rehearse and compare. It should be noted: in the history of all civilizations, in the face of the usual critique of culture and theory of decadence, never have so many units of time been spent as at present in reading books, magazines and newspapers, in listening to music of all kinds, in watching television programs, movies, talk shows, plays, *cabarets*, stage discussions, *etcetera*; never have there been so many singers and instrumentalists of the highest rank; the number of novelists, poets, actors, directors and artists of all levels and categories is today at an all-time high (only professional speakers have practically disappeared); the absolute majority of orchestras, operas, choirs, dance and theater groups are active today. All of them presuppose audience segments that are willing to exchange entertainment, art and information for attention.

The third dimension in the individualistic complex of tendencies is achieved by the transformation of serious "society" into a

excitable aggregate of clients, buyers and consumers, who take care of and pamper themselves. Among the commonplaces of psychohistory is the fact that the 20th century set in motion a redistribution of the forms of the subject, passing from the demands of early capitalism to those of developed capitalism, formerly late capitalism: from the puritanical sense of work to the liberal orientation of free time, from serious savings to cheerful credit, from the renunciation of consumption to the appetite for experiences, from the heroization of entrepreneurial virtues to the glorification of the prominence of sport and entertainment. In the latest variants of the critique of culture, it is said that the postmodern subject is being trained out of - or trained to eliminate - elementary characteristics of the classical cultivation of personality, such as orientation to stable norms, the conviction that one is not purchasable, the feeling of self-esteem for proven skills, the sense of biographical continuity and the like, in order to create a human being fully compatible with capital. Of whom it is said, partly afflicted, partly descriptively, that he oscillates between work and amusement, morally denucleated, slick as a snake,<sup>[705]</sup> capable to a high degree of service abroad, unprejudiced as an arms dealer, post-national as a brothel-owner. The analytical power of the financial situation, ascertained by Marx and Engels, that "everything corporate and stable evaporates,"<sup>[706]</sup> would thus have reached the last bastion of premodern reserves of order: the personal stratum. With the discovery of amusement (*Spass*, probably from the Italian *spasso*: expansion, distension) as a source of value creation, the subjective factor would have been definitively integrated into the sphere of capital; finally, erotic life would also have been opened to the market, as if to refute the myth of the "sexual revolution" launched by Wilhelm Reich, after wage earners, through the enjoyment of their sexuality, had become phallic rebels, and, consequently, refractory to any kind of alienation.

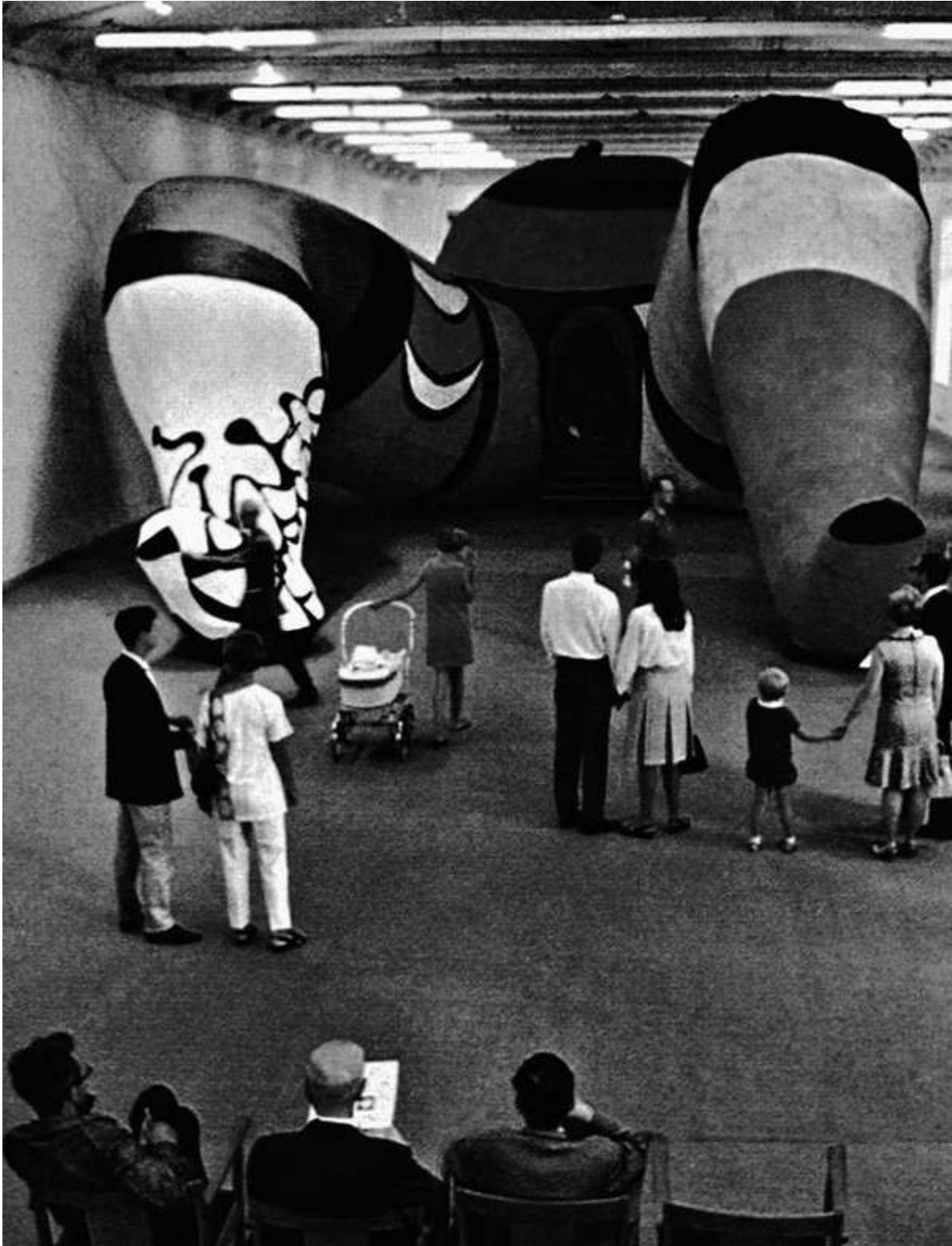




Eric Fischl, *Birth of Love* (second version), 1987, courtesy of Mary Boone Gallery, New York.

In fact, the integration of sexuality into the culture of entertainment - without being polemical in tone - has brought about a broad subjectivization of the consciousness of wealth and thus provoked an effect of truth to be taken seriously. Indeed, the impossibility of being poor, inherent to the human being, cannot be illustrated with as much evidence in any other biological endowment - except for the capacity for vigilance - as in sexuality. It constitutes the natural talent for experiences of bliss in the most literal sense of the word: as long as one chooses as a guideline the origin of the

The expression talent (from the Greek *thalanton*, that which has been weighed), extended since the Renaissance, in the New Testament term for "well trusted" or "pound" capable of yielding returns.





Niki de Saint Phalle, *The Figure Hon (= she)*, 1966, Stockholm.

where the break with the traditions of the dogmatism of poverty is most clearly shown in the twentieth century is in the liberation of a sexuality that has been de-demonized, naturalized, or positively minimized, and at the same time technically intensified. If we have stated above that an authentic theory of discharge and disempowerment is so far lacking, a restriction should now be made: that the sciences of sexuality, catapulted upwards in the second half of the twentieth century, on late nineteenth-century foundations, fill part of the gap, because, seen in the light, they provide the most powerful indirect theory of the present era. They treat individuals as rich - and with possibilities of further enrichment - owners of sexual capital. The science of sexuality possesses - Thomas Bernhard would also say in this case: naturally - the form of an investment consultancy. It starts from the intuition that many owners manage their capital with little skill, either because of inhibitions (presumably of miserabilist origin), or because of ignorance of the options and profit margins.

Contemporary sexology owes its existence to the shift towards the explicit, which places the mystifying label of "revolution" on the facts of consciousness in Modernity. The sexual explanation, which gave its mark on the 20th century from the cultural point of view, has brought to the light of day, in a historically unknown way, the modes and presuppositions of sexual life; it has broken the normative monopoly of conjugally regulated couple sexuality, and has made known and chosen an alternative list of options: from asexuality, to autosexuality, to autosexuality, to the

homosexuality and heterosexuality in all their ordinary and deviant varieties, as long as they are practicable in non-criminal forms; it has focused the gaze on genital facts and offered visual contemplation to an unknown extent; to the extent that the word "explicit" designates precisely the opening of intimacies;<sup>[707]</sup> by contrast with liberated light sexuality, it has shown the structure of perversions, in which it is usually a matter of codifying sexual action with cravings for drama, harshness or heaviness: on the one hand, to intuitively force the link between the pleasure practices of the sexual level and those of the rections-endorphin; on the other hand, to prevent the dissolution of the sublime sexuality in the pleasant one (once again the flight from freedom to necessity, ie: the conservative revolution of desire); has pushed to the open rupture the latent split, existing since ever, between sexuality and procreation, formally carried out with the introduction of oral steroidal contraceptives, whose first successful synthesis was dated by Carl Djerassi on October 15, 1951 in Mexico City, and whose popular use has since the 1960s supported the turn to levitated forms of heterosexual trafficking<sup>[708]</sup> (Djerassi has rightly made the observation that "most of these changes in sexual behavior would have appeared anyway");<sup>[709]</sup> by the possibility of practically certain control of births, has brought out with the utmost clarity the luxury character of sexual acts, both within and outside marriage. Never before - disregarding local forms of aristocratic erotics - has it been so evident that the "sex" - to assume now the relevant American-American term - represents a luxury occupation of absolute self-worth. As a natural theater of the upward thrust, it offers all assets an opportunity to explore their antigrave potential. Because of its location at the crossroads between passion, encounter, fun and sport, it offers access from all directions. In its decoded form, it is pure humor itself, if by *whim* we mean the desire whose purpose is itself, which carries its goal within itself.

Its realization includes self-reward. Its realization includes self-reward.  
(Whoever still asks what he gets out of it asks one question too many:  
definition of stupidity).



Jürgen Klauke, *Dr. Müller's Sex Shop or Here's How I Imagine Love*, 1977.

This is why sex, decoded, made explicit, easily decoupled from emotional and reproductive meanings, constitutes the center of the culture of entertainment, that is to say, of the system of emancipated whims. Only a vanishing minority of intimate actions still have, actually or potentially, any connection with the procreation of offspring, be it a possibility to be welcomed or avoided, while the greatest number of amorous games are exhausted in the horizon of the attainment of pleasure, *performance* or relaxation. (No one should be surprised that the current representatives of the authoritarian capitalism of the East - not to mention the Islamic reaction - are in agreement in the rejection of light sexuality). In the prostitution markets, grotesquely increased in number, what counts from the outset is the pure preference for this or that form of play. The more explicit sexuality becomes, the closer it approaches the pole of pure waste, of pure luxury. Moreover, that experience, which today is within the reach of countless erotically nomadic individuals, was traditionally well guarded in the few happy marriages for a long time; which enjoyed the privilege of balancing on the economic paradox of their relationship. When out of a thousand embraces of monochrome happiness came a handful of children, or even just one, this disproportion between too much and too little offered the less problematic face of happiness.

Sexuality, ordered to itself, as it now dominates in the "societies" with few children in the West, makes explicit a natural dimension, evolutionarily well established, of waste or squandering. It is implanted in all mammals, intensifies in hominids and reaches its peak in the *sapiens* lineage. The transition to permanent sex is outlined in some primates: sexual activity already acquires here luxury values, occasionally even leading to group *management*, as shown by the well-known example of the bonobos. Among millions of immature eggs, which are available in the ovaries of every female *individual-sapien*, only



slightly more than 400 reach maturity in the course of a life cycle; of these, less than 3 percent are fertilized in the case of intense relationships; and less than 0.5 percent develop into offspring. Even more extreme are the proportions of surplus in the case of the male members of the species. With a number of 40 million spermatozoa per ejaculation and a frequency of two dispensations per week, a man, during a period of 40 years, emits more than 150 billion sperm, of which biologists suppose that about half are normally motile, well formed, capable of generation.

After the physiological explanation of sexuality, a definition of male existence becomes possible: the decoded "man" is a channel through which cascades of sperm descend. Compared to this, almost everything else appears as superstructure. In view of the amount of wastefulness, real generative successes, of ordinary fathers, of vagabonds, of pashas, can be disdained. The subjective attitude of the men with regard to their spending is also quite futile; the sperm stream does not ask whether the person reads St. Paul or Bataille.

The sexual explanation becomes directly the explanation of the upward impulse. It can be affirmed that in these explanations essential features of the nature of the human being are manifested - note the absence of quotation marks - more adequately than in all the old systems determined by asceticism and lack. In these, access to overabundance was reached only indirectly, through an inner retention or organized frustration; whereas in erotic liberalism, one of the substrates of human wealth, the free use of excessive pleasures, is clearly shown without inhibitions due to prohibition and neurosis. Considered from the distance of a century, the Frank Wedekind's "masked religion of sex trafficking" and Otto Weininger's very obscure "religion of the vagina"<sup>[710]</sup> are hardly more than initial complications in the decoding of the

sexuality. In them the long tradition of misery has reached its final form. In the meantime it has become a matter of training to be able to develop sympathy in relation to such phenetic neuroses. Should we add that in such possibilities culminates one of the subtlest forms of luxury: that of worrying about things that are no longer needed?

## Retrospective

### *From a dialogue on oxymoron*

*The macrohistorian:* While we are waiting for the author, who will soon complete our get-together, we could perhaps try to organize our impressions a little. I confess, for my part, that my subject matter helped me in the main to cope with the tide of propositions that washed over me during the reading. As the author dragged me through the longitudes and latitudes of his observations - or shall I pay myself a compliment by stressing that it was I, by my own strength, who ventured into them? The impression was growing stronger that, as far as the historical construction of a framework was concerned, we were dealing with a narrative model with a high load-bearing capacity, analogous to the one we use in our macrohistorical studies; a model with which the history of mankind - and this is no less the case here - is brought to a triadic common denominator: the Neolithic caesura separates the Paleolithic era of hunters and gatherers from the era of the following agro-cultural civilizations, together with their regal sovereignties and imperative administrations; the industrial caesura, in turn, separates from roughly two to three hundred years ago the era of indolent local sovereignties from the era of the accelerated life forms of Modernity. If this theory of the three empires, if I may put it this way, is reminiscent of a certain idealistic process theory, *so much so* for Hegel and his ilk. We are definitely no longer idealists. In our analysis of the accumulation of inventions

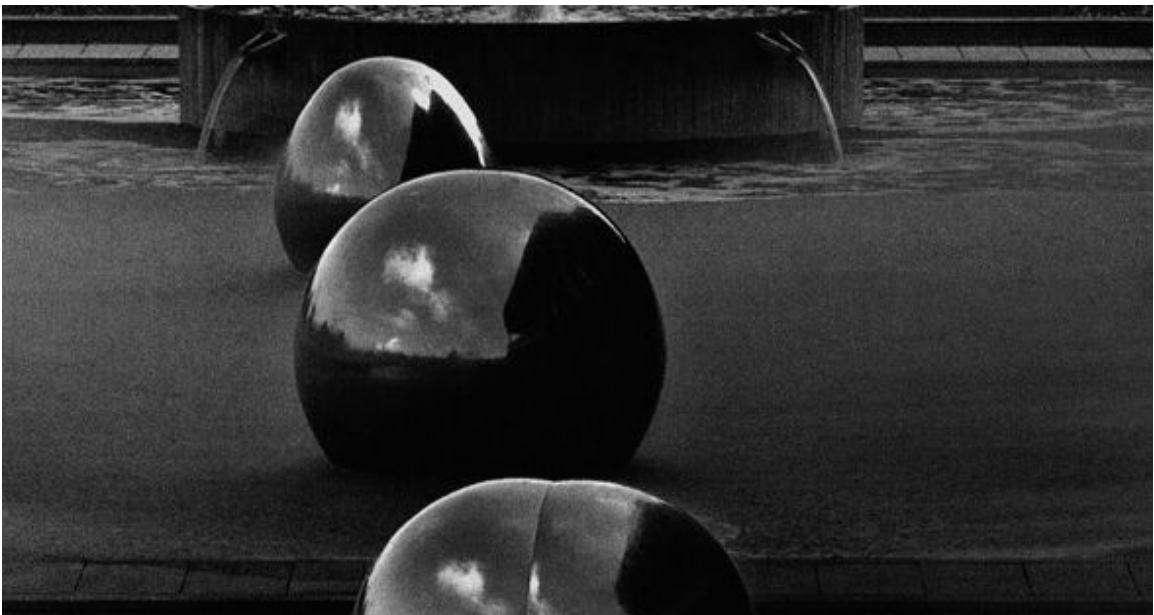
We do not pursue the trace of the spirit of the world as it moves through time, nor do we perceive the voice of the history of being. So much the worse for those who, because of superficial similarities between recent macrohistorical models and the fictions of the philosophy of history, allow themselves to be led to the conclusion that one is moving on familiar ground.

In order not to raise false hopes: I would not swear that I have understood what the so-called spheres ultimately mean. I doubt that I will work with such expressions in the future. It has not been sufficiently clear to me what dyads or multipolar surreal spaces are, let alone that I would know how to reproduce how peoples live under their so-called imaginary canopies, citizen cultures behind their immunizing walls and liberal populations in their greenhouses of mime. Well, historians are known to be on the warpath with more abstract ideas. Anyway, I am convinced that these vague and lofty speculations, in whose solidity, to tell the truth, I cannot entirely believe, are somehow linked to the above-mentioned construction in phases, which, after long verification, never disproved, I consider to be well grounded in the earth.

We macrohistorians consider ourselves skeptical descendants of the progressive universal historians, and we firmly believe, moreover, that we do useful, even indispensable work, since we provide empirical orientations in the process of civilization, convinced, as we are, that this process actually exists and that up to certain limits it is rationally reproducible. We caution, however, against exaggerations or, what amounts to the same thing, normative statements about the ultimate ends of history. Like all contemporaries who have gone through the school of doubt, we share the recommendation that the dead should bury their dead and ideologues should bury their ideologues. Above all, it is the servants of the idols of history who must bury their fellow servants of idolatrous servitude in the ground, there where

The result, corresponding to the circumstances of the time, is a gigantic sepulchral field, a cemetery of heroes of false obedience, in which, instead of monotonous surfaces full of crosses, hands and stretched index fingers rise from the ground: it is not known if they belong to victims who point to their seducers, or are the seducers themselves, who continue to sit on the chair from the beyond....

*The literary critic:* Excuse me for interrupting you. It seems to me that with these images you have come quite close to the rhetorical core of the *Spheres-project*, if a centrist metaphor such as the core were appropriate to the case. What, according to the linguistic form, is the experiment attempted with these books? I would say that it is a matter of making the poetic impulse cooperate with skepticism. Or in other words: it sets in motion a kind of prose criticism that extends to the criticism of the twentieth century. Did not the heresiarchs of the century, with their prosaic discourses on the masses, the ultimate struggles and the final goals of history prepare that real-political exterminism that was the fundamental characteristic of the epoch? That we, after that hysterical journey, prefer the cold style, also has external reasons.





Piotr Kowalski, *Sculpture flottante*, Orléans-la-Source, 1974.

To each great word of political prose correspond millions of murdered people, to each exaggeration that came to power, a holocaust of great style, to each failure of leading logic, a people extinguished. If we are looking for a minimal characterization of the twentieth century, we should begin, perhaps, with the observation: it was not an era complacent with failures.

*The macrohistorian:* I agree, assuming that we do not abandon ourselves to the terror of a moderation dictated by resentment. When, after 1945, we find ourselves in a spirit

of the time that suggested that no major subject should be dealt with because the ideologues had already tried before us, with our rickety and blandly correct behavior we wasted decades of precious time that could have been used to promote real research into the structures of the history of civilization. Didn't the great ethnologist Marcel Mauss say that every day that passes without our gathering the fragments of humanity is a day lost for science and for the history of mankind?

*The theologian:* Well, *pathos* possesses us again! A little care, please, dear colleague! It would be equally false to summarily assert that the post-war era only means lost time. It is no trifle to leave behind a misstep like National Socialism in Germany along with its cousins and brothers-in-law in the European nations. If the Germans and many other Europeans have spent a lot of time since 1945 pondering this mistake for what it was, to the point of ensuring its unrepeatability - assured, no doubt, for a long time - we should not see unnecessary waste in it. Forgive me for bothering you with trivialities.

From the point of view of the history of the spirit, the post-totalitarian situation can be determined from *hybris* as the return of the modern spirit. This is an event that has its own importance. You must understand that when I use a word like history of the mind or a word like event, because of my specialty, I also have something more in my head than my colleagues in the faculty of philosophy.

From that background, I read the theory of the *Spheres* as a strictly dated enterprise. In my eyes, it constitutes a crypto-theological essay, as was only possible after the collapse of modern mystification systems.





Louise Bourgeois, *Cell (glass balls and hands)*, 1993.

I know that the author would protest against this interpretation: he considers himself an anthropologist not identified as such, more precisely, as an anthro-monstrologist, he goes so far as to consider theology itself as a monstrological specialty. The least that can be said is, certainly, that with the turn to the science of atmospheres as First Science, the consequence of the unmasking of extreme realisms is drawn. The date of this attempt is fixed: after the *hybris* of Modernity.

*The literary critic:* I'm not sure, isn't it a hybrid form, in turn, a macro-theory of that format? Doesn't it also contain an exacerbated defense of modernism, insofar as it is contemplated, with the author, that the criterion of modernity is that the implicit becomes explicit and the background comes to the fore? I would say

that the author recognizes himself as a proponent of a special *hybris*, of a methodical *hybris*, let us say; and under two aspects: on the one hand, because the work has a stylistic note, and, as you know, it cannot be denied: style is not something collegial; on the other hand, because a project like this one arises from the spirit of the book market (this is, with your permission, the theoretical-specific expression for interdisciplinarity). With it, the hybridization of knowledge becomes a program. It should not be forgotten that, for the moment, such knowledge finds only one plausible place in the world: the author. An author is the only colloquium, in which different voices penetrate each other and create new resonance effects; the so-called colloquia of specialists only produce parallel discourses that do not intersect anywhere.

As far as the post-totalitarian situation is concerned, dear colleague, you may be right. Only I think that such a test, because it is too general, has little explanatory value for this enterprise; at best, it provides the idea of incorporating into any theory with ambitions a certain number of safety devices against abuse, as befits the postideological text. There is no need to demonstrate in detail that this is the case: already on its terminological surface spherology is a measure of intimidation against anything that is oriented towards seriousness, power and quota. Powerful people of any branch will be very careful not to talk about foams, let alone bubbles: the macabre probes of the first volume in the intimate sphere are already excluded in principle from the quotable, with negative gynecology can not be made propaganda. A barrier against imitation is installed in the texts, a barrier that functions reliably under the given socio-psychological conditions. Quoting is already a risk for the quoter, and so it should continue. In the case of the treatise on the current mime systems, with which the third book ends, something similar is to be expected. It will not capture the masses, and even academics would feel a certain uneasiness, serious young people would tighten their lips, trade unionists would raise objections, if they heard anything about it.

To get into the subject, it is necessary to analyze the rhetorical figures in which the *hybris* -I will keep that expression for now- immanent to the work is shown. You could consider it a modest *hybris*, in case you are satisfied with the oxymoron. It seems to me that the key to his way of working was hidden by the author in the introduction to the volume *Globes*, where he deduces classical European metaphysics from the systematic use of the superlative: since the world, because of its supposed origin from the divine intellect, possesses a round shape, it can be said that it is in the morphological *optimum*. Thinking begins with the principle of the optimum. It must then try to maintain the level, which means that in all its steps it remains bound to the superlative. To say what there is always means in this regime: to express in language what represents the supreme, the best, the perfect, at least as long as it concerns the two super-objects, God and world, together with their political appendages, the optimally organized city and the good life in it (as is well known, this is what classical philosophers like most). Judged from its middle part, the work of the *Spheres* is nothing other than an essay on the superlative: it describes its intimate beginnings, its monological triumph, its pluralistic transformation and thus...

*The macrohistorian*: If I may interrupt you, in my turn, dear colleague, that perspective seems to me too far-fetched. You don't take it amiss that I am so frank in expressing my misgivings about your considerations? It may be that my lack of understanding of the essence of the spherical plays a trick on me, but I affirm that this has nothing to do with the matter. I note: the trilogy has an objective theme that runs through all three parts, assuming it is read as what it incontestably is, namely as a history book, a grand narrative of the modes of being-in-the-world in the three stages or structures of civilization: in the hunter-gatherer era, in the agro-empire era, and in the technical era. With regard to these modalizations of being-in-the-world, it is shown that

what, and why, they differ radically. For whether human beings gather in their self-generated linguistic bell around a Paleolithic household, or whether during the agricultural epoch they place themselves under the protection of common walls, of a princely protector, with dominion over writing, and of his clergy, with dominion over meaning, or whether they inhabit the modern social and mass-media state, in which the securing of existence was split up into public services and private options of belief, all this yields in each case totally peculiar diagnoses of the *human conditio*. Each of these situations has its own risk profiles and generates corresponding security constructions, of which we can get an idea thanks to the history of religion and historical jurisprudence. What I mean is that all this falls unequivocally within the realm of substantive questions; that they belong to the specialty history of world pictures or, if you will, to empirical ontology. I hope you will forgive me if I state once again that I recognize here incessantly the schema of macrohistory, despite the author's use of it by shifting accents.

