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UTOPIAS AND ALTERNATIVES

Thinking Differently / Thinking Something Different

UTOPIES ET ALTERNATIVES

Penser autrement / penser autre chose

2: Utopia and Imaginary / Utopie et imaginaire

Edited by / Sous la direction de
Jelica Šumič Riha

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Contents

Filozofski vestnik | Volume XXXVIII | Number 3 | 2017

- 5 **Jelica Šumič Riha**
Introduction: The Imaginary and its Utopian Potential
- II. Utopia and Imaginary / Utopie et imaginaire**
- 19 **Jean-Jacques Lecercle**
Utopie et langage
- 37 **Claire Sibony**
Virginia Woolf. La stratégie du grain de raisin ou l’utopie
d’un corps translucide
- 53 **Rok Benčin**
“*Sans cause*”: Affect and Truth in Marcel Proust
- 67 **Christoph Sökler**
“White-heating the Real” – On Music’s Force towards Impossible Nudeness
- 79 **Helmut Draxler**
Traumatic or Utopian Other?
Conditions of Emancipation: Phantasy, Reality, and Depression
- 91 **Rado Riha**
What is the Object of Thinking Differently?
- 101 **Dominik Finkelde**
Anamorphose und Subjektivität – Zu den Beugungsgesetzen
von Bewusstsein und Wirklichkeit
- 119 **Christopher Dell**
Towards the Improvisation of Space
- 137 **Petra Čeferin**
Architecture: Constructing Concrete Utopias
- 155 **Barbara Predan**
Design for Life: The Struggle for Utopia?
- 171 **Notes on Contributors**
- 175 **Abstracts**

Kazalo

Filozofski vestnik | Letnik XXXVIII | Številka 3 | 2017

- 5 **Jelica Šumič Riha**
Uvodnik: Imaginarno in njegov utopijski potencial
- II. Utopija in imaginarno**
- 19 **Jean-Jacques Lecercle**
Utopija in govorica
- 37 **Claire Sibony**
Virginia Woolf. Strategija grozdne jagode ali utopija prosojnega telesa
- 53 **Rok Benčin**
»*Sans cause*«: afekt in resnica pri Marcelu Proustu
- 67 **Christoph Sökler**
»Razbeliti realno« – O zmožnosti glasbe za nemogočo golost
- 79 **Helmut Draxler**
Travmatični ali utopični Drugi?
Pogoji emancipacije: fantazija, realnost in depresija
- 91 **Rado Riha**
Kaj je objekt drugačnega mišljenja?
- 101 **Dominik Finkelde**
Anamorfoza in subjektivnost – O difrakcijskih zakonih zavesti in realnosti
- 119 **Christopher Dell**
K improvizaciji prostora
- 137 **Petra Čeferin**
Arhitektura: konstruiranje konkretnih utopij
- 155 **Barbara Predan**
Oblikovanje za življenje: prizadevanje za utopijo?
- 171 **Podatki o avtorjih**
175 **Povzetki**

Jelica Šumič Riha*

Introduction: The Imaginary and its Utopian Potential

“No matter where, no matter where,
so long as it is out of the world.”¹
Charles Baudelaire

The essays gathered together in this volume were prompted by the articulation of two notions: the imaginary and utopia, whose paradoxical convergences and divergences are currently altering our experience and conception of the radical changes brought about by various creative practices and, indeed, the very idea of what it means to think.

This introduction will try to touch upon this complex issue through a consideration of Foucault’s conception of space and spatialisation, focusing on the notion of heterotopia, which we will attempt to reformulate differently while following its logic more closely. The present period, Foucault famously claims in his essay *Of Other Spaces*, is the epoch of space, thus announcing a transition between temporal and spatial paradigms: in contrast to the 19th century, which was obsessed with temporality, more specifically, with history, at present, “[w]e are in the epoch of simultaneity, we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side by side, of the dispersed.”² The space in which we live is not an empty space, but a heterogeneous space that takes on the form of relations among sites that are irreducible to one another. It is from this perspective that Foucault introduces a distinction between utopias and heterotopias: “Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of a direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any

5

¹ Charles Baudelaire, “XCIII: Anywhere, Anywhere Out of the World” in: *Little Poems*, trans. A. Crowley, The Teitan Press, Chicago 1995, pp. 117–119.

