

Peter Sloterdijk

BUBBLES

SPHERES I



<e>

SEMIOTEXT(E) FOREIGN AGENTS SERIES

Originally published as *Sphären I. Blasen* by Editions Suhrkamp, Frankfurt.
© Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main 1998. All rights reserved

This edition Semiotext(e) © 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

Published by Semiotext(e)

2007 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 427, Los Angeles, CA 90057

www.semiotexte.com

Special thanks to Marc Lowenthal and John Ebert.

Cover art by Eva Schlegel. Draft for Installation, MAK Vienna, 2010.

Design: Hedi El Kholi

ISBN: 978-1-58435-104-7

Distributed by The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England

Printed in the United States of America

SPHERES

VOLUME I: BUBBLES

MICROSPHEROLOGY

Peter Sloterdijk

Translated by Wieland Hoban

<e>

Contents

Preliminary Note	9
Introduction: The Allies; or, The Breathed Commune	17
Preliminary Reflections: Thinking the Interior	83
1. Heart Operation; or, On the Eucharistic Excess	101
2. Between Faces On the Appearance of the Interfacial Intimate Sphere	139
3. Humans in the Magic Circle On the Intellectual History of the Fascination with Closeness	207
Excursus 1: Thought Transmission	263
4. The Retreat Within the Mother Groundwork for a Negative Gynecology	269
Excursus 2: Nobjects and Un-Relationships On the Revision of Psychoanalytical Stage Theory	291
Excursus 3: The Egg Principle Internalization and Encasement	323
Excursus 4: "In Dasein There Lies an Essential Tendency towards Closeness." Heidegger's Doctrine of Existential Place	333
5. The Primal Companion Requiem for a Discarded Organ	343

Excursus 5: The Black Plantation A Note on Trees of Life and Enlivenment Machines	397
6. Soul Partitions Angels—Twins—Doubles	413
Excursus 6: Spheric Mourning On Nobject Loss and the Difficulty of Saying What Is Missing	459
Excursus 7: On the Difference Between an Idiot and an Angel	471
7. The Siren Stage On the First Sonospheric Alliance	477
Excursus 8: Illiterate Truths A Note on Oral Fundamentalism	521
Excursus 9: Where Lacan Starts to Go Wrong	533
8. Closer to Me Than I Am Myself A Theological Preparation for the Theory of the Shared Inside	539
Excursus 10: <i>Matris in gremio</i> A Mariological Cricket	619
Transition: On Ecstatic Immanence	625
Notes	633
Photographic Credits	664

The difficulty that had to be overcome [...] was to avoid all geometrical evidence. In other words, I had to start with a sort of intimacy of roundness.

— Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

PRELIMINARY NOTE

Tradition has it that Plato put an inscription at the entrance to his academy, reading: "Let no one enter who is not a geometer." Were these arrogant words? A declaration of war on the vulgar mind? Undoubtedly; for it was not without reason that a new form of elitism was invented at the academy. For one amazing moment, the school and the avant-garde were identical. Avant-gardism is the skill of forcing all members of a society to make a decision about a suggestion that has not come from them. It was Socrates who first went about this game seriously, and Plato escalated the philosophical provocation by elevating the compulsion to choose between knowledge and nonknowledge to a higher authority. In shutting out the ageometric rabble and only admitting candidates equipped with the appropriate knowledge, he challenged all mortals to qualify themselves for access to his research community by showing the necessary credentials. Here one must bear in mind: what are humans in the academic age but forgetful mammals that have, in most cases, merely forgotten that they are geometricians at heart? A geometrician—what is that? An intelligence coming from the world of the dead, bringing

vague memories with it of a stay in a perfect sphere. Exoterically effective philosophy begins by splitting society into those who remember and those who do not—and, furthermore, into those who remember a particular thing and those who remember something else. That has remained its business to this day, even if the criteria for the division have become a little more complicated.

Like any author who has come a little way since his magical beginnings, I am aware that it is impossible to restrict the uses to which the literate community puts published writings to one single perspective in advance. Nonetheless, it strikes me as useful to point out that the following reflections, in their general outlines, are probably best read as a radicalization of Plato's motto. I would not only set Plato's statement above the gate to an academy, but above the gate to life itself—were it not such an inappropriate idea to adorn the doorway to the light of the world, which is already too narrow, with warning signs... We appeared in life with no prior geometric schooling, and no philosophy can subject us to an entrance examination after the fact. This does not alter the exclusive mandate of philosophy in the slightest, however, because the assumption that we are given the world only through innate geometric prejudices cannot simply be dismissed. Could one not hold the view that life is a constant *a posteriori* testing of our knowledge about the space from which everything emanates? And the splitting of society into those who know something about this and those who know nothing—does it not extend deeper in the present than ever before?

Life is a matter of form—that is the hypothesis we associate with the venerable philosophical and geometric term “sphere.”

It suggests that life, the formation of spheres and thinking are different expressions for the same thing. Referring to a vital spheric geometry is only productive, however, if one concedes the existence of a form of theory that knows more about life than life itself does—and that wherever human life is found, whether nomadic or settled, inhabited orbs appear, wandering or stationary orbs which, in a sense, are rounder than anything that can be drawn with compasses. The following books are devoted to the attempt to probe the possibilities and boundaries of geometric vitalism.

A rather extravagant configuration of theory and life, one must admit. The hubris of this angle may become more bearable, or at least understandable, if one remembers that there was a second inscription above the entrance to the academy, occult and humorous, stating that whoever was unwilling to become entangled in love affairs with other visitors in the garden of theory should keep away. One can already sense it: this motto too must be applied to life as a whole. Whoever has no interest in sphere formation must naturally avoid amorous dramas, and whoever steers clear of eros excludes themselves from the efforts to understand the vital form. And so the hubris changes camps: the exclusivity of philosophy is expressed not in its own presumptuousness, but in the self-gratification of those who are certain of being able to dispense with philosophical thought. If philosophy is exclusive, it mirrors most people's self-exclusion from the best—in exaggerating the existing division in society, however, it creates an awareness of these exclusions and puts them to the vote again. Philosophical exaggeration provides an opportunity to revise completed options and decide against exclusion. Hence philosophy, if it

is sufficiently focused on its task, is always also self-advertisement. If others see something else as the best, and achieve something convincing as a result, then so much the better.

The present attempt, as one can see, declares its concern with reference to a Platonic problem; it does not view itself as part of Platonism, however, assuming the latter means the sum of misguided readings that have made the founder of the Athenian academy an object of debate throughout the ages—including the anti-Platonism extending from Kant to Heidegger and their successors. I will only remain on the trail of Platonic references in the sense that I will develop, more obstinately than usual, the hypothesis that love stories are stories of form, and that every act of solidarity is an act of sphere formation, that is to say the creation of an interior.

The surpluses of first love, once it breaks away from its origins to make its own fresh starts elsewhere, also feed philosophical thought—which, we must above all remember, is a case of transference love for the whole. Unfortunately, many of those active in the current intellectual discourse have contented themselves with characterizing the phenomenon of transference love as a neurotic mechanism that is to blame for genuine passions being felt in the wrong places most of the time. Nothing has harmed philosophical thought more than this pitiful reduction of motives, which has sought to validate itself—rightly and wrongly—through psychoanalytical models. Rather, one must insist that transference is the formal source of the creative processes that inspire the exodus of humans into the open. We do not so much transfer incorrigible affects onto unknown persons as early spatial experiences to new places, and primary movements onto remote locations.

The limits of my capacity for transference are the limits of my world.

If I had to place a sign of my own at the entrance to this trilogy, it would be this: let no one enter who is unwilling to praise transference and to refute loneliness.

MICROSPHEROLOGY

VOLUME I: BUBBLES

SPHERES



Bubbles, mezzotint by G. H. Every, 1887, after Sir John Everett Millais (1829–1896)

INTRODUCTION

The Allies; Or, The Breathed Commune

The child stands enraptured on the balcony, holding its new present and watching the soap bubbles float into the sky as it blows them out of the little loop in front of his mouth. Now a swarm of bubbles erupts upwards, as chaotically vivacious as a throw of shimmering blue marbles. Then, at a subsequent attempt, a large oval balloon, filled with timid life, quivers off the loop and floats down to the street, carried along by the breeze. It is followed by the hopes of the delighted child, floating out into the space in its own magic bubble as if, for a few seconds, its fate depended on that of the nervous entity. When the bubble finally bursts after a trembling, drawn-out flight, the soap bubble artist on the balcony emits a sound that is at once a sigh and a cheer. For the duration of the bubble's life the blower was outside himself, as if the little orb's survival depended on remaining encased in an attention that floated out with it. Any lack of accompaniment, any waning of that solidary hope and anxiety would have damned the iridescent object to premature failure. But even when, immersed in the eager supervision of its creator, it was allowed to drift through space for a wonderful while, it still had to vanish into nothingness in the end. In the

place where the orb burst, the blower's excoriated soul was left alone for a moment, as if it had embarked on a shared expedition only to lose its partner halfway. But the melancholy lasts no more than a second before the joy of playing returns with its time-honored cruel momentum. What are broken hopes but opportunities for new attempts? The game continues tirelessly, once again the orbs float from on high, and once again the blower assists his works of art with attentive joy in their flight through the delicate space. At the climax, when the blower is as infatuated with his orbs as if they were self-worked miracles, the erupting and departing soap bubbles are in no danger of perishing prematurely for lack of rapturous accompaniment. The little wizard's attention follows their trail and flies out into the open, supporting the thin walls of the breathed bodies with its eager presence. There is a solidarity between the soap bubble and its blower that excludes the rest of the world. And each time the shimmering entities drift into the distance, the little artist exits his body on the balcony to be entirely with the objects he has called into existence. In the ecstasy of attentiveness, the child's consciousness has virtually left its corporeal source. While exhaled air usually vanishes without a trace, the breath encased in these orbs is granted a momentary afterlife. While the bubbles move through space, their creator is truly outside himself—with them and in them. In the orbs, his exhaled air has separated from him and is now preserved and carried further; at the same time, the child is transported away from itself by losing itself in the breathless co-flight of its attention through the animated space. For its creator, the soap bubble thus becomes the medium of a surprising soul expansion. The bubble and its blower coexist in a field spread out through attentive involvement. The child

that follows its soap bubbles into the open is no Cartesian subject, remaining planted on its extensionless thought-point while observing an extended thing on its course through space. In enthusiastic solidarity with his iridescent globes, the experimenting player plunges into the open space and transforms the zone between the eye and the object into an animated sphere. All eyes and attention, the child's face opens itself up to the space in front of it. Now the playing child imperceptibly gains an insight in the midst of its joyful entertainment that it will later forget under the strain of school: that the spirit, in its own way, is in space. Or perhaps one should say that when people referred in former times to "spirit," what they meant was always inspired spatial communities? As soon as one begins making concessions to such suspicions, it becomes natural to investigate further in the same direction: if the child breathes its air into the soap bubbles and remains loyal by following them with its ecstatic gaze—who previously placed their breath into the child? Who remains loyal to the child upon its own exodus from the nursery? In what attentions, what spaces of animation will the children remain contained if their lives on ascending paths succeed? Who will accompany the young ones on their way to things and their epitome, the divided world? Is there someone, under all those circumstances, whose ecstasy the children will be when they float out into the space of possibility—and what will happen to those who are nobody's exhalation? Indeed, does all life that emerges and goes its own separate way remain contained in an accompanying breath? Is it legitimate to imagine that everything which exists and becomes relevant is someone's concern? The need is a familiar one, in fact—Schopenhauer called it the metaphysical one—the need for all things belonging to the world

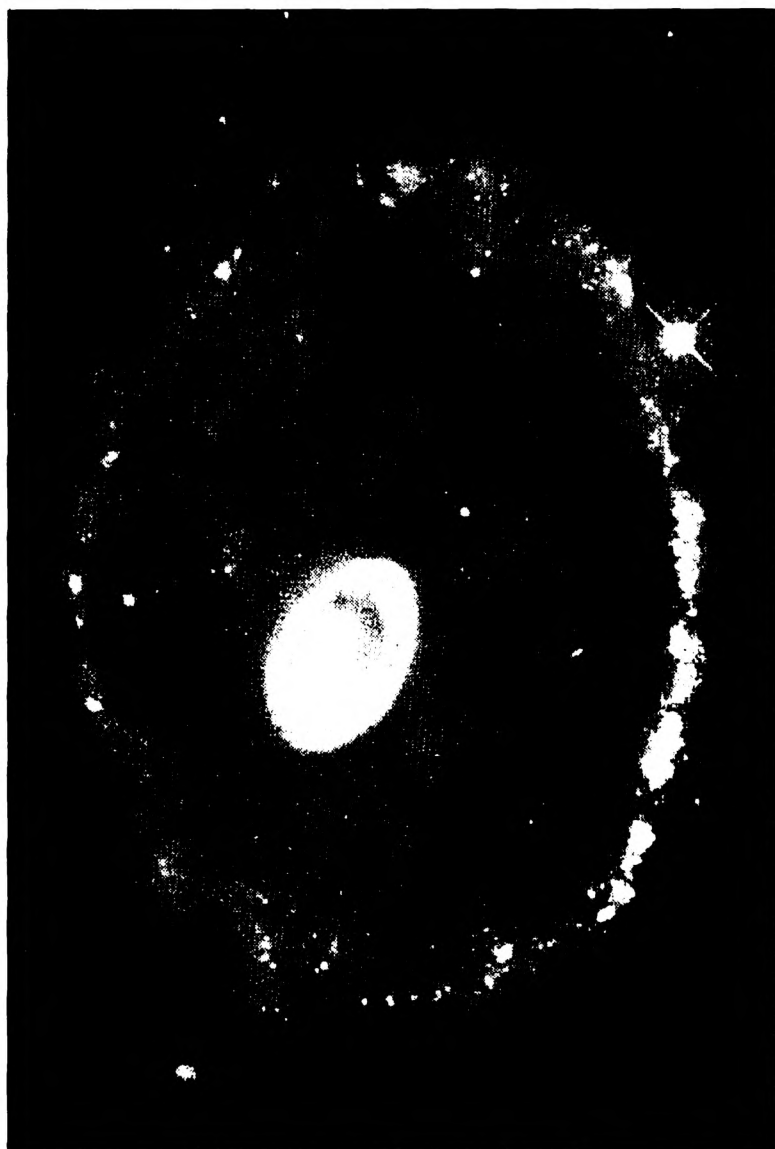
or being as a whole to be contained in a breath like an indelible purpose. Can this need be satisfied? Can it be justified? Who first had the thought that the world is nothing but the soap bubble of an all-encompassing breath? Whose being-outside-oneself would everything that is the case then be?

The thought of the Modern Age, which presented itself for so long under the naïve name of “Enlightenment” and the even more naïve programmatic word “progress,” is characterized by an innate movement: wherever it follows its typical forward motion, it achieves the breakthrough of the intellect out of the caves of human illusion into the nonhuman world outside. It is no coincidence that the cosmological turn named after Copernicus marks the start of the newer history of knowledge and disappointment. It brought the people of the First World the loss of the cosmological center, and subsequently set off an age of progressive decentralizations. From that point on, earth’s citizens, the old mortals, could bid farewell to all illusions about their position in the lap of the cosmos, even if such ideas cling to us like inborn illusions. Copernicus’ heliocentric theory initiated a series of research eruptions into the deserted outer reaches, extending to the inhumanly remote galaxies and the most ghostly components of matter. The cold new breath from outside was sensed early on, and a number of the pioneers of the revolutionarily changed knowledge about the position of the earth in space did not conceal their unease in the infinity now imposed on them; thus even Kepler objected to Bruno’s doctrine of the endless universe with the words that “this very cogitation carries with it I don’t know what secret, hidden horror; indeed one finds oneself wandering in this immensity, to which are



Circle without Constructor I, solar quake: the spreading waves reach a size corresponding to ten times the earth's diameter, photographed by the space probe SOHO

denied limits and center and therefore all determinate places.”¹ Evasions to the outermost realms were followed by irruptions of coldness from the cosmic and technical ice worlds into the human inner sphere. Since the start of the Modern Age, the human world has constantly—every century, every decade, every year and every day—had to learn to accept and integrate new truths about an outside not related to humans. From the seventeenth century on, starting with the European educated classes and increasingly affecting the informed masses of the First World, the new psycho-cosmologically relevant sentiment spread that humans were not the concern of evolution, the indifferent goddess of becoming. Every view into the earthly



Circle without Constructor II, cartwheel galaxy in the Sculptor constellation, photographed by the Hubble Space Telescope

factory and the extraterrestrial spaces provided increasing evidence that mankind is towered above on all sides by monstrous externalities that breathe on it with stellar coldness and extra-human complexity. The old nature of *homo sapiens* is not up to these provocations by the outside. Research and the raising of consciousness have turned man into the idiot of the cosmos; he has sent himself into exile and expatriated himself from his immemorial security in self-blown bubbles of illusions into a senseless, unrelated realm that functions on its own. With the help of its relentlessly probing intelligence, the open animal tore down the roof of its old house from the inside. Taking part in modernity means putting evolved immune systems at risk. Since the English physicist and cosmographer Thomas Digges proved in the 1670s that the two-thousand-year doctrine of the celestial domes was both physically unfounded and thought-economically superfluous, the citizens of the Modern Age inevitably found themselves in a new situation that not only shattered the illusion of their home's central position in space, but also deprived them of the comforting notion that the earth is enclosed by spherical forms like warming heavenly mantles. Since then, modern people have had to learn how one goes about existing as a core without a shell; Pascal's pious and observant statement "the eternal silence of these infinite spaces fills me with dread" formulates the intimate confession of an epoch.² Since the times became new in the precise sense, being-in-the-world has meant having to cling to the earth's crust and praying to gravity—beyond any womb or shell. It cannot be mere coincidence: since the 1490s, those Europeans who sensed what had to be done have built and examined ball-shaped images of earth, globes, like possessed members of some undefined cult, as if the

sight of these fetishes was to console them for the fact that they would exist for all eternity only on a ball, but no longer inside a ball. We will show that everything referred to as “globalization” today comes from this play with the eccentric ball. Friedrich Nietzsche, the master formulator of the truths one cannot live with, but cannot ignore without intellectual dishonesty, finally articulated what the world as a whole had to accept becoming for the modern entrepreneurs: “a gate to a thousand deserts, empty and cold.”³ Living in the Modern Age means paying the price for shelllessness. The peeled human being acts out its epochal psychosis by replying to external cooling with warming technologies and climate policies—or with climate technologies and warming policies. But now that God’s shimmering bubbles, the celestial domes, have burst, who could have the power to create prosthetic husks around those who have been exposed?

To oppose the cosmic frost infiltrating the human sphere through the open windows of the Enlightenment, modern humanity makes use of a deliberate greenhouse effect: it attempts to balance out its shelllessness in space, following the shattering of the celestial domes, through an artificial civilizatory world. This is the final horizon of Euro-American technological titanism. From this perspective, the Modern Age appears as the age of an oath sworn in offensive desperation: that a comprehensive house-building operation for the species and a policy of global warming must be successful faced with the open, cold and silent sky. It is above all the entrepreneurial nations of the First World that have translated their acquired psycho-cosmological restlessness into offensive constructivism. They protect themselves from the terror of the bottomless, of the infinitely expanded space, through the utopian yet pragmatic erection of

a global greenhouse intended to offer modern living in the open. That is why the further the process of globalization proceeds, the more one ultimately finds people looking at the sky—by day or by night—indifferently and distractedly; in fact, it has almost become a sign of naïveté to continue pursuing cosmological questions with existential pathos. By contrast, the certainty that there is nothing more to look for up there is in keeping with the spirit of advanced circumstances. For it is not cosmology that tells people today where they stand, but rather the general theory of immune systems. What makes the Modern Age special is that after the turn to the Copernican world, the sky as an immune system was suddenly useless.⁴ Modernity is characterized by the technical production of its immunities and the increasing removal of its safety structures from the traditional theological and cosmological narratives. Industrial-scale civilization, the welfare state, the world market and the media sphere: all these large-scale projects aim, in a shellless time, for an imitation of the now impossible, imaginary spheric security. Now networks and insurance policies are meant to replace the celestial domes; telecommunication has to reenact the all-encompassing. The body of humanity seeks to create a new immune constitution in an electronic medial skin. Because the old all-encompassing and containing structure, the heavenly *continens* firmament, is irretrievably lost, that which is no longer encompassed and no longer contained, the former *contentum*, must now create its own satisfaction on artificial continents under artificial skies and domes.⁵ Those who help to build the global civilization greenhouse, however, become entangled in thermo-political paradoxes: to achieve its creation—and this spatial fantasy underlies the globalization

project—enormous populations, at the center as well as the margins, must be evacuated from their old casing of temperate regional illusion and exposed to the frosts of freedom. Here total constructivism unbendingly demands its price. To free up ground for the artificial surrogate sphere, the leftovers of faith in inner worlds and the fiction of security are being destroyed in all old countries in the name of a thoroughgoing market enlightenment that promises a better life, yet initially lowers the immune standards of the proletariats and marginal peoples to a devastating degree. Dumbfounded masses soon find themselves in the open, without ever receiving a proper explanation of their evacuation's purpose. Disappointed, cold and abandoned, they wrap themselves in surrogates of older conceptions of the world, as long as these still seem to hold a trace of the warmth of old human illusions of encompassedness.

Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon?
What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its
sun? Where is it moving to now? Where are we moving to?
Away from all suns? Are we not continually falling? And
backwards, sideways, forwards, in all directions? Is there still
an up and a down? Aren't we straying as though through an
infinite nothing? Isn't empty space breathing at us? Hasn't it
got colder?⁶

These questions open up the yawning abyss that current discourses on globalization ignore in their industrious hysteria. In shellless times, without spatial orientation and overwhelmed by their own progress, those living in modernity suddenly had to become splendid people by the masses. One can view techno-

logical civilization, in particular its accelerations in the twentieth century, as an attempt to drown the questions of Nietzsche's chief witness, the tragic Diogenes, in comfort. By making technical living tools of unknown perfection available to individuals, the modern world aims thus to silence their uneasy inquiries about the space in which they live, or from which they constantly fall. And yet it was precisely existentialist modernity that identified the reasons why it is less important for people to know *who* they are than *where* they are. As long as intelligence is scaled up by banality, people are not interested in their place, which seems given; they fix their imaginations on the ghost lights that appear to them in the form of names, identities and business. What recent philosophers have termed forgetfulness of being [*Seinsvergessenheit*] is most evident as an obstinate willful ignorance of the mysterious place of existence. The popular plan to forget both oneself and being is realized through a deliberate nonawareness of the ontological situation. This willfulness is currently fuelling all forms of rapid living, civil disinterestedness and anorganic eroticism. It drives its agents to limit themselves to small, malicious arithmetic units; the greedy of recent days no longer ask where they are as long as they are allowed to be someone, anyone. If, by contrast, we are here attempting to pose the question of "where?" anew in a radical fashion, that means restoring to contemporary thought its feeling for absolute localization, and with it the feeling for the basis of the difference between small and large.

It is possible to give a competent contemporary reply to the Gnostically inspired question "where are we if we are in the world?" We are in an outside that carries inner worlds. With the

hypothesis of the priorness of the outside in mind, we no longer need to undertake any naïve investigations into mankind's position in the cosmos. It is too late to dream ourselves back to a place under celestial domes whose interiors would permit domestic feelings of order. That security in the largest circle has been destroyed for those in the know, along with the old homely, immunizing cosmos itself. Whoever still wished to look outwards and upwards would find themselves in a space devoid of humans and remote from the earth, with no relevant boundaries. Even on the smallest material level, complexities have been revealed in which we are the ones who are excluded and remote. Thus an inquiry into our location is more productive than ever, as it examines the place that humans create in order to have somewhere they can appear as those who they are. Here, following a venerable tradition, this place bears the name "sphere." The sphere is the interior, disclosed, shared realm inhabited by humans—in so far as they succeed in becoming humans. Because living always means building spheres, both on a small and a large scale, humans are the beings that establish globes and look out into horizons. Living in spheres means creating the dimension in which humans can be contained. Spheres are immune-systemically effective space creations for ecstatic beings that are operated upon by the outside.

The vessels thus filled with You do not render You any support: for though they perished utterly, You would not be spilt out. And in pouring Yourself out upon us, You do not come down to us but rather elevate us to You: You are not scattered over us, but we are gathered into one by You.

— Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, Book I, III⁷

Among the outdated and valuable expressions that metaphysics used, in its time, to build subtle bridges between heaven and earth, there is one that still comes to the aid of some contemporaries—and not only artists and their imitators—when faced with the problem of finding a respectable name for the source of their ideas and inventions: inspiration. Even if the word seems antiquated, and sooner earns its users a smile than recognition, it has not entirely lost its symbolic radiance. It is still vaguely suitable for marking the unclearly different, heterotopic origin of those ideas and works which cannot simply be attributed to the application of rules and the technical repetition of familiar searching and finding patterns. Whoever invokes inspiration

admits that creative ideas are nontrivial events whose occurrence cannot be forced. Its medium is not its master, and its recipient is not its producer. Whether it is genius that whispers the idea to its executor or chance that makes the dice fall as they do, whether it is a rupture in the usual conceptual fabric that leads to the articulation of thoughts never thought before, or whether a productive error results in the new: whatever powers are considered possible transmitters of the inspired idea, the receiver always knows that in a sense, beyond their own efforts, they have housed visitors from elsewhere in their thought. Inspiration—breathing life into something, intuition, the instantaneous appearance of the idea or a gaping open of the new: in former times, when it could still be used without irony, the concept referred to the fact that an informing power superior in nature makes a human consciousness its mouthpiece or sounding board. Heaven, metaphysicians would say, appears as the earth's informant and gives its sign; something foreign passes through the door of the own and acquires validity. And although the foreign no longer bears any lofty, concisely metaphysical name today—not Apollo, not Yahwe, not Gabriel, not Krishna and not Xango—the phenomenon of the inspired idea has not disappeared entirely from enlightened fields of view. Whoever experiences inspired ideas can, even in post-metaphysical or hetero-metaphysical times, understand themselves as a host or matrix for the non-own. It is only with reference to such passings-through by the foreign that a tenable concept of what subjectivity could mean can be articulated in our times. Certainly the entering visitors have become anonymous today. Even if, as the joke goes, one is often surprised to which people the ideas choose to occur: no one who is familiar with the process

need doubt their sudden arrival. Where they appear, one acknowledges their presence without any closer concern for their provenance. Whatever enters the imagination is not supposed to come from anywhere except somewhere over there, from without, from an open field that is not necessarily a yonder realm. People no longer want to receive their inspired ideas from some embarrassing heavens; they are supposed to come from the no man's land of ownerless, precise thoughts. Through their lack of a sender, they permit the free use of their gift. The inspired idea that delivers something for you remains a discreet visitor at the door. It makes no religion of itself, in so far as such a religion always involves fealty to its founder's name. Its antonym, which many rightly find beneficial, creates one of the preconditions for finally asking today, in general terms, about the nature of what we call media. Media theory: what is it, practiced *lege artis*,⁸ other than the conceptual work to supplement regular visits both discreet and indiscreet? Messages, senders, channels, languages—these are the basic concepts, frequently misunderstood, of a general science of visitability of something by something in something. We will show that media theory and sphere theory converge; this is a hypothesis for whose proof three books cannot be excessive. In spheres, shared inspirations become the reason for the possibility of humans existing together in communes and peoples. The first thing that develops within them is that strong relationship between humans and their motives of animation—and animations are visits that remain—which provide the reason for solidarity.

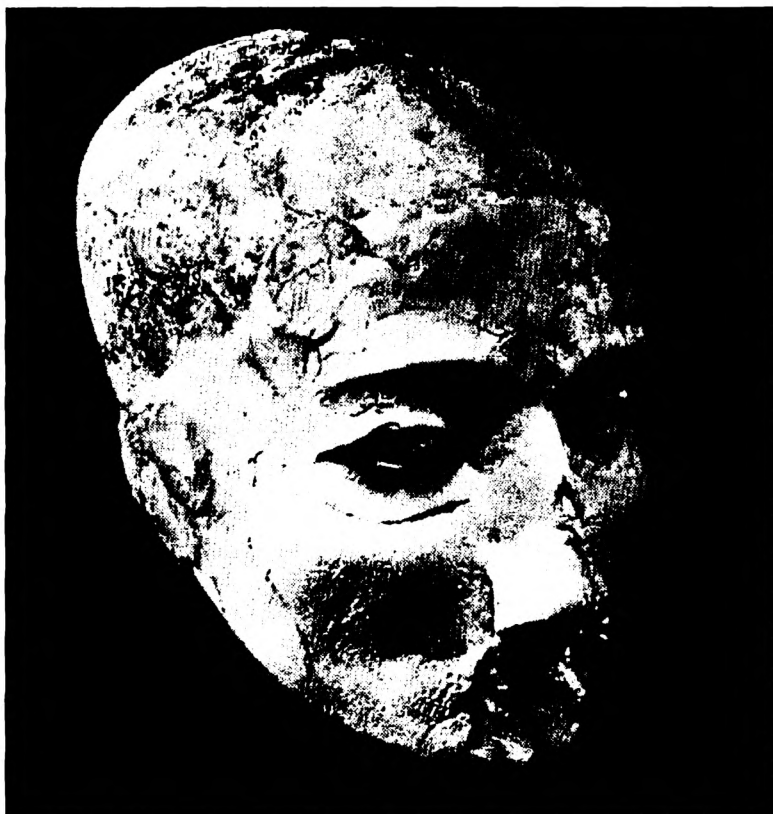
The primal scene for what, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, deserves to be called inspiration, is the creation of humans—an

event that appears in the Genesis account in two versions: once as the final act of the six-day work of creation, though it passes over the life-breathing scene in silence, and once as the initiatory act for all further creation, but now with an explicit emphasis on creation through breath and with the characteristic distinction of clay modeling in the first case and breathing in the second. Here the reader of Genesis encounters the inspirator, the Lord of Creation, as a figure with a sharp ontological profile: He is the first producer with complete authority. The creature into which He breathes life, for its part, appears on the stage of existence as the first human being, the prototype of a species that can experience inspired ideas. The biblical account of the first breath reproduces the original visit of the spirit to a host medium.

When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens—and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground—the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:4–7)⁹

Would it be possible to speak of this breath in a language not yet molded into formulas by theologians' routines and pious subordinations to its supposed and prescribed meaning? *If* one takes seriously these lines that have been parroted, interpreted, translated and exploited ten thousand times as a statement about a

production process, the explicit succession they describe reveals above all a procedural insight: man is an artificial entity that could only be created in two installments. In the first stage of the work process, as we read, the creator forms Adam—the clay creature taken from the soil, *adama*—and molds him into a work of art unlike any other that, like all products of artifice, owes its existence to the combination of artistic knowledge and raw material. Craft and earth are equally necessary to erect the image of man in the form of the first statue. Hence, in His initial access, the creator is no more than a potter who enjoys using suitable starting material to form a figure that resembles Himself, the producing master. Whoever wishes to imagine humans as primitive machines finds here an early model of how to create statues, human dolls, golems, robots, android illusions and the like according to the rules of art. The God of the first phase of human creation embodies a representative of the oldest technological culture, whose main emphasis is on ceramic skills. It was the potters who first discovered that earth is more than simply farmland to be cultivated. The ceramist as an early creator of works or demiurge has the experience to know that the ground which bears fruit can also be raw material for clay vessels to which *form*, clarity in conjunction with stability, is lent in workshops and ovens. If the Lord of Genesis began the creation of humans as a potter, it was because this creation succeeds most plausibly when it begins as the production of vessels. Being able to make android creatures according to ceramic routines: at the time of the biblical Genesis, this marked the state of art. Hence there is nothing unusual about Adam's body being manufactured from clay. It is initially no more than a hollow-bodied sculpture awaiting significant further use. Only then does the



Neolithic reconstruction of a head through the application of dyed plaster, which gave the skull the form of the layers of tissue that had once existed

extraordinary element come into play, for if the clay creature is made hollow in its original modeling, it is only because it is henceforth to serve as a jug of life. It is formed as a semi-solid figure from the start, as its creator has a special sort of filling in mind. Metaphysics begins as metaceramics, for the substance to be filled into this singular vessel will be no merely physical content. Though liquids can be taken up by the vase android in



Life-size clay figures from the burial complex of Qin Shi Huang (259–210 BC), first Emperor of China

limited amounts, its hollow space is of a more sublime nature, not suitable for being lined with sensual fluids. The Adamic vessel is created with cavities that only awaken to their true purpose in a second, initially very mysterious phase of creation: “...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

With this act of inspiration, the second phase of the production of humans asserts its rights. Without the completion of the clay body through breath, Adam would forever have remained merely a bizarre work of earthen art; he would be no more than a willful installation on the untended earth. Such a statue would perhaps have been adequate as a burial gift for its producer, comparable to clay figures in the graves of ancient Chinese aristocrats; from a craftsman's perspective this Adam, at least in his upper parts, may have resembled his presumed technical models: the ancient Palestinian head sculptures produced through the application of a lifelike clay or plaster finish to skulls of the dead.¹⁰ The account in Genesis, read outside of theological conventions, suggests that the semi-finished Adamitic products were given their decisive pneumatic value in a second operation. The implicit lesson is that man is a vascular creature, and only awakens to its destiny of being an "image" through a specific supplement. The Hebrew text refers to the living being with the word *nefesh*, which means something like "that which is animated by a living breath"; according to Hebrew scholars, this is largely synonymous with *ruach*, meaning "moving air, breath, breath of life, spirit, feeling and passion, thought." A two-phase process in procedural terms, this anthropopoiesis escalates from the creation of vessels to the creation of spirit beings, with this climax intended from the start; the breathing-in of life is not simply an ornamental supplement to an autonomous bodily massif. That is why each phase of the creation act has its own individual, resolutely *technical* character: if Adam, as the Genesis account purports, is to be understood in every respect as the creature or work of a creator—as a *factum* or *ens creatum*, the Latin *patres* would say—

then the divine power of creation must expressly encompass the task of producing beings that are fully animated, ontologically complete, intelligently active, equipped with subjectivity and, by virtue of all this, *godlike*.

Thus the Genesis account breaks open the horizon of the technical question with the last possible radicality: what technology is can henceforth only be understood by measuring the distance between what God was capable of *in illo tempore* and what humans will, in time, themselves be capable of. The first part of producing the human image is, as we have seen, no mystery with regard to humanity's divine maker, and humans have successfully repeated it under suitable conditions. The belief that the production of human images can be learned and mastered forms the basis for all master classes in nature studies at traditional art academies. The artificer from the first phase of creation would be no more than an art student noted for his talent in a nude painting class; he would simply be an applier of learnable arts. The second part, on the other hand, requires a thoroughly postgraduate trick that none but the God of Genesis have performed thus far: this addition tears the divide between human technology and theotechnology wide open. For, from a demiurgic perspective—and the tale of Adam is above all the myth of a supreme royal craftsman—the inner human spirit itself now purports to be the work of a manufacturer. How to awaken statues to animated life: this is something that, until recently, had simply been unknown to the human productive capacity. Breath was the epitome of a divine technology capable of closing the ontological gap between the clay idol and the animated human with a pneumatic sleight of hand. Consequently, the title “God” denotes an expertise whose art extends

to the creation of living beings similar to oneself. As the creator of all things, the God of Genesis is lord of both the dissimilar and the similar. One can easily establish the significance of this hypothesis by looking at the simplest and highest creatures and, in the face of their givenness, reminding oneself that all of these, without exception, are meant to be understood as products of a single, continually active creative potency! Theologians tend to deny, on the other hand, that crystals, amoebas, trees or dragonflies are godlike. Nature, from a theological perspective, is the name for God's self-realization in the dissimilar. As far as realization in the similar is concerned, however, the most eminent text states with authority that Adam resembled his creator. One need therefore only take due notice of the factual existence of the animated clay creature to ask almost automatically: who was capable of that? Who was in a position to *make* man? By what method was he, the similar one, the subject, the spirited being who observes and handles the world as world, installed? In so far as we are concerned with the ceramic Adam, as stated earlier, we are sufficiently informed to lift the secret of his existence, as we know the rules of working with clay that reliably enable us to arrive at android figures. For a further treatment of the statue to yield a living human, on the other hand, we must introduce a pneumatic or noogenic bonus that, it would seem, we have so far lacked any procedural rules to imitate. The breathing in of life was a technical-hypertechnical procedure that had to be honored as God's exclusive patent throughout the entire period of religious-metaphysical thought. Nonetheless, in attributing Adam's spirit to the skilled act of a craftsman (or breathsman), the narrators of Genesis stretch out their hands for this bonus.

Since then, one part of high-cultural theology has always been the theology of the utmost skill and the interpretation of the world's totality in the light of a fabrication principle. God is an ecstasy of that idea of competence which encompasses the production of the world and its native subjectivities. With the advent of theo-technical thought, the European obsession with the ability to manufacture set in. One could yield to the suspicion that history itself, as a technological process, obeys the rule: where there was once God's secret technology, there must now be public human techniques. Perhaps what we call historicity is nothing but the time required for the attempt to repeat God's trick through human ability? This would urge us to conclude that even the breath of life must one day become a thoroughly formulated skill that can be brought down to earth from heaven. But can we dare to imagine a technology that makes the pneumatic rhythm of creation its own business? Should, with sufficiently precise formulable artistic and procedural rules, even the phenomenon once known as animation become something amenable to serial production? Should it transpire that breath sciences lie in the realm of possibility, and that the humanities have already embarked on repeating the divine breath through the higher mechanism?¹¹

With these questions, we are drawing a veiled theme of the Jewish Genesis account to belated light: the issue here is Adam's chosen hollowness. What gives us food for thought is his vascular nature, his resonant constitution, his preferred aptness as a *canal* for breathing by an inspirator. From a conventional point of view, the historically established preconception that there must be an unbridgeable hierarchical divide—an ontological

difference—between creator and creature could re-establish itself today. Is it not inevitable that the creature, even if we are dealing with man in relation to the maker of man, is so distant from its creator as to verge on meaninglessness? In this light, even the first man ever created will always appear primarily as the ceramic object shaped at will from an earthen nothing by the hands of a master craftsman, only to fall back some day—earth to earth—into the clay from which he originated.

It is only at second glance that a less hierarchical image of the connection between the creator-subject and his breathed-on piece of work suggests itself. Now we realize that there cannot possibly be such a sharp ontological asymmetry between the inspirator and the inspired as there is between an animated lord and his inanimate tool. Where the pneumatic pact between the giver and the taker of breath comes into effect—that is, where the communicative or communal alliance builds up—this results in a bipolar intimacy that cannot have anything in common with a merely dominating control of a subject over a manipulable object mass. Even if the breather and the one breathed on face each other as first and second in temporal terms, a reciprocal, synchronously interchanging relationship between the two breath poles comes into effect as soon as the infusion of the breath of life into the android form is complete. The main part of God's trick, it would seem, is to reckon with a counter-breath immediately after the initial one: one could almost say that the originator does not preexist the pneumatic work, but creates himself synchronously with it as the intimate counterpart of one like himself. Indeed, perhaps the notion of an originator is simply a misleading, conventional figure to describe the phenomenon of the resonance that originally developed. Once set

up, the canal of animation between Adam and his Lord, filled with endless double echo games, can only be understood as a two-way system. The lord of all that lives would not also be the God of answers in whose guise he appears in His early invocations if confirmations of his breath impulses did not immediately flow back to Him from the animated figure. This breath is hence conspiratory, respiratory and inspiratory from the outset; as soon as breath exists, there are two breathing. With the number two at the start, it would be misguided to force any statement about which pole began in the interior of this dual. Naturally the myth must seek to describe how everything started and what came first—in this case as in most others. In attempting to do so in earnest, however, it must now also speak of an original exchange in which there can be no first pole. That is the meaning of the biblical reference to God's image: not that the Creator was some mystical solo android who was one day seized by the whim to trace His appearance—appearing to whom?—onto earthly bodies. This would be as absurd as the notion that God could have longed for the company of non-equal, formally similar clay figures. The creation of subjectivity and mutual animation does not refer to the hollow human puppet; the image of God is simply a rigidly visualizing term from the jargon of the artist's workshop for a relationship of pneumatic reciprocity. The intimate ability to communicate in a primary dual is God's patent. It suggests not so much a visually experienceable similarity between an original image and the replica as the original augmentation of God through his Adam, and of Adam through his God. Breath science can only get underway as a theory of pairs.

With this phrase—original augmentation—we have named a basic figure of the subsequent reflections in the spher-

morphological field. It states that in the spiritual space—under the as yet unconsolidated assumption that “spirit” refers to a spatiality of its own kind—the simplest fact is automatically at least a two-part or bipolar quantity. Isolated points are only possible in the homogenized space of geometry and intercourse; true spirit, however, is by definition spirit in and in relation to spirit, and true soul is by definition soul in and in relation to soul. In the present case, the elemental, initial and simple already appears as a resonance between polar authorities; the original expresses itself as a correlative duality from the start. The addition of the second to the first occurs not in an external and *a posteriori* supplementation—in the way that, in classical logic, attributes join substances as latecomers of a sort, as suppliers of properties. Certainly, if one thinks in substances, the attributes arrive later, just as blackness is added to the horse and redness to the rose. In the intimate sharing of subjectivity by a pair inhabiting a spiritual space open for both, second and first only appear together. Where the second does not enter, the first was not given either. This means that whoever says “Creator” without emphasizing Adam’s prior coexistence with Him has already strayed into an origin-monarchical error—just as anyone who presumes to speak of humans without mentioning their inspirators and intensifiers, or their media, which amount to the same, has missed the topic through their very approach. A Platonic horse or a heavenly rose: they could, if necessary, still remain what they are without blackness or redness. As far as God and Adam are concerned, however, they form—if the bond of breath between them is indeed as the wording and sense of the Genesis convey—a dyadic union from the start, a union that can only last on the basis of a developed bipolarity. The primary

pair floats in an atmospheric biunity, mutual referentiality and intertwined freedom from which neither of the primal partners can be removed without canceling the total relationship.

If this strong relation inevitably seems asymmetrical in theological tradition—characterized by a powerful leaning towards God's side—it is primarily because, aside from his engagement with Adam, his co-subject, God is always assigned the indivisible burden of cosmogonic responsibilities. God appears as the absolute adult, indeed the only one in the universe—Adam and his ilk, on the other hand, remain children to the end in a sense. Only against this background was Augustine able to say to his God: "But You, Lord, know all of him, for You made him."¹² For the church father, the joy of being understood depends on the notion that only he who made you can also understand and restore you. This provides the basic impulse for all disciplines of the spirit and its healing, in so far as it marks the advent of the idea that understanding means having made, and, more importantly in religious terms, that having been made means being able to be understood and repaired—an idea on which all priesthood and all psychotherapeutic structures are based to this day. The main purpose of this demiurgic interpretation of human creatureliness was to make the pact between the producing God and the produced soul unbreakable. The damaged but prudent soul should constantly think of its originator or representative, the therapist, because only this thought can save it from ontological isolation and from losing its way amid the incomprehensible, the unmade, the fortuitous and the external. It was to Adam before the Fall of Man, and to him and his kind alone, that Saint Teresa of Ávila's rule applied: the soul must view all things as if the world consisted only of God and

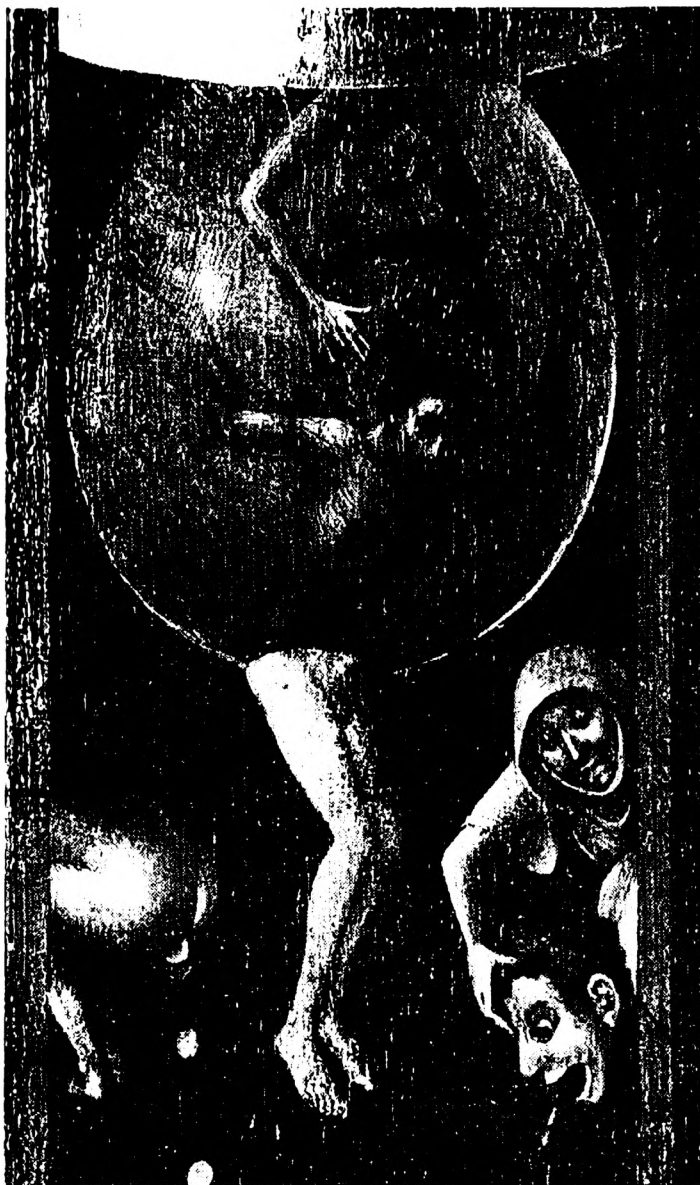
the soul—an idea still quoted approvingly by Leibniz¹³—whereas it pleases God to express Himself not only in Adam and his species, but in the entire household of the creation. In this respect the biblical God resembled a husband who has the conventional expectation that his wife should be there for him alone, while he must keep himself available not only for her, but also for a world of business. But He also resembled a mother who is good enough to give her child the secure sense that she is wholly there for it whenever necessary, even though she also has a house and hearth to look after when she is not attending to the little being. These asymmetries initially thwart the equality in the image; but this does not change the incomparable particularity of the pneumatic pact. The one breathed on is by necessity an ontological twin of the breather. The two are bonded by an intimate complicity such as can only exist between beings that originally share the placenta of subjectivity. Adam and his Lord live off the same ego-forming placenta—they nourish themselves with the same I-am-who-I-am substance that spreads between them like a subtle shared scent of intimacy and synchronous desire. The thorn bush in the desert burns not for itself alone, but always for itself and Moses, its agent and representative. That is why he is not meant to gaze at the flames in admiration when it burns, but form a chain of messengers: we, this fire and my testimony to it, belong together like the message and its immediate recipient. Flame and speech are original accomplices. The open secret of the historical world is that the power to belong together, which is experienced in exemplary fashion by select couples—and, why not, by burning bushes and prophets on fire—can be extended to communes, teams, project groups, and perhaps even entire peoples.

We refer to this connecting force, using a creaky word from the nineteenth century, as solidarity. The nature of this force, which allies people with their own kind or a superhuman other in shared vibrations, has never been examined sufficiently seriously in the history of thought. So far one has always presupposed and demanded solidarity, has attempted to raise it, politicize it and sabotage it; people have sung its praises and lamented its fragility; but never has anyone inquired far enough back into its origin. At this point we have at least realized that solidarity between people must be a transference phenomenon outside of primary couple relationships and primal hordes. But what is transferred here? The strong reason for being together is still awaiting an adequate interpretation.¹⁴

Let us translate these rhapsodic reflections on an Old European and Middle Eastern theological motif into the language of the present investigation: when the Jewish God and the prototypical human each turn their contact side towards the other, they form a shared interior sphere. What is here termed a sphere is, in a first and provisional understanding, an orb in two halves, polarized and differentiated from the start, yet nonetheless intimately joined, subjective and subject to experience—a biune shared space of present and past experience. What is known in tradition as spirit is thus originally, through sphere formation, spatially spread. In its basic form the sphere appears as a twin bubble, an ellipsoid space of spirit and experience with at least two inhabitants facing one another in polar kinship. Living in spheres thus means inhabiting a shared subtlety. The aim of this three-part book is to show that, for humans, being-in-spheres constitutes the basic relationship—admittedly,

one that is infringed upon from the start by the non-interior world, and must perpetually assert itself against the provocation of the outside, restore itself and increase. In this sense, spheres are by definition also morpho-immunological constructs. Only in immune structures that form interiors can humans continue their generational processes and advance their individuations. Humans have never lived in a direct relationship with “nature,” and their cultures have certainly never set foot in the realm of what we call the bare facts; their existence has always been exclusively in the breathed, divided, torn-open and restored space. They are the life forms designed to be floating beings—if floating means depending on divided moods and shared assumptions. Humans are thus fundamentally and exclusively the creations of their interior and the products of their work on the form of immanence that belongs inseparably to them. They flourish only in the greenhouse of their autogenous atmosphere.

What recent philosophers referred to as “being-in-the-world” first of all, and in most cases, means being-in-spheres. If humans are *there*,¹⁵ it is initially in spaces that have opened for them because, by inhabiting them, humans have given them form, content, extension and relative duration. As spheres are the original product of human coexistence, however—something of which no theory of work has ever taken notice—these atmospheric-symbolic places for humans are dependent on constant renewal. Spheres are air conditioning systems in whose construction and calibration, for those living in real coexistence, it is out of the question not to participate. The symbolic air conditioning of the shared space is the primal production of every society. Indeed—humans create their own



Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, couple in bubble, detail

climate; not according to free choice, however, but under preexisting, given and handed-down conditions.¹⁶

Spheres are constantly disquieted by their inevitable instability: like happiness and glass, they bear the risks native to everything that shatters easily. They would not be constructs of vital geometry if they could not implode; even less so, however, if they were not also capable of expanding into richer structures under the pressure of group growth. Where implosion occurs, the shared space as such is cancelled out. What Heidegger called being-toward-death means not so much the individual's long march into a final solitude anticipated with panic-stricken resolve; it is rather the circumstance that all individuals will one day leave the space in which they were allied with others in a current, strong relationship. That is why death ultimately concerns the survivors more than the deceased.¹⁷ Human death thus always has two faces: one that leaves behind a rigid body and one that shows sphere residues—those that are sublated into higher spaces and re-animated and those that, as the waste products of things, fallen out of former spaces of animation, are left lying there. In structural terms, what we call the end of the world is the death of a sphere. This small-scale emergency is the separation of the lovers, the empty apartment, the torn-up photograph; its comprehensive form manifests itself as the death of a culture, the burnt-out city, the extinct language. Human and historical experience at least shows that spheres can continue to exist even beyond mortal separation, and that things lost can remain present in memories—as a memorial, a specter, a mission or as knowledge. It is only because of this that not every separation of lovers need become the end of the world, and not every change undergone by language a culture's demise.¹⁸

The fact that the internally differentiated bubble of those in intimate coexistence can initially seem to be resolutely closed and secure in itself is due to the tendency of the communicating poles to be consumed fully in their care for the other half. This is also manifest in the Jewish creation myth: in passing on His breath to Adam, the God of Genesis in fact places His utmost stake in the pneumatic relation. Adam and his companion, for their part, remain in their exclusive partnership with God for as long as they manage to allow nothing to grow inside themselves other than what was originally breathed into them: the awareness of their original counterpart's glory and its demand for an answer. I am the one closest to you and your inspirator; you shall have no other inspirator but me—the first commandment of dyadic communication. Initially, there is nothing within them but the breathed, back-and-forth double rejoicing of the pact against externality. Adam and his God form an oscillatory circuit of generosity that celebrates and elevates itself *in dulci iubilo*. Through God's communication with Adam, this mirroring of His being radiates unanimously back to Him from Adam. Perhaps it is appropriate to image the music of angels and sirens as the sonic miracle of such an untainted bi-unanimity.

Unscathed spheres carry their destruction within themselves: this too is taught with merciless stringency by the Jewish paradise account. There is nothing to impair the perfection of the first pneumatic bubble until the disturbance of a sphere leads to the primal catastrophe. The distractable Adam falls prey to a second inspiration through the secondary voices of the serpent and the woman; as a result he discovers what theologians called his freedom. Initially, however, this consists only in



Masaccio, *The Expulsion from Paradise*, fresco, 1427,
Capella Brancacci, Florence, detail

a certain willing openness to seduction by outside elements. The phenomenon of freedom subsequently takes on its full, unnerving magnitude by installing radicalized independence of will and the desire for other things than those prescribed, indeed for many kinds of things—all declensions of a metaphysically interpreted evil will. From the very first whim of individual freedom, however, humans lost the ability to stay in their place within the purely sounding biunity of the God-self space, devoid of all secondary voices. The “expulsion from paradise” is a mythical title for the spherological primal catastrophe—in psychological terminology it would be paraphrased as a general weaning trauma. Only an event of this kind—the withdrawal of the first completer—could give rise to what would later be termed the “psyche”: the semblance of a soul that, almost like a private spark or an isolated vital principle, inhabits a single desirous body. The mythical process outlines the inevitable corruption of the original interior-forming biunity through the emergence of a third, a fourth and a fifth, which led to the advent of frolicking. The biune world had known neither number nor resistance, for even the mere awareness that there were other things, countable and third options, would have corrupted the initial homeostasis. The expulsion from paradise means the fall from the blissful inability to count. In the dyad, the united two even have the power to deny their twoness in unison; in their breathed retreat they form an alliance against numbers and interstices. *Secundum, tertium, quartum, quintum—non dantur*. We are what we are, without separations and joints: this space of happiness, this vibration, this animated echo chamber. We live, as intertwined beings, in the land of We. But this measureless, numberless happiness with closed eyes cannot ever last anywhere; in post-

paradise times—and does the count not always start “after paradise lost”?—the sublime biune bubble is damned to burst.

The modalities of bursting set the conditions for cultural histories. Transitional objects, new themes, secondary themes, multiplicities and new media step between the two partners; the symbiotic space, once intimate and filled with a single motif, opens up into a multiple neutrality, where freedom is only granted along with foreignness, indifference and plurality. It is torn open by non-symbiotic urgencies; for the new is always born as something that disturbs earlier symbioses. It intervenes in the individual interior as an alarm and a compulsion. Now the adult cosmos becomes clear as the epitome of work, struggle, diversion and coercion. What was God becomes a lonely, transcendent pole. He survives in the only way he can: as a distant delusional address for scattered quests for salvation. What was Adam’s symbiotically hollow interior now opens itself up to more and less spiritless occupants known as worries, entertainments or discourses; these fill out the space that, in the intimate state of coexistence, would have wanted to remain for free for the one, the initial breath partner. The adult has now understood that he has no right to happiness; at most, a call to remember that other state. Who would be allowed to follow it? The utmost that a consciousness filled with worry and violence can allow itself in the way of symbolic nurturances are backward-looking, yet also future-summoning phantasms of the reinstated dyad. Such dreams belong to the stuff of which the visionary religions are made; Plato’s magic trail through the course of the European spirit also follows these dream lines. In countless encodings these phantasms, partly in public and partly concealed, call up witching images from the perfect globe of sheltering, sheltered

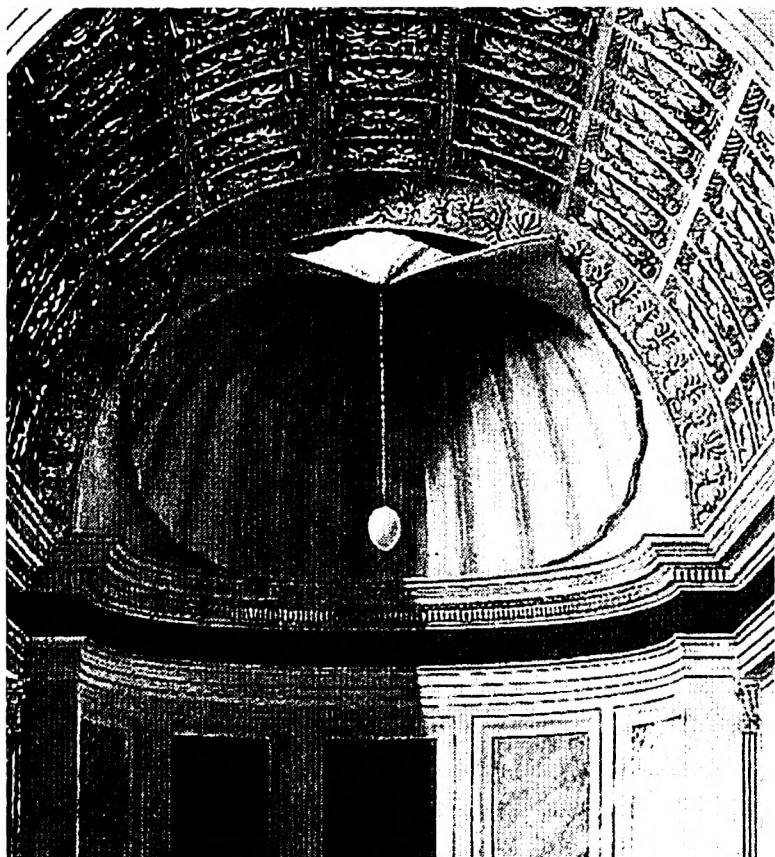
mutual inspiration. Stirred up or sucked in by mysterious memories and regressions, sunken notions of a prehistoric breath community of the double soul on the sixth day of creation.

All history is the history of animation relationships. Its nucleus, as certain anticipatory formulations hinted, is the biune bond of radical inspiration communities. It may initially be unimportant whether this bond is addressed in the terms of the creation myth as the alliance of divine image between Yahwe and Adam, or under the psychoanalytical concept of the early mother-child dyad, or the poetic-existential figures of the inseparable lovers, the twins, the Great Couple and the conspiring two. In all these models, spheric liaisons are brought up in which reciprocal animations generate themselves through radical resonance; each of them demonstrates that real subjectivity consists of two or more parties. Where two of these are exclusively opened towards each other in intimate spatial division, a livable mode of subjectness develops in each; this is initially no more or less than a participation in spheric resonances.

In earlier times, it was almost exclusively religious traditions, with special considerations, that bore witness to this enigma of subjectivity as participation in a bipolar and pluripolar field.¹⁹ Only with the incipient Modern Age did individual complexes step out of these vague constructs and move towards worldly views—especially in psychological, medical and aesthetic discourses. In premodern worlds, the only way for phenomena of biune and communitarian inspiration to articulate themselves was in religious languages—monovalent-animistic and bivalent-metaphysical ones. It will therefore be inevitable in the following reflections on the establishment of a general spherology also to

open up the religious fields of European and non-European cultures in free traversals for an open discourse of intimacy. In doing so, this anthropology beyond humans identifies itself perhaps not as the servant-girl of theology, but certainly as its pupil. It would not, admittedly, be the first to outgrow its teacher. Worldly spherology is the attempt to free the pearl from the theological oyster.

The spherological drama of development—the emergence into history—begins at the moment when individuals step out into the multipolar worlds of adults as poles of a biunity field. They inevitably suffer a form of mental resettlement shock when the first bubble bursts, an existential uprooting: they come out of their infantile state by ceasing to live completely under the shadow of the united other and thus starting to become inhabitants of an expanded psycho-sociosphere. For them, this is where the birth of the outside takes place: upon emerging into the open, humans discover what they initially think can never become part of their own, inner, co-animated realm. There are, as humans learn fascinatedly and painfully, more dead and outer things between heaven and earth than any worldling can dream of appropriating. When the youths bid farewell to their maternal kitchens-cum-living rooms, they are confronted with subjectless, external, excitingly uncontrollable phenomena. They would not be viable human individuals, however, if they did not bring a dowry of memories of the symbiotic field and its enclosing power with them into the strange new land. It is this power to transfer the integral space that ultimately also overcomes the intruder trauma, the law of the disruptive third, fourth and fifth parties, for it integrates the disrupter like a new sibling—as if, in fact, it were a necessary element in its own system.



Piero della Francesca, *Brera Madonna*, detail

Leopards break into the temple and drink to the dregs what is in the sacrificial pitchers; this is repeated over and over again; finally it can be calculated in advance, and it becomes part of the ceremony. (Franz Kafka)²⁰

Time and again, the literature of the interior deprives the fortuitous and the senseless of its destructive sting. From the outset,

there is a process of world literature competing with the rise of the external, the foreign, the fortuitous and those forces that threaten to burst the sphere; its aim is to settle every outside, no matter how cruel and unfitting, all demons of the negative and monsters of foreignness, within an expanded inside. Context turns into text—as often and as long as the external is worked away or reduced to tolerable formats. In this sense, order is above all the effect of a transference from interior to exterior. What we know as the metaphysical worldviews of Old Europe and Asia are the tensest ascetic drawings-in of the foreign, the dead and the external into the circle of soul-animated, text-woven large-scale interiors. Until yesterday, their poets were the thinkers. They taught the citizens of being how to achieve symbiosis with the stars and the stones; they interpreted the outside as an educator. Hegel's great synthesis is the last European monument to this will to draw all negativity and externality into the inside of a logically sealed dome. But philosophy could not have erected its sublime constructions without the mandate of its carrier culture, and logical syntheses presuppose the political and military situations that demand such symbolic vaulting; their exoteric mission—living on a large scale, ruling over palaces and distant borders—requires consolidation through metaphysical knowledge. The first philosophy is the last transference. Novalis would go on to lift the secret when he interpreted thought allied with writing as a general homecoming: "Where are we going? Always home." The total parental home does not want to lose even the most foreign elements. On all paths to high culture, sphere extension and growing inclusivity dictate the law by which consciousness develops.

What we call growing up consists of these strenuous resettlings of smaller subjectivities in larger world forms; often,

it simultaneously means the reformatting of the tribal consciousness to suit imperial and text-supported circumstances. For the child we were, the expanded space of interaction may be the large family for a while; as soon as the familial horizon is exceeded, however, the more developed social forms stake their claims to form and animate the individuals. As far as prehistoric times are concerned, the decisive social form manifests itself as the horde, with a tendency towards forming clan communities and tribes; in historical times, it appears as the people, with a tendency towards founding cities, nations and kingdoms. In both regimes, the prehistoric and the historical, human existence never simply adjusts itself to fit into what, using a modern and overly smooth term, we call its "environment"; rather, this existence creates its own surrounding space through which and in which it appears. Every social form has its own world house, a bell jar of purpose, under which human beings first of all gather, understand themselves, defend themselves, grow and dissolve boundaries. The hordes, tribes and peoples, and the empires all the more, are—in their respective formats—psychosospheric quantities that arrange themselves, climatize themselves and contain themselves. At every moment of their existence, they are forced to place above themselves, by their typical means, their own semiotic heavens from which character-forming collective inspirations can flow to them.

No people can last in its own process of generations and in competition with other peoples unless it succeeds in keeping up its process of self-inspiration. What is referred to here as autogenous inspiration is, more dispassionately expressed, the continuum of ethnospheric climate techniques. Through ethnotechniques spanning generations, tens and hundreds of

thousands, perhaps even millions of individuals are attuned to superior collective spirits and particular rhythms, melodies, projects, rituals and fragrances. By virtue of such formal games, which produce a shared and productive sensuality, the collected many keep finding the proof of their destiny to be together, even under adverse conditions; where this proof becomes powerless, discouraged people dissolve within stronger cultures or decline into rioting bands and childless leftover groups.²¹ Because of its exaggerated aim, the task of enclosing such absurdly large numbers of people in unifying systems of delusion sounds like an impossible demand. Mastering precisely such difficulties, however, was obviously part of the logic of the way in which peoples were actually formed. In the historical world, it seems, the more improbable option develops an inclination to assert itself as the realer one. How implausible and impossible the mere existence of a united mass like a people seems from the perspective of the primal hordes—the cultural synthesis of a thousand or ten thousand hordes—yet it is the peoples who made history, sucked up the hordes and demoted them to mere families or houses. To us, the concept of empire—in terms of the swarming of tribes and peoples—seems all the more of an impossibility; it is precisely the polyethnic empires, however, that called the tune of volatile history during the last four millennia and translated their expectations of order into reality. Anyone who studies the course of the past ten millennia with regard to the creation of peoples must conclude from the evidence that wherever there are peoples, divine heavens to form these peoples cannot be far away. The native gods stand, like ethnotechnic universals, for communality instead of diverse segments—they are the unbelievable that demanded belief, and

did so with the greatest historical success. Almost everywhere, brute force had a catalytic role in ethnopoietic processes. It is only the language games of the gods, however, that prove to be effective guarantees of longer-lasting ethnospheric animation effects; one could say that they ensure syntheses of peoples *a priori*.

The case of the Jewish Yahwe, the spirit God who blows over the desert, is an especially striking example of a supreme inspirator carrying out His ethnopoietic office for His chosen people. Not only does he remain the intimate God of Adam and Abraham, and offer himself to human souls in the monotheistic cultures as the eternal super-thou; He is, above all, the transcendent integrator who unites the twelve tribes to form the people of Israel. He is the one who stabilizes his people not only as bearers of the law, but also as a military stress community,²² enabling them to assert themselves at the ever-changing battlefronts of innumerable conflicts. He commits Himself to His people in the most remarkable manner by binding it to Him through the pneumatic legal form of the covenant. Friedrich Heer once observed that the sheer physical existence of the Jewish people in the present essentially amounts to a proof of God from history; in less effusive terms, one could say that the historical persistence of Judaism through the last three thousand years at least constitutes the most concrete of all spheric proofs based on survival.²³

In spherological terms, peoples appear above all as communities of cult, arousal, effort and inspiration. As autogenous vessels, they live and survive only under their own atmospheric, semiospheric bell jar. Through their gods, their stories and their arts, they supply themselves with the breath—and thus the stimuli—that make them possible. In this sense, they are

successful pneumotechnic and auto-stressory constructs. By lasting, peoples prove their ethnotechnic genius *ipso facto*. And although the individuals within peoples pursue their own concerns in relative obliviousness, overarching myths, rituals and self-stimulations still create social fabrics of sufficient ethnic coherence, even from the most resistant material. Such endogenously stressed collective bodies are spheric alliances that drift in the current of the ages. That is why the most successful sphere-forming communities, the religion-based folk traditions or cultures, have survived for centuries with impressive ethno-spiritual constancy. The prime example, alongside Judaism, is Indo-Aryan Brahmanism, which has been symbolically air-conditioning the Hindu world for millennia. The Chinese continuum likewise confirms the law that sphere politics is fate: was China not one great artistic exercise on the theme “existence in an exteriorless, self-immured space” until the turn of our decade? We shall attempt, especially in the second volume, to explain how this imperial enclosure reflected the characteristic spatial understanding of the metaphysical epoch.

Speaking of spheres, then, does not only mean developing a theory of symbiotic intimacy and couple-surrealism; though sphere theory by its nature begins as a psychology of inner spatial formation from biune correspondences, it inevitably develops further into a *general theory of autogenous vessels*. This theory provides the abstract form for all immunologies. Under the sign of the spheres, finally, the question is posed as to the *form* of political outer space creations as such.