I find the metaphors of the foam fruitful, above all because they present the civilizational stages by interpreting them analytically and spatially: their loose and evasive character appears with greater force than hitherto in the original forms of small segmentary societies; precisely as if in the early epoch of humanity there had been nothing but tiny *rogue states*, autonomous groups, narcotized by themselves, which tried to avoid as much as possible the encounter with strangers. This era was followed by that of tribes, peoples and empires, whose distinctive feature, apart from strictly hierarchical orders, consisted in their average compactness: it is possible that war, as a historical form of collision *per se*, is the characteristic sign of semi-compact interethnic relations. Finally, with the transition to Modernity, an experiment with highly compact conglomerations begins, of which to this day we can only say that

highlights features of the anthropological *matrix* that are completely different from those of all previous formations. To speak with the author, Modernity is the era of increasing cofragility, which could mean *à la longue* the transit to post-war. In co-fragile systems, not much can be done with ideas such as independence and autonomy. When high compactness stabilizes, all hitherto sovereign reason, together with its strategic concepts, could be reduced to folklore. It is not to be excluded that an era of cooperation is approaching that dissolves the imperial logic and disenchants the traditional political collectives, the excited peoples. Since these are phenomena that develop over long periods of time, we will have to wait for the judgment of future generations. It will then be seen how the next two hundred years suit the national state and the fiction of the people. I want to leave as an open question whether it is legitimate to postulate a macrohistorical law of increasing compactnesses until a supercontext embodying a stable final foam is reached; if such a law were to be consolidated, it would be a proof that heterodox relations are emerging between morphology and the science of history. Think from afar of Newton's definition, according to which bodies are more compact the more intense their inertia. According to it, universal civilization would be a highly integrated, hyperactive state of inertia. Perhaps one day it will be necessary to affirm that compactness is destiny.

If I wanted to recognize a certain innovative energy in the work, I would find it, above all, in the fact that the macrohistorical stages are conceived under unusual points of view that transcend the phases. No matter how deep the two great cuts reach, both the Neolithic and the technical-industrial, through all the metamorphoses there always remains, as we have seen exposed here, an incessantly growing perplexity of the human being in view of his premature birth, his youthfulness, his pampering, his chronic need for illusion. This privileged immaturity, which, in the circles of the

The philosophical term is called openness of the world or openness to the world (I must suppose that by this is meant this displacement from *a priori* channeling to *a posteriori* channeling). According to this, the human being would be a monster that educates itself, it is a begetter that learns. In this context, the indication that *homo sapiens* depends not only on biological immunity systems, but even more on cultural immunity systems, makes sense to me. I admit that it is a suggestive shift to find the good old institutions that we cultural theorists have to deal with on a daily basis redefined as civilizational immunity systems. We will see what the guilds do with it.

*The theologian:* I can confirm, indeed, that we have once again arrived at the monstrosity, as I fleetingly suggested at the beginning. As soon as one speaks of being human, the extrahuman is introduced. It should be added that this corresponds *cum grano salis* to the current state of affairs in my field. In the twentieth century we have reoriented our knowledge of God. We think we know that there can now be only indirect and modest theory of him; we can no longer speak of defending him from the evil of the world in a pompous process. What we do, rather, is to exculpate the nervous systems in the face of the non-certainty of the world. This gives rise neither to positive nor to negative theology, but to a dislodged theology, unpossessed, if you will allow the expression. If we want to be contemporary, we are condemned to anonymity. What we have to say has been hidden in neurological exile, or in ethical-communicative and immunological exile. I would not be surprised if one day a young author of our faculty would pick up the ball that has been thrown here: that reference to the relationship between immunity and community. Viewed as a whole, I admit that I feel good about the book, it provokes me in a way that is not ungrateful to me because of my specialty. I think I know why: a reader of Christian-post-Christian observance can do nothing but feel challenged by the reintroduction of space, since space -it had been forgotten- is a space that is not only a space, but a space that is a space.

a time - is the residence of the gods. We devote ourselves to the signs of space as we once devoted ourselves to the signs of time. After a century of idolatry of time, the memory of inspired space sounds like a return to our best possibilities.

*The literary critic:* I disagree, assuming two risks: on the one hand, that of depriving myself of the unusual pleasure of agreeing with a connoisseur of God; on the other hand, that of being accused again of formalism. If you enter so quickly - too quickly, I think - into the contents, whether you ground them in the history of culture and the image of the world or whether you attribute them to the metamorphoses of theology, you miss what I call the work of the text, you lose the information stored in rhetorical constructions. Supposing that my thesis that the author, especially in the *Globes* volume, wanted to repeat the superlativist and suprematistic form of classical philosophical discourse - I was interrupted at this point - were not too mistaken, then we would have to consider the trilogy as a machine for the production of systems of hyperbole, developed in parallel, which carry out their impulse towards multiple sides, without it ever being clear where ingenuity ends and parody begins. A hundred years ago such a thing would have been considered dangerous thinking. If, in the meantime, one also manages without such pathetic formulas, the question remains open as to how the text intends to prevent ideological surpluses from leaping out of it into the social space: our author knows perfectly well that "society" must be protected more from philosophy than philosophy from "society". I find the answer in the literary procedure: if it has nothing to do neither with theology nor with a cosmovisional totalization -and I affirm this with great decision-, then the text must immanently reduce its own hyperbolic outbursts, its exalted impulses, its grand gestures, until it reaches an internal balance between maniacal and skeptical tendencies. This maneuver must be expressed in an equation: upward impulse minus downward impulse equals zero (one may think here of the saying of

Heraclitus that the way up and the way down are the same). Naturally, for upward impulse one can also use enthusiasm, or exaggeration and antigravitation; for downward impulse skepticism, parody and gravity would be appropriate substitute expressions.

*The theologian:* Curiously, I do not get that account. When I subtract the downward from the upward in my readings, I don't get zero, but I have a positive remainder. In case you are right, you would have to explain to me why in my reading a surplus appears. Why do I feel edified? Where does this surplus come from? Is it the consequence of a projection that I raise my eyes, sometimes, from the open page in a state of mind that I know from the prayers of May or the liturgy of Pentecost?

*The literary critic:* Among analytics, it corresponds to the rules of art to get the reader to lie down with his book on the sofa. Normally the subject projects only when the object offers a foothold. It could be that you like the baroque way of writing the work: in that case you would be an emotional accomplice of the author, who fully enjoys a cornucopia complex. Personally, I am inclined to suppose that the festive tone suggests to you a pleasant confusion: could it not be that what is in itself a new version of cheerful science came to you as good news?

*The theologian:* Assuming, dear colleague, that the good news, in turn, does not indulge in the joke of appearing as cheerful science. Seriously: if the disguise can be chosen by both sides, who can decide what to keep?

*The literary critic:* As it stands, the question is undecidable and, because of the dear liberality, we should welcome the fact that it is. But you gave the impression, Mr. colleague, that you want to find out how one arrives at the positive remainder that you think you have in hand. If we wanted not to go into more detail, we could close the inquiry by referring to sympathy. This would be an acceptable course of action, for the fact of sympathy is the best among the good ones.



The reasoning is equivalent to a final substantiation: when the feeling speaks, the *cause* is finished. But if we are willing to pursue the inquiry beyond the emotional oracle, we must turn again to the description of form that I have earlier claimed.

I begin again with the assertion that the classical philosophical text was a praxis of the superlative. It pronounces a laudatory discourse, which says the best of the super-objects God and world (the third subject of philosophy, the soul, the poor thing in the middle, which will later be called subject or being-there, need not interest us at this point). Consequently, optimism must be defined as a rhetorical form: *de mundo Deoque nihil nisi bene*, better still: *nihil nisi optime*. The First Theory is a hyperbolic saying-good of all that is, it wants to be the pure panegyric, the praise of being, the praise of perfection. Popular opinion misunderstands optimism, unfortunately, as affective temper, as if it were enough to have a radiant mood, as they say, to see everything in the most favorable light, like a philosopher of the old school. In reality, affective optimism produces *kitsch*, foolish and pretentious shortcuts on the road to the reconciled image. One is never further from knowledge than with simulations of peace before one's eyes. Philosophical optimism is a hard discipline, it is humanly improbable because it is dedicated to the defense of the best from practically impossible situations. It pretends nothing less than, knowing the real circumstances, to certify of God and of the world perfection.

Let us take a classical situation like that of Russia after October 1917: the soldier of the red army fires a bullet that could hit my indolent bourgeois body if I did not take cover. But for ideas I am forced to give reason to the bullet, since it belongs to history, while my life is only a nervous system at leisure. The bullet of the rifle has necessity on its side, I, on the contrary, count myself among the superfluous matter as long as I do not understand what is happening on a large scale. This is real optimism,

all the rest is tea-time talk. It will be admitted that such a thesis does not have great initial plausibility. It is necessary to contort oneself a lot to admit it. That is why the ancient philosophers declared themselves in favor of a life in constant exercise. Contortion - later called transcendence - needs training. All these are things that the twentieth century no longer understands, for its contribution to the history of the spirit consisted above all in the irruption of the untrained into theory. Since a life in training, which was called *áskesis*, is likewise humanly improbable, the first friends of wisdom in Greece, like their contemporaries, the first athletes, had to present themselves as friends of effort. Some slept on the floor knot, more than one refused even the pillow. Something like this makes a great impression on the people, who like monsters, who have an *affair* with the improbable. At the height of the situation, the thinkers were admired as acrobats of optimism and walked fearlessly on the best-of-all-possible-worlds rope.

*The macrohistorian:* Here a comment from the evolutionary perspective seems appropriate. The improbability of what you call philosophical optimism is reflected, if I understand it correctly, in the improbability of the first agrarian-monarchical life forms. Certainly, the point of the first great cultures was to conceal in their images of the world their own improbability: only in this way do they present themselves as manifestations of eternal laws. Just as the first great kings had to become specialists of an enlightened government, so the first metaphysicians had to become experts of an enlightened conception of empire. In both cases the almost impossible appears as the most certain disposition of all. Properly, in its classical form, ontology was a universal cartography; and it is clear that one does not draw maps when one does not want to secure one's territory. The concepts of being and realm thus reflect each other. Being is the essential compendium of territories and empire, their administration. When philosophers intoned the

praises of the optimum, under titles such as *kósmos*, *ágathon*, *ón* and the like, practice an indirect praise of empire: the objective counterposition to the praise of the prince, of which we know, from all the cultures that produced regal conditions, that it was a school of boasting. The superlative belongs to political cybernetics. Thanks to it, power and its luck are hung from the pinnacle of being: mortals are suggested subordination to higher command, they are convinced that they are lucky when they are allowed to serve. It is only with the rise of bourgeois civilization that the praxis of speaking ill of princes develops, and, in analogy, one also begins to ascribe bad predicates to the existing, regionally or in its entirety. As soon as one has taken this liberty, reality presents itself as a single zone of necessity. The rest is familiar: upon awakening, the spirit of Modernity replaces the ontology of optimism, which previously carried with it an ethic of obedience, with an ontology of imperfection, to which is added, understandably, an ethic of reform or revolution.

*The literary critic:* The superlatives do not fall, therefore, in disuse, they take another direction. The moderns do not draw other consequences, they exaggerate in another way. And we have already experienced ourselves where that leads. The theory of the twentieth century invests in pessimistic hyperboles, invents a rhetoric of a worse world and a worse God. The consequence is an era of critics. It is well understood that the worst that can be said of a God is that there is no God, and that the worst that could be said of the world is that only realists have a chance in it. One forgets to add this clarification: the authentic name for a place where nothing contrary to reality can be done is hell. Dramaturgically, the realists and the devil are the same personnel.

*The theologian:* Now, either by choice or by force, I have been given the task of completing my statement regarding the dating of the theory of spheres. That theory is post-hybrid in that it is post-pessimistic. The positive remainder, which gives me food for thought, originated from

probably from the unexpected abandonment of the pessimistic exaggerations, from which it was to be feared that we would never get rid of. A theory that doesn't exaggerate still seems like an import from another planet.

*The literary historian:* It seems to me that, indeed, I come to the forbidden pleasure of agreeing with a representative of your faculty, and moreover on the most sensitive point. The description of the form leads us to the point where the work of hyperbole becomes visible. The author makes exaggerations appear, one in front of the other, until they come to neutralize each other; without this being confused with an overcoming. Why this duplication of exaggerations? I see in it a procedure to present complexity. For complexity -that much is clear- cannot be grasped in a first attempt. The languages of the complex arise from the renunciation of a previous simplification.

In rhetoric the figures of renunciation of simplification are known as *correctio* and oxymoron. In the former, the speaker cuts himself off, substituting a first inappropriate expression with a second, more appropriate one. It could be argued that the whole history of ideas follows this procedure, only that the corrections are spread over several generations. The other figure arose from the observation that some speakers feel unable to decide whether to describe a particular taste as sweet or rather as something sour, as sour but also as something sweet; with the result that they initiate the flight forward in order to make indecision a value of its own, the bittersweet, the double taste, the double predicate. Literally, *oxymoron* means the sharp-blunt or the fiery-tempered. When Sappho sings of ambiguous eros she uses the predicate *glyk'ypikros*, composed of *gl'ykos*, sweet, and *píkros*, pungent, to express that love on Lesbos, as presumably elsewhere, is a happy misery, an ecstatic torture. From the union of opposite qualities in the same group of utterances develops a first discourse on the composite, on the non-simple and non-monocolor. Only when

have such expressions at their disposal, one can talk about Chinese sauce and encompassing situations. That is exactly what the *Spheres* books make you see from their position. In their case, one has in the language the taste of complexity. This way of proceeding produces, ontologically, a discourse on the best-worst of all possible worlds; morally it brings to the table the good-bad, psychologically the enthusiastic-disenthusiastic, in terms of the ergonomics of life, the easy-difficult, and so on. It is needless to say that the enterprise performs the conversion of monotonous-pessimistic science into joyful-sad science: that contemporary form of the *docta ignorantia*. The oxymoronic form appears continuously: what was to be demonstrated.

I am reminded of an observation made by Gabriel Tarde in his book on imitation, which I think is very well suited *mutatis mutandis* to the text of the trilogy: in the theater of the present, says the sociologist, tragedy retreats more and more before comedy; comedy, however, gains incessantly in scope and becomes continually sadder and more afflicted. The imperative to make concessions to complexity even after the workday is over cannot be better formulated. The epigraph post-pessimism, which you have supplied yourself, implies the renunciation of one-dimensional negativist hyperbole.

*The macrohistorian*: I admit that. Unfortunately I am still not in a position to fully accept your view of things. I prefer to return once again to what I consider to be the core of the matter, and to emphasize that from my point of view it is less about enunciative forms of complex facts than about the states of affairs themselves, or better: about the complex conditions of life and their historical development. It is clear that the book is also of this opinion, otherwise it would be incomprehensible how one could entertain oneself with explanations about the construction of space stations, greenhouses, stadiums and urban apartments, even of congress centers; explanations that are completed with a risky, to my taste very precarious, tour of psychosocial landscapes.

of contemporary luxury lifestyles. For me, the consequences of all this are not so much rhetorical as moral and political-civilizational.

I think I can understand that the author is trying to carry out to its extreme consequences the experiment of Modernity, the dissolution of agro-imperial forms of life and thought and the liquidation of the traditional holistic ethics of obedience and renunciation in the modern individualistic cult of mass ambition and hedonism. He seems to want to answer a question that has so far hardly been explicitly asked: what does it take to present a compact description of the risks inherent in modern modes of world production without making concessions to theories of decadence or theories of progress? Here I recognize something of what I call the *ethos* of the macrohistorian.

Let me explain what that means. Thanks to our explorations, which go back to the time of hunters and gatherers, we have one example, and literally only one, that the vast majority of humanity has made a break with its most ancient *modus vivendi*: a historical break, which most contemporaries, with the exception of a few romantic skeptics and utopian naturalists, admit that, despite its bitter consequences of oppression, exploitation and chronic warfare, has meant an evolutionary leap for the species. There is no trace of any evidence that there was a necessary inner bond of union between the nature of the human being and the highly improbable agro-cultural-imperial way of life; and yet many cultures have developed in the East and West during that era in such a way that one cannot but admit that certain strata or dimensions of human potential have developed convincingly. The concept of realization cannot be dispensed with: it is an element of the macrohistorical creed, it expresses the historian's respect for temporally and spatially distant modes of life.

We have recently been confronted with the fact that a second great caesura that radically changes the course of history is becoming recognizable; I am referring to the cultural-industrial or technological-capitalist irruption, which for us is perceptible simply as *factum brutum*, given that we are its actors, witnesses and products. But as far as its prosecution is concerned, we are in an almost impossible situation. Everything we can say about the new *modus vivendi* is tinged with ambiguity, inasmuch as, in correspondence with our situation in process, we ourselves are entirely ambiguous beings. Even in the core of our concepts and sensations we are double agents, hanging between agro-imperial and techno-capitalist structures. We are, at the same time, border walkers between deep and flat conceptual worlds, of which the former are constituted metaphorically and speculatively, the latter exactly and operationally. I find it interesting how the author correlates depth with the implicit, flatness with the explicit: here there is an interpretation of transition, centered more on logical than material characteristics. That is why it can never be expressed with sufficient insistence that we are transitional beings and will continue to be so for the time being. We still have in us the old era more or less consciously, we still think of our background categories as peasants, warriors, kings, priests and teachers (to name only these components of the agro-imperial staff, which represent without exception incarnations of *homo hierarchicus*). It is only a fable that the sociologists of the present want to treat us already fully as creatures of the new egalitarian beginning; not even for the industrial *fellahs* of the US Midwest would this interpretation be acceptable. Developed languages are all languages of yesterday, they keep us in the *continuum* of custom, and the same is true of historical religions. Only very rarely do we come up with a phrase that already belongs to the present; no one is ripe for the universal culture of the future. Even our so-called

revolutionaries were only aggressive sleepwalkers between epochs. However, we are also now indisputably the children of transformation, which impels us to new heights of the improbable. *Climbing Mount Improbable* would be a good title for what we have been engaged in since the Industrial Revolution: we climb to the top of mountains of foam, rising to unparalleled heights. For a hundred years we have been electing our rulers according to the very recent customs of equality, for a few decades we have been living as semi-nomadic citizens, supported by a fleet of vehicles whose size can never surprise us enough. Our relationship with the world is only since yesterday or the day before yesterday that of possessors of purchasing power and remote observers. If you value the Nietzschean characterization of the modern individual, we are exactly the last human beings to have invented happiness and blink an eye.

Between the ages, an equitable theory is not easy. I am convinced that such a theory would be the counter-venom against the two temptations of our time: the reactionary and the revolutionary. What I liked most about the *Spheres-project* is its epic neutrality, its determined indecision, its resistance to both sides. I suppose that its fluctuation between epochs, its tireless back and forth between current and historical perspectives, refers to a methodical principle: while keeping alive the memory of the psycho-cosmic treasure houses of the past, the author participates at the same time in the modern emptying of the inner world. It is evident that his exposition has arisen from the decision to grant a pause to the polemic on the course of civilization until a convincing description of the new in its own right and in its relation to the old is available.

Of course, neither in the modern caesura is there even the trace of a proof that there is a necessary inner bond of union between the elastic nature of the human being and the emerging arsenal of life-forms of the technical world, but again it speaks much in favor of the fact that in the coming conditions, as in



predecessors, a plethora of human plasma features will happily develop. With the technological irruption, something has been set in motion that can also be called realization. There are already classics of Modernity, there are already achievements of this era. The centuries to come will expand both lists.

*Theologian:* But the concept of fulfillment also makes us think of its opposite. It is true, certainly, that behind the technical caesura there are innumerable human lives being fulfilled in the hothouses of welfare, as you say, even if there remains there much more hollow and fragmentary than the statistical yearbooks say. But let it stand to reason that the rich societies of the West and the upper strata of the rest of the modernizing nations do indeed stand out, for now and for the future, as the most plausible places of the good life; all the more so, then, that outside the great hothouse conditions often prevail that can only be described as a total negation of human potential. It cannot be excluded that this may have always been the case and that the *homo sapiens* archipelago has always had its cursed zones. It is just that the conditions of the flamboyance of misery have changed. We have the thorn of information in our flesh. As far as we know today, three thirds of humanity are excluded for now from the opportunities of the welfare climate. In view of the brevity of life, "for now" means forever.

The moral implications of this realization are not easily appreciated. They too represent a kind of oxymoron, but one in which the bitter strongly predominates. If humanity were a subject of superior rank, in the expression of the idealists, it could be said of it that it is in its totality an accomplished-failed humanity. But this would be too edifying. The oxymoronic form fails here because as long as a universal culture of equilibrium has not developed, humanity does not embody any actor to whom something could go partly right and partly wrong. What is monstrous is the split itself: here something goes almost completely right and

There something fails almost completely. Success and failure are distributed over situations that barely communicate with each other. They constitute the most rigorous difference that we can think of, perhaps even more rigorous than that of life and death. Certainly, some of this is perceived by those contemporaries who have made success the ultimate God. There is no middle ground. Who would venture a synthesis there that would not be a cheap lie? We are facing a split that generates unequal halves. For an unpredictable time, the opportunities for a happy life are so asymmetrically distributed between the zones of wealth and the zones of poverty that the tension must rise to unbearable levels. Nevertheless, the oxymoronic form crosses our path internally once again, for those who live on our side of the border may find the unbearable very bearable. The wretched on the other side of the wall often feel as unbearable not only their own living conditions, but also the idea that somewhere else, inaccessible to them, a bearable life would be possible. Just as the 19th century had its social question, we have the question of exclusion. It is the postmodern form of unhappy consciousness.

With this inhuman picture before one's eyes, one recognizes what the use value of God consisted of in times of firm belief (for this time allow me to express myself coldly as a functionalist). In the writing *On the Misery of Human Existence*, from the pen of Lotarius of Segnis, later Innocent III, we find an enlightening consideration of the metaphysical conditions of the balance between the destinies of the human being. The great lord, it is said there, is in no better position for anything than the poorest servant, because, like the latter, he is not only exposed to the burdens of his situation in this world, but also to the horrors of eternity. Here casts its shadow the scholastic argument that different finite magnitudes are the same in relation to the infinite. Admittedly, this mathematics of the good God had a certain edifying value. Inasmuch as it exhorted everyone to consider himself as a quasi-normality in the face of the immeasurable, it contributed its share to

prevent the collapse of Christian humanity, at least on the symbolic level. At present we lack such a higher kind of calculation. We do not even know whether God, who was an emergency of the first historical cut, will survive the second.

*The macrohistorian:* My lords, it seems that the author, for reasons unknown to us at this time, is unable to carry out his intention to participate in our dialogue. That is why I think we should go ahead and finish without him. At the risk of repeating myself, I would like to state, for my part, that I read the book as an empirical ethicist and researcher of symbolic behavior: that is, precisely as a historian. From this condition I see that an attempt has been made here to narrate the history of the human being as a spatial history, more precisely, as a history of the creation and organization of space. This manifests the conviction that the gestures of space-giving and space-taking are the first ethical acts. In the course of studying the book I developed the suspicion that the author wanted to write, properly speaking, a universal history of generosity and presented it under the mask of a phenomenology of the enlargements of space. At times it seemed to me as if I were reading a long paraphrase of the categorical imperative according to Marcel Mauss, whom I cite with such gusto as one of the most remote godfathers of our specialty: we must go out of ourselves and realize ourselves in gifts, both voluntary and obligatory, for there is no risk in this.

*The literary critic:* The same author has also distinguished, almost in the classical tradition, between happiness and wealth, by underlining that if it is true that peoples, classes, families, individuals, can each become richer for themselves, they only become happy, however, when they learn to group themselves around their common wealth. As a good Frenchman and lyrical socialist, Mauss then quotes the myth of the Knights of the Round Table and highly recommends it to moderns as if it were as topical as in the time of Chrétien de Troyes. May mankind become an Arthurian commune, carrying the art of the

distribution at the height of time. Presumably the author of the project - *Spheres* is not so chivalrous, he might even be of the opinion that round tables are not enough.

But at least the roundness of King Arthur's table signified a beginning, since it indicates how each individual's right to his own adventure and shared honor can coexist. The spherical will be added early enough, and with it everything else that belongs to these fragments of a language of participation.

## Illustration credits

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# Notes

[1] Martin Heidegger, Einführung in die Metaphysik, course of 1935, Tübingen 1953, Frankfurt 1983, p. 138. <<

[2] Not everyone admits this. A contemporary author admits: "A Mongolian shaman told me that a stone dug out of the ground does not find peace for years because of it. I consider it probable." Martin Mosebach, "Eternal stone age", in: Kursbuch 149, Berlin, September 2002, p. 13. <<

[3] Cf. Dietrich Mahnke, *Unendliche Sphäre und Allmittelpunkt*, Halle 1937; Georges Poulet, *Metamorphosen des Kreises in der Dichtung*, Frankfurt/Berlin/Vienna 1985, pp. 11-124. <<



[4] Jean Paul, "The nocturnal thoughts of midwife Walther Vierneissel on his lost ideals as a fetus, because he had become nothing but a human being," in: *Museum* (1814), section II, second volume, Darmstadt 2000, pp. 1005 and 1010.