² M. Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”, *Diacritics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 1986, p. 22.

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case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.” In contrast to the utopian unreal spaces, there are also

real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias.³

One of the distinctive features of heterotopias, as Foucault defines them, is their capacity to juxtapose in a single real place several spaces that are in themselves incompatible. As they are in relation to all remaining spaces, heterotopias, according to Foucault, have a double function, i.e. either to “create a space of illusion that exposes every real space [...] as still more illusory,” or, on the contrary, to “create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled.”⁴ While it may appear that in this second function heterotopias appear to be indistinguishable from utopias, this is not the case. Taking certain colonies as an example, Foucault goes on to show that such heterotopias, unlike utopias which could be seen as heterotopias of illusion, have a compensatory role: they are spaces in which “human perfection [has been] effectively achieved.”⁵

It should be noted, however, that the examples mentioned by Foucault (the museum, the cemetery, the holiday village, etc.), i.e. social sites intended for a particular activity, which are well demarcated, both spatially and temporally, prevent one from fully developing the potential of the heterotopic idea introduced by Foucault, for envisioning the possibility of gaining distance from the here and now. In order to widen its scope and areas for its redeployment, thus bringing into play new spatio-temporal dimensions, so as to include a spatialisation of the subject within the framework of networks of relations between different points beyond the subject’s control, it is important to note that a het-

³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

erotopia concerns the users of a site, not only its spatial organisation, as has been elaborated in essays concerned with the utopian potential in urbanism, architecture, and design. For in the heterotopic site it is not only spaces that may be multiplied, but the simultaneous presence of the subject – insofar as it is distinct from the individual – may be multiplied in these different spaces as well. Moreover, being-in-space today means being-in-heterotopic-space, which is why heterotopia is not just a matter of well-demarkated sites as the whole world is gradually becoming heterotopic to the extent that heterotopic spaces are spaces that are not mastered by the speaking bodies that inhabit them.

At the heart of the investigations presented in the various essays assembled in this volume are the notions of the imaginary and utopia, whose redefinitions and redeployment serve widely divergent ends: from the reinforcement of the typically modernist political fantasy regarding the possibility of radically breaking with the here and now, to assisting in the reimagining of ethical and politically responsible urbanism, architecture, and design. Directed against the pressures of the neoliberal dominant discourse, this collection of essays attempts to rediscover the emancipatory potential of these two troubled notions by clarifying their vicinity to and/or distance from notions such as ideology, fiction, fantasy, and illusion.

The individual contributions range from an examination of the utopian drive inherent in language, to reworking concepts, such as Lacan's notion of anamorphosis, Badiou's notion of the post-evental truth in literary terms, and considerations of specific political issues, such as the simultaneous coexistence of more spatial settings in a single space, the emergence of new socio-political formations in which the boundaries of mastery are disseminated everywhere, thus becoming progressively invisible, and the correlative necessity of creating new heterotopic spaces, spaces that are out of joint precisely at those points of passage where different speaking bodies use the same space differently.

While each of the essays brought together in this volume contributes to a collective reflection on the relations of conjunction or disjunction that can be established between utopia and the imaginary, the essay "Utopie et langage" by Jean-Jacques Lecercle provides the most general framework in which this reflection can be inscribed. Thus, utopia, or rather the utopian drive, is not primarily due to the unbridled imagination, but is inherent to the very structure of hu-