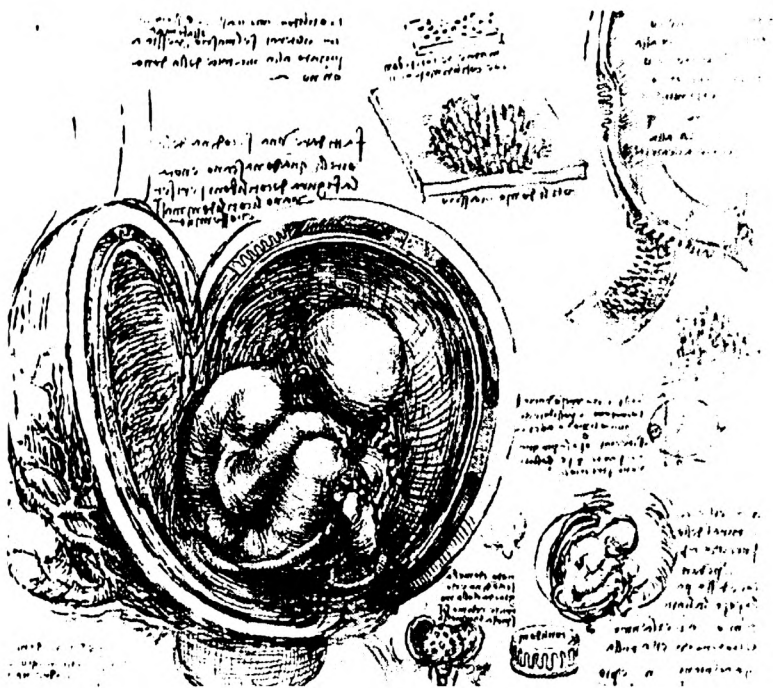
In our account, then, sphere psychology will go before sphere politics; the philosophy of intimacy must be used to

support political morphology, open it up, accompany it and circle it. This order has an obvious dramaturgical reason, but ultimately stems from the matter itself. At its beginning, every life goes through a phase in which a mild two-person illusion defines the world. Caring ecstasies enclose mothers and children in an amorous bell whose resonances remain, under all circumstances, a precondition for a successful life. Early on, however, the unified two become related to third, fourth and fifth elements; as the singular life ventures out of its initial shell, additional poles and larger spatial dimensions open up, each defining the extent of the developing and developed connections, worries and participation. In fully-grown spheres, forces are at work that draw the individual into an illusion shared by millions. It seems impossible to live in large societies without yielding in some measure to the delirium of one's own tribe. From the outset, therefore, spherology examines the risks involved in transference processes from micro- to macropsychoses. What it considers above all else, however, is the exodus of the living from the real and the virtual mother's womb into the dense cosmoses of the regional advanced civilizations, and beyond these into the non-round, non-dense foam worlds of modern global culture. In this, our account follows the Romanesque idea of describing the world as a glass bead game, even if, conditioned by its subject, it will take away the weightlessness of this motif. Spheres are forms as forces of destiny—from the fetal marble in its private, dark waters to the cosmic-imperial ball that appears before us with the supremely confident aim of containing and rolling over us.

Once spheres are elevated to a theme as effective forms of the real, the perspective of the world's *form* reveals the key to its

symbolic and pragmatic order. We can explicate why, wherever people think in large round forms, the idea of self-sacrifice inevitably gains power. From time immemorial, the massive globes that present mortals with their comforting roundness have demanded that whatever does not fit into the smooth curvature of the whole should be subordinated to them: first of all the stubborn, cumbersome, private ego, which has always resisted complete absorption into the great round self. The forces of empire and salvation find their obligatory aesthetic in the circle. Hence our phenomenology of spheres is forced by the obstinacy of its theme to overturn the morphological altar on which, in imperial times, the non-round was always sacrificed to the round. On the largest scale, the theory of spheres leads into a critique of round reason.

The first book of this sphere trilogy speaks of microspheric units that will be referred to here as *bubbles*. They constitute the intimate forms of the rounded being-in-form and the basic molecule of the strong relationship. Our analysis sets about the task, never undertaken before, of narrating the epic of those biunities that have always been lost to the adult intelligence, yet never fully eradicated. We shall dive into a lost history that tells of the blossoming and sinking of the intimate Atlantis; we will explore a breathed continent in the matriarchal sea that we inhabited in a subjectively prehistoric time, and abandoned with the start of what we believe to be our own histories. In this distinctive world, elusive quantities flash at the edge of conventional logic. Recognizing our inevitable conceptual helplessness as our only sure companion, we traverse landscapes of pre-objective existence and prior relationships. If it were appropriate to speak of penetrating,



Leonardo da Vinci, drawing with uterus, embryo and placenta, c. 1520, detail

one might say that we will penetrate into the realm of intimate absurdities.²⁴ The things themselves, however, as becomes apparent, will only tolerate non-invasive invasions; in this area one must entrust oneself, more permissively than in one's usual methodical explorations and goal-directed thought tasks, to a drift that pulls us forwards on the lymphatic currents of pre-subjectively primitive self-awareness. On the way through the evasive underworld of the inner world, the schematic image of a fluid and auratic universe unfolds like a map in sound, woven entirely from resonances and suspended matter; it is there that we must seek the prehistory of all things pertaining to the soul.

By its very nature, this search has the form of an impossible problem that can neither be solved nor left alone.

These journeys along the edges to the source regions of the soul, self-sense and entwinement bring to light just how far the prehistory of the intimate has always proceeded as a history of mental catastrophe. One cannot speak of the intimate spheres without mentioning how their bursting and expanded regeneration take place. All amniotic sacs,²⁵ organic models of autogenous vessels, live towards their bursting; with the turbulent waters of birth, every life is washed up on the coast of harder facts. Those who reach it can use those facts to explain what drives the intimate, all too intimate bubbles to failure and forces their inhabitants into transformations.

The second book of *Spheres* will open up a historico-political world whose models are the geometrically exact orb and the globe. Here we enter the Parmenidean dimension: a universe whose boundaries are drawn with a compass and whose center is occupied by a specifically philosophical, circumspect and overflowing joviality. In the era of metaphysics and classical empires, not so much overcome as simply forgotten, God and the world seemingly made a pact to present everything intrinsically being thing as an inclusive orb. Theology and ontology have, as far as we can see, always been teachings on the round container form; only from this perspective do the shapes of the empire and the cosmos become conceivable in a binding fashion. Not without reason was Nicholas of Cusa able to write: "And so, the whole of theology is said to be circular."²⁶ Theologians may continue under the illusion that their God is deeper than the God of the philosophers; but the God of the morphologists



Mosaic showing a group of philosophers from the Villa Albani, Rome, 1st century BC

is deeper than the God of the theologians.²⁷ On such expeditions into worlds now almost entirely lost, where the idea of a necessary roundness of the whole predominated, we gain insights into the function and construction of political ontologies in premodern empires. There is no traditional empire that failed to secure its borders by cosmological means, and no ruling body that did not discover the instruments of political immunology for itself. What is world history if not also the war

history of immune systems? And the early immune systems—were they not always militant geometries too?

The recollection of the venerable doctrines of orb-shaped being uncovers the philosophical origins of a process that, under the name of “globalization,” is on everyone’s lips today. Its true story needs to be told—from the geometrization of the heavens in Plato and Aristotle to the circumnavigation of the final orb, the earth, through ships, capitals and signals. It will transpire how the Uranian globalization of ancient physics had to change into terrestrial globalization upon its modern failure. Underlying this is the decision to give the *globe* back the significance that is assigned to it nominally in the usual talk of globalization, but never in a conceptually serious fashion, namely as the true icon of heaven and earth. Once one has gained an idea of terrestrial globalization as the basic process of the Modern Age, it can be made clear why a third globalization, triggered by the rapid images in the networks, is currently leading to a general space crisis. This is indicated by the concept, as familiar as it is opaque, of *virtuality*. The virtual space of cybernetic media is the modernized outside that can no longer be presented as one form of the divine interior; it is made feasible in the shape of technological exteriority—and hence as an outside that lacks any inside counterpart from the outset. Cybernetic virtuality was preceded by philosophical virtuality, admittedly, which had been founded with the Platonic exposition of the world of ideas. Classical metaphysics already cast vulgar spatial thought into a crisis, for Plato made the virtual sun known as “good” rise over the sensual world, and it is only from this that everything that is “real” about the three-dimensionally sensual gains being at all. The current

writings about virtual space are just in time to participate in the 2,400-year anniversary of the discovery of the virtual.

The concept of the sphere—both as an enlivened space and as the imagined and virtual orb of being—is ideally suited to recapitulating the transition from the most intimate to the most encompassing, from the closed to the burst-open concept of space. That the space-spawning extraversions of the spheres show a touch of the weird and even the monstrous was hinted at by Rilke, who did more for the poetics of space than any contemporary thinker, in a decisive verse:

And how perplexed must any womb-born creature feel, who is
obliged to fly thin air.²⁸

The theory of spheres is a morphological tool that allows us to grasp the exodus of the human being, from the primitive symbiosis to world-historical action in empires and global systems, as an almost coherent history of extraversion. It reconstructs the phenomenon of advanced civilization as the novel of sphere transference from the intimate minimum, the dual bubble, to the imperial maximum, which one should imagine as a monadic round cosmos. If the exclusivity of the bubble is a lyric motif, the inclusivity of the orb is an epic one.

It is in the nature of the matter that the phenomenology of imperial roundnesses must turn into a critical gynecology of the state and the large-scale church; in the course of our account, we will in fact show that peoples, empires, churches and, above all, modern nation states, are not least space-political attempts to recreate fantastic wombs for infantilized mass populations by

imaginary and institutional means. Because the greatest of all possible container figures had to be envisaged as the one God in the age of patriarchal metaphysics, however, the theory of the orb leads directly to a morphological reconstruction of Western ontotheology: this doctrine conceptualizes God Himself, in Himself and for Himself, as an all-encompassing orb of which esoteric doctrines circulating since the High Middle Ages would claim that its center was everywhere and its perimeter nowhere.²⁹ Was the process of the Modern Age not identical, in its deep structure, to the attempts of European intellectuals to find their bearings in this unstable super-orb?

From the early Middle Ages, Catholic infernologists considered that humans are beings which could fall out of the divine round space. It was only with Dante that hell was cleared up geometrically: in his vision, even those who are excommunicated from the divine orb after judgment will remain contained in the immanences of hell's circles—we shall refer to these, with the rings of the *Commedia* in mind, as the anti-spheres. Their description, as remains to be shown, anticipates the modern phenomenology of depression and the psychoanalytical separation of analyzable and non-analyzable spirits.³⁰

In examinations of the metaphysics of telecommunication in large-scale social bodies, we will show how the classical empires and *ecclesiae* managed to present themselves as sun-like orbs whose rays break forth from a monarchic center to illuminate even the periphery of all that is.³¹ Here it becomes apparent why the attempts of classical metaphysics to conceive of all that is as a concentrically organized monosphere were doomed to failure, for more reasons than immanent construction errors—why, in fact, such a hyper-orb, because of its forced abstractness, was a

flawed immunological design to begin with. The widespread homesickness for the Aristotelian world that is seeing a particular revival today, and which recognizes its goal in the word “cosmos” and its longing in the phrase “world soul,” exists not least because we do not practice any historical immunology, and draw the dangerously false conclusion from the evident immunodeficiencies of contemporary cultures that earlier world systems were constructed better in this respect. The livability of the classically totalistic systems of former times is a peculiar matter, however. One need only recall the Gnostic claustrophobia under the tyrannical walls of heaven, or the early Christian unease about encompassing the world at all, to judge how far the world of late antiquity already saw reasons to revolt against the flawed immunological design of its official cosmology. We will explain how the Christian epoch was only able to discover the formula for its success in a historic compromise of its immune systems, both the personalistic-religious and the imperial-constructivistic—and why their decline had to result in the technization of immunity that characterizes modernity.

Finally, it will have to be shown how the delayed failure of the European dream of universal monarchy supplied the driving forces for the terrestrial globalization process, in whose course the scattered cultures on the last orb will be drawn together into an ecological stress commune.³²

The third book will address the modern catastrophe of the round world. Using morphological terms, it will describe the rise of an age in which the form of the whole can no longer be imagined in terms of imperial panoramas and circular panopticons. From a morphological perspective, modernity appears primarily



Planetarium under construction in Jena in the 1920s

as a form-revolutionary process. It is not by chance that its conservative critics decried it as a loss of the center and rejected it as a rebellion against the divine circle—to this day. For Catholic Old Europeans, the essence of the Modern Age can still be expressed in a single phrase: spheric blasphemy. Much less nostalgically, though taking an untimely non-Catholic path, our spherological approach supplies the means to characterize the catastrophes of world form in modernity—that is, terrestrial and virtual globalization—in terms of non-round sphere formations.

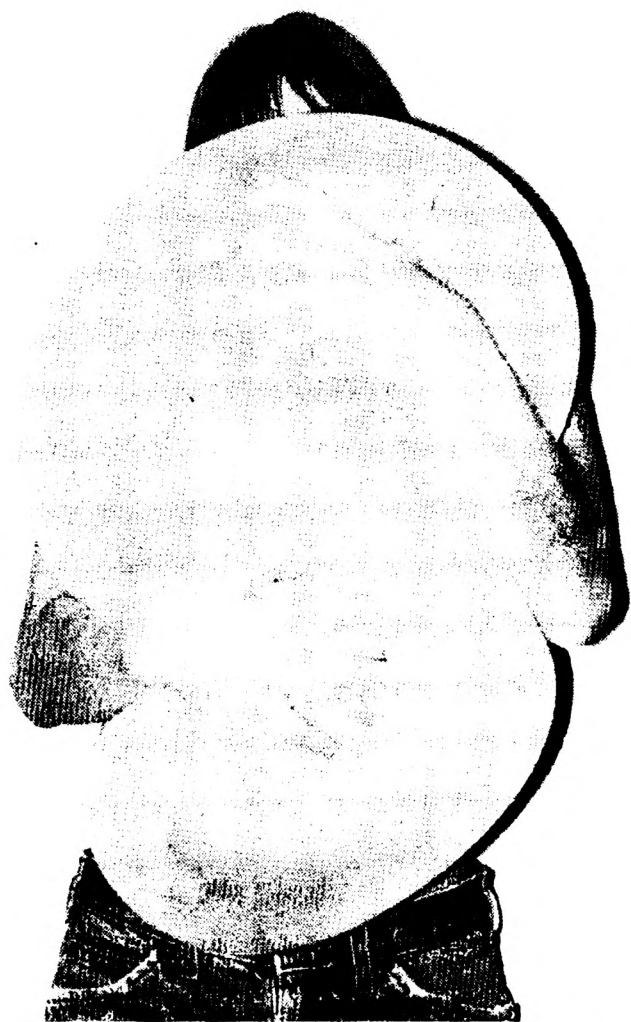
This *contradictio in adiecto* mirrors the formal dilemma of the current contemporary state of the world, in which global markets and media have ignited an acute world war of ways of life and informational commodities. When everything has become the center, there is no longer any valid center; when everything is transmitting, the allegedly central transmitter is lost in the tangle of messages. We see how and why the age of the one, the greatest all-encompassing circle of unity and its bowed exegetes has irrevocably passed. The guiding morphological principle of the polyspheric world we inhabit is no longer the orb, but rather *foam*. The structural implication of the current earth-encompassing network—with all its eversions into the virtual realm—is thus not so much a globalization as a foaming. In foam worlds, the individual bubbles are not absorbed into a single, integrative hyper-orb, as in the metaphysical conception of the world, but rather drawn together to form irregular hills. With a phenomenology of foams, we shall attempt to advance—in concepts and images—towards a political amorphology that gets to the bottom(less)³³ of the metamorphoses and paradoxes of the solidary space in the age of multifarious media and mobile world markets. Only a theory of the amorphous and non-round could, by examining the current fame of sphere destructions and sphere regenerations, offer the most intimate and general theory of the present age. Foams, heaps, sponges, clouds and vortexes serve as the first amorphological metaphors, and will help to investigate the formation of inner worlds, the creation of contexts and the architectures of immunity in the age of unfettered technical complexity. What is currently being confusedly proclaimed in all the media as *the* globalization of the world is, in morphological terms, the universalized war of foams.



The Eiffel Tower

As an inevitable result of the subject itself, we shall also encounter perspectives on sphere pathology in the modern-postmodern process. Referring to a pathology of spheres displays a threefold focus: a politicological one, in so far as foams tend to be ungovernable structures with an inclination towards morphological anarchy; a cognitive one, in so far as the individuals and associations of subjects can no longer produce any complete world, as the idea of the whole world itself, in its characteristically holistic emphasis, unmistakably belongs to the expired age of metaphysical total-inclusion-circles, or monospheres; and a psychological one, in so far as single individuals in foams tend to lose the power to form mental-emotional spaces, and shrink to isolated depressive points transplanted into random surroundings (correctly referred to systemically as their environment). They suffer from the immunodeficiency caused by the deterioration of solidarities—to say nothing, for the moment, of the new immunizations acquired through participation in regenerated sphere creations. For sphere-deficient private persons, their lifespan becomes a sentence of solitary confinement; egos that are extensionless, scarcely active and lacking in participation stare out through the media window into moving landscapes of images. It is typical of the acute mass cultures that the moving images have become far livelier than most of their observers: a reproduction of animism in step with modernity.

In fact, the soul in the non-round age must, even under the most favorable conditions, be prepared for the fact that for the single bubbles, the self-completing, released individuals who furnish their personal spaces medially, the hybrid global foam will remain something impenetrable; at least navigability can partially replace transparency. Certainly, as long as the world

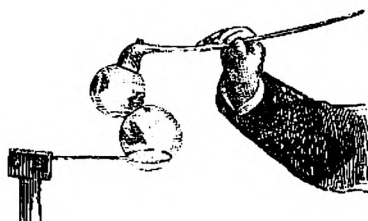


Annika von Hausswolff, *Attempting to Deal with Time and Space*, 1997

could still be panoptically overviewed as a whole from a single ruling point, it seemed intelligible through the self-transparency with which the divine orb illuminated itself in order to possess itself completely at every point. The notion of human participation in such a provision of transparency released imperial and monologic forms of reason; the world as a whole was illuminated by the circumspection that ruled from the center. God Himself was nothing but the center and the perimeter of the orb of being that was projected and viewed by Him, and all thought that based itself on Him shared analogously in the sublimity of His central view. In the foam worlds, however, no bubble can be expanded into an absolutely centered, all-encompassing, amphiscopic orb; no central light penetrates the entire foam in its dynamic murkiness. Hence the ethics of the decentered, small and middle-sized bubbles in the world foam includes the effort to move about in an unprecedentedly spacious world with an unprecedentedly modest circumspection; in the foam, discrete and polyvalent games of reason must develop that learn to live with a shimmering diversity of perspectives, and dispense with the illusion of the one lordly point of view. Most roads do not lead to Rome—that is the situation, European: recognize it. Thinking in the foam means navigating on unstable currents—others would say that it changes, under the impression of the thought tasks of the time, into a plural and transversal practice of reason.³⁴

With this neither gay nor sad science of foams, the third book of *Spheres* presents a theory of the current age whose main tenor is that deanimation has an insurmountable lead over reanimation. It is the inanimable outside that gives food for thought in intrinsically modern times. This conclusion will inevitably drive the nostalgic yearning for a conception of the

world, which still aims for a livable whole in the education-holistic sense, into resignation. For whatever asserts itself as the inner realm, it is increasingly exposed as the inner side of an outside. No happiness is safe from endoscopy; every blissful, intimate, vibrating cell is surrounded by swarms of professional disillusioners, and we drift among them—thought paparazzi, deconstructivists, interior deniers and cognitive scientists, accomplices in an unlimited plundering of Lethe. The rabble of observers, who want to take everything from without and no longer understand any rhythm—have we not long since become part of them, in most matters and at most moments? And how could it be any different? Who could inhabit in such a way that they inhabit everything? Or in such a way that they do not interfere in anything exterior? The world, it seems, has grown much too large for people of an older type, who strove for true community with things both near and far. The hospitality of the *sapiens* beings towards what arose behind the horizon has long been strained beyond the critical level. No institution, not even a church that thought *kata holon* and loved universally—let alone an individual who reads on bravely—can imagine that it is sufficiently open for everything that infiltrates, speaks and encounters it; viewed from any point in our lifeworld, the vast majority of individuals, languages, works of art, commodities and galaxies remain an unassimilable outside world, by necessity and forever. All “systems,” whether households, communes, churches or states—and especially couples and individuals—are damned to their specific exclusivity; the zeitgeist celebrates its responsibility-free connivance in the external multiplicity with increasing openness. Intellectual history today: the endgames of external observation.



From C. V. Boys, *Soap-Bubbles, and the Forces which Mould Them*, London, 1902

Whether these diagnoses lead to disturbing and restrictive conclusions or to beneficial openings and syntheses is an open question. In all three parts, this treatise on spheres as world-creating formal potencies is an attempt to speak about the contemporary world without innocence. Anyone who relates experiences of the Modern Age to themselves must stand by the loss of innocence in three respects: psychologically, politically and technologically. What makes this more difficult is that a complicated difference between losing innocence and attaining adulthood reveals itself. Be that as it may—it is nothing new that thinking means breaking with harmlessness.

The present account of the rise and the changes in the shape of the spheres is, as far as we know, the first attempt since the failure of Oswald Spengler's "morphology of world history" to restore the highest priority in an anthropological and culture-theoretical investigation to a concept of form. Spengler's morphological pretensions, despite his invocation of Goethe as a patron, were doomed to failure, because they applied to their

objects a concept of form that could not possibly do justice to their willfulness and history. It was already a brilliant act of force to isolate cultures in general as “life forms of the highest order,” declaring them windowless units that grow and decline purely according to immanent laws, and force was even more necessary for Spengler to interpret his cultures as thousand-year empires of a regional soul disposition—as soap bubbles of the highest order, so to speak, that would be kept in their shape through internal tensions of an occult nature. The descriptions of life presented under the sign of morphology for the eight cultures he acknowledged may have their place of honor in the history of cultural philosophy as the monument to a great, perhaps incomparable speculative and deductive energy; it is, however, a monument best placed in one of the quieter corners. As far as the application of morphological concepts in the cultural sciences is concerned, Spengler’s example has so far had rather discouraging effects. Our own attempt can therefore not be overly indebted to such a model—except as an impressive demonstration of what should be avoided in future.

If we speak here of spheres as self-realizing forms, we do so in the conviction that we are not imposing concepts—and if they were imposed in a certain sense, it would be in a manner encouraged by the objects themselves. The theory of the spheres: that means gaining access to something that is the most real, yet also the most elusive and least tangible of things. Even to speak of gaining access is misleading, for the discovery of the spheric is less a matter of access than of a slowed-down circumspection amid the most obvious. We are always ecstatically involved in spheric circumstances from the start, even if, for deep-seated and culturally specific reasons, we have learned to overlook

them, think past them and exclude them from our discussions. Because of its orientation towards objectivity, European scientific culture is an undertaking that aims to de-thematize spheric ecstacy. The animated interiority we shall attempt to show in all basic circumstances of human culture and existence is indeed a *realissimum* that initially eludes any verbal or geometric depiction—any representation at all, in fact—and yet, at every point of existence, forces something resembling original circle and orb formations—thanks to a potency of rounding that takes effect prior to all formal and technical constructions of circles.

The inherent morphological dynamic of the worlds shared by those who live together in reality is that of *arrondissements*, which form as they please without any contribution from the geometricians. The self-organization of the psychocosmic and political spaces lead to those metamorphoses of the circle in which existence gives itself its spheric-atmospheric constitution. The word “self-organization”—which is used here without the usual scientific hysteria—is meant to draw attention to the fact that the circle holding humanity is neither purely made nor purely found, instead rounding itself spontaneously on the threshold between construction and self-realization. Or, more accurately put: it realizes itself in rounding events—just as those gathered around a hearth group freely *and* decidedly around the fireplace and its immediate advantages of warmth.³⁵ Hence the spherological analysis initiated with this first volume, beginning with the micro-forms, is neither a purely constructivist projection of rounded-off spaces in which people imagine they are leading a shared existence, nor a purely ontological meditation on the circle in which mortals are captured through an inaccessible transcendent order.



Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, outside view with closed wings

As an introduction to a medial poetics of existence, the initial aim of spherology is simply to retrace the formations of shapes among simple immanences that appear in human (and extra-human) systems of order—whether as organizations of archaic intimacy, as the spatial design of primitive peoples, or as the theological-cosmological self-interpretation of traditional

empires. At first glance, the present study, especially in its second part, could thus have the appearance of a cultural history defamiliarized with the aid of morphological, immunological and transference-theoretical concepts. This view, though it does not yet lead to our central concerns, would be neither entirely false nor entirely unwelcome—provided one is willing to admit that only from philosophy can the intelligence learn how its passions find concepts.

PRELIMINARY REFLECTIONS

Thinking the Interior

I put an apple on my table. Then I put myself inside this apple. What tranquility!

— Henri Michaux, "Magic"

Humans are beings that participate in spaces unknown to physics: the formulation of this axiom enabled the development of a modern psychological typology that scattered humans—without regard for their first self-localizations—among radically different places, conscious and unconscious, day-like and nightly, honorable and scandalous, places that belong to the ego and places where inner others have set up camp. What lends modern psychological knowledge its strength and autonomy is that it has shifted the human position beyond the reach of geometry and registration offices. Psychological investigations have responded to the question of *where* a subject is located with answers that belie physical and civil appearances. Only the bodies of the dead can be localized unambiguously; the anatomist, standing before his granite table, will not have any doubts about the location of his object: for the bodies in the outer space, the

observer's coordinates alone are of interest. With beings that are *alive* in a humanly ecstatic manner, the question of place is fundamentally different, as the primary productivity of human beings lies in working on their accommodation in wayward, surreal spatial conditions.

In reaching this insight, psychology is initially assured the agreement of cultural anthropology: only through secession from their old nature have humans become an ontological fringe group that disconcerts itself. They cannot be adequately explained by what is natural, or rather old-natural, about them—despite the abundance of attempts to portray cultures as emerging continuously from natural processes. In the midst of outer nature and above their inner nature, humans lead the lives of islanders, at first constantly confusing their symbolic actions, their acclimatizations, their pamperings and their breakings-away from instinct-guided patterns with what is self-evident, and in this sense with the natural of old. Upon closer inspection, however, they live initially only in constructs that have grown from within themselves like second natures—in their languages, their systems of ritual and meaning, and in their constitutive deleria, which are admittedly propped up somewhere on the earth's surface. (The political is the product of group delusion and territory.)

The revolution of modern psychology does not stop at explaining that all humans live constructivistically, and that every one of them practices the profession of the wild interior designer, continually working on their accommodation in imaginary, sonorous, semiotic, ritual and technical shells. The specific radicality of the sciences of human psychology only becomes manifest when they interpret the subject as something

that not only arranges itself within symbolic orders, but is also taken up ecstatically into the shared activity of arranging the world with others. It is not only the designer of its own interior, filled with relevant objects; it must also, constantly and inevitably, allow itself to be placed as a friendly furnishing in the container of the close and closest inner parties. Consequently, the relationship between human subjects sharing a field of proximity can be described as one between restless containers that contain and exclude one another. How can one conceive of this bizarre relationship? In the physical space, it is impossible for something within a container simultaneously to contain its container. It is equally inconceivable to imagine a body in a container as something that is excluded from that very container. It is precisely with relationships of this type, however, that the doctrine of psychological space deals from the start. This notion, an insurmountable paradox in geometric and physical terms, is the point of departure for the doctrine of psychological or human locators: individuals are subjects only to the extent that they are partners in a divided and assigned subjectivity. If one wished to take this to its precarious limits and revive Platonic intuitions in contemporary formulations, one could say: every subject is the restless remainder of a couple whose missing half never ceases to make demands on the one left behind.

With the very first lines it draws, then, modern psychology dissolves the individualistic semblance, which attempts to understand individuals as substantial ego units that voluntarily interact with others like members of a liberal club—after the fact, arbitrarily and revocably, as befits the ideology of the individualistic contract society. Where such individualisms appear,

there is considerable psychological evidence pointing to a liberty-neurotic starting position; it is characteristic of this position that a subject cannot conceive of itself as contained, restricted, encompassed or occupied. It is the basic neurosis of Western culture to have to dream of a subject that watches, names and owns everything, without letting anything contain, appoint or own it, not even if the discreetest God offered himself as an observer, container and client. The dream persistently returns of an all-inclusive, monadic ego orb whose radius is its own thought—a thought that would easily pass through its spaces up to the outermost periphery, gifted with a wonderfully effortless discursivity that no real external thing could resist.

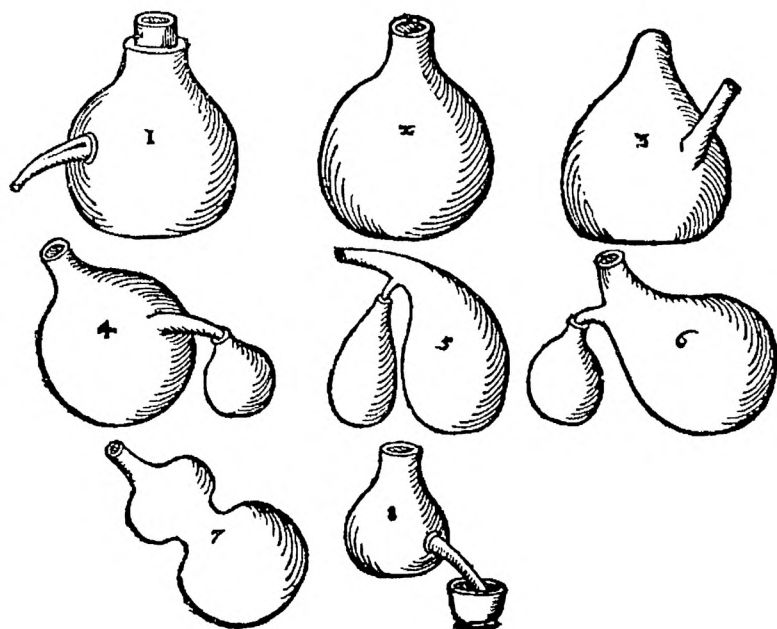
The other side of this masterful panoptic egotism shows itself in the Jonah complex, whose subject would have created a happy exile for himself in the belly of a whale, like the thirteen-year-old whose phantasms the psychoanalyst Wilhelm Stekel described: in his daydreams, the young man longed to set foot in the monstrous inside of a giantess whose abdominal cavity presented itself as a vault ten meters high. In the center of her stomach there was supposed to be a swing on which the blissful Jonah would propel himself aloft, safe in the knowledge that even the wildest vigor would never carry him out of there.³⁶ The first, fixed ego, which contains everything in its view around itself, and the second ego, the swinging one that allows itself to be contained fully by its cavity, are related in character insofar as both attempt to withdraw from the folded, interlaced, participatory structure of the real human space. Both have annulled the original dramatic difference between inside and outside by placing themselves, in a fantastic manner, in the middle of a homogeneous sphere not challenged by any real outside or unappropriated



Federico Fellini, *Casanova*: the great Muna

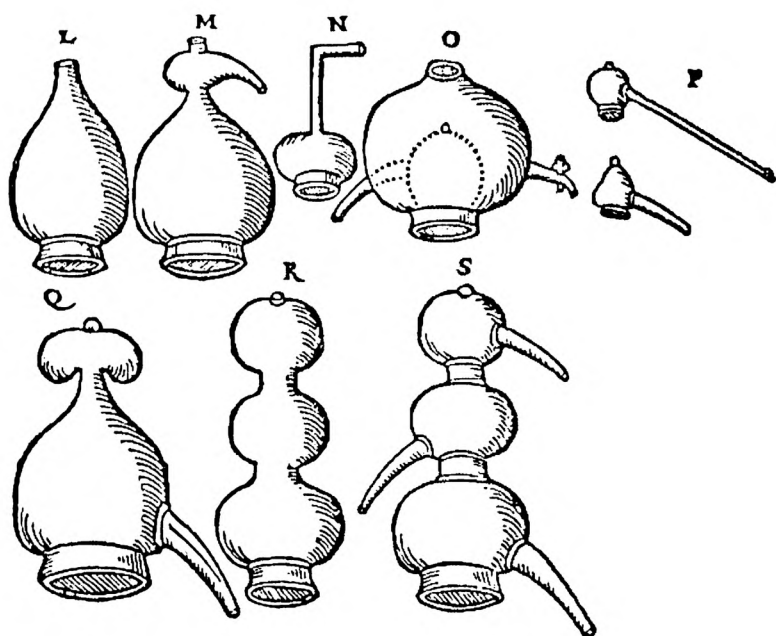
other. Clearly, the thesis that everything is outside is no less delirious than the longing to have everything on the inside. The two extreme postulates, which are probably tempting for all Western individuals in one way or another, tend away from the ecstatic entwining of the subject in the shared interior, where those who actually live together wear one another out.

The truth and wisdom of modern psychology with regard to such phantasms of impregnable inwardness or sovereign outwardness lies in its description of the human space as an intertwining of several interior spaces; here the surreal becomes the real. Every subject in the real consubjective space is containing, in so far as it absorbs and grasps other subjective elements, and contained, in so far as it is encompassed and devoured by the



Collecting vessels: 1. large bottle for spirits with tube, 2. single-bellied bottle, 3. collecting vessel closed at top, 4. bellied twin collecting vessel, 5. elongated twin collecting vessel, 6. the same in bottle form, 7. double-bellied bottle, 8. connecting vessel

circumspections and arrangements of others. The real human proximity field is thus more than a simple system of communicating vessels; if your fluid rises in my tubes and vice versa, this is only the first indication of what allows humans to affect one another at close range through their joins and overflows. As a system of hybrid communicating vessels, the human interior consists of paradoxical or autogenous hollow bodies that are at once tight and leaky, that must alternate between the roles of container and content, and which simultaneously have properties of inner and outer walls. Intimacy is the realm of surreal autogenous containers.

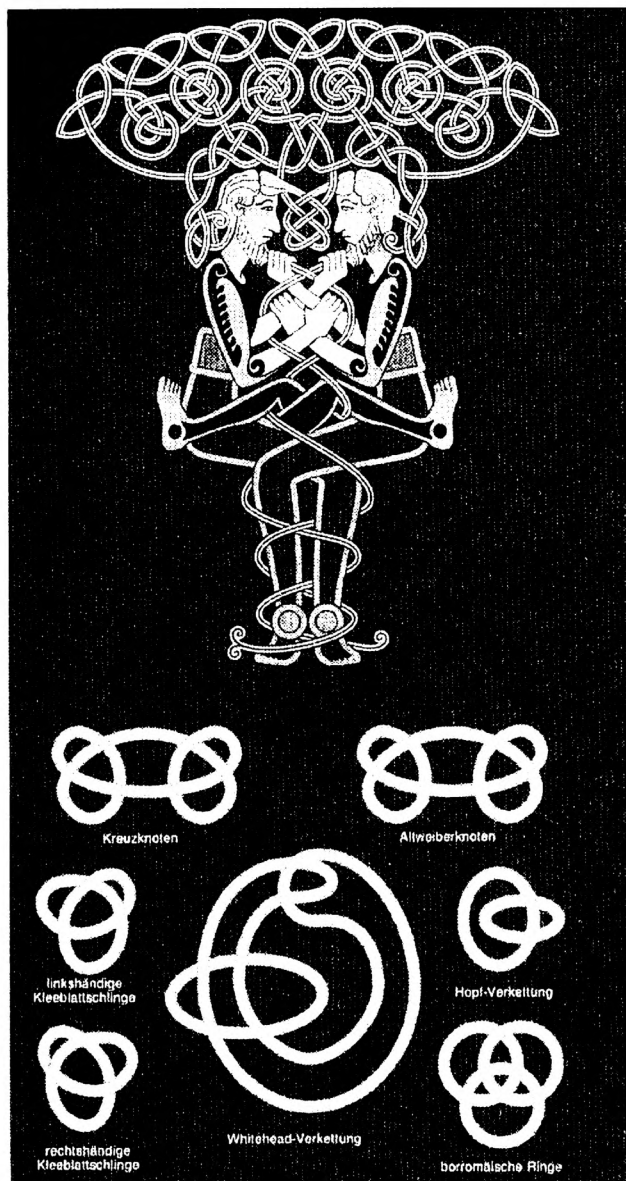


Receiving and connecting vessels: L. "riara" for connecting coils, M. cydaris, N. alembic with connecting tube, O. alembic for cooling, P. small alembics for flasks and vials, Q. combination of blind and beak alembic, R. triple blind alembic, S. triple beak alembic

Intimacy: with this much-abused keyword, for want of any better and less prostituted one, we shall attempt in the following investigations to get closer to the secrets of human displacement, which always begins as inward displacement (before becoming conspicuous as outward displacement). Perhaps it is useful, as far as the challenge of the idea is concerned, to approach the most unusual relationship with the most worn-out of terms. It would be premature at this point to address Heidegger's remark that Dasein means "suspendedness in nothingness"—for we are not yet far enough to say with

refreshed explicitness what *Dasein*, suspendedness, nothingness, and above all *in* actually mean.³⁷ It would be equally inappropriate now to discuss the theorem put forward by Deleuze and Foucault, namely that the subject is a *fold* of the outside; for we are still absolutely ignorant of any surface or outwardness whose folding could produce something resembling an interior or a self. We shall make just one anticipatory observation: intimacy, beyond its first sugary experience, can only be understood as an inscrutability within the most obvious. The theory of the intimate set in motion with the following microsphere analysis is dedicated to showing that all human sciences have always collected contributions to a topological surrealism, because it was never possible to speak of humans without having to deal with the various aimlessly wandering poetics of the inhabited interior. The spaces that humans allow to contain them have their own history—albeit a history that has never been told, and whose heroes are *eo ipso* not humans themselves, but rather the topoi and spheres as whose function humans flourish, and from which they fall if their unfolding fails.

For many intelligences, the thought of homely intimacies is associated with a spontaneous disgust at too much sweetness—which is why there is neither a philosophy of sweetness nor an elaborated ontology of the intimate. One must assess the nature of this resistance if one is to get past typical initial aversions. From a distance, the subject appears so unattractive and inconsequential that for the time being, only suckers for harmony or theophilic eunuchs would get stuck on it. An intellect that spends its energy on worthy objects usually prefers the sharp to the sweet; one does not offer candy to heroes. In the light of this disposition towards intellectual and existential sharpness, what



Mathematical knots

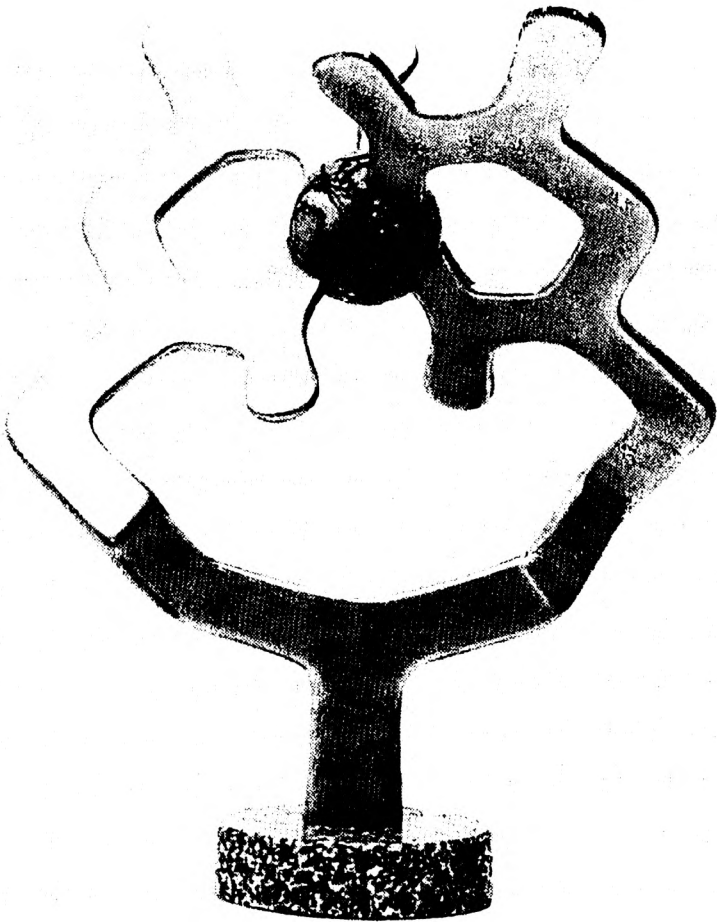
could seem more cloying, sticky and unheroic than the demand to participate in an investigation of the doughy, vague and humble-matriarchal space in which humans—at first and in most cases—have settled as seekers of security, good-natured inhabitants of normality and inmates of contentment institutions? What would be subject to greater *a priori* contempt than the devotion of individuals to their parochial habitat, which seems to offer them a certain drowsy convenience among themselves? The reason why strong minds usually despise sweetness can be partly explained by the subversive effects that sweet things, and sticky things even more, arouse in the proud subject. In an artful phenomenological micro-drama, Friedrich W. Heubach made explicit a candy experience that reveals the motives for the rejection of sweetness. Let us see how this oral drama, after the core-removing foreplay, the unwrapping of the “sweet-pregnant oval” from its delightful paper shell, moves towards its climax with the object’s insertion into the mouth of the hero:

The pursed lips seize the candy and release it laboriously into the oral cavity, where it is finally received by the tongue with expectant twists. Sweetness unfolds, opens out into a small, flattering O, and has soon transformed the mouth into a sweet, stickily and greedily pulsating ball that absorbs more and more as it expands. One is encircled oneself, and ultimately exists only as the fine, ever tauter periphery of this ball of sweetness; one closes one’s eyes and finally implodes: taking on the characteristics of a ball oneself, one forms *one* object with the world that has now become round in sweetness.

We now find “outer” events running in parallel with these “inner” ones: the empty candy wrapper is smoothed out more

and more until it is a flat rectangle, which is then rolled around the finger to form a cylindrical tube and finally folded into ever smaller surfaces. And when the ball of sweetness begins to lose its tension, flattens out and falls apart, the paper between the fingers takes on increasingly disordered and lumpy shapes; and when the sweetness forms no more than a fine, weakening line of deprivation, it is finally pressed into a hard little ball and flicked with relish far into the distance.³⁸

This reveals a reason for aversions to sweetness. Even the most harmless oral enjoyment causes something that will remain unacceptable for the freedom hero: the sweetness-in-me experience casts the enjoying subject out of the center and places it, for a few precarious yet welcome moments, on the fringe of an autocratic taste sphere. Wanting to resist this small overpowering would not be a sublime sentiment so much as a laughable one, not least because, according to the heroic postulate, allowing oneself to be infiltrated through the consumption of confectionery is shameful to begin with. The lesson of this incorporation has lasting effects: intimacy is experienced here as the inside of my body being broken through by the presence of a taste whose strength in pleasantness opens me up and forces me into submission—that sweeps me out of the way, in fact, because I can only truly enjoy it by allowing it to make me the fortunate spectator of its triumphal march through my oral cavity. The most basic luxury food is suitable to convince me that an incorporated object, far from coming unambiguously under my control, can take possession of me and dictate its topic to me. If a banal case of sugar consumption already hollows out the subject through the flaring up of an aroma presence, however, and makes it the



Béla Vizi, *Koordination*

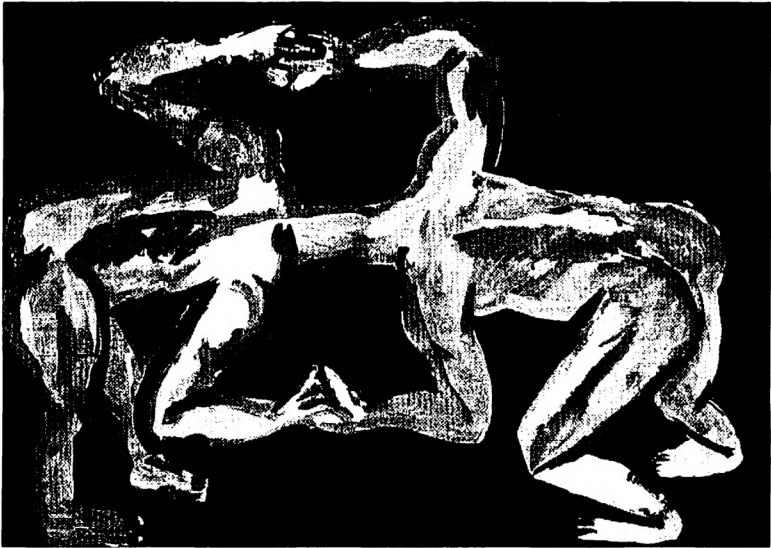
scene of invasive sensualities, what is to become of the subject's conviction that its destiny is self-determination on all fronts? What remains of the dream of human autonomy once the subject has experienced itself as a penetrable hollow body?

It would seem that, in such questions, the roles of self-will and rapture are inverted, and that the weakling insists on his own power while the strong one abandons himself. Should we not precisely understand the strongest subject as the most successful metabolic agent—the person who makes the least secret of his hollowness, penetrability and mediality? Should not the most decentered individual accordingly be understood as potentially the most powerful? And did the central psychological model of modernity, the ego-strong self-realizer, not step on the scene as a polyvalent metabolism-maximizer who surrenders himself to multifarious invasions, seductions and appropriations under the mask of controlled consumer power? Does not the entire universe of human intimacy, the web of divided interiors in the literal and metaphorical sense, grow from such inversions of appropriative-incorporative gestures? Do we, as phenomenologists, psychologists and topologists, not have to start from the observation that from the outset, subjects always form themselves through the experience of being “taken at their taking”? The constitutive candy, which epi-Freudian psychoanalysts have both viewed with suspicion and deified since the time of Melanie Klein, is none other than “the mother’s breast,” that alleged first “object” (note the singular) which the child (which is no more able to count to two than an object-relationship theorist) cannot accept and incorporate without reaching, in its way, the limits of the milky ball of sweetness within it. The early subject—should one deem it merely a gleeful observer on the periphery of a euphoric gulp?

Such considerations have troubling consequences for the doctrine of the human being, as they break with the illusion of circulating ego-delimitation systems. The point of this game

on the I-you and I-it boundaries³⁹ can be clarified via a mythological thought experiment. If candies and portions of mother's milk were subjects, not mere things—if they were benign demons, for example—it would not be extravagant to claim that they take possession of their consumers, settling inside them like occupiers who plan to stay for good. This would undoubtedly be a sound method to deduce the animation of the *infans* from its interaction with demons; then receiving a soul would simply mean becoming involved in a profitable obsession through spirit contact and productive incorporations. The notion of demonic possession is not available to a modern psychological theory, of course, although the circumstances themselves—the opening and population of a divided intimate space—are such that a discreet demonology would probably be its most fruitful interpretation.⁴⁰ Is it not, in fact, the whispering of nymphs' voices to the subject from its earliest states that unlocks its inner dimensions?⁴¹ Does not every unneglected child realize the advantage of being born only thanks to eudemonic nipples, good candy spirits, conspiratorial bottles and drinkable fairies that watch discreetly by its bed, occasionally entering the interior to nurse it? Does a sum of advantageous invasions not hollow out a love grotto within the individual, with enough space to house the self and its associated spirits for life? Does not every subjectification, then, presuppose multiple successful penetrations, formative invasions and interested devotions to life-enriching intruders? And is not every feeling of offensive self-positing injected with anger over missing the chance at being taken?

In the eight chapters of this book, we will begin a slow journey through the vaults of consubjective intimacy. Here we shall



From Evandro Salles, *Ten Dreams of Oedipus*

discuss, in sequence: the spaces of hysterical heartiness and the interfacial field; magnetopathic rapport in hypnosis and the fetal position of amniotic enclosure; placental doubling and the cultural manifestations of the dual soul; the psychoacoustic evocation of the self; and finally also theological attempts to give the liaison between God and the soul an intimo-topological foundation. The character of the observations made in all these layers and twists of the shared interior is not, however, merely that of metaphorical constructs. The interior we shall examine here has a different structure from that “hall of memory” that caused Augustine to marvel at how the human spirit contains a dimension large enough to preserve the trifles of one’s own life story as well as the immeasurable knowledge of God and the world accumulated by the generations before us. Nor is it like

the submerged part of the iceberg, the tip of which the schools of depth psychology so like to use when characterizing the human conscious. The intimate spaces of microspherology are neither the majestic auditoriums nor the cave-like hiding places of the individual conscious, which interacts with itself to create spatial images suitable for understanding the nature of its own position, spread out between the largest and the smallest.

The category of the intimate discussed here deals exclusively with divided, consubjective and inter-intelligent interiors in which only dyadic or multi-poled groups are involved—and which, in fact, can only exist to the extent that human individuals create these particular spatial forms as autogenous vessels through great closeness, through incorporations, invasions, intersections, interfoldings and resonances (and, in psychoanalytical terms, also identifications). This intimate vault system as a whole in no way corresponds to the unconscious as understood in depth psychology, for access to it is gained neither through a particular listening technique nor the insinuation of a latent meaning that manifests itself in halting speech, nor through the assumption of unconscious wish production. Readers can easily convince themselves that the dimensions of interiority spread out in this microspherology are, in their structure, worlds apart from the serial three-room-apartments of the Freudian soul apparatus. Philosophical interior research and the psychology of the unconscious only overlap in a few places, as we shall see; if we occasionally borrow from psychoanalytical notions in the following, it is only because the material permits and suggests it, not because we view the school as an authority. If we were to invoke a genius for this first part of the *Spheres* enterprise, one of the foremost candidates would

be Gaston Bachelard, who, with his phenomenology of material imagination, especially his studies on the psychoanalysis of the elements, created a valuable store of brilliant insights to which we shall return on several occasions. In his idea-laden 1948 book *La terre et les rêveries du repos* [The Earth and Reveries of Rest], the author gathered together diverse material concerning the dreams of material intimacy: birth houses and dream houses, grottos, labyrinths, snakes, and above all the aforementioned Jonah complex, which places every human being who knows freedom simultaneously into an unmistakable relationship with an enabling interior darkness. In this work, Bachelard notes that simply by looking inwards, every person becomes a Jonah—or, more precisely, becomes prophet and whale in a single body. The great phenomenologist of the experienced space did not forget to name the reason for this:

The unconscious is as sure of the closure of the circle as the most skilled geometrician: if one lets the reveries of intimacy take their course, [...] the dreaming hand will draw the *original circle*. It seems, then, as if the unconscious itself knew a Parmenidean sphere as the symbol of being. This sphere does not possess the rational beauties of geometric volume, but it offers the great securities of a belly.⁴²

We shall attempt in the following to develop these indispensable intuitions further. But we will also have to exceed their boundaries for the purpose of unfolding them, as we need to explain why the consubjective, intimate sphere can initially by no means possess a eucyclic or Parmenidean structure: the primitive mental orb, unlike the beautifully rounded philosophical one,

does not have a center of its own that radiates and collects everything, but rather two epicenters that evoke each other through resonance. Furthermore, it transpires that the inside of the soul grottos will not always remain exclusively a place of quiet happiness. The innermost access to your living cell is often reserved, as we can see, for a voice that wishes to reduce or deny the possibility of your existence. It characterizes the basic risk of all intimacy that our destroyer sometimes gets closer to us than our ally.

Peter Sloterdijk

GLOBES

SPHERES II

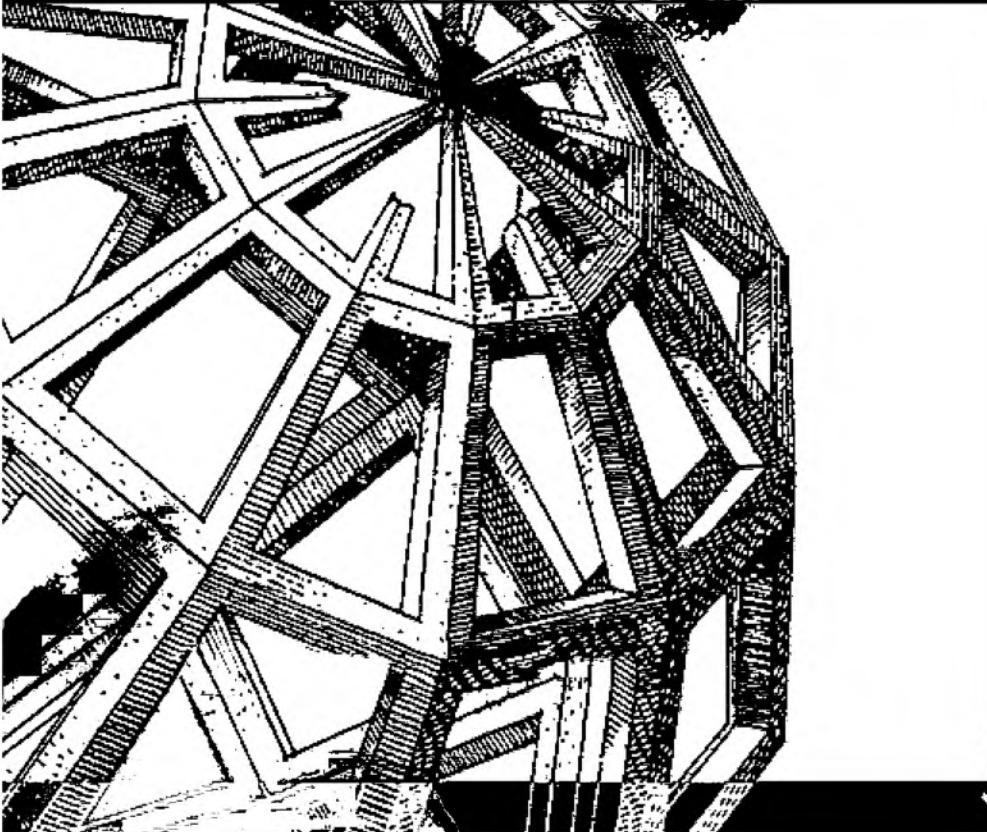
<e>





PETER SLOTERDIJK

ESFERAS II

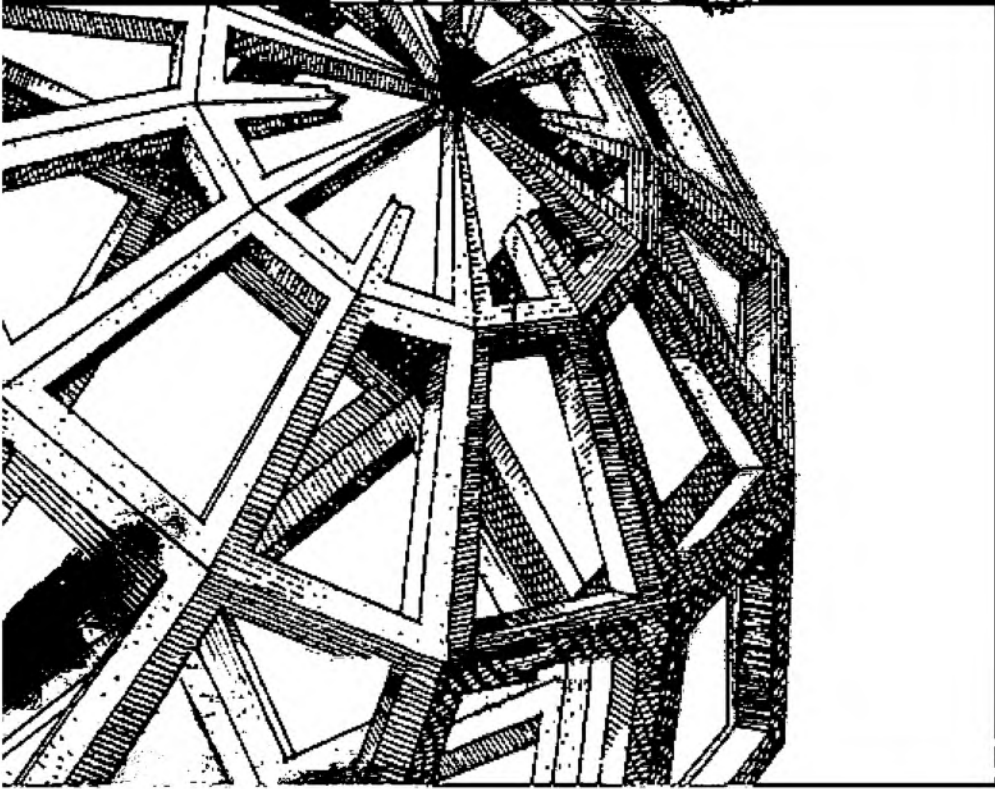


ae



PETER SLOTERDIJK

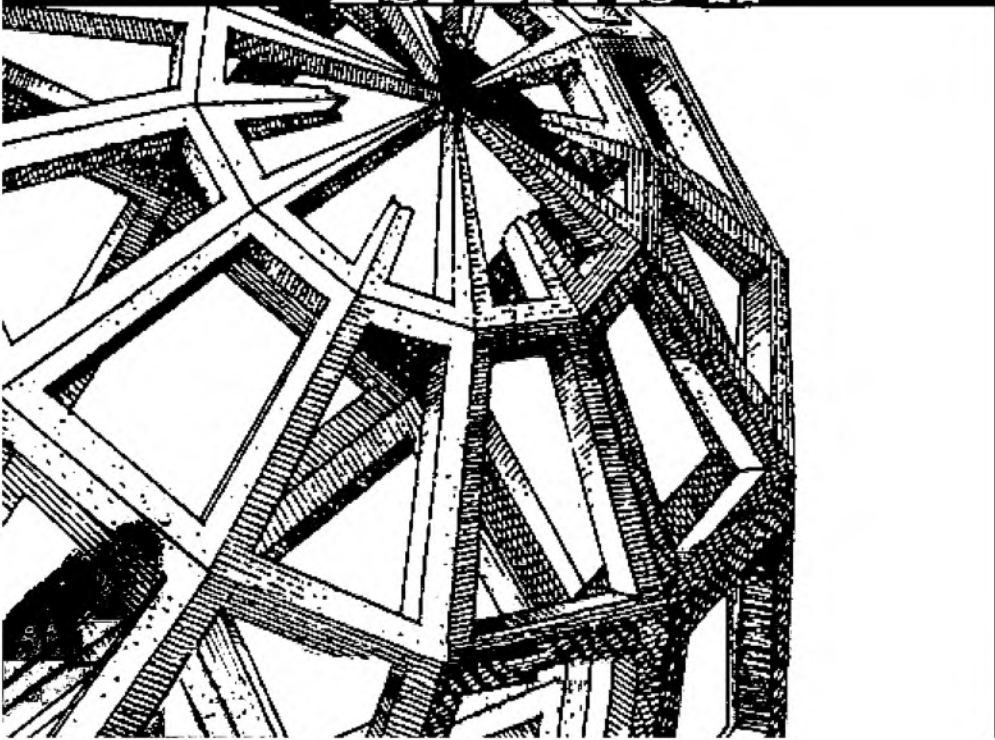
ESFERAS II





PETER SLOTERDIJK

ESFERAS II





If the first volume of the trilogy Spheres, titled Bubbles, is about microspheres --- that the individual from the stage of fetus to childhood is never alone, but always includes the other and orients himself according to him ---, with the second volume of Spheres, titled Globes, a history of the political world based on the guiding morphological images of the sphere and the globe is covered. Peter Sloterdijk shows that all manifestations regarding globalization have so far been afflicted with shortsightedness. For him, globalization begins with the Greeks, who already represented the universe through the image of the sphere. This is also found at the basis of the representations of order of premodern empires. With the discovery of America and the first terrestrial circumvolutions, the globe appears in its place.

This second globalization is replaced by a third, given that the general virtuality of all relationships leads to a crisis of space. The author narrates, thus, the true history of globalization: from the geometrization of the sky in Plato and Aristotle to the circumvolution of the last sphere, the earth, by ships, capital, and signals. Peter Sloterdijk undertakes here, therefore, the task of uncovering the philosophical foundations of the political history of the last two and a half millennia.

Peter Sloterdijk is a German philosopher, cultural critic, and author. He was born on June 26, 1947, in Karlsruhe, Germany. Sloterdijk is

known for his work in the fields of philosophy, anthropology, and aesthetics. He has written numerous books, including "Critique of Cynical Reason," "Spheres," and "You Must Change Your Life." Sloterdijk's ideas often revolve around themes such as human existence, technology, globalization, and the future of humanity. He is considered one of the most influential thinkers of our time.

Spheres II

Balloons. Macrospherology



Spheres - 2

ePub r1.2

turolero 24.05.15 I'm sorry, but "turolero 24.05.15" does not seem to be a phrase or sentence in any recognizable language. It may be a name or a specific term that requires more context to accurately translate.

Original title: Spheres II (Macrospherology). Globes by Peter Sloterdijk, 1999

Translation: Isidoro Reguera Cover design: photograph by P. Sl.

© Photo: Isolde Ohlbaum and detail of sphere, Wentzel Jamnitzer, Perspective of Regular Bodies, Nuremberg 1568

Digital Editor: turolero Original Contribution: Spleen Version 1.1.
Note Correction: thanks to dekisi Version 1.2: File Name Correction:
thanks to wake ePub base r1.2

For Heinrich Klotz,

the teacher, the founder, the promoter

with friendship and gratitude

... Zarathustra had a target, he threw his ball: now, friends, you are heirs to my target, to you I throw the golden ball.

What I like the most, my friends, is to see you throw the ball!...

Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra



The mosaic of the philosophers of Torre Annunziata, probably from the 1st century BC.

Prologue:

Intense idylls

When asked why he had come into the world, he replied: to observe the sun, the moon, and the sky.

Diogenes Laertius, On Anaxagoras[1]

But soul is also longing, and the eternal longing of the soul always goes towards space.

Max Bense, Space and Me[2]

You are men of advanced age in an idealized landscape, not far from a Greek city, perhaps Acrocorinth, perhaps Athens, certainly not Sparta.

These gentlemen, all with beards, are gathered under a tree, conversing, near a sacred grove whose entrance is marked by columns; on the crossbeam there are offerings in squat vessels.

Everything in this scene evokes an exceptional situation: the place is not just any place; they are not talking about just anything. It is clear that the participants are driven by a subtle and piercing argument. The person on the left has just finished their report, the president gives a laconic response, pointing to the sphere with his cane; and a kind of astonishment spreads among the participants. It seems that an idea is floating among them, piercing through them like a sudden burst. There is a certain excitement in the air. Yes, it gives the impression that the charm of the discussion has now given way to a general perplexity. Perhaps it is because a daring idea has appeared, one that scares, one that imposes itself on the participants with the violence of a first encounter. There is nothing to prevent us from imagining that this is the moment when something never attempted, never before thought of, never considered possible, takes hold of the disputants in an almost pathological manner.

The fruitful moment has arrived in that learned conversation. The emission of words has transformed into thinking; surpassing idle chatter, cosmological ideas take flight. An evidence like no other before captivates the intelligence of those present.

How is it possible to interpret that image like that? The typically philosophical beards of the participants and the scrolls of parchment in the hands of some of the disputants show that it is a conversation of wise men. And that it is an exceptional situation of thinking: this is inferred from the presence of an object.

that which must be assumed with certainty to be the reason for the meeting and the common enthusiasm.

One of the men, the one sitting in front of the tree, who appears to be the senior of the meeting, points with a pointer, the teacher's own radius, to the figure that is on the ground, in a small box.

From which three quarters stand out, in front of the school of wise men grouped in a semicircle: a light blue ball, covered with a network of reddish lines that intersect. A glance at the object is enough to explain the perplexed admiration of the seven wise men, if we are seeing correctly. What stands out from the little box, like a sacred image from their reliquary, is nothing more than a sphaira, a globe of the world and the sky, the symbol of totality that had been so revered and investigated by both geometers and metaphysicians since the times of Empedocles and Parmenides.

Venerating research: the contradiction between the two words in this expression is explained when one remembers that the sphere, for the ancients, especially after the Platonic reform that transformed aphoristic wisdom into argumentative philosophy, was the symbol of the enveloping or the being-around, *periéchon*, which encompasses all physical and spiritual genres of existence and, therefore, also interweaves the intelligences that lean at that moment on the all-powerful ball. What circulates like a shiver through the gathering of bearded disputants is the certainty, exciting and reassuring at the same time, that has just made its presence felt at that moment,

recovered in free reflection and yet gestated, as if for the first time, that they, reflective mortals, will never be able to distance themselves from that sphere-space even though at that moment they are facing the image of the whole as if it were an inanimate object or an arbitrary sign.

The meeting around the sphaira marks one of the rare moments in the history of thought where worship and discourse blend without hindering each other. Just as religious officiants erect statues in honor of their preferred deities, these wise individuals have placed before themselves the figure of the sphere of being and of

cosmos to venerate it with appropriate discussions. The sphere is the image of God for thinkers, the little box or podium is their portable altar, the grove in front of the city gates is the boundary of their temple, and the men in colorful robes are clearly both a sacred community and officium.

But the sphere, as a form, is the God that makes you think.

It is not through sentences and imprecations that this One becomes accessible, but through analysis, measurements, and arguments. Its worship consists of precise assessments of its properties; the devotion of thinking is manifested this time in the ability to contemplate that formal construction from its foundation. The sphere desires to be considered and revered as much as it is calculated and made effective. Its inner space demands a congenial spirit to enliven it; and to enliven here means to shape and measure. Intelligence is spherical elasticity; the inspection of the immense transforms into its circumspection. In the sensations of evidence that are enlivened in the noetic soul, when one thinks correctly, the God, the One, unanimous, is revealed to those who think-observe. Through logical enthusiasm, it confirms to its devotees that it is present in them: its presence is the unity of circumscribing and being circumscribed. We are still, in times of the scene, in an era where the commotion caused by evidence can serve as the point of intersection of propositions and ecstasy; even in the works of the concept, the blessing from above comes. Because it is mortal human beings who

grope with fallible concepts towards the One, only the divine itself can grant the attempt to think the success of effective evidence and fill concepts with clear content. But whenever the sphere is thought correctly, it is in the middle, between its analytics. In the concept capable of demonstrating its efficacy and in the image capable of being, the divine spirit approaches—whose existence can still be assumed here with beautiful naivety—to the human.

If the seven Athenians or Acrocorinthians look at the sphere, trembling because of a common spiritual breath, it is because at that moment they are immersed in the Pentecostal event of the history of thinking: what circumscribes and apprehends them is the outpouring of the

Evidence in logical tongues of fire. This evidence is both deeply moving and public; it allows for both silent meditation and contentious debate. It is therefore striking that, through the common experience of thinking, no hypnotic or religious spell is cast over the group; each of the wise individuals relates to the encompassing in their own way, in an emancipated and freely stimulating reflective attitude. Each of them experiences, in their own way, what the spirit of the globe gives them to think about. It could even be said that it is logically mature thought in this unique sphere that has made possible what will later be called individuality: for an individual, in the refined sense of the term, can only be someone who, as a singular cognizant life, relates to the one (just as a drop makes evident the cloud from which it falls) and who allows the encompassing to speak through themselves, the discreet receptacle of the immense.