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[5] Esferas II, Globos, Siruela, Madrid 2004, pp. 695-871; this text has meanwhile appeared as an independent publication in Italian translation under the title *L'ultima sfera. Breve storia filosofica della globalizzazione*, Rome 2002; a greatly expanded German version, with the title *Im Weltinnenraum des Kapitals*, Frankfurt 2005 [soon to be published by Siruela in Spanish].

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[6] Albert Speer, Erinnerungen, Berlin 1969, p. 175. [Memoirs, Círculo de Lectores, Barcelona 2002]. <<

[7] Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, "What is the third state?", in: Politische Schriften 1788-1790, Munich/Oldenbourg 1981, pp. 188-189. <<

[8] Denis Diderot, article from the Encyclopedia edited by Diderot and D'Alembert, Frankfurt 1985, selection by Manfred Naumann, entry "Enzyklopädie," p. 359. <<

[9] Marshall McLuhan, *Wohin steuert die Welt?*, Toronto/Vienna 1978, p. 81. In the same context McLuhan speaks of the confusion of Catholic centralism by the "oscillating space of the oral Church"; *ibidem*, p. 79. <<

[10] "Deus est sphaera cuius centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam" ["God is a sphere, whose center is everywhere and its circumference nowhere"]. The phrase is contextualized and discussed in Spheres II, Globes, chapter 5: "Deus sive sphaera o: The One-Everything that bursts forth," pp. 404-416, especially pp. 412ff. <<

[11] Marshall McLuhan, "Sex Organ of Machines," Playboy interview with Eric Norden (March 1969), quoted in: Absolute Marshall McLuhan, Martin Baltes and Rainer Höltschl, Freiburg 2002, p. 37.

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[12] Bruno Latour, Das Parlament der Dinge. Für eine politische Ökologie, Frankfurt 2001. <<

[13] Cf. Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas. Protezione e negazione della vita*, Turin 2002, and *Communitas. Origine e destino della comunità*, Torino 1999; Philippe Caspar, *L'individuation des êtres. Aristote, Leibniz et l'immunologie contemporaine*, Paris/Namur 1985.

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[14] Cf. Homi K. Bhabha, Die Verortung der Kultur, Tübingen 2000; Volker Demuth, Topische Ästhetik. Körperwelten Kunstwelten Cyberspace, Würzburg 2002; Hermann Schmitz, Adolf Hitler in der Geschichte, Bonn 1999. <<

[15] Cf. Bruno Latour, "Gabriel Tarde and the End of the Social," in: Soziale Welt 52 (2001), pp. 361-375. <<

[16] Bruno Latour, Das Parlament der Dinge, o. c. <<

[\*] The expression "Beseelung" continues to be translated, as in the first two volumes of Spheres, by "animation" in the etymological sense of: (soul) animation, vivification, giving soul, breath, etc. Its derivatives, likewise in this sense. <<

[17] Heinrich Heine, Buch der Lieder, Lyrisches Intermezzo XLIII,  
"Old tales warn", final line. <<

[18] Cfr. Die Vorsokratiker, Greek-German, Jaap Mansfeld, Stuttgart 1987, pp. 244-245, fr. 3. <<



[19] Wittgenstein said of the critique of language: "What we destroy are only castles in the air"; cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt 1967, p. 68. In the same spirit, and without fear before crooked pictures, Richard Saul Wurman speaks (in: *Information Architects*, New York 1997) of a "gigantic tidal wave of data", which, like an incoherent cacophony of foam, breaks over the human beings of the information age. <<

[20] G. W. F. Hegel, Vorlesungen zur Philosophie der Religion, Werke in 20 Bänden, Frankfurt 1970, vol. 17, p. 320. <<

[21] Aristotle, *Problemata physica*, XXX, I, Darmstadt 1962, pp. 252. <<

[22] Ibid. <<

[23] Here we follow the theory of the decorum that Heiner Mühlmann has developed in his seminal book *Die Natur der Kulturen. Eine kulturgenetische Theorie*, Vienna/New York 1996, pp. 50-97. For more details on this see *infra*, "The Ergotope - Communities of Effort and Belligerent Empires," chapter 1, C, section 6, pp. 316-327. For a short version of the Brock/Mühlmann approach cf. Heiner Mühlmann, "The Ecology of Cultures," in: Bazon Brock/Gerlinde Koschik (eds.), *Krieg und Kunst*, Munich 2002, pp. 39-54. <<

[24] Especially in the work of the founder of neo-phenomenology Hermann Schmitz. Cf., among others, Hermann Schmitz, Leib und Gefühl. Materialien zu einer philosophischen Therapeutik, Paderborn 1992, pp. 135-s. <<

[25] Cf. Bart Kosko, Die Zukunft ist fuzzy. Unscharfe Logik verändert die Welt, Munich 2001. <<

[26] Cf. Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari, *Mil plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2*, Paris 1980, chapter 14: "1440 - le lisse et le strié", pp. 592-625. [Mil Mesetas, *Pre-Textos*, Valencia 1988, chapter 14: "1440 - The Smooth and the Grooved"]] <<



[27] Cf. Ernst Bloch, *Spuren*, Berlin 1930, new expanded edition Frankfurt 1969. <<

[28] Cf. Günther Gamm, Nicht nichts. Studien zu einer Semantik des Unbestimmten, Frankfurt 2000, and Flucht aus der Kategorie. Die Positivierung des Unbestimmten als Ausgang aus der Moderne, Frankfurt 1994. <<

[29] Cf. Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Le Je-ne-sais-quoi et le Presque-rien*, Paris 1957, new edition in three volumes, Paris 1980. <<

[30] Cf. Yve-Alain Bois/Rosalind Kraus, L'informe. Mode d'emploi, Paris 1996. <<

[31] For the source of the expression, which Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs coined *ad hoc* in a conversation, see Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs/Peter Sloterdijk, *Die Sonne und der Tod. Dialogische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt 2001, p. 247. [*El sol y la muerte*, Siruela, Madrid 2004].

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[32] See *infra*, chapter 1, "Insulations. For a theory of capsules, islands and greenhouses," section A, "Absolute islands," pp. 244-260. <<

[33] Hesiod, *Theogonie. Werke und Tage*, Greek and German, edition and translation by Adalbert von Schirnding, Darmstadt 1991, pp. 20-21.

verses 188-202. The didactic poem speaks in the preceding verses of how the primordial mother Earth, Gaea, tried to convince her children to take revenge on her spouse, a despot and child abuser, a task to the performance of which only the youngest of the Titans, Cronus, was finally willing, among all the hesitant offspring; He perpetrated it with the "shining steel," manufactured by Gaea and forged like a huge, sharp-toothed sickle, castrating the father with it when he lay in the dark upon the goddess (o. c., verses 154-182). <<

[34] Ibidem, verses 197-198. <<



[35] In Indian mythology an analogous motif appears around the dancing god Shiva Nataraja; from the ecstatically shaking loops of the god arise the waters, sparkling in foam, of the divine river; where a drop of foam fell, a pilgrimage center arose; cf. Helmut Maassen, "The Dancing God", in: Rolf Elberfeld/Günter Wolfart, *Komparative Ästhetik. Künste und ästhetische Erfahrungen zwischen Asien und Europa*, Köln 2000, p. 113. <<

[36] Heinrich Zimmer offers a free interpretation and reproduction of the various traditions in his book *Maya. Der indische Mythos*, Frankfurt 1978 (first Stuttgart and Berlin 1936), under the title "The Churning of the Sea of Milk," pp. 127-147. <<

[37] The Mahabharata. Translation by Pratap Chandra Roy, New Delhi 1970, volume 1, section 18, pp. 59-60. The name of the poison probably means summit (kuta) of death (kala); according to Heinrich Zimmer's interpretation, it means "the quintessence of the deadly poison of the world"; it was drunk by the god Shiva and preserved in the throat, hence it also bears the nickname Nilakantha, Blue-throat.

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[38] Le Ramayana from Valmiki. Edition a by by  
Madelaine Biardeau, Paris 1999, pp. 87-88. <<

[39] It is not without reason that the French edition of the Ramayana translates the Sanskrit expression "batida" (manthá) by "baratage", to make butter. Cf. also Amritabindu Upanishad 20: "As butter is hidden in milk, so rests pure consciousness (vijñanam) in every being, the understanding serving as churning." <<

[40] Charles Vernon Boys, Soap Bubbles. Their Colours and Forces Which Mould Them (1890), New York 1959. <<

[41] Cf. Sidney Perkowitz, *Universal Foam. From Cappucino to the Cosmos*, New York 2000; for branching cosmic bubbles see fig: Spheres II, Balloons, p. 124. <<<

[42] Lynn Margulis, Die andere Evolution, chapter 5: "Born of the foam", pp. 89-108, Heidelberg/Berlin 1999, pp. 92-93. <<



[43] For the foam/emulsion hypothesis of zoogenesis cf. Harold Morowitz, *Mayonnaise and the Origine of Life: Thoughts of Minds and Molecules*, Woodbridge, Conn. 1985. On the recently understood role of air bubbles in the gaseous exchange between the oceans and the Earth's atmosphere, cf. the report by marine researchers Grant Deane and Dale Stokes in *Nature* 418, 2002, pp. 839ff. The technical applications of the foam principle are surprisingly numerous: its most popular manifestations include baked goods such as bread and cakes, which are rarely clear that they are semi-consistent foams, based on an inflation of air cells in the dough, produced by heat. The gesture of stirring the dough is the trace of the most everyday aphrogeny. The modernization of building materials has produced a plethora of artificial foams, ranging from the well-known artificial PVC foam materials to metal foams and other foams consisting of glass, stone, ceramics and the like. The introduction of aerogels has brought about an elegant innovation in the field of foam technologies. As far as modern architecture is concerned, it is inspired in many ways by the space-forming power of foam structures. These, together with the geometrism and organomorphism of Modernism, constitute, so to speak, a third: the mimetic-natural path of modern architecture. <<

[44] Developed in: Spheres I, Bubbles, Siruela, Madrid 2003. <<

[45] We return to the subject of cellular pluralities below, in Chapter 2, "Indoors. Foam Architectures," section B, "Cellular construction, egospheres, autocontainer," pp. 432ff. <<

[46] Cf. Georg Simmel, "La sociedad de a dos" (1908), in: Aufsätze und Abhandlungen 1901-1908, volume II, Frankfurt 1993, pp. 348ff.

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[47] For the theme of the hearth as a passage from the quasi-surreal space of the conjugal dyad to the physical, social and cultic space of home life, cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 2, "Memories-receptacle. On the foundation of solidarity in the inclusive form," pp. 173-218, 204ff. <<

[48] On radiocratic or imperial space, cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 7, "How through the pure medium the center of the spheres acts in the distance. For a metaphysics of telecommunication", pp. 581ff. <<

[49] Cf. Slavoj Žižek, "Welcome to the Desert of the Real," in: Die Revolution steht bevor. Dreizehn Versuche über Lenin, Frankfurt 2002, p. 147; as an echo of this can be read Erica Jongs' reflections on the first anniversary of September 11, 2001, which revolve around the thesis that the United States has never been truly immune and that it was only boasting to believe it. In a similar critical sense, Vilém Flusser has defined the concept of homeland as domiciles surrounded by mystery. Cf. Vilém Flusser, Von der Freiheit des Migranten. Einsprüche gegen den Nationalismus, Bensheim 1994, pp. 15-30. <<

[50] Peter Fuchs, Das seltsame Problem der Weltgesellschaft: Eine Neubrandenburger Vorlesung, Opladen 1997. <<



[51] Cfr. for this infra the chapter "Transit. Neither contract nor organism. Approach to the multiplicity-spaces, which, unfortunately, are called societies", pp. 202-fs. <<

[52] For this expression cf. Gabriel Tarde, *Die Gesetze der Nachahmung* (1890), Frankfurt 2003, pp. 25-60; cf. also the expressions "imitative radiation", *rayonnement imitatif*, and "*rayonnement imitatif*".

"contagious imitative imitation," *contagion imitative*, p. 67. <<

[53] Volker Grassmuck, "'Alone, but not lonely" - The otaku-generation. On some new trends in Japanese popular and media culture," in: Norbert Bolz/Friedrich Kittler/Christoph Tholen, Computer als Medium, Munich 1994, p. 283. <<

[54] Which can be represented, as we will do later, as self-matching, cf. chapter 2, "Indoors. Foam architectures," section B, "Cellular construction, egospheres, self-container," pp. 443-459. <<

[55] Jakob von Uexküll, Kompositionslehre der Natur, Frankfurt/Berlin/Vienna 1980, p. 355. <<

[56] Johann Gottfried Herder, Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit, Frankfurt 1967, p. 44. <<<

[57] Pierre Lévy, Die kollektive Intelligenz. Eine Anthropologie des Cyberspace, Mannheim 1997, p. 172. <<

[58] Cited according to: Maurice Besset, Le Corbusier, Geneva 1987,  
pp.  
98. <<



[<sup>59</sup>] Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (1927), Tübingen 1967, §§ 29 and 30 [*El ser y el tiempo*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, Madrid 1989] <<.

[60] Cf. Hermann Schmitz, *Adolf Hitler in der Geschichte*, o. c., pp. 21-31; 377-404. <<

[61] On the need for integral human domesticity cf. Hugh Miller, Progress and Decline. The Group in Evolution, Oxford 1964, pp. 173-213. Tilman Allert, Die Familie. Fallstudien zur Unverwüstlichkeit einer Lebensform, Berlin/New York 1998. <<

[62] Cf. Spheres II, Globes, pp. 715-725, as well as Peter Sloterdijk/Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs, Die Sonne und der Tod. Dialogische Untersuchungen, o. c., pp. 190ff. <<

[63] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Maximen und Reflexionen, no. 501. <<

[64] Cf. Robert B. Brandon, *Making It Explicit. Reasoning, Representing and Discursive Commitment*, Boston 1994; German under the ill-advised title *Expressive Vernunft*, Frankfurt 2000. <<

[65] One of the few authors who took this situation into account was Karl Rahner SJ, who explained in his article "The Human Being Experiment. Theological perspective on the self-manipulation of the human being": "The human being must want to be operable, even if the dimension and the correct way of this self-manipulation are still obscure in the distance". In: Die Frage nach dem Menschen. Aufriss einer philosophischen Anthropologie, written in homage to Max Müller on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, Freiburg/Munich 1966, p. 53. <<

[66] Cf. in this regard the "Intermediate Consideration: Luminous Compulsion and Irruption in the Articulated World," especially the references to the conception of articulation in Bruno Latour, pp. 169ff. <<



[67] Eric Alliez, in his book *De l'impossibilité de la phénoménologie. Sur la philosophie française contemporaine*, Paris 1995, casts a serene retrospective look at the phenomenological constellation and its dissolution. <<

[68] See pp. 485-497. <<

[69] Monadology, 61: "Mais une Ame ne peut lire en elle-même que ce qui y est représenté distinctement, car elle ne sauroit développer tout d'un coup tous ses replis, car ils vont à l'infini". If the folding of what is known implicitly or obscurely by the soul goes to infinity, there is no prospect of arriving at a completely explicit knowledge; this is reserved to God, to the human intellect belongs a progress of consciousness of increasing explicitness, but always insufficient. <<

[70] One can trace the origins of the modern defense of the primacy of perception at least as far back as Goethe's critique of the natural-scientific worldview; cf. Albrecht Schöne, *Goethes Farbentheologie*, Munich 1987; Ursula Schuh, "Die Sinne trügen nicht": *Goethes Kritik der Wahrnehmung als Antwort auf virtuelle Welten*, Stuttgart/Berlin 2000. <<

[71] Heidegger's concept "Ge-stell" (gear, frame, structure of emplacement) picks up something of the abnormality of states of affairs forced to appear, which do not appear by themselves. It manifests a sense for the monstrous in the newly-unhidden, hence for the violation of the hidden, which has to make itself known by investigation and which, as soon as it falls under the coercion of visibility, that is, publicity, means something completely different than the presence of a natural "thing" in the near environment or than the openness of a habitual landscape to wide panoramic glances. <<

[72] Scale up: Transfer from models at at technique of procedures, Weinheim 2000. <<

[73] Cf. Peter Galison, *Image and Logic. A Material Culture of Microphysics*, Chicago 1997. <<

[74] The strongest form so far of a rotated theory, in that sense, is offered, in our view, by Heiner Mühlmann, *Die Natur der Kulturen. Entwurf einer kulturgenetischen Theorie*, Vienna/New York 1996. <<



[\*] Quoted, as always when it can be done with Nietzsche, by the translation of Andrés Sánchez Pascual, Alianza, Madrid 1996 (N. of the T.). <<

[75] Hermann Broch, Frankfurt 1976, p. 103. <<

[76] In mentioning these data we follow the account in Dieter Martinetz, *Der Gas-Krieg 1914-1918. Entwicklung, Einsatz und Herstellung chemischer Kampfstoffe. Das Zusammenwirken von militärischer Führung, Wissenschaft und Industrie*, Bonn 1996; minor variants in indications of location as well as in temporal and quantitative data can be found in Olivier Lepick's monograph, *La grande guerre chimique: 1914-1918*, Paris 1998. <<

[77] Jean-Jules Henry Mordacq, *Le drame de l'Yser*, Paris 1933, quoted by Rudolf Hanslian (ed.), *Der chemische Krieg*, third edition, Berlin 1935, pp. 123-sf. <<

[78] Cf. Martinetz, o. c., pp. 23ff. <<

[79] Fritz Haber (1868-1934) was also during the war director of a lecture dedicated to "Issues of gas warfare" in the War Ministry. As a Jew, he had to leave Germany in 1933, after he had apparently advised the Reich Military Directorate on the reintroduction of a gas weapon in the summer of the same year. After a stay in England, he died on January 29, 1934 in Basel while on his way to Palestine. Some of those close to him died in Auschwitz. In military science, the memory of the so-called haberian lethality product, which results from multiplying the toxic concentration by the exposure time (product  $c \times t$ ), has been kept. The awarding of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1918 to Haber for his discovery of the synthesis of ammonia raised strong protests in England and France, where his name was associated, above all, with the organization of chemical warfare. <<

[<sup>80</sup>] Cited by Martinetz, o. c., p. 24. <<

[81] Cf. infra, pp. 514ff. <<



[82] "You take my life / When you do take the means whereby I live".  
The Merchant of Venice, Act IV, Scene 1. <<

[83] Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Frankfurt 1970, pp. 431ff. [*Phenomenology of the Spirit*, FCE, Madrid 1981. According to Hegel, in terror is realized the "discrete, absolute, hard rigidity and obstinate punctuality of real self-consciousness... Therefore, the only work and performance of universal freedom is death, and certainly a death that has no consummation or inner scope whatsoever; since what is denied is the unconsummated point of the absolutely free self; it is, then, the coldest, most trivial death, with no more meaning than cutting a head of cabbage or drinking a drink of water" (ibid, p. 436). <<

[84] Cf. the idealist German anarchist Johann Most, who invented the idea of the letter bomb; as well as Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté*, Paris 1951, who emphasizes the difference between individual terror and state terrorism. [*El hombre rebelde*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid 2005] <<<

[<sup>85</sup>] Cf. Joachin Fest, Hitler. Eine Biographie, Munich 2000, p. 205.  
[Hitler, Planeta, Barcelona 2005] <<.

[86] Since both sides were aware that they were violating the law of war, they declined to protest to the enemy governments about the use of toxic gases. Haber's false argument that in the case of chlorine it was not a toxic gas but only an irritant gas, and therefore not subject to the prohibition of the Hague Convention, has been maintained even in the most recent national-German apologetics.

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[87] Cf. Jörg Friedrich, Das Gesetz des Krieges: das deutsche Heer in Russland 1941-1945. Der Prozess gegen das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, Munich 1993. <<

[<sup>88</sup>] This effect was anticipated by the massive use of high explosive projectiles: cf. Niall Ferguson, *Der falsche Krieg. Der Erste Weltkrieg und das 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 2001, p. 290:  
"The strength of the grenades had to make up for the lack of accuracy." <<

[89] We will explain later how, in our view, Hermann Broch's theory of mass delirium was the second new science of the century; cf. infra, pp. 145ff. <<



[90] On the genesis of a more uncluttered nephology (or, to speak with Thomas Mann, of a theory of "higher mobilities") at the beginning of the 19th century reports Richard Hamblyn's monograph *Die Erfindung der Wolken. Wie ein unbekannter Meteorologe die Sprache des Himmels erforschte*, Frankfurt 2001. The most important derivations from the point of view of the human sciences of the phenomenon of war propaganda and its overcoming in intoxicating mass communication are to be found in Hermann Broch's theory of mass delirium or collective psychosis, see *infra*, pp. 145ff. <<

[91] Cfr. Martinetz, o. c., p. 93. <<

[92] Named after Fritz Haber because of the scientists responsible, Dr. Lommel (Bayer, Leverkusen) and Prof. Steinkopf (Haber's collaborator at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry and Electrochemistry, Dahlem, during the war: "Prussian Military Institute). That combat gas was also called mustard gas because of its odor, or Hun material, because of its devastating effect, or yperite [or iperite], because of its first place of use [Ypres or leper]. <<

[93] On the non-use of gas weapons in World War II cf. Günther Gellermann, Der Krieg, der nicht stattfand. Möglichkeiten, Überlegungen und Entscheidungen der deutschen Obersten Führung zur Verwendung chemischer Kampfstoffe im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Koblenz 1986. <<

[94] Cf. Martinetz, o. c., p. 70. <<

[95] For the expression shadow-stress cf. Heiner Mühlmann, Die Natur der Kulturen, o. c. <<.