man language. Taking up the line of argument of Karl Mannheim, according to which utopia is consciousness that does not coincide with being, a trait shared by ideology, too, as both utopia and ideology push towards transgressing the frontier of reality and, in so doing, partly or entirely destroy the ontic regime of a given situation. For Lecerclé, however, the gist of utopia is not to be found in the content of various utopian fictions, it is language itself that encourages and produces what he terms the utopian impulse or drive. On this reading, utopia parasitises language's ability to construct and organise time, i.e. to transgress the present, to anticipate the future, or to return to the past. But it equally exploits the modal dimension of language. Because language does not express only what is, it also states what is possible, thereby opening onto the possible worlds. The modality of the possible is the linguistic equivalent of the mirror experience in that it opens onto a multiplicity of worlds. If utopia can thus be situated in the vicinity of fiction, this is because, Lecerclé maintains, "all fiction is virtually utopian." Fiction is a way of escaping imprisonment in our world in order to accede to other worlds. Utopia pushes this possibility of escaping to the extreme. But the structural trait that, in a sense, constitutes the basis for all others, and which is for that reason at the heart of the relation between utopia and language, is negation. Language has the capacity to negate or annihilate what is and to bring into existence what is not and it is precisely in negation that the militant "no" of a revolt finds its roots. Several conclusions follow from this analysis, first of all concerning the relationship between ideology and utopia, since both aim at transcending the existing reality. However, while utopia is destructive, ideology is essentially conservative: being a false consciousness, it fosters adaptation to reality in the very move of going beyond it. This distinction allows for a more elaborated account of the emancipatory potential of the utopian, which is to be situated in the moment of counter-interpellation that opens up the possibility for individuals interpellated into the subjects of ideology to gain some distance *vis-à-vis* their condition. By finding its support in the non-referential functions of language (emotional, poetic, metalinguistic), which presuppose that the speaking being has a body, utopia is able to spell out the truth of imagination and the imaginary insofar as the latter is not simply a reproduction or representation but primarily a creation.

8

Several essays focus on the relation between fiction and truth, which figures, for different reasons, as the eternal irony of writing. The essay by Claire Sibony, "Virginia Woolf. La stratégie du grain de raisin ou l'utopie d'un corps trans-

lucide”, addresses the issue of utopia in connection with the imaginary from a slightly different angle. Setting out from Foucault’s definition of the utopian body, “the utopia of an incorporeal body” – since it is only in a place outside of places, this being Foucault’s definition of utopia, that it is possible to have “a body without a body”⁶ – Sibony interrogates Virginia Woolf’s “private utopia” or, rather, fantasy of “another body that is experienced as one’s proper body, but not as I” in order to bring to light its connection to writing. In this regard, the scopic fantasy of “lying in a grape and seeing through a film of semi-transparent yellow” that intimates the experience of rapture, i.e. the pleasure of being without being oneself, represents a source of Woolf’s writing, indeed, a utopia of a non-place wherefrom, for her, meaning emerges. A grape, for Woolf, as a fantasmatic and utopic place, allows the writer not only to experience the sense of being, but also to protect herself from the chaos of nonbeing. “Lying in a grape” thus turns the subject into a monadic shelter that shields her from moments of de-realisation, moments of the eclipse of being and the *aphanisis* of the subject.

Discussing the connection between truth and affect as revealed and treated in Proust’s writing, Rok Benčin in his essay “‘Sans cause’: Affect and Truth in Marcel Proust” probes the intricate articulation of the imaginary, utopia, fantasy, and fiction. The truth that is at stake in the work of Marcel Proust is, in the words of Deleuze, “one that depends on an encounter with something that forces us to think and seek truth.”⁷ Focusing on the forceful aspect of truth that “presents itself to us as necessary and inevitable,” Benčin presents how Proustian truth shares some crucial traits with a Badiouian post-evental truth, to the extent that it is endowed with the potential to “reframe what we perceive as reality,” a problematic that is also addressed in the essays of Riha and Finkelde. The emphasis on the real dimension of truth comes to the fore in the very nexus of affect and truth: from this vantage point which, Benčin argues, situates truths “beyond the realm of the possible,” i.e. beyond the realm of the imaginary, a truth can only be “revealed by the intermediary of an affect because it is a truth that does not yet exist, that still needs to be developed.” Through an analysis of the relationship between the affect and truth, Benčin pins down what is specific to Proust’s idea of subjectivation, noting that it involves the effect of de-personalisation since affects “give rise to another being from within the individual

⁶ M. Foucault, *Le Corps utopique, les hétérotopies*, Nouvelles Editions Lignes, Paris 2009, p. 10.