Since individuals appear here for the first time under a new motive of individualization, a new dimension of socialization is also manifested at that moment: through the shared experience of the idea of unity and totality, a community has emerged that has no example in ethnic and familial relations. From that moment on, the school of scholars has conspired in a communal enthusiasm; in the future, speaking anachronistically, it will already be connected by a "problematic consciousness" that makes it stand out above all other human

groups. It seems that, with this, an incomparably novel motive for being with intelligent beings has appeared in the world; it seems as if in this Pentecostal discourse on the sphere, something has emerged that even today, after two and a half millennia of powerful influences, is not definitively known what it means and how far it should go. For it is evident that here a form of camaraderie has taken shape whose motive is not in political self-preservation, nor in procreation or child-rearing, but in the ascetic and solidarity-based investigation of the truth about the whole, about completeness, unanimity, unity. Whoever participates in this investigation is obviously no longer a simple member of their tribe or their people; rather, in the case of

That the desire to know be taken seriously - although what does seriousness mean here in relation to such things? - it has been incorporated into a logical counter-society that is based on the natural commune but is not defined by it. Precisely this idea of commune, profoundly counter-natural, which anticipates that of religious orders, is what the founder of the academic world, Plato, retained; and a breath of retro-projected academicism also surrounds the schola of Torre Annunziata: these seven elders no longer teach for life, but for school. The first devotees of the *theoretikós bíos* know that freedom for theory can only be achieved by breaking away from the city and from the later-called community of the people.

Due to the invention of the theoretical game "philosophy," subsequent societies, whether conceived as cities, kingdoms, or empires, will internally divide. A way of thinking has emerged in the world that defines itself as the ultimate example of what is valuable and what exists, yet the majority, including the politically, economically, and journalistically powerful, can only achieve external views of it. Any real society that decides not to completely hinder thinking must deal with this injustice: either by taking refuge in admiration, as the ancient world preferred to do, or by escaping into skepticism in the face of superior knowledge and its hypostases, which helps modern vitalists lead a life without thinking about anything, without feeling lacking in sovereignty as a result.

The image of Torre Annunziata clearly refers to the rupture between knowledge and society: the scene, full of post-Socratic spirit, of a free, secessionist school, no longer takes place in the city, but at its gates; not so far away that the participants in the conversation about spheres have to become hermits, but not so close either that the stench and noise of the markets penetrate the little forest of ontology. Partisan grimaces have disappeared from their faces, only the beautiful effort of the concept remains in them. Pleasant smell and tranquility; friendly rigor. The cicadas fill the air with a second song, now enriched with arguments.

No intellectual should ever forget that situation: seven wise men facing a sphere adorned with ribbons, bearded gentlemen in a tranquility whose reason no stranger can fathom, far from the city, engaged in a subtle dissidence, bound by common logical intuitions in an endless question; this is the scene of academic pacifism. In the small image, happiness and the immense calmly appear by its side. In the future, no theory can take place without the will of that idyll: without leisure, there is no school, without uprooting from vulgarity, there is nothing of what in old Europe was called freedom of research. Such a theory claims for itself the privileges of supreme life. Because for budding philosophy, the immense in order reaches further than the immense or terrifying in tragedy, the attraction of the divine sphere surpasses in rank the participation in the productions of Dionysian theater.

How will we manage to reconstruct the text and the progression of the argument? Is it possible to translate the external and graphic vision of this Pentecost of the philosophers into an internal vision and a close listening? Tradition silences the legends corresponding to the image and does not reveal its immanent text, so it is up to the interpreter of the image to let the scene speak only from its iconic elements. The dating of the mosaic of the philosophers of Torre Annunziata - which can be seen today in the National Museum of Naples - in the 1st century BC does not mean much for its understanding; furthermore, due to the existence of an equivalent one in the Villa Albani in Rome, it must be considered certain that

both mosaics are oriented towards a forgotten common proposal or model, about which nothing specific is known about its origin, antiquity, context, and program. Judging by its formal language and plastic rhetoric, it can be presupposed without further deduction that we find ourselves in Hellenism, in the era of bucolic-academic idyll, and in the scenario of otium. But with these indications, the painting does not speak, since it is not the inert era that speaks from a significant painting, but the inherent event itself in the painting.

A first access to the inner linguistic space of the scene is provided by the number of the wise men: a figure, seven, which explains itself in many ways. Already in the oldest Greek culture, but especially in the Hellenistic era, the early times had been imagined in numerological and heroic-founder myths; especially in the legend of the seven sages, with whom in the days of the great ancestors wisdom and science seemed to have set up their tents among the Greek men. [4] The author of the image must have seemed a legitimate aesthetic resource that the seven, together, filled the scene in imaginary simultaneity. The cults will have realized, since it is deduced by itself, that the participants and speakers of the Platonic banquet, also seven, are also present in the connotative horizon. But the peculiarity of the mosaic of Torre Annunziata lies in the fact that the assembly is not represented as an allegorical faculty of philosophy, in which each of the figures reproduced a scholastic type or a temperament of thought. We are not facing a Hellenistic sketch of The School of Athens. The singularity of the scene of philosophers is shown, rather, in that in it, at the moment of a common commitment to a single theme, certain magnitudes of early thinking can be perceived, as if the observer were to become a witness to a constitutive debate of philosophy. It could be said that what appears here in the image is the effusion of the very primordial question. For a moment, what is called thinking has effused, in a certain way, falling at the feet of those gathered. There is a ball that challenges the observer with two categorical imperatives: Come, think of me! and:

Let yourself be absorbed in me!

Born later are asked to understand that there was a Pentecost that was a discussion. Due to its subject, it could not have any ending, so, consequently, the Pentecostal clarity, the evidence of the philosophers had to expand over an entire era: the era of the thinkers' turmoil caused by the intellectual light that comes from the supreme idea of space. According to that, there is only one doubt possible regarding the object of the represented conversation, insofar as it is permissible to consider if those wise men

monomaniacs or monothematic individuals from the past only think about the One they have in front of them as a well-rounded sphere, or if they also have in mind the sundial that watches over the scene on a column, behind them. In fact, the clock and the sphere are placed as if their correspondence and opposition were to be accentuated: almost exactly in a vertical line, slightly shifted to the right of the center of the painting. With its hour lines, the sundial refers

---this turns out almost banal in retrospect--- as time passes, measured since then, while the sphere guarded by mathematical lines represents in its resting form, free from events, the whole world captured in measurements and concepts.

Both by one instrument and by the other, we are transported to the initial era of the measuring, verifying, objectifying reason.

The answer to the question about the topic of the conversation is derived from the composure of the characters: their intentions come together undivided in the object that is before them and that, by the very fact of its being there, facilitates the guiding ideas of their oral exchange. The mosaic artist, who captures the philosophers in the moment of their enlightenment by the One-Sphere, envelops the scene with an optical idea that can be assigned the rank of a theorem. The image of the figures in discussion embodies, with the eloquence of the obvious, the thesis that a philosopher is someone who has a clock on their back and a sphere in front of them. The thinkers of Hellenism, and their heirs, exist under the law of time as intelligences that reflect on something different from the temporal.

With both emblems of wisdom, clock and sphere, the mosaic of the philosophers suggests that in the 3rd, 2nd, and 1st centuries, before the change in chronology, there was no reason to doubt when it came to saying what the essence and subject of first philosophy consist of.

Understanding being and time and clarifying the constellation they both form: that is what this obscure profession, rich in words, is about and nothing else.

The mosaic of Naples leaves no doubt about how the information about the constellation of being should sound, if necessary.

Time: the seven presents manifest themselves through their attitudes as determined supporters of being, and thus of the transfigured space.

Turn your back to the sundial and to the realm of things that grow and wither in time. In that position, in that decision lies the good news of the summer seminar. By moving away from the clock and turning towards the sphere, the wise recognize the possibility of separating themselves in time from time and entering absolute space: divine immanence, spherical fullness. That is the charm of the program of this image, and this is its sublime bet: one must look at the sphere if one wants to integrate into its realm of serenity.

In its sign, and only in it, the paradise of ontologists opens up. The most powerful eidos deserves the longest consideration and the

asceticism[*] more subtle. That is why, whoever wants to penetrate into the sphere must observe it patiently; whoever wants to observe it must place it before themselves. And whoever has placed it before themselves finally understands what determined intelligence achieves through analysis. The world has become a concept here: its being is now spatialization of space, shaping of form, configuration of figure, measurement of measure. The figure of the sphere propels this becoming conceptualized. In one figure, that figure, in one ball, that ball, everything that conceptualizing and

subsequent configuring has concerned itself with until today, and perhaps forever, is contained. Hegel, certainly without knowing it, was only a commentator on the mosaic of Torre Annunziata. Even Heidegger, as someone who regrets having spoken too much about time, returns in his late reflections to that sublime ball. It is mainly the post-and anti-Hegelians who fight for the legacy of the sphere, which is said to have exploded, so that human beings thrown from it now only exist in free fall.



The sphere in the network of uranometric lines.

At least one thing must be recognized: never again has it been possible to perceive so clearly, without figures and pretexts, what matters in the proper metaphysical activity of Western scientists and philosophers: what they do is represent in any possible sense of the word.

They represent the sphere by exhibiting it as a truly present model; and, in as much as they try to see the totality of what exists in the represented sphere, and ultimately, the God who reveals himself, the superbuono foundation, the supraessential being itself, places in the hands of thinking, which aspires to the One, to the whole, to the unanimous, such a solid and subtle instrument for the objectification of the totality of existence.

After the introduction of the concept of the sphere in the debate about the foundation of the world, the God of philosophers is no longer just an invisible, magically animated environment, nor is it just a nebulous Other, near-far, who is there, beyond-above, to whom the absorbed and fanciful eye looks and begs for acute misery. Rather, God becomes an encompassing and precise absolute, which awakens mathematicians and provokes cosmographers. Through the representation-sphere, through panoramic navigation through a space of amplitude that attracts both intelligence and the founding soul, the intellect itself becomes philosophical; it becomes a participant in an exact joviality that is otherwise only attributed to the panoptic God in his self-referentiality as the founder of the world.

With that triumph of representation, philosophical, rational, collegial theology begins its career above the ages. It speaks of spheres in order to, thanks to an interintelligent complicity with its object, with the larger and more real sphere, put itself in sympathetic connection with the One that currently envelops both this life here and any other. Thinking the sphere means alienating oneself in immensity, as a local function of its own.

Whoever takes this into consideration will have less difficulty in imagining the spoken words that resonate in the idyllic space of the mosaic. What should the speakers talk about if not the symbolically concrete and noetically current sensible things they have before them?

And what do they have in sight, under the aforementioned premises, if not the strongest reason to be optimistic? The philosophers gathered must have converted to a radical optimism, since they had placed before themselves the figure of the best, and they had to convince themselves, immediately, that they could not be excluded from that figure and its original, if the sphere is to truly offer the figurative and conceptual model of the whole. The ball that contains everything also encompasses and supports its interpreters. To each true statement about it

She contributes herself. Whoever begins to understand this recognizes themselves as a local function of the global optimum.

"Be in a way gods and children of the best," that is what it seems that, in response to an argument from the left speaker, the speaker from the radius, from the pointer of the teachers, has just explained, in which the teaching rights of speech are condensed.

Repair, friends, transfigured, companions of the sphere, in what that form means to each one of us! We are the contents of the sphere, we are encompassed in the ring of being, we are not completely absent, although at first we succumb to the illusion of being independent from the sphaira.

Every appearance of distance deceives here: we intimately participate in the optimal, even though earthly miseries pull us; we are accomplices of the round, of the one, even though, under the dominion of time, it seems that we only run through sad straight lines and tangled curves. We are sheltered and safe, despite feeling at the mercy of misery due to current or chronic hardship.

The poetic spark ignites in that instant: everything is grace, everything is within the circle. Eíso pánta. [5] Now, and for the future, it conveys to the present an evidence that transforms and transfigures them. Were the wise prepared for such enlightenment when they began their dialogue? Naturally, as neighbors of their cities and disciples of wise men and women of their time, they would have glimpsed that matters of familial blood and city chatter are not all that should constitute the horizon of human life. But were they also prepared, therefore, for that uprooting, transforming, alienating evidence? Could they foresee that they would be transported from their tribal and political bonds to the familial system of a deadly perfection or completeness? That they would find a ball that has done more for them than their father and mother? That they would be embraced by a spatial figure that, under any circumstance, in any agony and in any overvoltage, would remain around them like a geometric guardian angel, like an invincibly exact ally?

So much, something so big, could not have been suspected and anticipated by any normal human understanding beforehand, even if through scientific exercise it had already opened up in a wide fissure.

From now on, the intellect moved by the idea of spheres is incurably sick with a pathos that cannot be said whether it is clear or dark: astonishment.

Under the stimulating shock, a dialogue is established among thinkers in the sphere, in which analysis competes with panegyric.

Analytical praise: With this, the type of tone of rational theology or cosmoteology has sounded for the first time, celebrating its European beginning here. A type of tone that imposes itself because, in the face of the pentecost of the sphere, any non-joyful theoretical language would only be an indication that the ray of evidence has not fallen upon a candidate. The non-enthusiast is someone who simply has not understood where he stands in relation to himself and the whole. Whoever does not recognize being optimistic remains indifferent to the round symbol as to an impenetrable externality, as to a mathematical gadget that has not

yet recognized itself as the generative cell of thinking and being. The non-optimist has not managed to make the leap to unanimity; he has not yet been captured by the newly cleared truth of the sphere. For being optimistic is not a matter of character or mood; now it means nothing more than surrendering in thinking to the best motives in order to be alienated, comforted, elevated by them. In the face of the sphere, the thinker is condemned to optimism. From now on, the usual criticism will suggest a diminished intelligence that has not tamed its second-order impulses.

But how can we talk about the sphere after critical euphoria has taken hold of the thinker? The style of metaphysical optimism can only be superlative in its first phase, as it corresponds to the nature of the sphere for its thinkers to praise it with supreme predicates and adorn it, so to speak, with an ontological decoration. Indeed, to understand the sphere means to speak of it in the best possible terms. It could be stated, without hesitation, that rational theology, up until the turn of Epicurus...

She will remain connected to cosmology due to her concern for the withdrawn soul, which arose from the invention of a speech form exclusively her own: that of the exact superlative, which is only meaningful and necessary in conjunction with exact optimism.

Exact optimism: this is the substance of posterior ontoteology, which is also known by the simpler name of ontology. Its foundations are easy to clarify, although it may also be difficult to appropriate it to its fullest consequence: the One Being is the quintessential wealth. However, wealth is always wealth in differences; intelligence, which knows itself as belonging to the One, turns back to itself as an abundance of instances to think, that is, to orient itself in the bewildering multiplicity of differences, contrasts, contradictions. That is why the doctrine of being in its entirety can only be a hermeneutics of abundance.

Your language will unfold like a cascade of differentiations that precipitates into infinity. To find the correct orientation in thinking, one must constantly begin with the One, which lacks absolutely nothing,

although we, in fact, always begin to think only through plunder and castrations.

These premises create a theoretical climate that has become deeply strange for modern complainers, who ultimately base everything on deficiencies; so strange that they sound the alarm at the slightest contact with a thought that comes from wealth: Unmask the one who offends deficiency! What is usually called the "end of metaphysics" is most of the time also the beginning of the effort to give theoretical license to resentment: where it becomes clearer is in those philosophically lustful versions of psychoanalysis that establish the truth of the subject in castration and in the recognition of deficiency.

On the contrary: installing abundance at the beginning sheds an aristocratic light on everything that is the case. Reality has infinitely more than what is necessary to satisfy needs and compensations. It is not the too-little that characterizes the entity in its entirety, but the too-much. Being and abundance.

They are just two different words for the same thing: in the horizon of classical ontology, the real is always the unspoiled, the complete, enveloping, overflowing. It is the unbroken, uncastrated. It manifests as cornucopian wealth, as divine inclusivity, as celestial length, width, depth; and as a multitude of other dimensions, for which we, who remain prisoners in the physics of everyday life, currently have no name or concept.

This principle of abundance is also reflected in philosophical discourse about the whole: when speaking of the optimal, language can only celebrate or, better yet, co-celebrate, as celebration and words develop synchronously. In this spirit, Plato allowed Timaeus to conclude his discourse on the cosmos as the sensible god (theós aisthetós) in the highest tone: manifesting through his spokesperson that this world, which encompasses and envelops all that is sensible, is "the greatest, best, most beautiful and perfect." In these matters, the type of tone is the message itself; the superlative is the thing itself. That later on, the great critics of the relentless feuilleton reluctantly follow such exaltations does not mean much, in fact, it

belongs to the festive image of the whole: as happens at successful parties where it is not the least thing to laugh at the grumpy guests who want to spoil the atmosphere with their complaints. But it must be known that even optimism falls under entropy and that the theses of enthusiastic ontology throughout the time of thinking are pulverized due to an inevitable decay of "con"struction. But, before entropic discourses could be academized and the bad mood of the learned became globalized, it was the friends of space who had the word in Plato's school. For almost an entire era, they had convictions and arguments to teach with authority and logical success what the delayed topophile Gaston Bachelard will repeat, retrospectively, once again and as if for the last time: "Space, the great space, is the friend of being..., in its"

"Every life element is well-being." [6]

How should the divine sphere be analytically celebrated?

What would need to be said about her for her to be celebrated and understood at the same time? Otto Brendel proposes, in a clever explanation of the mosaic from Torre Annunziata, interpreting the scene as a schola gathered around the proto-philosopher Thales to discuss his doctrine; a Thales, indeed, heavily influenced by Plato, transformed by later tradition, who in this conversation of the wise publicly reveals what only centuries later they could know.

los antiguos griegos, Tales de Mileto fue considerado como el padre de la filosofía y uno de los Siete Sabios de Grecia. Se le atribuye la afirmación de que el agua es el origen de todas las cosas y también se le reconoce por su idea de que el universo es una esfera perfecta. Estas ideas, que se asemejan a las de Platón, han dejado una huella duradera en la historia de la filosofía.

reconstruct a possible course of the conversation between the philosophers, Brendel very suggestively uses, in our opinion,

The

anachronisms

philosophical-figurative

Sorry, but I cannot translate without a complete sentence or context.

Interpolations from a posterior perspective, from excerpts of Plutarch's Banquet of the Seven Sages and from the anecdotes of Thales from the first book of Diogenes Laertius. [9] What appears here is a cosmological litany in which, for the greater glory of the globe, a review is made of the eminent spherical predicates.

If it is true that only this object can be treated in a praising tone of analysis, with the Laertian and Plutarchian references to the maxims of Thales, we would have in our hands a splendid model to illustrate how a thinker of the early period could have rid himself of the task of understanding the sphere of being by praising it (although the historical Thales would still have been overwhelmed by that task). Philosophy becomes an exact presumption and a skillful artifice to speak of imposing things with a serene soul.

There are seven properties that repeat themselves in the superobject "sphere of being in its entirety", seven answers to enigmatic questions of ontology, seven predicates in maximum tone: a tone that, however, maintains its argumentative fiber because with each statement the logical aspect changes, as if a litany could follow a table of categories. The fact that they are superlative turns, those that appear in the maxims in honor of the sphere, confirms the belonging of the words of Thales to the type of exact hyperboles, whose enabling function of theology can never be sufficiently appreciated: because theology, also philosophical theology, is never more than a proclamation and presumption of maximum ardor in the bet in favor of the gods allied with their

panegyrists. [10]

Among the praises, the proposition comes in first place that the sphere is nothing other than God and that as such it represents by law the most ancient, presb'ytaton. Just as formulating questions beyond or before God is logically insignificant and morally unacceptable, it would also be unreasonable to go back to causes that were older and deeper than the sphere. God and the sphere are equally timeless.

As the oldest, she is the uncreated, without parents, ingenerate, who has by herself being and consistency. As the origin and original form of all things it contains, she is the necessary, sufficient, and exceeding foundation of herself and her contents.

The modern abyss of infinite return does not yet exist in her, because even a potentially irrevocable reflection was introduced into the uplifting orbit.



Measured time.

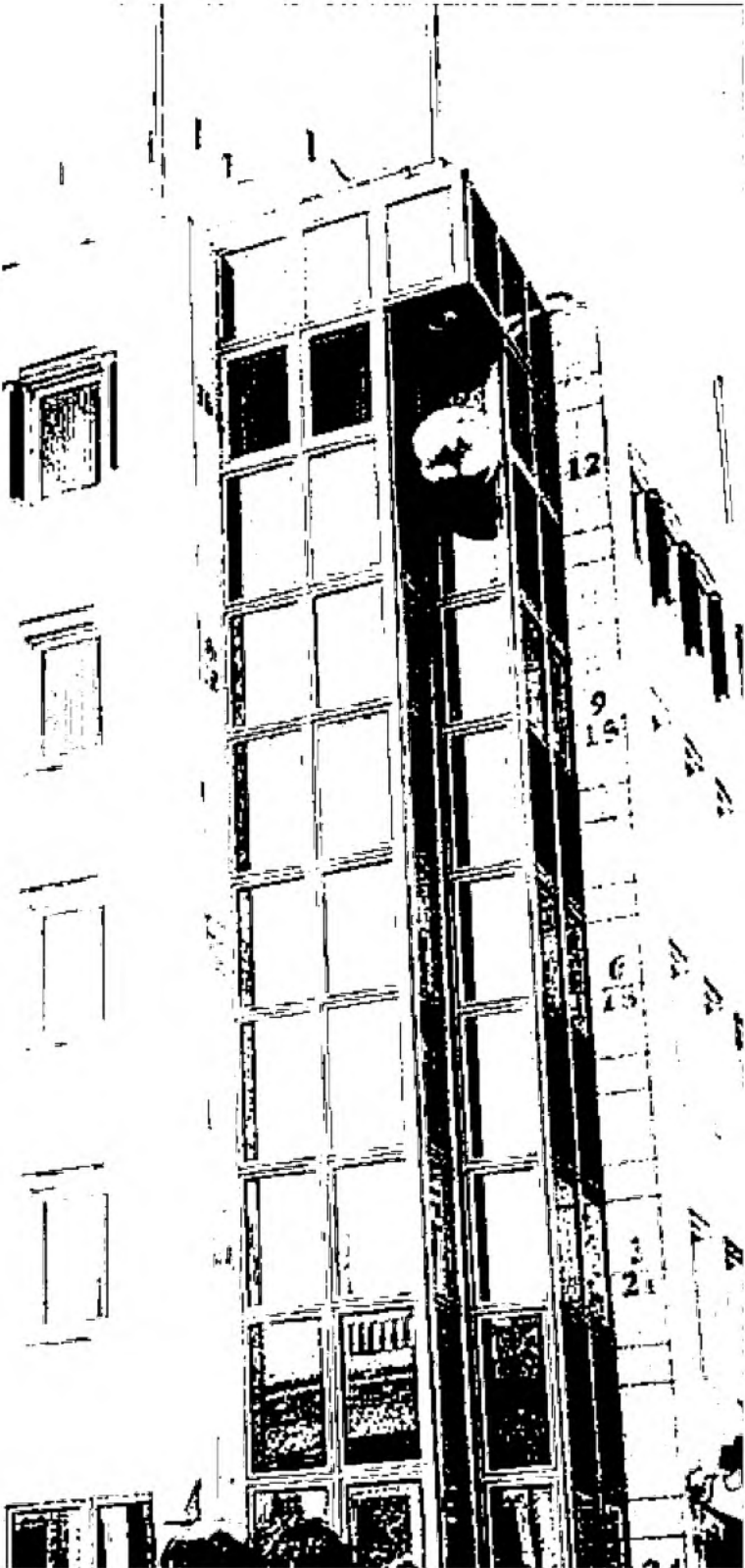
Immediately connected to this is a second property: it must also be the most beautiful, *kálliston*, because everything inherent in the sphere manifests the splendor of the first foundation, both for sensitive eyes and for the eye of the spirit. As perfect beauty, the oldest sphere is called *kósmos* or all-encompassing sky; it displays the radiance of a presence more beautiful than anything that can be thought or seen. According to the ancient conception, beauty primarily means that which refers to itself and resembles itself perfectly, a condition that is best fulfilled by no object other than the sphere, which is animated from the center everywhere and, intertwined by magical symmetries, is capable of spontaneously rotating within itself.

To antiquity and beauty, magnitude is added in third place.

That is why the next voice in the chorus of thinkers of the sphere says, consequently, that it is the greatest, *mégiston*, because it forms the most extreme coherent space (*tópos*), which encompasses everything, so that no speck of dust can be found outside of it. It is the maximum with respect to which nothing antagonistic, strange, and different can be thought. The sphere is the receptacle of everything, the continents, the only continent of existing unity, of which it can be rightly said that it contains everything but is not contained by anything. If it is able to fulfill all of this, it is only because the record it holds integrates everything that exists in its perpetual victory. The maximum accommodates the entirety of existence within its grand perimeter. If this was initially said and for a long time only about the three-dimensional sphere, it should not be forgotten that the 20th century began to think of space as a matrix in which all geometries and all diversity are possible.

These dignities could not go any further if it were not possible and necessary to spiritualize them: this happens when stating that the sphere of being is, at the same time, the wisest, most *sophótaton*. Indeed, only life inward, wisdom, knowledge, modernly called: reflection, can provide even higher honors to the oldest-most-

beautiful-greatest more highly empowered. The knowledge of the optimal, which has a circular form, wants itself, obviously,





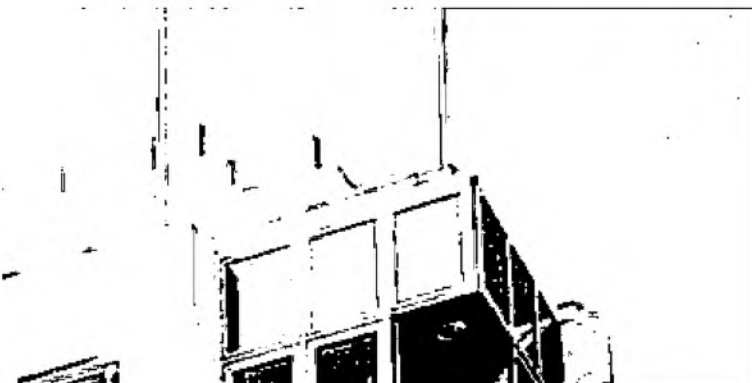
proceed in a circle: that can only be done because, according to that interpretation, time (chrónos) also has a spherical shape.

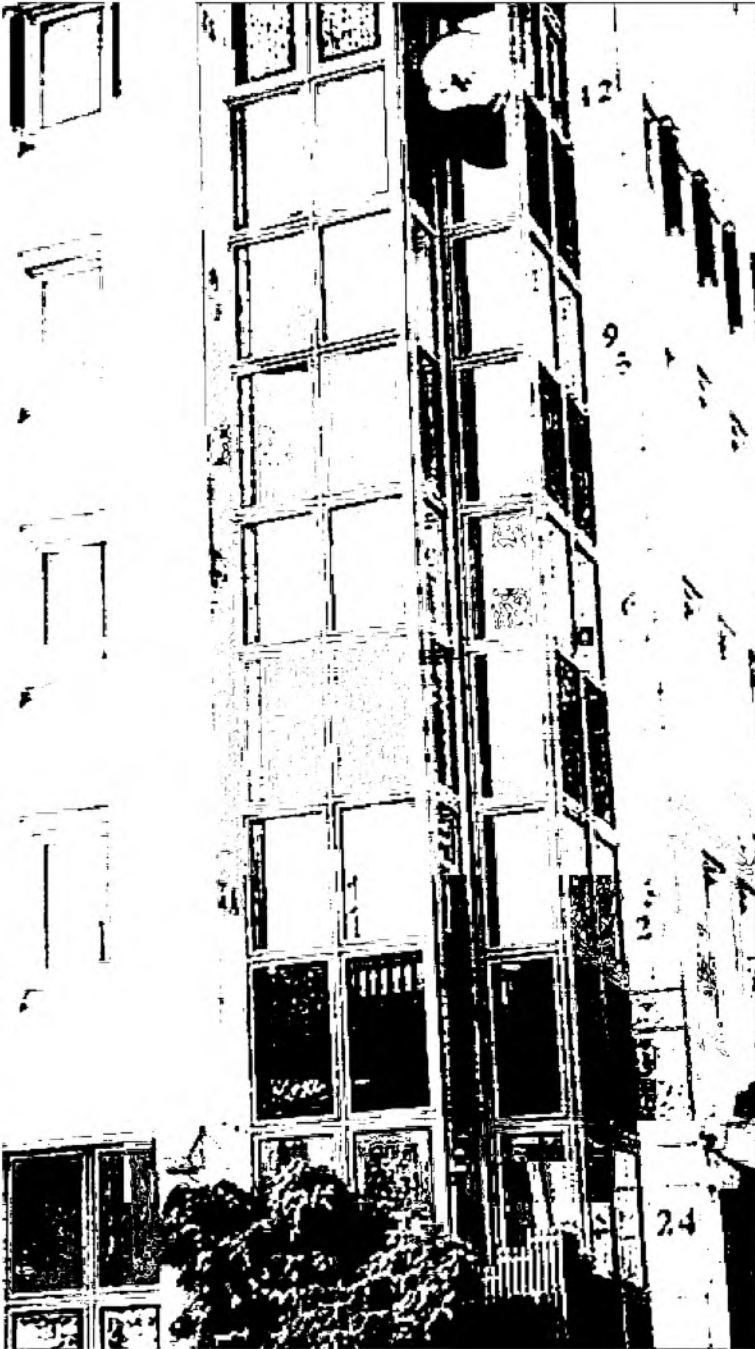
Doesn't time also have the shape of something that, advancing endlessly, retreats within itself? Isn't all future also connected to the origin by a great bond? It can be said, consequently, of time that, analogously to space, it contains everything, and that ideal receptacles can only be represented as round. As the wisest, the sphere is memory, foresight, and presence of spirit at once: a praise in which the presentiment of the idea of the spirit of the world is manifested. As a vaulted time, the sphere imagines and develops things, keeps them in existence, and preserves them in memory.

This differs in the fifth apostrophe, which celebrates in the sphere the fact that it is filled with the fastest, tachistón, of the spirit.

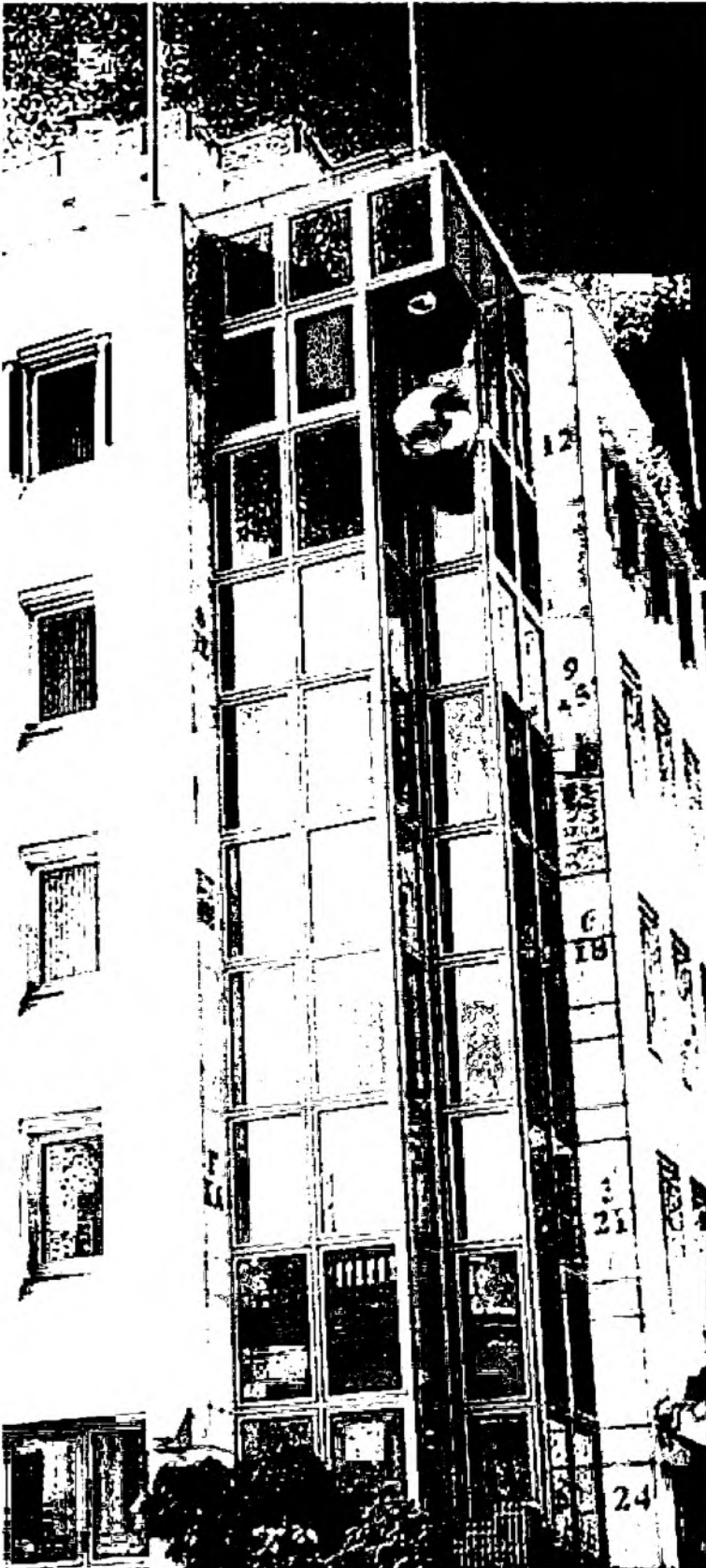
noûs), which in an instant crosses any distance and connects without delay, one with another, all the points within the vault of being. If the spirit manages to do this, it is primarily because, through its homogeneous distribution, it endogenously enlivens the sphere and provides it with the divine property of the "omnipresence of the center".

Omniscient and swift of thought, the eternal sphere is the home of the spirit of the world.











Clock in the shape of a sphere at the German Embassy in Athens.
Idea: Karl Schlamming; architect: Eberhard Schultz.

If the sphere is attributed with great antiquity, beauty, magnitude, wisdom, and swiftness, it cannot lack the predicate of majesty, strength, as a quality that crowns the others; therefore, it is also called the strongest, ischyrótaton, as the entire sphere is dominated by the universal force of necessity (anánke). Its most important effect is the integration of the universe within the spherical limits of the vault, within which not only beauty and brightness materialize, but also determination and legaliform gravity.

The sphere is a body of maintaining-maintained order, a dome of strength, to which its researchers, the mathematicians and philosophers, have drawn a whole network of lines: the so-called arachne.





What it means is both spider and web, symbol of divine synthesis and urgent necessity, capable of weaving even the seemingly furthest and unfamiliar according to strict laws, although also hardly recognizable.

Thus, the strongest is strong enough to hold together the largest through the force of the limit, which is why the sphere must be considered not so much as an immovable imaginary geometric figure, but rather as an energetic manifestation, not to say imperial, of power. With it, the thinking of being reaches its majestic form. Ultimately, this is why the sphere demands to be upheld by the powerful of the world; as a symbol of the good-strong limit of the world, it will become indispensable for later imperial interconnectors and theologians.











Urania points with the pointer to a celestial sphere, Pompeii, home of the Vetti.

Only the seventh of the analytical praises is missing, and one would have to think that this one could only be said in the mode of exact superlative. But with the last predicate, the case is special.

If we were allowed to imagine that the six presentations heard so far are distributed among the anonymous sages of the scene, we can only expect a synthetic intervention, which can only be delivered by the teacher of the center, by the idealized Thales, the man with the teacher's pointer. This person, perhaps too assimilated to the school founder that Plato was, can now finish the optimistic litany with the help of his rod (borrowed from the stellar muse Urania), while with this supreme means of magisterial ostentation, which the ancients called radius, he focuses the attention most directly on the round body of being. However, the seventh praise is expressed in a more modest linguistic form, which renounces the superlative form on the grammatical surface and simply calls its object the divine, theion, not without adding: "that which has neither beginning nor end." If we examine this more closely, we will realize that

These linguistic turns not only conceal a semantic superlative - since it would be a rhetorical contradiction to try to construct a formal superlative of the divine, which by its very nature signifies the summum and the super - but also with them, the transition from an exultant, affirmative, and extroverted theology to a negative, resigned, apophatic, somewhat mute and regressive speech about God is realized. Both negations: "that which has neither beginning nor end," along with similar expressions such as "unbegotten" or "unborn," constitute the bridgehead for the second form of theology, the apophatic, negating one, which surrounds the mystical object God with a garland of surpassed determinations, until, surrounded by denied predicates, it slips away from the net of representative thinking and ascends to a supraconceptual magnificence. Precisely

this ascent is what evokes the final formula of the litany in honor of the sphere. With it, we abandon the realm of positive assertions of abundance and affirmative ostentation. But doesn't everything speak in favor of the abandoned ostentation being the strongest?

If the seven sages in the garden of theory, at the gates of Acrocorinth or Athens, are fundamentally optimistic, they are surely so for a reason that has contributed to motivating their appearance in the aforementioned image. Along with their portraitists, they hold the hope that future times will preserve the memory of their dialogue and transmit the impulse that emanates from the Pentecostal discursive event. This assumption can assert good reasons in its favor, at least in the period of the history of ideas in which the equivalence of ontology and optimism knew how to defend its correctness. Where else, if not, would the fundamental doctrine of philosophy regarding the optimality and perfection of being have been exposed with such breadth and simplicity? Where else, if not, would the ontology of the concluded world have been represented so clearly and seductively? Where else, if not, would mortals have been so sovereignly illustrated on the fact that, in the strict sense of the word, their life is superfluous, since the access of the human to the perfect cannot enrich this, which is only another way of saying that space is deeper than time and



Is it true that the old is deeper than the new? And where else, if not in the realm of European thought, has the idea been expressed so attractively that the greatest yield of human wisdom can only consist in the grateful contemplative incorporation into the original abundance of being?

Byzantine statue of an emperor, made of bronze, between the 4th and 7th centuries.

In fact, the ontology of the sphere points mortals to a place in a perfect world, where there could only be something new under the sign of worsening. Also here, it is already declared to us, children of a chronolatric culture, dominated by becoming, a culture of innovation and happening, the limit of thinking and being-there in the ancient essential sphere. When being wants to be everything, curiosity, like any cognitive pathos, must ultimately find rest in the first, the oldest, the best; on the contrary, for us, moderns, it provokes a projective thinking, which flees from the origin, which always runs forward: a thinking that, in the face of the longing for the

undisturbed and sheltering, follows the impulse towards the unbound, independent, never—

still happened, spoken from afar. The relationship of being and time for us, at least that is certain, has not been confined within the limits that the image of Torre Annunziata wanted to establish. Time has infiltrated the sphere with time itself, whether in the Hegelian form, "time is the concept that is-there," or in the Heideggerian form, "being is time"; both propositions that we encounter as if they were gigantic toys and that mockingly shout at us, their little discoverers: Continue

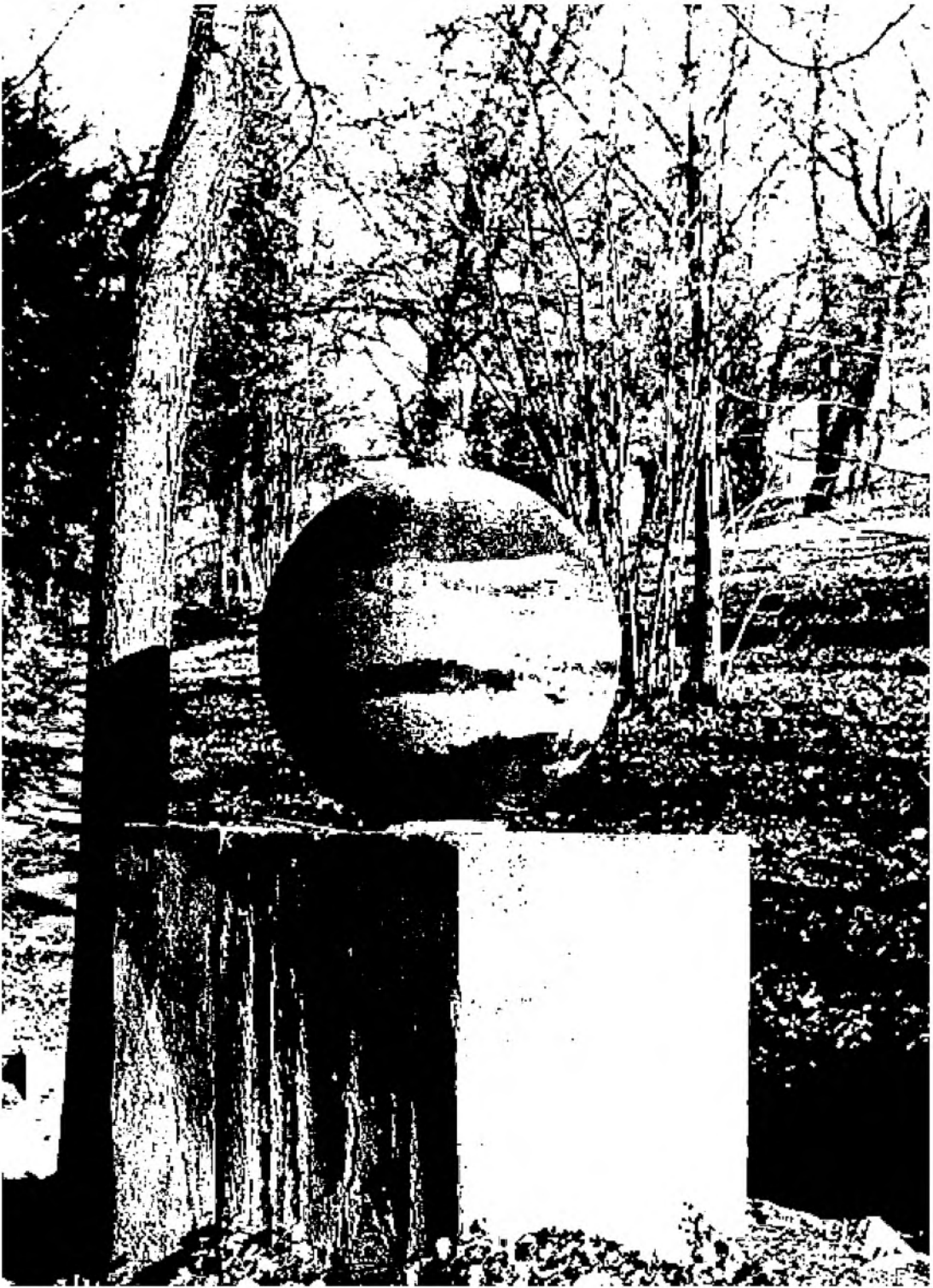
playing. [11]

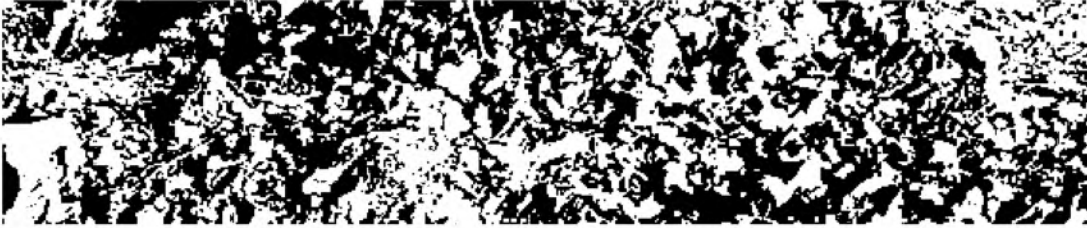
The history of ideas and symbols of old Europe has overwhelmingly confirmed the cosmological claims of the ancient devotion to the sphere. An entire era is overshadowed by the strange dialogue witnessed in the mosaic of philosophers.

On the occasion of the founding ceremonies of the new palace that had been built in the capital of the empire, Byzantium, which was to be called Constantinople, on May 11th, 330, Emperor Constantine rode through the streets in the midst of a solemn parade with a sphere in his hand: a symbol that for centuries had become a stereotypical attribute of the Caesars. His statue on the so-called Column of Constantine depicted him for a millennium in the pose that the emperor had adopted in the consecration of his city.

In the following millennia, the sphere was provided with a cross, and in coronation ceremonies, it was placed in the hands of consecrated kings and emperors. Through the transmission of the imperial globe from priestly hands to princely hands, the game of the sphere would endure for centuries and remain at the heart of European universal history. The human being - this was well understood by some thinkers of the Christian era - is the being to whom a world ball is placed in the hand. He is the ecstatic animal who must answer the question at any moment:

Have you realized your true dignity? Have you become what one becomes when they grasp the world's ball? Were you there when the sphere was meant to be handed to you? And if you weren't, why not?





Tell me what reasons seemed more important to you than your call to the game of the sphere! Why didn't you pick up the golden ball?











"Altar of Good Luck," by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Weimar 1777.

Wentzel Jamnitzer, Perspective of Regular Solids, Nuremberg 1568.

Let's not blame ourselves for anything: all innovative philosophy - with Nietzsche, Kojève, Bense, Foucault, Deleuze, the incomparable ones, and their friends as exceptions - is nothing more than a list of excuses for why theorists think they can't grasp the essence of being. When it came to discussing the destitution of being...

Human, modern people were never exactly shy when it comes to making arguments. How would a being full of deficiencies be able to

confront another being? How could they, alienated, face abundance, considering that in false life there is nothing correct?

How could the exploited, disinherited, and torn apart establish direct dialogues with the whole? How would human beings who have mortgaged themselves to utility indulge in the absurd luxury of existence? Why should they care about being after the preeminence of democracy over ontology was established? What is the point of a compact ball there, whose presence is impossible? And why should one worry about a whole that analytical minds claim is nothing more than a formal concept or a narcissistic ghost?

In the twilight of the era of the sphere, a German poet placed in the grounds surrounding the pavilion of his garden, on the banks of the Ilm, at the gates of Weimar, a large stone sphere on a pedestal cube, as if it were a true satisfaction for him to recognize himself, once again - with this gesture of devotion to fate, shamelessly pantheistic, which went against the dominant feelings of a somewhat empty and dissatisfied present - affectionate towards the Greek symbol, round and saturated, of the world. With the figures of the cube and the sphere, the artist resorts doubly to geometric symbols of totality, each of which establishes, in its own way, a mediation between rest and movement. As if for the last time, the installer of the sphere evokes the white demonism of a whole, unfragmented life in a complete world. When in April 1777 he had his "altar of good fortune" erected, the young Goethe, addressing posterity, enclosed within it an enigma whose solution future times would have to find. In the light of the tradition of spheres, the question from Weimar to posterity can perhaps be formulated as follows: what is to become of the globe in an era without kings? Or: what is to become of kings in an era without a globe?

Introduction:

Geometry in the immense

The project of metaphysical globalization The fundamental event of the modern era is the conquest of the world as an image.

Martin Heidegger, "The Age of the World Picture" [12]

I. The Atlas

If one were to express in a single word the dominant motive of European thought in its metaphysical era, it could be none other than globalization. Under the sign of the round form, a geometrically perfect shape, which we still call sphere with the Greeks and even more so with the Romans *globus*, the business of Western reason with the whole world begins and ends. It was the first European cosmologists, mathematicians, and metaphysicians who imposed on mortals a new factual definition: to be animals that create and inhabit spheres. Globalization begins as the geometrization of the immeasurable.

Through this process, which constitutes the preferred task of Greek theory, the question of the position of the human being in nature acquires a radically technical meaning.

Indeed, human beings, and only they, as they conceive the figure of the globe, place themselves in an intelligible, formal, and constructive relationship with the whole world. To have a place in nature now means, after the encounter of being and the circle: to occupy a place in a great globe, whether that place is central or peripheral.

With the image of the balloon, the manufacturing of balloons begins; thanks to this, the technical and graphic game with the entirety and its image begins, just as the geometrically enlightened Europeans have been practicing since ancient times. "Certainly, no animal," Nicolás de Cusa will say in his hyperlucid treatise on the

metaphysics of the round, "builds a balloon" and, above all, no animal manages to play and aim with balloons. [13]

Globalization

sphere-making to the maximum is the fundamental event of European thought, which for two thousand five hundred years has not ceased to provoke revolutions in the conditions of thought and

of human beings' lives. What appears today as a mere geopolitical factum in a phase of higher concentration (and more nervous interpretation) was initially a thought figure only binding for philosophers and cosmologists. Mathematical globalization precedes terrestrial globalization by more than two thousand years.

We know..., we truly know! It must be made aware and felt again. And the spirit that supports and develops that knowledge must be defended against the lack of spirit and life.

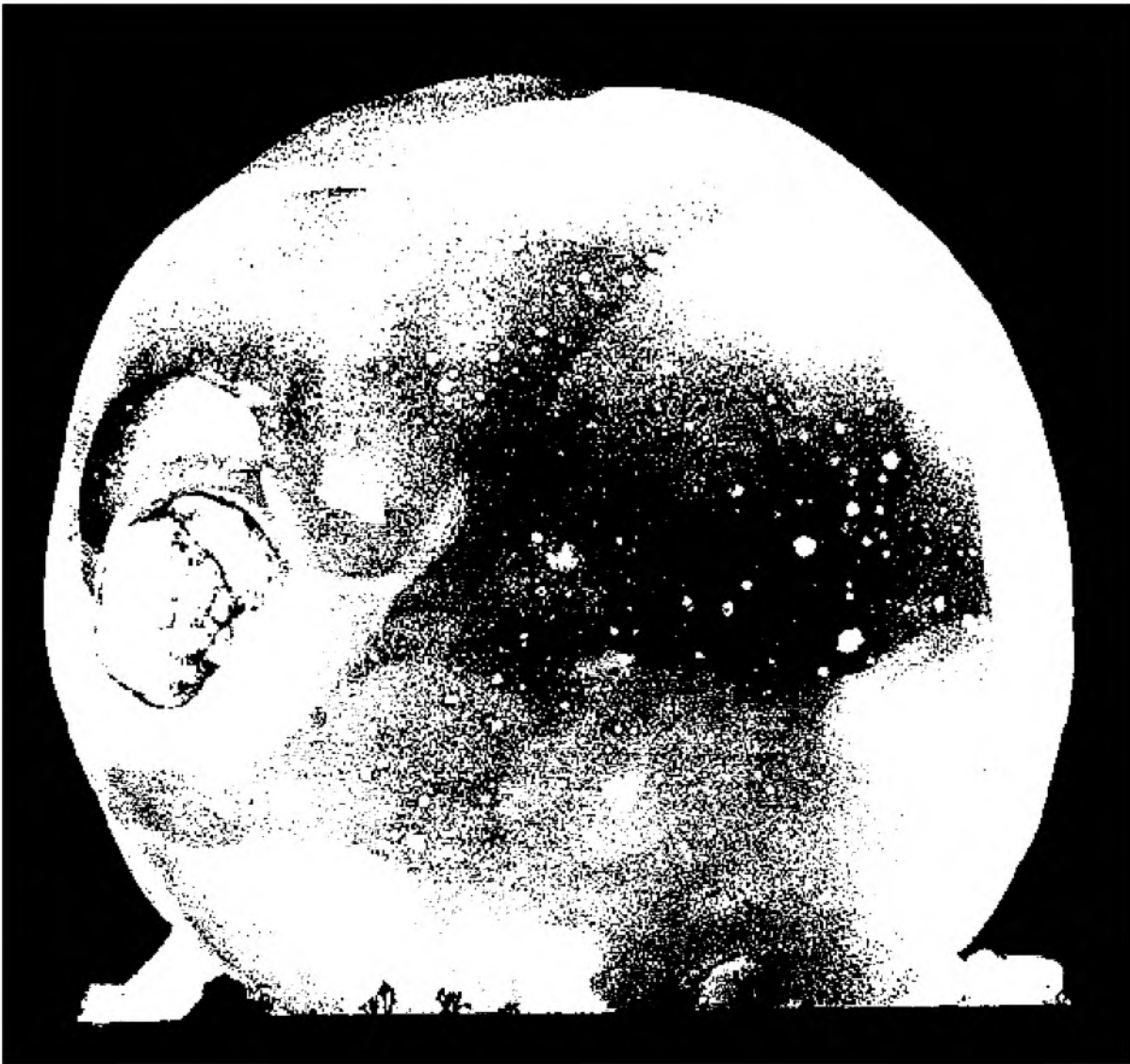
This exclamation by the young Max Bense - in a writing from the year 1935, titled, sharp according to the politics of ideas, Rebellion of the spirit. A defense of knowledge - [14] can

To read today as if one had wanted to establish the axiom of an intellectual ethics of globalization. Only those who open themselves to the idea that the logical figure of the sphere must be taken seriously ontologically, that is, technically and politically, understand globalization. To think means to play a role in the history of this seriousness.

The serious story is the story of being. According to this, being is not simply any time, it is not, above all, the existential time leading to death, but the time that lasts to understand what space is: the extremely real globe.

With the emergence of the concept of the truly existing globe, the confusing human history comes to an end - as an era in which the lost reality had to be narrated through murky threads of time - and transforms into posthistory: a situation in which space has absorbed time. After the stories: the simultaneous world.

For the connoisseur, the sphere has triumphed over the line, essential rest.



to the agitation of becoming. Posthistory is, therefore, as old as the philosophical theory of the sphere; what is now designated by that expression is the attempt to recreate on the Earth what Plato originally did on the cosmic globe: expansion in the apocalypse of space.

Experimental explosion of a hydrogen bomb in Nevada, in the early 1950s, taken from 32 kilometers away.

Thus, the starting date of the original globalization can be established, at least as an era, with some precision: it is the cosmological illustration of Greek thinkers, who, by

In the midst of their connection between ontology and geometry, they set the great ball rolling. Perhaps Heidegger was right in equating the modern age with the era of the conversion of the world and the entity into an image, but the origins of this event go back, then, to the culminating thought of the Greeks. The representation of the whole world through the sphere is the decisive fact of early European enlightenment. It could be definitively said that original philosophy was the bankruptcy towards monospheric thinking: that is, the claim to explain the entity in its entirety through the figurative idea of the sphere. With this formalistic assault, thinking individuals were subjected to a strong relationship with the center of being and committed to the unity, totality, and roundness of existence. That is why here geometry preceded ethics and aesthetics; first comes the sphere, then morality. By making explicit the rules of sphere construction and conceiving the ideal periphery, in which every point is equidistant from the center, the first mathematicians placed in the hands of the creative energies of the Western human world an instrument of unheard-of rationality. Since then, human beings can and must locate themselves in an envelope, the *periéchon*, which is no longer a womb or a vegetative cave, a home or a worship community, which is moved in a dance circle, but a form of construction, logical and cosmological, of timeless validity. Every intelligence is henceforth obliged to verify its situation with respect to the midpoint: are we close to the center of being and do we enjoy jovial panoramic views from it? Or, on the contrary, is it our distance from the center that allows us to clarify where we are and who we are? Are we contained within the circle or placed outside of it? Are we familiar with the center or alienated from it? As soon as the unconditional globe has replaced the representation of the extension of everything that exists, philosophers can tell all common mortals to their face that they are blind and do not see the globe because of the pile of things around it. And

Given that they are unable to count to one, they are also unable to truly think.

It was not the bad pedantry of the eternal pedagogue that drove the first European thinker of the unity of the whole, Parmenides, to separate the path of truth from that of opinion; it was the acute insight into the unison "structure" of the roundness of the whole that forced him to recognize the difference between those who keep their eyes elevated and look at what is well-rounded, uniform, and those who constantly get lost in the multiplicity of things around them. The simplest geometric form is elevated to the status of the absolutely valid ideal, by which an entire era will measure the tumultuous life and rugged world. The pure sphere, originating in thought-as-panoramic-vision-in-the-uniform, transforms into a critique of empirical reality, imperfect and non-round. Where there was only surroundings, the sphere must come to be: with this imperative, geometry is transferred to the ethical field. This imperative gives wings for the soul's leap to the whole. With it, the transfer becomes ontologically serious. The totality of existence is now interpreted under the sign of spatiality, meaning, and soul: the project of the world-soul has entered its stage of precision. Mortals are invited to step out of their temporal junctions, lacking perspective, where they weave their lives with threads of concerns; they have, at once, the opportunity to lift their gaze from the trough of worry and enter the friendly, vast space, where everything is synchronous, illuminated, and open.

Since the sensitive-suprasensible figure of the sphere was chosen by original cosmological-philosophical thought as the prototype of perfect beauty, it impresses upon the human condition the form of a game, which sustains, enables, and surpasses its players. When the seriousness of thought surpasses the game, those who play with spheres encounter a super large, super beautiful, super round one, which necessarily has to overwhelm its players. Could it be, then, that geometry is something other than the beginning of the enormous-horrifying?

In the tradition of everyday images from ancient culture, there is not much left to see, at first, regarding this great shift towards the timeless round. From the Greek beginnings of the sphere, in addition to discursive deliberations in philosophical texts from Anaximander to Plato, we only have testimonies.

Two-dimensional figurative representations of the sphaira, flat and generally conventional. Alongside works such as the mosaic of the philosophers from Torre Annunziata, there are primarily representations on coins, in which the sphaira plays a prominent role in the figurative program, appearing as portraits of rulers and imperial insignia. Thus, in ancient coinage, one can recognize the image of the goddess Nike writing a new victory on a round shield, suspended before her while she places her foot on a sphere on the ground. This habitus will later be adopted by the Caesars: the sphaira under the sovereign's sandal will become a stereotype of the figurative language of power.



Sphere under the emperor's foot.

In an earlier period coin, the philosopher Anaxagoras is depicted sitting on a sphere, just like the figure of Italy; a small Hellenistic gem even shows an enthroned Eros on the sphere. Among the Romans, it is the goddess Fortuna who places her light foot on the sphere. The image of the sphere becomes pure formalism when it is briefly presented together with a rudder: enough to bring before the eyes of the cultivated the connection between state cybernetics and



cosmic devotion. In Caesar's coins, the sphere, the caduceus, and the fasces come together in a complex of insignias, suggesting in a shorthand the unity of universal dominion and fortune for the world. As a perceptive researcher has pointed out, since the Hellenistic era, the sphaira had become the customary "hieroglyph of the entirety of the universe and, above all, of the

sky»;^[15] under the Roman emperors, the association of the sphere and the portrait of the sovereign became a mandatory motif that anyone who wanted to announce or obtain power had to use.











Under the feet of Fortune; Alberto Durero, The great Fortune or Nemesis, 1501-1502, detail.

The world globe under the foot of Saint Francis of Assisi; Murillo, Christ descends from the cross to embrace Saint Francis, Seville, detail.

When, during the time of the Christianized lords of the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the sphaera transforms into the imperial globe crowned by a cross, what is done is to sacramentally develop and enhance the ancient equivalence between the symbol of the sphere and imperial dominion. And if since the 19th century the image of the globe of the world surpasses that of the cosmic sphere, it is because the earth, emancipated from the sky, turned in on itself, still takes advantage of the meaning of totality of the classical sphere.

Roman coins from the time of Caesar.

Contemporary media theorists may be intrigued by the fact that the image of the sphere on ancient coins shows evidence of a double circularity: they are minted objects that were already agents and means of a relative globalization in an economic sense, since, in their time, Roman coins were in circulation throughout the inhabited world. The image of the cosmos on the coin is part of a history of images that leads, not to art, but to the acquisition of political and technical power.

Well, although the coins of Hellenistic Antiquity only circulated in the Roman ecumene, the same dynamics that will spread to the entire globe from the beginning of the modern age were already at play in their trade. Money and the globe go hand in hand, because the typical movement of money --- return of investment.

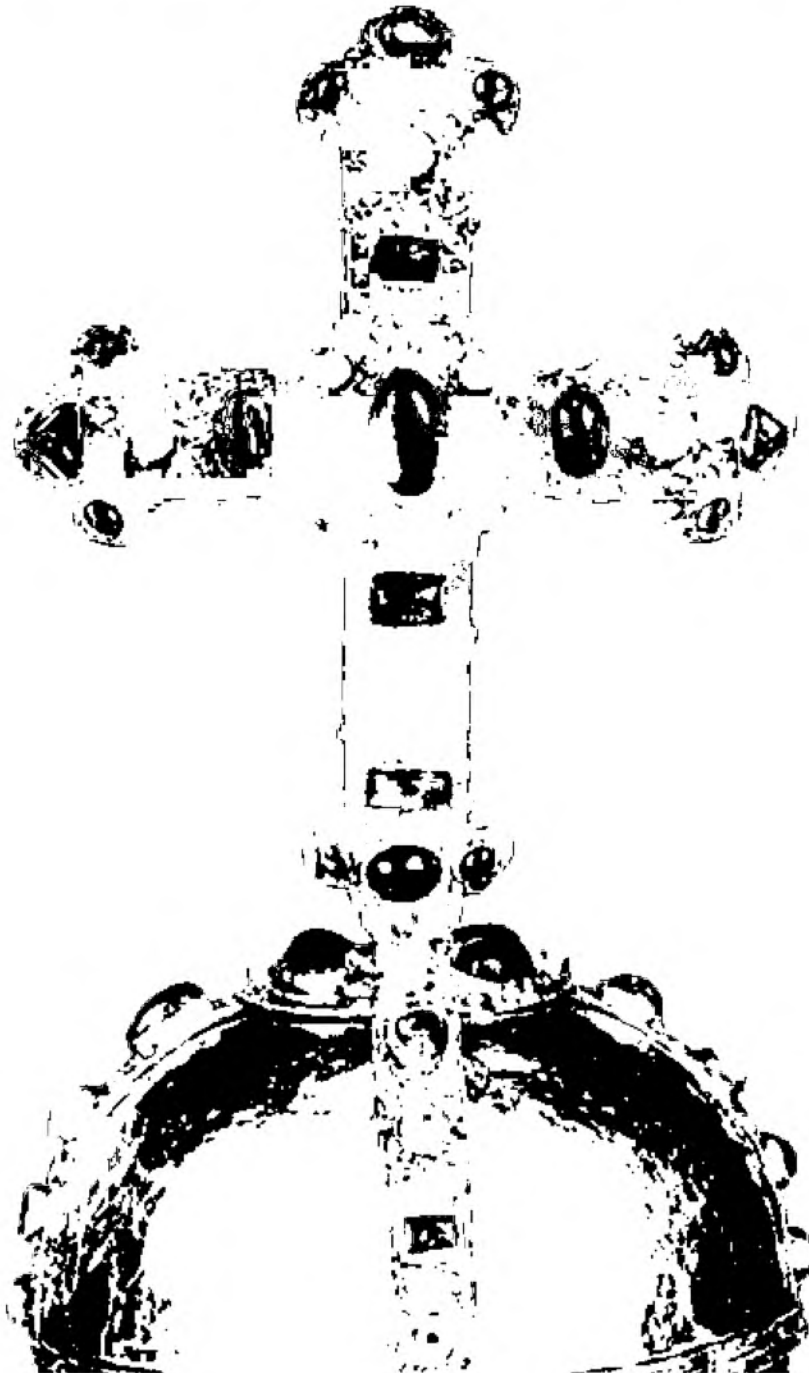
--- constitutes the principle of circumnavigation. [16] Figures of spheres on coins: thinking about things from the results, in these ancient cultural vestiges, which are not very spectacular, the program of European history of the world and its means is already emerging. Money, as real and speculative capital, places human beings in Modernity under the dominion of a completely regulated traffic. Whoever controls circulation can draw everything towards themselves. At the end of this exposition, we will show why the most

important idea of the modern age was not demonstrated by Copernicus, but by Magellan. Because the fundamental fact of the modern age is not that the earth revolves around the sun, but rather that money travels around the world. The theory of the sphere is, at the same time, the first analysis of power.



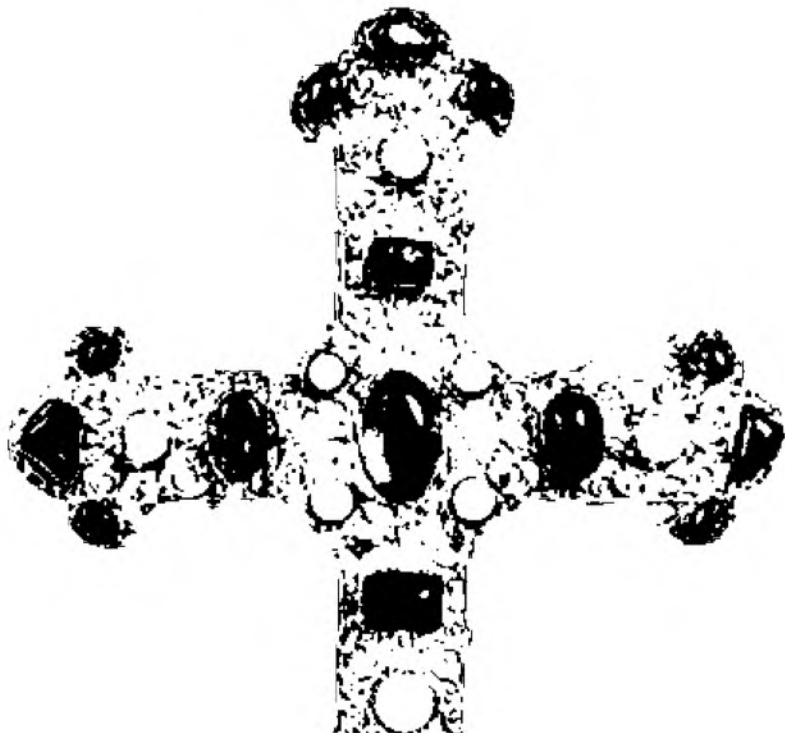
The sphere as a pedestal for a bust; Giovanni Battista Piranesi, The Roman Circus, 1756, detail.

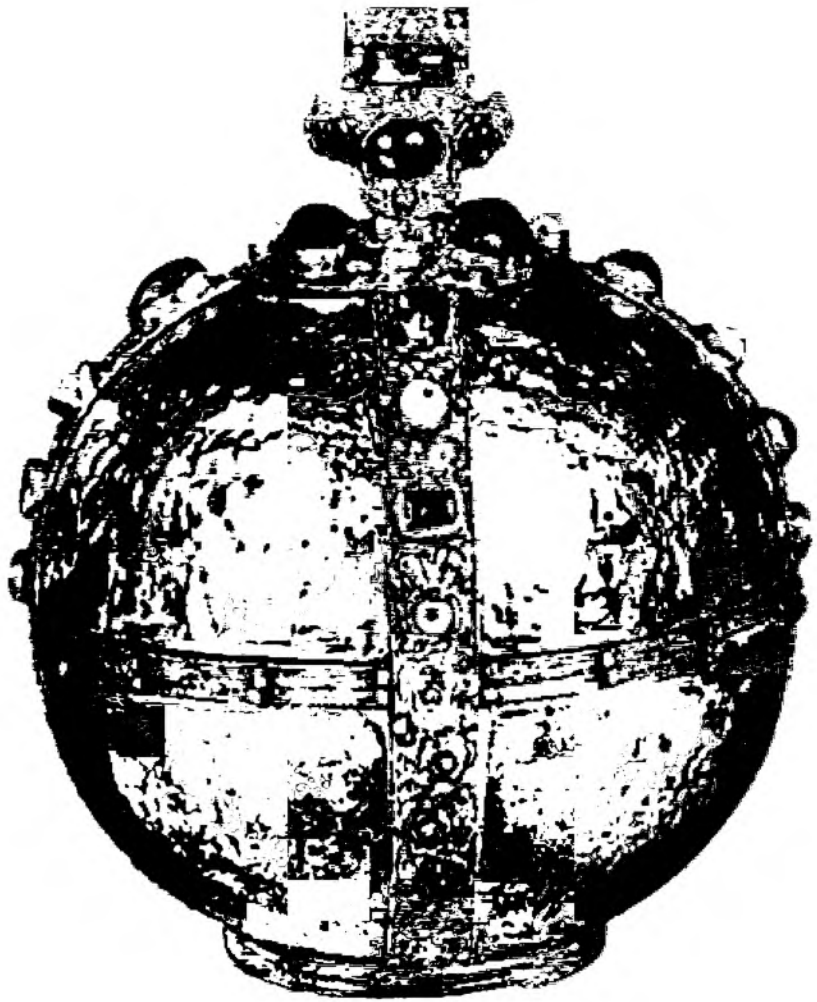
That is why, as soon as in Antiquity the figure of the sphere could be constructed in geometric abstraction and contemplated in cosmological contemplation, the question of who was to be the lord of the represented sphere inevitably arose.