[96] On the contrary, it makes no sense at all to take measures of a police and, if necessary, military nature against defined groups, attached to the use of violence against institutions, persons and symbols. <<

[97] Nor on the German side was an absolute premiere in gas warfare the chlorine gas attack of Ieper; already in January 1915 had been tested on the eastern front the gas grenade, called T 12, and used in March on the western front near Nieuport. <<



[98] Exterminism represents a simplification of the sadism classically described by Sartre; in it, what matters is no longer to appropriate the freedom of the other, but to liberate one's own environment from the freedom of the other. <<

[99] Intoxication, both literally and figuratively. On August 4, 2002, the ARD evening news showed an interview with a young woman on the beach in Tel Aviv, who, faced with the suicide bombing of a Palestinian on an Israeli bus, asked:  
"Do we have to stop breathing?". <<

[100] Cited according to: Jürgen Kalthoff/Martin Werner, Die Händler des Zyklon B. Tesch & Stabenow. Eine Firmengeschichte zwischen Hamburg und Auschwitz, Hamburg 1998, p. 24. <<<

[101] Ibid., p. 25. <<

[102] Considering that such an addition would have been counterproductive for the purposes of human extermination, the hygiene departments of Auschwitz, Oranienburg and other concentration camps were supplied with a variant of Cyclone B, without that warning component. <<

[103] Cf. Kalthoff/Werner, o. c., pp. 56f. and 241. <<

[104] Ibid. pp. 45-102. <<

[105] Ibid., p. 109. <<



[106] The war gas Sarin (T 144) was synthesized in 1938 in the research department of I. G. Farben, headed by Dr. Gerhard Schrader. Its toxicity is more than thirty times that of hydrocyanic acid; with sufficient exposure time one gram of Sarin would suffice to kill up to a thousand human beings. <<

[107] Cf. Haruki Murakami, *Underground. The Tokyo Gas Attack & the Japanese Psyche*, London 2001. The writer Josef Haslinger has provided an Austro-terrorist variant of these events: in his crime novel *Opernball*, Frankfurt 1995, he plays with the idea that a building of the size of the Vienna Opera House could occasionally be transformed into a large gas chamber by a group of criminals. <<

[108] Elias Canetti, Das Gewissen der Worte. Essays, Frankfurt 1981,  
p. 23. <<

[109] Cf. Götz Aly, "Endlösung": Völkerverschiebungen und der Mord an den europäischen Juden, Frankfurt 1995, p. 374. Only recently has such a sentence-hate-speech been analyzed in a linguistically and philosophically-morally adequate manner. Cf. Judith Butler, Hass spricht. Zur Politik des Performativen, Berlin 1998. <<

[110] Cfr. Wim Klever (ed.), *Die Schwere der Luft in der Diskussion des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Wiesbaden 1997; Steven Shapin/Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump. Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*, Princeton 1985; Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland's *Macrobiotics*, 1796, already refers to the connection between air quality and life expectancy. <<

[111] J. G. Herder, *Schriften. Eine Auswahl aus dem Gesamtwerk*, Walter Flemmer ed., Munich 1960, pp. 78-79, italics ours. <<

[112] Cf. in this volume, in chapter 3: "Impulse upward and mime. For a Critique of Pure Humor," section 2: "The Fiction of Being-of-Lacking," pp. 529-538. <<

[113] Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, Briefe, Sämtliche Briefe, Kritische Studienausgabe, volume 6, Munich 1986, p. 140. To Franz Overbeck, November 14, 1881: "[...] but that medical meteorology... is unfortunately a science which is still in its infancy and, as far as I am concerned, only a dozen more questions. Perhaps more will be known now; I should have been at the electricity exhibition in Paris, partly to learn the latest developments, partly as the object of the exhibition: for as a sniffer of electrical changes and as a weather prophet, so it is said, I compete with the monkeys and am probably a 'specialty'." <<



[114] Cf. Rudibert Kunz/Rolf-Dieter Müller, Giftgas gegen Abd el Krim. Deutschland, Spanien und der Gaskrieg in Spanisch- Marokko 1922-1927, Freiburg 1990; in this book are detailed details on the participation of German war chemists and firms in the first aerochemical war, in which mounted warriors from the mountain population of the Rif Kabylie were shot down by hydrocyanic acid and gasoline bombs. <<

[115] Already in 1950 Carl Schmitt spoke of the "pure destructive character of modern air warfare", in: *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europeum*, Berlin 1988, p. 298. <<

[116] One indication, among many, of this is the use of overtly terrorist means of warfare such as napalm by the US Air Force in the Vietnam War, as well as the dropping of the dreaded lung-busting bomb, the Blue 82 Commando Vault, aka Daisy Cutter (a 5.7 ton ammonia nitrate bomb), on Iraqi infantry and Afghan warriors. <<

[117] Cfr. Jörg Friedrich, Der Brand. Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940-1945, Munich 2002. <<

[118] Jörg Friedrich, o. c., p. 358. <<

[<sup>119</sup>] For a later detailed account of events between 13 and 15 February 1945 cf. Götz Bergander, *Dresden im Luftkrieg. Vorgeschichte, Zerstörung, Folgen*, Weimar/Cologne/Vienna 1994, especially pp. 112-231; as well as Jörg Friedrich, o. c., pp. 358ff. <<

[120] In any case, as early as the night of the Hamburg fire, 41,000 deaths are reported. The "official" figure of the Dresden victims seems intuitively to an eyewitness like Götz Bergander too low, although he admits as a historian that the evidence for higher figures is lacking, however plausible they may seem subjectively and within the dynamics of exaggeration. <<

[121] If one adds the radiation sick who died up to the end of 1945, or, rather, up to the first anniversary of the dropping of the bombs, one arrives at 151 000 for Hiroshima and 70 000 for Nagasaki. <<



[122] During the peace memorial party in Hiroshima on August 6, 2001, the total number of victims, with the addition of those killed by after-effects (which loses plausibility after more than half a century), was put at 221,893, of whom approximately 123,000 were men and 98,500 women. <<

[123] Andrew S. Grove, Nur die Paranoiden überleben: strategische Wendepunkte vorzeitig erkennen, Frankfurt 1994. <<

[124] Ken Alibek/Stephen Handelman, Biohazard. The Chilling True Story of the Largest Covert Biological Weapons Program in the World - Told from the Inside by the Man Who Ran it, New York 1999, pp. 25-28. <<

[125] Cf. Werner Marx, "The "place" for measurement. The Twisting of Subjectivism," in: Gibt es auf Erden ein Mass? Grundbestimmungen einer nichtmetaphysischen Ethik, Hamburg 1983, pp. 63-85. <<

[126] Martin Heidegger, Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit. Aus einem Feldweggespräch über das Denken, 1944/1945, in: Gesammelte Werke 13, p. 47. <<<

[127] Hermann Schmitz, in his doctrine of "inclusive situations", linked to the positive content of the concept of "dwelling"; cf. Hermann Schmitz, *Adolf Hitler in der Geschichte*, o. c. <<<

[128] Cf. Jeane Manning/Nick Begich, Löcher im Himmel. Der geheime Ökokrieg mit dem Ionosphärenheizer HAARP, Frankfurt 1996. <<

[129] Ibid. pp. 231ff. <<



[130] Cf. Ian Gibson, Salvador Dalí. Die Biographie, Stuttgart 1998, p. 378. <<

[131] Salvador Dalí, Dalí, Rastatt 1988, pp. 229-s. <<

[132] Salvador Dalí, *La Conquête de l'Irrationnel*, 1935; German in: Salvador Dalí, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Munich 1974, pp. 268-279. ["The Conquest of the Irrational," *Obra completa*, volume IV, *Essays I*, Juan José Lahuerta (ed.), Destino, Barcelona 2005, pp. 403-419.]

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[133] Marshall McLuhan, Die magischen Kanäle. Understanding Media, Düsseldorf and Vienna 1968, p. 139. <<

[134] André Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme*, Paris 1962, p. 155  
[*Manifestos del surrealismo*, Visor Libros, Madrid 2002] <<.

[135] According to an indication of Gabriel Tarde, this also has to do with that "revolution in the head", which is most often mistakenly described as enlightenment: the habit of believing preachers and ancestors at face value is replaced by the habit of repeating what contemporary innovators bring to the table. Cf. Gabriel Tarde, *Die Gesetze der Nachahmung* (1890), o. c., p. 270. <<

[136] The philosophical sources of the concept of the unconscious are expounded, above all, in the works of Odo Marquard, *Transzendentaler Idealismus. Romantische Naturphilosophie. Psychoanalyse*, Cologne 1987, and Jean-Marie Vaysse, *L'unconscius des modernes. Essai sur l'origine métaphysique de la psychanalyse*, Paris 1999. <<

[137] Salvador Dalí, o. c., p. 290. <<



[138] Cited by: Absolute McLuhan, Martin Baltes and Rainer Höltschl eds, Freiburg 2002, p. 164; cf. also Marc Monmonier, Air Apparent. How Meteorologists Learned to Map, Predict and Dramatize Weather, Chicago and London 1999. <<

[139] Cf. Thomas E. Graedel/Paul J. Crutzen, *Atmosphäre im Wandel. Die empfindliche Lufthülle unseres Planeten*, Heidelberg/Berlin/Oxford 1996, pp. 3-5. <<

[140] Cf. Günter Barudio, Tränen des Teufels. Eine Weltgeschichte des Erdöls, Stuttgart 2001. <<

[141] Cf. Peter Sloterdijk/Hans-Jürgen Heinrichs, Die Sonne und der Tod, o. c., pp. 320-329. <<

[142] Rolf Peter Sieferle, Der unterirdische Wald. Energiekrise und industrielle Revolution, Munich 1982. <<

[143] Sylvie Joussaume, Klima. Gestern, heute, morgen, Berlin/Heidelberg 1996, p. 62. <<

[144] Carl Amery and Hermann Scheer, in their book: Klimawechsel. Von der fossilen zur solaren Kultur (Munich 2001), discuss the technical and mental presuppositions of the transition to a post-fossil energy civilization, though more on the political as well as ideological resistances against it. <<

[145] Cfr. Spheres II, Globes, excursus 2, "Merdocracy. From the immunoparadox of sedentary cultures," pp. 297-308. <<



[146] Claudia Bölling/Rolf Horst, Schirme. Der Himmel auf Erden, Berlin 1995. <<

[147] Cf. Erich Heck, Indoor Air Quality am Arbeitsplatz, "Sick Building Syndrom" und "Building Related Illness". Ein deutsch-amerikanischer Rechtsvergleich, Baden-Baden 1994. <<

[148] Luce Irigaray, L'oubli de l'air chez Martin Heidegger, Paris 1983, p.147. <<

[149] Cf. Anja Stöhr, Air-Design als Erfolgsfaktor im Handel. Modellgestützte Erfolgsbeurteilung und strategische Empfehlung, Wiesbaden 1998. <<

[150] Cf. Diotima von Kempfski, Raumluf-Essenzen-Zugabe. Ein kleiner Leitfaden über Grundlagen und Anwendungsmöglichkeiten, Karlsruhe 1999. <<

[151] Cf. Gerhard Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*, Frankfurt/ New York 1993, chapter 10 "Scene Theory," pp. 459ff. <<

[152] Cfr. Walter Benjamin, Das Passagen-Werk, Gesammelte Schriften, vol. v 1, Frankfurt 1989, p. 292. <<

[153] For the collector concept see *infra*, Chapter 2, "Indoors. Architectures of Foam," pp. 475-490. <<



[154] "Elias Canetti, "Hermann Broch. Speech for his  
50th birthday," in: Elias Canetti, *Das Gewissen der Worte*, o.  
c., pp.  
22. <<

[155] Ibid., p. 18. <<

[156] Ibid., p. 23. <<

[157] Ibid. pp. 23-s. <<

[158] Cf. Paul Michael Lützeler, Hermann Broch. Eine Biographie, Frankfurt 1985, p. 209; the expression "gassing" is found in a letter to Ernst Schönwiese of October 3, 1936. It is not ascertainable whether Broch was aware of the development of the new, extremely toxic combat gases Tabun (1934) and Sarin (1938) in a research laboratory of I. G. Farben. A whole series of contemporary authors had also drawn dark prognoses for the future from their memory of the gas war, for example Erich Kästner in his poem "The Last Chapter" from his book of poems Ein Mann gibt Auskunft, 1930: 'one day in the year 2003 a thousand planes with gas and bacilli on board leave Boston and kill the whole of mankind, which only in this way succeeds in achieving its goal of world peace; strangely concrete, Kästner dates this satire of the death drive on July 13, the eve of the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille; cf. Erich Kästner, Kästner für Erwachsene, Selected Works, volume 1, Zurich 1983, pp. 219ff.

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[159] Karl Kraus, Briefe an Sidonie Nadherny von Borutin 1913-1936, volume one, Munich 1974, p. 167. <<<

[160] Karl Kraus, Die Fackel, reprint, Frankfurt 1977, booklet 261-2, 1908, p. 1. <<

[161] Hermann Broch, Massenwahntheorie. Beiträge zu einer Psychologie der Politik, Frankfurt 1979, p. 454. <<



[162] Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung, o. c., p. 100.

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[163] Elias Canetti, *Masse und Macht*, Frankfurt and Vienna 1988, pp. 97. [*Masa y poder*, El Aleph, Barcelona 2000] <<.

[<sup>164</sup>] Hermann Broch, Massenwahntheorie, o. c., pp. 306ff. <<

[165] Ibid., p. 334. <<

[166] Broch had formulated the lesson as follows: "The struggle is directed [...] at the obsession for victory as such, and when one succeeds in bringing it to its goal, this "victory of victory" is no longer victory in the traditional sense [...] one could almost say that the usual (and so very human) jubilation over victory would henceforth have to be replaced by mourning for victory...", *ibid*, p. 344:  
"Europe is dotted with triumphal arches erected at the same time, the sum of which results in zero", *Cahiers II*, Paris 1974, p. 1478. Moreover, Broch's theses on political somnambulism, states of mass delirium and organized self-deception are indirectly confirmed by the latest American science of strategy. The latter has produced an explanatory figure of propaganda, defined as a form of  
The "state channeling of public opinion" and essential for American hegemony. This hyper-sophistic conception of cyberwar was tested on a global scale, in a major media test, on the occasion of the second Iraq war in March 2003. Cf. John Arquilla/David Ronfeldt, *The Emergence of Noopolitik. Towards an American Information Strategy*, Santa Monica 1999. <<

[167] Cfr. Calvin Tomkins, Marcel Duchamp. Eine Biographie, Munich 1999, pp. 262ff. and 436. <<

[168] Ibid. p. 474. The speaker is Calvin Tomkins. <<

[169] For the investment, also conditioned by this, of immune energies in living conditions, see *infra*, chapter 2, "Indoors", section A: "Where we live, move and are" and section B: "Cellular construction, egospheres, autocontainer". <<



[170] Jakob von Uexküll, *Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere*, Berlin 1909, second edition 1921. <<

[171] Cf. Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas. Protezione e negazione della vita*, Turin 2002. <<

[172] On the individualistic tendency: Norbert Bolz, *Die Konformisten des Andersseins. Ende der Kritik*, Munich 1999; Tilman Habermas, *Geliebte Objekte: Symbole und Instrumente der Identitätsbildung*, Frankfurt 1999; Detlef Ax, *"Verwundete Männer": zu vaterlosen Kultur und männlicher Identität in den westlichen Industriestaaten*, Stuttgart 2000; on the collectivist tendency: Alois Mosser (ed.), *"Gottes auserwählte Völker": Erwählungsvorstellungen und kollektive Selbfindung in der Geschichte*, Frankfurt/Berlin/New York 2001; Carolin Emcke, *Kollektive Identitäten: sozialphilosophische Grundlagen*, Frankfurt 2000; Nikolaus Busse, *Die Entstehung von kollektiven Identitäten: das Beispiel der ASEAN-Staaten*, Baden-Baden 2000; Günther Schlee (ed.), *Imagined Differences: Hatred and the Construction of Identity*, Münster/Hamburg/New York 2002. <<

[173] Cf. Gert Mattenklott, "Soundings. The impalement of the characters", in: Blindgänger. Physiognomische Essays, Frankfurt 1986, pp. 7-40. <<

[174] Cf. Donna J. Haraway, "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Determinations of Self in Immune System Discourse," in: Differences 1, 1, 1989. <<

[175] "Certe ignoratio futurorum utilior est quam scientia." De divinatione II, 23. <<

[176] Botho Strauss, Die Fehler des Kopisten, Munich 1999, p. 102.

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[177] Cf. Sven Spieker, "Archive culture, or: 'Where there was something, there has to be archive now.' The historical avant-garde in the office era," in: Trajekte 5, year 3, September 2002, Newsletter des Zentrums für Literaturforschung, Berlin, pp. 23-28. <<



[178] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 230, Kritische Studienausgabe, volume 5, Munich 1980, pp. 167ff. <<

[179] This conception is prefigured in Johann Gottfried Herder, who in his *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (Frankfurt 1967, p. 45) makes the observation, "I envy, I long for, I appropriate to myself all that is still homogeneous with my nature, all that can be assimilated into it; moreover, kind nature has equipped me with insensitivity, coldness and blindness; it can even become contempt and disgust..." <<

[180] Friedrich Nietzsche, Kritische Studienausgabe, volume 1, Munich 1980, pp. 875ff. <<

[181] Cf. The Gaiety of Science, § 344: "To what extent are we still pious". A softening of this idea of the antithetical of life and knowledge is offered by Helmuth Plessner in his theory of the "eccentric positionality". Cf. Joachim Fischer, "Androids - Human Beings - Primates. Philosophical anthropology as underpinning of humanism," in: Humanismus in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Richard Faber and Enno Rudolph eds, Tübingen 2002, pp. 229-239. At the same time as Nietzsche, Gabriel Tarde refers to the likelihood that the "individual cult of hopeless truth is sacrificed for the sake of the social need for a comforting, comfortable and common illusion", cf. Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung, o. c., p. 149. <<

[182] Ibid., p. 168. <<

[183] Cf. Ernst Benz, *Theologie der Elektrizität. Zur Begegnung und Auseinandersetzung von Theologie und Naturwissenschaft im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Mainz/Wiesbaden 1971. <<

[184] Cf. Die elektrifizierte Gesellschaft, exhibition catalog of the Badisches Landesmuseum in Karlsruhe, 1996. <<

[185] On the way and manner in which Pasteur's discoveries contributed to shaping the solidarity and social-hygienic thinking of the late 19th century, cf. François Ewald, *Der Vorsorgestaat*, Frankfurt 1993, pp. 464-s. <<



[186] Cf. Jacques Poulain, *L'âge pragmatique ou l'expérimentation totale*, Paris 1991. It is certainly a significant coincidence that the most astute analyst of the modern culture of science, Bruno Latour, has a course in "Sociology of innovation" at the Ecole des Mines in Paris. <<

[187] Boris Groys, "Propaganda of Communism. 40 years after Stalin's death: why even then art only wanted to be Lifestyle," in: Die Zeit, No. 10/2003, p. 38. <<

[188] Cf. Marshall McLuhan, "The Printed Word. Architect of Nationalism," in: Die magischen Kanäle. Understanding Media, o. c., pp. 186ff. As well as the classic: Karl Kraus, "End of the World by Black Magic" (Die Fackel, December 1912), Frankfurt 1989, pp. 424-fs. <<

[189] Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung, o. c., p. 387.

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[190] Cf. Bruno Latour, "The historicity of things: where were Pasteur's microbes?", in: Die Hoffnung der Pandora. Untersuchungen zur Wirklichkeit der Wissenschaft, Frankfurt 2000, pp. 175ff. <<

[191] Cf. Peter Fabian, *Leben im Treibhaus: unser Klimasystem - und was wir daraus machen*, Berlin/Heidelberg 2002. <<

[192] Cf. Bruno Latour, *Das Parlament der Dinge*, o. c., pp. 82ff.

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[193] Cf. Bruno Latour, "Do objects also have a history? An encounter of Pasteur and Whitehead in a bath of lactic acid," in: *Der Berliner Schlüssel. Erkundungen eines Liebhabers der Wissenschaften*, Berlin 1996, pp. 87-112; for the expression propositions cf. Alfred N. Whitehead, *Das Abenteuer der Ideen*, Frankfurt 2000, pp. 426-s. <<



[194] Bruno Latour, Die Hoffnung der Pandora, o. c., p. 73. <<

[195] Ibid., p. 174. <<

[196] Arnold Gehlen, Urmensch und Spätkultur. Philosophische Ergebnisse und Aussagen, Bonn 1956, p. 26. <<

[197] Ibid., p. 71. <<

[198] Cf. Bruno Latour, Wir sind modern gewesen. Versuch einer symmetrischen Anthropologie, Frankfurt 1998. <<

[199] Alfred North Whitehead, Prozess und Realität. Entwurf einer Kosmologie, Frankfurt 1984, p. 472. <<

[200] Cf. Ernst Tugendhat, *Der Wahrheitsbegriff bei Husserl und Heidegger*, Berlin 1967; this work, which with respect to Heidegger arrives at a negative result, offers an expressive example of how the rituals of thoroughness and solidity can serve to prevent the best understanding by the worst. More appropriately, Hermann Schmitz, from a critical proximity to Husserl and Heidegger, has reformulated the too compact thesis of the "forgetfulness of being" into a discrete list of fundamental "blunders" of the Western spirit; in doing so (in contrast to Husserl, who in his writing "Krisis" named two great erroneous developments: transcendental subjectivism and objectivist physicalism) he goes on to name four: the psychologist-reductionist, the dynamic, the ironic, the autistic. For each of them the author outlines a therapeutic-cultural correction drawn from the spirit of renewed phenomenology. <<

[201] Elias Canetti, Die Provinz der Menschen. Aufzeichnungen 1942-1972, Frankfurt 1976, p. 77. <<<



[202] Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Aletheia (Fragment of Heraclitus 16)," in: Vorträge und Aufsätze, Pfullingen 1985, pp. 249ff. <<

[203] Quintus Horatius Flaccus, Carmina I, 22. <<

[204] In the poem quoted above, we speak, first of all, of the immutability of the poet's love, which responds to the charm, independent of the weather, of the beloved. <<

[205] Plato, Timaeus, 33 a. <<

[206] On the origins, development and catastrophe of the enveloping  
cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 5: "Deus sive sphaera or: The One-  
Everything that explodes", pp. 403-502. <<

[207] Phaedo, 61c2-69e5. <<

[208] Briefe von und an Hegel, volume I, J. Hoffmeister ed., Hamburg 1969, p. 120. <<

[209] Whose magnetopathic-psychoanalytic flank is recalled in Spheres I, Bubbles, chapter 3: "Human beings in the magic circle. For a history of ideas of the fascination of proximity," pp. 197-244. An extensive description of the current in its entirety offers Bertrand Méheust, *Somnambulisme et médiumnité (1784-1930)*, volume 1: *Le défi du magnétisme animal*, volume 2: *Le choc des sciences psychiques*, Paris 1999. <<



[210] Cfr. Werner Weiss, Enttäuscher Pantheismus. Zur Weltgestaltung der Dichtung in der Restaurationszeit, Dornbirn 1962.

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[211] Cf. the important analysis of Wolfgang Riedel, *Homo natura*.  
Literarische Anthropologie um 1900, Berlin/New York 1996. <<

[212] Cf. Karl Joel, Seele und Welt. Versuch einer organischen Auffassung, Jena 1912. <<

[213] Cf. Helmut Lethen, *Verhaltenslehren der Kälte. Lebensversuche zwischen den Kriegen*, Frankfurt 1994. <<

[214] C. P. Snow, *Die zwei Kulturen. Literarische und naturwissenschaftliche Intelligenz*, Stuttgart 1967. The work, informative on the English history of eighteenth-century ideas, by Sigmund Bonk, *Abschied von der anima mundi. Die britische Philosophie im Vorfeld der Industriellen Revolution*, Freiburg/Munich 1999, chooses too narrow a scope of analysis to make visible the long-standing opposition between mechanicism and belief in the soul of the world. Otherwise, the vision sketched of the two cultures is shortened in one dimension, because modern neo-gnosis, as a quasi-third culture, rejected both mechanicism and panpsychism in order to remove the human being from the entire context of the world and to order him or her toward the wholly-other. The trend culminates in the work of Karl Barth, who only through a unilateralization of tradition was able to arrive at his theology-totaliter-aliter, not least because of his failure to consider the cosmotheistic implications of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit; although it should not be ignored that it was unacceptable to orthodoxy to immediately equate the world soul with the third person of the Trinity (recall the accusations made against Giordano Bruno at his trial); cf. Henning Ziebritzki, *Heiliger Geist und Weltseele. Das Problem der dritten Hypostase bei Origines, Plotin und ihren Vorläufern*, Tübingen 1994.

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[215] Jakob von Uexküll, Kompositionslehre der Natur, o. c., p. 355.

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[216] Cfr. infra the chapter "Transit. Neither contract nor organism. Approach to the multiplicity-spaces, which, unfortunately, are called societies", pp. 202-fs. <<

[217] Jacques Poulain shares with Arnold Gehlen the concern for this separation, cf. Jacques Poulain, *De l'homme. Éléments d'anthropobiologie du langage*, Paris 2001. <<



[218] Cf. Arnold Gehlen, Urmensch und Spätkultur. Philosophische Ergebnisse und Aussagen, Bonn 1956, p. 13. <<

[219] Cf. Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung (1890), Frankfurt 2003. <<

[220] Ibid., p. 58. <<

[221] The "or" between "mothers" and "fathers" recalls that in most of the early ancestry line systems children were only included in one half of the marriage alliance, quite contrary to the family logic understood today, according to which every child is considered bilinearly related to both parental parties. <<

[222] On the proto-institutional and highly artificial character of unilinear kinship systems, cf. Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur. Philosophische Ergebnisse und Aussagen*, Bonn 1956, § 37 "Orders of blood ties" and § 38.

"Totemism," pp. 217-230. <<

[223] Nicomachean Ethics, book 9, 1170b 10. <<

[224] Cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 4: "The Ontological Argument of the Sphere," pp. 309-368. <<

[225] Cf. Jean-Pierre Vernant, Die Entstehung des griechischen Denkens, Frankfurt 1982. <<



[226] Laws, book 3, 678c. <<

[227] Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, "Suffrage in favor of animals. Fantasy on Animal Representation," in: Herausforderung Tier. Von Beuys bis Kabakov, Regina Haslinger ed., Munich/London/New York 2000, pp. 128-133. <<

[228] Cf. Wilhelm Emil Mühlmann, "Colluvies gentium. Genesis of the people from asylums," in: Homo creator. Abhandlungen zur Soziologie, Anthropologie und Ethnologie, Wiesbaden 1962, pp. 303ff. Mühlmann refers, among others, to the example of the Crimean Tatars, who constitute an ethnic neoformation from the most diverse "population residues": "A mixture of authentic Tatars with Ottoman Turks, with Genoese, with remnants of Crimean Goths, Pontic Greeks and perhaps also with splinters of former Iranian populations from southern Russia ('skites')", p.

306. One source of the colluvies gentium was the relations with clients and metecos of the Hellenic polis, who, through an active asylum policy, were concerned with increasing their vassalage; here lies one of the origins of the clientelist-mafioso "state," which can be understood as an obscure sosias of both the feudal and the post-democratic state. Mühlmann stresses that the era-colluvies-gentium is by no means over: in the fugitive movements of the second half of the twentieth century he sees starting points for new ethnogenetic dramas. With these considerations can be connected, effortlessly, the approaches-imagined- communities of the latest political sociology.

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[229] Gilles Deleuze, Die einsame Insel und andere Texte. Texte und Gespräche 1953 bis 1974, David Lapoujade ed., Frankfurt 2003, pp. 16-17. [La isla desierta y otros textos: textos y entrevistas (1953-1974), translated by José Luis Pardo, Pre-Textos, Valencia 2005].