⁷ G. Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2000, p. 16.

that can be the bearer and the developer of a truth.” Or in terms closer to the Badiouian vocabulary: it is from within a finite entity, the individual, that there emerges an instance of infinity, i.e. the subject whose function is precisely to fully develop the truth. It is also at this level that Benčín situates and discusses the Proustian conception of fiction, for the correlation between affect and truth is reduplicated by another correlation, that of event and world. Conceived as a frame of totality, the world dissolves under the impact of the event; on the other hand, the event, if the truth it carries is not developed, disappears without a trace. The eventual truth that Proust’s conception of the artist’s vocation implies is singular, Benčín insists, but precisely for that reason it must be “for all,” which can only be achieved and demonstrated through the fictional “construction of a world to be shared.”

The last essay to tackle the utopian potential in language and art is one that, paradoxically, places the object of its analysis, music, at the uncomfortable point of a “neither nor,” thus opening another, quite unexpected, heterotopic perspective. In his essay, “‘White-heating the Real’ – On Music’s Force towards Impossible Nudeness”, Christoph Sökler positions music “at the rim of language, at the border between language and non-language.” Neither purely symbolic, “another language with its own rules,” nor the imaginary, a kind of fantasmatic ancestor of language, music is rather what Sökler, borrowing from Alain Dider Weill, calls “experimenting with lack,” an experience involving both a particular topology – “music is always on the other side” of the Möbius strip – and temporality – involving a logical time that can be reconstructed in the very experience of listening to music. Discussing this experience, Sökler examines the subjectifying effects of music, a “music-making subject,” as Dider Weill puts it, that can be reconstructed through “torsions between the subject and the Other.” For what characterises the experience of listening to music, Sökler claims, is the experience of lack. It is as a lacking, desiring subject that one listens to music and it is only by listening to music that one discovers oneself as lacking. Here, Sökler, insists, we are facing a double nescience or a double lack, which, however, is never to be fused in order to dissolve in a mystical experience of ecstasy. On the contrary, the experience of the two lacks is one that presents the subject with the possibility of experimenting with his or her own lack and the lack in the Other, “without the mediation of a fantasmatic object,” yet which precisely as such “opens up the possibility of directly enjoying the barred Other, the Other that is fundamentally inconsistent and lacking.” It is only at this point

that – through the experience of listening to music – the subject experiences the “ceasing of time,” an experience of fantasy beyond fantasy, as it were, as it presents the subject *in statu nascendi*, so to speak, i.e. at the “degree zero” of his or her subjectivation when, as a speaking being, he/she emerges as the subject of desire, which is to say, as divided.

It is from the perspective of fantasy that Helmut Draxler’s essay “Traumatic or Utopian Other? Conditions of Emancipation: Phantasy, Reality, and Depression” broaches the complex relations between utopia, trauma, and emancipation. Defined as “a fundamental fantasy inseparable from the ideal of emancipation,” utopia signifies the possibility of a full realisation of this ideal. On the other hand, trauma, too, necessarily contains an aspect of fantasy insofar as it relates to reality as “pure negativity,” as a complete loss of the ideal. Consequently, a politics that strives for emancipation oscillates between utopia and trauma because of its inability, in the words of Draxler, to “synchronise content and form.” In fact, this lack of synchronisation constitutes “the symbolic space of politics” in which “single acts are symbolically determined as political only in and through the relations that structure them.” And, paradoxically, it is only insofar as politics can be defined as a symbolic space characterised by the absence of unity, stability, and control that its articulation to utopia can be elucidated. At the same time, politics can be seen as having “the symbolic function allowing one to imagine a world beyond the existing normative order, and the possible realisation of utopian ideals.” And it is precisely this inconsistency of the symbolic that ceaselessly calls for alternatives, thus keeping us “trapped within the narcissistic and competitive aspects of the imaginary.” This can be evidenced in a paradoxical relation between the impossibility of a radical break or the transgression of the existing symbolic and the ceaseless productions of alternatives. The symbolic, in this view, can only operate by tacitly calling for new alternatives. It is precisely as a symbolic operation that politics is driven by the desire to think otherwise and to search for another world. Put otherwise, the very fact that a politics of emancipation gestures towards another world signals that it is caught up in the symbolic matrix. Hence, the desire to find a way out of the symbolic is only possible within the framework of the symbolic. Because politics can only be symbolically radical, Draxler proposes reconsidering it from a post-Kleinian perspective. This would be a politics that, renouncing its utopian ambitions, takes into account utopia and trauma, on the one hand, and phantasy and reality on the other, while keeping them distinct from each other. This is the only viable solution to

avoid both traps of modern politics: the imaginary confusion of these categories, as well as an orientation to the impossible real that would require the (unachievable) transgression of the framework of the symbolic.