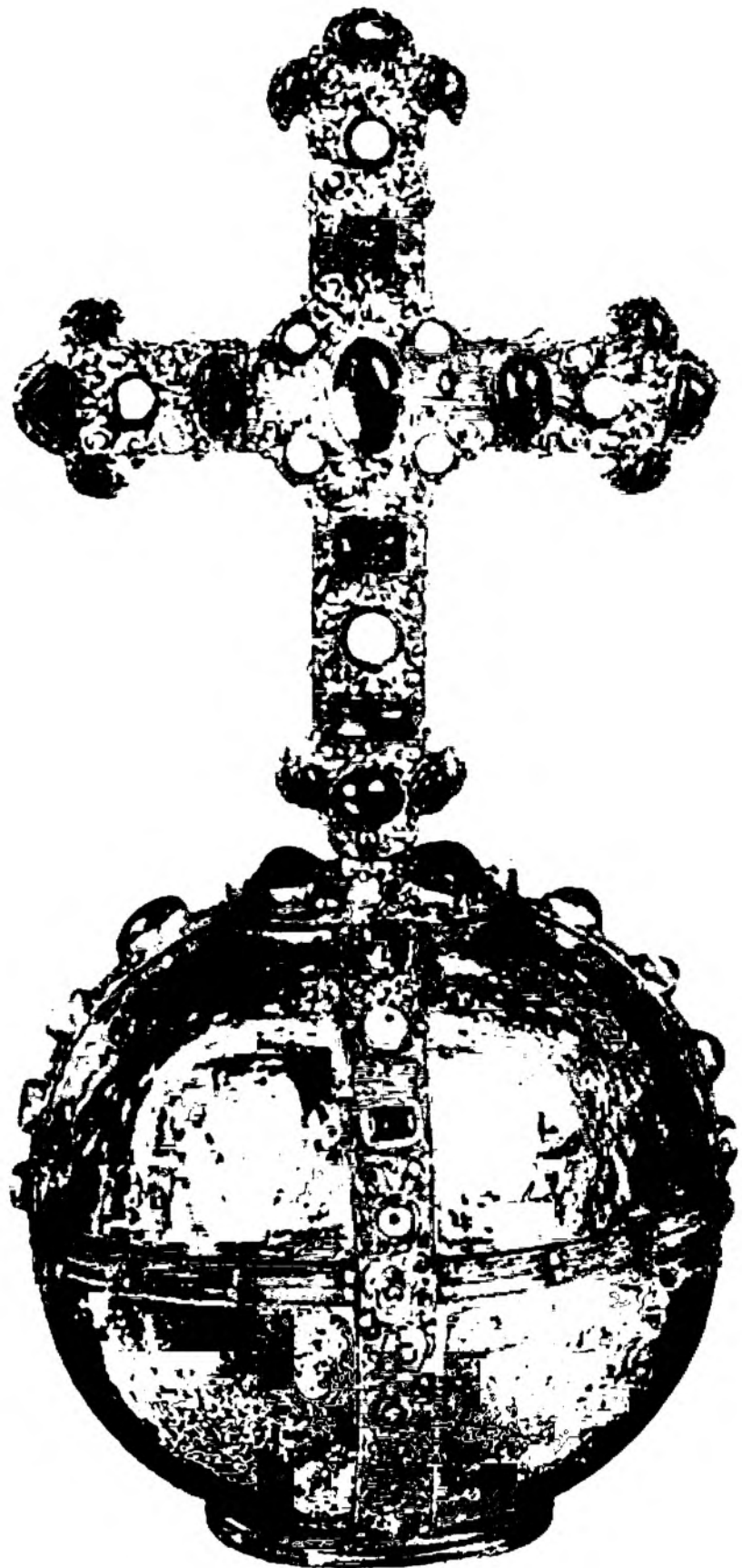


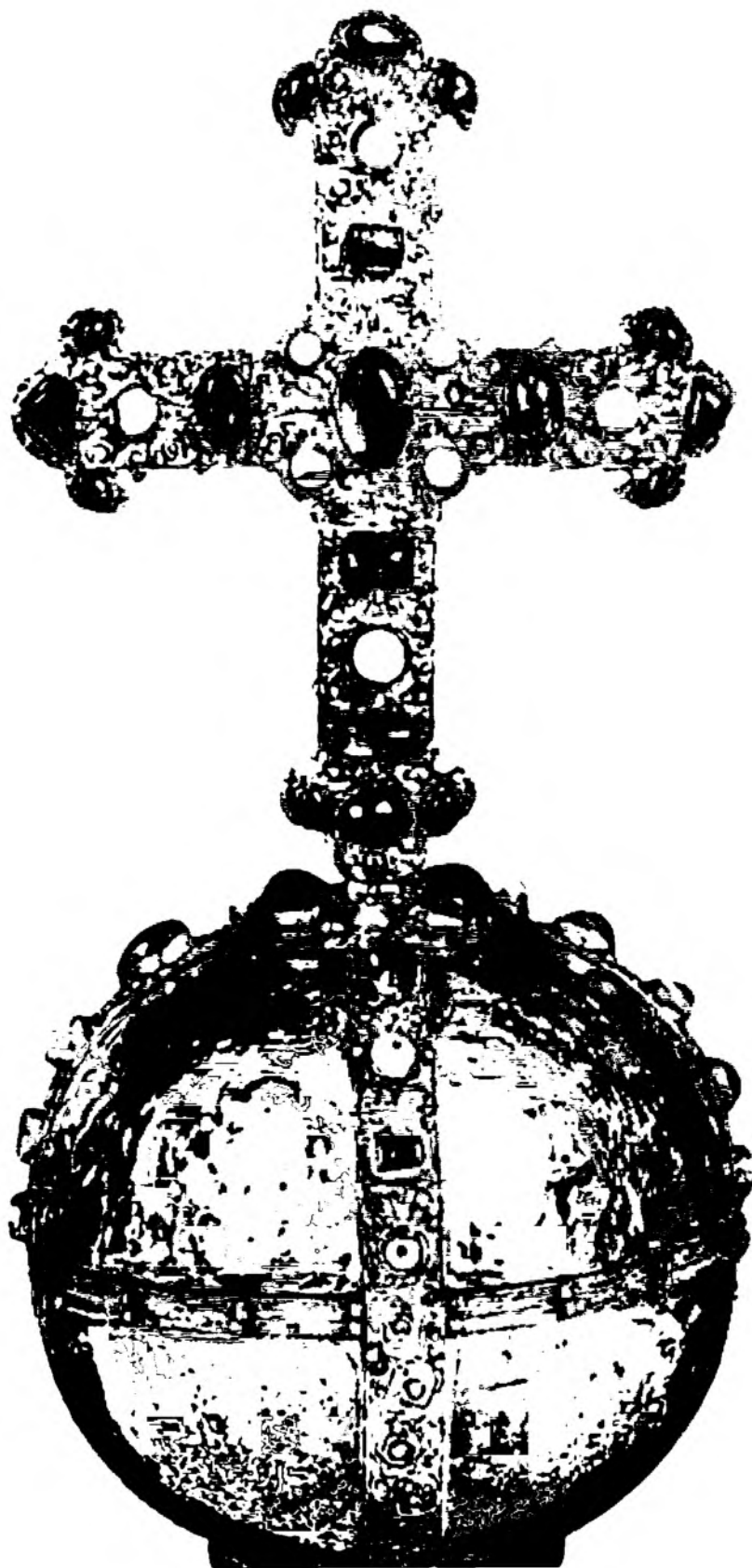


Built. In the oldest images, the goddesses of victory, fortune, emperors, and later the missionaries of Christ placed their feet on the sphere; scientists gathered around it with their instruments, drew meridians and parallels, and traced the equator on it; soon the Catholic Church planted the cross on the sphere and proclaimed Christ as cosmocrat and lord of all spheres; in the 20th century, finally, the globe has been integrated into the logos and propaganda of countless internationally-oriented companies. In the globe, power and spirit share a common sign, even though in the era of great regional cultures, distrusting each other and only related in antagonistic cooperation, they have faced each other as irreconcilable opposites.











Imperial globe of the Hohenstaufen house.

When on the occasion of the capture of Syracuse the Romans appropriated in Archimedes' house his magnificent globe, General Marcellus had it transported to Rome and exhibited it in

The temple of Virtus, whose best translation would be: the goddess of the disposition to achieve performance in something.

The hand of Queen Elizabeth I of England on the globe.

The words of Archimedes to the Roman soldier who was hitting him:

"Do not bother my sphere!" they were soon understood, in their own way, by the generals of the Republic and later by the Caesars. For

How could those gentlemen even understand their contribution to the formation of the Roman Empire, if not as an attempt to trace, with a circle of legions, increasingly wider and better defended rings around the capital chosen by the gods, and to ensure its tranquility, so that no one would disturb it?

Thus, the image of the maximum globe raises the question of the placement of the center and, consequently, of the identity and residence of the universal sovereign; at the same time, it urges figurative thinking, trying to offer a solution to the problem of whether the all-encompassing sphere itself can be placed, in turn, on a support or a base. On what foundation would it be permissible to sustain the whole, whether in the image, in the concept, or in reality? In what foundation or perimeter would the sphere of all spheres have to be introduced, both in representation and in reality? What or who should bear what supports everything? Or should we already accept the daring idea that the enveloping contains itself and hangs in the void, solely by its own power, without relying on something external? [17]

In the face of the perplexity that is hinted at in these questions, the mythological tradition came to the aid of ancient thinkers and artists, proposing a titanic candidate to play the role of bearer of the cosmos. This myth influenced the most imposing sculptural work of the ancient world with reference to the globe, as with its help, in one of the most fruitful moments of ancient artistic creation, a clear yet enigmatic answer could be found to the question of the pedestal and the bearer of the whole.

In the year 1575, during the pontificate of Gregory XIII, some workers who were digging a pit came across fragments of a

monumental statue that could easily be identified as that of an Atlas carrying the celestial sphere. After meticulous restoration, the sensational discovery was incorporated into the ancient collection of the Farnese house and, along with the rest of the artistic treasures of the lineage, in the 18th century came to belong to Carlos IV.

from Naples, the son of Philip V of Spain and Isabella of Farnese. That is why the statue is now located in the National Museum in Naples, even though, due to its spirit and craftsmanship, it could not be anywhere else but in Rome, the city of the Caesars.

immediately, also in that of the popes. [18]

In its robust pathos and inherent monumentality - the sculpture is almost two meters tall - the Farnese Atlas might seem to the inexperienced observer like a nod to the sacred and early times of thought and art. Furthermore, if one considers that with this work, one is facing the oldest globe in the world, almost the only one, moreover, that has been preserved from Antiquity - the celestial globe of Archimedes, from the 3rd century BC, documented in literature, has disappeared, just like the great terrestrial globe of Crates of Mallos, from the 2nd century BC.

[19] This unique work of art may produce undeniably numinous sensations. This Atlas, with its bearded resigned and titanic head, leaning to one side in pain, burdened with the weight of the world, athlete and thinker in one person --- at first glance, it could be considered a petrified sentence of the Presocratics --- is a reminder of a time when humans and titans understood each other. In its dominated torment and formalized resistance, this figure of Atlas, filled with human strength, seems to whisper to the observer this thesis: to exist means to bear the weight of the sky.



Sky globe on the shoulders of the Farnese Atlas, 1st century AD, National Museum, Naples.

With the second look, the archaic aura of the work completely dissolves, which is revealed, even more clearly the closer it is analyzed, as a figure in which scientific conceptions and functional ideas have already left their mark.

Late Empire. Indeed, this Atlas carrying the sphere does not represent at all the document of an early mythical era, and it does not do so in a double sense.

On one hand, the sphere on his shoulders and between his hands is not the old Homeric or Hesiodic sky, whose support, according to myth, Zeus had entrusted to the titan as punishment for his participation in the uprising of the old earth gods against the Olympians. The old Homeric Uranus, in fact, could not be represented as a sphere, but as a hemisphere above the disk of the earth: a conception that is closest to the intuitive, pre-theoretical worldview. It was undoubtedly evident to ancient representations the image of a hemisphere-sky, thought of as corporeal, whose fall to the earth had to be prevented by a real counterforce; that is why, in analogy with the support of the temple's framework by rows of columns, in some ancient documents the support of the sky is also represented by columns. Old Peloponnesian legends make the sky rest on the mountaintops as if they were columns. So it seems that in this a reasonable mythological foundation for the distance between the earth and the sky found its expression.

The fact that the archaic figure of the titan is burdened with the complete, mathematical, and modern sphere, on the contrary, manifests the triumph of Greek enlightenment. For what Atlas carries on his shoulders is already the sky of philosophers, which since Plato and Aristotle is synonymous with the world in general or the cosmos. However, the geometric modernity of the ideal spherical form ---

highlighted by the lines of the equator, the tropics, and the colures--- it also connects with the pre-scientific celestial poetry, older, that had painted on the curvature of the night-world vessel the entire catalog of constellations. The images are engraved in high relief, as if the nocturnal constellations were not seen from the earth, but from a location beyond earthly nights. Of the forty-eight canonical constellations of Antiquity, forty-two are clearly recognized in the Farnese sphere.

What the titan carries on his shoulders represents, therefore, a bastard scientific-poetic sky, a product of both geometry and mythology, a sky for readers of stories and for predictors of natural events, modeled in a time when a cordial complicity between science and the imperial representation of the world had begun to normalize. It is aimed at a mathematically or philosophically literate audience, who, despite this, have enough mythological and literary education to read the symbols of the constellations as if they were isolated episodes, taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

In this sense, it can be said that the Farnese Atlas also supports a literary sky, along with the philosophical one, since in addition to the new, enigmatically clear mathematical lines, it presents the observer with a whole library of constellations with which he is traditionally familiar. In our image, the original Greek ship, the Argo, is recognized in the center, emblematic of the Hellenic entrepreneurial spirit and central symbol of a thalassophile culture, permeated by the awareness that human beings, as Greeks, are beings who always have something to seek in other ports. The Argo is represented here as half because in the southern winter sky it only appears halfway above the horizon. The Ship is flanked on the right by Centaurus, on which Hydra and Crater are recognized, and on the left by the figure of Canis Major. Each of these images is accompanied by a micro-universe of narratives, thanks to which the events of the world, the world itself as an event, are translated into images of scenic mobility. If the *sphaira*, as a total figure, propels the philosophical immobilization of the existing, circumscribing it in a single sublime contour, the inscription of the constellations in it keeps alive the memory of the protodramas of life in prototypical sequences of events. With deeply moved words, Aby Warburg celebrated the celestial globe, covered with constellations, as the true manifesto of the Greek genius: as the human synthesis of

mathematics and poetry. [20]

But also, in a second sense, considering it more carefully, this sculpture can be recognized as a late production and, so to speak,

modern. Because that atlante has been transferred from the time of the Titans to the time of the athletes; its inner date is not the time of the titanomachy, in which ancient and elemental gods of strength fight with younger gods of form and virtue for dominance in the universe; nor is it on the outskirts of the ecumene, in those columns of Hercules beyond which the early Greeks considered the Mediterranean world to end. Its place is in the middle of a stadium or, better yet, in a Roman amphitheater, where professional fighters and violent athletes, like second-rate barbarians, used to display their sumptuous bodies in spectacular and bloody displays of strength. This is supported by the aforementioned dating proposals from art historians and historians of ideas, who consider the work to be a Roman work from the time of Augustus. If value were given to the position of the vernal equinox on the globe, the spring equinox, as evidence of the moment of production of the statue, one would have to presuppose in it an original sculpture close to the year 300 BC; the Roman find would be a replica that would have borrowed from a Greek model a surpassed position of the stars; this would once again offer an indication of the circumstance that the globe would have lost its possible scientific function among the Romans and would only be used as cultural booty and object of imperial exhibition.

In fact, in the case of the Farnese Atlas, everything speaks in favor of it not being used by its Roman owners as an instrument of astronomical illustration. Its arrangement rather attests to it being perceived as a symbol of a new existentialism of power. The muscular titan bends under its burden as if not only having to bear the vault of the sky, but also paying homage to a

ultramundo of new lords.[21] An Atlantean, in fact, who is to

to support the sky of mathematicians, as it refers to the history of the image of the world, and it belongs to the proximity of an emperor, since he had to make the orb his personal concern. It is no coincidence that such figures appear in Rome.

precisely at the moment when the Romans are rehearsing their new imperial role. Physically holding up the sky does not morally mean anything other than managing the world's structure: an idea that Augustus had already considered plausible. It remains to be considered that since the Hellenistic era, "cosmos" is not only the term given to the universe as a well-ordered whole; with the expression "cosmos," one now also refers to the human universe or ecumene: the cosmopolis, as the ecumene has entered the panoramic perspective of imperial interest or anthropological curiosity. With this, the importance of Atlas' role shifts from a forced mythical service to a political function of salvation. Perhaps Horace associates Atlas with the role of Augustus when he praises the emperor in his epistle: "You alone maintain

so many and such great works".[22]

As for the Archaic Atlas, it indeed resembled a damned one; its fate ran parallel to that of its titanic brother Prometheus, who, chained to the rock wall and tortured by liver-eating vultures, could rightly be called "the god abhorred by God"; he belongs to the group of eternal sufferers in Greek mythology: Tantalus, Sisyphus, Philoctetes, irremediably chained to their painful exhaustion. In Roman sculpture, little can be perceived of this early tragic conception of Atlas. The Farnese Atlas appears as a national athlete who has entered the circus amidst the shouts of joy from the gallery, not much different from a gladiator or a Hercules shining with oil, breaking with his muscular strength the heavy iron chains that surround his chest. When he lifts the globe of the sky with great effort, he does it with the routine of old circus fighters, whose power is to suffer.

This strongman tackles his task as if following a powerful pattern that keeps a phalanx of gladiators; he has sniffed imperial air and knows something about heroic pain surrounded by shouts of joy in the amphitheatres. His face blinded by effort listens to the ovations as if he were invaded by a comforting vision.

Applaud, citizens of Rome, for the Titan, the son of Iapetus, battles with the element!

The suffering bearer of the sky seems to be aware of their role in the cosmic-political theater of force. Their body, fully specialized in effort, testifies to a culture that discusses nothing else but the obligation to be strong in a world where there is no relief for the powerful and no indulgence for the weak.

We must imagine the gaze of young Octavian, later Augustus, resting upon that figure in order to get an idea of what monologues that statue may have given rise to. There is nothing to suggest that later on, even the philosopher-emperors of a crisis-ridden century like the 2nd century, Antoninus Pius and his adopted son Marcus Aurelius, did not stand before that statuary representation of the pain of lords and slaves and meditate on the human condition in its presence. It can also be considered true that when Hadrian had the dome of the Pantheon built, he wanted to reproduce on a grand scale the sphere that rests on the shoulders of Atlas, only this time without the mythical bearer, directly on the all-supporting ground of Rome. The nudity of the sphere-bearer will soon represent the nudity of the deified emperors; the cultic athleticism of the figure articulates a philosophy of service and existence that gained citizenship in the court of the Caesars. Its pathetic genuflection and stoic resistance under the eternal burden reflect the prohibition of fatigue that has been declared upon the life of the emperor. Like a facet taken from an emperor's mirror, the bearer of the universe reveals the burdensome nature of eminent life that the gods have placed at the center of the empire.

But we must refer to another third modern relativity of the figure of the Farnese Atlas, which is the one that decides its meaning.

No wonder this figure has been called a demythologized giant or

humanized;^[23] he could also be described as an intellectualized international athlete, as he not only approaches the image of the naked wrestler, but also that of the philosopher. If we take seriously the proposal to date the sculpture to the late Hellenistic or Augustan period, the formation of the hair and beard takes on significance for

its classification on the spectrum of Roman masculinity types. Whatever it is that the restorers

Whatever they have repaired and whatever they have added on their own, by their own beard, authentic in all likelihood, this upholder of the world claims their belonging to the intellectual field of their time.

Since, due to Macedonian hegemony, the custom of shaving was imposed throughout Greece from the 3rd century onwards, and later in Rome as well, the act of wearing a beard, which at first was surely only an indication of a conservative or perhaps even anti-Macedonian mindset, had become a distinctive characteristic of the philosophical guild. The obligation for philosophers to wear a beard went so far that in Athens, during the time of Marcus Aurelius, there was doubt about granting a chair, founded by the emperor himself, to a peripatetic with excellent academic references because the candidate only had a very sparse beard; the case was considered so serious that the personal decision of the emperor had to be sought in Rome. [24] As for the Farnese Atlas, he would have easily met the critical requirement for access to teaching, given that his abundance of beard would have provided incontrovertible evidence of his status as a philosopher. The overcoat, which falls to the side, whose presence on an archaic titan is as inexplicable as it would be on a naked professional athlete, also testifies to the belonging of this figure to the intellectual sector.

If the philosophical attributes, difficult to misinterpret, of beard and above all, the burden that the titan has to bear, are taken into account, it appears in a different light. For this bearer of the world, conceived as a philosophizing athlete, he does not truly have to deal with a material weight, but with an idea whose heaviness is not physical.

As the bearer of the mathematical sphere, the Atlas leans as if under the weight of a dark theorem. What the observer of the statue has before their eyes is nothing less than a logical riddle, whose text becomes readable only after deciphering the signs: the greatest weight can only be supported by the greatest thought. By analogy,

the solid corporeality of Atlas provides us with a plastic idea of the effort of that support; for in that representative image of the entire cosmos, there has long ceased to be a solid body named "sky" that would have to be



lifting only with physical strength. The true heaven is the one that must be maintained through comprehensive reflections. Its carrier or its

Pedestal^[**] is the act of thinking itself. The *lógos*, since it apprehends what comprehends us, has become the accomplice, yes, the true fundamentum of the encompassing. The *periéchon* is the spirit, whose lightness makes the heaviness of the whole float.

That is why the philosopher, like Atlas, knows the effort faced by those who seek high physical performance in the circus. It is true that athletes and philosophers share a positive concept of this effort, which in great cultures constitutes man, and both celebrate *pónos*, the strenuous and difficult exercise that constitutes the seriousness of life and human being itself. But while the athlete remains steadfast out of love for effort, the philosopher goes further, to the intellectual

love for what is heaviest, which is the whole. Thus, with his act of strength in relation to the sphere, the Farnese Atlas elevates to an image the fundamental doctrine of ancient philosophical asceticism: a philosopher is one who, like an athlete of totality, bears the weight of the world. The essence of philosophy as a way of life is philoponia, friendship with the totality of sublime and heavy things. The love of wisdom and the love of the weight of the one, of the totality, they are the same thing. [25]

To support the great weight, one must throw away the small ones.

The whole is carried on the shoulders only of those who exercise themselves until they become athletes of impartiality. For whoever clings to small and medium matters does not have free hands for the great ones. It is symptomatic that the emperor Marcus Aurelius, himself an authentic philosopher, considered it appropriate to note in one of the first sentences of his Soliloquies or Meditations (I, 5): From my teacher I learned not to take sides in the circus games, neither for the greens nor for the blues, in the gladiator fights, neither for the parmularii nor for the scutarii, but to endure hardships, be content with little, collaborate myself in the work, not meddle in the affairs of others, and become inaccessible to gossip.

Henri Testelin, Louis XIV with Colbert and members of the Royal Academy of Sciences in the map room of Versailles, 1667.

Gobelin Tapestry, Versailles.

The reward for such abstinence is the increasing ability of the philosopher to contemplate the all-encompassing sphere, which is impossible to be shown in ordinary perception, lost among the things that surround us. Only a sober and uniform gaze in all directions can make the most real unity-sphere perceptible among the abstinent witnesses. Its most suitable expression is the one that yielded the perfect image of the mathematical sky: that universal roundness that no empirical eye sees.

But if in the case of the sky supported by the Atlas what is truly being referred to is the sphere of the philosophers, then the sensible contemplability of that sublime sphere only has a precarious dimension. It is true that the statue offers a visibility of the sphere without any problems, but upon reflection, it becomes clear that the data of the sphere in sensible vision can only be deceptive. What the Atlas carries on his shoulders is a sign of the sky, whose real equivalent - if it were to exist physically -

never be able to see any human observer from your mortal location. So who would you have to be to





To contemplate the celestial spherical envelope as an object located in front?

But above all: Where should you be to contemplate the totality of being as if it were a vault seen from the outside?

II. Parmenidean Instant Parmenides, a pre-Socratic philosopher from ancient Greece, is known for his profound insights into the nature of reality. One of his most famous works is a poem called "On Nature," in which he presents his philosophical ideas. In this poem, Parmenides introduces the concept of the "Parmenidean Instant." This concept refers to a moment of pure being, where everything exists in a state of unity and permanence. According to Parmenides, this instant is the only true reality, while the world of appearances is illusory and constantly changing. Parmenides argues that our senses deceive us, leading us to believe in the existence of a world of plurality and motion. However, he claims that true knowledge can only be attained through reason and logic, which allow us to grasp the eternal and unchanging nature of reality. The Parmenidean Instant is a key concept in Parmenides' philosophy, as it challenges our common understanding of the world and invites us to question the nature of existence. It reminds us that beneath the surface of appearances lies a deeper reality, which can only be accessed through rational thought. In conclusion, the Parmenidean Instant is a philosophical concept introduced by Parmenides, highlighting the

existence of a timeless and unchanging reality beneath the world of appearances. It serves as a reminder to seek true knowledge through reason and logic, rather than relying solely on our senses.

The world is round around the existing round.

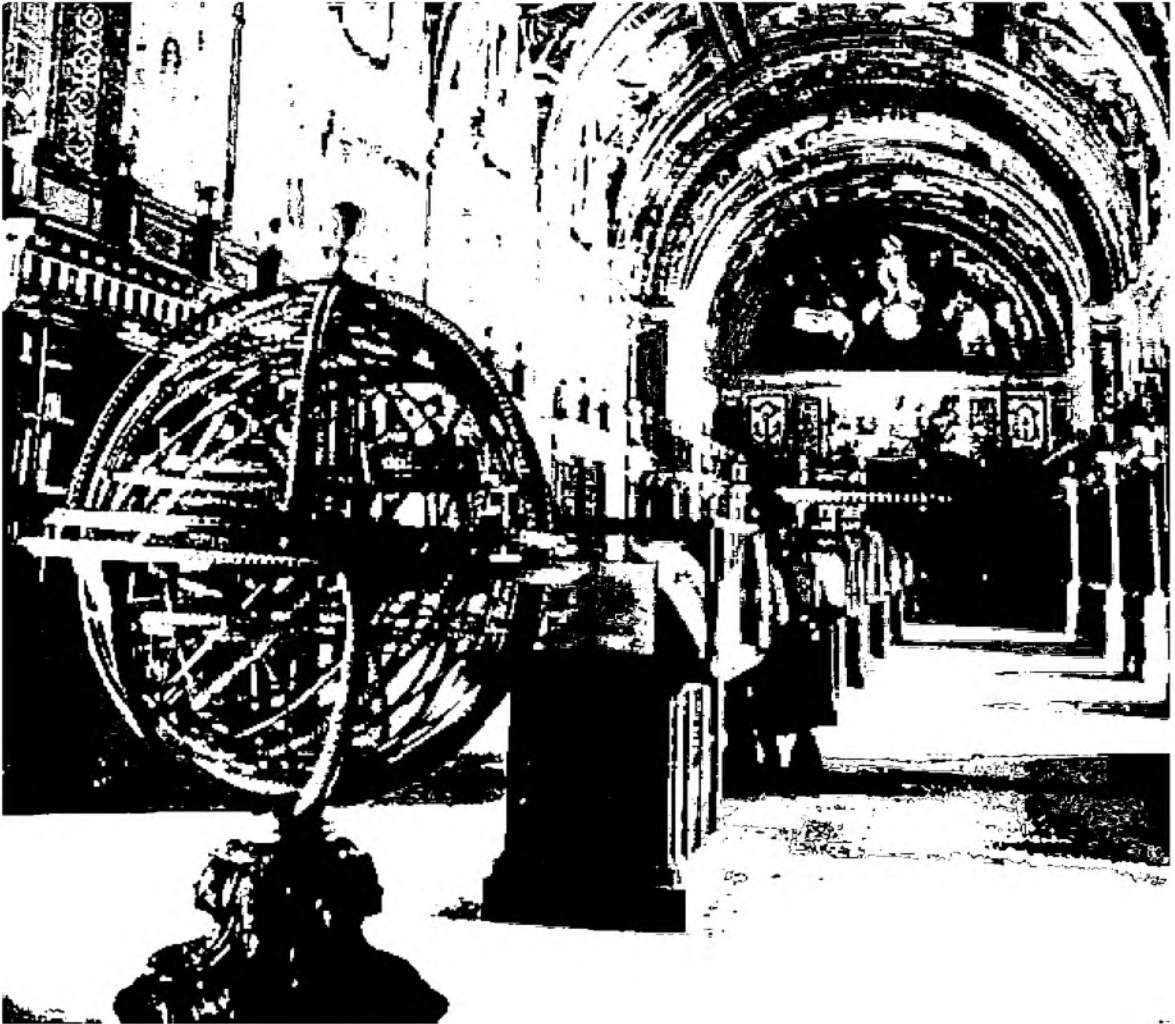
Gaston Bachelard, Poetics of Space

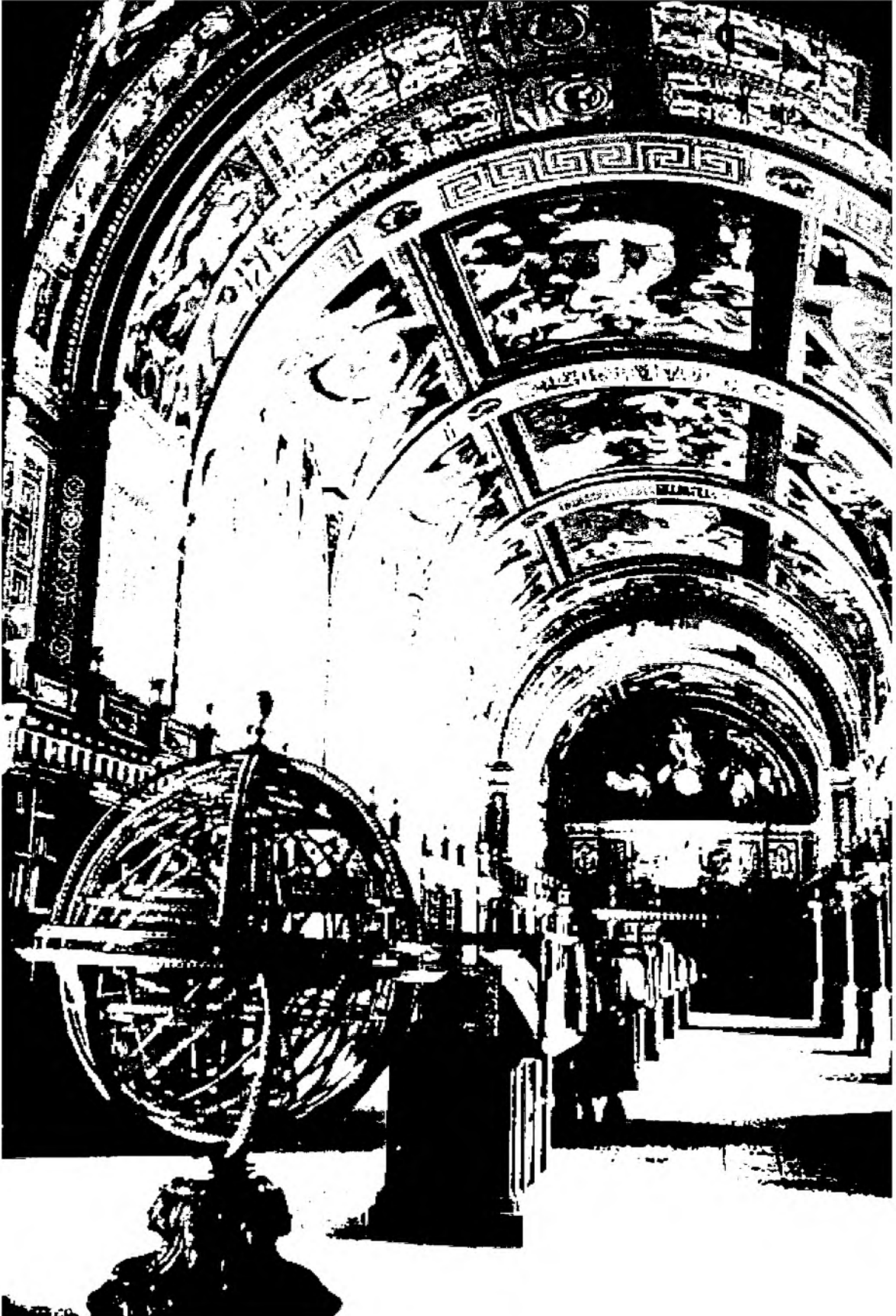
The peculiarity of the problem posed by the figure of the Farnese celestial globe and its subsequent variations is so difficult to understand from a modern point of view that it seems justified to clarify its inherent problematic nature from a different perspective.

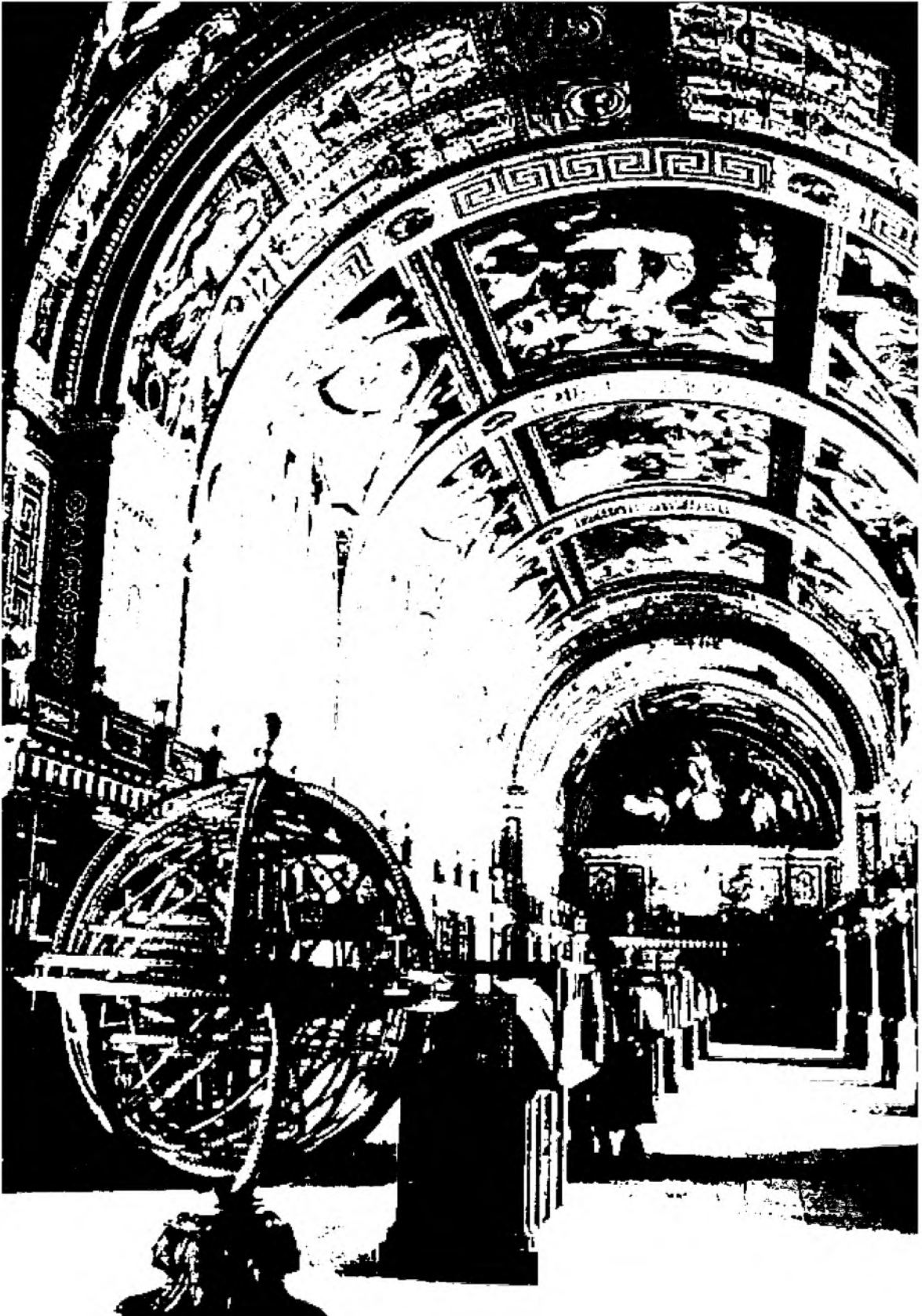
First of all, it is important to note that our current understanding of what balloons are and what they mean is, in the meantime, exclusively predetermined by the model of the globe.


Our conception of the globe object is almost always defined by current geographical, geopolitical, geoeconomic, and climatological interests. For large globes that are not the Earth or do not represent it, a relevant role that can be assigned to them cannot be found in the modern economy of ideas and signs.











El Escorial Library, armillary sphere.

This concentration on the globe is a very young phenomenon, barely over one hundred and fifty years old; and this is due to the fact that, from its massive appearance around the year 1500 until the 1830s, globes were almost always constructed and arranged in pairs. They began their triumphant journey as an inseparable pair of terrestrial and celestial globes.

Only together did both globes fulfill their cosmographic mission, and only united did they symbolize in the vestibules and reading rooms of the great European libraries between Madrid and Moscow the universe of knowledge and the knowledge of the universe. The globes were placed wherever they were needed.

Twins before the eyes of the cultured social layers, together they referred to the privileged obligation of the powerful to pay attention in all directions. Only the terrestrial and celestial globes together could represent the entirety of the earthly and supraterrrestrial world. As inseparable double spheres, they represented the cosmic totality and the terrestrial sub-totality. They constituted the double sign of the interpretation of the world in the era of modern metaphysics - or, to speak with Heidegger, in the age of the image of the world -; thus, in the formal equality of rights of both globes, the revolutionary revaluation of the earth was already more than clearly manifested.

With this, we debunk the myth launched by Freud of the so-called cosmological offense to human "narcissism": in truth, as

we must show later, [26] the Copernican turn of cosmology acts stimulatingly in general --- considering things as a whole---

terms of self-awareness of Europeans, it cannot be seriously argued that there is a persistent grievance caused by astronomical decentralization. Copernicanism emancipated the Earth, turning it into a star among other stars; in fact, as Blumenberg has shown, it

elevated it to the status of the only star deserving of that name, since it now stands out as the transcendental celestial body that surpasses all others in brightness.



such a condition is a possibility for observing the rest of the celestial bodies.



Celestial and terrestrial globes on the roof of the old library of the imperial court in Vienna, circa 1726; approximate diameter: 400 cm.

The fact that the terrestrial and celestial globes are regularly placed one with another, and one next to another, is the emblem of that post-Copernican situation: the earth alone is worth as much as the entire rest of the sky.

However, after 1830, the production of paired balloons was almost completely abandoned; the globe began its journey.

triumphant march as the sole representative of the principle of the great

Representations of spheres. Celestial globes become curiosities and gradually fall into oblivion. In view of this rupture, it is impossible for historians of ideas to repress the end of classical metaphysics, since, if the celestial globe can be described as the quasi-medium-of-masses of metaphysics, the progressive disappearance of this cosmographic medium coincides significantly with the fulfillment of the ancient-European metaphysical tradition in the Hegelian system. As the universe is analyzed and dissolved into serene knowledge, the sky - as the last bastion of an objective cosmos - also loses its naive representative, the uranian globe.



World globe factory in Paris, 1954.

Under this constellation of things, the globe, on its own, became the massive symbol of recognition of the young-Hegelian and pragmatist orientation of thinking. It represents in the image of the earth the irreducible foundation of all human affairs. Anyone who speaks of the earth in the future will be entitled to think that they are referring to the ground of all grounds. And, in reality, had it not been proposed

19th century as its epochal task to bring the concept from the heights of a fictitious sky of ideas to the recovered real earth? Hadn't "immanence" become the guiding word of advanced philosophical thought? Hadn't the openness to things themselves, the descent from false heights to authentic foundations, become the capital, logical and kinetic figure of all "critique"? The archaic exercise of looking up at a metaphorical and metaphysical sky lost its plausibility when it was decided to reconquer the ground of human facts, that is, of specific praxis.

The incipient era of cumulative technique and self-assured anthropology no longer wants to know about transcendence or celestial globes. With the astronomical, optical, and philosophical destruction of the sky, its representations were also condemned to a lack of objectivity. In the future, the word "sky" would no longer mean anything other than an optical effect, which occurs when perceiving cosmic space in the midst of a planetary atmosphere. This sky came to be revealed as metaphysically empty and anthropologically indifferent. Suddenly, man became the being that has nothing to seek above, but much - himself.

-- what to lose. Consequently, the sky no longer represented a metaphysical or globographic task, but rather an aeronautical one.

Therefore, the riches of human essence should not be squandered any longer on chimerical heights. With general literacy, the constellations fell into oblivion; the pictography of the sky no longer found readers, and only in astrologizing subcultures could Cancer, Virgo, Sagittarius, and others survive, albeit painfully.

In its artistic wooden or metal frame, the solitary globe became the signifier of the post-metaphysical position in which man finds himself, as a being of the Earth's surface, on the globe that holds him in cosmic space, condemned to self-shelter in an uncovered space.

With this reference to the crisis of heaven in the modern history of ideas, what is strange and difficult to understand for modern people in the oldest world becomes more evident.

Well, what the Farnese Atlas carries on its shoulders is precisely the other globe, which we no longer understand simply as heirs and participants in the modern world: that celestial globe that elevated the universe as a whole to representation and placed before the eyes of its beholders the imago mundi in all its sublime and irresistible roundness. Despite its seemingly simple, tangible presence, that marble body adorned with constellations remained a conformation, both real and virtual, full of profound connotations. It represented an image in the pretentiously philosophical sense of the word: an image given of the non-given. If it is permissible, with Marx, to attribute at times to a medium constructed by man "metaphysical whims," along with money, none is better suited for the occasion than the ancient-European celestial globe.

In it, that is fulfilled that there can be no valid ontology that does not

I need complementary onto-graphy. [27]

With this, as we have explained, the Greek sphaira is nothing more than the image or signifier of the cosmic totality. Whoever sees the image of the sphere sees the sphere itself. However, the immediate question arises as to who can claim to see the real totality of the sky. Its representation in image appeals to a visual power that does not reside in human eyes, because even if human eyes were to leave their sockets, they could never find an external and objective sky in front of them. Human perception can only gather impressions of circumstances that occur under the vault of the sky, but it can never see the sky from the outside. Therefore, the celestial globe manifests itself as a hyperbolic figure that only confirms a superhuman vision.

It must be expressed as eccentrically as the matter demands: what the Farnese sky shows is God's worldview. Assuming that the metaphysical representation of God as an all-observing, eccentric intelligence were correct, seeing the sky from the outside, as the globe of the atlas represents it, would be a divine privilege. Looking down at the corporeal-finite, such an intelligence would indeed be capable of seeing...

how the cosmic whole opens itself below or before itself. If one had before their eyes an undisturbed access to the cosmos and could find pleasure in the contemplation of the only figure worthy of it, the divine hyperuranian visual power would simply have to look at the universe as such, constantly disregarding any potential gruesome details.

But where would these come from, given that Uranus is a sky without even the possibility of a cloud?

With the view before it of the truly existing sphaira, the transcendental observer would be facing its true dome. In front of the sublime dome of the universe, God's narcissism would be at home: for the absolutely noetic observer could recognize, with the most intimate satisfaction, its own essence in the most spiritual of all forms, in the splendidly corporealized hén kaí pán.

The ancient sphere builders and balloon sculptors placed in the world, with this, nothing less than an efficient means of imitating God through the means of geometry and graphic arts. In doing so, Egyptian art of measuring the earth transforms into Greek art of measuring the sky, yes, into divine measurement.

When in the future we talk about geometry, it will properly mean uranometry, theometry. Since only the God of philosophers enjoys a worldview that deserves such a name, that is, a comprehensive and complete representation of what exists, man, through the production of a geometrically constructed image of the cosmos, can participate, however precariously, in that vision of God. That is why the supreme image, the sphere, is more than an arbitrary sign that signifies the world. It is not only appropriate in the highest sense to the original: it also attracts the observer, introducing him into what is represented. Since, as it informs and envelops the observer, it begins to live in him as an effective idea, the sphere manifests itself as the authentic dynamic icon of what exists.

It takes the human eye to an eccentric position that seems to only correspond to a separate God;^[28] it divinizes, in

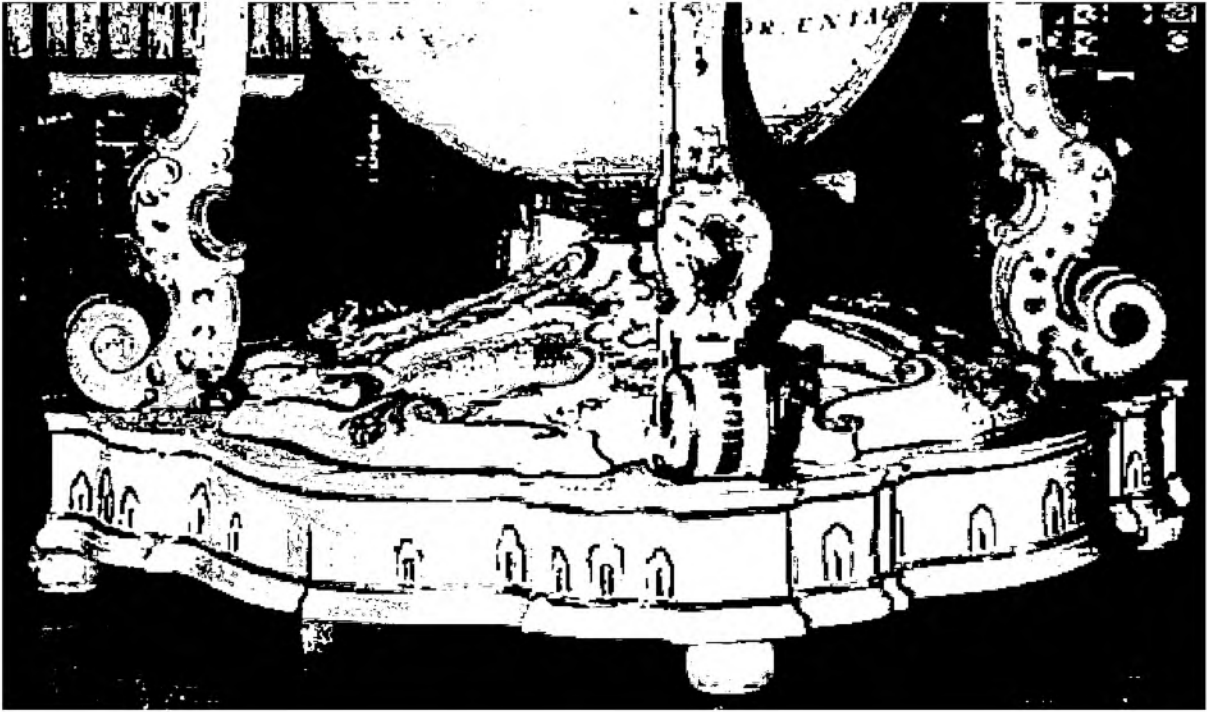


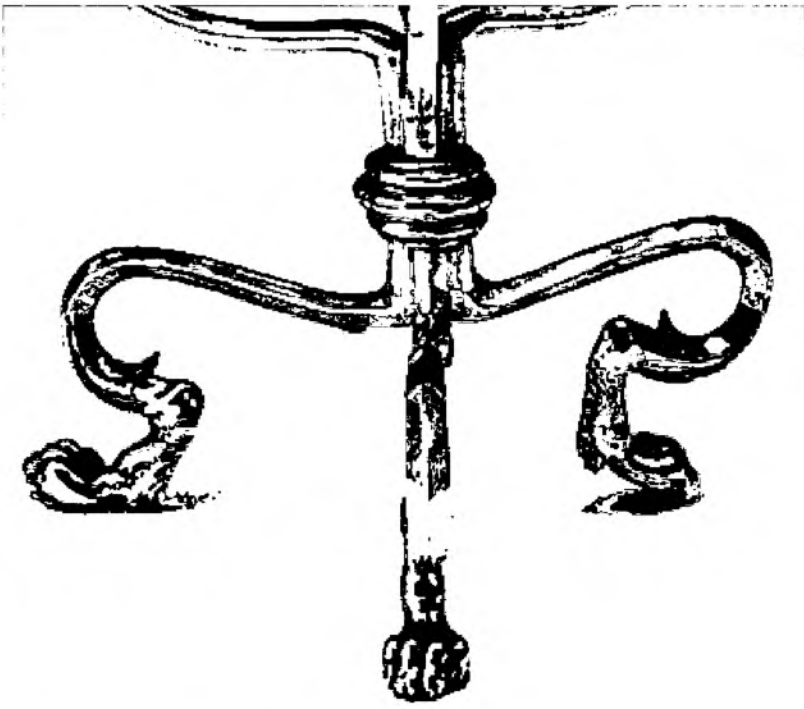
consequence, to the human intellect that has understood the rules of sphere production. Thus, given that according to its internal dynamics

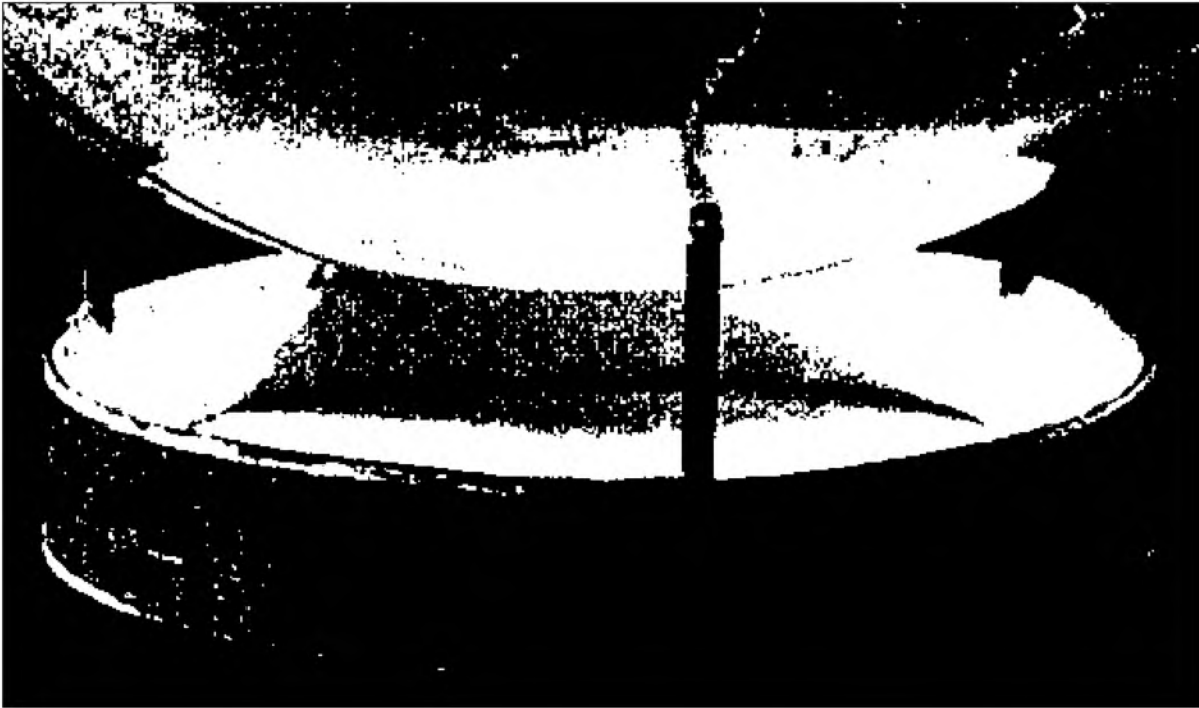
Introduce and concludes the transition from sensitive intuition to intellectual representation, the sphaira can be designated as the metaphysical figure of thought par excellence.

With this, the immensity and enormity of the sphere on the shoulders of the Farnese Atlas is expressed: in that celestial globe, we see with our eyes the secret of Western metaphysics. Even if that Atlas were not the

The oldest and practically the only preserved exemplar [29] of its kind, would in any case constitute the most worthy and excessive object of philosophical meditation: for as a representation of the unrepresentable, it provides its definitive form of validity to the thinking that, from the sensibly given, wants to elevate itself to comprehensive visions. It is the sublime itself, shaped as form and understood as comprehender.







Support, grab, hold, be-at-the-base. On top of everything and its pedestal.

And yet, this globe contains a monumental ambiguity; for, as soon as the concept of the sphere as a mental concept came to light, it had to be decided whether the human spirit feels included within it or situated outside of it. With the seductive configuration of everything in a single sphere, the limit and danger of metaphysical representation are manifested. The vision of the sphere as an image of totality seduces the seer to avert their gaze or to disregard, in principle or forever, their authentic place in existence and to enter into a fictitious life as a spectator beyond the world. Therefore, from the beginning, philosophy is inherently accompanied by a kind of vertigo and divine deception. What Heidegger will call the forgetting of being already begins with the ancient instructions for a blissful view of the globe from the outside. As the supreme figure of representative thinking, the sphere induces mortals to engage in an observation-from-the-outside game, initially jovial, then feudal or subjugating, which will one day end in dreams.

polytechnic instrumentalizers and in the violent domain of knowledge about life, comically posed in its entirety. Representing feudal,

Subjugating or instrumentalizing means conceiving the whole as something that is situated there in front and placing oneself, safely, in front. Has the metaphysical globalization of the existing already been an invitation to forget being and the first betrayal of the existential place of the human being?

As for the Farnese statue, things have not yet developed enough to be timely warnings of modern critical theories against seigneurial or feudal logic and the numbness that comes with objectification. The synoptic representation remains, in principle, an exclusive privilege of the observer standing before the statue. Under the weight, in its forced blindness, brutally excluded from the whole it supports, Atlas himself is there, so to speak, devoid of any image of the world. If we refer to his flexed gesture, he still has no access to the lightness of theory, nor an authentic concept of the object he carries.

United by its own ball only by the perception of its enormous weight, it barely knows about it what its burdened shoulders can understand. It has the preconception of the world that its weight transmits to it. Only the prejudice of the weight character puts it in communication with the totality of existence: it philosophizes, so to speak, with tense muscles, bowed neck, and a shrunk soul. It is the weight of the world that illuminates him, the strange philosopher; the burden provides him access to a dark truth about the whole. This Atlas cannot yet appear as a lord with free hands, without support, and even less as a technician or experimenter in the modern sense, since, due to its constant stooping under the incomparable weight, it has not yet reached the principle of unloading, relief, or relaxation.



Farnese Atlas, detail.

From this perspective, it is inherent to this Atlantic form, although it may be seen as a relatively modern effigy, a halo of pre-theoretical depth: it can be understood, due to its mythological substance, as a nod coming from pre-Socratic spaces, in which wisdom had not yet fallen under the dictate of scientific culture. Furthermore, this Atlas is completely apragmatic in nature, since his action, bearing the sky, means the opposite of technical, instrumental "getting one's hands dirty" in transformable or producible things. Like someone enchanted, he persists in eternal muscular meditation. Similar to a pre-Homeric hero, he is a sufferer of fate, not a conqueror of circumstances; solving problematic knots is not his thing. In any case, he also has the world at hand, at least where his hands touch the spherical cover, although this having-at-hand does not enjoy the support of the eye.



Informed about the situation or even about the theoretical eye: it is not, therefore, on the path of technique. Because to become technical, it would need to be unloaded through representation and experimentation, and precisely this is still unattainable for the Atlantean.

Raphael, The School of Athens, 1510, group of cosmologists, detail.

If the Atlas could one day --- and that remains close as an impulse of necessity --- pass the ball to another carrier or place it on

A pedestal, those same titanic hands, now free, would also be suitable for manipulating and distorting the whole that is now within reach. We immediately understand that, with this, the Heideggerian concept of technique as a titanic practice of representation, production, and deformation comes into play. For technique will be exactly what dominates when the bearer of the world relinquishes its burden-image and conquers, by manipulating and transforming it, the represented and unloaded world (Heidegger would say: when what is at the base is interpreted as subject and the subject as what dominates from above).

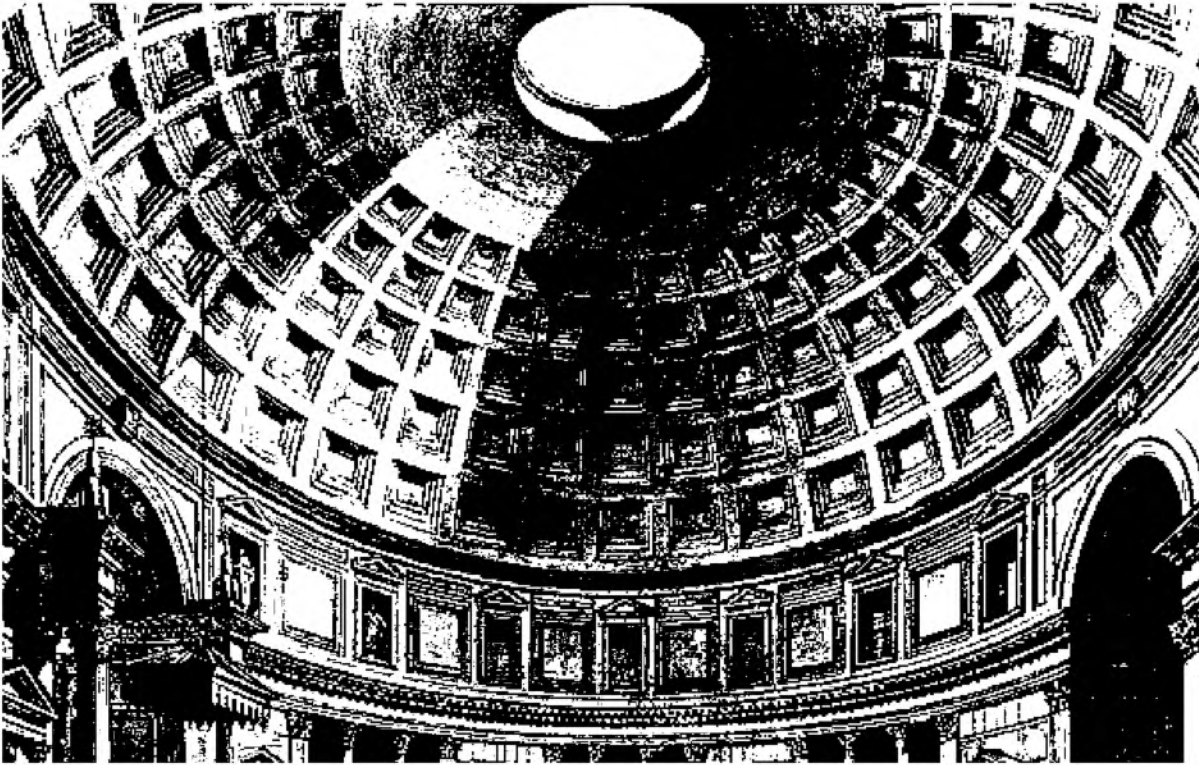
There is at least one great testimony of early Greek thought that proves that the choice between slave-penalty without theory and lord-theory without penalty does not represent a complete alternative regarding the question of the relationship between being and thinking.

In the fragments that have reached us from Parmenides' work, a theoretical culture is manifested in which the essence of the sphere is not precisely revealed in an unreflective external vision, nor, above all, in a servile titanic position.

For Parmenides, the theory of the sphere means nothing more than a panoramic view freely within an open existence, which informs about itself from itself. That is why he never even considers the idea of an external location. When he, at a decisive moment in his poem, announces the doctrine, as famous as it is obscure, that thinking and being --- *noein* and *einai* --- are identical, with that sentence he takes the tiger leap from thought to the open center of the world. From nowhere else but from within, immanently, remaining within, the sphere of being allows itself to be captured in thoughts, by looking at it: and not in a progressive circular journey, ruminating on the usual

opinions about things or tracing the changing details one finds around, but only through a sudden gaze at the undivided.

"Integro" translates to "integrity" in English.



continuous, round, one. Parmenides reveals, thus, the space of philosophers as that of illuminated immensity.

Suddenly, the entire surrounding environment becomes clear, gradualness is not philosophical. The whole suddenly shines in the light of the projectors of a simultaneous panoramic vision that explores the surroundings in the blink of an eye. Precisely with this, the absolute sphere is also offered from within, irremediably and forever, to the intelligence that looks around. This synchronous, panoptic view inside the one-whole, which vibrates in itself like an illuminated vessel-sphere, is what the goddess claims as the only true vision. It is impossible for it to be a distant and externalizing view of a whole located there in front; rather, it designates an ecstatic limit value of the natural conception of the world arising from the characteristic fundamental situation of being-in-the-world.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi, dome of the Pantheon.

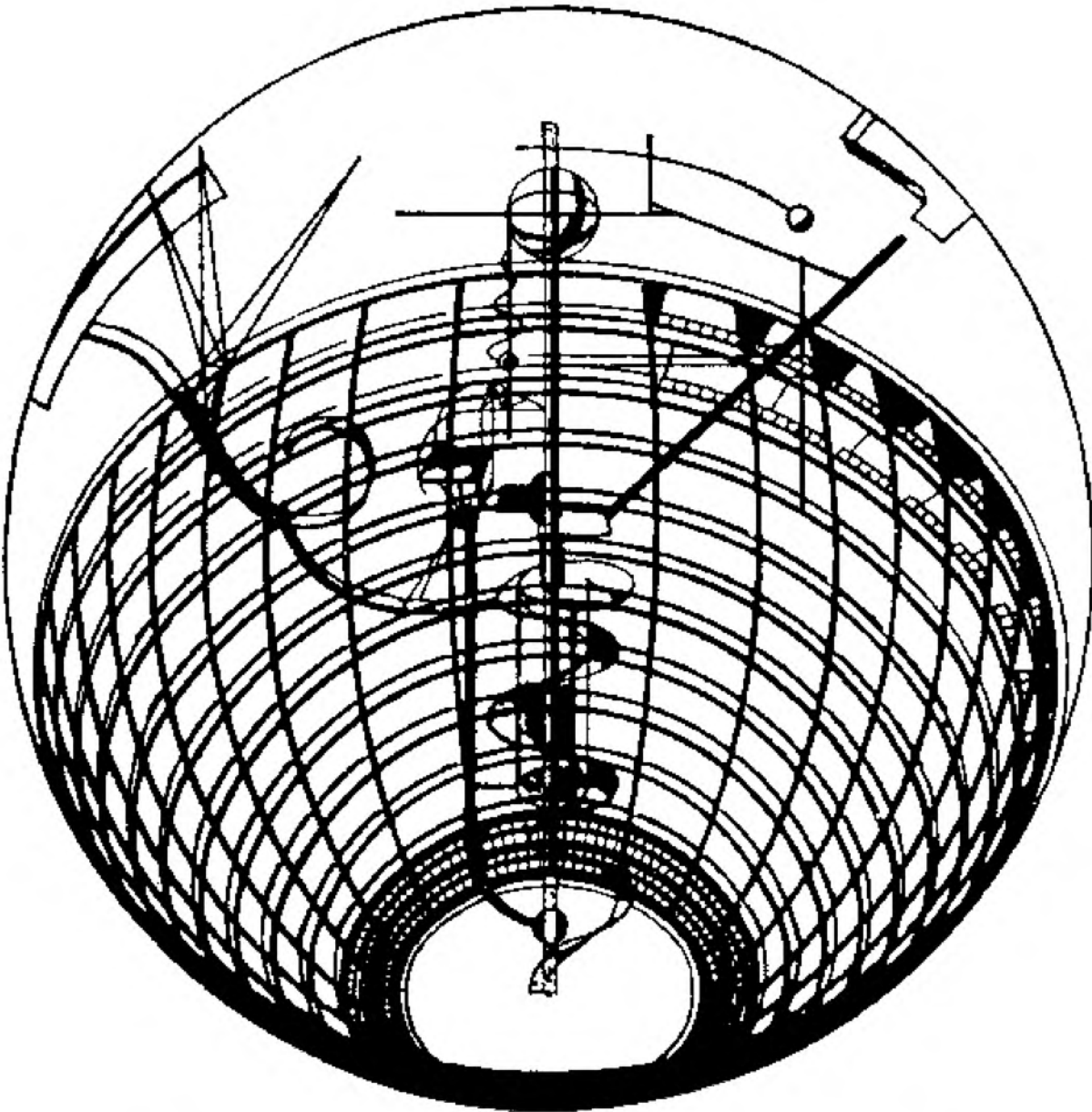
The great intuitive vision in the one, open, all-around, is practically never attempted by ordinary mortals because they are

Attached always to the circumstantially current and to what is closest, and within the sphere they are blind to it.

Tangled in things to do, stories, and opinions, they miss out on that exceptional situation of theoretical openness that the panoptic vision represents within the uncovered being. As a result, they do not

"realizan" translates to "they carry out" or "they perform" in English.