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[230] Materials for a critique of genealogical reason are found in Thomas Macho, "So Many Human Beings. Beyond the genealogical principle," in: *Vor der Jahrtausendwende. Berichte zur Lage der Zukunft*, Peter Sloterdijk ed., Frankfurt 1990, pp. 29-64; as well as in: Thomas Macho, "Genealogical Trees, Trees of Freedom and Religion of Genius. Notes for the history of genealogical systems," in: *Genealogie und Genetik. Schnittstellen zwischen Biologie und Kulturgeschichte*, Sigrid Weigel ed., Berlin 2002, pp. 15-43; Klaus Heinrich, "The Function of Genealogy in Myth," in: *Vernunft und Mythos. Ausgewählte Texte*, Frankfurt 1992, pp. 11-26; Pierre Legendre, *L'inestimable objet de la transmission. Etude sur le principe généalogique en occident*, Paris 1985. <<

[231] Cicero already expressed the idea of socialization through a qualitatively new type of assembly: "A people is not just any assembly of human beings, congregated in any way, but the gathering of a multitude, associated in function of juridical consensuses and communion of interests" ["Populus non est omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus"]. De re publica, I 39. <<

[232] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (1651), chapter 17, Richard Tuck ed, Cambridge 1992, p. 120. <<.

[233] Laws, Book x, 903b, c. [Spanish translation by J. M. Pabón and M. Fernández-Galiano, Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Madrid 1960].

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[234] Laws, Book x, 904b. <<

[235] eudaímona theón, Timaeus 34b. <<

[236] zoon aídion on, Timaeus 37d. <<

[237] Meditations, IV, 29, and II, 1. <<

[238] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Vom Gesellschaftsvertrag oder Grundsätze des Staatsrechts, Stuttgart 1986, p. 116. <<

[239] Titus Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, II, 32, 9-12, 2. <<

[240] Republic, Book III, 414b-415cd. Evidence of the timeliness of the argument is provided by the strong influence of the political Platonist Leo Strauss on American neoconservatives, who recognize, with their master, the need for a democratic management of illusion by elites without illusion. <<

[241] John Rawls, Eine Theorie der Gerechtigkeit, Frankfurt 1975. <<



[242] Ibid., p. 160. <<

[243] Cf. Garbis Kortian, "Une philosophie première pour le dernier homme?", in: Critique, January 1981, no. 404, pp. 3-ss. That it has been possible to arrive in recent times at a renaissance of contractualist theories is not, as representatives of this tendency admit, conditioned by the richness of content of the metaphor of the contract, but for theoretical-political reasons, more precisely: by the interest in restraining systemic approaches in sociology and in giving birth to a model that could support a not too illusory theory of collective action. Neo-contractualism is the offer with which a certain "social philosophy" addresses the demand for an edifying theory for unit officials and pedagogues. That it is an edifying theory is shown, among other things, by the fact that representatives of negotiating professions (lawyers, diplomats, trade unionists in collective bargaining negotiations, intermediaries, social workers, commanders of peacekeeping troops, etc.) hardly recognize their own praxis, determined by strategic considerations, in the speculations of contractualist theorists. Cf. Klaus Eder, "The Permanent Social Contract. For the collective construction of a social order", in: Lucian Kern/Hans-Peter Müller (eds.), Gerechtigkei, Diskurs oder Markt? Die neuen Ansätze in der Vertragstheorie, Opladen 1986, pp. 67-sf.

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[244] The actor-theory [ANT: Akteur-Netzwerk-Theorie], which only pretends to deal with associations, proposes another way to do away with the expression "social" in the theory of society. Cf. Bruno Latour, "Gabriel Tarde and the end of the social", in: Soziale Welt (2001), pp. 361-376. <<

[245] Georg Simmel, "Excursus on the problem: How is society possible?", in: *Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung*, Leipzig 1908, pp. 27-45; also in: Georg Simmel, *Schriften zur Soziologie*. A selection edited and introduced by Heinz-Jürgen Dahme and Otthein Rammstedt, Frankfurt 1983, pp. 275-293. <<

[246] Ibid., p. 280. <<

[247] Ibid. p. 290. That as-if (which Simmel himself emphasizes) is proof that the author does not really return to the holistic-social point of view, even if he occasionally resorts to the language game in which the individual, as a professional, precisely because of his "peculiarity, becomes a necessary member in the life of the whole...," o. c., p. 293. <<

[248] Ibid., p. 283. <<

[249] Ibid., p. 285. <<



[250] A more radical formulation of this idea is found in the work of Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie* (1893), reprint Paris 1999, p. 80: "Their elements [i.e., those of the great social mechanisms, P. Sl.] [...] always belong only on one side of their essence to the world they form, while on other sides they escape it. This world would not exist without them, yet they would be something without this world."

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[251] **ibid.** <<

[252] Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, introduction by Eric Alliez, postface by Maurice Lazzarato, Paris 1999, p. 58. With this way of speaking Tarde anticipates that of Whitehead, who in *Process and Reality* understands "society" as a self-supporting nexus of "real entities"; thus, for example, one can speak of a "society of electromagnetic events"; cf. Alfred N. Whitehead, *Prozess und Realität*, o. c., pp. 176-s. and 182. <<

[253] Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, o. c., p. 58. <<

[254] Regarding our reservations against the network metaphor, see supra, pp. 197ff. <<

[255] Gabriel Tarde, *Monadologie et sociologie*, o. c., p. 61. Note that Tarde, in his imaginary experiment on the vertical nation, again abandons the hypothesis of suppressed gravitation (otherwise, the materials for the construction of the vertical city would not have to be postulated as particularly solid). <<

[256] Vilém Flusser, "Spaces," in: Heidemarie Seblatnig (ed.), *Aussen räume innen räume. Der Wandel des Raumbegriffs im Zeitalter der elektronischen Medien*, Vienna 1991, p. 78. <<

[257] Cf. Spheres I, Bubbles, chapter 5, "The original companion. Requiem for a discarded organ", especially pp. 319ff.

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[258] ["autogenes Gefäss"] Cf. Spheres I, Bubbles, "Introduction. The allies or: The exhaled commune", especially pp. 51-52 and 64. <<

[259] René Crevel, "Le bien du siècle", quoted in: La révolution surréaliste. Ein Lesebuch, Una Pfau ed., Munich 1997, p. 55. <<

[260] Uwe Sander, Die Bindung der Unverbindlichkeit. Mediatisierte Kommunikation in modernen Gesellschaften, Frankfurt 1998. <<

[261] Georg Simmel, "Sociology of Space," 1903, in: Schriften zur Soziologie, Frankfurt 1983, p. 229 <<<

[262] Cfr. Immanuel Kant, Die Metaphysics der Sitten, Wilhelm Weischedel ed., Frankfurt 1977, pp. 336-s. <<

[263] Paralipomena zum Blütenstaub, n.º 131. <<

[264] Cf. Heiner Mühlmann's topological expositions in his theory of instinct architecture, in which a distinction is to be made between biological systems of space and artifact or symbol spaces: *Die Natur der Kulturen*, o. c., pp. 55-sf. <<

[\*] Luftbeben. Aus den Quellen des Terrors, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 2002 [Tembloros de aire. En las fuentes del terror, Pre- Textos, Valencia 2003]. Here it appears somewhat modified and expanded with new pages. We translate Luftbeben by "aerimotos", firstly because in German Erdbeben = earthquake(s), Seebeben = tidal wave(s), and secondly because of certain resonances of the text itself (pp. 103-105). It is, moreover, an insinuation that I owe and thank to my colleague in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Extremadura, the professor of Latin philology Mr. Eustaquio Sánchez Salor. Eustaquio Sanchez Salor (N. of the T.) <<



[\*\*] "Air force" (German), literally meaning "air weapon". Both meanings are played with (N. of the T.) <<

[265] Gilles Deleuze, Die einsame Insel und andere Texte. Texte und Gespräche von 1953 bis 1974, o. c., pp. 12-s. [Quoted from the translation by José Luis Pardo, in: Gilles Deleuze, La isla desierta y otros textos, Pre-Textos, Valencia 2005, p. 17. <<

[266] Georg Simmel, "Sociology of Space", in: Schriften zur Soziologie, o. c., p. 226; cf. also by the same author "The Frame of a Picture. An aesthetic essay", in: Von Wesen der Moderne. Essays zur Philosophie und Ästhetik, Werner Jung (ed.), Hamburg 1990.

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[267] Robert von Ranke-Graves, Griechische Mythologie. Quellen und Deutung, Reinbeck, Hamburg 1984, pp. 116-117. <<

[268] Cf. Ernst Messerschmidt/Reinhold Bertrand/Frank Pohlemann, *Raumstationen. Systeme und Nutzung*, Berlin/Heidelberg/New York/etc. 1997, p. 145. The "salad machine" is a development of the greenhouse-svet, created by Soviet researchers, which had been tested since 1990 on board the Mir. Growth experiments in weightlessness showed that the svet-plants initially reached only half the size of plants grown on Earth under comparable conditions; in trials with wheat, edible but sterile grains appeared: due to too high concentrations of ethyl, as was proven in later analyses. The first successful cultivation of mustard plants capable of germinating in space broke new ground in the field of space planting biology in the summer of 1997; in 1999, experiments with a second generation of space wheat resulted. Cf. Marsha Freeman, *Challenges of Human Space Exploration*, Chichester 2000, pp. 74-79. <<

[269] Ibid. pp. 109-148. <<

[270] For a description of politicians as containers of collective situations cf. Thomas Macho, "Container of Attention. Reflections on rectitude in politics", in: Opfer der Macht. Müssen Politiker ehrlich sein?", Peter Kemper ed., Frankfurt/Leipzig 1993, pp. 194ff. <<

[271] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 124: "On the horizon of the infinite - We have left the Earth and embarked! We have broken the bridges behind us, indeed, the Earth behind us! [...] Alas, if you are overcome with longing for the Earth, as if there had been more freedom there! For there is no "Earth" any more!". <<



[272] "Cosmonaut Sergey Krikalev in conversation with Andrei Ukhica: weightless around the motherland Earth. Life in space - Space in life", in: Lettre international, notebook 53, summer 2001, p. 75. <<

[273] Conversation with Andrey Ukhica, o. c., p. 74. <<

[274] More details on this infra pp. 268ff. <<

[275] Thus paraphrases Barbara Ward, in her book *Spaceship Earth*, London 1966, p. 17, written under the influence of Fuller, the fundamental holistic doctrine of the brilliant engineer. <<

[276] R. Buckminster Fuller, Bedienungsanleitung für das Raumschiff Erde und andere Schriften, Amsterdam/Dresden 1998, p. 48. <<

[277] Ibid., p. 49. <<

[278] Olafur Eliasson, Surroundings Surrounded. Essays on space and science, Peter Weibel ed., Graz/Karlsruhe 2001. Cf. also by the same author, The Weather Project, Susan May ed. <<

[279] Oswald Spengler, Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte (1923), Munich 1979, p. 676.

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[280] Cf. supra, pp. 75-152. <<

[281] For example the Wollaton Hall Camellia House in Nottingham, 1823, which also represents the oldest preserved greenhouse made of prefabricated elements. <<

[282] Georg Kohlmaier/Barna von Sartory, Das Glashaus. Ein Bautypus des 19. Jahrhunderts, Munich 1981, p. 426. <<

[283] Ibid., p. 425. <<

[284] See *infra*, chapter 2, "Indoors. Architectures of Foam," especially pp. 399ff. <<

[285] G. Stanhill, H. Zvi Enoch (ed.), Greenhouse Ecosystems, Amsterdam 1999, pp. 9-11. <<

[286] Bernd Zabel, technical director of Biosphere 2, in conversation with Florian Rötzer, September 25, 1996. <<

[287] This hypothesis has been played with in the media of both mass culture and high culture at least since the 1920s; cf. E. M. Forster, *Die Maschine bleibt stehen*, 1928; Arno Schmidt, *Kaff*, auch *Mare Crisium*, 1960; Philip K. Dick, *Total Recall*, 1965. <<



[288] It could also be said of nine strata, if the image of the strata did not suggest a superposition of levels without a null point; if we prefer the expression dimension it is because it allows us to imagine that all the dimensions branch out from a common interface or a zero point (from a here-now-we-are-intertwined). <<

[289] Eduard Kirschmann, Das Zeitalter der Werfer - eine neue Sicht des Menschen. Das Schimpansen-Werfer-Aasfresser-Krieger-Modell der menschlichen Evolution, Hannover 1999; Alfred W. Crosby, Throwing Fire: Projectile Technology Through History, Cambridge 2002. <<

[290] Paul Alsberg, Das Menschheitsrätsel, 1922; republished with a foreword by Dieter Claessen under the title Der Ausbruch aus dem Gefängnis - Zu den Entstehungsbedingungen des Menschen, Giessen 1975. <<

[291] Michel Serres, Hominiscence, Paris 2001. <<

[292] G. W. F. Hegel, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, § 187, Appendix. <<

[293] Cf. Arnold Gehlen, *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt*, Frankfurt/Bonn 1962, p. 135. <<

[294] The unloading motif will be developed in detail later, when discussing Arnold Gehlen's interpretation of the human being as a being-of-lacking; cf. pp. 529ff. <<

[295] Cited according to: Frank R. Wilson, Die Hand - Geniestreich der Evolution. Ihr Einfluss auf Gehirn, Sprache und Kultur des Menschen, Stuttgart 2000, p. 189. <<



[296] Cf. in Wilson, Chapter 9: "Dangerous Youth, Pollywogs and the Heterotechnical Revolution," o. c., pp. 181-196. <<

[297] G. W. F. Hegel, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, § 189, Appendix. <<

[298] Cf. Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur*, o. c., p. 26. <<

[299] Cf. Charles Malamoud, "The ways of the knife. Notes on dismemberments in Vedic sacrifice," in: *Cuire le monde. Rite et pensée dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1989, pp. 211-ss. <<

[300] Cf. the theosophical phrase, quoted on p. 22, concerning the media, by McLuhan on the audiosphere, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere; the pathos of this thesis lies in the fact that it (thanks to electric and electronic media) is no longer to be worthwhile from a merely sociological-tribal point of view, but from a sociological-universal one. <<

[301] McLuhan seriously pretended to believe that we are living the rebirth of a global "closed society", paradoxically retribalized, which would be constituted as a "product of language, drums and technologies, which speak to the ear". <<

[302] Cf. Adolf Portmann, "For a basal anthropology", in: *Biologie und Geist*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 256ff. <<

[303] Ibid., p. 257. <<



[304] Ibid. p. 261 <<<

[305] Friedrich Nietzsche, The Antichrist, in: Kritische Studienausgabe, vol. 6, Munich 1980, p. 182. <<

[306] St. Augustine, De vera religione XXXIX, 72. <<

[307] Charles Baudelaire, Spleen de Paris, "A une heure de matin".

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[308] Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, *Das soziale Band und die Audiophonie. Anmerkungen zur Anthropologie im technischen Zeitalter*, Stephan Krass ed., edition S2 Kultur, Baden Baden 1994; on the acoustics of the promise cf. also *Spheres I, Bubbles*, chapter 7, "The stadium-sirens. From the first sonospheric alliance", pp. 431-468.

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[309] On the installation of individual phonotopes through the alliance between apartment living and sound technology see *infra*, in Chapter 2: "Indoors. Architectures of Foam," the part dealing with acoustic self-complementation, pp. 451-sf. <<

[310] Cf. Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mutter Natur. Die weibliche Seite der Evolution*, Berlin 2000, especially chapter 6, "The Milky Way," pp. 153ff; as well as *Spheres I, Bubbles*, excursus 3, "The Egg Principle. Intimation and envelopment," pp. 297-304. <<

[311] John Bowlby, Bindung. Eine Analyse der Mutter-Kind-Beziehung, Munich 1975. <<



[312] This is manifested, among other things, in the opposition of dogmatic feminists to theories that realistically describe the dependencies of young children on the mother. On the incident of John Bowlby being awarded an *honorary* doctorate by the University of Cambridge in 1977, cf. Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mutter Natur*, o. c., p. 554. In addition, the thesis of the concealment of early childhood neglect ("The drama of the gifted child") has to be balanced by observations that speak of intensive maternal care and almost neo-paleolithic pampering of young children in the First World. Cf. for this *infra*, pp. 604-606 313 <<<

[313] Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse, 1830, part three, Philosophie des Geistes, § 405, in: Werke, vol. 10, Frankfurt 1970, p. 125. <<

[314] Among others, in the books: Eurotaoismus. Zur Kritik der politischen Kinetik, Frankfurt 1989, pp. 174-210, as well as: Nicht gerettet. Versuche nach Heidegger, Frankfurt 2001, pp. 142-234.

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[315] Republic, book III, 414b-415d. <<

[316] Friedrich Heiler, Die Religionen der Menschheit, Kurt Goldammer ed., Stuttgart 1999, p. 31. <<

[317] Cf. the similar theses of the epistemic-irenic Michel Serres:  
"Does all the evil in the world come from belonging to something?  
Yes. All the evil in the world comes from comparison. And from the  
miserable glory conferred by entry into a distinguished collective,  
elevated above the common condition." Cf. Michel Serres, *Atlas*,  
Paris 1996, p. 213. <<<

[318] We forgo exemplifying this point of view in the possible scenarios of the current triple intramonotheistic struggle. <<

[319] Martin Walser, *Ones without others*, novel, Frankfurt (1993),  
Werke in zwölf Bänden, volume 7, p. 58. <<



[320] Friedrich Nietzsche, Human, all too human I, no. 627,  
"Living and experiencing". <<

[321] Aeschylus, Prometheus in Chains, v. 7. <<

[322] Cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 2, "Memories-receptacle. On the foundation of solidarity in the inclusive form," pp. 173-218. <<

[323] Charles Malamoud, *Cuire le monde. Rite et pensée dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1989. <<

[324] Gaston Bachelard, *Psychoanalyse des Feuers*, Munich 1985, p. 55. Bachelard speaks (in reference to Novalis' *In Praise of the Night*) about the dualism of light and public-superficial distribution, on the one hand, and darkness and intimate-exclusive dedication, on the other. <<

[325] Cfr. Emmanuel Todd, *Weltmach USA. Ein Nachruf*, Munich 2003. <<

[326] Franz Xaver Baier, "Thermal sense and thermal organism. Project of a thermal aesthetics," in: Feuer. Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn 2001, pp. 463-470. <<

[327] Cf. René Girard, *Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*, Paris 1961. <<



[328] Cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 1, "Dawn of remoteness - closeness. Thanatological space, paranoia, imperial peace," especially pp. 163-172. <<

[329] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke*, Kritische Studienausgabe, volume 1, Munich 1980, p. 32. <<

[330] The concept of tiers garant goes back to Pierre Legendre, who placed it at the center of a reflection on the need for positive transmission of norms, presented by him as a dogmatic anthropology. Legendre's strongly "westernized" doctrine of patricentric norms and institutions, which can be interpreted as a Lacanian response to Gehlen, naturally leads to a critique of the times, which is scandalized by the weakening in modern civilization of the functions of the father, the legislator, the super-ego, the symbolic order, the general obedience to norms and the third party guarantor; warning against the omnipresent communicative-consumptive subject, who allows himself everything and "knows no limits". Cf. Pierre Legendre, *Sur la question dogmatique en occident*, Paris 1999. Consequently, Legendre reproaches communicative theories and discursive ethics in use for squandering the "symbolic capital of humanity" (ibid., p. 72). <<

[331] René Girard, *Je vois Satan tomber comme l'éclair*, Paris 1999.

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[332] Girard comes close to that goal with high praise for Nietzsche as a diagnostician of constitutive jealousy, but retreats from the spiritual core of the Nietzschean ethics of the gift and falls back into the usual theological clichés of the "neopaganism"; cf. o. c., chap. XIV, "Le double héritage nietzschéen", pp. 263-279. Admittedly, the immanent daring of Nietzsche's ethical project: the combination of disinterestedness and re-interestedness in a kind of polyvalent morality, has not yet been properly reconstructed anywhere. <<

[333] Cfr. René Girard, *Shakespeare ou les feux de l'envie*, Paris 1990. <<

[334] William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time. Dance and Drill in Human History*, Cambridge, Mass. 1995. <<

[335] Cf. the failed interpretation of the training in Siegfried Kracauer, *Das Ornament der Masse*, Frankfurt 1963. Kracauer's "critical theory" of modern *ballet* as an emanation of capitalist conformization shows the typically academic connection of historical-anthropological ignorance and pretension to hermeneutic depth. <<



[336] Cf. Ingomar Weiler, Der Sport bei den Völkern der Alten Welt, Darmstadt 1981. <<

[337] For the architectural forms of the massive cultural renaissance see infra, chapter 2, "Indoors. Architectures of foam", section C, "Foam City. Macro-interiors and urban congress buildings make explicit the symbiotic situations of the crowd", pp. 478ff. <<

[338] Heiner Mühlmann, Die Natur der Kulturen. Eine kulturgenetische Theorie, Heidelberg/ New York 1996. <<

[339] Ibid., p. 39. <<

[340] From Mühlmann's 5-phase scheme, we will only sketch very schematically the first three: local rules, stress, relaxation; to phases four and five, Mühlmann calls iteration and degeneration; in the treatment of the last one we find an interesting new interpretation of the fascism-effect as a supra-concept of state-affected hooliganism.

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[341] Heiner Mühlmann, "The Ecology of Cultures," in: Kunst und Krieg, Bazon Brock and Gerlinde Koschig eds, Munich 2002, p. 52.

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[<sup>342</sup>] Leo Strauss, letter to Carl Schmitt of September 4, 1932, in: Heinrich Meier, Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und der "Begriff des Politischen". Dialog unter Abwesenden, Stuttgart 1988, p. 133. <<

[343] Cf. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, § 22. From here follows a systematic definition of propaganda: a procedure of production of that paranoia, based on displeasure, which is used for the stabilization of groups of warlike cooperation; and from here, additionally, follows the definition of the strategic functions of the counselor: they constitute a metaparanoïd service, carried out by like-minded intellectuals, for the production of paranoia of the first order, useful for war. <<



[344] For a recent profession of neo-Hobbesian faith in warfare cf. Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics. Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*, New York 2003. <<

[345] Cf. infra, pp. 350-351. <<

[346] When the commandment of discreet dominance matures enough to be explained, the concept of soft power appears; cf. Joseph Nye jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York 1990. It is not, therefore, a question of general inclusion, but of that of the submissive and appropriate. On the phenomenon of imperial partial universalism cf. also *infra*, chapter 3, section 9, "The Empire or: The hothouse of comfort; the mime scale open upwards", pp. 604ff. <<

[347] Cf. Franz Joseph Wetz, *Die Kunst der Resignation*, Stuttgart 2000; elsewhere (Daniel Bensaïd, *Le pari mélancolique. Métamorphose de la politique et politique de la métamorphose*, Paris 1997, p. 236) speaks of "chamber music of resignation" and of micromorals. <<

[348] Regarding approaches to a philosophical critique of standard discourses on globalization cf. Jacques Derrida, *Marx' Gespenster. Der verschuldete Staat, die Trauerarbeit und die neue Internationale*, Frankfurt 1995; Jean-Luc Nancy, *La création du monde ou la mondialisation*, Paris 2002; Kostas Axelos, "La question de la technique planétaire", in: *Ce questionnement. Approche - éloignement*, Paris 2001, pp. 15-35; Peter Sloterdijk, *Weltinnenraum des Kapitals. Zu einer philosophischen Geschichte der terrestrischen Globalisierung*, Frankfurt 2005. <<

[349] Here parallels are drawn with the "conservative revolution" of the 1920s and 1930s in Germany; it was also based, among other things, on the abstract political figure of a "self-improvement of liberalism" in view of the state of exception forced by the enemy. Cf. Ian Buruma, *Revolution from Above* (interview by Paul Berman, "Terror and Liberalism"), *New York Review of Books*, April 26, 2003.

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[<sup>350</sup>] Francis Bacon, Neu-Atlantis (1624), Stuttgart 1962, pp. 27ff.  
., 43-sf. and, above all, 56. <<

[351] Hans Kelsen, Was ist Gerechtigkeit, Stuttgart 2000, p. 52.