Rado Riha's essay refocuses the main theme of this collection by asking "What is the object of thinking differently?" Following Lebrun, Riha argues that it is Kant and more specifically his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that can teach us to think differently. A short analysis of the artwork *Public Toilet* by the contemporary Slovenian sculptor and architect Jože Barši provides us with a reflection on the object proper to such thinking differently. Taking up and further developing Barši's thesis according to which contemporary artwork is destined for anybody and is thus "for all," while presenting at the same time an irreducible uniqueness, Riha considers this paradoxical connection of the artworks singularity and its universal destination as one that opens up a possibility for the elaboration of the notion of singular universality, this being, for him, a new notion of the universal introduced in Kant's third *Critique*. Strictly speaking, the true referent of thinking differently as implied in Kant's reflecting power of judgment is what is declared to be a case of the generic Idea of Reason, i.e. something that has no body of its own within reality and can therefore only exist by parasitising some existing, ordinary objects. By transforming an ordinary object, a public toilet, into an object of art, *Public Toilet*, Barši de-sublimates the sublime object *Public Toilet* and, at the same time, de-realises the ordinary utilitarian object, a public toilet. But precisely as such, in presenting "a materialisation of the double absence of this 'neither the one nor the other'" contemporary art presents what it means to think differently: it implies the kind of thinking that "opens our eyes so that we can see that our objective reality is objective only under the condition that we are capable of understanding and using it as a place where also something non-existent is present." And in so doing, it signals that the de-constitution or de-realisation of the given reality through "the affirmation of the existence of the non-existent in this reality" is to be considered as "the de-realisation of reality in the name of this same reality," which as a consequence of this very operation turns into "something other than what it is."

12

In the essay that follows, "Anamorphose und Subjektivität – Zu den beugungsgesetzen von Bewusstsein und Wirklichkeit", Dominik Finkelde shifts the focus of attention from what could be called a heterotopic object, an object that finds no place in "objective" reality, to the subject of desire, that is, likewise, place-

less and can only situate itself in some “other space.” To delineate the contours of such a heterotopic subject and the mode of its operation in reality, Finkelde takes the Kantian difference between *phainomenon* and *noumenon* as a point of departure, only to displace it by introducing Lacan’s notion of anamorphosis. Grounding his argument on Lacan’s analysis of Holbein’s painting *The Ambassadors*, which shows how the spectator, as the subject of desire, is “literally called into the picture, and represented here as caught,”⁸ Finkelde maintains that what is constitutive of objective reality is nothing other than the subject’s gaze that is present in the perceived reality as a blind spot, or better, as that in the object that is more than the object itself. Discussing the moment of the paradoxical self-inclusion of the subject in “the picture” of objective reality that renders visible the parallax hole that separates reality from itself allows Finkelde to bring together Lacan and Hegel: If, on the one hand, anamorphosis can be seen as that operation that allows the subject to be inscribed in the realm of being only to provoke the de-hegemonisation of the objective reality, there is, on the other hand, no domain of veridical facts without the constitution of an anamorphic place since for both Lacan and Hegel, Finkelde’s argument goes, this curious heterotopia that is here called anamorphic place is nothing other than the subject.

When the concept of heterotopia is applied not only to space but also to its users it becomes possible to account for those creative practices that take place on the frontier between places, thus enabling the emergence of new spatial-temporal configurations in which the process of subjectivation can only deploy itself. While the concept of heterotopia does not automatically imply emancipation, for it relates to a complex of irreconcilable spaces in which one remains entangled in obscure networks of power beyond anyone’s control, it nevertheless gestures towards those liminal sites where the stitches by which the dominant discourse strives to hold together a heterogeneous reality become visible, thus providing an opportunity for an unforeseeable transformation of the present conditions. Or, in the words of Christopher Dell, “it is always possible for urban actors to find a gap in any power regime in order to try out and experiment on new ways of socialising spatiality.”