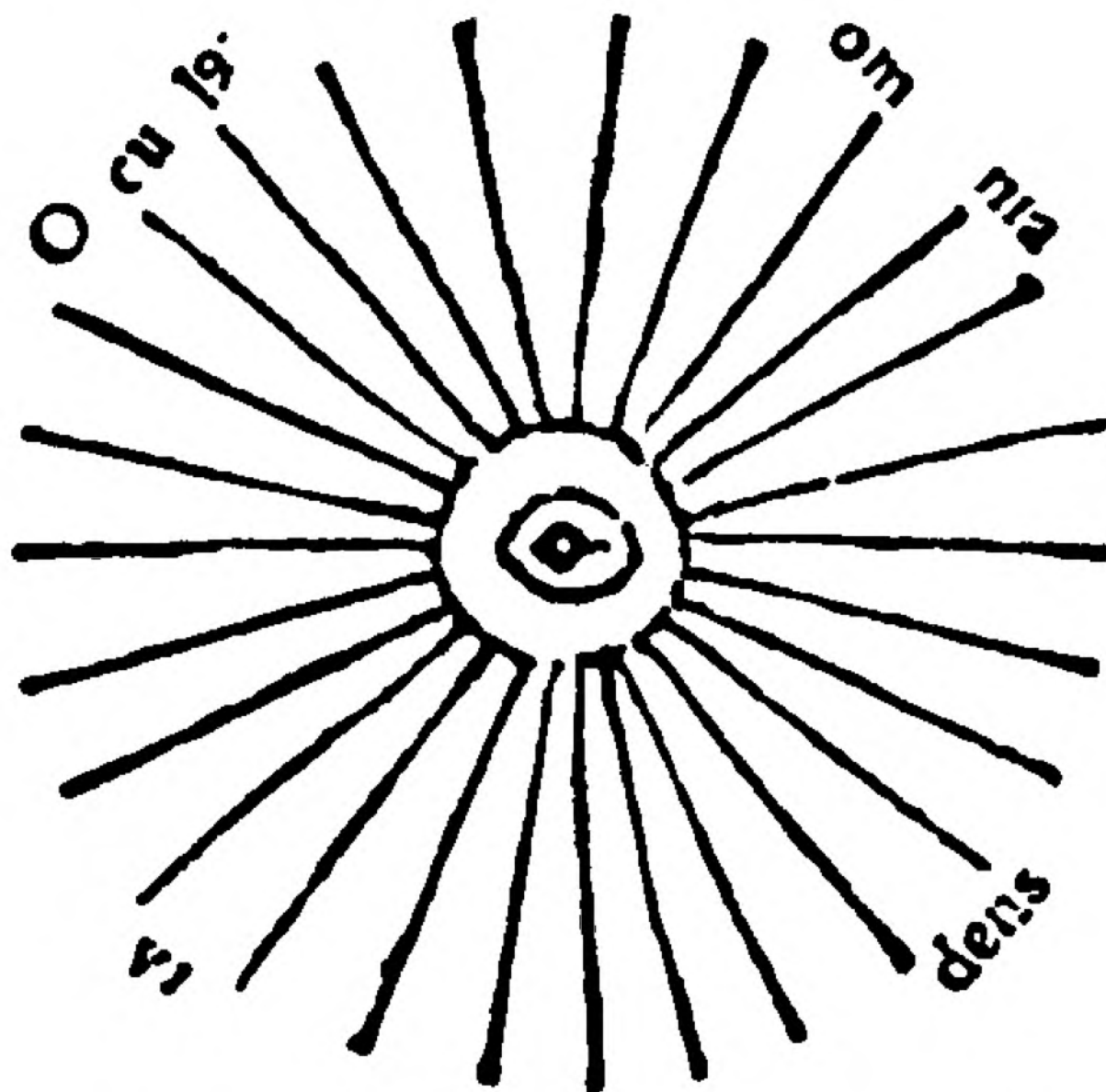
Their situation in it, the unperturbedly uniform, and they get lost in scattered opinions about this and that. Unable to gather themselves in the presence of spirit, required in view of a sudden panoramic vision of the clearing, completely still, mortals fail to reach the location that the goddess first points out to her favorite, the philosopher, as the authentic and salvific one.



Andreas Weininger, project for a spherical theater, 1925-1926.

In the school of vision of the philosophical panoptic gaze, or of all-encompassing perception, the thinker feels and understands what it means to "know" everything: to see everything visible, to recognize everything encompassing apprehended in the ring of being, and all of this forever, and always in the same light of perceiving, of becoming aware, if perceiving and becoming aware are to mean here that everything that is can only be effectively named in the

same and identical way, simply saying of it: "that it is". [31]
Measurement means nothing else.



made in one fell swoop, from the sphere of being in the original meditation that allows us to affirm that the common characteristic of everything is "being", eon. The entirety of being is sovereignly determined as "openness for spiritual panoramic vision within that same being". That is why being means here as much as hanging in the clear homogeneity of the sphere, opened from within by a panoptic awareness. "To perceive and to be are the same." [32]

Oculus omnia videns, illustration in Carolus Bovillus, Liber de sapiente, 1510. Translation: "The all-seeing eye, illustration in Carolus Bovillus, Book of Wisdom, 1510."

It is not divided [the being], for it is all the same; nor is there more here, as this would prevent it from being continuous, nor less there, but rather it is all filled with being. Therefore, it is all continuous, for being touches being. [33]

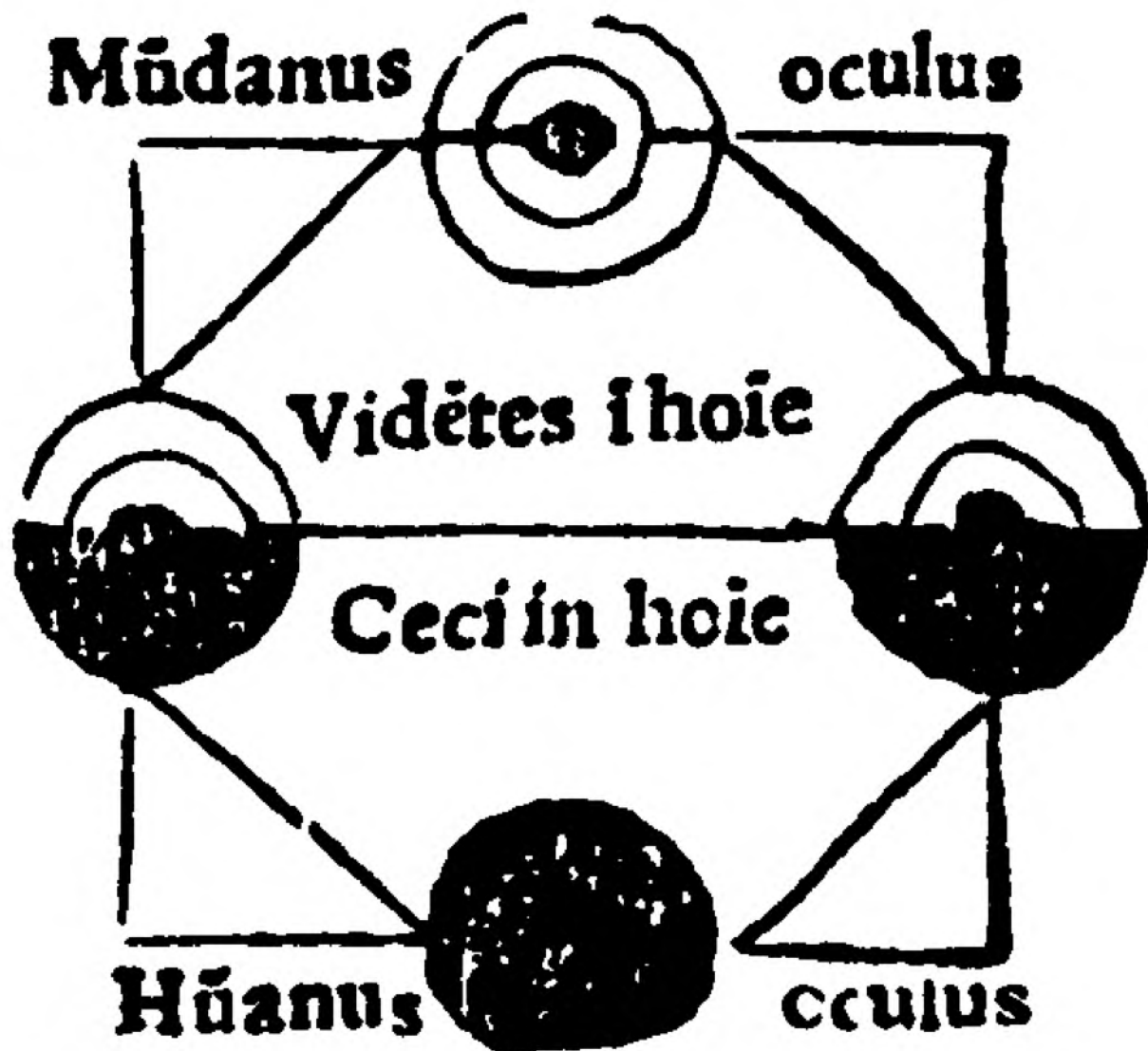
... But, since its limit is the ultimate, it is complete everywhere, similar to the mass of a perfectly round sphere (euk'yklou sphaíres), equally strong from the center in all directions. [34]

Also in the case of this quasi-ontological sphere, which is not conceived with the compass of mathematicians but with a panoptic sense for the appellation "is", common to all beings --- therefore, its possible expansion is always accompanied by an improper sense, although

Which one specifically?---, the question arises of who would be capable of perceiving it and where the seer would have to position themselves.

"Realizarla" translates to "carry it out" or "perform it" in English.

While the celestial globe, as shown, would only be visible to a metaphysical observer or an eccentric usurper imitating the divine worldview, Parmenides' ontological globe could only be shown to an ecstatic individual who, as an absolutely contemplative intelligence, looking around in a state of alienation, placed themselves within the "unshaking heart of truth".



Human eye, illumination, average vision, and blindness.

Who appropriates the outer view of the entire sky has in mind the prototype of objectivity in general: the universe as a superobject that does not contain the superobserver. The Parmenidean sphere, on the other hand, embodies the prototype of an omni-immanent figure of inclusion, and, since it is only constituted by a predicate: "that which enters into a panoramic perception", it does not have the structure of a thing, but rather that of a spiritual fact or state of affairs: that of a vaulted panorama, so to speak, animated from within everywhere, illuminated.

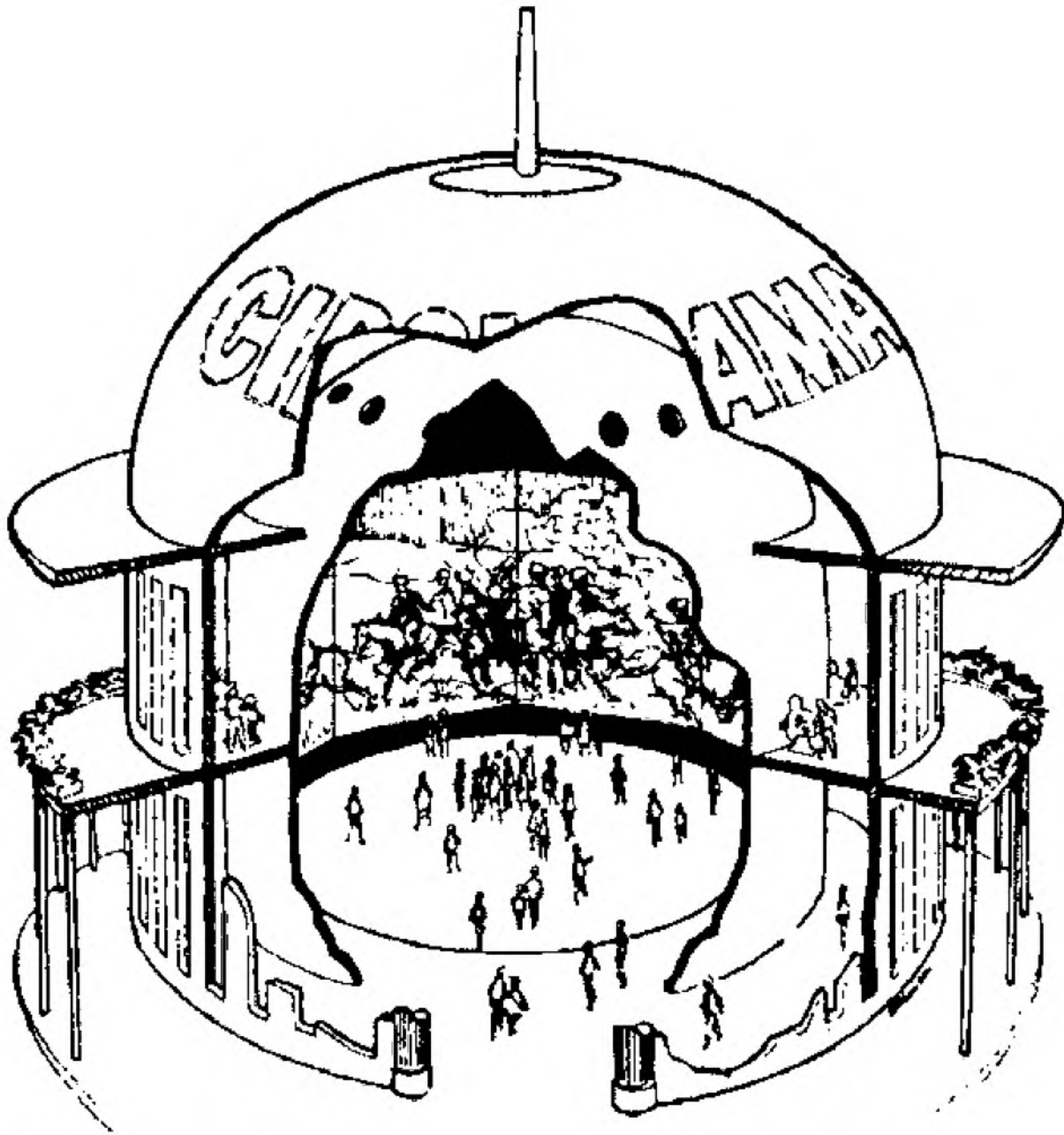
uniformly. [35] If the sky observer were to adopt

one

Absolutely eccentric position, the seer of the Parmenidean sphere of being would have to center himself absolutely, and this to such an extent that he would have to distance himself radically from his ties to sensory impressions and the back and forth that occur within human society: he would have to be crazy about the center.

If the worldview from the outside already entailed a certain eccentricity or a cosmological madness, the concentricism of Eleatic thought depends on a counter-madness: the ability to place oneself in the absolute middle and there, in ecstatic contemplation, be surrounded by immobile fullness, "integrity". Parmenidean spatial eye, in its fulminating circular gaze, captures the one and only continent of the opening of being that generously accounts for itself. It is true that in his poem the philosopher does not openly speak of the sphere of being signifying the true God and his clairvoyance, but the entire tendency of his ontology leads to the philosopher becoming a participant in the panoramic view from within the immobile one. Only to him, the super-madman, can the privileged intuition be granted --- from the most intimate visual point --- of the conception of the world of the round God. For who but a God who looks from within inside-out of his world could satisfy the condition of capturing in his

totality, in full anfiscopia, the immobile sphere of being? [36]



Russian panoramic cinema, a project from the twenties.

The consideration arises as to whether in both cases of intuition of the sphere - both in metaphysical-globalizing eccentricism and in ecstatic-panoramic concentricism - not only have two different styles of philosophical theology appeared in mutual concurrence: one exotheological and the other endotheological, so to speak; one that

places God and His intelligence in front of the totality of cosmic being, and



another that moves the intelligent God inside, to the center of being, and allows

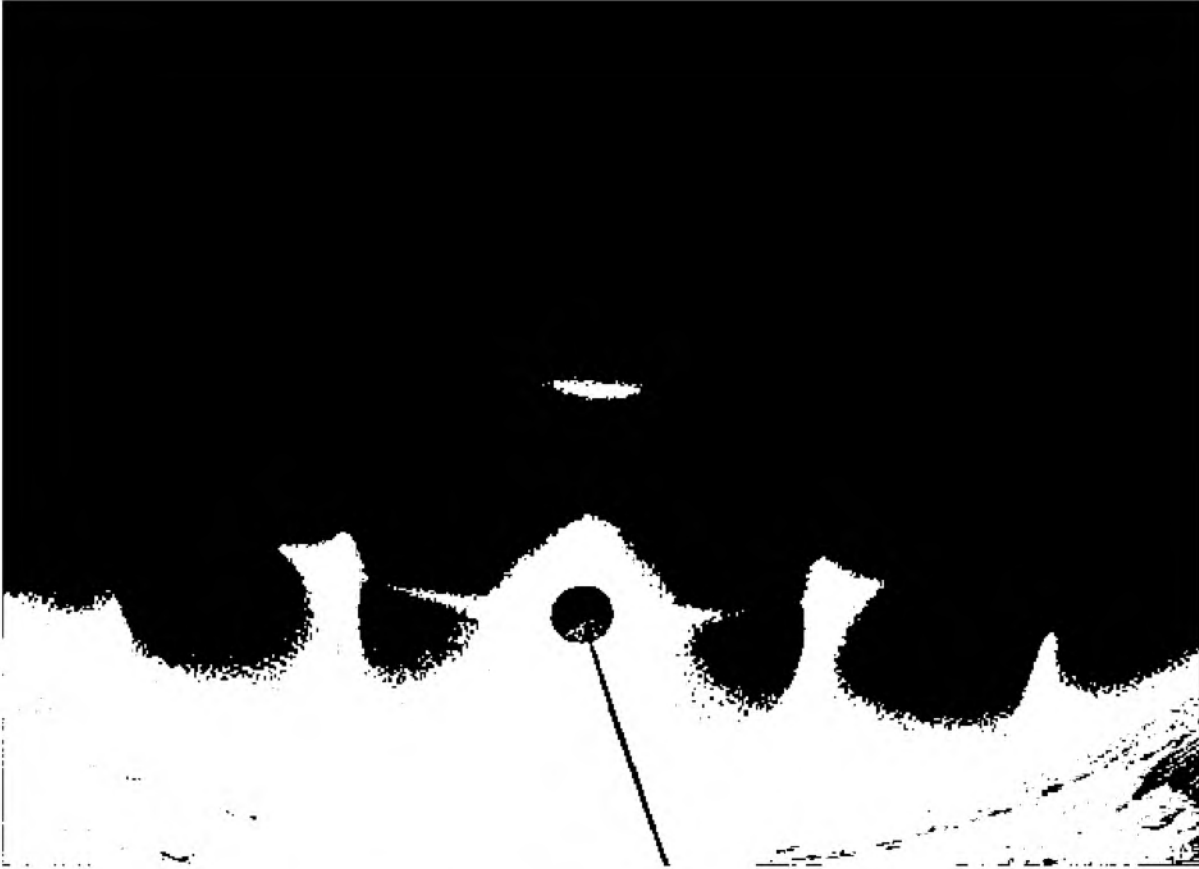
The inspection from within in the whole-sphere. It goes without saying that this second path, since it can be oriented through the interior of human self-relationship, remains by far the most fertile and enigmatic; only it is also the one that can perhaps free itself from the modern suspicion towards the "archaic" thinking of unity and totality.

Its foothills reach up to the late medieval mysticism and German idealism, even to the harsh Heideggerian interpretations of being-in-the-world, which claim to surpass all traditional metaphysical conveniences but cannot hide their cryptoparmenidean structure.

Masaki Fujihata, Impalpability, 1998.



Fetal hand, photograph by Lennart Nilsson.



Hello at the South Pole, January 2, 1990, photo by Walter Tape.

Gilles Deleuze's ontology, with its heightened Spinozist pathos of immanence, also remains within the Parmenidean continuum.

However it was broken by Plato's intervention, the Eleatic impulse set the task for subsequent thought to inspect, from the ecstatic-concentric position, a panoramic entity organized as a distant-near world-environment: supreme philosophy is the amphi-theory of the amphi-cosmos. How could this be achieved if not through a second type of theological madness?

Perhaps it is Nietzsche who has formulated the most accurate comment about Parmenides:

Around the hero, everything turns into tragedy, around the demigod everything into satire; and around God, everything turns into what?

In "world" perhaps? (Beyond Good and Evil, § 150).

III. Transporting God

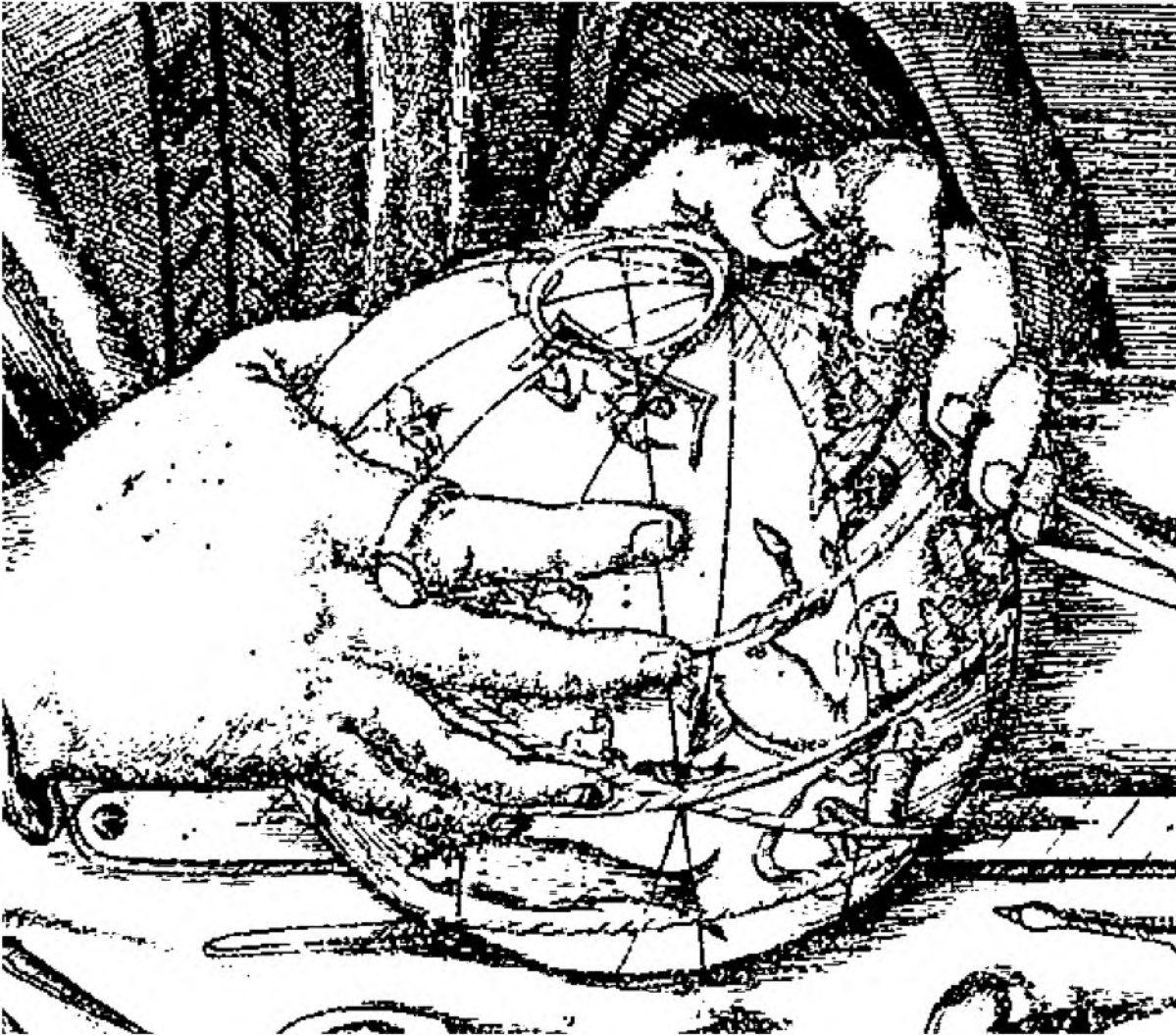
We will clarify in what follows how the fundamental phenomenon of the microspheric world - the reciprocal evocation of the two that are united in a strong relationship - is also repeated in the macrosphere, in the sphere-shaped universe. The couple also has to obtain the absolute sphere for themselves. We have already shown, with allusions to it, that when thinking from a single dominant center, the question of the role and significance of epicenters arises.

Furthermore: if a finite maximum sphere is to contain the entity in its entirety, what then happens to its exterior and its opposite? How to evaluate the rest not encompassed by it and how to place it (if it exists)?

And there exists: the rest is obvious. The Pharnesian figure of Atlas has sensibly presented us with the paradox of the all-encompassing sphere. If the celestial globe is truly meant to represent the self-verifying symbol of absolute inclusivity, then what happens to the unfortunate Atlas who is so clearly not contained within that which he supports in his hands? What happens to the quality of totality of an all-encompassing figure, outside of which a excluded, lost, and proscribed being roams? In his statue misfortune, Atlas embodies the question that unsettles from the beginning any harmonistic metaphysics of the sphere: what weight do the eccentric points have in an inclusive round world, in which all power comes from the center? What do the places, which seem to have fallen from the contour of the whole and find themselves in a inhospitable and inessential exterior, signify?

A look at the situation of the unfortunate atlas, which is meant to support the whole, is enough to understand that any finitely constructed centric world is infested with an inevitable eccentricity; for if the whole forms a certainly gigantic, but finite sphere, the question of a remaining exterior cannot be avoided. The ungrateful position of the cosmophore already indicates that the perfectly round

whole could be threatened by a rebellion of slaves from the lower and outer powers, and that, in any case,



In the case, the whole can only subsist in its geometric euphoria if it manages, and as long as it manages, to keep the eccentric in check from the center. Precisely this relationship is what the Greeks captured through the Olympic dictatorship over the old titanic god, transferred downwards and outwards; a dictatorship that is exercised in order to domesticate chaos through cosmifying form.

Celestial globe in the hands of the cosmographer Gemma Frisius (1508-1555), detail of a posthumous portrait, 1557.

It can be argued that, in its inevitable plastic naivety, our figure of Atlas can do nothing but pay a double tribute to mythical imagery and representative thinking. But didn't Parmenides show a way to avoid the confusion caused by external perception, a way to achieve an inspection



radically immanent, obtained from within, in an absolutely exterior-less sphere? Wouldn't the domain of the center be established

through this path, without any blemish or turbidity, by eccentric remnants?

Placenta examination, photo by Lennart Nilsson.

can be suppressed, as Parmenides' vision of the sphere is also infected with an irrepressible eccentricity, albeit completely different. This eccentricity does not

It occurs, as in the case of Atlas, not due to a completely isolated position, but due to the insurmountable difficulty for the common mortals to place themselves in the location of an absolute center.

It cannot be considered a marginal condition.

arbitrary of the Parmenidean doctrine that is transmitted by the mouth of a goddess to an enraptured philosopher: far from everyday dwellings, after a stormy ascent to a magnificent, superhuman place. For what the goddess teaches, the ecstatic anfsicopia in the eternally immobile sphere of "what is," establishes a norm for philosophical gaze that cannot be carried out at all by mortal eyes. These, attached to the illusion of a busy, changing life, never manage to effectively access the ecstatic-panoramic position of the midpoint, only from which ontological vision in the round can occur: ontoscopy as anfsicopia. It is, therefore, the vision and the ordinary human life that manifests itself as eccentric in relation to that center from which the panoramic gaze of God and the philosopher must be launched towards the one and only.

With this, a second eccentricity has been made evident, which entails much more intimate and persistent consequences than the first: to differentiate it from the observer's externality, we will call it epicentrism. Philosophy approaches the ordinary human intellect with the pretension of understanding: I do not see the world from the center, as I would if I were in a position to have God inspect his world with my eyes; I myself am, as I am, a disturbance of the absolute gaze; I look at the world from an epicentric point and therefore, I do not see anything that is a permanent whole, but only

the chromatic flash of an invisible totality. Through the veil of opinions, images, and situations, I never capture anything other than fragments and partial views of the dark machine of becoming.

So, if with our gaze fixed on the figure of the Atlas we have discovered a tension between the sphere of the universe and its impossible eccentric view from the outside, through the analysis of the Parmenidean vision of the sphere an indissoluble tension is produced between the gaze.

absolute, absolutely centered, within the ontological sphere and the epicentric conception of the world from the existential placement. Therefore, to sensibly see the world means: not to contemplate it from within, from the real midpoint. With this, a sentence of grave consequences has been pronounced about the human condition: human beings, until they manage to reach the exceptional ecstatic situation of philosophical *anfiscopia*, similar to the divine, are condemned always and without restriction to exist in semi-blind epicentric placements. To express it in relation to Greek anthropology: from now on, they are not only the *brotoi*, the mortals, but also the removed-from-the-center, the lost in circumstances, the marginal beings, the situationally obscured. Human beings are the marginals of God and, as such, incurably epicentric, semi-blind, semi-clear-sighted. This early conclusion of Greek philosophy signifies a great event in the history of the clarification of human self-relations, since, thereafter, human beings from developed cultures, despite their immemorial ethno- and egocentrism, have to forever understand themselves as non-midpoint beings.

Classic philosophy means the demand to understand that the center is elsewhere. It is true that when humans are in their right minds, they are required and captivated by the center, but they are not that center itself. What in the 20th century, especially in the discourses of Catholic anti-modernism, has been called the loss of the center, is, seen from the perspective of enlightened mortals, an event that happened an entire era before, conditioned by the newly coined metaphysical interpretation of space. This brought to light something

worthy of attention: that humans move away from the center because a point that is not within themselves imposes itself in their thinking as an absolute midpoint.

"Enfrente". Since then, being human means existing in the epicenter of the absolute. Epicentric existence, in turn, means knowing oneself exhaled and influenced by the breath of a supreme center without being able to confuse oneself with it.

And precisely with this, in the space of the unfolded, conscious life, a situation arises that causes the exact repetition of intimate microspheric relationships at the macrospheric level. For the tense relationship between the human epicenter and the divine center is a replica of the original reciprocal evocation that occurs in the strong relationship of the two unified, now, however, at the level of understanding of the world that is maturing logically and practically.

In a classical sense, then, to think metaphysically means to contemplate the fascination that the center exerts on the epicenter points around it.

In the relationship between the Atlas and its celestial sphere, nothing of this sublime metaphysical centrism can yet be appreciated.

Its exteriority towards the maximum sphere and its center is of eccentric quality, not epicentric. That is why in its way of supporting the whole, it is not evident what it could contribute to the stability of the sphere that is on its shoulders: another support could be given to the sphere without experiencing any noteworthy change. Therefore, no essential or intimately conditioning relationship can be assumed between Atlas and his celestial burden, and in the sky itself, there is nothing that would make support on an external support necessary for its complete realization. (We disregard here, for a moment, the aforementioned requirement that the full realization of the sky could also be conditioned by the love-effort of the resistant thinker).

Another completely different thing happens with the supporting roles that fall on human beings when, as epicenters, they are subordinate

to a center and are used and attracted by it. The clearest prototypes of such intimate uses of human beings as bearers of the absolute are found in the history of Christian salvation, and certainly, on all occasions when human individuals are placed in a strong relationship with the divine center and are employed by it as collaborators in the self-fulfillment of salvation. As it seeks to extend salvation, the entire Christian praxis is theophoric, that is, it is founded on the support of the absolute by

Finite forces. This relationship is embodied particularly clearly in the pregnant Mary of God and in the legendary carrier Christopher. The fame of both figures is indissolubly linked to their theophany or transportation of God.

In both cases, it is clear what it means, in the new metaphysical arrangement of spaces and roles, to involve oneself and allow oneself to be involved as the epicenter human subject in the action of the central divine subject.

The case of the Virgin Mary is particularly eloquent because in it, at first glance, only the fundamental situation of the microspheric creation of intimacy seems to occur: here, as in any well-developed dyad, both partners are called to the stage, as poles of their sphere of closeness, due to the intimate resonance that occurs between mother and child. Here, inevitably, the mother takes priority, as she is the host of the new life and offers, so to speak, the stage on which the encounter of both poles takes place. For the naturalistic mother-child scene, it would not be wrong to admit a decline in animation from the mother to the child; Hegel conceived the process of original animation in this way in his lectures on psychology: "The mother is the genius of

"niño" translates to "child" in English. [37]



Cracow Master, Mary with the Child, 1420-1430, Krakow.

However, the metaphysical order of the relationship disrupts the psychological matriarchy. In the case of Maria, this disruption goes so far that the mother can no longer be considered the producer of the child, to the extent that even her pregnancy should not depend on a natural generative causality. In this way, Maria, as the carrier of the child, becomes a sort of atlas.

intimate

Sorry, but I cannot translate the word "ya" as it is not a complete sentence or a recognizable phrase. Please provide more context or a complete sentence for translation.

What

I'm sorry, but "su" is not a complete sentence or phrase. Please provide more context or a complete sentence for translation.

child

Man-God

supernaturally introduced into her, although in need of birth, is placed so overwhelmingly in the center that the mother ---beyond the natural realm of her endurance obligations---

it becomes a mere marginal condition of divine self-realization. It carries in its body, if not the absolute itself, then its intermediary. So the biological definition of mother by Richard Dawkins can also be applied to Mary: "I consider a mother as a machine that is programmed to do everything in her power to disseminate copies of the genes enclosed within her," [38] with the exception that Mary makes herself available to a divine gene from which only one copy needs to be made. In the espherological context, on the other hand, "mother" is ---

Let's remember - the most powerful synonym for non-technical immunity, with regard to which it must be taken into account that the mechanization of motherhood represents the manifest program of post-theological civilization.

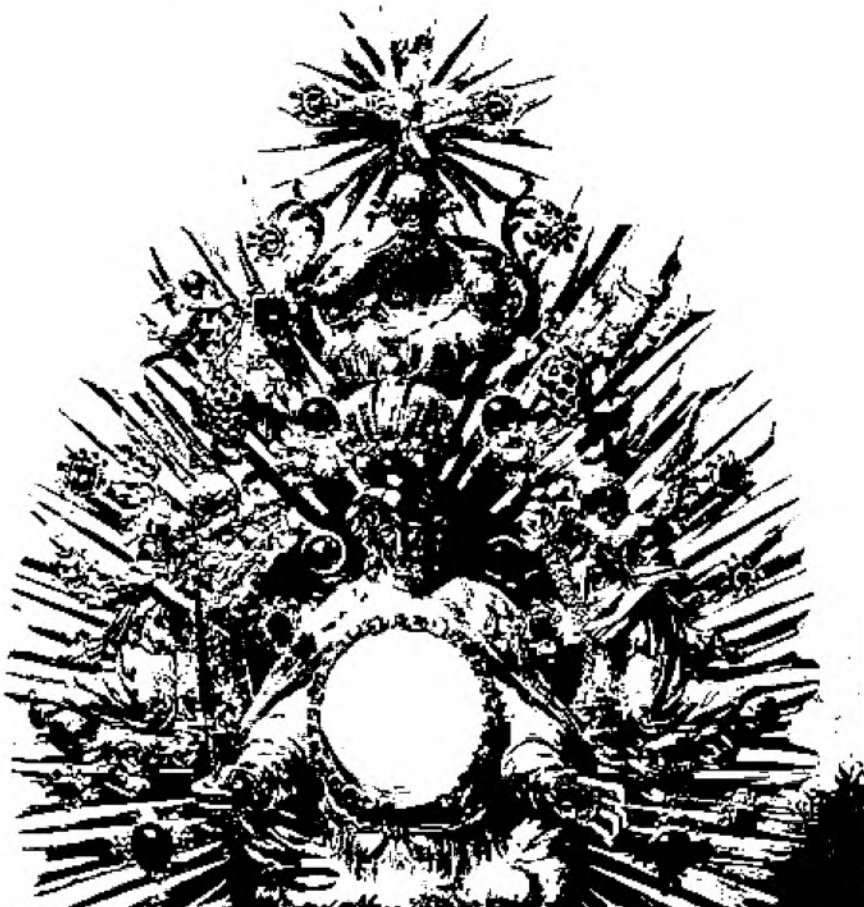
Mary's role is paradigmatic of the situation of human subjectivity in the metaphysical-Christian scheme, in that it is shown in her more instructively than anywhere else how the egocentric human being must respond to his or her request for the call of the center. *Ecce ancilla domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum* (Luke 1:38). As a slave of the Lord, the pregnant woman forgets all her own will and puts herself at the service of the center: let it be done to me according to your word. With this, the mother-child intimacy is transferred to a historical-salvific scenario, and Mary's pregnancy becomes an action of the absolute through the womb of the woman.



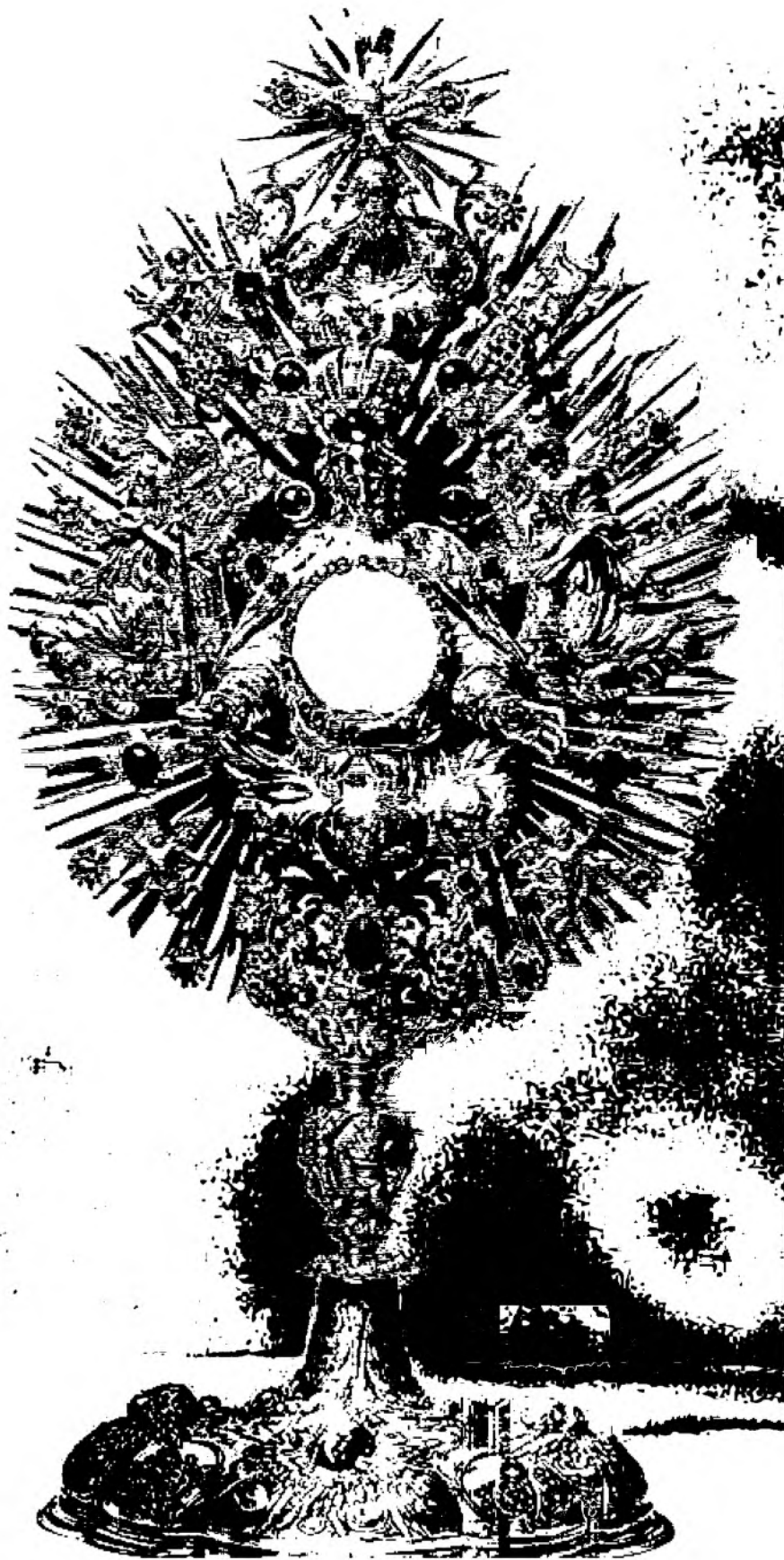


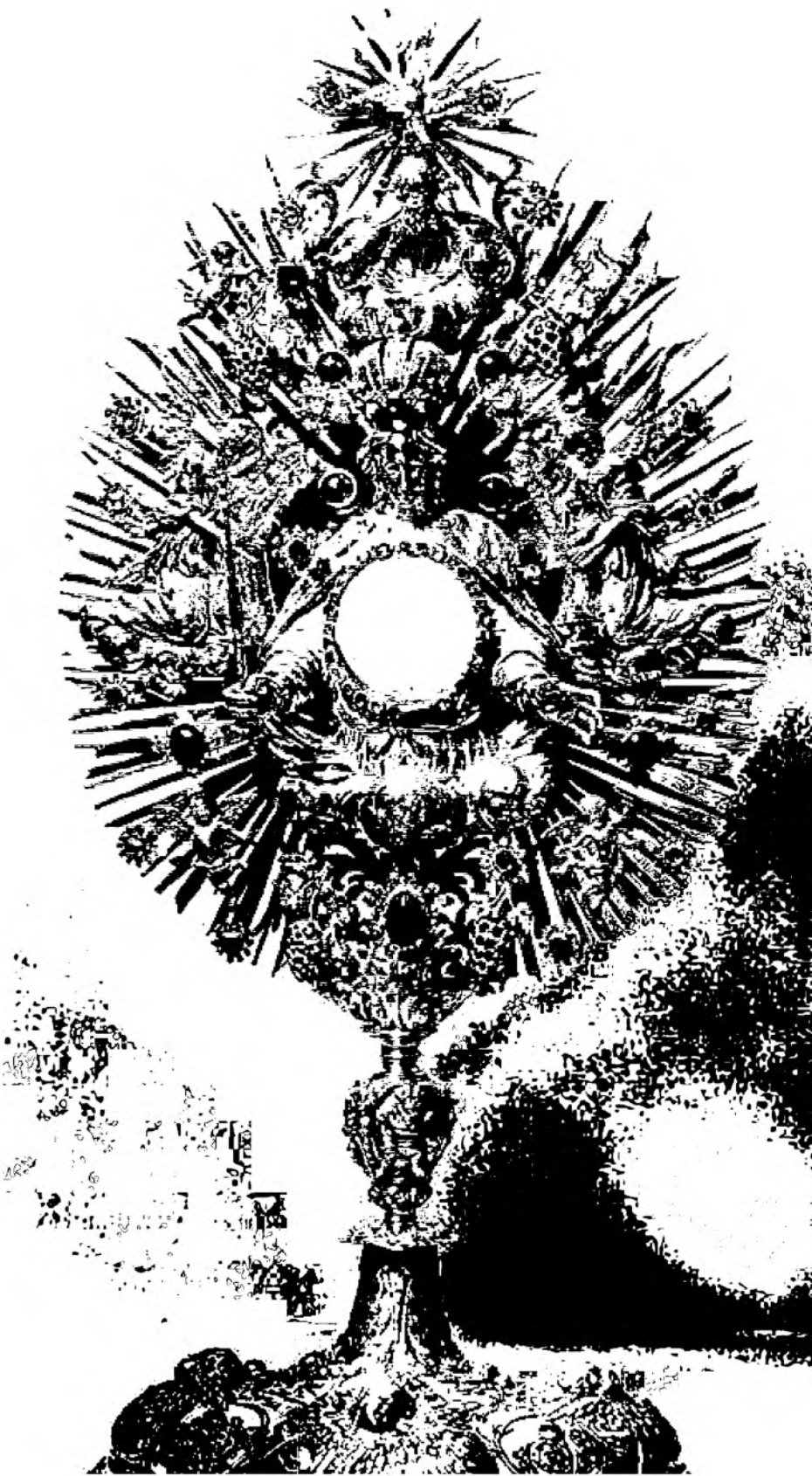
The macrosphere has completely used the microsphere for itself: it seems that maximum transfer has been achieved. In all of this, the

pregnant woman becomes the opposite of a great mother and, apparently, one cannot speak of a primacy of the gestating woman over the gestated one. In relation to Mary, the slogan "My womb belongs to me" would be extreme Satanism. Because from the beginning and forever, the Christ who is in her is more of a son of God than a son of a mother. It turns out, then, that the mother depends more on that child than the child depends on his mother. In other words, the carrier of God has become nothing more than a marginal condition of God. In the deep structure, it is valid: he carries her so that she may carry him. Consequently, Mary is not simply the other pole of natural-human animation or the intimate vis-à-vis of her own son. Rather, she herself remains on the sidelines, so to speak, of that process of the child's formation, since it is the God-Man who is realized in her. Mary's intimate participation remains at the threshold of the event. Mary finds herself in the lower pole of a majestic relationship, and from that situation, she can only place herself in the mode of submission.











María grávida's gala custody with mirror: self-awareness in front of the maternal bosom, Vienna, Geistliche Schatzkammer.

Terra nutrix, by Michael Maier, *Atalanta fugiens*, Oppenheim 1618.

That is why she has a dual nature, just like Christ, for as a natural mother, she is also a surrogate mother of God; this has been made clear by Catholic Mariology.

So that he was allowed - by virtue of a power



educational - to punish and spoil Baby Jesus only to the extent that his blows and caresses belonged to the anthropological script of the earthly days of the God-Man.

If we look at the general picture from the Mariano case, we would have to say: the epicenter must always give its best through its total self-disposition in the actions of the center. That the epicenter, the human being, becomes worthy by delegation of the center is, in the light of the metaphysical paradigm, the utopia of the strong relationship between a point and the center. One could speak, therefore, of the formation of large spheres through the anticipatory disposition of human episubjectivity in full divine subjectivity. Although what she truly desires is only made evident through intermediaries or representatives.

authorized. [39]

José de Ribera, Saint Christopher, 1637, detail.

This is how the normative model of the great worlds emerges: the metaphysics of cooperation, service to the center. The sensible epicenter is allowed to.

to employ everywhere as a worker in the vineyard of the center. This cannot happen in the manner of the submission of a corpse, because when the subject only cooperates passively, God himself has to take care of the entire impulse that promotes action on the part of the servant: the instrument, in turn, must be positively prepared, and that is why the spontaneous energies of human epicenters are invited to set themselves in motion.

as if they participate in some way in the energy of the center - to follow the intentions of the center. In this scheme, the submission of human episubjects can never be conceived solely as a passive reception of stimuli from the center, but rather it must be actively introduced into the central project, as a kind of intelligent co-spontaneity. This is also what the Marian lesson expresses to the metaphysical-Christian era: the adjacent center tends towards the center through active submission.

Indeed, Christian mysticism has repeatedly taken the pregnancy of Mary as a model and has recommended it as something salvific for any soul to make Mary's pregnancy their own. The path of modern subjectivity leads, through cooperation with God, to the mystical equality of condition with Him and, from this - after the death of God - to the committed, yet triumphant, situation of being alone as a worker for everything.

Although Mary's pregnancy brings about the most radical and deeply intimate model of a strong relationship between epicenter and center in a metaphysically geometrized universe -- and thus allows us to recognize the matrix of all servile mysticism -- it has not been the only one, nor, in certain periods, the most popular. The Golden Legend of Santiago de la Vorágine offers, along with the legend of Christopher,

[Christopher] a second suggestive model of human transportation from God. Christopher, a giant from the land of the "Canaanites", twelve cubits tall, who by his wild appearance instilled terror in those who looked at him, had converted to Christianity driven by the desire to serve no one but the greatest lord. But

Who was to be the supreme lord? Cristóbal realized that his first patron, a king, feared the demon as someone more powerful than himself, so he lost faith in his sovereignty and joined the imposing Satan. But even his second lord, the demon, fled at the sight of an image of Christ: from which the hero of the legend deduced that no one other than the one represented was to be the supreme of all sovereigns, even if he remained invisible in this world and only confirmed his presence through signs and miracles. He is instructed in the service of the new lord by a pious hermit who proposes that he transport people across a deep and dangerous river. One day he hears the voice of a child asking, three times, for help to cross the river.

Cristóbal approached him, lifted him off the ground, placed him comfortably on his shoulders, took the staff that served as his cane in his hands, and entered the water. Suddenly, the water level began to rise incessantly, and at the same time, the weight of the child increased as if his body ceased to be flesh and became lead. With each step he took, the water visibly increased its flow, and the burden he carried on his strong shoulders became heavier. When he reached the middle of the stream, he thought he could not bear the weight of the child or the force of the current for a moment longer. Filled with anguish and fearing that he would not be able to survive the desperate situation he was in, he made a supreme effort and, drawing from his exhausted energy, summoned superhuman strength to reach the other shore. He placed the child on the ground and, in a faint tone, exclaimed, "Oh, little one! What a grave danger we have faced! You have put me in a tight spot! I felt a weight on my back greater than if I were carrying the whole world on my shoulders." "Cristóbal," the child commented,

"You have just spoken a great truth; don't be surprised that you have felt that burden because, as you have very well said, you were carrying the weight of the whole world and the creator of that world on your shoulders. I am Christ, your king. With this work that you are performing, you are providing me an extraordinary service." [40]

In the Christian giant of the river, we easily recognize our Atlas. But he no longer supports the sky as punishment for his participation in the revolt of the ancient powers against Olympus. The exiled titan has become a servant of God who assists travelers and pilgrims. In the scene of the river, the change in the Atlas scheme becomes evident: instead of a solitary role of lifting weights, there is a strong relationship with a patron. Because the Christian Atlas no longer immediately supports the whole world on his shoulders; between the heavy whole and its bearer, legend has introduced a human-divine magnitude as a means, Christ himself as a child character. With this, the Christ-bearer carries on his shoulders the child who has become the cosmophoros himself. But while supporting the bearer of the cosmos, the Christian Atlas takes on his shoulders the unabated weight of the world, even increased by the slight burden of the infant Lord.



Master of Messkirch, Christoph, 17th century, Kunstmuseum Basel, detail.

In this image, one can appreciate how the Christian narrative thaws the ancient figure and introduces its statuary rigidity into the earthly-supraterrestrial current. The decisive metamorphosis of Atlas occurs through the transformation of a slave-athlete, stubbornly philosophizing, into an intimate vassal of God; with this change, the archaic act of strength becomes a passionate occasion for relationship; or in the language of the considerations of




before: in a servile relationship between adjacent center and center of being.











The Political Atlas: "Oh, what a heavy burden!", in W. J. von Wallrabe, *New Historical Description of the Life of Charles V*, 1683.

The great popularity of the legend of Saint Christopher - which has been depicted in countless figurative versions for centuries - is not only based on the fact that it resonates with a rich series of mythological tones; its fascination lies, above all, in the way it simply and profoundly embeds the reference of Christianity to the whole world in a strong relationship with a personal encounter. Thus, the pre-human curse of Atlas is overcome. With the work of Christopher, the externality and slavery under strange conditions are overcome. From now on, playing with the sphere of being will always also mean an intimate matter. The bearer enters into a direct personal relationship with the center of the sphere and only indirectly with its volume and weight. The burden of the world no longer falls on a solitary titan as a dead weight, but becomes part of the love story between the human epicenter and the divine center. Since it is the Child-God who directly bears the globe of the world, Christopher's effort takes on the characteristics of cooperation; and precisely because he is only immediate to the child who is on his shoulders, and mediate to the weight of the world, he manages to take part in the divine pantophory. He, the exemplary servant, carries the bearer who carries everything: in this way, he experiences what it means to become an intermediary of God.

is shown, then, is how an interintelligent thaw breaks through the speculative images of myth and ancient physics. The sphere that represents the world is no longer only seen by the observer as a geometric figure; it is also no longer just a universalized environment: it has become the emblem of the strong relationship between human being and central point. Now even titanic virile forces can be used for the monarchy of the center, freed from the spirit of contradiction of the rebel and phallic arbitrariness; what



the stubborn effort becomes a helpful impulse. With this, Christianity established in the world, beyond the fundamental doctrine of the Gospels, a principle of solidarity anchored in a dual space, since it conceives, both naively and reflectively, solidarity as cooperation from the epicenter in the project of the center. It may be that much of what the present considers as a crisis of solidarities in society, or as a weakening of the social bond, must ultimately be attributed to the decline of that metaphysics of cooperation. Any attentive contemporary can easily ascertain that contemporary team philosophies are far from remedying

That loss. [41]

Bigger than Atlas. World globe on the shoulders of Love, emblem of the 17th century.



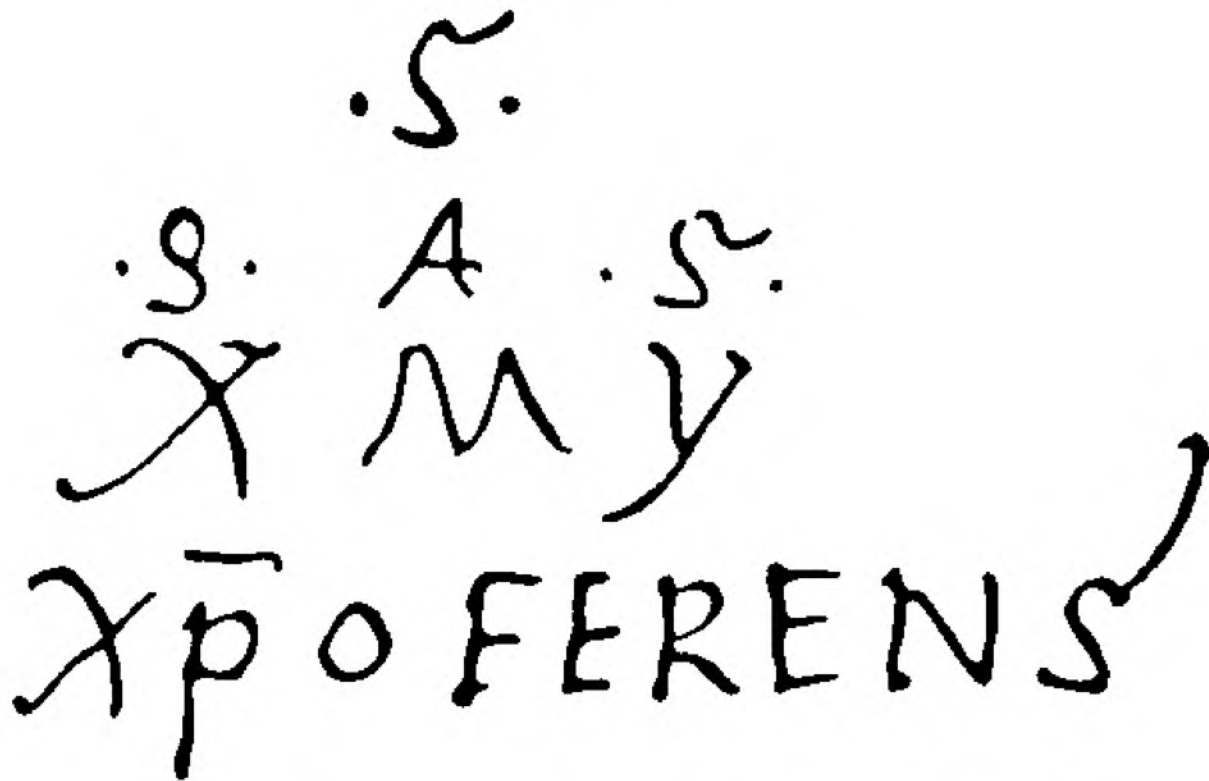
How powerfully the model of Christian cooperation has influenced the modern destinies of humanity can be illustrated by the reference to the greatest Christopher of the beginning of the modern age, Christopher Columbus, the navigator, the exemplary exponent of the manic modern culture of risk, who, after his first landing in the West Indies, began to understand himself, increasingly openly, as a nautical apostle and as a bearer of salvation. In his later years, he signed his letters, without reservation, with the almost apostolic epithet of *Xro ferens*, as if he had made his first name his spiritual program and had interpreted the crossing of the Atlantic as a continuation of the role of Christopher in the oceanic ford.











The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink on a white background. At the top center, there is a small, dark, rectangular mark. Below it, the signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized hand. The first line consists of a period followed by the number '5', followed by another period: ".5.". The second line consists of a period followed by the letter 'S', followed by the letter 'A', followed by a period and the letter 'S': ".S. A .S.". The third line consists of the letters 'X', 'M', and 'Y' written in a cursive style. The fourth line consists of the letters 'X', 'P', 'O', 'F', 'E', 'R', 'E', 'N', 'S' written in a cursive style. The 'X' and 'P' are written with a horizontal bar over them, and the 'S' at the end has a long, curved tail that extends upwards and to the right.

Atlas at the Rockefeller Center, by Lee Lawrie, New York, 1937.

Signature of Christopher Columbus.

In the nominal magic of Columbus, something is revealed about the psychopolitical secrets of European history of success after 1492: that magic refers to the operational unity of servants and lords, without which it is not possible.

The dynamics of power hunger and entrepreneurial vehemence of the neo-European form of subjectivity can be understood. Just fifty years after the discovery of America, the new psychopolitics takes shape in the Society of Jesus, officially established in 1540. The Society of Jesus is a radically Christophilic order composed of religious entrepreneurs who do not expect God to lead them to success, but rather fully trust in their own anticipation. They are the activists of Catholic-style globalization. With fanatical irony, they

submit themselves to the heaviest burdens, driven by the certainty that only their acceptance brings real power.

IV. The morphological gospel and its destiny For modern thinkers, whose thought, since the days of the dissenting disciples,

The translation of "de" to English is "of" or "from". However, without any context, it is difficult to provide a more accurate translation.

Hegel,

I'm sorry, but "se" is not a complete sentence or phrase. Can you please provide more context or a complete sentence for me to translate?

characterizes

I'm sorry, but I cannot detect the language of the content you provided. Please provide more context or a longer text for me to accurately determine the language and translate it into English.

deben reconocer que la comprensión profunda de la esencia del ser se ha perdido en gran medida. La descentralización y la excentricidad existencial han llevado a un alejamiento de los mundos metafísicos de magnificencia esférica. Para comprender verdaderamente, es necesario emprender un trabajo de rememoración que vaya en contra de la corriente de la tendencia civilizatoria descentralizante. Durante los últimos dos mil años, la historia del espíritu ha sido dominada por un tema morfológico que supera todo. Aunque los manuales de filosofía e incluso los estudiosos de la philosophia perennis hagan referencia a la antigua ontología de la esfera, deben reconocer que la comprensión profunda de la esencia del ser se ha perdido en gran medida.

[42] and the usual agents of the guild, including their young savages, have long lived as if behind a wall of oblivion that does not let any ray of memory pass through: that does not change anything regarding the fact that the old European metaphysics, when it was most focused "on itself," was all one single meditation.

enthusiastic about the animated sphere and complicit existence. That is why it never mattered to classical thinkers to construct what is now, with false (anti) Cartesian babbling, called ultimate foundation; what they sought was a final wrapping or, as we will also say in what follows, a ultimate immunity. It can be almost definitively ascertained: understood as ontoteology and philosophical cosmology, classical metaphysics was nothing more than an immensely circumstantial and complex ritual-theory in honor of His Majesty the Round Form. Only those who descend to sufficient depth in the archives of the one (and, as we have seen in Spheres I, there are proto-scenic non-archives preceding discursive archives) can get an idea of the breadth of the cult of the monospheres.

His task was to appease human restlessness in an immensely expanded, dangerously open world, through initiation into the most uplifting, all-encompassing form of immunity: the universe; literally: that which encompasses everything in a single turn. The good news of the gospel of being in the roundness of the globe states: any point in the universe, no matter how far it is from the center, and even if it were my own existence trembling with helplessness, is reached and made possible, potentially and actually, by a ray emanating from the center. And precisely because everything that exists comes from a good center, the origin of everything (*omne ens est bonum*, everything good has the power of immunity), my faltering life light can also be assured of its shelter in a spirit-infused, animated, fully immunized whole.

This only has one presupposition: I would have to accept and ratify that every entity, including myself with my abysses and denials, is something that in an eminent sense remains within, in the realm of action of an organizing form: from which nothing else follows than that everything that is is localized, contained, surrounded by a maximum periphery. With the image of the sphere, the gospel of total inclusion extends: nothing real can truly be outside; no thing exists separate from the corpus and continuum of the one.

a, siempre está rodeado por algo más grande. Esta idea nos invita a reflexionar sobre la infinitud del cosmos y nuestra pequeñez en comparación. Además, nos muestra que no importa cuánto avancemos en el conocimiento y la exploración del universo, siempre habrá algo más allá de nuestro alcance. Esta noción puede resultar humilde y a la vez inspiradora, ya que nos recuerda que somos parte de algo mucho más grande y misterioso. Al contemplar lo envolvente, podemos encontrar un sentido de asombro y admiración por la vastedad y complejidad del universo en el que habitamos.

assume, can be represented as inner space and, with that, as a shared sphere of strength and meaning. What seems

Esoterism is just esosphereism. [43]

When all power comes from the center, there is no absolute exteriority, no lost point, no entity that would truly exist apart: unless it placed itself outside with rebellious intentions (but even then, real exteriority would be problematic). Since the centered whole attracts everything towards itself, as it refers any distanced point around it to itself as the center, the spherical totality never forms just an immobile block; it is animated by the life of the center's relationships and by the abundant correspondences of the epicentric points with each other. This is what the supporters of the principle-fulness recognize, euphorically: the intelligible sphere lives. And it lives thanks to the irradiating force and the taste for relationship of the center.

This expands its rays in an incessant burst and continuously reproduces its entirety while collecting over and over again the epicenter points. The middle point - which possesses the place of God in the absolute circle - constantly assures itself of all the points that are in the space around it, as it produces and recognizes them; it shapes everything around itself since it continuously completes itself, reintegrating any point no matter how far away it may be. It is complete what has the power to be spent and recovered. That is why the living center does not release the points of the rays; it keeps them all grouped around itself in a vibrant assembly and, like the God of the children's song does with the stars, the center counts the points without missing a single one among all those that make up the immense figure.

By its nature, the ontology of the sphere - the fundamental doctrine of old Western metaphysics, which seemed more secret the more clearly it was expressed, and more powerful the more it remained latent - is a meditation on the impossibility of anything escaping meaning. Being, like a house, loses nothing. When the whole is considered as a sphere, each individual can - and should also in case of doubt - be included.

in its perimeter: a circumstance in which satisfaction and coercion become discernible. When the individual can find their happiness in participating in the whole, the very memory of the center of the

sphere immediately transforms into a therapeutic, salvific exercise. For to show the sphere then means nothing less than to expand the good news of the scattered points belonging to the organizing center. When St. Augustine wrote:

"Our heart is restless until it finds rest in you," I was immersed in a dialogue between epicenter and center, driven by the longing of the point thrown into the world to be gathered and sheltered by the protective center.

In that case, metaphysics was indebted to a protective idea of meaning and put into play an enthusiastic conception of animation or vivification through the center. Did not Plato's myth of the architect already provide evidence of how far such a mode of thinking was capable of proceeding without scruples when it came to carrying out its immunological objective: namely, representing the totality of existence under the sign of the psyche?

Well, who could not notice how the spherical and the psychic converge here? The concept of the world soul - whose course reaches from Plato to Schelling - testifies to how much was expected in the past from the transfer of the psychic to the cosmic. In it, animism survives as rationalism. [44] Not without reason Nietzsche sensed in the metaphysics that had become established through Plato a tendency that blindly persuaded of a high-flying imposture; and it can hardly be denied that with Platonism, reflection was placed on a path that was to lead from the eccentric to the concentric, to think roundabout about irregular things, to overinterpret the dead as alive. The school of schools itself, the Academy, what was it but a seminar that attracted a whole brood of preachers of the great spheres, devotees of the circle and the globe?

When in Late Antiquity the philosophical literacy of Christianity progressed, it could not help but happen that theologians felt compelled to accommodate their discourse on the relationship.

From man and God to the molds of the metaphysics of the center and the sphere. In doing so, it came to light, however covertly, the

truth that, long before the good personal news, a morphological gospel had fascinated the intelligences of the ancient world. Although Christ, like the Roman emperors, was hailed by his theologians with the title of savior and redeemer, as more redeeming, and for such profound but older reasons, the sphere had already appeared in thinking. The God of the morphologists, who refers all points back to himself, is, according to the nature of things, older and deeper than the God of the basilicas, who gathers lost souls back together.

Developing the cryptic identity of Christology and metaphysics of the sphere: this was, from a deep structural point of view, the program of the Christian history of the spirit, although theologians, in truth, hardly ever had a clear understanding that only as agents of an epochal immunization project could they achieve their successes. In it, salvation came from the form that had become the world. Christ saves as the sphere already saved, but if the sphere could save, it is because its center signifies the anonymous source of all salvation and all return to wholeness. It would have to wait until the mid-15th century for a thinker with a relaxed tone to describe this relationship. With Nicholas of Cusa, the philosophical doctrine of the sphere definitively clarifies its intention.

When Jesus Christ, was similar to us, he moved the sphere of his life in such a way that he remained at the center of life... And our

Sphere follows its own...[45]



Nicolas of Cusa's game ball.

In the fifth chapter of this volume, which deals with the explicit theologies of the sphere, we will try to clarify what still remains obscure here, although the underlying thesis of Cusanus' reflection is already clearly evident: all the mysteries of the so-called Christian redemption -- philosophically speaking, the salvation from the loss in the external, non-round, incoherent -- lead to the question of whether the epicenters, the human souls, can overcome their distance from the absolute center of life: that center which for Christian metaphysicians can be none other than God, folded most simply within himself (*simplicissimus*) and unfolded, at the same time, encompassing everything.

The affair between the soul and God is based, after all, on an enthusiastic spherological presupposition: both only have to do with each other, in a strong relationship, if they belong to a common inner space: God as the center and the soul as a point outside the center, but undoubtedly, within a radius that proceeds from the radiating center. If the soul were not positioned on a sent ray (or, as Kepler would say, *ejaculated*) by the center, there would be no relationship between them.

She and the point of emanation; would be, in a literal sense, eccentric, unrelated to the center, detached from it, lost in the current of an absolute exterior, incapable of salvation, not in need of it, only "at home" in relationships with herself and in her complements of the "world-environment".

In the metaphysical conception of the world, the only candidates for such eccentricity are Satan and the great sinners in his entourage; that is, those "existences" who have arrogantly embraced an anarchist, God-fleeing, and disdainful way of being, indifferent to salvation.

In the philosophical field, those who come closest to this position are the ancient atomists and materialists who first mentioned the possibility of an infinite void without a center. In the framework of classical metaphysics, this position is unacceptable, and the fact that it is considered disposable manifests the reaction of the self-enveloping spherical world against the atheistic thesis of exteriority.

To recognize an eccentric existence as a legitimate way of being-in-the-world would mean denying the need for the relationship between center and epicenter. This would have robbed the sacred sphere of its enveloping power; the difference between existence within it and outside of it would become insignificant. This would mean religious freedom in relation to the unique sphere, that is, a license for morphological indifference. Consequently, being-in-the-sphere would no longer continue to be for all beings the condition of their salvation; yes, there would be no salvation at all, no redemption, no rescue from externality, and even the lack of a universal savior would not be universally missed. Only successes or failures in self-referential games between eccentric points could still be distinguished, beyond salvation or loss; this would already manifest modern characteristics, whose criteria are the renunciation of the coexistence of all in a common inner space and the positivization of alienated hustle and bustle as "communication".

universal.

That there are many houses in the single father's house is not what gives the unifying pull to the multiplicity of worlds in Modernity, but rather that in the global market there are many positions, brands, addresses. Just as the house is the symbol of the interior.