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[352] Cfr. Fritz K. Ringer, Die Gelehrten. Der Niedergang der deutschen Mandarine 1890-1933, Munich 1987. <<

[353] B. F. Skinner, *Futurum Zwei*, Reinbeck (Hamburg) 1972, pp. 238. <<

[354] Gernot Böhme, Am Ende des Baconschen Zeitalters. Studien zur Wissenschaftsentwicklung, Frankfurt 1993. <<

[355] Cf. Bruno Latour, *Das Parlament der Dinge*, o. c., especially chapter 3, "A New Division of Powers," pp. 127ff. and chapter 4, "The Powers of the Collective," pp. 169ff. <<

[356] Exceptions to this rule can be observed in the cult of the emigrants to the ancestors, which confirms the possibility of a deterritorialized dealings with the ancestors. <<

[357] Émile Durkheim, Die elementaren Formen des religiösen Lebens, Frankfurt 1984, p. 400. <<

[358] For a complex image of the Old Testament god see Bernhard Lang, JAHWE. Der biblische Gott: ein Portrait, Munich 2002; on the hermeneutics of the sorrowful psalms of the Old Testament referring to the enemy and vengeance cf. Erich Zenger, Ein Gott der Rache? Feindpsalmen Verstehen, Freiburg/Basel/Vienna 1994. Prima facie, the Koran, like similar monotheistic books, can also be read as a litany about the extermination of infidels, atheists and skeptics; like their Christian and Jewish colleagues, the hermeneuts of the Koran have to put all their hands to work to explain that this does not mean what it seems to mean. <<

[359] Thus, there is much that speaks in favor of seeing in what will later be called superstition one of the fundamental forms of the religious mentality in general: superstitious means among the Romans as much as "meditative expectation in religious matters"; it is, to some extent, the neurotic variant of scrupulous awareness (*religio*), with which signs, prodigies and omens, as well as ritual prescriptions, must be observed. Cf. Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio. Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters*, Berlin 1979, p. 21. <<



[360] Cf. Johann Jakob Bachofen, *Das Mutterrecht: eine Untersuchung über die Gynaikokratie der alten Welt nach ihrer religiösen und rechtlichen Natur; eine Auswahl*, Frankfurt 1975; as well as Michel Serres, *Statues. Le second livre des fondations*, Paris 1987. <<

[361] Cf. Martin Buber, Gottesfinsternis. Betrachtungen zur Beziehung zwischen Religion und Philosophie, Heidelberg 1987; Raimon Panikkar, Gottes Schweigen. Die Antwort des Buddha für unsere Zeit, Munich 1992; Klaus Schneider, Die schweigenden Götter: eine Studie zur Gottesvorstellung des religiösen Platonismus, Hildesheim 1966. <<

[362] Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung, o. c., pp. 296-300. <<

[363] Cf. Elisabeth von Samsonow, Was ist der Sex-Appeal des Anorganischen wirklich? Theorie und kurze Geschichte der hypnogenen Subjekte und Objekte, Lecture by Vilém Flusser at the Cologne Media University, 2002. <<

[364] Fred Hoyle, Kosmische Katastrophen und der Ursprung der Religion, Frankfurt/Leipzig 1997. <<

[365] Gabriel Tarde, o. c., p. 303. <<

[366] On the contrary, one could rightly say that popular religious culture has preserved to this day the traits of a panic culture; cf. Alphonse Dupront, *Du sacré. Croisade et pèlerinages. Images et langages*, Paris 1987, p. 462. <<

[367] Cf. Heinrich Meier, "Death as God. A note on Martin Heidegger," in: *Das theologisch-politische Problem. Zum Thema von Leo Strauss*, Stuttgart 2003, pp. 73-82. <<



[368] Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Dialektik der Aufklärung, Philosophische Fragmente, Frankfurt 1984, pp. 61-99. <<

[<sup>369</sup>] Cf. First Letter to the Corinthians, 12:1-11; 28-31. <<

[370] Tobie Nathan et collectif, L'enfant ancêtre, Paris 2000. <<

[371] Aeneid, book 6, verses 851-853. Unfortunately Anchises says nothing regarding how the Romans are to proceed when the allies, for their part, do not respect in matters of foreign policy the sentiments of the hegemon. <<

[372] That this rule does not apply without exception is shown, among other things, by the precedents of the declaration of sainthood of Sister Angela of the Cross (1846-1932), carried out in Seville by John Paul II in early May 2003, whose corpse was exposed for several days in the cathedral and visited by an immense human mass; as if the saints still possessed the power to advise the heroes of worldly culture as classics of neighborly love, given the case. <<

[373] Cf. Erich Voegelin, *Das Volk Gottes. Sektenbewegungen und der Geist der Moderne*, Munich 1994. <<

[374] For the most significant essay on a xenotopic ethics cf. Hans-Dieter Bahr, *Die Sprache des Gastes. Eine Metaethik*, Leipzig 1994. For a critique of philosophical xenophobia, see François Laruelle, *Théorie des étrangers. Science des hommes, démocratie, non-psychoanalyse*, Paris 1995. <<

[375] Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra I, "On the Love of Neighbor". Cf. Axel Honneth, Kampf um Anerkennung, Zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte, Frankfurt 1994; as well as Ludwig Klages, Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches, third edition, Bonn 1958. While the philosophers of the you (such as the holists) claim that the I blindly holds power everywhere and would first have to learn the lesson of the other, by which its eyes would be opened, Nietzsche emphasizes the thesis that the I is a late and improbable acquisition, which has to be achieved from the always dominant primacy of the other; moreover: that until now no beings have appeared who could authentically say I; what until today was called egoism was always the egoism of the other in me. <<



[376] Max Scheler, Die Wissensformen and die Gesellschaft, Leipzig 1926, pp. 53ff. <<

[377] Alphonso Lingis, *The Imperative*, Bloomington, Indiana 1998, pp. 161 and 192. <<

[378] Vilém Flusser, "Motives and limits of communication", in: *Kommunikologie*, Mannheim 1996, p. 261. <<

[379] For right-wing exterminism there are figures, for left-wing exterminism there are assessments. Hartmut Böhme, in his article "Genocide in the 20th century. Perspectives on the 1948 UN convention against genocide" (in: Paragrana. Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie, Volume 10, Berlin 2001, pp. 124-148), cites the results of quantitative and comparative genocide research, according to which, in the course of the 20th century up to 1987, more than 161 million deaths by terror had to be consigned, most of them due to state policies of extermination against own populations, where the figures of totalitarian leftist regimes lead by far. <<

[380] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen*. Eine Auswahl aus dem Nachlass, Georg Henrik von Wright (ed.), in: *Werkausgabe*, volume VIII, Frankfurt 1984, p. 568. Recall that the Wittgensteinian aphorism alludes to the homophile-Gnostic dream of a society without procreation, since in an order [religious, military, lay] one can only enter, but not be born into it. <<

[381] Cfr. Günther Ortman, Regel und Ausnahme. Paradoxien sozialer Ordnung, Frankfurt 2003. <<

[382] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Aurora*, book 1, 9. <<

[383] Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung, o. c., p. 346.

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[384] De legibus I, 28. <<

[385] Marc Augé, Pour une anthropologie des mondes contemporains, Paris 1999, pp. 103-s. <<

[386] Pierre Legendre, "Ce que nous appelons le droit", in: Sur la question dogmatique en occident, Paris 1999, pp. 123-152. <<

[387] Günther Ortman, Regel und Ausnahme, o. c., p. 33. <<

[388] Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy. The logic of War and Peace*, Cambridge, Mass. and London 1987, chapter 13, "Armed Suasion," pp. 190ff. <<

[389] Cfr. Hans-Georg Gadamer, Über die Verborgenheit der Gesundheit, Frankfurt 1993. <<

[<sup>390</sup>] Cf. Paul Lafargue, Das Recht auf Faulheit: Widerlegung des "Rechts auf Arbeit" von 1848, Grafenau 1999. <<

[391] Arnold Gehlen, Urmensch und Spätkultur. Philosophische Ergebnisse und Aussagen, Bonn 1956, pp. 88ff. <<



[392] Hans Urs von Balthasar, Herrlichkeit. Eine theologische Ästhetik, 2 vols, Freiburg 1990. <<

[393] Cfr. Richard von Dülmen, Theater des Schreckens. Gerichtspraxis und Strafrituale der frühen Neuzeit, Munich 1985. <<

[394] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Aurora*, book 1, 19. <<

[395] According to Hans Thomä, *Unter Amerikanern: eine Lebensart wird besichtigt*, Munich 2000, p. 75 <<.

[396] Francis Fukuyama, Der grosse Aufbruch. Wie unsere Gesellschaft eine neue Ordnung erfindet, Munich 2002, especially part two: "On the Genealogy of Morals," pp. 193-326. <<

[397] That this may literally be the case is shown by Thomas Jefferson's well-known words on the occasional character of the declaration of independence of July 4, 1776: "Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiment, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind, and to give to that expression the proper tone and spirit called for by the occasion." Cited by Hannah Arendt, *Über die Revolution*, Munich 1974, p. 168. <<

[398] G. W. F. Hegel, Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, §§  
189-208. <<

[399] Cfr. Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers*, New York 1984. <<



[400] Cfr. Dieter Claessens, Das Konkrete and das Abstrakte. Soziologische Skizzen zur Anthropologie, Frankfurt 1980. <<

[401] Cf. Arnaud Spire, *Servitudes et grandeurs du cynisme: de l'impossibilité des principes et de l'impossibilité de s'en passer*, Paris 1997, p. 218. <<<

[402] Michel Serres, *Der Parasit*, Frankfurt 1980; before Serres, Gabriel Tarde had already spoken of the parasites of parasites (et ainsi de suite): *Oeuvres de G. T.*, volume I, under the editorship of Eric Alliez, "Monadologie et sociologie", Paris 1999, p. 35. <<

[403] Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *L'ouvert. De l'homme et de l'animal*, Paris 2002. Gehlen has also understood the separation of the anthroposphere from the environmental element as the authentic mechanism of the creation of culture: "There, nature still retains much of what is anthropologically fundamental of a "field of surprise", in which successful praxis has installed, so to speak, islands of the neutralized and of what is secured by custom", in: Arnold Gehlen, *Urmensch und Spätkultur*, o. c., p. 112. <<

[404] See supra, pp. 229-230. <<

[405] For this expression cf. Friedrich Schnack, *Der Traum vom Paradies. Eine Kulturgeschichte des Gartens*, Hamburg 1962, pp. 331. <<

[406] That is the title of a 1950 text by R. Buckminster Fuller on the construction of geodesic domes. Facsimile reproduction in: *Your Private Sky: Diskurs*. R. Buckminster Fuller, Joachim Krausse/Claude Lichtenstein eds, Zurich 2001, pp. 190-239. <<

[407] We note that Bruno Latour's sociological critique of the exclusion of the expert at the ontological level goes hand in hand with a complementary critique of the exclusion of nature. <<



[408] Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts, § 196, appendix, in:  
Werke, vol. 7, Frankfurt 1970, p. 351. <<

[409] Cf. Edward Said, "Culture and Identity. Europe's self-encounter from the incorporation of the world", in: *Lettre International* 34, 1996, p. 24. <<

[410] Cf. supra, pp. 145ff. <<

[\*] Ge-stell: gear, frame, framework, site structure <<

[\*\*] Above we speak of the conversion of Pforten (animal hands, in apes or quadrumans: hands - or paws - with thumb opposite to the others) into Hande (hominid or human hands). Because of the absence in English of an exclusive term for Pforten, we translate this word by "animal hands" and Hande simply by "hands". (N. of the T.)

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[\*\*\*] Sorge: concern, worry, solicitude, solicitude, care, attention. <<

[\*\*\*\*] Insider-Injunktionen. <<

[\*\*\*\*] With the nuance of zone of homesickness, homecoming [Heimsuchungszone], referring to dead ancestors. Also affection, affliction, for their remembrance, their visit. (N. of T.) <<



[\*\*\*\*\*] Zug: dragging, pulling, even attraction. <<

[411] Cf. H. van der Laan, Der architektonische Raum. Fünfzehn Lektionen über die Disposition der menschlichen Behausung, Leiden/New York/Cologne 1992, p. 1. <<<

[412] Cf. Christopher Alexander/Sara Ishikwa/Murray Silverstein, Eine Muster-Sprache. Städte. Gebäude. Konstruktion, Hermann Czech ed., Vienna 1995. <<

[413] Carl Schmitt, Land und Meer. Eine weltgeschichtliche Betrachtung, Stuttgart 1954, third edition 1993, pp. 103-ss. <<

[414] Cf. supra pp. 75-93; also Peter Sloterdijk, *Luftbeben. An den Quellen des Terrors*, Frankfurt 2002. <<

[415] Edward Morgan Forster, "The Machine Stops," in: Duell im 25. Jahrhundert. Geschichten von glücklichen Welten und kommenden Zeiten. Klassische Science-fiction-Geschichten, Erich Simon and Olaf R. Spittel eds, Berlin 1987. <<

[416] Cf. Bernhard Waldenfals, "Physical Dwelling in Space," in: Gerhart Schröder/Helga Breuninger (eds.), *Kulturtheorien der Gegenwart. Ansätze und Positionen*, Frankfurt 2001, pp. 179-182.

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[417] For this expression cf. supra, p. 254. <<.



[418] Martin Heidegger, Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik, Welt - Endlichkeit - Einsamkeit, Frankfurt 1992, p. 229. <<

[419] Vilém Flusser, "Caravan," in: Von der Freiheit des Migranten. Einsprüche gegen den Nationalismus, Bensheim 1994, pp. 45-49.

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[420] Cf. Manfred Sommer, *Sammeln. Ein philosophischer Versuch*, Frankfurt 1999; as well as Thomas Schloz, *Die Geste des Sammelns. Eine Fundamentalspekulation, Umgriff, Anthropologie, Etymographie*, Entlass, Stuttgart 2000. <<

[421] Martin Heidegger, "Building Inhabiting Thinking," in: Vorträge und Aufsätze, Pfullingen, fifth edition 1985, p. 143. <<

[422] Martin Heidegger, "Building Inhabiting Thinking", o. c., p. 145.

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[423] Cf. Hans-Dieter Bahr, Die Sprache des Gastes. Eine Metaethik, Leipzig 1994. <<

[424] Vilém Flusser, "Settling into Housing in Exile," in: Von der Freiheit des Migranten, o. c., p. 27. <<

[425] See supra pp. 254ff. <<



[426] He does so most clearly in his curious book *Adolf Hitler in der Geschichte*, Bonn 1999, in which Hitler is portrayed as an installation artist and communal stage director whose talent consisted in staging inclusive (captious) situations of a communal-popular nature. Schmitz places the expression "inclusive situation" as a corrective to Husserl's and Heidegger's, in his opinion insufficient, analyses of residing in the "lifeworld" or dwelling. <<

[427] Ilya Kabakov/Boris Groys, Die Kunst der Installation, Munich/Vienna 1996. <<

[428] Ilya Kabakov/Boris Groys, Die Kunst des Fliehens. Dialoge über Angst, das heilige Weiss und den sowjetischen Müll, Munich/Vienna 1991, p. 61. Cf. the contrary thesis of Durs Grünbein in his Salzburg Speech: "[...] a shared captivity is not at all a half-hearted captivity, but, on the contrary, its multiplication", in: Warum schriflos leben. Aufsätze, Frankfurt 2003, p. 19. <<.

[429] The volume edited by Nicolas Bancel, Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boetsch, Eric Deroo and Sandrine Lemaire, *Zoos humains. XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles. De la Vénus hottentote aux reality shows*, Paris 2002, shows that the zoological exposition could also become "human park" anthropozoological. <<

[430] Ilya Kabakov/Boris Groys, Die Kunst der Installation, o. c., pp. 137. <<

[431] Boris Groys, Politik der Unsterblichkeit. Vier Gespräche mit Thomas Knoefel, Munich/Vienna 2002, p. 22. <<

[432] Paul Valéry, Eupalinos, o. c., p. 33. [Eupalinos o el arquitecto, Colegio Oficial de Aparejadores y Arquitectos Técnicos de Murcia, Murcia 2004]. <<

[433] "Nous sommes, nous nous mouvons, nous vivons alors dans l'oeuvre de l'homme"; cf. Acts of the Apostles 17, 28. <<



[434] Ibid., p. 33. <<

[435] Ibid., p. 34. <<

[436] Ibid., p. 35. <<

[437] Cf. Boris Groys, Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin. Die gespaltene Kultur in der Sowjetunion, Munich/Vienna 1988. <<

[438] Gaston Bachelard, *Poetik des Raumes*, Munich 1960, p. 132;  
"The world is a nest." [*La poética del espacio*, FCE, Madrid 1993].

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[439] Cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 8, section 27, "The great immunological transformation. On the way to thin-walled societies," pp. 863-872. <<

[440] Cfr. Hans Hattenhauer, Europäische Rechtsgeschichte, Heidelberg 1994, p. 7. [Usual German expression] <<<

[441] Cf. Roberto Esposito, *Immunitas. Protezione e negazione della vita*, Torino 2002, p. 13. <<



[442] Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus spoke Zarathustra I, "Of the Three Transformations". <<

[443] Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra III, "Of the Three Evils" 2. <<

[444] Marshall McLuhan, Die magischen Kanäle, o. c., p. 135. <<

[445] This is what Le Corbusier had in mind when in *Vers une Architecture* he wrote that the dwelling of the "select human being" and creator had to offer him "a clear and enclosed space, so that he could immerse himself in peace in his work; the solution of this problem is essential for the health of the elite", in: *Ausblick auf eine Architektur*, Berlin/Frankfurt/Vienna 1963, p. 34. <<

[446] Cf. Walter Benjamin's supratemporal (and at the same time historicizing) deduction of the interior from the intrauterine proto-scene, in: *Das Passagen-Werk, Gesammelte Schriften V. 1*, Frankfurt 1989, p. 292. <<

[447] On the motif, introduced by D. H. Lawrence, of the umbrella that human beings spread over themselves to protect themselves and in which artists make holes and slits to let in an "air current from chaos," cf. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *Was ist Philosophie?*, Frankfurt 1996, pp. 241-242. [What is philosophy?, Anagrama, Barcelona 1993] <<.

[448] On the phenomenology of the nest cf. Gaston Bachelard, *Poetik des Raumes*, o. c., pp. 119-133. <<

[449] Cf. Markus Grob, *Tun der Architektur*, Stuttgart 1997, as well as Stephan Isphording, *Das kleine Haus für Singles, Paare und ältere Menschen*, Munich 2002. <<



[450] This has been stated by Vilém Flusser in one of his most agile texts, "The Bed", in: Dinge und Undinge. Phänomenologische Skizzen, Munich 1993, pp. 89-109. <<

[451] Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, volume II, part four, "Schemes for a Better World," Frankfurt 1959, p. 845; both types, crystal of death (pyramid) and tree of life (Gothic cathedral) represent, according to Bloch, the extreme poles of "architectural utopias." <<

[452] Ibid., p. 850. <<

[453] Gospel according to St. Matthew 8:20. <<

[454] Gospel according to John 16:32. "And I am not alone, for the Father is with me." <<

[455] Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, "How do we brush against the dream of the world? Conjectures on Awakening," in: *Weltfremdheit*, Frankfurt, seventh edition 2002, pp. 326-381; as well as Ernst Bloch, *Viele Kammern im Welthaus*, Friedrich Dieckmann and Jürgen Teller eds, Frankfurt 1994. <<

[456] Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra III, "Of the Three Evils" 2. <<

[457] On the awakening of monotheistic self-hypnosis and the realization of the immunological futility of the infinite God cf. Spheres II, Globes, pp. 481-484. <<



[458] Le Corbusier, Ausblick auf eine Architektur, o. c., p. 166. <<

[459] Ibid., p. 167. <<

[460] Oeuvre complète 1910-1929, Zurich 1967, pp. 45-s. (Order of the parts of the sentence reversed.) <<

[461] Edgar Wedepohl, "The Weissenhof colony of the Werkbund exhibition "Housing" in Stuttgart 1927", in: Wasmuths Monatshefte für Baukunst XI, 1927, pp. 396 ff. The reaction of the press at the time to the Stuttgart exhibition was otherwise, almost without exception, positive; it was only from 1933 onwards that denunciations were carried out, the repercussions of which were noticeable even in the post-war period. <<

[462] Rudolf Arnheim, Die Dynamik der architektonischen Form: Gestützt auf die 1975 an der Cooper Union gehaltenen Mary Duke Biddle Lectures, Cologne 1980, pp. 151ff. <<

[463] Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, o. c., p. 859. <<

[464] Georg Simmel, Philosophie des Geldes, Frankfurt 1989, p. 714.

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[465] El Lissitzky, 1929, Russland: Architektur für eine Weltrevolution, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1989, pp. 46-48. <<



[466] Ibid., p. 47. <<

[467] Cf. Ulf Poschardt, *Über Sportwagen*, Berlin 2002, pp. 29ff.

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[468] Cf. Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*, Cambridge, Mass., 1992; German: *unHEIMlich. Über das Unbehagen in der modernen Architektur*, Hamburg 2002. <<

[469] Cf. Robert Kronenburg, "Modern Architecture for a Variable Dwelling", in: Living in Motion. Design und Architektur für flexible Wohnen, exhibition catalog, Weil am Rhein 2002, pp. 18-77.

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[470] R. Buckminster Fuller, "Dymaxion House. Lecture at the Architectural League, N. Y. C., 1929," in: Your Private Sky. R. Buckminster Fuller. Diskurs, Zurich 2001, p. 90. <<

[471] Ibid. pp. 90-91. <<

[472] H. van der Laan, Der architektonische Raum, o. c., p. 4. <<

[473] R. Buckminster Fuller, *Your Private Sky*, o. c., p. 92. <<.



[474] Ibid., p. 98. <<

[475] Cf. Adolf Max Vogt, *Le Corbusier, der edle Wilde. Zur Archäologie der Moderne*, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1996, pp. 67-sf. <<

[476] Velimir Chlebnikow, *Werke. Poesie Prosa Schriften Briefe*, Peter Urban ed., Reinbeck (Hamburg) 1985, part 2, "Prose Writings Letters," pp. 229 and 236-237; Chlebnikow's frame-houses, filled with parked and stacked glass cells, are perfect urban foams, in each of whose concrete bubbles an individual lives, travels, rests. "In each city there was an iron skeleton, half full, awaiting its glassy inhabitants; and which, in the black emptiness of its cells for insertable glass boxes, which had become currency, was reminiscent of a skeleton without muscles... They floated by, fully loaded with glass inhabitants... It could be the case that someone owned two or three cages", *ibid.*, p. 237. <<

[477] R. Buckminster Fuller, *Your Private Sky*, o. c., p. 97. <<

[478] Ibid., p. 103. <<

[479] Ibid., p. 105. <<

[480] Ibid., p. 106. <<

[481] Véronique Patteeuw, "The Conspiracy Against the City. Lieven de Cauter in Conversation with Richard Plunz," in: Een Stad in Beweging / Une ville en mouvement / A Moving City, Brussels 1998, p. 230. <<



[482] The construction type of the "portable cottage", or colonial cottage, emerged in England around 1830; cf. Matthias Ludwig, *Mobile Architektur. Geschichte und Entwicklung transportabler und modularer Bauten*, Stuttgart 1998, pp. 20ff. <<

[483] Cf. David Weinberger, *Small pieces loosely joined. A unified theory of the web*, Cambridge, Mass. 2002, chapter 5, "Togetherness," pp. 95-120. <<

[484] Cf. Jeremy Rifkin, *Access. Das Verschwinden des Eigentums*, Frankfurt/New York 2000, chapter 7, "Access as a Way of Life," pp. 154-180. <<

[485] Cf. Peter Schefe, "Prolegomena to an agentology: Magic, metaphor or montage?", in: HyperKult. Geschichte, Theorie und Kontext digitaler Medien, Wolfgang Coy/Christoph Tholen/Martin Warnke eds, Basel/Frankfurt 1997, pp. 411-432. <<

[486] Bill Gates, Der Weg nach vorn. Die Zukunft der Informationsgesellschaft, Hamburg 1995, chapter 10, "Cyber-home," pp. 297-327. <<

[487] Jeremy Rifkin, *Access*, o. c., p. 164. <<

[488] Reinhold Grether, Sehnsucht nach Weltkultur. Grenzüberschreitung und Nichtung im zweiten ökumenischen Zeitalter, doctoral dissertation, Konstanz 1994, p. 100. <<<

[489] Cf. supra pp. 260-274. <<



[490] David S. Landes, Wohlstand und Armut der Nationen. Warum die einen reich und die anderen arm sind, Berlin 1999, p. 23. <<<

[491] See supra, pp. 79-80. <<

[492] Cf. Siegfried Giedion, Raum, Zeit, Architektur. Die Entstehung einer neuen Tradition, Zurich/Munich 1992. <<

[493] Cf. Doris Weigel, Die Einraumwohnung als räumliches Manifest der Moderne. Untersuchungen zum Innenraum der dreissiger Jahre, Schliengen 1996. <<

[494] Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung, o. c., p. 87. <<

[495] On the common history of serialism, standardization, engineering and modern warfare instructs the work of Peter Berz, 08/15. Ein Standard des 20. Jahrhunderts, Munich 2001. <<

[496] Literally: "Proun is the transfer point from painting to architecture". <<

[497] Gottfried Semper, *Kleine Schriften*, Manfred and Hans Semper eds, Berlin/Stuttgart 1884, reprint Mittenwald 1979, p. 422.

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[498] From constructivist points of view, the definition of the architectural elementary unit as a cell or atom-habitat has more possibilities for development than the attempts of semioticians to conceive of the smallest unit of the constructed text as a room, so that it should be placed as a noun or noun in a complete architectural proposition, i.e., in a building. Cf. Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, London/New York 1991, pp. 105ff.

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[499] Cf. Spheres I, Bubbles, pp. 64ff. <<

[<sup>500</sup>] Karl Marx, Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte, in: Marx/Engels Werke, volume 8, Berlin 1969, p. 198 [El dieciocho brumario de Luis Bonaparte, Alianza Editorial, Madrid 2003] <<.

[501] **ibid.** <<

[502] *ibid.* <<

[503] Ibid., p. 201. <<

[504] Hermann Broch, *Die Schuldlosen. Roman in elf Erzählungen* (1950), Frankfurt, 1977, p. 52:

"[...] they played a common game of obnubilation" (ibid., p. 247) can be applied both to couples and to broader social units, up to the format of nations and alliances of nations.

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[505] "Un homme seul est toujours en mauvaise compagnie", Paul Valéry, *L'Idée fixe ou Deux hommes à la mer* (1932); German: *Die fixe Idee oder Zwei Männer am Meer*, in: *Werke*, Frankfurter Ausgabe, volume 2, Frankfurt 1990, p. 24. <<<



[506] Spheres I, Bubbles, chapter 2, "Between Faces. On the emergence of the intimate interfacial sphere," especially pp. 181-195; the expression faciality [Gesichtlichkeit] is a translation of the Deleuze/Guattari term visagéité from Mille Plateaux, Paris 1980. <<

[<sup>507</sup>] Spheres I, Bubbles, chapter 2, p. 192. <<

[508] Elias Canetti, Die Provinz des Menschen.  
Aufzeichnungen 1942-1972, Munich/Vienna 1973, p. 232 <<<

[509] "Je voudrais toute ma vie habiter ce qu'ils appellent leurs cellules", quoted by Adolf Max Vogt, *Le Corbusier, der edle Wilde*, o. c., p. 27. <<

[510] On metabolic nihilism cf. Reinhold Grether, Sehnsucht nach Weltkultur, o. c., pp. 98ff. <<

[511] "Aphorisms from wastebok of Hegel" (1803-1806), in: G. W. F. Hegel, Werke in zwanzig Bänden, volume 2, "Writings from Jena 1801-1807", Frankfurt 1970, p. 547. <<

[512] For the connection between silence and original individualization in the great culture, cf. *supra*, pp. 294-297, as well as Spheres I, excursus 1, "Transmission of Thoughts," pp. 245-250.

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[513] The formula, as far as we know, goes back to French filmmaker Ariel Wizman, influenced by Lévinas, who articulates with it his experiences as a disc *jockey*. <<



[514] The expression biophony is introduced by Avital Ronell in his work *Das Telefonbuch. Technik Schizophrenie Elektrische Rede* (original English Lincoln, Nebraska 1989), Berlin 2001, p. 19. <<

[515] Cf. our re-interpretation of the biblical story of the creation of Adam in expressions of a radicalized dyadic, in: Spheres I, "Introduction. The allies or: The exhaled commune," pp. 39-51. <<

[516] Cf. supra chapter 1, C, section 8, on the thanatotope and its heterologous transformation, pp. 352ff. <<

[<sup>517</sup>] Betty Dodson, Sex for one. Die Lust am eigenen Körper, Munich 1989, p. 12. [Sex for one: the pleasure of autoeroticism, Temas de Hoy, Madrid 1989] <<.

[518] Volker Grasmuck, ""Alone, but not lonely" - The otaku-generation. On some new trends in Japanese popular and media culture," in: Norbert Bolz/Friedrich Kittler/Christoph Tholen eds, Computer als Medium, Munich 1994, pp. 267-296. <<

[519] The most important advance in this direction was initiated by Elias Canetti in *Mass and Power*, by diluting the concept of mass into so many nuances that it was no longer possible to speak of a unitary sense of the expression. Deleuze and Guattari went a step further, introducing the differentiation between molar and molecular multitudes. What we call foams reproduces an aspect of Deleuzian molecularity. Connecting with Deleuze and Guattari, Negri and Hardt substituted "mass" for "multitude" in their book *Empire*. With this, the farewell to the ideology of the mass would have to be a *fait accompli*, also among the remnants of the left, still capable of theory. <<

[520] Cf. Emil Kaufmann, "Architectural Projects of the Time of the French Revolution," in: Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst 63, 1929/30, pp. 38-46; Antonio Hernández, Grundsätze einer Ideengeschichte der französischen Architekturtheorie von 1650-1800.

Basel 1972. The term architecture of the revolution is not only misleading from a chronological point of view, but also objectively, since the corresponding projects have hardly any relation to the ideas of 1789, but, on the contrary, unmistakably show imprints of Masonic, Pythagorean and Platonic motifs. <<

[521] Regarding the view of the conservatives, which should never have matured, cf. Hans Sedlmayr, "The Sphere as Building, or: The Groundless", in: *Das Werk des Künstlers I*, 1939/40, pp. 279-310; as well as in: Klaus Jan Philipp (ed.), *Revolutionsarchitektur. Transformation und Utopie des Raums in der Französischen Revolution. Von der Zerstörung der Königsstatuen zur republikanischen Idealstadt*, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden 1994, pp. 125-154. <<



[522] According to Denis Richet, "Revolutionary Assemblies", in: *Kritisches Wörterbuch der Französischen Revolution*, François Furet and Mona Ozouf eds., volume II, "Institutions and Innovations, Ideas, Interpretations and Representations", Frankfurt 1996, pp. 850-862. see p. 853. <<

[523] Cf., among others, Hans Christian Harten, o. c., pp. 213-217. <<

[524] Quoted by Walter Markow, Albert Soboul, 1789. Die Grosse Revolution der Franzosen, Cologne 1977, p. 131. <<

[525] Hans Christian Harten, o. c., pp. 20-29. <<

[526] Cf. Mona Ozouf, Das Pantheon. Freiheit Gleichheit Brüderlichkeit. Zwei französische Gedächtnisorte, Berlin 1996, pp. 7-38. <<

[527] Cf. Eduard Pommier, "The Louvre as a Cemetery of World Art," in: Gottfried Fliedl, Die Erfindung des Museums. Anfänge der bürgerlichen Museums-idee in der Französischen Revolution, Vienna 1996, pp. 7-25. <<

[528] Cf. Mona Ozouf, *Das Pantheon*, o. c., p. 31. <<

[529] In his *Kommunikologie*, Vilém Flusser has related the type of "amphitheater speeches" to the concept of totalitarianism; cf. o. c., pp. 27-28. <<



[530] For the interpretation of this event in the context of the history of modern levitation, cf. *infra*, pp. 539ff. <<

[531] Already on June 12, 1790, during the preparations for the feast of the Federation, Marat had agitated against the fallacy of unity in his gazette *L'ami du peuple*: "You are entertained with the words liberty and union, while the war against us is already being secretly prepared". Therefore, the true friends of the fatherland would have to exclude from the party the indifferent as well as the cowards and traitors. Marat recognizes exclusively moral and psychopolitical classes, not those still defined by "position in the productive process." <<

[532] Cf. Stephen Buch, *Beethovens Neunte. Eine Biographie*, Berlin/Munich 2000, part one, "The Birth of Modern State Music," pp. 19-126. <<

[533] The differentiation between indoor and outdoor public assemblies is significant both in Article 8 of the German Constitution and in the law of assembly, since the principle that all Germans have the right to assemble peacefully and unarmed without prior notification or permission can be limited by law in case of outdoor assemblies. Cf. Helmut Ridder/Michael Breitbach/Ulli Rühl/Frank Steinmeier, *Versammlungsrecht. Kommentar*, Baden-Baden 1992; as well as Martin Quilisch, *Die demokratische Versammlung. Zur Rechtsnatur der Ordnungsgewalt des Leiters öffentlicher Versammlungen - Zugleich ein Beitrag zu einer Theorie der Versammlungsfreiheit*, Berlin 1970. <<

[534] That the promoters of the early Olympic movement made no secret of its renaissance character is attested, among others, by the French sports pedagogue Philippe Daryl, *Renaissance physique*, Paris 1888. On the ancient circus system cf. Karl-Wilhelm Weeber, *Panem et circenses. Massenunterhaltung als Politik im alten Rom*, Mainz 1944; Paul Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque. Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique*, Paris 1976; Clemens Heucke, *Circus und Hippodrom als politischer Raum. Untersuchungen zum grossen Hippodrom von Konstantinopel und zu entsprechenden Anlagen in spätantiken Kaiserresidenzen*, Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 1994. <<

[535] Gunter Gebauer, "Olympia as Utopia," in: Olympische Spiele - die andere Utopie der Moderne. Olympia zwischen Kult und Droge, Frankfurt 1996, p. 10. <<

[536] Cf. Klaus Deinet, Die mimetische Revolution oder Die französische Linke und die Re-Inszenierung der Französischen Revolution im neunzehnten Jahrhundert (1830-1871), Stuttgart 2001; François Furet, 1789 - Jenseits des Mythos, Hamburg 1989.

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[537] Elias Canetti, *Masse und Macht*, o. c., pp. 53-s. <<



[538] Ibid. pp. 29-s. <<

[539] For the German tradition cf. George L. Mosse, Die Nationalisierung der Massen. Politische Symbolik und Massenbewegungen in Deutschland von den Napoleonischen Kriegen bis zum Dritten Reich, Frankfurt 1976. <<

[540] In any case, it has been rightly pointed out that the shopping mall is the best place to go for a stroll, an otherwise un-American activity, in the United States today: also a transformation of the flaneur; cf. Arthur Kroker/Marieluise Kroker/David Cook, Panik-Enzyklopädie, Vienna 1999, p. 90. <<<

[541] The only exception worth mentioning: Albert Speer's plans for the German Stadium on the site of the Reich party's general assembly in Nuremberg, which was to serve as the final location for the Pan-German Olympic Games, envisaged a U-shaped facility with a grandstand height of almost 100 meters and a capacity for 400,000 spectators; the work for this did not go beyond the excavation of the construction pit, today a dredged lake. According to Alex Scobie (*Hitler's State Architecture: The Impact of Classical Antiquity*, Pennsylvania State University, Park and London 1990, pp. 79 ff.), even in this project, Roman style elements prevailed over Greek ones. Speer's autobiography confirms this interpretation, even if it refers, at the same time, to impressions drawn from the restored Panathenaic stadium during a trip to Greece in 1935. Cf. Albert Speer, *Erinnerungen*, Berlin 1969, p. 76. <<

[542] For the phenomenon of agonal différance cf. Spheres II, Globes, excursus 1, "Dying later, in the amphitheater. On delay, Roman style," pp. 283-296. <<

[543] Oswald Spengler, Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte (1923), Munich 1972, p. 49.

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[544] Cf. Thomas Schmidt, Werner March. Architekt des Olympia-Stadions. 1894-1976, Basel/Berlin/Boston 1992, p. 48. <<<

[545] According to Speer's report, after the presentation of March's plans, Hitler wanted to give up the Olympic Games, because he refused to step on such a "glass box": in the original project it was foreseen to cover the empty spaces between the concrete skeleton with glass. The Campo de Mayo was used few times, one of them was during the official visit of Mussolini, in September 1937, when the entire Reich Sport Field was flooded with a million people. <<



[546] Cf. Thymian Bussemer, Propaganda und Populärkultur. Konstruierte Erlebniswelten im Nationalsozialismus, Wiesbaden 2000, p. 133. <<

[547] For a historical-cultural and historical-architectural arrangement of the Nuremberg ensemble, cf. Yvonne Karow, *Deutsches Opfer. Kultische Selbstausslöschung auf den Reichsparteitagen der NSDAP*, Berlin 1997, especially pp. 33-91. <<

[548] Cited by Joachim Fest, Hitler. Eine Biographie (1973), Munich 2000, p. 733. <<

[549] Cfr. Yvonne Karow, *Deutsches Opfer*, o. c., p. 88. <<

[550] Cf. Walter Meyer-Bohe/Thomas Meyer-Bohe, Bauten für Schulungen, Tagungen, Kongresse, Leinfelden-Echterdingen 1983. also (p. 7) the approach to a theory of the conjuncture-congress: "For each era there are certain priority tasks. After World War II it was housing construction, then followed in waves by the construction of hospitals, schools and universities. Today the emphasis is on exhibition buildings - from museums to congress halls - as well as, in connection with these, on buildings for advanced training.

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[551] The m+a Messeplaner. Messen & Ausstellungen International, year 83, 2002, Frankfurt 2002, presents on pp. 1198-1244, under the heading "Facilities for congresses and events", an overview of space and service offers of 144 meeting centers in 110 cities within the German-speaking area, each of which offers a spectrum of ten to thirty large halls, function rooms, conference rooms, *lounges*, seminar rooms, clubs, press rooms, etc., in dimensions ranging from 12 to 10,000 seats. The extent to which the technical explanation of assembly events in professionally managed collectors has advanced is shown by the Arbeitslexikon Menschen. Märkte. Marketing. Medien am Point of Interest (Mannheim 2000) by Peter Goschmann, which presents a list of what is interesting to know about trade fairs, exhibitions, events, congresses, meetings, incentives, sponsoring, etc. The German Society for the Promotion and Development of Seminars and Meetings ("DeGefest") is a consortium of interests of suppliers in congress management (which, in turn, itself holds one professional congress per year); that the ambient climate of the meeting rooms must, according to DIN 15906, correspond to the guidelines of the workplace regulations, and that in meeting rooms without a smoking permit an air flow of at least 20 cubic meters per person per hour must be ensured. <<

[552] Cf. Elisabeth von Samsonow, "Tuch down and Take off. Project for a philosophy of the foundation (of construction)," inaugural lecture at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna 1996, in: Architektur und Bau Forum I/1997, pp. 33-40. <<

[553] Guy Debord, "Report on the Construction of Situations," in: Situationistische Internationale 1957-1972, Museum of Modern Art, Ludwig Foundation, Vienna 1998, pp. 74-77. <<



[554] Mark Wigley, Constant's New Babylon. The Hyper-Architecture of Desire, Rotterdam 1998, p. 13. <<<

[555] Georg Simmel, "The Concept and Tragedy of Culture," in: Aufsätze und Abhandlungen 1909-1918, volume 1, Gesamtausgabe vol. 12, Frankfurt 2001, pp. 194-223. <<

[556] Guy Debord 1957: "The general goal must be the enlargement of the non-mediocre part of life, on the one hand, and the reduction, as much as possible, of the empty instants, on the other hand. Our influence on behavior, then, can be considered as an enterprise of a quantitative amplification of human life, which must be taken more seriously than the biological procedure being investigated today." Cited by: Situationistische Internationale 1957- 1972, o. c., p. 75. <<

[557] About that triad, at detail, cf. supra, chapter 1, "Insults. For a theory of the capsules, islands and greenhouses", pp. 237-374. <<

[558] L. de C., "The Capsular City," in: The Hieroglyphics of Space, Neil Leach ed, London and New York 2002, pp. 271-280. <<

[559] Elisabeth Diller/Ricardo Scofidio, *Blur: The Making of Nothing*, New York 2002. <<

[\*] Aufenthalt: stay, residence, sojourn or delay in a place <<

[\*\*] Wohnen (N. of T.) <<



[\*\*\*] Langeweile, literally: instant or moment or long lapse of time,  
which becomes long. (N. of T.) <<

[\*\*\*\*] Allusion ironic to story of the brothers Grimm  
Rumpelstilzchen [The Jumping Dwarf] (N.) <<

[\*\*\*\*] Another ironic expression [Reichsgeltungsbedürfnisanstalt], which could also be translated, without forcing it too much, as "public toilet of the prestige of the Reich". (N. of the T.) <<

[560] John Kenneth Galbraith, Gesellschaft im Überfluss, Munich/Zürich 1959, pp. 12 and 16. [La sociedad opulenta, Altaya, Barcelona 1999] <<

[<sup>561</sup>] Alexis de Tocqueville, Über die Demokratie in Amerika, first part 1835, Zurich 1987, p. 21. [Democracy in America, Alianza, Madrid 2005] <<<

[562] Alfred Weber, Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie, Munich 1960, p. 415. <<

[563] The expression can be found in the infamous "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question," in: Frazer's Magazine 1849, which, because of its taking sides for the maintenance of slavery, brought Carlyle the repulse of both liberals and Christian abolitionists, costing him, in addition, the friendship of John Stuart Mill. <<

[564] Or those who could only be helped within the framework of Christian caritas or bourgeois philanthropy; cf. Bronislaw Geremek, *Geschichte der Armut. Elend und Barmherzigkeit in Europa*, Frankfurt/Vienna 1988. <<



[565] Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*. Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben, Frankfurt 1951, p. 7: "The sad science, of which I offer some things to my friend, refers to a field which in time immemorial was worth as the proper domain of philosophy [...]: the doctrine of right living." [*Minima moralia: reflexiones desde la vida dañada*, Akal, Madrid 2004] <<<

[566] Eric Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes. The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991, London 1994. There is no need to hide the fact that the success of the formula "age of extremes" comes first and foremost from its neutralist tendency: it is attractive for its usefulness for the self-amnesty of the left, which, once it has made a fair and harsh trial of the extreme right, forgives itself its own excesses without trial: in the name of the "extreme epoch".

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[567] Daniel Bell calls this, in the jargon of discontinuity theorists, "the revolution of rising legal claims," which would be included in the "revolution of rising expectations"; cf. Daniel Bell, *Die Zukunft der westlichen Welt. Kultur und Technologie im Widerstreit*, Frankfurt 1979, pp. 271ff. <<

[568] For the last 100 years, men's average life expectancy has increased from 44.1 to 75.1 years, and women's average life expectancy has increased from 47.6 to 80.0 years. For the social implications of the collapse of birth rates, see Francis Fukuyama, *Der grosse Aufbruch. Wie unsere Gesellschaft eine neue Ordnung erfindet*, Munich 2002, pp. 128-157; the connection between falling birth rates, literacy and democratization is elucidated by Emmanuel Todd in: *Après l'Empire. Essai sur la décomposition du système américain*, Paris 2002. [After the empire: essay on the decomposition of the American system, Foca, Madrid 2003]. <<

[569] Cf. the ambivalent capital work of neo-miserabilism: Pierre Bourdieu, *Das Elend der Welt: Zeugnisse und Diagnosen alläglichen Leidens an der Gesellschaft*, Constance 1998; for the source of medieval Christian miserabilism cf. Lotario de Segni (Pope Innocent III), *Vom Elend des menschlichen Daseins (De miseria conditionis humanae)*, Carl-Friedrich Geyer (ed.), Hildesheim/Zurich/New York 1990. <<

[570] John Kenneth Galbraith, Gesellschaft im Überfluss, o. c. <<

[571] "Poverty and Wealth Report of the Federal Government 2001", appended table 1. 13. For the 25-54 age group they constitute 9.6%, for the 7-13 age group 15.3% (!). Cf. also: Reiner Geissler, Die Sozialstruktur Deutschlands, Opladen 1992. In 2002, the average savings per household in Austria amounted to about 85,000 euros. The U. S. Bureau of the Census reports for the United States that the poverty rate has never exceeded 15% since 1967. The political economists' concept of poverty designates the situation of people in a welfare nation whose income is 50% or less of the median income per head. Stephan Leibfried, Lutz Leisering et al. (Zeit der Armut, Frankfurt 1995) consider poverty in the Federal Republic of Germany as a passing aspect of the biography of profit: "We do not live in a two-thirds society, but in a 70-20-10 society, consisting of 70% never-poor, 20% occasionally poor and 10% frequently poor. "Only" 1.3% of the population was poor in general in the space of time that the research lasted" (p. 306). <<

[572] The linguistic trace of thinking in fractions appears in turns of phrase such as society-of-four-fifths, society-of-three-fourths, society-of-two-thirds, etc. <<



[573] German: Simon Schama, Überfluss und schöner Schein. Zur Kultur der Niederlande im Goldenen Zeitalter, Munich 1988. <<

[574] John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Culture of Contentment*, London 1992, p. 12 [La cultura de la satisfacción, Ariel, Barcelona 2000]; Antonio Gramsci had formulated something similar with his concept of "historical bloc"; this was defined as a syndrome composed of militant safeguarding of the state of possession and active anti-political rejection of the so-called general interests. In the post-political "society", the sum of particularisms results in the quiet resentment of majorities within the *status quo*. <<

[575] Elsewhere we have tried to show that philosophy arose rather from the gestures of boasting with knowledge and competitive exaggeration of the search for grounds for assertions than from wonder; e.g., in *Spheres II, Globes*, pp. 15-42, as well as in: *Nicht gerettet. versuche nach Heidegger*, Frankfurt 2001, pp. 255ff. <<

[576] Published in German in 1957 under the title *Eros und Kultur* [*Eros and Civilization*, Ariel, Barcelona 2001]; in 1958, against the background of incipient automation, Hannah Arendt, in the introductory considerations to her work *Vita activa oder Vom tätigen Leben* (Munich 1981, pp. 11-12), expressed the diagnosis:

"What awaits us is the panorama of a working society that is running out of work, that is, the only activity it still understands. What could be more disastrous? This radical-snobish statement - depicting working human beings as tragic, useless vulgar beings - remains anchored in the conservative syndrome, because it fails to reach any positive concept of superabundance, mass purchasing power, leisure time and optional praxis of life. The work, originally published in 1950, by David Riesman and others, *Die einsame Masse. Eine Untersuchung der Wandlungen des amerikanischen Charakters* (Hamburg 1958, p. 293) incidentally sweeps up the epochal theme of "malaise among the newly liberated." <<

[577] In this context, Deleuze and Guattari's devastating critique of familialistic psychoanalysis in their 1972 work *Anti-Oedipus* can once again be appreciated in its correctness: by refuting the interpretations of the use of desire through the pulsional structure of the poor and disciplined, the authors put in evidence the premises for the new determination of a productive unconscious, non-poor and not deformed by trauma. <<

[578] When it has been attempted, it has been done rather with naive, culturally reformist accents, as for example John de Graaf/David Wann/Thomas Naylor, *Affluenza. Zeitkrankheit Konsum*, Munich 2002, where the recommendation is expressed to return to living as measuredly as the Franciscans and as satisfyingly as the Prairie Indians. <<

[579] On some reasons for failed conceptions of one's own welfare and on the dissatisfaction of the saturated reports Gerhard Schulze: "Sociology of Welfare," in: Ernst-Ulrich Huster (ed.), *Reichtum in Deutschland. Die Gewinner in der sozialen Polarisierung*, Frankfurt/New York, second edition 1997, pp. 261-285. <<

[580] Cf. H. Kaelble (ed.), Der Boom. 1948-1973. Gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Folgen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in Europa, Opladen 1992. <<



[581] Cf. Gregg Easterbrook, "Axle of Evil. Americas Twisted Love  
Affair with Sociopathic Cars," in: The New Republic, January 2003.  
[<<](#)

[582] German: Michael Harrison, Das andere Amerika. Armut in den Vereinigten Staaten, Munich 1964. <<

[583] Marcel Mauss speaks in 1923, in his essay on the gift, that the French laws of social security contain a "state socialism already realized". In 1924, in his writing *The Illusions of the Community*, Plessner had laid bare the management of the illusion of radicalism and criticized its foundations in a misguided idea of commune. <<

[584] St. Paul, I Letter to the Thessalonians 5, 2. <<

[585] "On the Concept of History," Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, Frankfurt 1974, p. 697. <<

[586] Cf. Pascal Bruckner, *Le sanglot de l'homme blanc*, Paris 1983.

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[587] A defender of rationalist utopianism like Raymond Tallis, in his attack on the fashionable pessimism of the contemporary intelligentsia:

"[Hysterical humanists] have need to borrow the miseries of others, since if the present world is, in fact, exceptionally horrible, it would be morally uncomfortable for them to live as exceptionally comfortable as the historical diagnosis suggests," in: *Enemies of Hope. A Critique of Contemporary Pessimism*, Hampshire and London 1997, p. 209. <<

[588] "The Problem of the Formation of the Human Being," lecture delivered April 15, 1926, at the XXV Assembly of the Freiburg Anatomical Society, Jena 1926. <<



[589] To this complex is devoted the first part of Gehlen's major work *The Human Being (Der Mensch)*, which deals with the special morphological situation of the human being (pp. 86-130). <<

[590] Arnold Gehlen, *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt*, seventh revised edition, Frankfurt/Bonn 1962, p. 34.

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[591] Ibid., p. 37. <<

[592] Ibid., p. 45. <<

[593] Ibid. p. 61 <<<

[594] Ibid., p. 83. <<

[595] Ibid., p. 84. <<

[596] Terence W. Deacon, *The Symbolic Species. The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain*, New York/London 1997. <<



[597] Arnold Gehlen, *Der Mensch. Seine Natur und seine Stellung in der Welt*, o. c., p. 36. <<

[598] *ibid.* <<

[599] For Gehlen's pessimism, and its parallelism with Adorno's, cf. Christian Thies, *Die Krise des Individuums. Zur Kritik der Moderne bei Adorno und Gehlen*, Reinbeck (Hamburg) 1997, pp. 275-285. <<

[600] He shows mistrust of the relief rallies; and it is understandable why. Wasn't it Stalin who touted: "Joy is the most striking feature of the Soviet Union"? The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the model of fun parties? Not quite, because also the National Socialist Workers' Party knew what it owed forcibly for joy. [The sadly famous Nazi label "Kraft durch Freude." (N. of the T.)] <<

[601] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*,  
"Prologue," o. c., pp. 18-s. <<

[602] Francis Bacon, Neu-Atlantis, Stuttgart 1982, p. 53 <<.