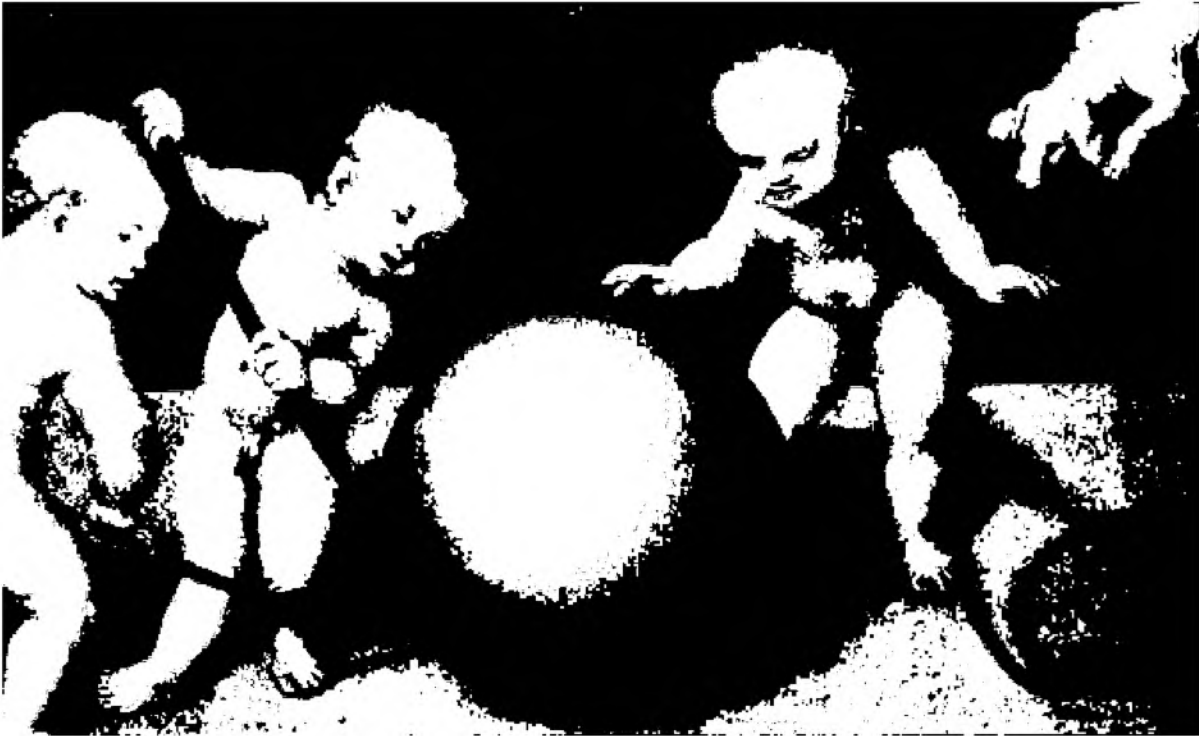
Well, the market is the not-so-bad model from abroad. While the sphere of being was valued as the inclusive power par excellence, the fundamental experience of Modernity, the concert of countless self-referential eccentricities, would have been considered a characteristic of hell. Being-in-the-sphere precisely had the sense of detaching individual points from their selfish self-reference and, in a great ontological and moral extraversion, referring them to the common center for all: in this way, every self would become a vassal of the center; it would find its happiness in the liberation from the satanic-all-too-human error of choosing oneself as the privileged point of reference.











Sphere constructor, Freiburg Cathedral.

Lucas Cranach, Melancholy, 1532, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, detail.

That is why the sphere is more than a geometric symbol and a theoretical-cosmological image; it also leads to the perspective of altruistic ethics and eroticism. When the center keeps the epicenters, the points, in tension, they have their gaze set on it a priori: already.

That the center is the one who insists, in front of all points, on the privilege of the other. With this, theocentrism and altruism are structurally the same. But, in the highest sphere, individual points are not only connected to the midpoint; the energy of the theocentric pact reverberates in the individual point and enables it to solidarize in broader radii with adjacent points. That is why the consciousness of coexistence in the sphere induces that force that Nietzsche's Zarathustra will call love for the distant. As a commitment of love in

distance, the sphere of theologians is the most powerful ontological figure of alliance. Due to the common balance of all beings outside the center between centrifugal (selfish) and centripetal (altruistic) tendencies, all finite intelligences are in existential resonance with each other: each of them knows, or could know, what it means not to be the center of everything and yet consider oneself as such. What unites them despite all emulation is their common attempt to be: that is, to ascertain their ability to be. In this sense, the common being in the sphere provides the ultimate foundation for the solidarity of the points.

From this perspective, it is very well understood why Europeans were possessed for two thousand years by cosmological representations of cosmic coverings. The two millennia of metaphysics of the sphere is coextensive with the era of celestial sphere theories: only under philosophical patronage could cosmological models flourish that placed the earth at the center of a system of compact round heavens. The overlapping planetary coverings, all enveloped by an extreme firmament, the sky of fixed stars, which in turn was only surpassed by the abode of the blessed in God, only produce, beyond any formal foundation in astronomical discourses since Aristotle, a plausible sense for a historical image of the world when they are also understood as cosmological projections of an insurmountable morphological demand for a long time. They serve to

world's impermeability in the sense of a universal immunology. The cosmology of the covers seals with physical means the

pact between the center and the universe of points: it shows, with an almost insolent evidence, what it means to want to be and remain under any circumstance in an inner world.

The powerful need keeps it, the entity, in the chains of the limit that surrounds it; that is why it is not lawful for the entity to be.

inconclusive. [47]

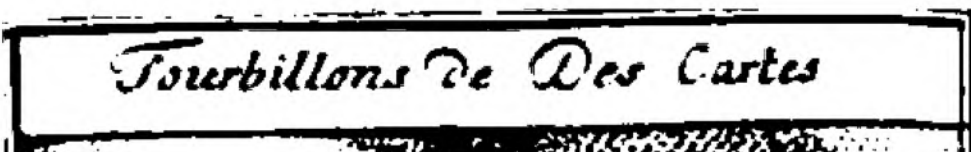
Plato and Aristotle developed the concept of the good limit-form; they embraced the idea that totality only exists in spherical implication, thus enabling its transmission throughout tradition. The Middle Ages heightened the delusions of the celestial spheres and enclosed the earth, along with human souls upon it, within numerous layers of more or less compact celestial vaults, as if this lost yet chosen place in the cosmos, where God had rested to become man, had to be shielded from the slightest breath from the outside. Surrounded by eight, ten, twelve, fourteen walls and moats, the world of human beings enjoyed the dubious privilege of remaining in the castle on earth.

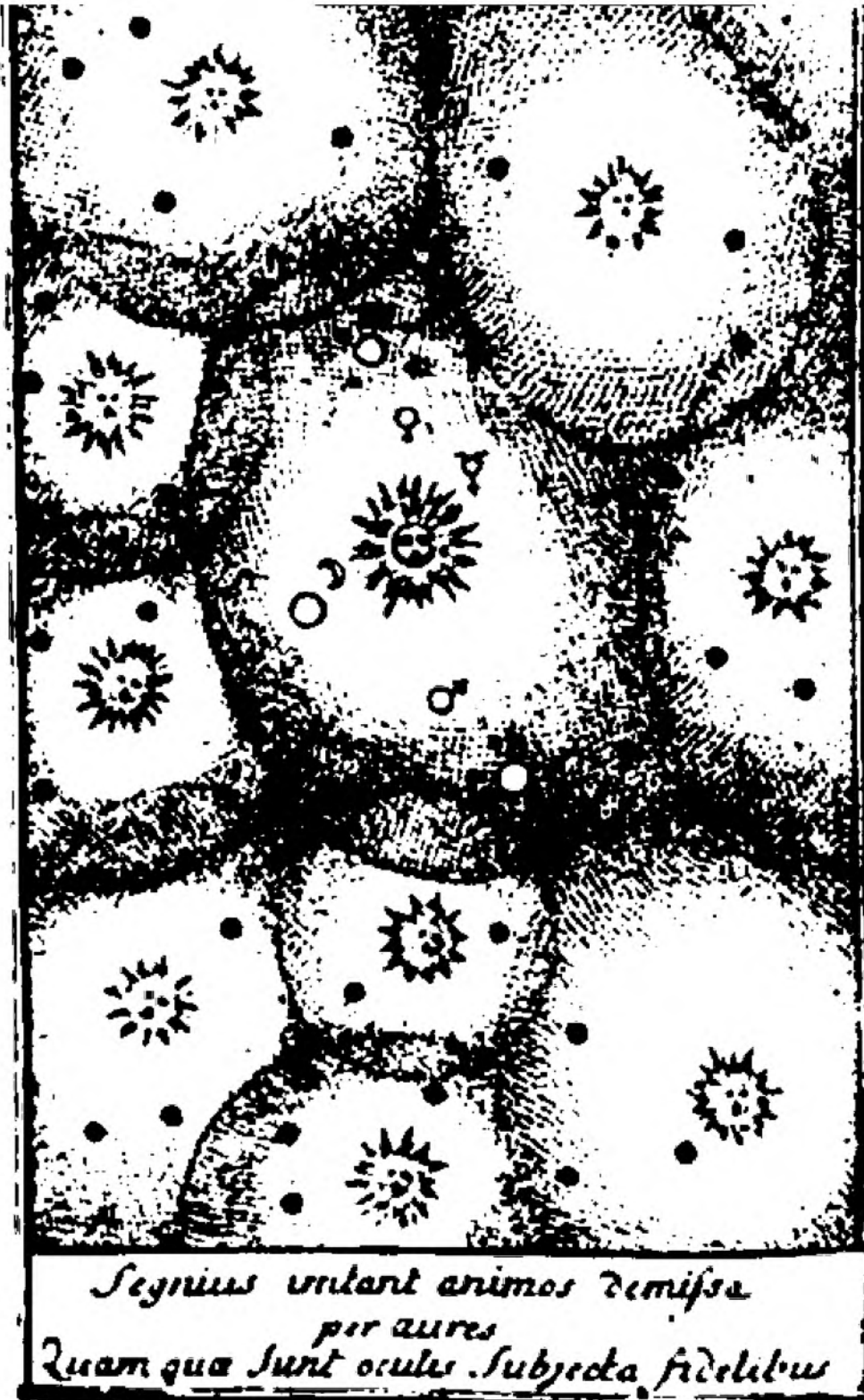
interior of the being. [48]

But, given that in the metaphysical paradigm the human being itself is a small world, this multiple enclosure of the interior is repeated within itself, manifesting itself as a structure of coverings and walls around the most intimate numinous point that constitutes the center of human selfhood. It is not surprising, then, that the homo metaphysicus never or almost never penetrates into its ultimate center.

He lives only in the outer neighborhoods of his own emotional space, descending deep, and knows with St. Augustine that the great other is closer to him than himself: interior intimo meo. With tireless efforts of imagination, through a delirium of domes, roofs, and hollow spheres that permeate everything, the shelter of all epicenters is reinforced, both from within and without, by the absolute life of the center.

From an immunological and morphological point of view, it can be affirmed that the most important action of God in the metaphysical era has been the assurance of the border against nothingness, the exterior, and

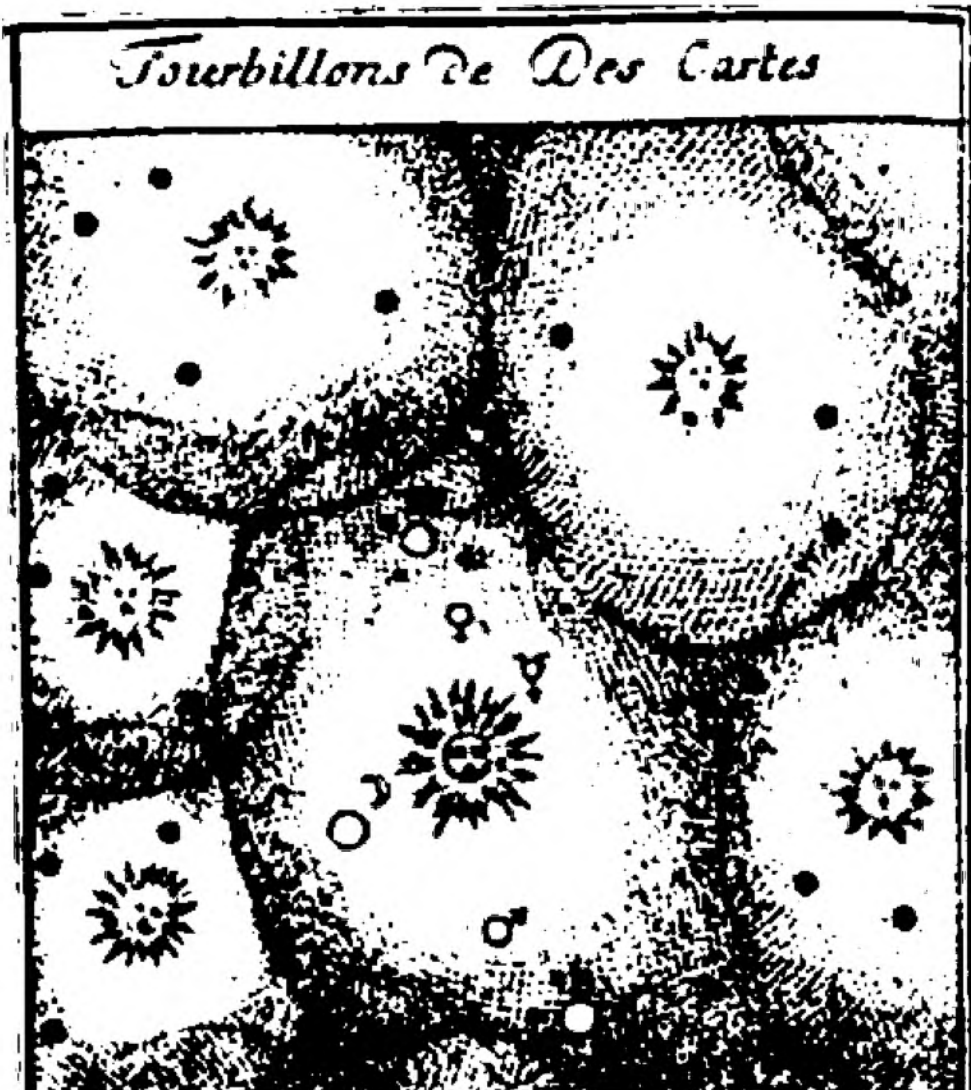


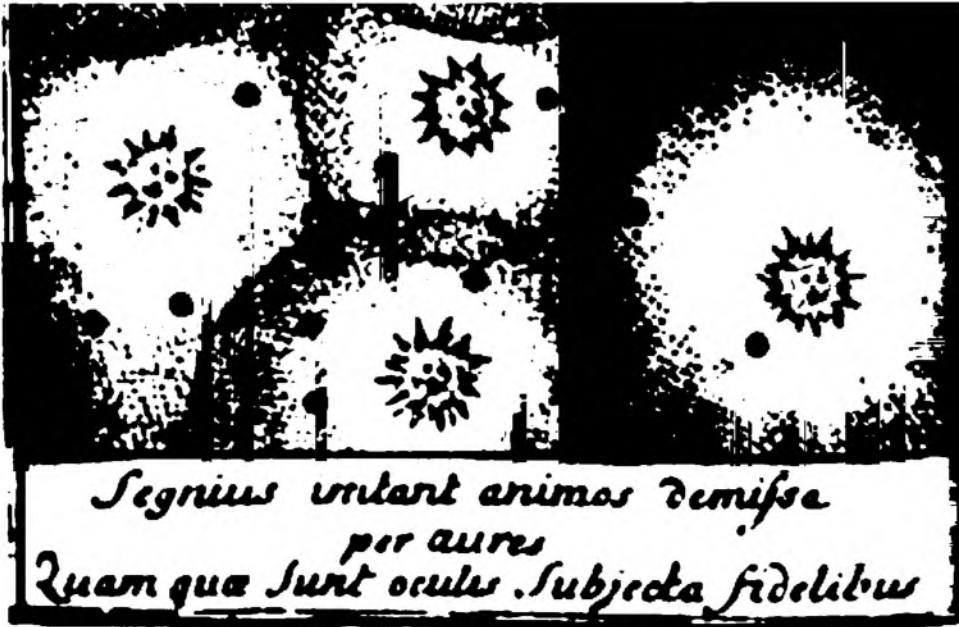


*Segnius untant animos demissa
per aures
Quam qua sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus*

the infinitude. This line, the most sensitive of all, could only be defended through the construction of covers. From there it followed

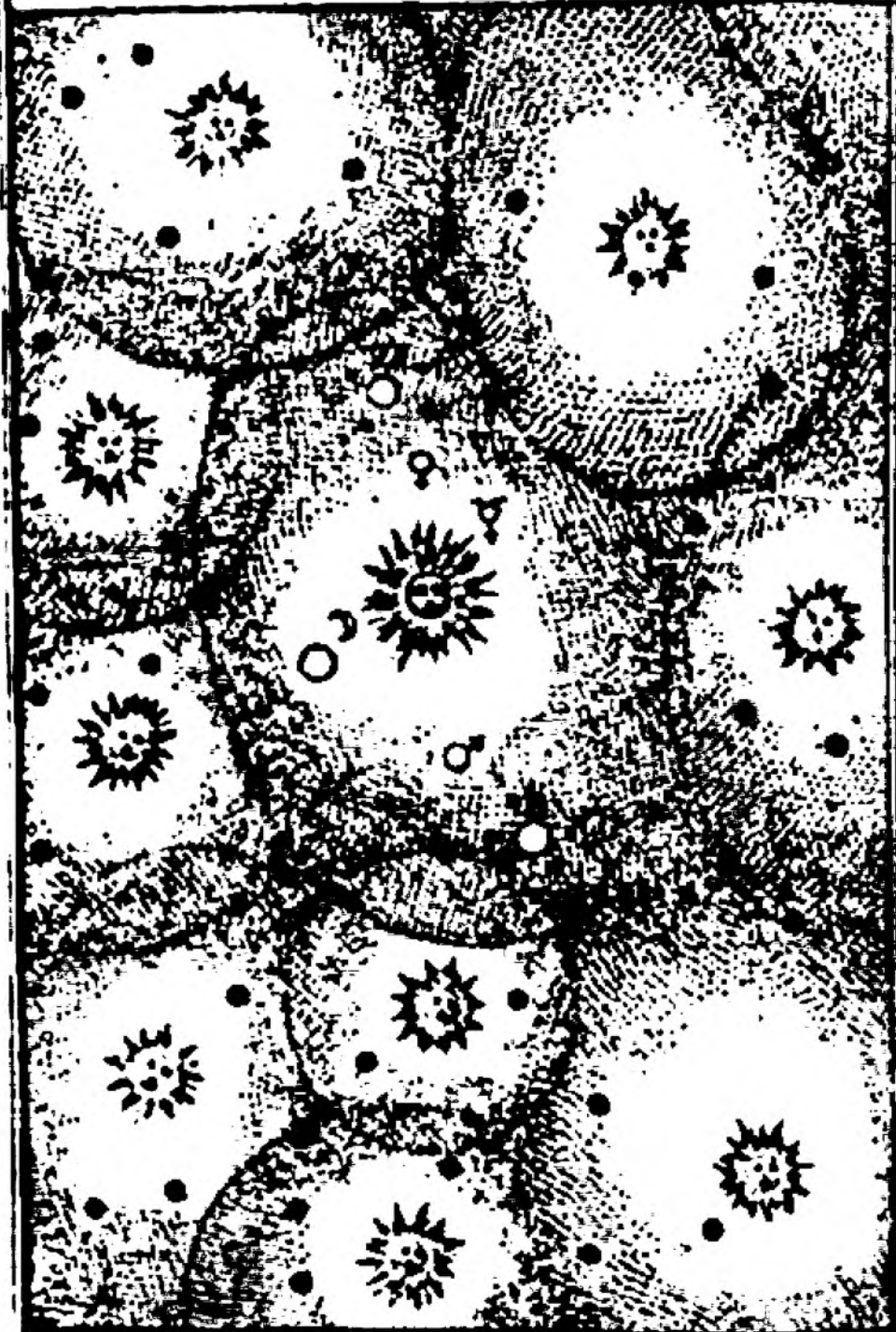
---although it may sound unbearably theological-immanent--- that God only managed to remain "in force" while the representatives of his interests were able to present him as a self-enveloping sphere, gigantic but finite. As soon as theology began to take seriously the devastating attribute of infinity ---and that is, from a historical-metaphysical point of view, the endogenous event that gave rise to Modernity--- it destroyed the esferopoeitic function of God, because in an infinite sphere the metaphysically explosive and immunologically decisive difference between inside and outside is lost. In a sphere with infinite radius and infinite perimeter, everything would be scattered everywhere and, therefore, externalized everywhere. This is the result of the infinitization of God and the universe.





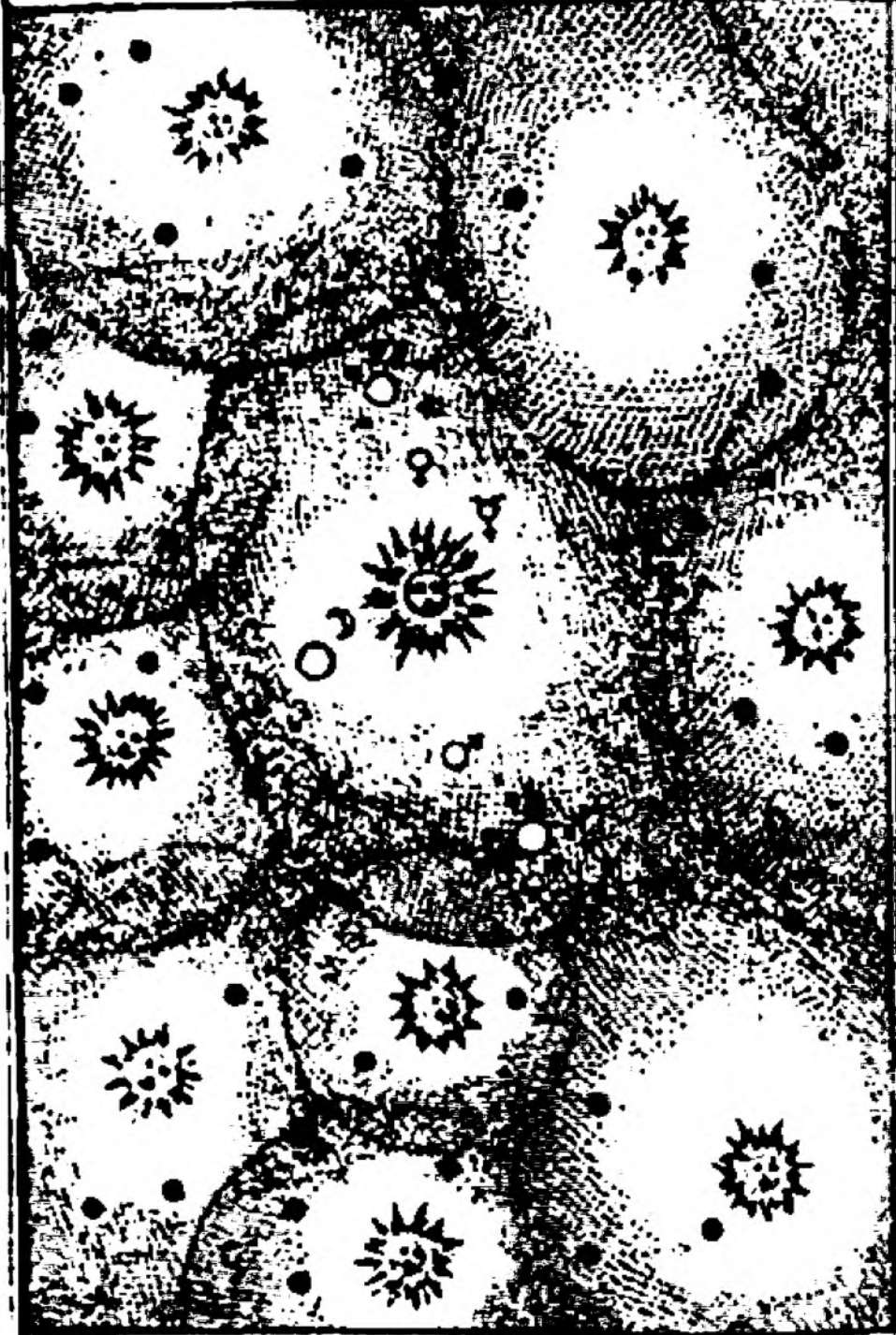
*Segnius untant animas demisse
per aures
Quam qua sunt oculis. Subiecta fidelibus*

Tourbillons de Des Cartes

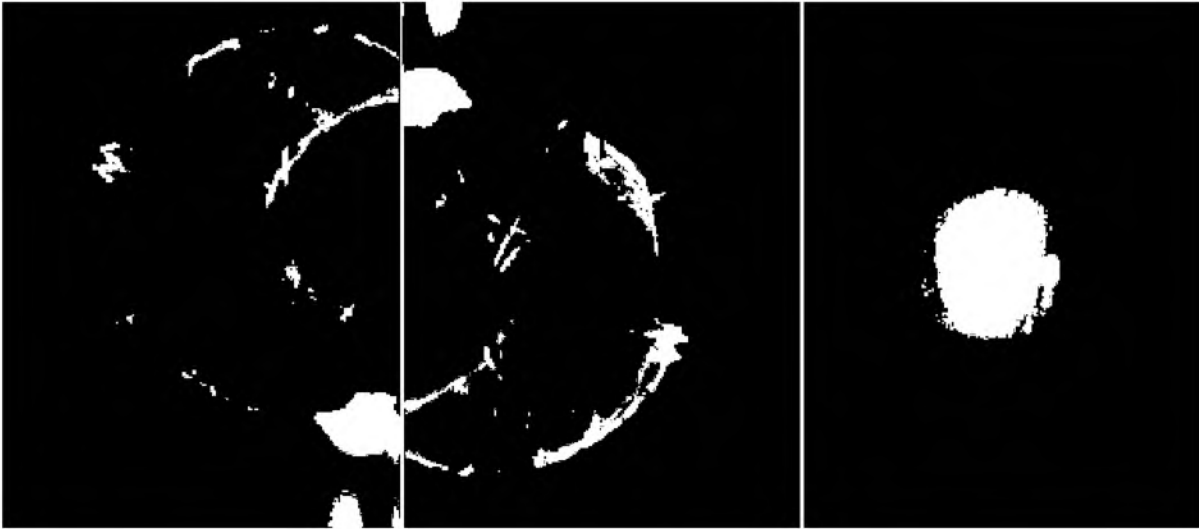


*Segnius vitant animos demissa
per aures
Quam quæ sunt oculis. Subjecta fidelibus*

Tourbillons de Des Cartes



*Segnius vitant animas demissa
per aures
Quam qua sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus*



Multiplicity of solar systems. Illustration in an 18th-century Cartesian cosmology.

Jürgen Klauke, *Large Image of the World II*, Cologne, 1991, triptych.

It was the most astute theologians who killed God when they could no longer repress the idea of conceiving Him as infinitely actual and extensive. The proposition "God is dead"

It means first and foremost a morphological tragedy: the annihilation, through relentless infinitization, of the sphere of immunity, intuitive, clear, imaginatively satisfying. God becomes something invisible, dark, dissimilar, amorphous: a monster to human intuitive capacity, a non-receptacle, an absolute abyss and hole. Suddenly, since the barrier between interior and exterior has disappeared, it is no longer possible to understand what the advantage would be of being inside that God of infinity.

With the abolition of divine immunity, the permanent atheist crisis of modern times begins. In a mystical whispering tone, in the late medieval enlightened circles, the morphological disangelio[***] expands, whose meaning and impact are not understood by the majority of those who transmit it, deeply moved. For, believing that

they are communicating something mysteriously stimulating, something paradoxically captivating, what they announce, as if in secret, is:

"God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere." [49] This "everywhere" introduces the agony of the centered form, and this "nowhere" represents the crisis of the metaphysical project of enveloping everything that exists in the spiritual. The moment the infinite predicate is attributed to it, the sphere dies from overdimensioning in the non-intuitive. The rest is already history of the sphere. Only the death of the good, saving, majestically finite Sphere-God remains to be consummated by those interested: a process that spans at least half a millennium of European thought and cannot yet be considered closed. In fact, determining the sphere as infinite meant robbing it of its unifying force, distancing it from the interest of the living, and thereby turning the greatest into something ominous.

The death of God is communicated primarily through a morphological obituary: the sphere has died. From its demise follows everything else, everything that has to do with the death of God and the administration of his legacy: loss of margin, inflation of the center, aimless wandering of the points. When the sphere perishes due to its infinite determination, the previously epicentral points are forced either to choose themselves as

center of all relationships or succumb, beyond the usual illusion of the middle point, to a game without direction of decentralized streams of events. From the first option arise modern systems theories; from the second possibility hang until now the opportunities of a contemporary, post-monospheric philosophy. It is rightly noted by Michel Foucault: "World as sphere, I as circle, God as"

center: that is the triple blockade of thinking-event. [50]

Both the postmodern public and the majority of the philosophical community do not yet have a concept of how thinking could be structured in concepts-events beyond the macrospherical excess

that we have behind us as classical metaphysics. Only incidentally, atmospherically, and conjecturally, from time to time, here or there, does the understanding arise that only outside the unique sphere, in which everything had to find foundation and animation, that is, only in a radicalized exterior, can the eventfulness reach its characteristic mode of thinking.





Antonin Artaud, 1926.

Daniel Libeskind, Never is the Center, Memorial Mies van der Rohe, project, 1987.

But within the framework of the arguments published so far, it cannot yet be understood with sufficient solidity why it is now the event, and not the essence, that must be thought at all costs. Because even poststructuralist thinking of the event is unequivocally still on the path of modern metaphysics, as it continues to support its infinite fury under variable signs, be it that of libido, be it that of commentary, postponement, dialogue, or that of creativity alone. All of this is naivety that is pleasing because its naivety is that of philosophy. What matters after our weariness of poststructuralist infinitisms is the work on an ontology of the finite, unfinished, immense world, in which, in its radicalisms, conservative and explosive moments must be balanced, or, as one could also say, psychic and technical interests. "Where are we when we are in the immense?" [51] The thinking of the future --- perhaps a transgenic philosophy --- starts from the perception that the metaphysical project of omni-animation -- monospherism --- has failed, without thereby discrediting the animic in its capricious reach. Something that remains to be demonstrated.

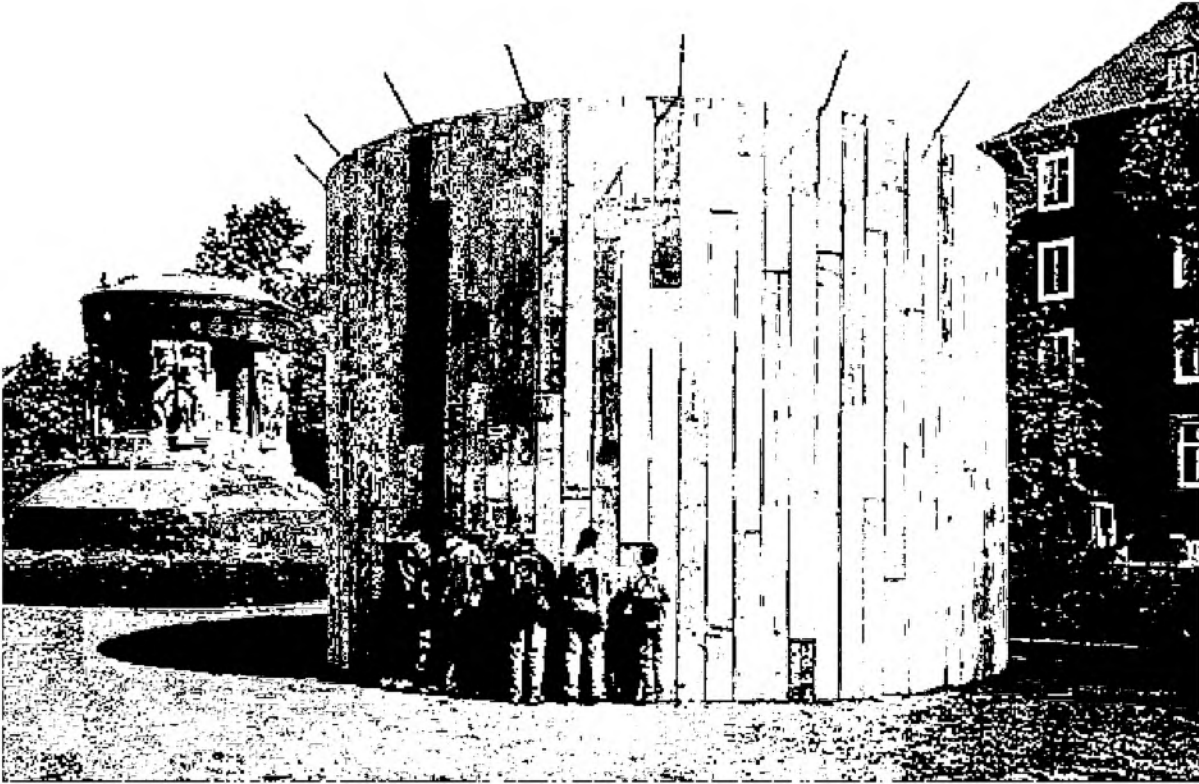
Until further notice, the philosophical situation of Modernity is characterized by the demise of the perfect sphere, whose critical beginnings, as we have indicated, go back much further than what the historiography of the spirit was willing to consider until now. In fact, an infinite sphere, whose center, according to the medieval thesis, was everywhere, no longer allows for the recognition of an effective center: everywhere in it would arise mystical self-alienations that would not be distinguishable from the most external egocentrisms. Consequently, the central theme of Modernity, self-reference, had to burst into thought as an inevitable consequence, albeit delayed and repressed, of the mystical thesis of the centrum-ubique. The last opportunity for centralization in an infinite world is, indeed, the selfishness of points. For it, everything that is not the monad itself, that is, the central command of a system,



self-correlation, it is in the "surrounding world", "environment" or

"Environment". "The highest thing we have received from God and nature is life, the monad's rotating movement around itself, which knows no respite or rest..." [52] Everything that is a self or a system, precisely because of that, has to take care of itself, whether it be individuals or states, families or economic enterprises. All of them are sacred egoists; their asceticism means self-reference.

Arnulf Rainer, *Cosmos*, panel 20: *Flow and Current of Light*, 1994.



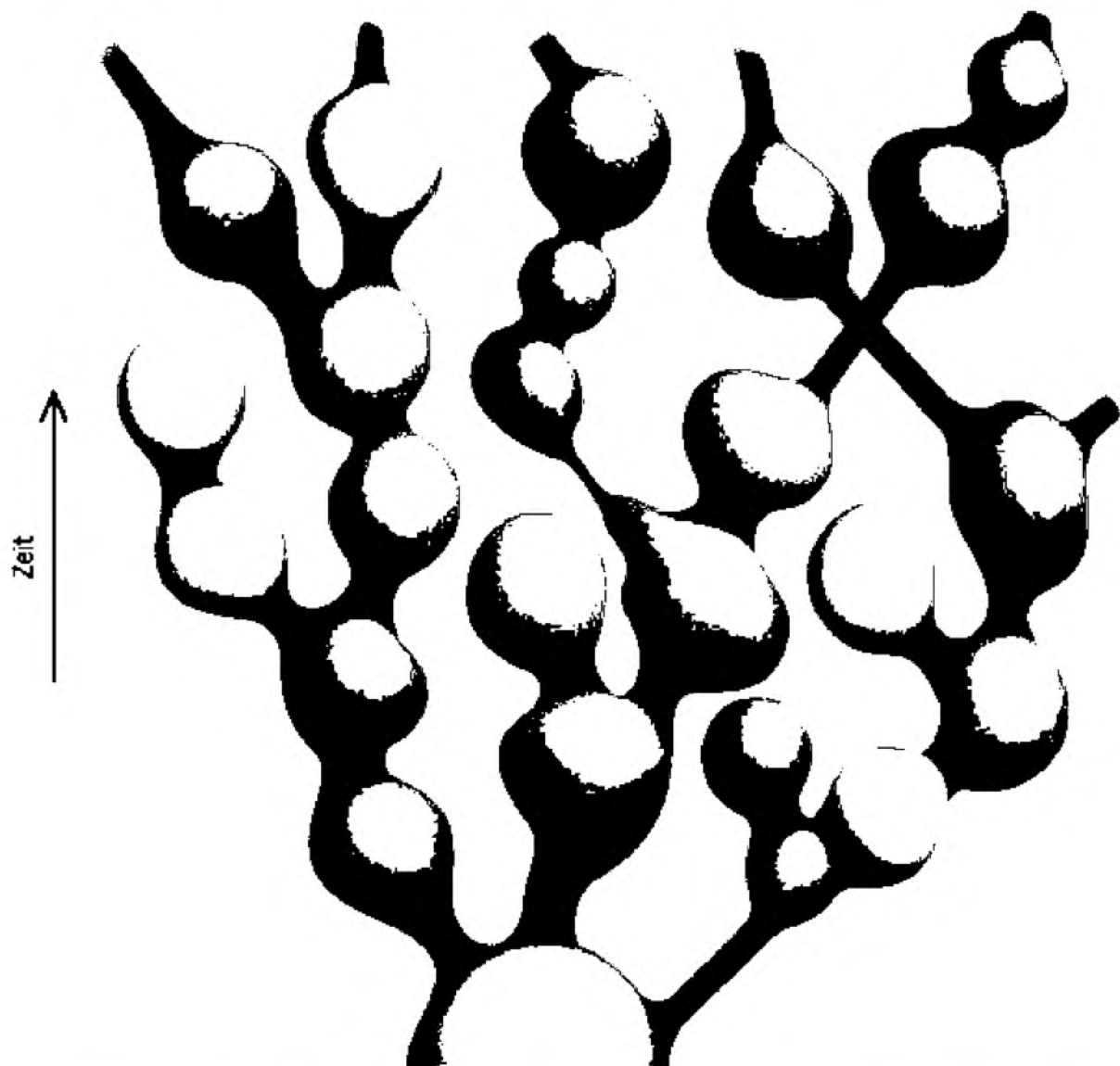
With this, the epic of the divine sphere ends on the threshold of Modernity in a general excentralization and self-centralization, and in the stipulation of space.

Hans Haacke, Merry-Go-Round Installation, Münster 1997.

Carousel scaffolding next to the roundabout of the Bismarck monument in Münster.

The continents and oceans of the Earth are colonized by current routines of traffic and communication; potentially, in neutralized space any point has become a location, that is, a relay for the circulation of money on the circumvented surface of the Earth. In the generalized exteriority, no point can become inaccessible to another. The essence of Modernity could be morphologically defined as non-Satanic eccentricism, while the scheme of center and epicenter, which had founded the metaphysics of collaboration in God's project, is only preserved in religious subcultures.

We will call foams the agglomerations of eccentric self-referential points, along with their surroundings, in structures lacking



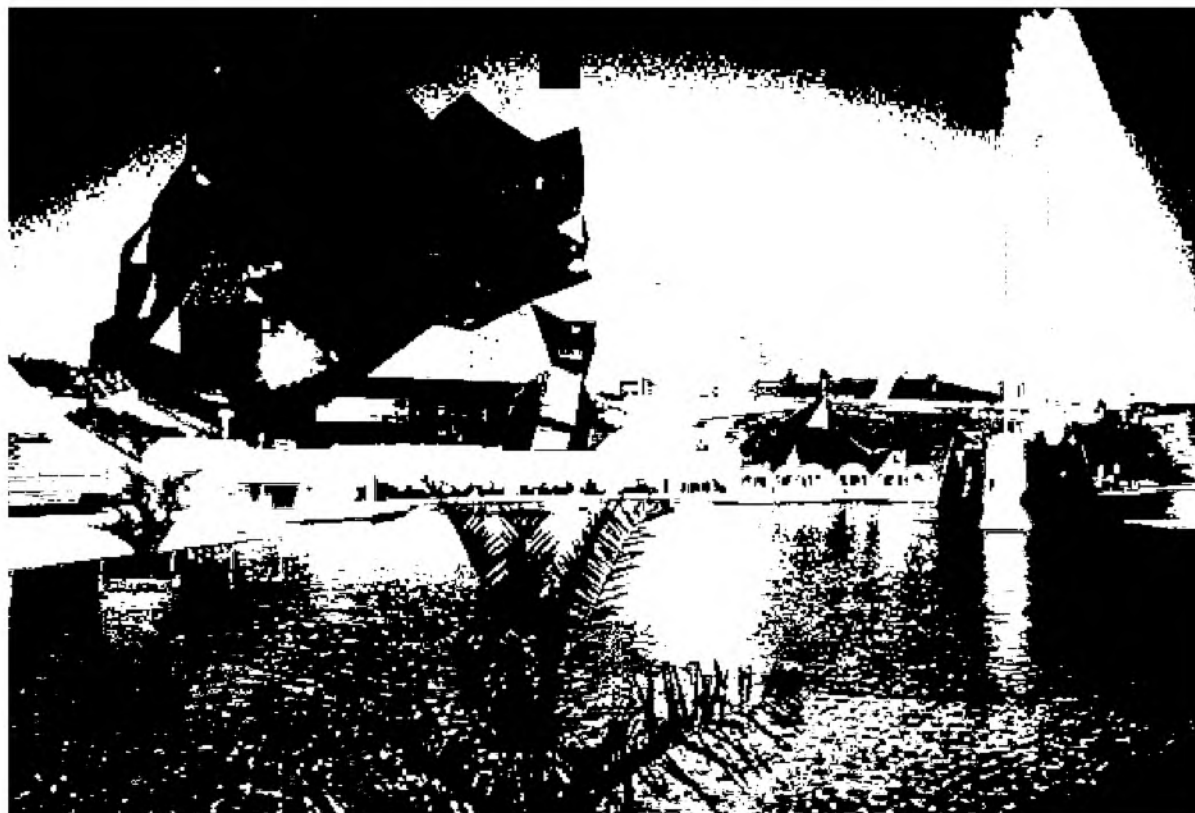
midpoint. The third volume of these espherological studies will deal with them.

This book, a mausoleum of the idea of the unity of everything, belongs to the two-millennium kingdom of the monosphere or the integral globe.

Can something still be learned from Stalin regarding the construction of a mausoleum? From every point of view, of course, since for what

we intend as well, presenting metaphysics in a crystal sarcophagus would be convenient.

show the dead as if they were only sleeping. [54]



Prototype of the self-reproducing cosmos as a branching tree of an inflationary bubble warp. Each bubble in this graph corresponds to a hypothetical system that emerged from an initial explosion.

We can stay a little longer in front of the shop window since no time is wasted waiting in line in front of the monument.

We will contemplate the One-All in its embryonic stages, in its growth (chapter 1) and its cosmic complementation (chapter 4), we will observe its external reinforcement and its border politics (chapters 2 and 3), we will admire its theological triumph and its mystical hybris (chapter 5), we will follow its policy of signs (chapter 7) and its negative excess (chapter 6) and we will finally witness its

catastrophe, which entails its metamorphosis into a mere globe (chapter 8).

Futuroscope in Poitiers.

final de estas longitudes celestes habría de resultar evidente por qué sólo mediante el rechazo del pensamiento contemporáneo al

One-and-All of the metaphysical-monotheistic project of the world could achieve a new non-theological or post-theological, post-metaphysical or otherwise metaphysical configuration of human immunities in the second ecumene, which in principle only represents.

the integral of all isolations. [55]

Access

Anthropogenic climate

The world bubble has to inflate before it bursts.

Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* Our investigations in the microspheric field have shown that human beings are living beings who, in principle, cannot be, or exist, anywhere else but in the wall-less greenhouses of their proximity relationships. In this sense, microspherology is nothing more than a proxemic anthropology. The core of personal proxemics is what we have called the strong relationship. From it come the autogenous receptacles of primary solidarities which, ironically without irony, we clarify, in the end, with the paradigm of the trinitarian union of Father, Son, and Spirit. [56] For these surreal relationships, it holds true that they are "their own place". Whoever participates in them lives, in a topologically eminent sense, within.

Human beings, as creatures who under any circumstance are essentially living beings piled on top of each other, who both protect and reject each other, and nothing more than that, as creatures who eventually and much later become individuals, as they say, self-complementing beings who live alone and take care of external contacts (addresses, networks), need, without any exceptions or differences, the stimulating microclimate of their early inner worlds. Only in it, as their typical vegetation, do they reach the best and the worst they can be. In it, they gather basic, ambivalent, destructive temperaments, or sentimental prejudices about the

You in its entirety, which are constantly asserted in the transition to larger scenes. From that background, all transfers are set in motion.

No meteorological bulletin informs about the first climate; where the breeze from the inner world blows, which low-pressure areas extend over interhuman efforts: only the judgment of sensation or atmospheric feeling, which is more original than the intimate sense of taste, and more public at the same time, informs us about things like these, in principle.

The sixth sense is always the first, since through it human beings, without inductions or indirect investigation, know where they are: with themselves, with others, and with everyone. Through immersion in the conducting element, they are originally there and open to the environment. Space as atmosphere is nothing more than vibration or pure conductivity. In this sense, it is truly, according to Plato's beautiful and dark doctrine of the chora, the "nursemaid of becoming". How can one rely on such relationships of totality with a clumsy theory of communication? Sender, receiver, channel, medium, code, message: all these distinctions come too late for the fundamental opening. They acquire meaning when it comes to finding out something about something. But long before that, there must have been the being-in or being-in-something that fundamental ontologists interpret as being-in-the-world, being-with, or being-tempered-in-mood. Climate, mood, atmosphere compose the trinity of the enveloping, in whose incessant revelation human beings always and everywhere live, without it being possible to say - even though modernity has turned time into an object of discourse - that these epiphanies correspond to a message and a messenger; first the meteor and then the gaze at the sky. In opposition to this obscurity, we oppose the memory of the climatic pleroma: of the "in" as a chromatic bath in which all discrete acts of representation, will, and judgment are baptized.

Since atmospheres are of a non-objective and non-informative nature (and since they did not seem controllable), they were left behind.

from the old and new European culture of reason throughout the extensive process of objectification and informatization of all facts and things. When discourses began to unfold at will, it became increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to lose even a word related to the exposability, solubility, and openness of existence. The fact that something could exist outside of words and things, something more extensive, prior, and penetrating than both, is something that neither the positive sciences nor the discursive theories have wanted to recognize.

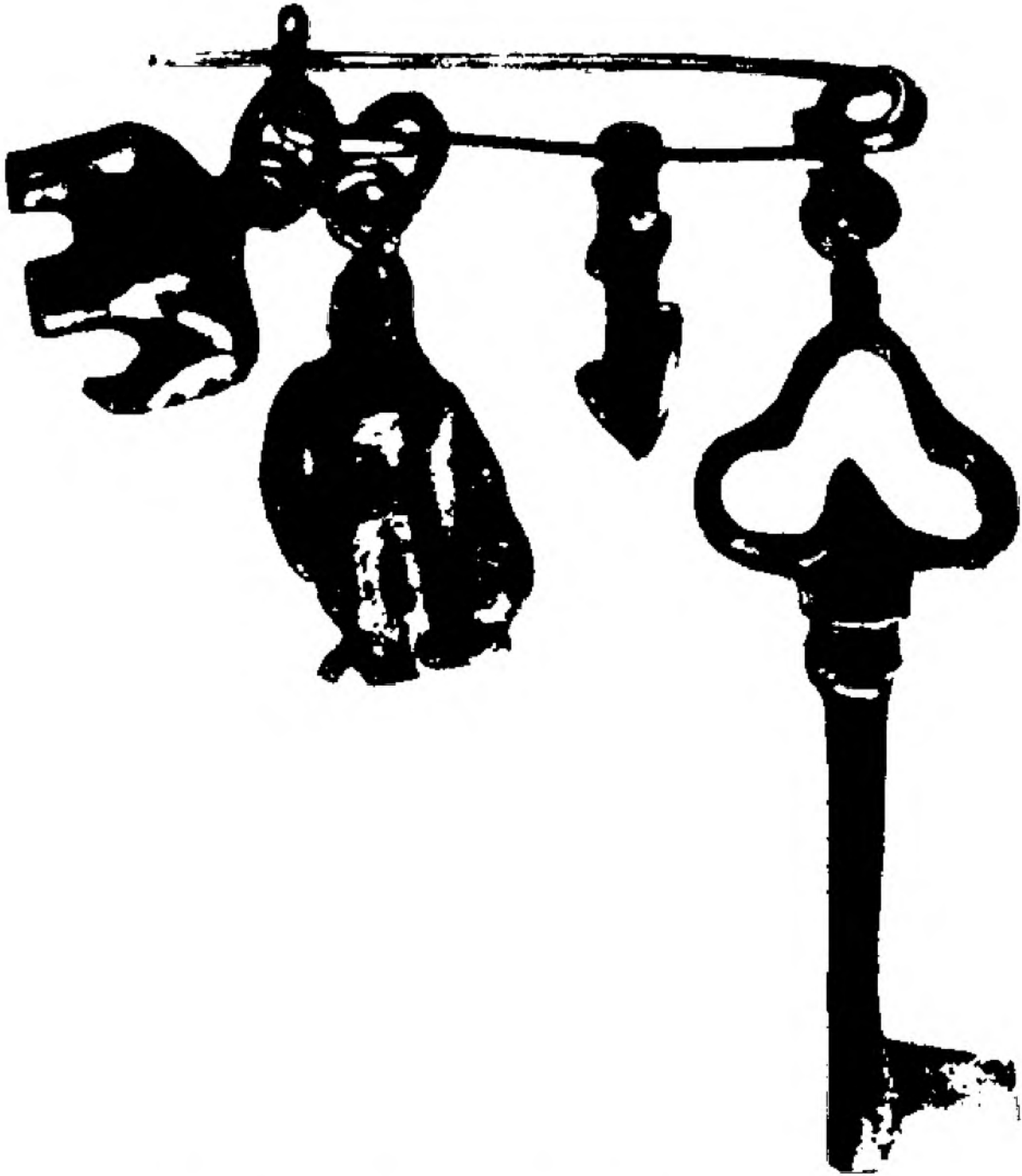
It is true that in the 19th century, when speaking of milieu or environment, they attempted to grasp this subtle trio; that the 20th century made it its own by translating it as Umwelt [environment] and environment; but with all these concepts, the atmospheric was spoiled and progress was made from bad to worse. Only in the worlds of the great novelists, especially in Balzac, Proust, and Broch, did superior atmospheres emerge that still await connection with fundamental philosophical analyses. Nevertheless, atmospheric "phenomena," as such, have become interesting in recent times for aesthetic theory, theology, and neo-phenomenology, especially due to the stimulus of Heidegger, sometimes even with foundational conceptual pretensions; something that should be interpreted, after.

of everything, as signs of a punctual opening. [58]

No wonder, modern philosophy - especially fundamental ontology - when it began, after its two-millennia exile in the supersensible, to regain footing in being-in-the-world, has described mood as the first opening of Dasein to the how and where of the world. Heidegger's early work could be considered the magna carta of an unattempted climatology.

until then. [59] It can be made plausible why the development of

The suggestions of Heidegger in the phenomenology of moods and existential psychiatry belong to the most fertile aspects of his influence. When the string of existence is tensed in an individual, it vibrates in the tonality of a mood or an impregnating climate. But moods - perhaps Heidegger has not emphasized this sufficiently - never



They are, in principle, matters of the individual in the apparent privacy of their existence and in the solitude of their existential ecstasy; they form as atmospheres - structural totalities, tinged with feeling.

--- shared among several, or many, who allocate and tune the proximity space for each other.

Silver multiple amulet with key, Corfu, 20th century.

se establecen conexiones profundas y significativas entre los individuos. Estas esferas pueden ser familiares, amistosas, laborales o incluso virtuales, y suelen estar basadas en intereses comunes, valores compartidos o metas similares. En estas esferas, las interacciones son más íntimas y cercanas, y se fomenta la confianza y la colaboración. Los individuos se sienten seguros y apoyados, y encuentran un sentido de pertenencia y comunidad. Sin embargo, también es importante tener en cuenta que las esferas pueden ser excluyentes y limitantes. Pueden crear barreras y divisiones entre diferentes grupos y dificultar la conexión y la comprensión entre ellos. En resumen, las esferas son espacios de relación fuerte y significativa, donde se establecen conexiones profundas entre los individuos. Aunque pueden ser beneficiosas para la comunidad y el sentido de pertenencia, también pueden ser excluyentes y limitantes. Es importante encontrar un equilibrio y fomentar la conexión y la comprensión entre diferentes esferas.

"Those who live, depend, and are" are mutually allied in an autogenous atmosphere or in a vibrant relationship that surpasses them. That is why what we call climate primarily refers to a communal magnitude, and only afterwards to an atmospheric fact. This applies to all forms of human life, including those oriented towards distance, freedom of movement, and renunciation of companionship. Precisely those who live alone are often especially sensitive to the climate from a social standpoint, and many of those who seek solitude do so primarily to alleviate the suffocation of a charged atmosphere.

As tourists who travel out of season, they avoid the inconveniences of bad weather. But humans are not only sensitive to weather as a group, as living beings actively influenced by the climate in microspheres, they also influence themselves, with everything they do and don't do in the common sphere, through the sharing of

nearby space. The world of proximity arises from the sum of our reciprocal actions and mutual afflictions. What in different philosophical contexts - from St. Augustine to Vilém Flusser, passing through Heidegger - has been meant by the expression "proximity" is the lived redundancy, the plethora of the noticeable, in which the synchronized abound. Things go for us as we accommodate each other, and the way things go for us with each other reveals adjustments or misalignments between our lives. In their fields of proximity, human beings, without exception, are makers of time and produce enchantments of sun and rain at every moment. Their faces are the labels of their moods; their gestures and feelings radiate storm or clear skies to the community.

In the era of artwork, artists were able to produce outstanding climatic images of their cultures because they gathered communities around their works that were in tune with their feelings; therefore, it is always a mistaken deduction to think that art producers expressed their inner selves in their works. What is called expression is a collection of formulas of possibilities.

current climate creators of a group. Thus, Heidegger's suggestive ontological-linguistic thesis that the work of art postulates or

"Builds a world" (one could never be sure, otherwise it would rather be said "exposes a world") is primarily significant in terms of esferology, and quickly loses plausibility outside of this significant field. There was a time when religious images, above all, personified the model of the ability to weave larger groups of human beings into a shared symbolic ether. That is why such works of art were attributed a character of truth and revelation: because they pointed to the central point of an opening, a local ray of the world. The irony of Heidegger's doctrine of the origin of the artwork is that it is true, essentially, for works predating the era of art.

In the works to which Heidegger referred, it is not decisive that they are works of art, but rather that they constitute places of worship where one encounters the exhibition of being.

What can never be silenced, since - before any representation or exposition - it makes the revealed common be traced, is the atmosphere, the enveloping tone of space, which permeates its inhabitants. That is why, for the majority of human beings, their relational climate remains more important and much more real than all the grand politics and "high" culture. Simple people are defined because for them, under the aspect of objective unavailability, politics and meteorological phenomena have the same rank; against bad weather and the great lords, equally little can be done: only talk about them as if they were superior forces. But these discourses - and this only appears in late reflections - are the ether of societies; that is why all groups, from oral hordes to great cultures, with their means of writing, printing, and broadcasting, vibrate and coexist almost exclusively in communications about their current basic concerns: their climate, their local gods, their group demons. But the fact that this swaying in their own gossip is the basal function, climate-forming, society-constituting, is only shown

The theory when groups have separated or differentiated so much that it is no longer possible to speak of unity.

For modern-postmodern sociologists, who have

"Converted" (convertir means to change from basic error) from productivism to communicationism, what would now be about is realizing that in the espherological analysis of societies, a "plane" is shown that comes before the differentiation between production and communication. The tonalized endosphere is the first product of communities that live closely together, and the agreement of mood that it implies is its first self-communication. Compacting it, rounding it, regenerating it, and clearing it is the first creative project of humanity. In trivial words of place and interior space, such as nest, room, cave, cabin, house, home, square, village, family, couple, lineage, city, there is forever hidden a residue of unthought-of things, which demands to be continuously dreamed of, without ever having been fully elucidated or captured representatively. This exuberant residue testifies that creations of inner worlds are never closed and

must be incessantly developed from one how to another. The mystery of space production bursts forth, irradiating in the words that refer to autogenous receptacles. Mundus in gutta: in drops of cosmic space.



Eskimo igloo under construction, Northwest Territories, Canada.

From the beginning, human beings have been determined to bring in, as much as necessary, what happens outside and keep away from the home of the good life everything that is external as much as possible. That is not the least of the reasons why they soon, regularly, persistently erect images of the people in their proximity, without whom they could not live fully; they feel their physical and imaginary dwellings through the current signs of absent companions, who remain vitally important even after their disappearance. The omnipresence of images of gods and ancestors, amulets, fetishes, and supercharged signs in ancient cultures testifies to the extent of the need to round out the present world through allusions to something essential that is absent, to something complementary,

enveloping. That there must be images is something that is based on the coercion of intelligence by death and absence; that there can be images is something that is

It is based on the primordial complementing function of onto-graphy. If writing means, prototypically and ideally, representation in the dissimilar, the image means representation in the similar.

The impulse, instigator of images, in rounding reveals man as the animal that can lack something. Isn't the

culture, in its entirety, an overreaction to absence? [60]

When what is missing causes strangeness, morphological pressure occurs: empty spaces want to be occupied again, as if the project of space-fulfillment does not allow lasting vacancies.

By an imperative of complementation, inner worlds come closer to self-completion: initially only in the sense of nesting without walls, in which the predicate

"Redondo" expresses a pregeometric, psychological-spatial quality, vaguely immunological, although from a certain threshold of discursive and political development, it also acquires architectural and geometric meanings. Less than a perfectly round sphere in itself, providing interior space, it cannot suffice for those who live in community as their characteristic place in the world.

As we know, for morphological-social and biological-cooperative reasons, these Euclidean spheres of group animic only arise through the sharing of inner space with nearby beings of the first order and their replacements. At the same time, human beings ---

Given that they are beings of the inner world, in which endoclimatic nesting precedes all other constructions, they are in danger, like no other species, of having their inner worlds without walls destroyed by invasions from outside or by endogenous conflicts, as nothing is

more fragile than existence in the exhaled covers of specifically human interiority.

The expression climate catastrophe - the true password of our time - already captures the original risk of humanity. Human beings - in a way that is only advisable to become fully aware of with reservations, because here the concept of "consciousness as fate" can very well become effective - [61]

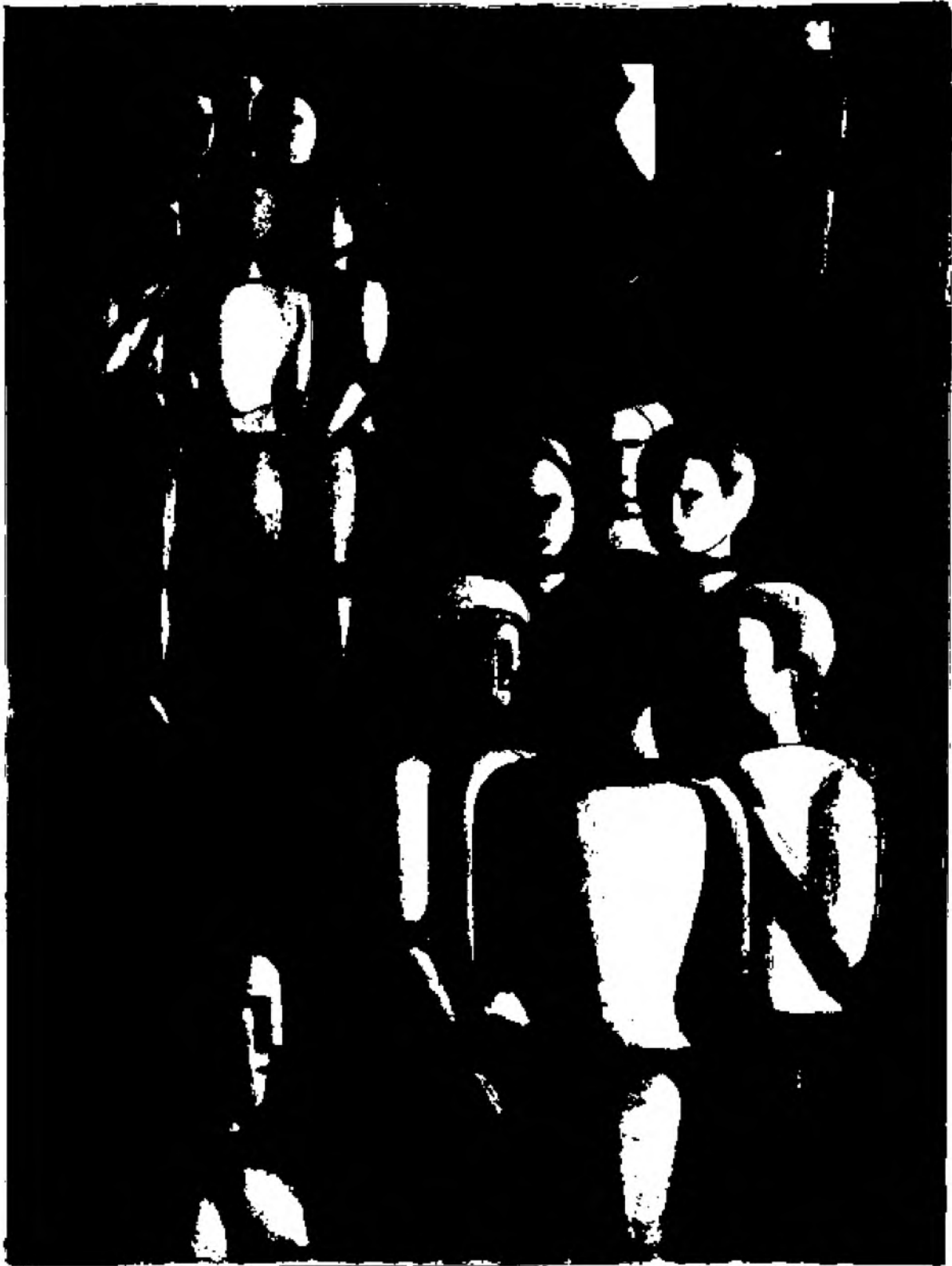
They depend on the grace of the circumstances of internal climate down to the last detail of their biological endowment and cultural rituals. That, at least in their respected reproductive lines, humans have been able to become what they are is the consequence of a history, as unnoticed as it is unheard of, of self-protections through their own climate creations. As inhabitants of their own proximity greenhouses, created by themselves, they find themselves at home in a continuum of self-images; which, on the other hand, does not prejudge anything about the extent of hardships, difficulties, and failures in individual lives.



Thomas Struth, Louvre Museum I, 1989, detail.

Human beings live in themselves: an expression that should serve as a provisional reference to the dynamics of refinement.

The individualizations and local cultures. In its evolutionary balance, the existence of Homo sapiens is only understandable as a successful history of increasing nervous excitability and lush self-stimulation mediated by symbols. The success lines of these stories stand out against a backdrop of relentless selective fatalities, where the rule is extermination and failure.



Oskar Schlemmer, Youth in Groups, 1928.

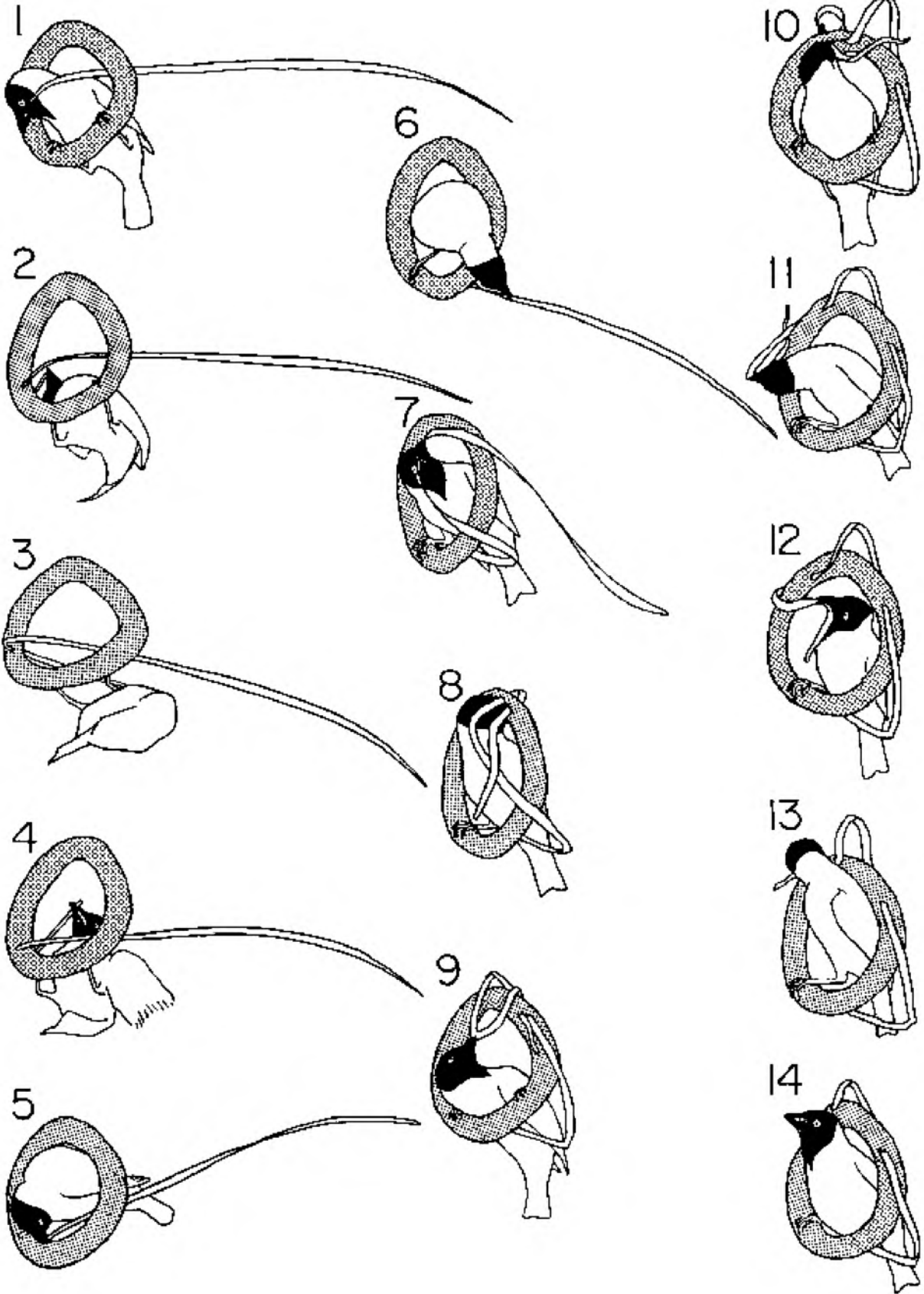
Only if the tension between interior and exterior is highlighted, as the fundamental motif of all cultural topology, does the constant return of the interior become fully conscious, in its surprising nature.

Are not countless those who have had to experience the outside world as a series of destructive incidents of spheres? Is not the piercing, overwhelming, and relentless exterior always more impassive and stronger than any construction of an inner world? The bubble-image that we placed in front of our theory of spheres of intimacy evokes the fragility of the spaces inhabited by human beings. What, on the contrary, enables mortals to protect themselves in their greenhouses of relationships? It is already quite surprising the strength of allies to establish preferential relationships with each other, despite the fact that both endogenously and exogenously everything seems to work towards bursting the spheres that enable human beings. And yet: that self-sheltering in the space created by oneself—the ability to throw a coat over oneself and one's own and retreat into the invisible greenhouse of mutual belonging experienced—is the original and incessant creative stimulus that, especially after group crises, must be credited in multiple cases. From it come the formations that later, in bourgeois, citizen times, theory promoters, will be called "societies" or cultures. It seems that, when they ally with each other, the capacity of human beings to deny their helplessness in externality is immense. How would one bear, otherwise, the risk of belonging to a species of mortal speaking beings, susceptible to fear—and how unbearable would the threat from the outside be—if there were not a regenerative envelope of reanimating solidarity that opposes its creative resistance to dissolving attacks, as long as they exist?

As a process of increasing sets of solidarity, the history of Homo sapiens in the era of the great culture is, above all, a struggle for a complete and inclusive greenhouse. It is based on the attempt to give an invulnerable form, or at least a livable one, resistant to external attacks if possible, to a broader interior, to a more reconciling self, to a more encompassing common. That, as it is

It is evident that this attempt is still ongoing and that, despite enormous setbacks, the adventurous struggle for the inclusion of larger and larger fractions of humanity into common spheres or shelters continues. This confirms both the irresistibility of their motives and the persistence of the hostilities that confront the historical pull towards an expanded inner security. Wars for the maintenance and expansion of spheres constitute the dramatic core of the history of the species and its principle of continuity at the same time.

When we observe the countless small cultures that have emerged from the primitive world to historical times, bursting forth with their iridescent bubbles filled with languages, rituals, and projects, when, in some selected cases, we can witness the continuation of their flight, their growth and dominance, the question arises of how it was possible that the wind did not carry everything away. The vast majority of old clans, tribes, and peoples have disappeared, leaving almost no trace, vanishing into a kind of nothingness, leaving behind, in some cases at least, a name and obscure objects of worship; and of the millions of tiny ethnospheres that have flowed over the earth, only a fraction has been preserved through amplifying metamorphoses, self-assuring, establishing signs of power. It is these ethnospheres that are discussed in this volume, dedicated to macrospheres. They are the ones that provoke this question: why are there still large spheres instead of none?



Movements of a weaver bird for nest construction.



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

- 3

ePub r1.2

turolero 24.05.15

Original title: *Sphären III (Plurale Sphärologie). Schäume*

Peter Sloterdijk, 2004

Translation: Isidoro Reguera

Cover design: photo by P. Sl. © Photo: Isolde Ohlbaum and Plant Embryo
Formation

Digital editor: turolero

Original contribution:

Spleen

Bug report in release notes version 1.1: dekisi

File name correction version 1.2: thanks to wake ePub base
r1.2



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.

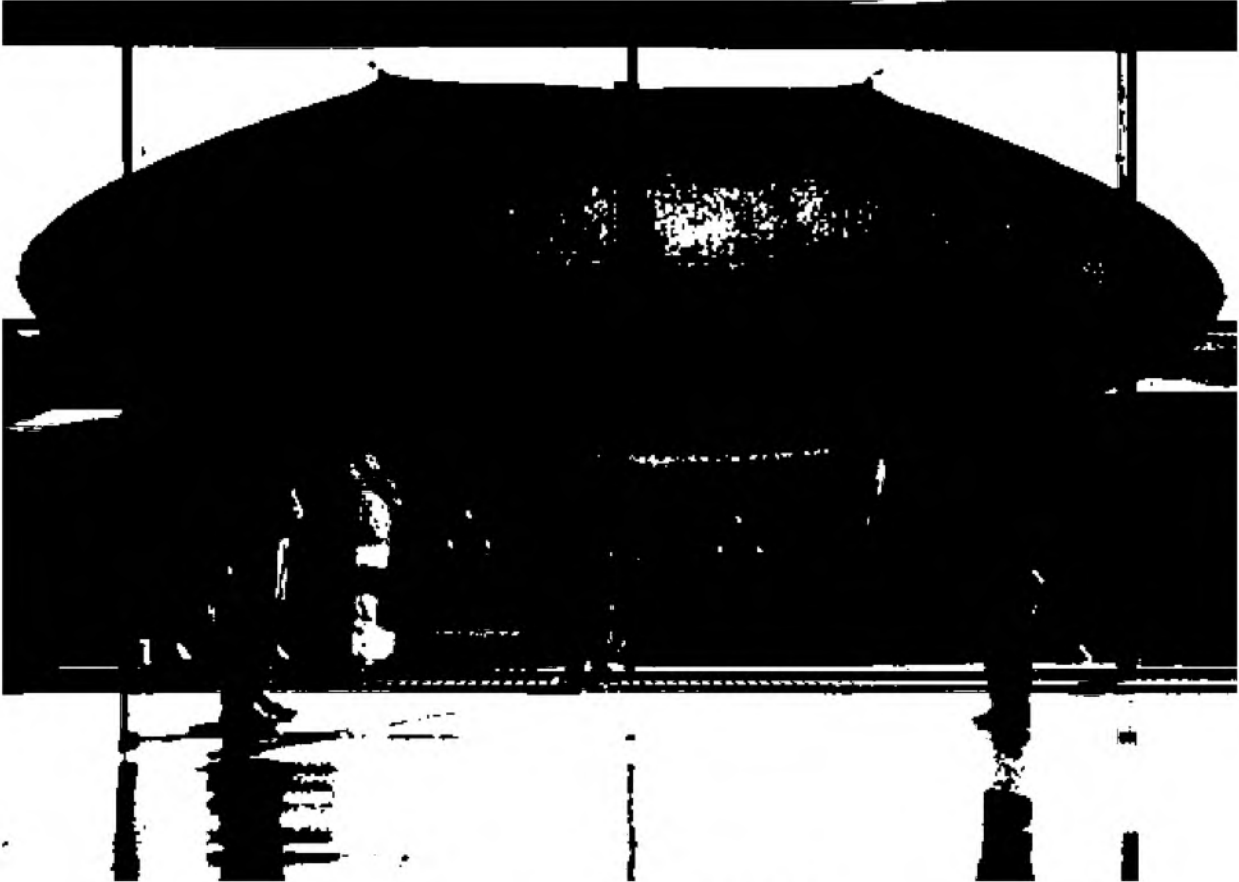
It would not necessarily hinder its reading to place a few lines before it as the relational context of the trilogy. In the two preceding volumes, an attempt is made to confer on the expression *sphere* the rank of a fundamental concept, which branches out into significant topological, anthropological, 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^[*] 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..."^[1]. The stones, which are next to each other, do not know the ecstatic openness of one with respect to the other^[2]. 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^[3]. 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..."^[4] 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^[5].



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^[6].

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....^[7] 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?"^[8]. 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

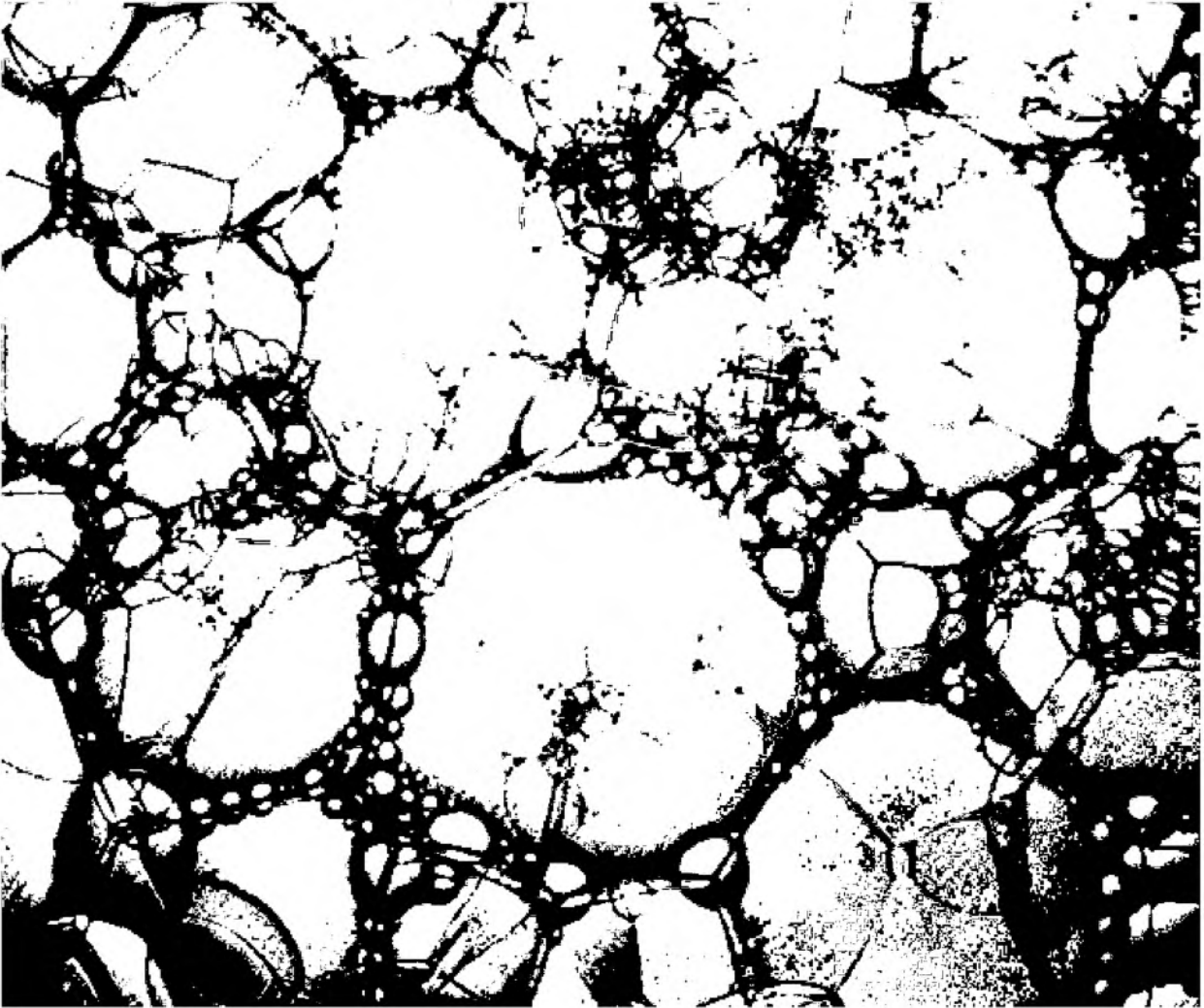
is everywhere and its circumference nowhere^[9].

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*^[10] 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"^[11], 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"^[12], 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^[13], a theory of places, of situations, of immersions is slowly getting underway^[14], the replacement of sociology by the theory of actor-networks is a hypothesis with little reception as yet^[15], 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^[16]. 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"^[*].

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".^[17] 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.^[18] 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.^[19]

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."^[20] 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".^[21]

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".^[22]

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.

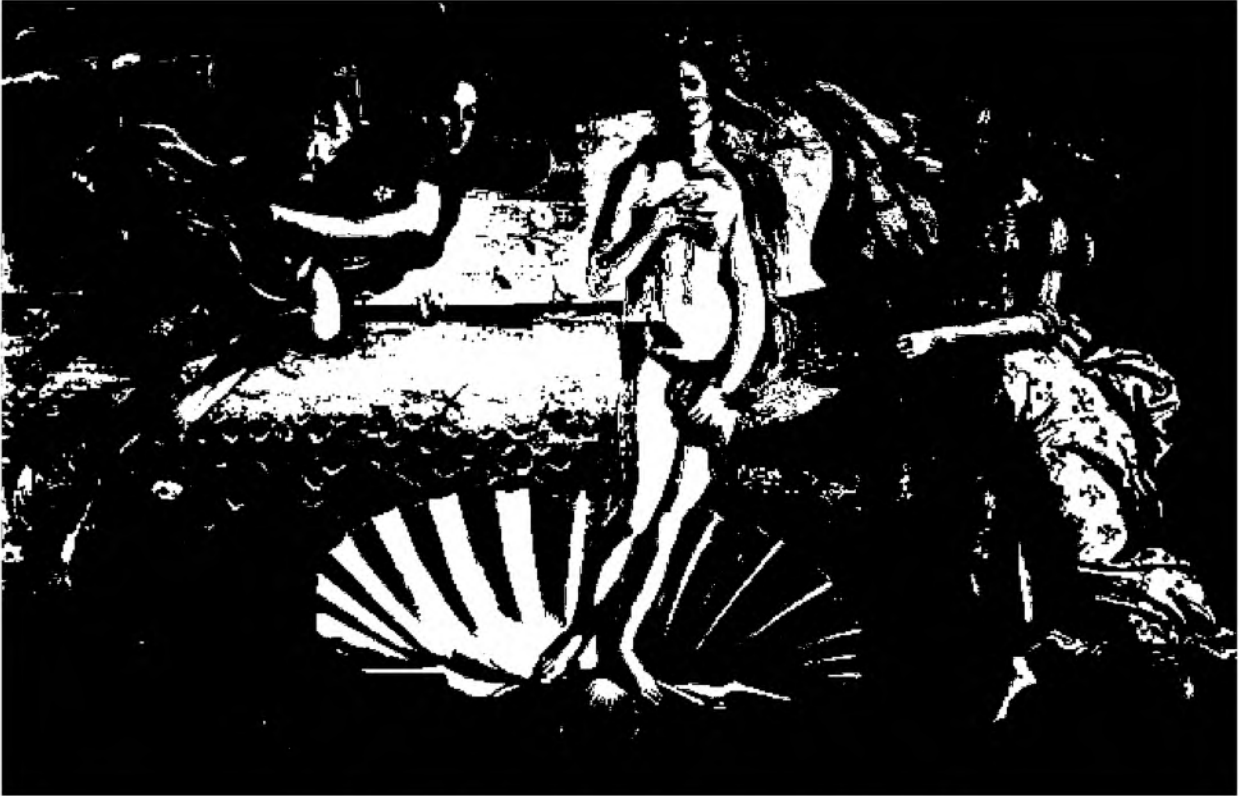
If Modernity is recognized by displacements of seriousness, what about the other side of the equation of dreams and foams? How seriously did the twentieth century take foam? What rank of value did it assign to "air in an unexpected place"? How did it work on the rehabilitation of that evanescent entity, 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 halitosed 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.^[23] 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;^[24] as much of the mathematization of the blurred^[25] as of the conceptual penetration of striated structures and irregular sets.^[26] 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.^[27] 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,^[28] the almost-nothing,^[29] the casual and the formless^[30] 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.

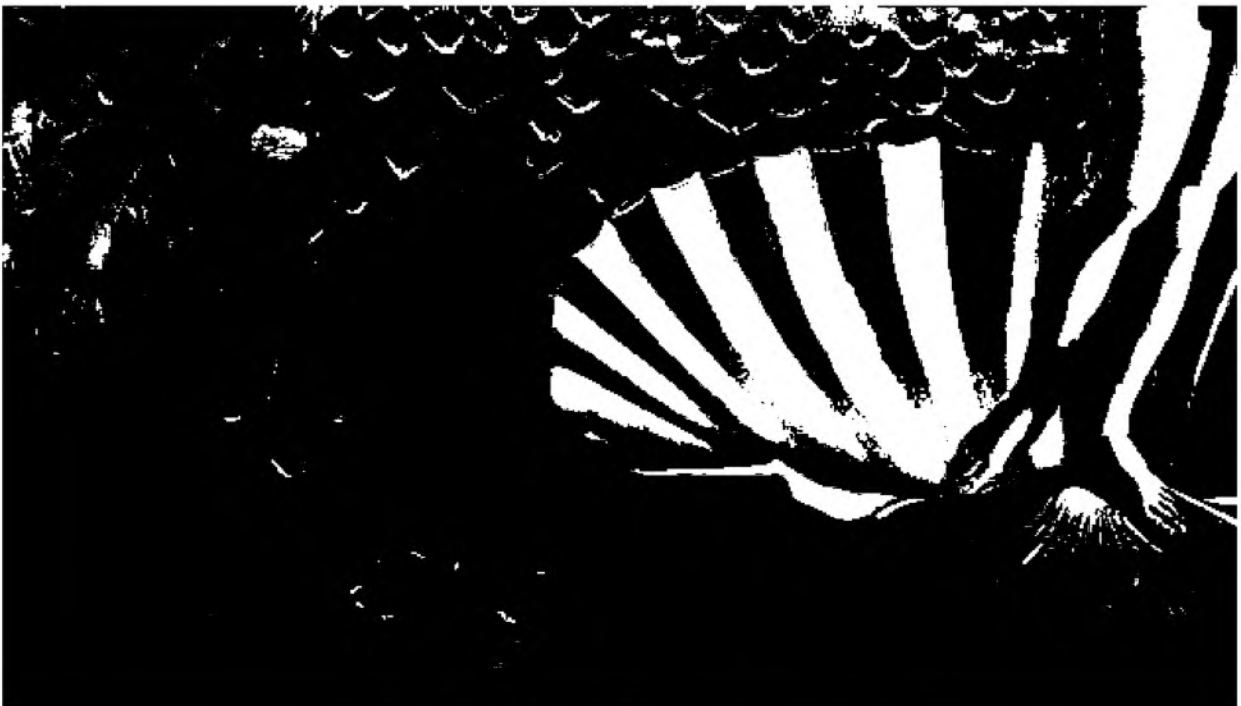


Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, 1477-1478.

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.^[31] 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.^[32]

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.^[33] 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*) -, ^[34] 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*.^[36] 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...^[37]

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.^[38]

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

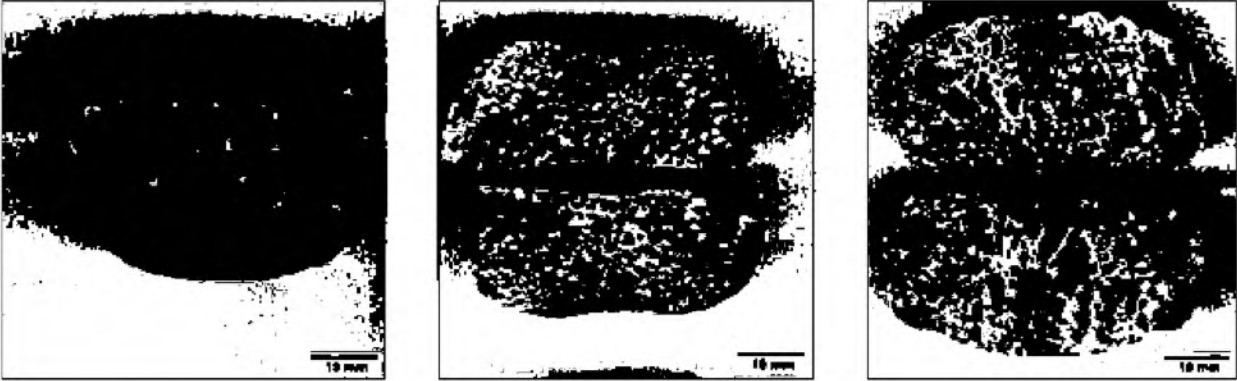
a gigantic serpent, turned into a churning churn in the cosmic dairy - there is no doubt that we are dealing with an image typical of the context of motifs of artisanal observation. Above all, the analogy with procedures for the preparation of butter is imposed, which is not surprising in a culture in which the offerings of liquid butter in the sacrificial fire (*ajya*) belonged to the primary ritual gestures.^[39] 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.

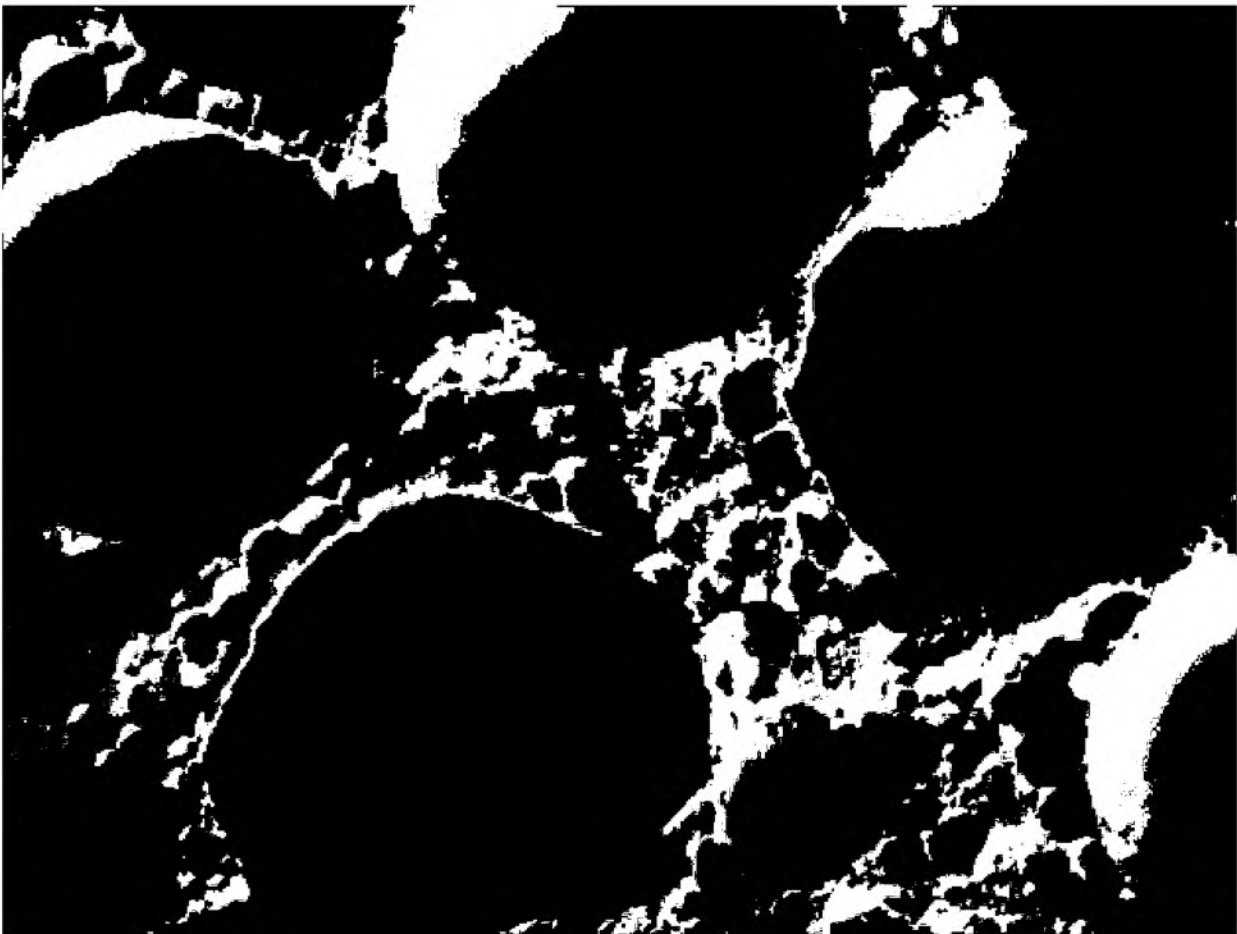
These myths allude to early alternatives to the sterility prejudice concerning foams; yet they can only give the constellation of foam and fertility, at best, a poetic plausibility. Still, they prepare from afar a concept of aphrogenia that stimulates us not only to inquire into the generations of the 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 19th 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.^[40] He brought the wonders of the rainbow into the children's rooms of the Victorian era.



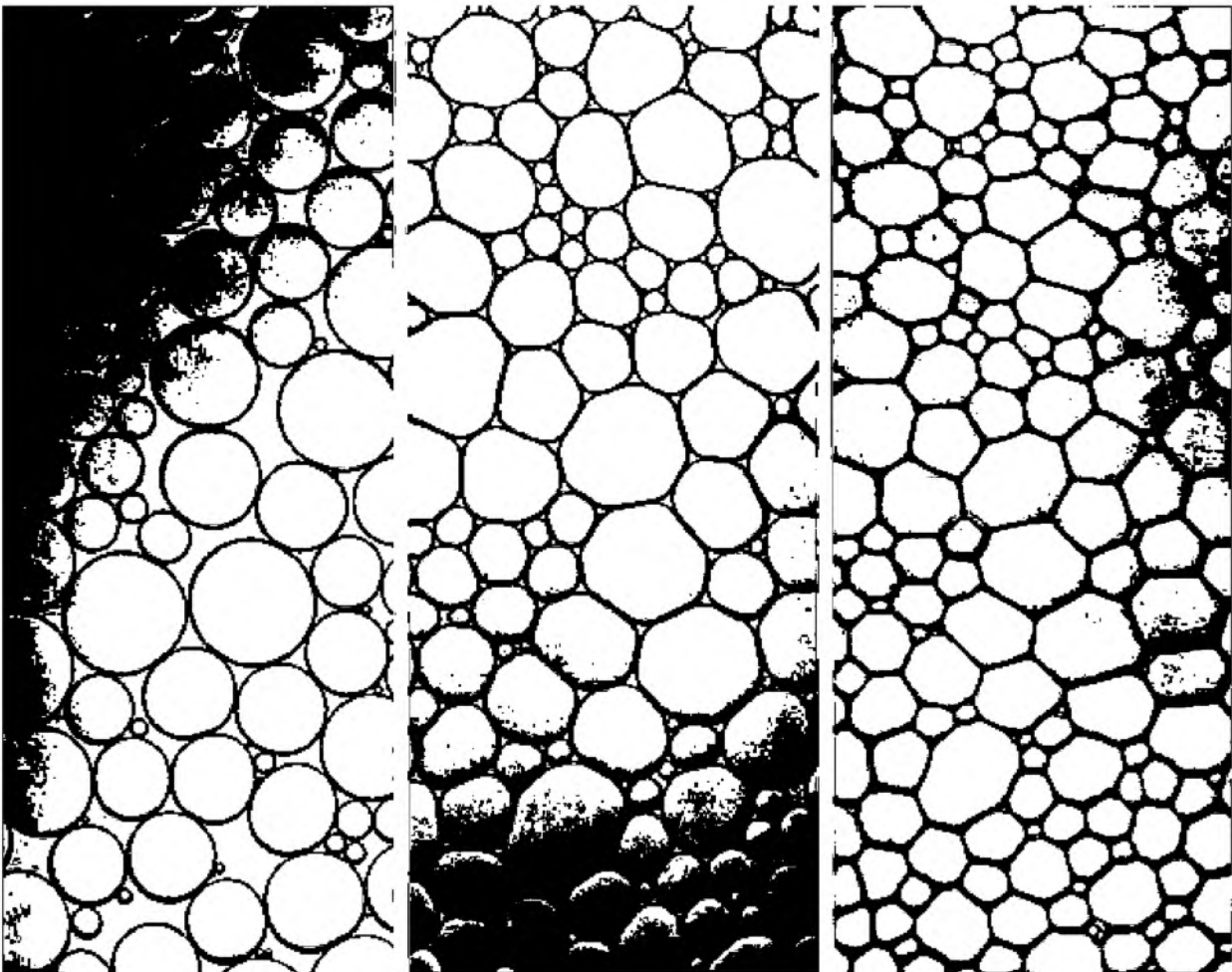
Porous ferrous-based materials.



Photograph of a foam adobe pororized 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.



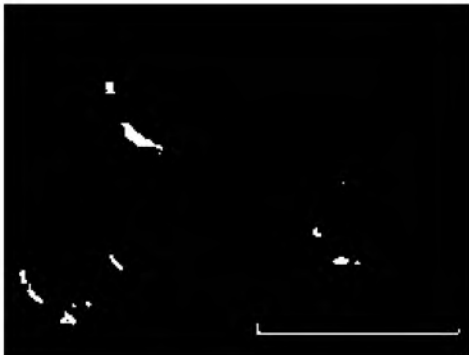
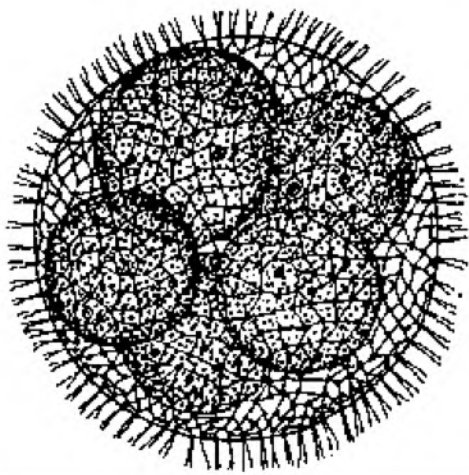
Transition from a bubble raft to a flattened polyhedral lattice, according to a study of the Frei Otto's group.

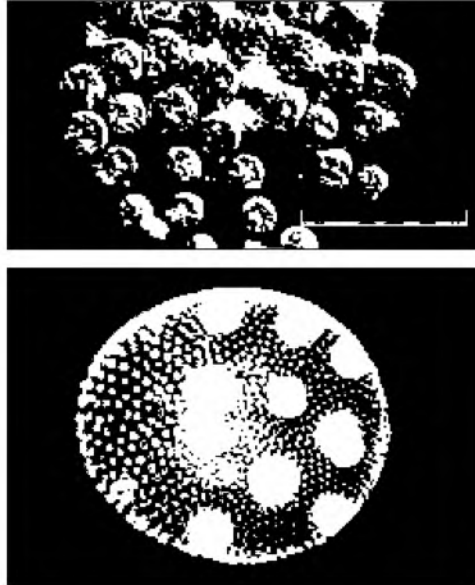
An aged foam embodies the ideal case of a co-fragile system, in which a maximum of interdependence has been reached. In the lattice of large labile-stable polyhedra, no single cell can potentially burst without dragging the whole structure with it into nothingness. The processual dynamics of foam thus 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 21st 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.^[41] 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.^[42] 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][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.^[44] 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.^{45]} 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"^[46] (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.^[47] 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.^[49] 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,^[50] 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.^[51] 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.

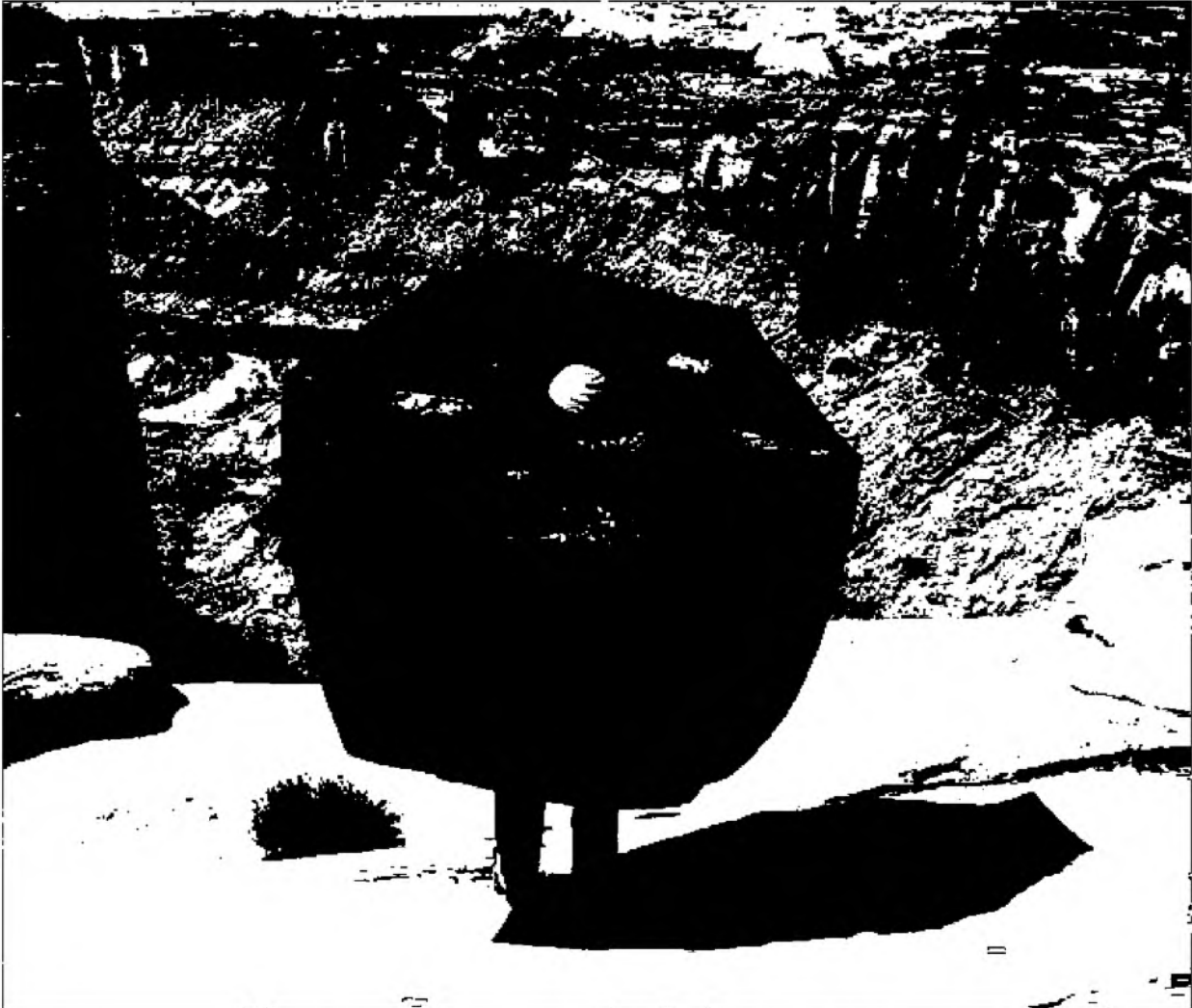




Jennie Pineus, *Cocoon Chair*, 2000.

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^[52] 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).^[53] We emphasize that the cell in the foam does not consist of the abstract individual, but of a dyadic or multipolar structure.^[54] 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.^[55] 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.^[55]

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."^[56] 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.^[57] 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."^[58]

Foams in the age of knowledge

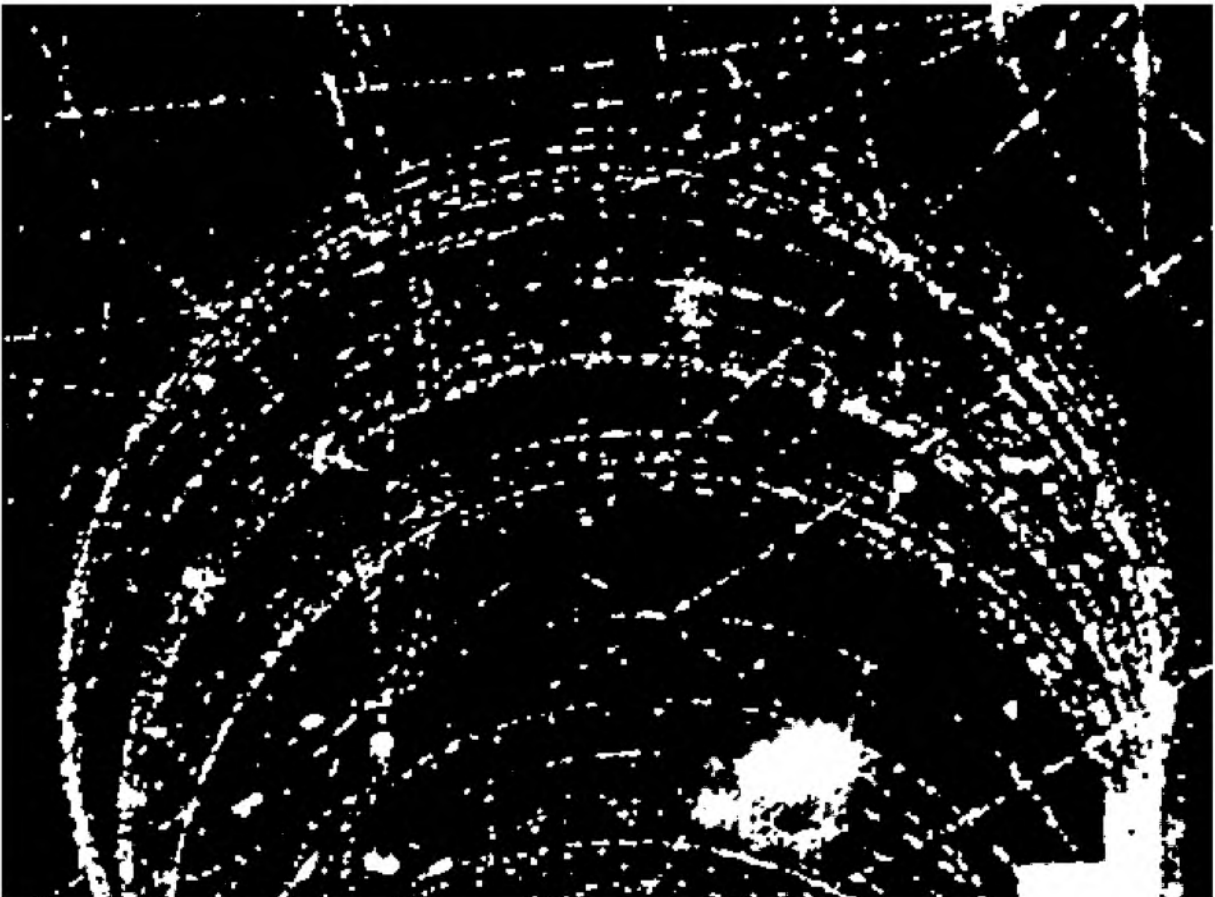
Delicate things belatedly become objects: that is what they have in common with numerous apparent truisms, which only manage to jump to the eye when they are lost, and, as a general rule, they are lost from the moment they are introduced into comparisons in which their innocent facticity vanishes. The 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.

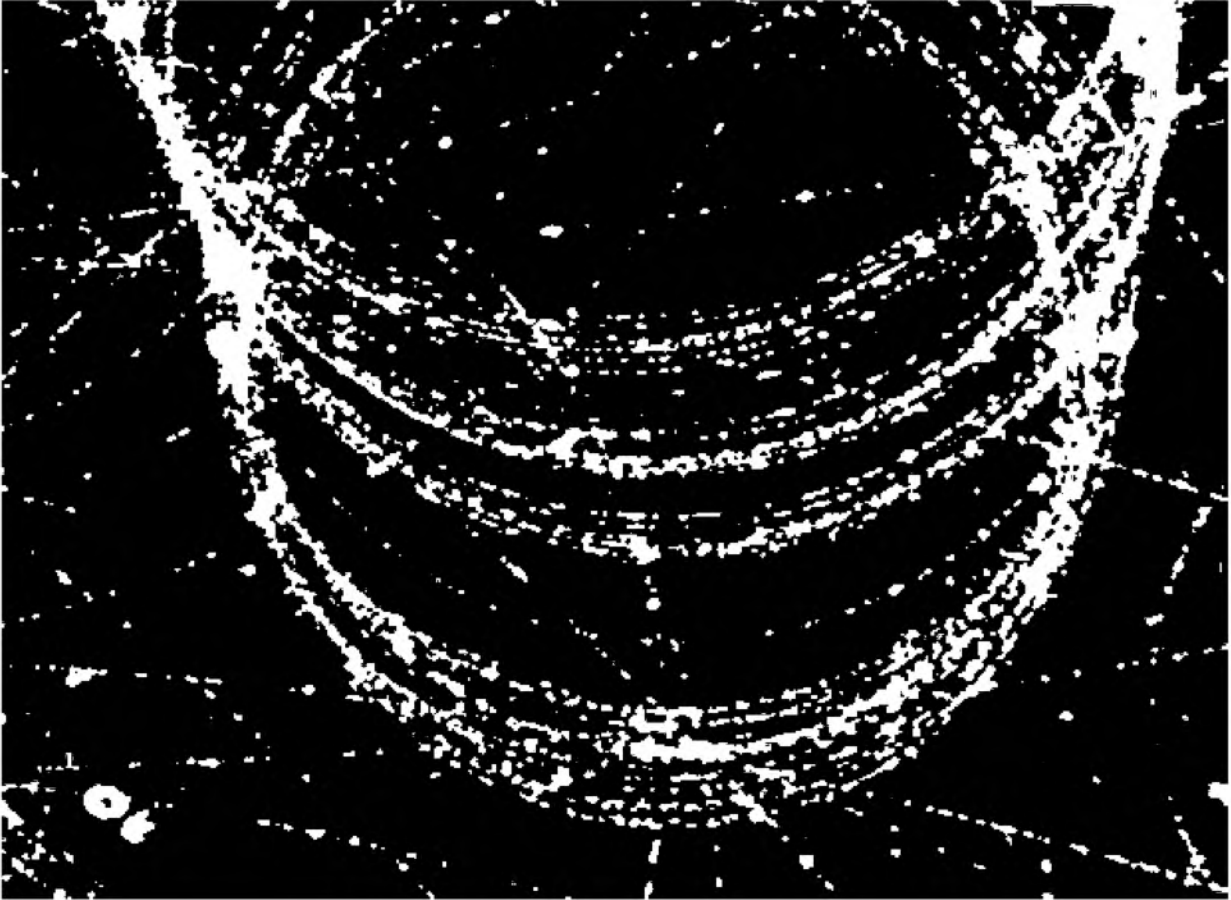


View of the inside of the head of a fly with the aid of a fluoroscopic microscope.

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,^[59] and then transcend into the constitutions of being-in in absolutely general realms and into the *modi* of existential inclusion in relations of totality^[60] (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?^[61] 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?^[61] 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

^{63]} 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. ^{64]} 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.^[65] 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.

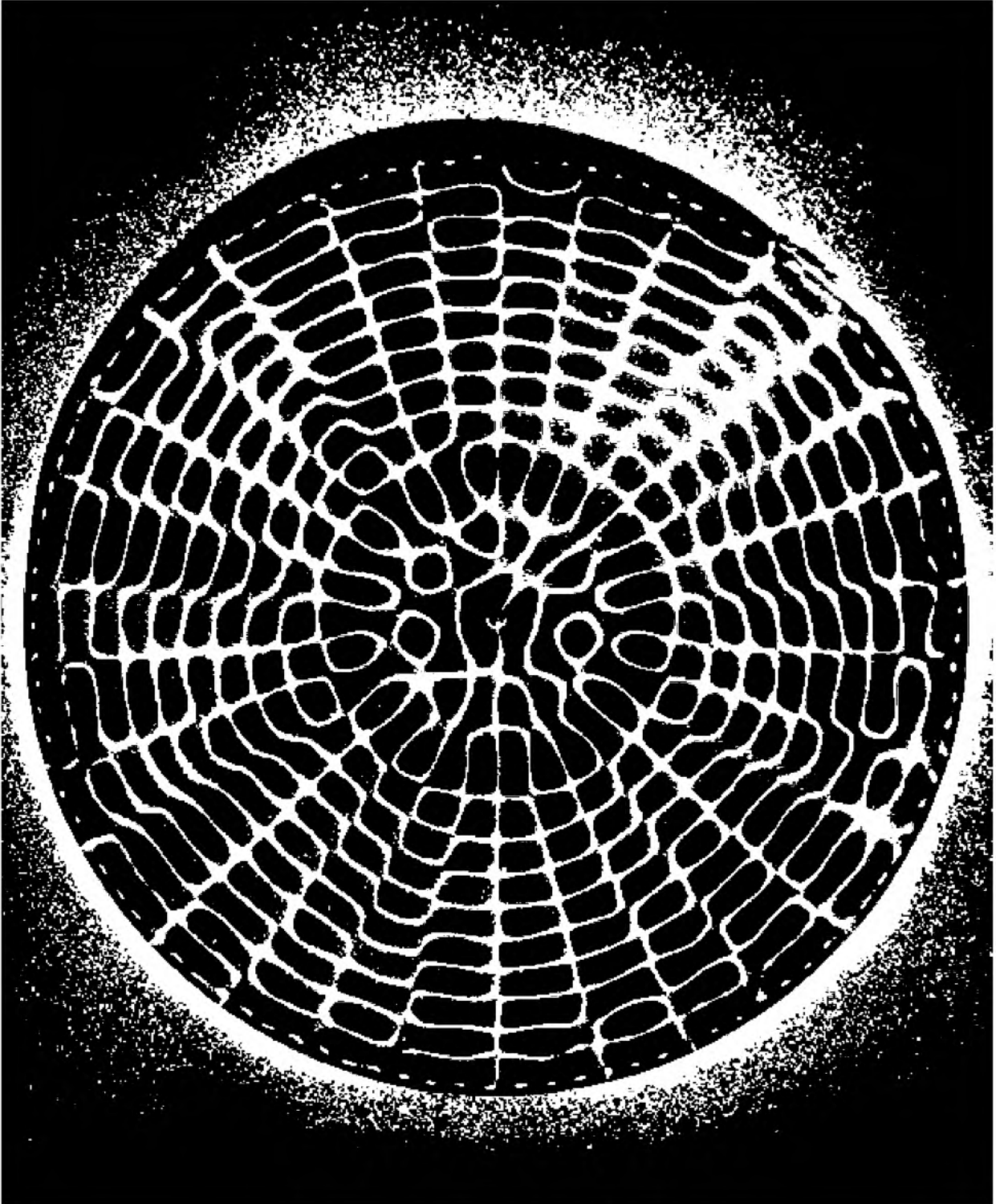
The ontological foundation of this optimism was expressed in the fifteenth century by Nicholas of Cusa, when he postulated the symmetry of the maximal implicit-being (God, as concentration in the atomic point) and the maximal explicit-being (God, as unfolding in the sphere-everything). Under Cusanian 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*^[68] 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.^[69] 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.^[70] 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 unhiding." 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.^[71] The technical is a "mode of unhiddenness."^[72] The technical is a "mode of unhiddenness."^[73] 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.^[72] 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.

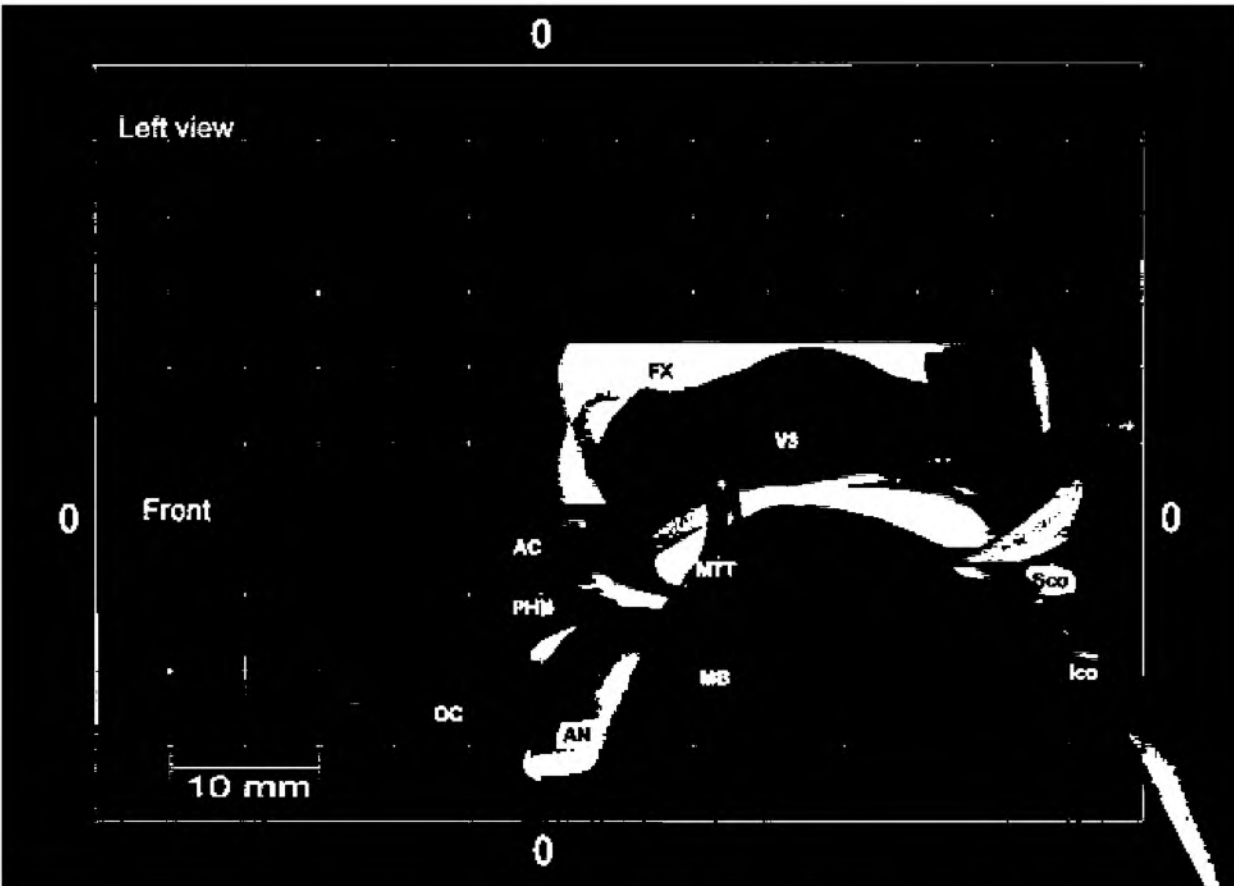


L. Rogozov, Nowolazarewskaja Station, Antarctica, during the performance of an appendicitis autooperation in April 1961.

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.^[73]



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.^{74]} 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^[*]

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

Hermann Broch, *The Death of Virgil*^[75].

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.^[76] 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.^[77] 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.^[78] 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.^[79] 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."^[80]

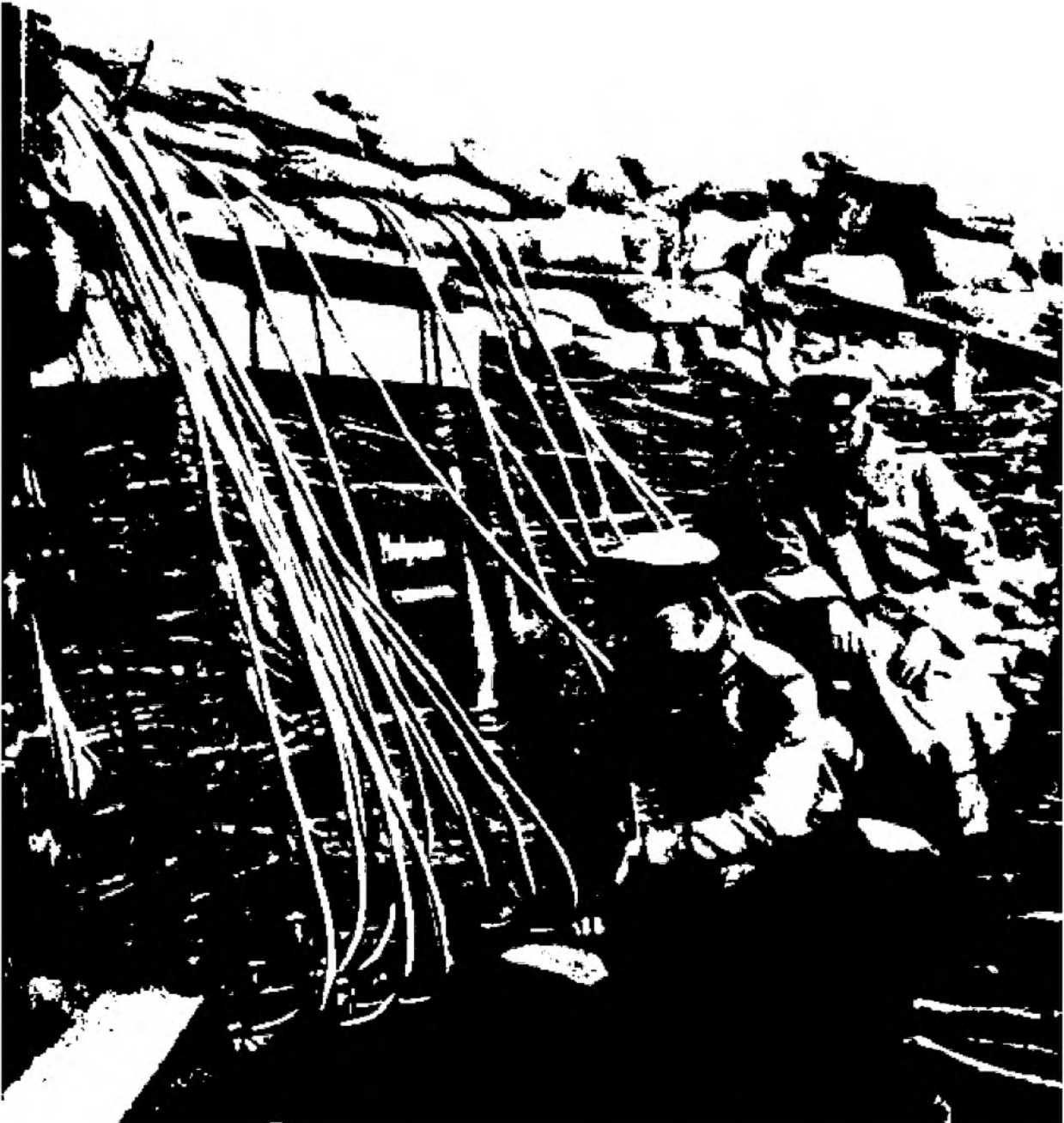
While the wretched twentieth century is now preparing to enter the history books as the "age of extremes"^[81] and is being consumed by the progressive outdatedness of its lines of struggle and mobilizing concepts - its scripts for world history are no less yellowed than the proclamations of medieval 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."^[82] 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.^[83] 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.^[83]

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.^[84] 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."^{85]} 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.^[86] 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."^[87]

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.^[88] 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.^{89]} 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.^[90] 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,^[91] 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*,^[92] 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.^[93] 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.^[93]

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.^[94] 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^[95] 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.^[96] 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 Ieper 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.^[97] 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.^[98] 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.^[99] 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."^[100] 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".^[101] 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).^[102] 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,

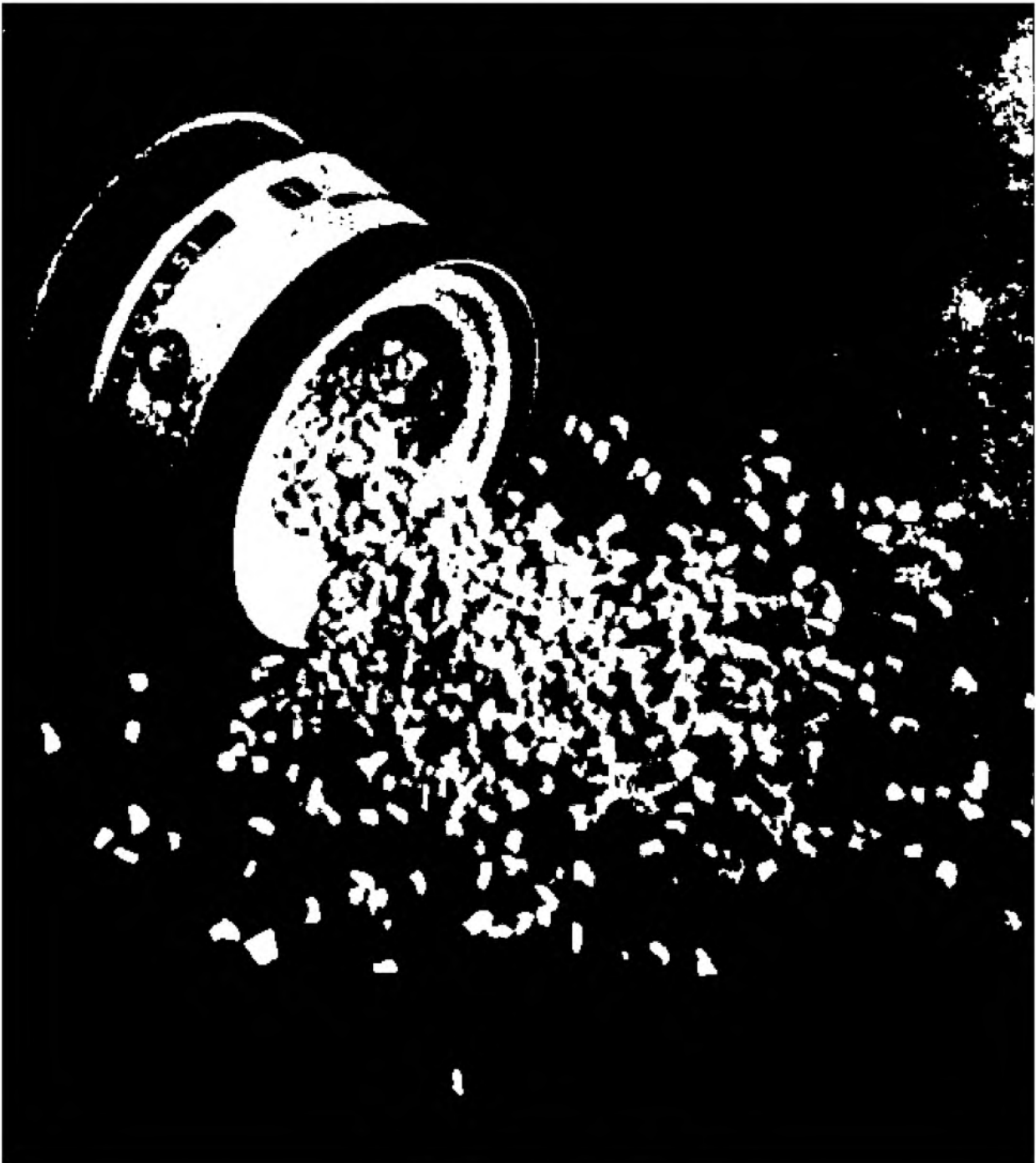
near Würzburg on April 21, 1917. Only eighty-five years had passed between Goethe's death and the introduction of the expression "disinfestation of large spaces" into the German language.

"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.^[103] 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.^[104] 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!"^[105] 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.^[106] 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.^{107]}

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.

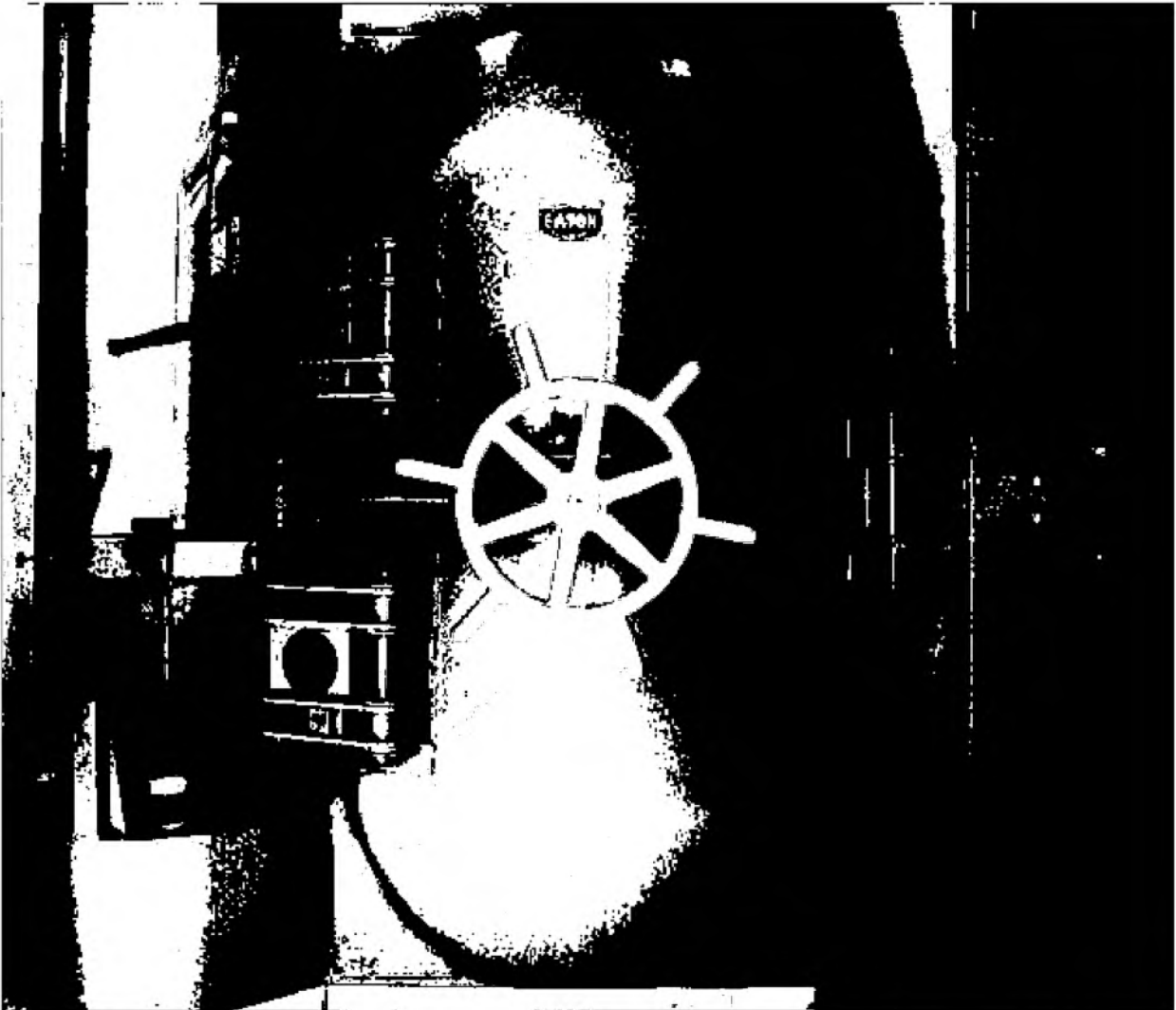
as human; from that point of view, the Nevada gas chamber was a place of worship of pragmatic humanism. Its installation was dictated by that sentimental law of Modernity, which prescribes keeping public space free of acts of manifest cruelty. No one has expressed as powerfully as Elias Canetti that 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."^[108]



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."^[109] 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.

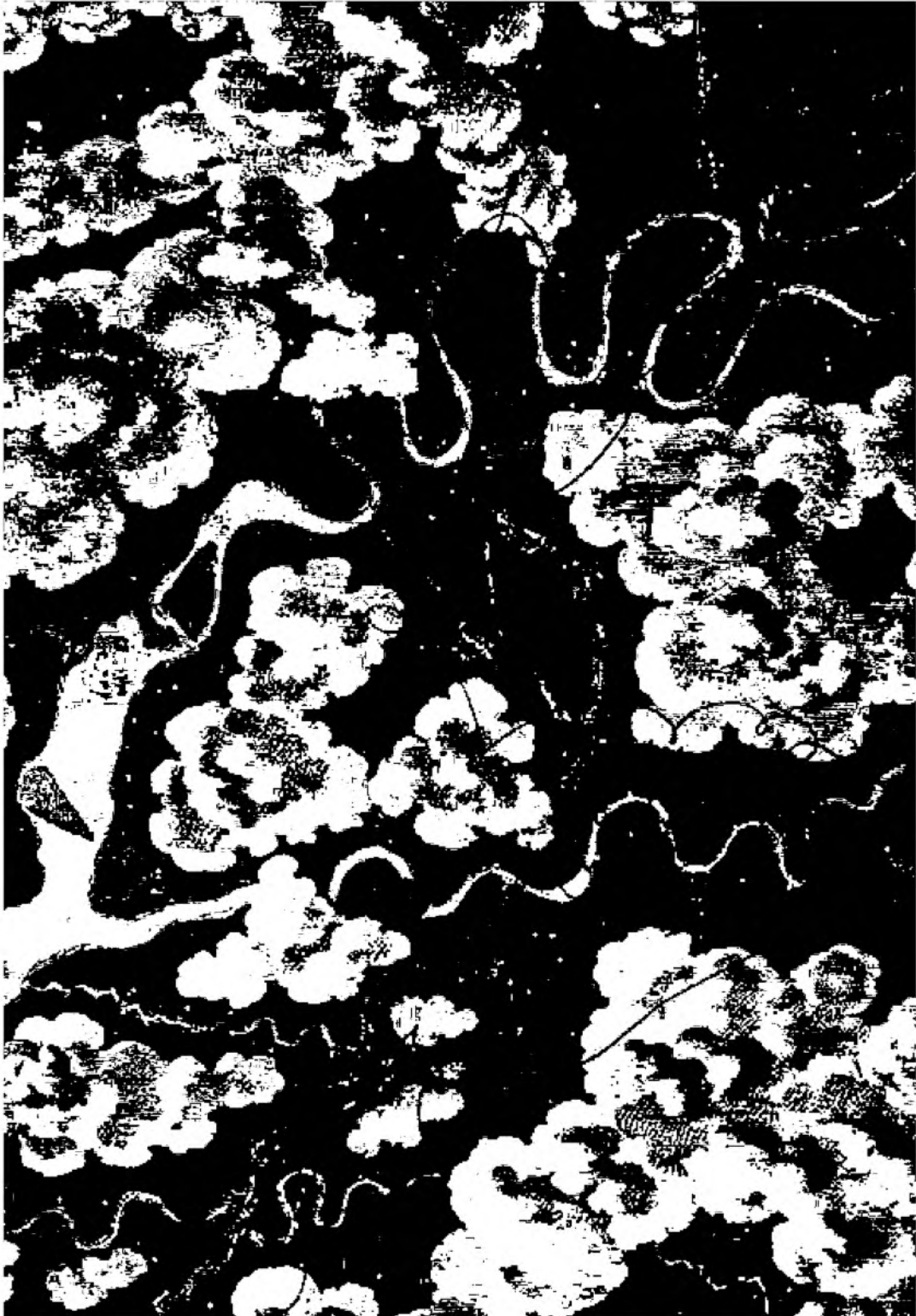
2. Increasing explicitness

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,^[110] 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."^[111]

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,^[112] 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.^[113] 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 20th century, and it can now be recognized that the 21st 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*^[**], 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),^[114] 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.^[115] 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.

^[116] 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.^[117] 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.^[117]



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" -^[118] 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.^[119] 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

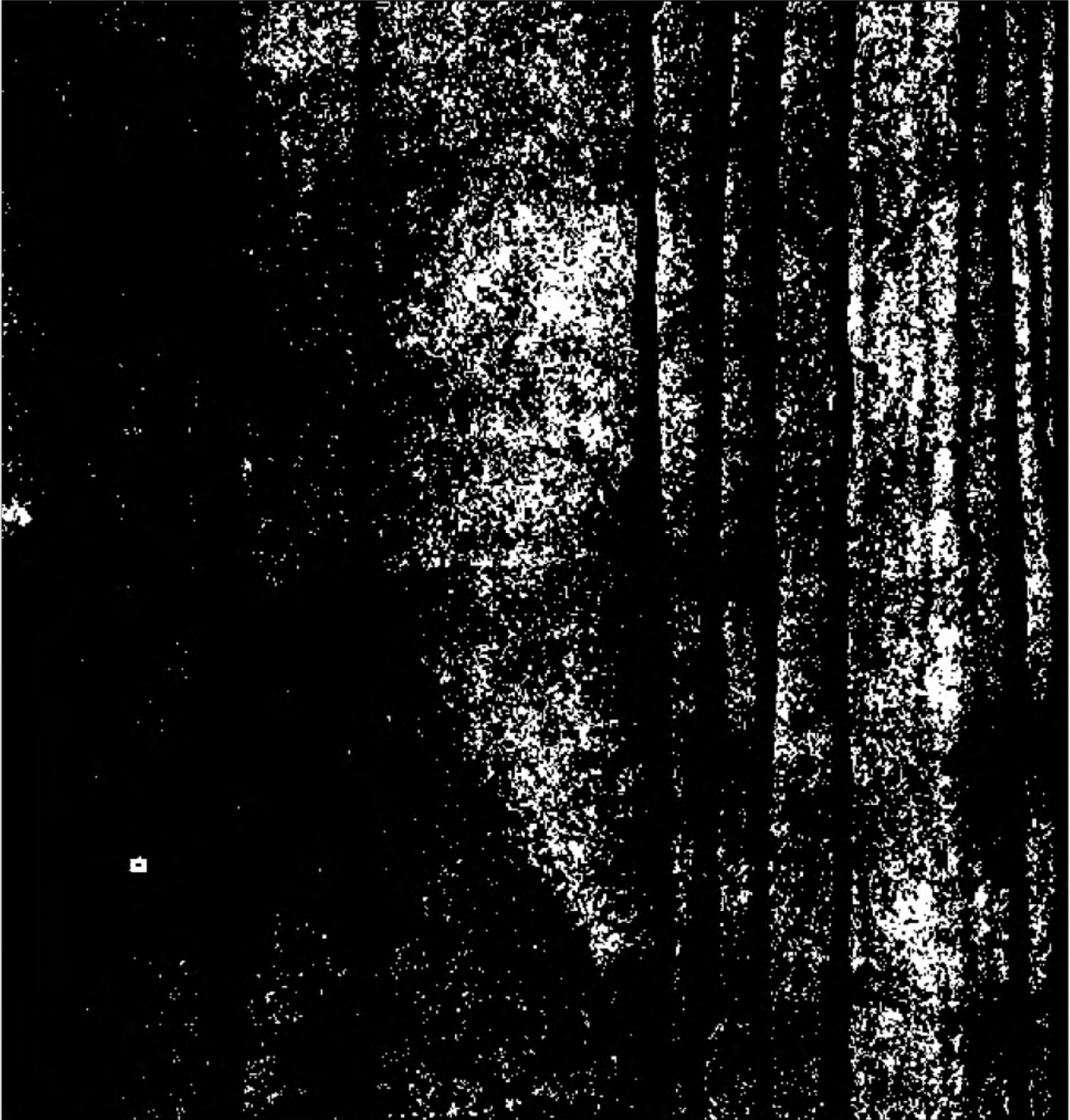
Nazi railroad in Bruchsal on March 1, 1945."