[603] Cf. Richard Alewyn, Das grosse Welttheater. Die Epoche der höfische Feste, Munich 1989, p. 67. <<

[604] Hegel, o. c., p. 24. <<



[605] Ibid., p. 26. <<

[606] Novalis Werke, edited and annotated by Gerhard Schulz, Munich 1969, p. 336 ("Vermischte Bemerkungen "Blüthenstaub", nos. 65 and 62). <<

[607] Cf. Daniele Del'Agli, *Abendländische Teleologie. Kritik einer Obsession*, doctoral dissertation, Berlin 1993. <<

[608] The End of Gravity, film screenplay by Dan Simmons and Ujica, and Worlds Enough and Time - Five Tales of Speculation, New York 2002. <<

[609] Even the emergency industry, in the strictest sense of the word, has been ~~basically~~ In the basements of German cities, there are not nearly enough accidents to exhaust the capacities of reputable emergency services such as the Red Cross, the Arbeitersamariterbund, Promedic and the like. Even more significant is the waste management situation: Since there is not nearly enough waste produced in German households and factories to make the existing recycling companies profitable, the fight for dirty gold has been opened up among the waste disposal companies, most of which are promoted by the community. In the meantime, proven citizen initiatives continue to meditate on the possibilities of reducing the amount of waste. <<

[610] It appears that Rudolf Borchardt (according to the testimony of Lessing) said after World War I: "This war was necessary to prove that I am not a coward". Cf. Theodor Lessing, Einmal und nie wieder. Lebenserinnerungen, Prague 1935, Gütersloh 1969, p. 319. <<

[611] Simone Weil, L'enracinement. Prélude à une déclaration des devoirs envers l'être humain (1949), Paris 1962, pp. 379-s. <<

[612] Cf. also Robert Pfaller, Die Illusionen der anderen. Über das Lustprinzip in der Kultur, Frankfurt 2002. <<



[613] Friedrich Nietzsche, Human, all too human I, no. 137. <<

[614] For the interpretation of the phenomenon that human beings  
If we are to bet seriously on the non-serious, we must turn to  
Huizinga's observations on the absorption of players by the game. A  
psychological theory of the fanatical position as an overcompensated  
decisionism might have something to say here.

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[615] For the reflection of these observations in psychoanalysis postmodernized cf. Charles Melman/Jean-Pierre Lebrun, *L'Homme sans gravité. Jouir à tout prix*, Paris 2003. In the diagnosis of the time of the youngest, the anti-irony and the search for support in one's own heaviness and compactness are striking. Cf. Jedediah Purdy, *Das Elend der Ironie*, Hamburg 2002; Camille de Toledo, *Archimondain, Jolipunk. Confessions d'un jeune homme à contretemps*, Paris 2003, an autobiographical book, in which the search for new points of support crosses, first, the ironic space-time of mass dandyism, then the schizoid space-time of Deleuzian liquidation, to anchor itself definitively in an era of "new incarnations" ("I am heavy, I am compact"). <<

[616] Max Frisch, Die Schwierigen oder J'adore ce qui me brûle, novel, Zurich 1957, p. 269. <<

[617] Peter Handke, "Life without Poetry," 1972, in: Als das Wünschen noch geholfen hat, Frankfurt 1974, p. 15. <<

[618] The analogy most similar to this exercise is found in the chapter on consciousness, the beautiful soul, evil and its remission in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Here, evil had to be fully established as the self-conscious rebellion of the individual before the God could manifest itself or the entry of the subject into the service of the general could be realized. Hegel's great didactics dares to stipulate the formative sense of evil and to enclose even despair in a curriculum. Cf. for this Ernst Behler, *Klassische Ironie, Romantische Ironie, Tragische Ironie. Zum Ursprung dieser Begriffe*, Darmstadt 1972, pp. 113-115. <<

[619] Bernhard Pörksen, Abschied vom Absoluten. Gespräche zum Konstruktivismus, Heidelberg 2001, p. 40, <<.

[620] For this formulation see N. Luhmann: "The proofs of efficacy lie in therapy which tries to achieve the least painful solutions and which cultivates, even, a certain lack of commitment in matters of reality", in: Die nuerzeitlichen Wissenschaften und die Phänomenologie, Vienna 1996, p. 45. <<



[621] Ibid., p. 46. <<

[622] Ibid., p. 45. <<

[623] Robbie Williams, 2002. <<

[624] Cfr. Your Private Sky. R. Buckminster Fuller. Design als Kunst einer Wissenschaft, Joachim Krause/Claude Lichtenstein eds, Zurich 1999. <<

[625] Cf. Claudia Bölling/Rolf Horst, Schirme. Der Himmel auf Erden, Berlin 1995. <<

[626] Jurek Becker, Jakob der Lügner, Frankfurt 1969.

<<

[627] Cf. Reinhart G. E. Lempp, Das Kind im Menschen. Über Nebenrealitäten und Regression - oder: Warum wir nie erwachsen werden, Stuttgart 2003; John S. Kafka, Multiple Realities in Clinical Practice, New Haven and London 1989. <<

[628] In May 2003, in Esher, near London, the first inflatable PVC church with a capacity of 60 people, according to an idea (in connection with the children's jumping castles at fairs) of the entrepreneur Michael Gill, from 1998, thanks to which pneumatology was practically implemented (Yahoo News, May 14, 2003). The Pentagon is heard to be working at the moment on an inflatable Parliament, which can be set up in the liberated rogue states, immediately after the military operations necessary for it, and be occupied by up to 120 local, quickly appointed parliamentarians, discussing democratic constitutions. <<



[629] See supra pp. 297ff. and 305ff. <<

[630] Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, Mutter Natur, o. c., chapter 6, pp. 153ff.

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[631] For the role of patronage in the process of civilization  
cf. *infra*, pp. 576ff. as well as Dieter Claessens, *Das Konkrete und  
das Abstrakte. Soziologische Skizzen zur Anthropologie*, Frankfurt  
1980, pp. 61, 64-s. <<

[632] Cfr. Spheres I, Bubbles, chapter 7, "The stage-sirens. From the first sonospheric alliance", page 458.

[633] We refer once again to the work of Heiner Mühlmann, *Die Natur der Kulturen. Entwurf einer kulturgenetischen Theorie*, Vienna and New York 1996, as well as to: *Kunst und Krieg. Über das säuische Behagen in der Kultur*, Cologne 1998; it should be noted, moreover, that the affluent society not only produces a malaise in opulence, but also a malaise in peace, accompanied by nostalgia for harshness and warmongering romanticism (about which Julien Benda has said the necessary already in 1927, in his book *La trahison des clerics*). <<

[634] Sarah Blaffer Hrdy refers, in the important chapter 22 ("Of the The concept of "human servitude") of his work Mutter Natur (o. c., pp. 549-578), to the scarcity of resources of all-mothers in contemporary "society", which should therefore be characterized in this respect as an era of persistent, if not even increased, poverty. Later on (see pp. 604ff.) we will emphasize elsewhere, extending the concept of all-motherhood beyond the phenomena of concrete childcare and including under it all forms of assistance from state agencies or social services; in this light, contemporary "society" appears as a broad experiment in the protection of maternal functions. <<

[635] György Konrád: "What is the wealth of the rich worth? For that they help, in their own way, those who need it and have deserved support. Child protection is a compressed defense of human rights", in: Vor den Toren des Reiches, Frankfurt 1997, p. 87.

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[636] For the dynamics of such regulations, see above the section  
nomotop - First Constitutional Theory," pp. 357-374. <<



[637] Cf. Helmut Schulze, Der progressiv domestizierte Mensch und seine Neurosen. Die Rolle of Entlastung and Belastung für Krankheit und Heilung, Munich 1964. <<

[638] Genesis, 3, 16. <<

[639] Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, vol. I, Berlin 1954, p. 259.

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[640] Cited by Pierre-Antoine Bernheim/Guy Stavrides, *Welt der Paradiese - Paradiese der Welt*, Zurich 1992, pp. 40-41. <<

[641] Complemented by non-fighting safety and non-fighting immunity.  
penalty. <<

[642] Cf. Walter Benjamin, Über den Begriff der Geschichte II:  
Thus, "There is a secret rendezvous between the generations that  
have been and ours. Then we have been awaited on earth. Then we,  
like every generation before ours, have also been given a weak  
messianic force, to which the past has a right. It is not easy to satisfy  
that right. The historical materialist knows about it." << p. 694.

[643] Cf. Bernheim/Stravrides, *Paradiese der Welt*, o. c., pp. 47ff.

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[644] Irenaeus of Lyon, Des Heiligen Irenäus fünf Bücher gegen die Häresien, V, 33, 3, translated into German by Ernst Klebba, Kempten and Munich 1812, p. 240. <<



[645] In any case, from the philological point of view (and even more so from the religious) there is much to speak in favor of the fact that the cited erotic-paradisiac fantasies are nothing more than the result of mistranslations of obscure passages of the Koran, e.g. of suras 44 and 52; according to Christoph Luxenberg (*Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Korans. Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*, Berlin 2000), the much-quoted Huris are simply, in truth, white grapes: an image that makes much more sense in the context of our interpretation of the oral-homeostatic dynamics of paradise imagery; the grape awaiting the believers constitutes, as we have hinted, an extended topos of Christian and Jewish literature of the afterlife, which may have been familiar to the authors of the Koran as well. <<

[646] By example Ioan P. Culianu, *Jenseits dieser Welt. Ausserweltliche Reisen von Gilgamesh bis Albert Einstein*, Munich 1995; Pierre-Antoine Bernheim/Guy Stavrides, *Welt der Paradiese - Paradiese der Welt*, o. c.; Friedrich Heer, *Abschied von Höllen und Himmeln. Vom Ende des religiösen Tertiär*, Frankfurt/Berlin 1990; Bernhard Lang/Colleen McDannell, *Der Himmel. Eine Kulturgeschichte des ewigen Lebens*, Frankfurt/Leipzig 1996. <<

[647] Gilles Deleuze/Félix Guattari, Was ist Philosophie?, o. c., pp. 112. <<

[648] Cf. Gotthard Günther, *Selbstdarstellung im Spiegel Amerikas*, Hamburg 1975, p. 30. <<

[649] Quoted by Deutsche Volksbücher, Carl Otto Conrady (ed.), Reinbeck (Hamburg) 1968, p. 76. <<

[650] On the total mime as a result of the triad: revenues without work, safety without struggle and immunity without evil cf. infra, pp. 626ff. <<

[651] Cf. Spheres II, Globes, chapter 8, "The last sphere. For a Philosophical History of Terrestrial Globalization," pp. 695-872, especially pp. 763ff. <<

[652] Pascal Bruckner, Ich leide, also ich bin. Die Krankheit der  
Moderne - eine Streitschrift, Weinheim and Berlin 1997, p. 91. <<



[653] On ghosts and magical flight essays in the context of the Wolfgang Behringer/Constance Ott-Koptschalijski, *Der Traum vom Fliegen. Zwischen Mythos und Technik*, Frankfurt 1991, pp. 238-241.

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[654] Cited by Kutsch/Wiswede, Wirtschaftssoziologie,  
Stuttgart 1986, p. 213. <<

[655] Bernard Mandeville, Die Bienenfabel oder Private Laster, öffentliche Vorteile, Walter Euchner, Frankfurt 1968, pp. 79-92. <<

[656] Werner Sombart, *Liebe, Luxus und Kapitalismus* (1922),  
Munich 1967, p. 133. <<

[657] It is in this tradition that the theorist of the marks of  
Wolfgang Reitzle, Luxus schafft Wohlstand. Die Zukunft der globalen  
Wirtschaft, Reinbeck (Hamburg) 2001. <<

[658] Anna Pavord, Die Tulpe. Eine Kulturgeschichte, Frankfurt/Leipzig 1999, pp. 126-157. <<

[659] This phenomenon has its contemporary analogue in the countries of the authoritarian capitalism of East Asia, Singapore and China in the first place, whose intelligentsia, loyal to the State, incessantly warns the neo-rich "society" against the danger, immanent to welfare, of "excessive individualism" (as is verifiable in the decadent "West"). <<

[660] The expression is taken from the advertising writings of the Josiah Wedgwood porcelain and pottery, 18th century; cf. Neil McKendrick, "The Origins of Consumer Society. Luxury, envy and social imitation in eighteenth-century English literature," in: Hannes Sigrist/Hartmut Kaelble, Jürgen Kocka (ed.), Europäische Kosumgeschichte. Zur Gesellschaft- und Kulturgeschichte des Konsums (18. bis 20. Jahrhundert), Frankfurt/New York 1997, pp. 100-s. The linguistic picture of infection by new needs shows that a hundred years before Gabriel Tarde there were already approaches to a mental epidemiology. It was already clear to the actors of the modern theater of enrichment that the mimesis of luxury begins at the top. That is why Colbert was right, under mercantilist premises, to promote "silk manufactures and other aristocratic industries" (Gabriel Tarde, *Die Gesetzte der Nachahmung*, o. c., p. 359). In the illustrated topos of the libertine Turkish sultan it is shown that the critique of luxury is also usable outwardly in the sense of a cultural critique. Thus, in Constantin François de Volney's historical-philosophical study, *Die Ruinen oder Betrachtungen über die Revolutionen der Reiche* (1791) (German reprint, Frankfurt 1977, p. 79), one reads, "He surrounded himself with an army of women, of eunuchs, of flatterers [...] Imitating their master, also the slaves claimed luxurious houses [...] and the seraglio swallowed up the riches of the empire." <<



[661] Hermann Burger, Die künstliche Mutter, novel, Frankfurt 1982.

<<

[662] The expression is found in Lionel Tiger, *The Decline of Males*, New York 1999. <<

[663] James L. Nolan, *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End*, New York 1998. <<

[664] At this context can be explained the decline of intellectuals in the modern culture. The classical intellectual can only exist as long as he takes his voice as the representative of real need or, what is almost the same, of the real in general. Since necessity has become exotic, the intellectual falls into the suspicion that he pretends to live by importing precarious situations from far away. In the West, the best time for politicizing hitherto pre-political scandals and miseries has passed; this gesture could only regain importance if the situation of the lowest quarter within the luxury system approaches a degree of politicizable impoverishment (Bourdieu has bet on this effect with his research on the mute misery of the French in *La misère du monde* [The Misery of the World, Akal, Madrid 1999]) and if, in addition to the energies of protest, new ideas for a politics of redistribution are also available. For the moment, both are present only in weak and confused forms; that is why, for understandable reasons, it was of no consequence that Bourdieu tried to change the name of the welfare society's pro-welfare state to the misery state ("Etat de misère", in: *Express*, March 16, 1993). <<

[665] To this is added the social-narcissistic dimension of the mime starsystem of the "mass" culture, where the demand for notability is exercised without effort or work. <<

[666] Dieter Senghaas, in "Successes few, failures numerous and counter-arrestable advances. Reflections on David Lande's opus magnum Welfare and Poverty of Nations" (Leviathan, 1, 2000, pp. 142ff.), refers to the paradox or, rather, the self-sabotaging structure of so-called development policy, according to which nationals who have been slow to catch their train, while being exhorted to competition, are systematically hindered from it. <<

[667] See supra, chapter 1, "Insulations. For a theory of Capsules, Islands, and Greenhouses," pp. 254ff. <<

[668] Cfr. Annette Hünnekens, Expanded Museum. Kulturelle Erinnerung und virtuelle realitäten, Bielefeld 2002. <<



[669] Cf. supra notes on Olafur Eliasson, pp. 257 ff.

such as the remarks on installation theory by Ilya Kabakov and Boris Groys, pp. 400ff. Under the direction of Peter Weibel, the Center for Art and Media Technology (ZKM) in Karlsruhe has become a globally unique embodiment of the new type of "museum-as-systems-knowledge-machine" institutions. Heiner Mühlmann and Bazon Brock have come up with an explosive idea in their project for a double art/war museum. "The double museum has the didactic task of generating cultural meta-knowledge through exhibitions about the connection between war, entertainment with war content and entertainment with cultural knowledge, in which war is forbidden", quoted by Heiner Mühlmann, "Art and/or war - The double museum", in: Bazon Brock, Gerlinde Koschig (eds.), *Kunst und Krieg*, Munich 2002, p. 189. <<<

[670] For the theory of immersion, cf. the explanations of the third passage of inhabiting through installation and the total work of art, supra, pp. 399-407. <<

[671] For the expression collector see supra pp. 475ff. <<

[672] Cf. Gerhard Schulze, Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart, Frankfurt/New York 1993. <<

[673] Gabriel Tarde, Die Gesetze der Nachahmung, o. c., p. 198.

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[674] Cf. Burkhard Scherer, Auf de Inseln des Eigensinns. Eine kleine Ethnologie der Hobbywelt, Munich 1995. <<

[675] Cf. Jean de Maillard, *Le marché fait sa loi. De l'usage du crime par la mondialisation*, Paris 2001. <<

[676] Giorgio Agamben, Homo sacer, Frankfurt 2001. [Homo sacer, Pre-Textos, Valencia 1998] <<



[677] Compare the statement of Imre Kertész: "The West is a field for prisoners well treated. This camp must be must be defended," quoted in Die Zeit, 43/2002, p. 43. <<

[678] For the difference between the represented balloon view and panoramic vision within the sphere of the continuous one (and derivations of it in more recent immersive art, e.g. spherical cinema) cf. Spheres II, Globes, Introduction, section II, "Parmenidean Instant," pp. 66-86. <<

[679] Cf. Benjamin Barber, Coca-Cola und heiliger Krieg. Jihad vs. McWorld. Der grundlegende Konflikt of our Zeit, Bern/Munich/Vienna 2001. <<

[680] Cf. Norbert Bolz, Das konsumistische Manifest, Munich 2002, p. 90. <<

[681] Michael Hardt/Antonio Negri, Empire. Die neue Weltordnung, Frankfurt/New York 2002. [Empire, Paidós, Barcelona 2005] <<.

[682] Negri/Hardt, Empire, o. c., p. 211. <<

[683] Ibid, p. 212. <<

[684] This diagnosis covers both promethean aggravation and Negri's Franciscan as to the radicalization of pure militancy in Alain Badiou's para-atheist essay *Saint Paul. La fondation de l'universalisme*, Paris 1997. For a melancholic-realist appropriation of the "heritage of prophetic reason" advocates Daniel Bensaïd in his book *Le pari mélancholique. Métamorphose de la politique et politique de la métamorphose*, Paris 1997. The metaphysical line of defense of the left principle was shown philosophically-religiously and historically-religiously in Peter Sloterdijk/Thomas H. Macho (eds.), *Weltrevolution der Seele. Ein Lese- und Arbeitsbuch der Gnosis von der Spätantike bis zur Gegenwart*, Zurich/Munich 1991; whoever wants to go back to the sources of the 20th century will have to reread Paul Tillich, *Die sozialistische Entscheidung*, 1932, and Hermann Cohen, *Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*, Berlin, second edition 1928, as well as the writings of Charles Péguy. <<



[685] At all case, can be adulterated by  
opposing ideology, a resulting from misunderstandings and  
simplifications, as evidenced in recent contributions to the dispute  
between the poor and the rich world, where there is talk of  
confronting the Empire. <<

[686] According to the data from Fischer Weltalmanach 2003, Frankfurt 2002. <<

[687] Cf. Emmanuel Todd, L'illusion économique, Paris 1998. <<

[688] Eric Hobsbawm, Das Zeitalter der Extreme, o. c., pp. 365-367.

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[689] Cf. once again for this context the article by Gerhard Schulze cited in footnote 579. <<

[690] Helga Häsing and Ludwig Janus, in the book, edited by them, *Ungewollte Kinder. Annäherungen, Beispiele, Hilfen*, Reinbeck (Hamburg) 1994, start from the "cautious calculation" that still today one child in three comes into the world unwanted; a figure probably placed too high, which, however, even if it were real, would contain the reference to the historical novum that a two-thirds majority of wanted children dominates. <<

[691] Peter Handke, Versuch über die Müdigkeit, Frankfurt 1989, pp.  
52. <<

[692] In the year 2000, in the Federal Republic of Germany, with of 39 million jobs (in a population of 82 million people) and a sickness quota (very low, conditioned by the crisis) of 9 days per worker per year, there were around 350 million paid sick days. This, without taking into account the imperceptible morbidity of the weekend (which can be distributed in 4000 million days per year), nor the covert morbidity of vacations (virtually 1000 million days), nor the sick attitudes of the segment of the population not directly integrated into active life. <<



[693] Honoré de Balzac, La piel de zapa [1831], Siruela, Madrid 2004.

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[694] Cynthia Fleurie, Pretium doloris. L'accident comme souci de soi, Paris 2002. <<

[695] Cfr. Walther K. Lang, Grausame Bilder: Sadismus in der neapolitanischen Malerei von Caravaggio bis Giordano, Berlin 2001.

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[696] Charles T. Sykes, *A Nation of Victims. The Decay of the American Character*, New York 1992. <<

[697] Cf. Lorenzo Pinna, Fünf Hypothesen zum Untergang der Welt, Munich 1996. <<

[698] Cf. Julia Kristeva, *Le temps sensible. Proust et l'expérience littéraire*, Paris 1994. <<

[699] The most superb last monograph of luxury in a culture  
Specifically, chapter 11 of Ludwig Friedländer's monumental History  
of the Customs of Rome (Stuttgart 1980, pp. 645-747) divides the  
phenomena into: luxury of the table, luxury of attire and adornment,  
luxury of the dwelling, luxury of the domestic installation, luxury of  
burial, luxury of slaves. <<

[700] Cf. Norbert Bolz, Das konsumistische Manifest, o. c., pp. 102-ss. <<



[701] Cf. Jonathan Crary, *Aufmerksamkeit. Wahrnehmung und moderne Kultur*, Frankfurt 2002; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility," in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 12, pp. 482-498. <<

[702] For the derivation of religio from a verb of the vis legendi cfr. Cicero, De natura deorum II, 28. <<

[703] Cf. Günther Ohloff, *Irdische Düfte - himmlische Lust. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Duftstoffe*, Frankfurt and Leipzig 1996, especially pp. 270ff. One reads (p. 277) that Jacques Guerlain, possessed of absolute olfaction, could allegedly distinguish, without context, 3000 olfactory qualities, a "performance that can only be achieved by intense daily training." <<

[704] Cf. Franz Sales Meyer (ed.), Handbuch der Ornamentik: zum Gebrauche für Musterzeichner, Architekten, Schulen und Gewerbetreibende sowie zum Studium im allgemeinen, Stuttgart 1993. <<

[705] For the theme "snake" cf. in Antonio Negri/Michael Hardt, Empire, o. c., the section "Mole and snake," pp. 66-72. <<

[706] T manifesto communist quote by: Karl Marx, Die  
Frühschriften, Siegfried Landshut (ed), Stuttgart 1968, p. 529. <<  
e

[707] Mehdi Belhaj Kacem, in "Society. Investigative and adventurous sur la communauté désavouable, Paris 2001, pp. 239ff, especially pp. 258-262, has interpreted the production of pornographic-heterosexual images of the liberalization era from the character of "hypersensitivity" of female organs and the performance of male arousal. <<

[708] Carl Djerassi, Die Mutter der Pille. Autobiographie, Munich/Zurich 2001, pp. 82-105. <<



[709] Ibid, p. 102. <<

[710] Cf. Carl Christian Bry, *Verkappte Religionen. Kritik des kollektiven Wahns* (1924), Martin Gregor-Dellin (ed.), Munich 1979, pp. 150 and 154. <<

[\*] Verwöhnung: pampering, attention, care, dedication, gift, flattery, gift, comfort, well-being, comfort... In all these meanings this word appears in this book, but always with the ultimate semantic referent of pampering, in general, from the mother to the child. (N. of the T.)

<<

[\*\*] Laune: mood, state of mood, even fickleness, whim, caprice. <<

[\*\*] Weltoffenheit: patency of the world or of the world, i.e., openness from the world to man and from man to the world, the world manifests itself to the human being, the world is something manifest to the human being, who perceives its openness or patency. (N. of the T.) <<

[\*\*\*\*] Entlastung: unloading of weight, of the structural overload of the human being, relief of tensions by the luxury of experiences, etc. It recalls, in a transferred context, the general lightening [Erleichterung] of which we have been speaking in these pages as a characteristic sign of human beings in modernity. (N. of the T.) <<

[\*\*\*\*] Langeweile in German, we repeat: instant, moment, lapse of time, ~~long~~, or becoming long. (N.) <<

[\*\*\*\*\*] Allomutter, Allomother (biology). Prefix allo- or allo-: other, different, distinct (N.) <<



[\*\*\*\*\*] Quality or circumstance of being or being sustained, carried, maintained [Getragenheit]. As lines below, throwing: quality or circumstance of being or being thrown [Geworfenheit]. (N. of the T.)

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[\*\*\*\*\*] Wille zum Können: will to be able or to know how to do  
to be able to do something <<

[\*\*\*\*\*] Verfremdung: unusual way of representing something  
for example, and above all, aesthetically, literary, theatrically; to  
characterize the real in a strange or foreign, unaccustomed way; in  
this sense: estrangement, artifice, dis- realization, interpretation,  
transplantation, recomposition, reconversion, distortion,  
extrapolation, etc. (N. of the T.) <<

[\*\*\*\*\*] Remember what was said at the beginning of the chapter, mood, disposition, state of mind, caprice, whim, craving, etc. <<