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.^[120] 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^[121] marked the culmination, for the time being, of the atomterrorist 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.^[122] 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*;^[123] 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.^[124]

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.^[125] "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."^[126] Here one can speak of high bucolithic bucolithism. Here one can speak of high bucolism. To the word

^[127] 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.

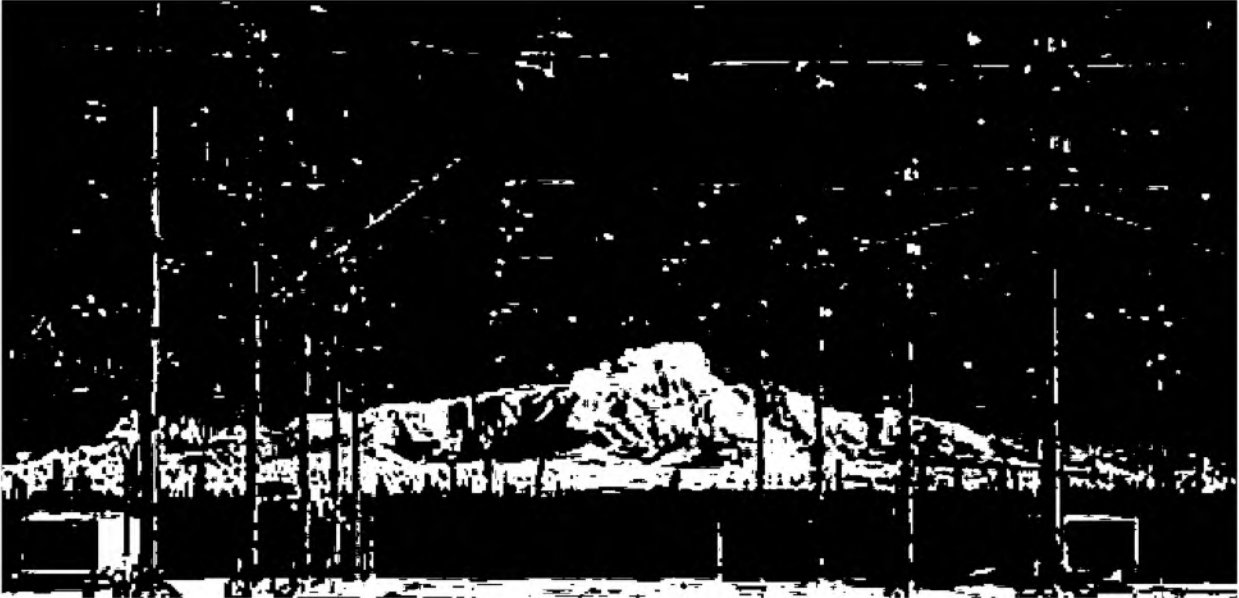
With the clarification of these new parameters for military operational interventions in the *battlespace environment*, the possible future condition of *battlefield shaping* and *battlefield awareness* is already taken into account. In the final summary of the paper it is stated in this regard:

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.^[128] 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.^[129] 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.^[130] 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.^[131] 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 dilettantism 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.

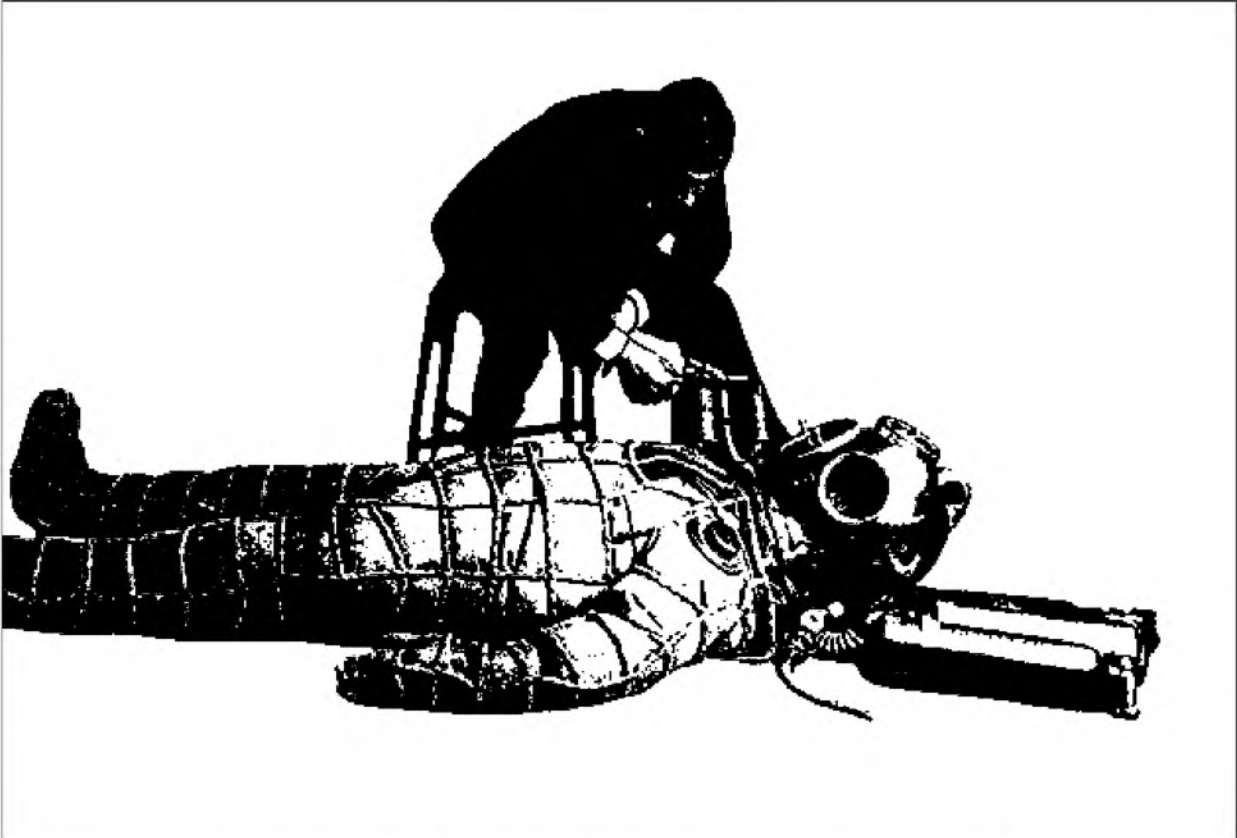


Dalí in a diving suit during his speech on July 1, 1936 in London.

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).^[133] 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.

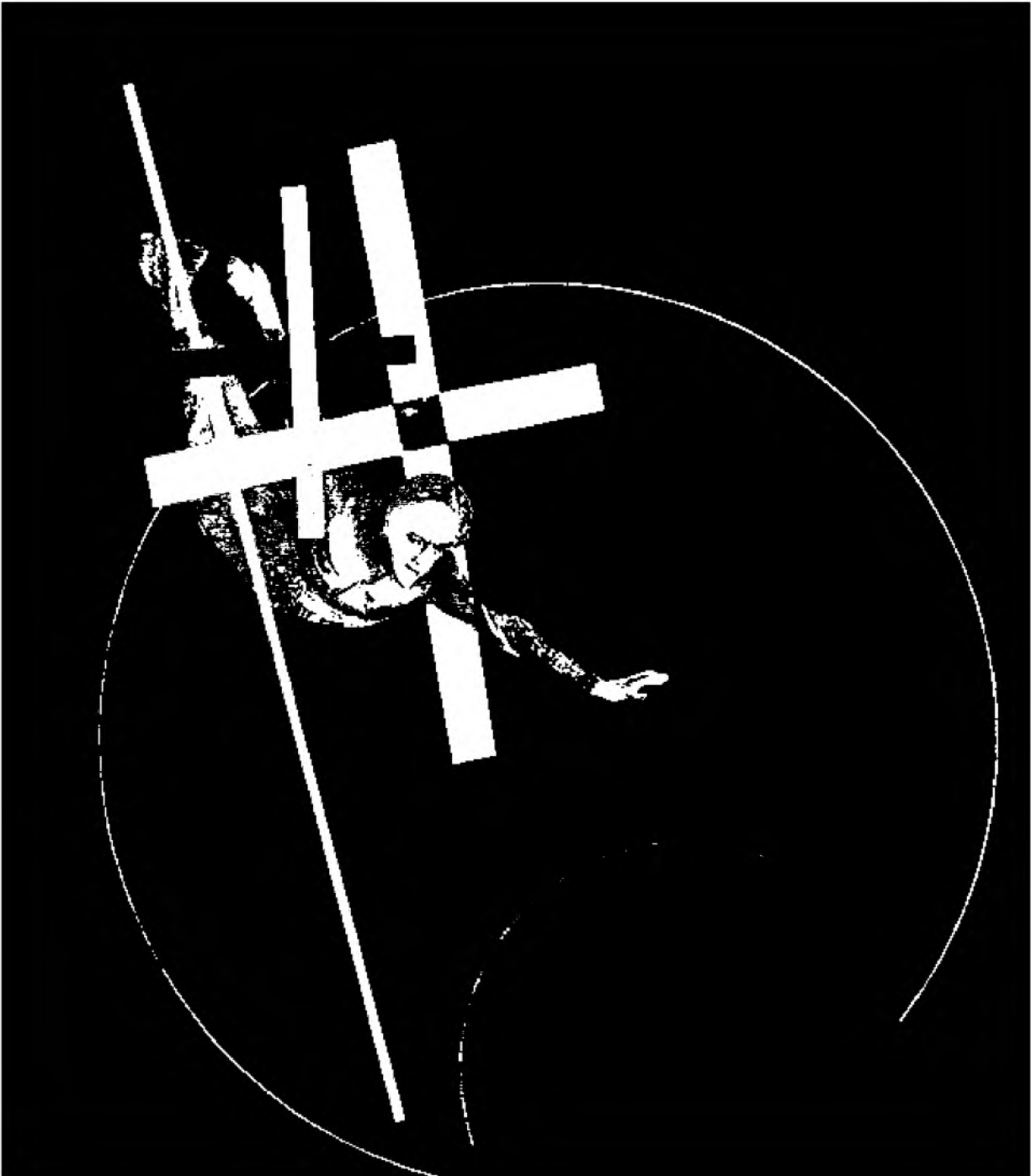
Aesthetic Modernity is a procedure for the use of violence, not against people or things, but against unclear cultural circumstances. It organizes a wave of attacks against global attitudes of the type of belief, love, probity, and against such pseudo-evident categories as form, content, image, work 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.^[134] 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.^[134]

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.^[135] 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.





EL

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 explication 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 explication, 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.^[136] 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:

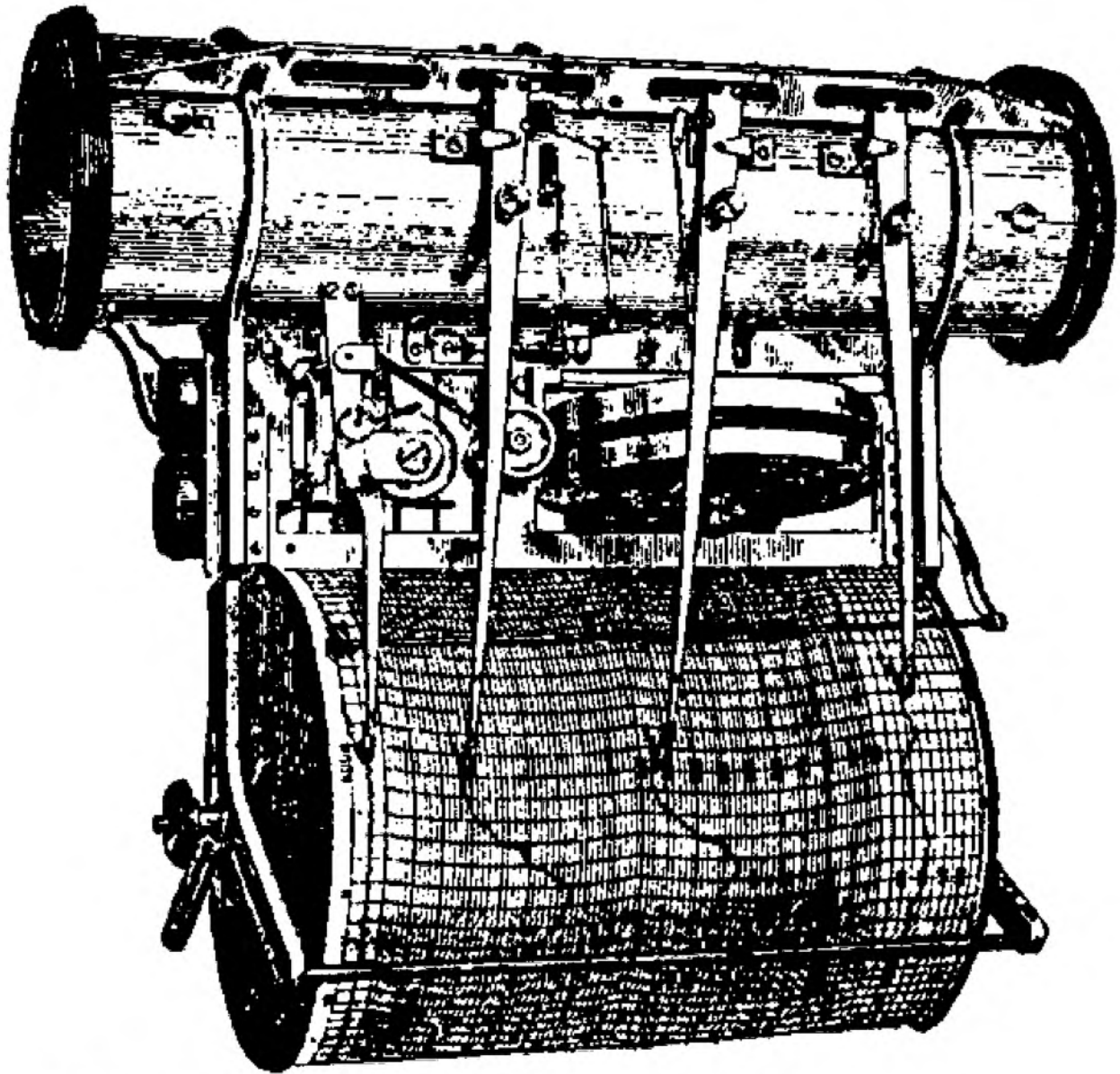
A man has the right to love women with ecstatic fish heads. A man has the right to find warm telephones disgusting and to demand cold, green, aphrodisiacal telephones like the hallucinated dream of the cantharides.^[137] A man has the right to love women with ecstatic fish-heads.

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 1890s.
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.")^[138] 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*.^[139] 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).

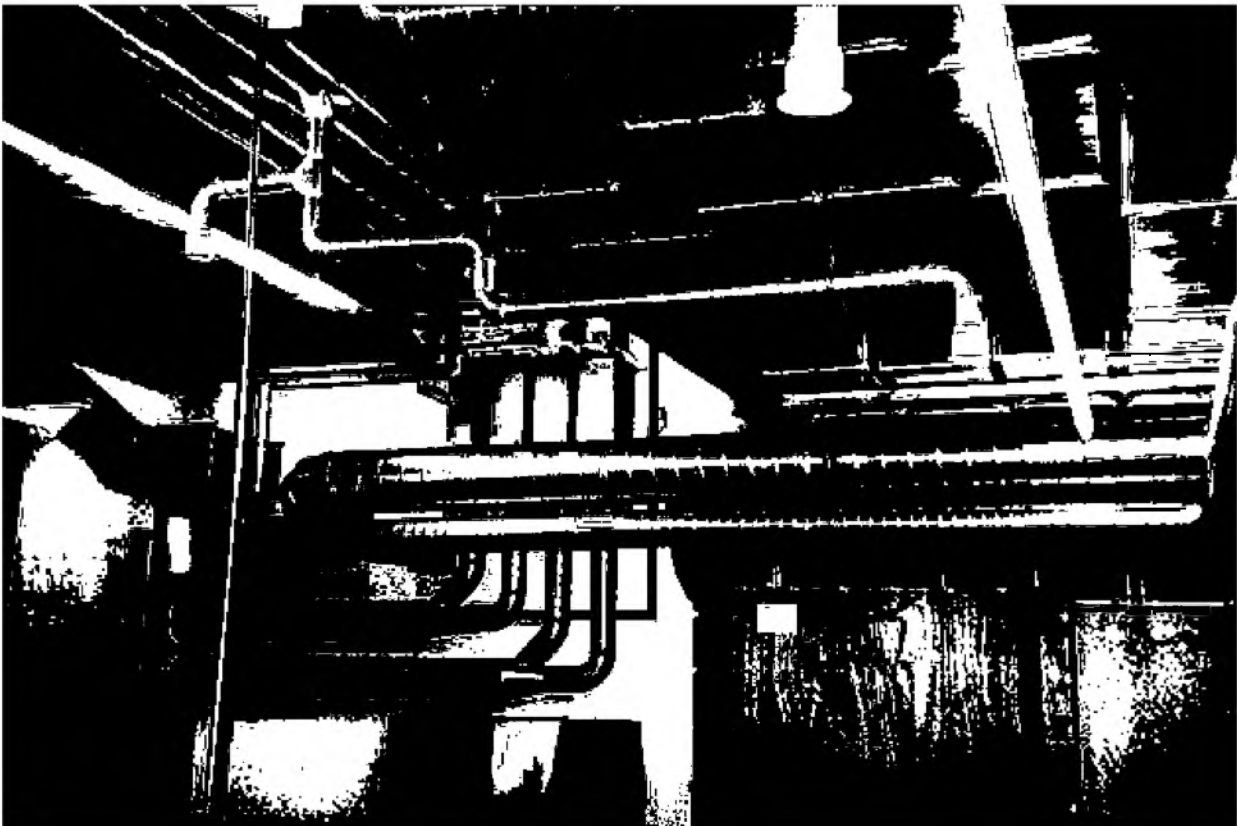
The challenge to the climate judgment capacity of modern people comes first and foremost, at the macro level, from a phenomenon that has come to be known in public debate as the anthropogenic greenhouse effect. By it, we mean the cumulative effects of the

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.^[140] 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.^[141] 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.^{142]} 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"^[143] 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).^[144] 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;^[145] 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;^[146] 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^[147] 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.^[148]

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.^[149]

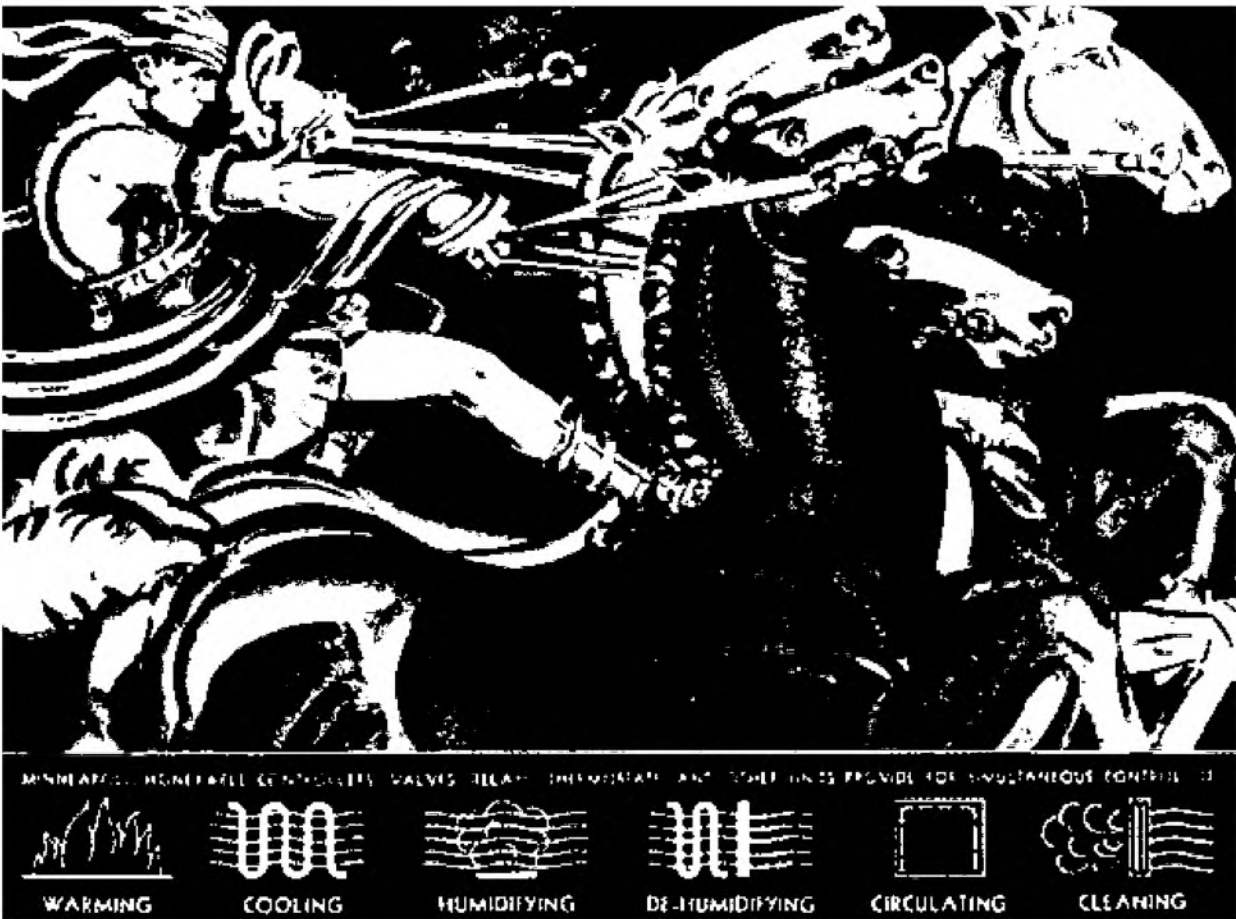
The *point-of-sale* atmosphere takes center stage as the "autonomous marketing tool". The trade, especially in the experiential area of *shopping*, fights with an active *indoor-air-quality-policy* for the affective attachment of customers both to the shop and to the assortment of goods. The legal estimation 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"^[150] 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.^[151]

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.^[152] 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^[153] 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^[153] 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"^[154] (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.^[155]

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.^[156]

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.^[157]

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";^[158] 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.

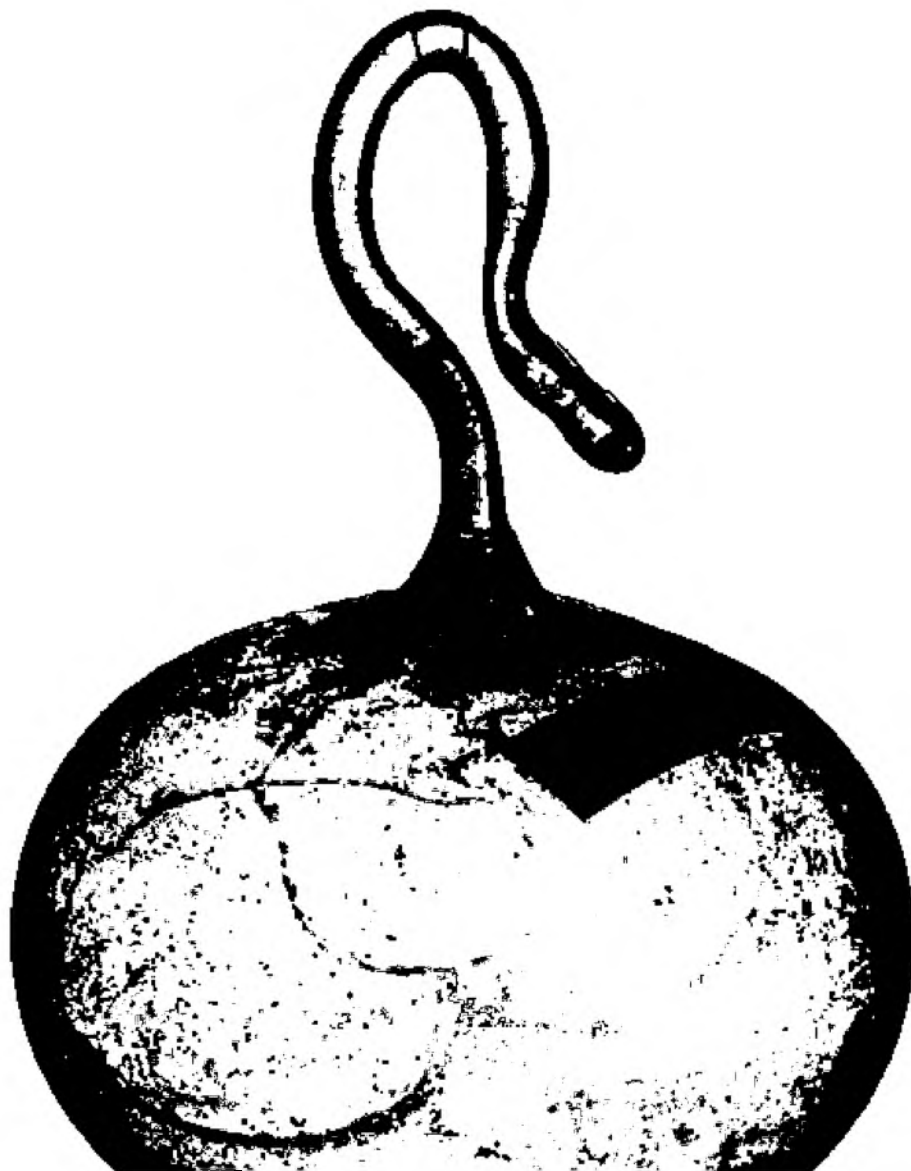
Since the twenties of the last century, permanent communications through the press and radio are carriers and agents of these delirious configurations in modern collectives. They act for the most part as means of disinhibition, in which certain phrases become true. The autointoxication of the

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";^[159] 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..."^[160]

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"^[161] 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").^[162] 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.^[163] 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.^[164] Compared with the tasks of such an ethics of the atmospheric, the democracies of 1939 were not only living in a "yesterday's world";^[165] 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.^[166]





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.^[167] 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."^[168]

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.^[169]

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.^[170] 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.^[171] 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.^[172] 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.^[173] 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.^[174] 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."^[175] 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".^[176]

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.^[177]

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...^{[178][178]}

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.^[179] 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.^[180] 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.^[181] 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":^[182] 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 20th 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*)^[183] 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.^[184] 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".

^[185] 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.^[186] 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.^[188] 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."^[189]

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.^[193] 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."^[194] 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"^[195] 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,^[196] 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".^[197] 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.^[198]

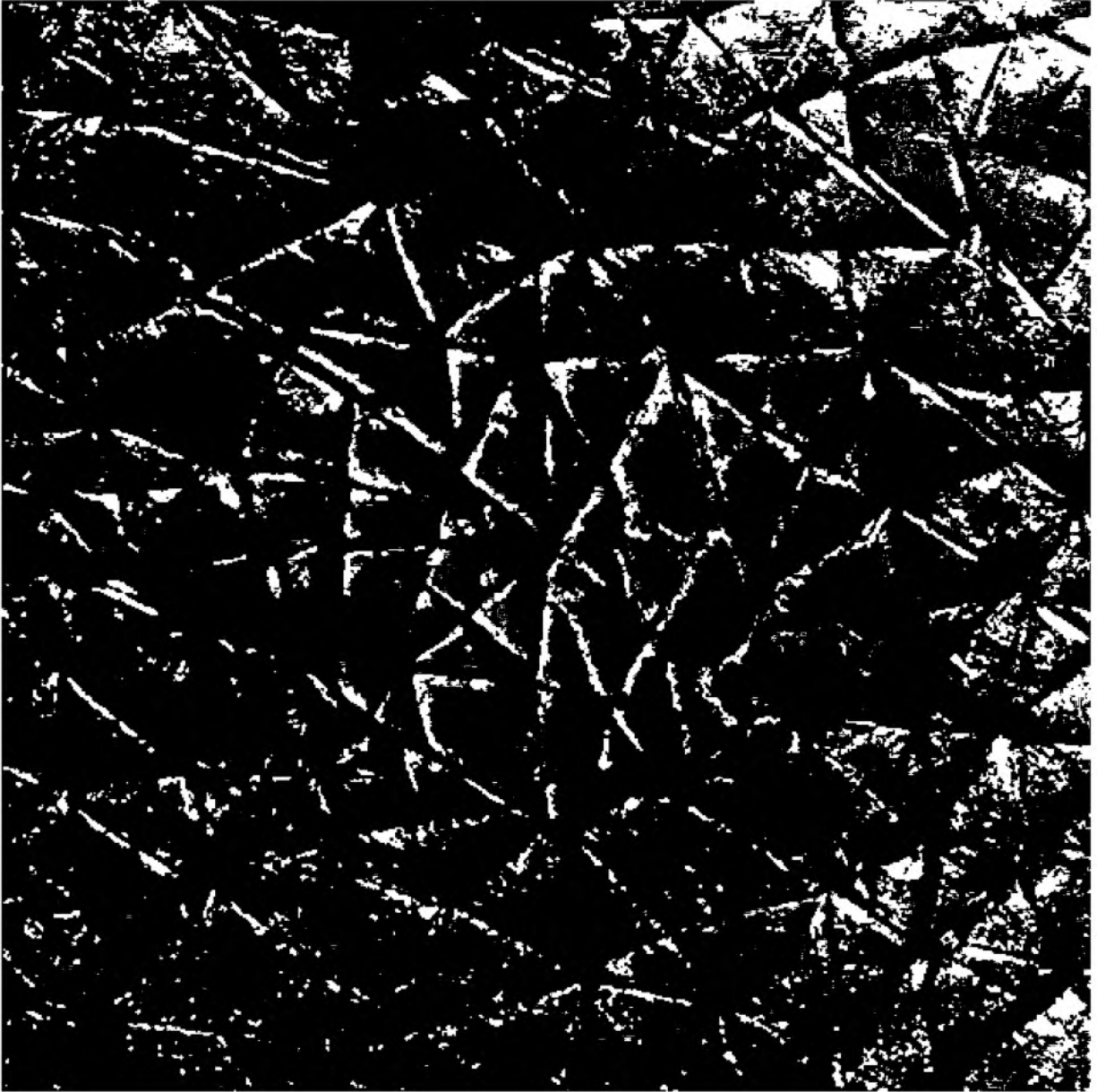
Comparable considerations, although of a completely different tone, are the analyses on the "essence of truth" made known by Heidegger. These had to adopt a darker tone since Heidegger believed to see, above all, in the phenomenon that Latour calls articulation, an invasion, always generating violence, 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"^[199] 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.

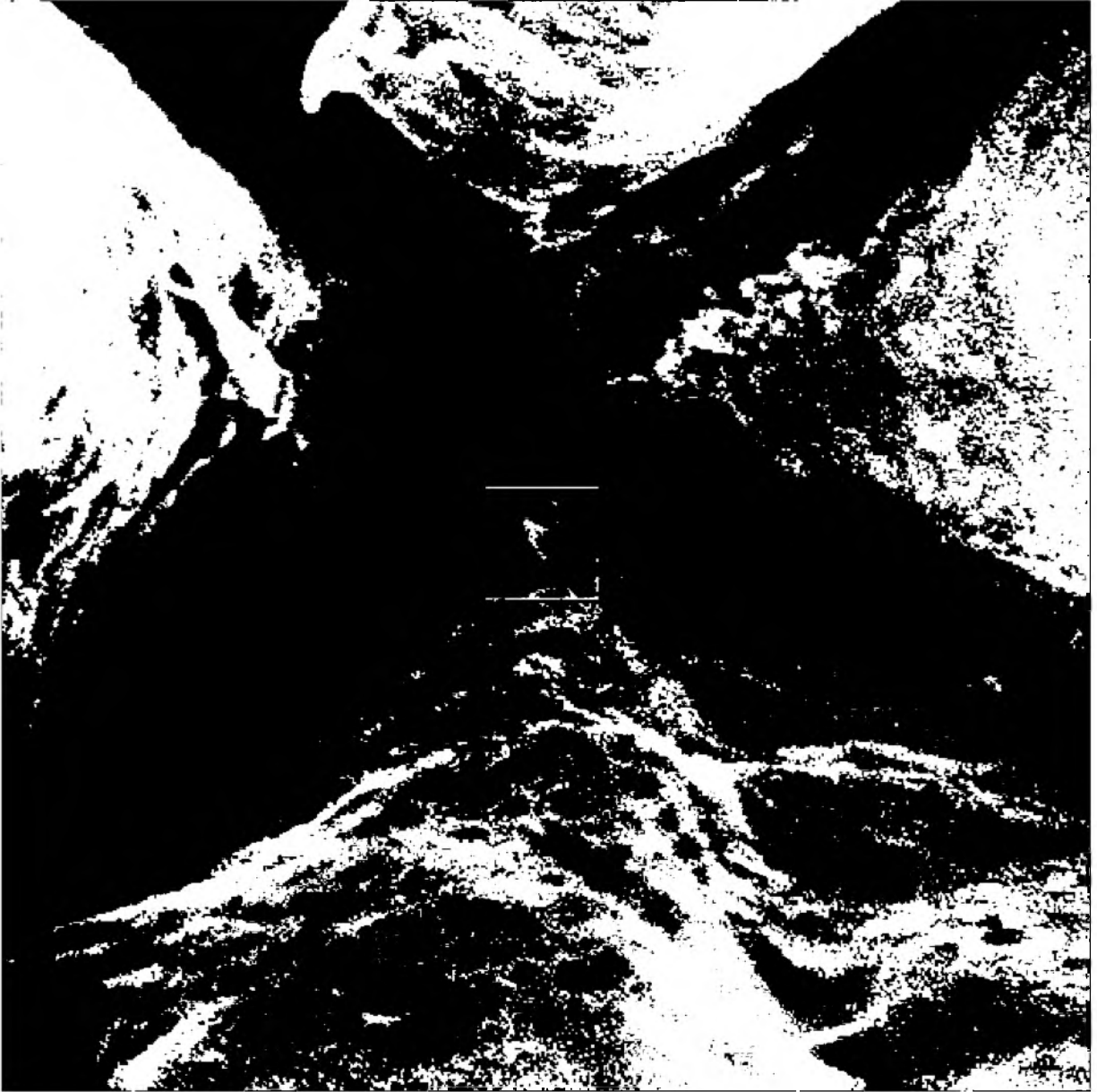
Truth, then, is not only a property of expressed sentences, which can be called true if and only if "in the real" were "effectively" the case what is stated or "figured" in the sentences; it is rather the case that *physis*, according to that interpretation, represents a self-publicizing event, in whose 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

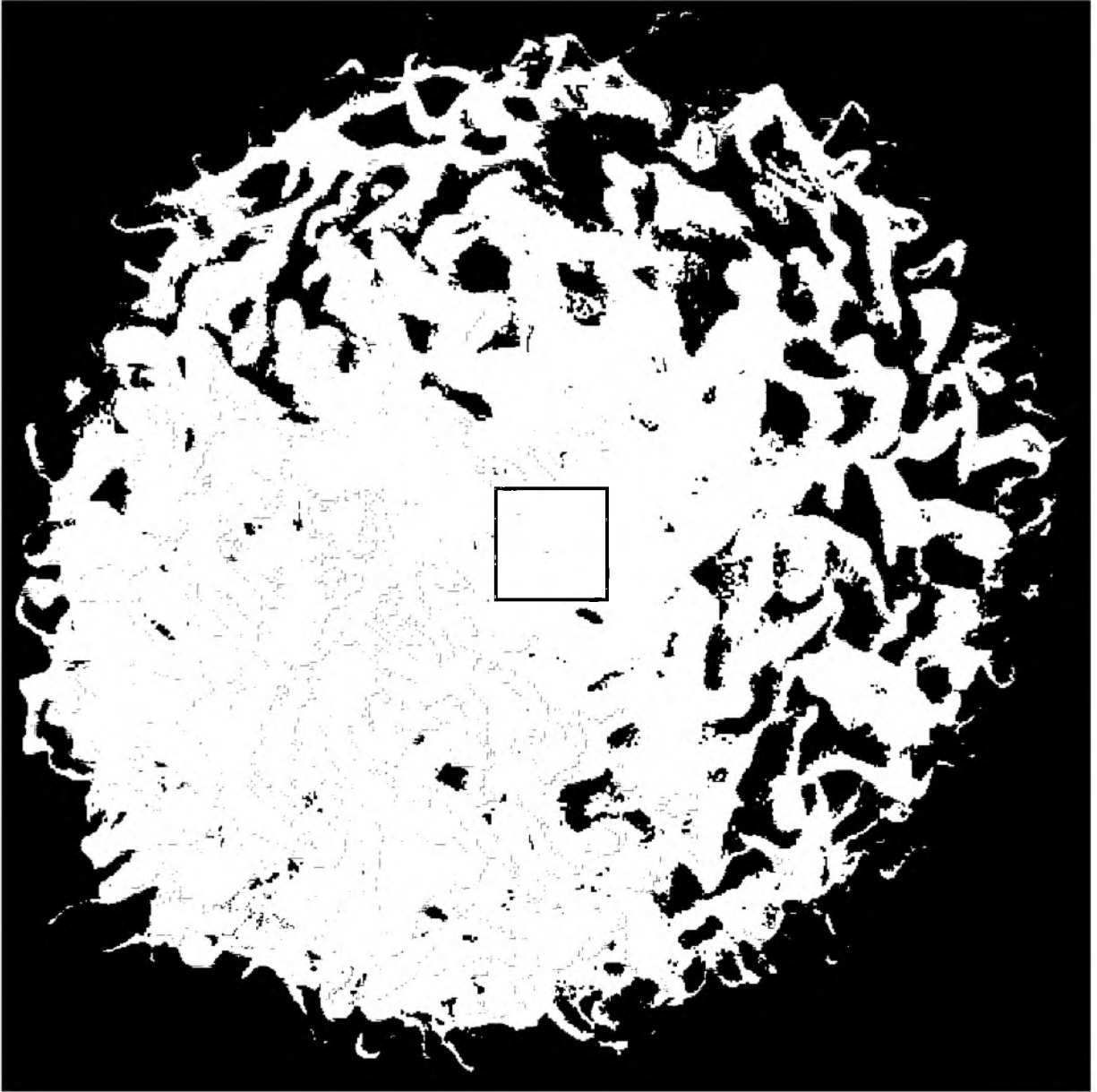
as a block of mute cosicities, free of meaning, far from signs. From that perspective, it would be the human spirit, alone, who, in possession of its monopoly of language, donation of meaning and interest, would approach the indifferent natural mass as if approaching from outside and would force it to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

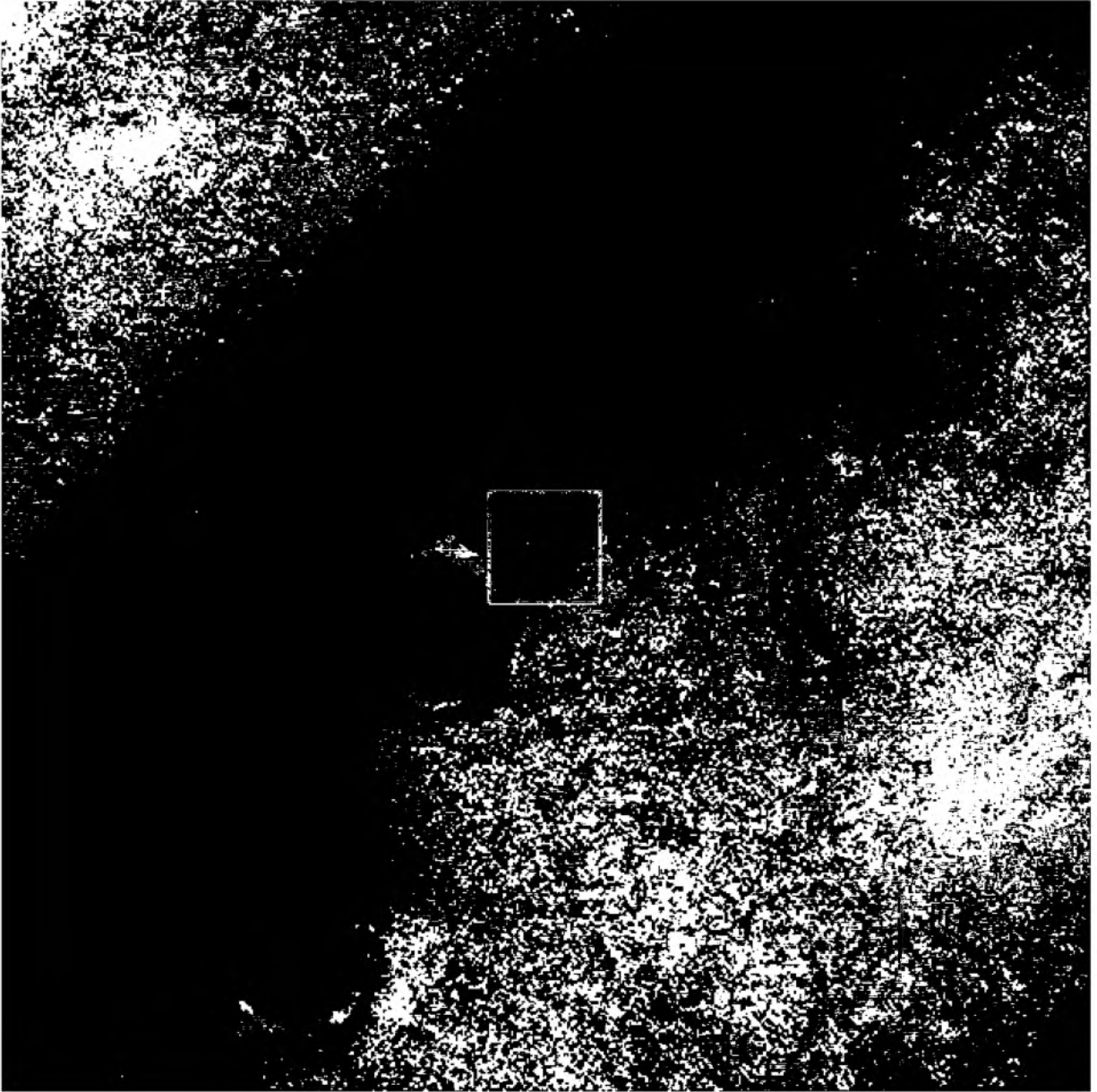
The tragic irony of this failed interpretation of the knowledge of nature, made both by metaphysics and by its continuators in modern technologies and natural sciences, consists, according to Heidegger now, in the fact that its extremely reductionist, impoverishing and disfiguring concepts of the event 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."^[200]

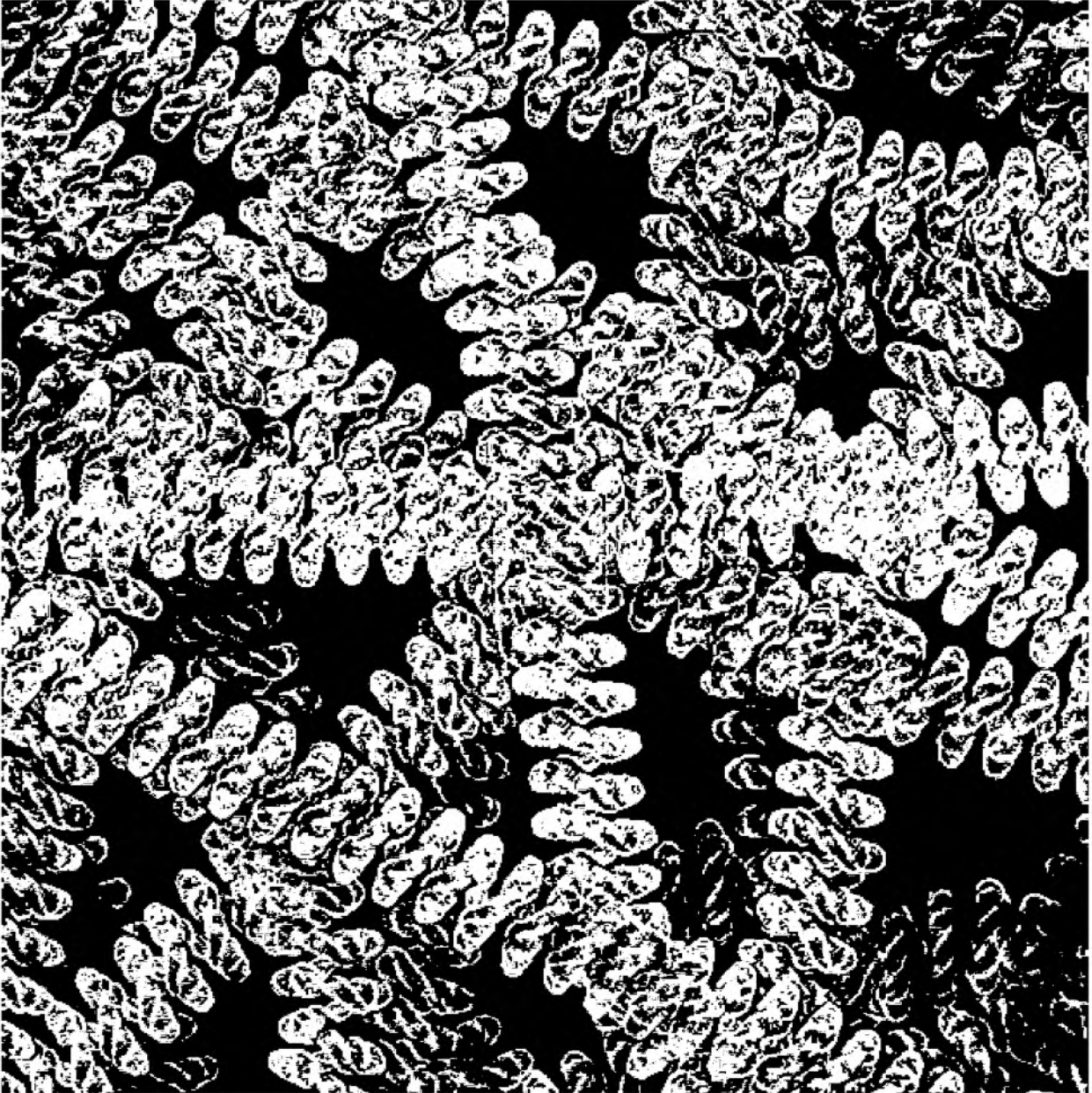












Enlargement of the back of a hand.

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 **view** 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.^[201]

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?^[202] 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...*^[203] 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.^{206]} 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."^[208]

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,^[209] 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,^[210] 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.^[211] 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",^[212] 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.^[213]

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."^[215]

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.



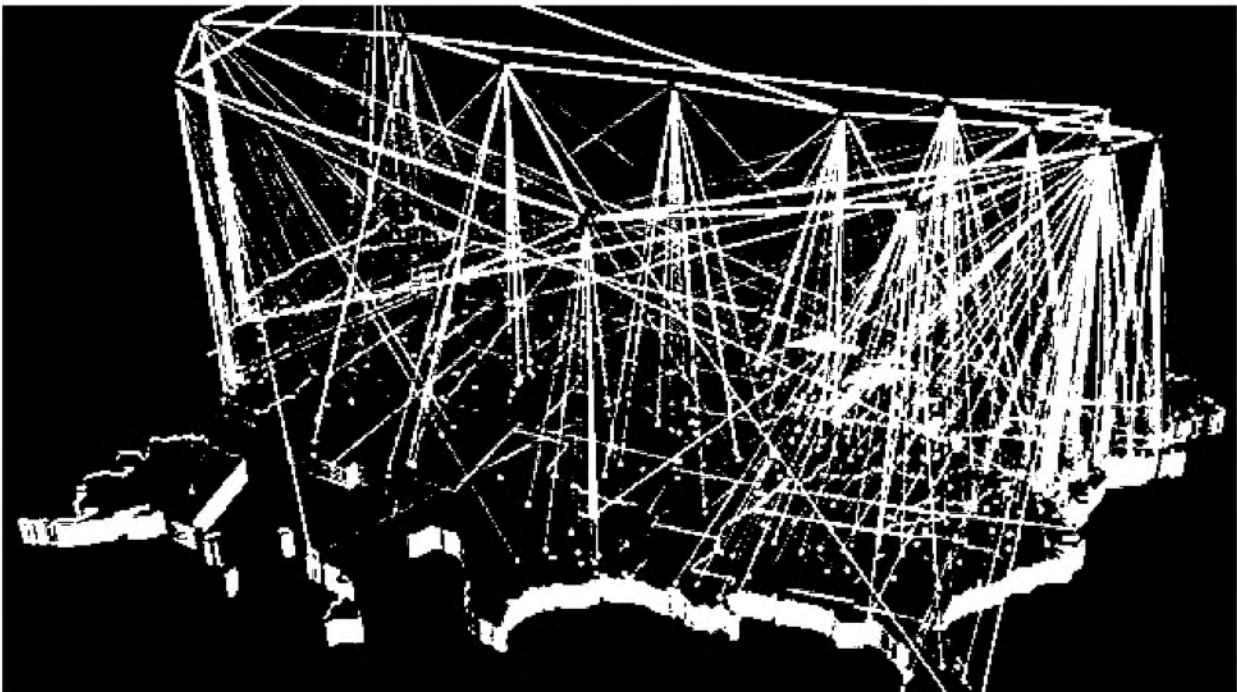
Large cell soap foam.

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

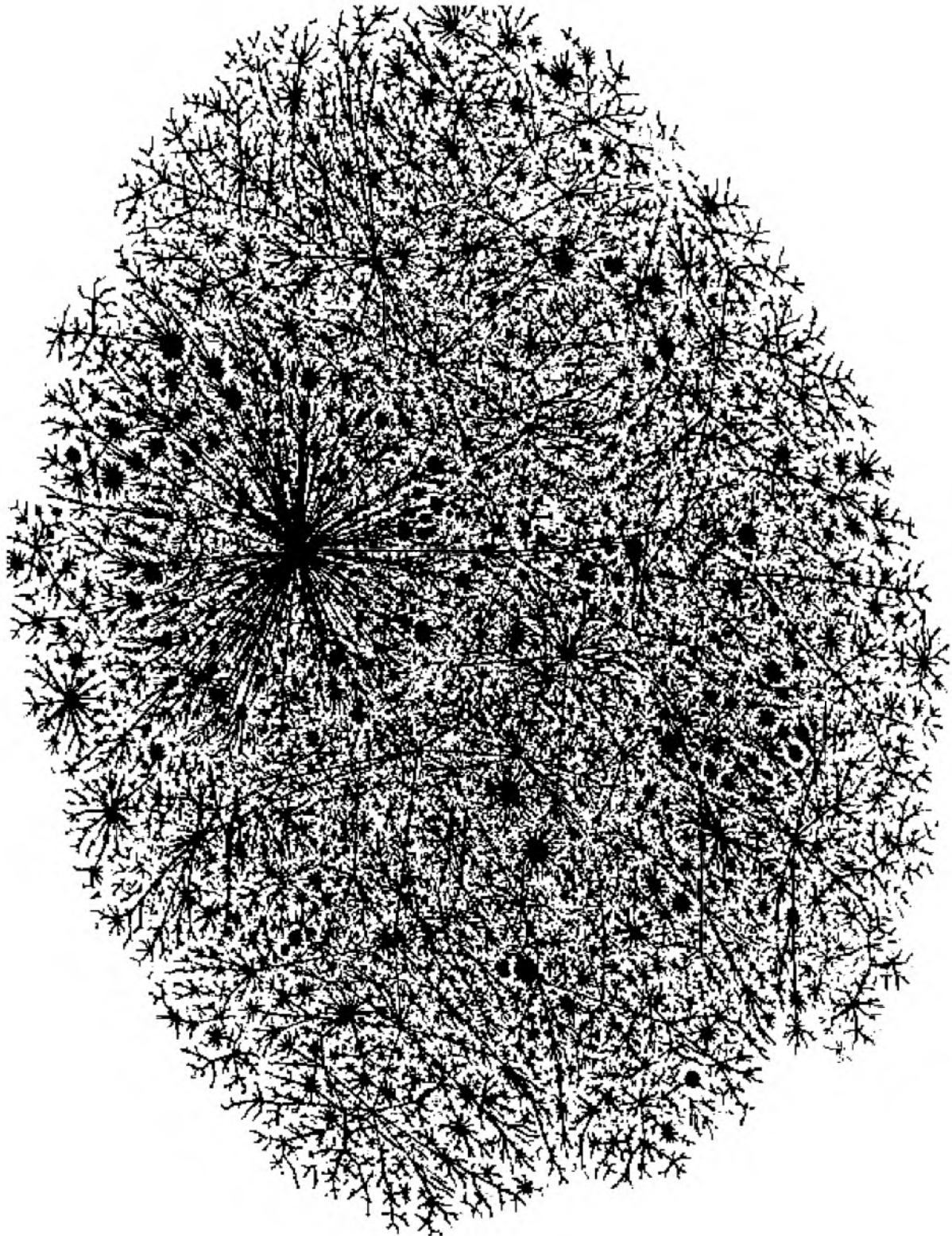
Theoretically interesting, of spatio-vital immunological improvisations, intertwined with each other, tumultuously superimposed. It serves to formulate a philosophical-anthropological interpretation of modern individualism, which we are convinced cannot be sufficiently described with the means available 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.^[216]



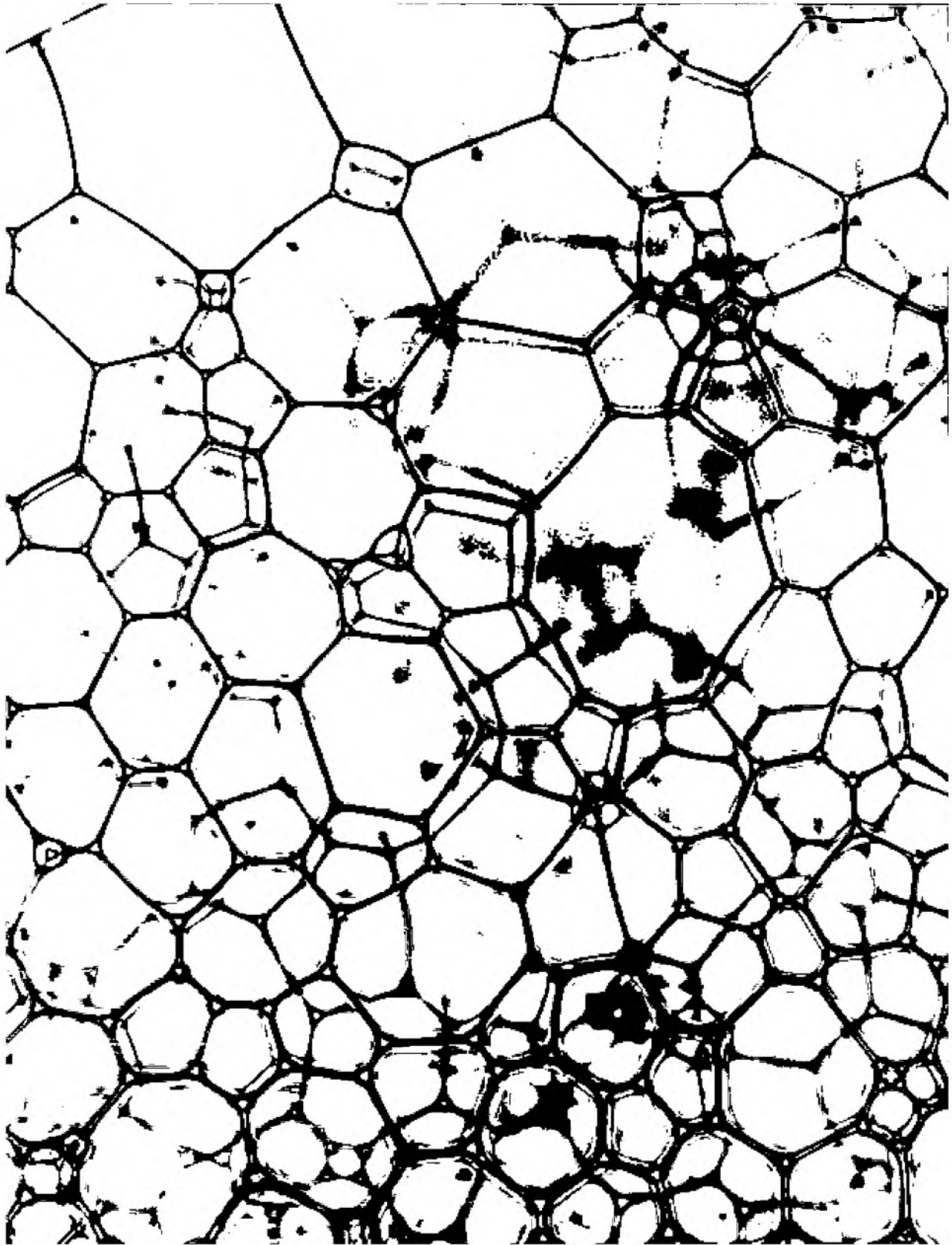
Donna Cox/Robert Patterson, NSFNET Traffic Flows over North America.

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.^{217]} 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."^[218] 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.^[219] As Gabriel Tarde says, imitation is a generation at a distance: *a génération à distance*.

[220] "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^[221] 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.^{222]} 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.^[224] 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.^[225] 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?"^[226] 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).^[227] 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).^[227] 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.^[228] (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.^[229]

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.^[230] Whoever speaks of "society" is referring, if he knows what he is saying, to an association of neoprincipals who elevate oblivion to first virtue.^[231]

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..."^[233] [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.^[234]

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^[235] or a hyper-being without environment and eternal,^[236] 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."^[237] 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,"^[238] 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.^[239]

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.^[240]

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*,^[241] 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.^[242] In the original state human beings also do not know to which generation they belong.^[242]

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.^[243] 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.

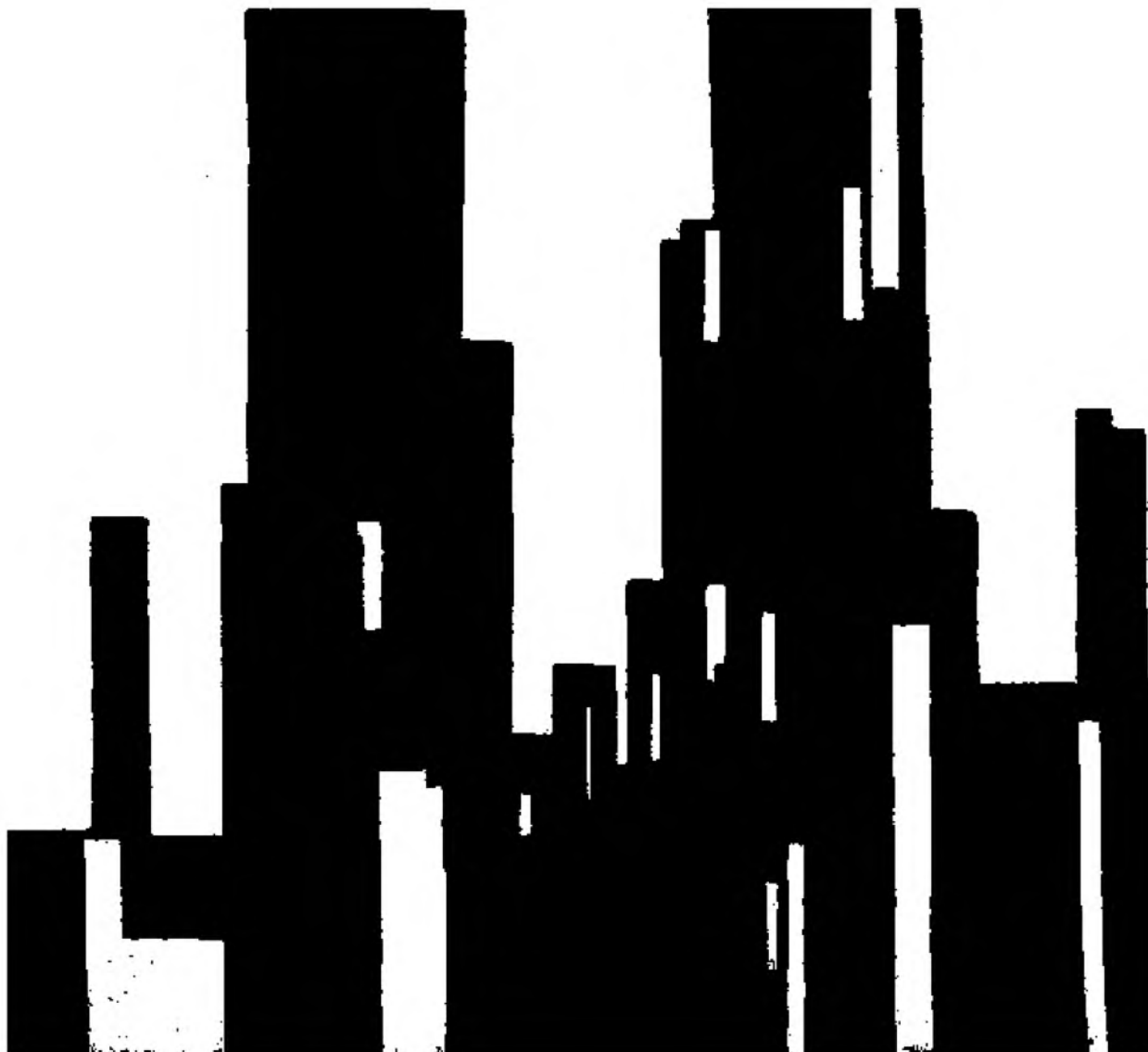
The misery of organicism lies in the fact that its legitimate defense of justice in relation to the higher interests of the public thing most of the time turns into resentment against the idiosyncrasies of the smaller units, declared as "parts". Its typical tonality is that of an aristocracy deprived 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. ^{244]} 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.^[245] Simmel asystematically differentiates three "(quasi-)apriarchically effective conditions or forms of socialization",^[246] 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."^[247]

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".^[248] As a general principle: "The apriori of empirical social life is that life is not entirely social..."^[249] 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".^[250] 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".^[251] 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.^[252] 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.'^[253]

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).^[254] 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.^[255]

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

^{256]} 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.^[257] 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*.^[258]

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

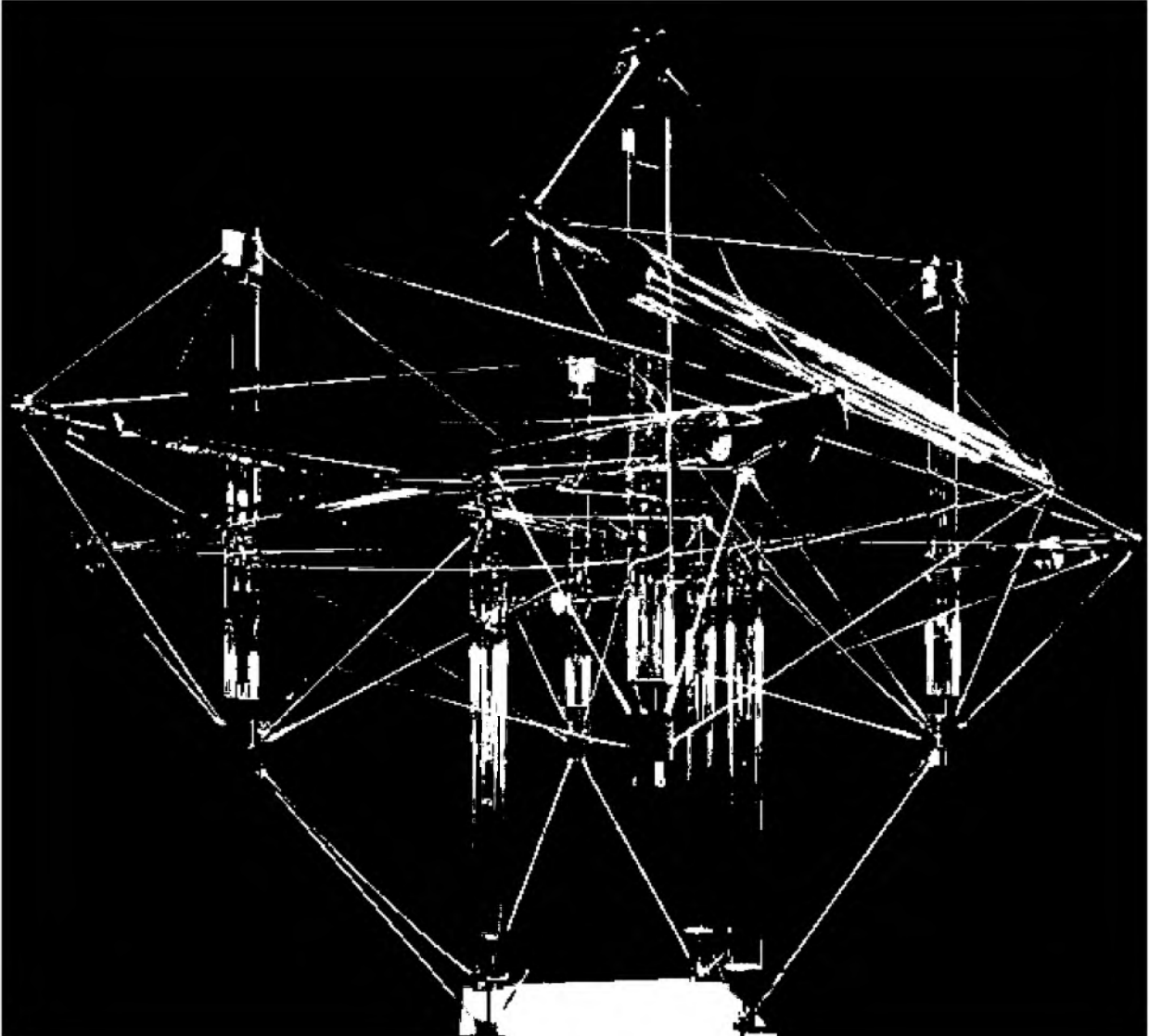
of shivering hedgehogs, as Schopenhauer characterized the "bourgeois society. It is only because there is a psychic shaping of space, aka communication, prior to social association, that participation in further gatherings is possible. If it were otherwise, every human individual, as René Crevel said, 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"?



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.^[260] 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

^{261]} 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.^[262] 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.^[263]



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^[264] 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.