⁸ J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Penguin Books, London 1977, p. 92.

Of particular importance and all the more ambiguous is the discussion of our spontaneous urge to imagine how our everyday life could be better than it is now in architecture and design, the two disciplines that shape our daily existence, since the capacity to transform in architecture and design is itself moulded by the demands of the neoliberal market. Among contemporary architects, Yona Friedman, with his “mobile architecture” and “*utopies réalisables*” (feasible or realisable utopias), is known as *the* theorist and practitioner of utopia. Indeed, in a world moving toward increasing pauperisation, utopia, as a collective response to this problem, for Friedman, appears to be not only possible, but necessary. Friedman’s utopian architecture takes the form of architecture without architecture, a new kind of mobility of architectural structures that are neither determined nor determining, relegating responsibility for the conception and creation of their dwelling to future users – a process he calls “autoplanification”. Fundamentally convinced that the ideal mode of architecture is the absence of planning, Friedman advances the idea of an improvised architecture, modelled on the future user who is ultimately situated as the creator of his/her dwelling. Thus emancipating the user, changing his/her environment, intervening in the very materiality of the real by encouraging new modes of behaviour, architecture, as Friedman conceives it, allows for a new way of envisioning and using the world, one marked by the coexistence of heterogeneous spatialities.

The architectural principles of mobility, flexibility, improvisation, and renunciation of construction, dear to Friedman, speak thematically to the final three essays in this volume, which reveal the utopian perspective materialised in theories and practices in architecture and design in order to explore the potential for a radically transformative thinking in these two fields. Architecture and design converge toward the same aspiration: engaged in a process of subjectification, which is itself a consequence of a displacement of their conceptual practices – due to grappling with the heterogeneity of the real – architecture and design aim at opening the space for a rethinking of the social and political space.

This architecture’s ability to use the unpredictable in order to re-invent, to make new spaces that emerge alongside new urban objects, is at the foreground of Christopher Dell’s essay, “Towards the Improvisation of Space”. The thorny question of the “right to the city” is raised here from the perspective of contingency considered “as a positive resource of the city” insofar as it “shifts the focus away from the city as object towards the city as process.” As a response to

the transformations of ways of life and the mutations of spatial and built morphologies, the city, considered as “a space of possibility” in a constant state of flux, is transformed into “a social laboratory.” Taking into account the constantly changing urban practices in unforeseeable, contingent situations requires a radical transformation of urbanism: a move away from static solutions to a mobile urbanism that can be understood as “the technology of improvisation” capable of rapid alterations and re-utilisations in response to the needs and desires of the city’s inhabitants. This new way of thinking, which requires such a “fluctuating urbanity,” is one that “reads the city as an unfolding of action situations,” states Dell, and thus opens up a space for emancipatory gestures.

Petra Čeferin raises the question of utopia in architecture, however not in the sense of a retreat from or the denial of reality denounced by Manfredo Tafuri. Traversing the divide between idealism and materialism, “the utopia of Enlightenment architecture,” and “absolute realism”, which denies any sort of utopian aspirations, the essay “Architecture: Constructing Concrete Utopias” considers architecture as a creative practice that is no longer merely a spatial practice, but one that engages an attitude, a concept, thus turning architecture into a vector of a much vaster transformation. It is in this sense that architecture, according to Čeferin, could be considered as being “always, already, utopia realised.” For architecture, to be engaged “in the construction of a better world” requires that we insist precisely on “enacting architecture in the world as a utopian, that is, creative practice.” Taken in its radical sense, the utopian moment in architecture signifies its ability to open up “a space in the given world for something that is radically heterogeneous to it.” It is precisely this utopian moment that architecture shares with other creative practices: “it affirms something in the world that from the point of view of this world seems impossible, something that isn’t of this world.” The possibilisation of the impossible of a given world is at the same time the way in which “the materiality of architecture as a thing is present” in the world. It is present through peculiar kinds of objects that are both a-topical and anachronistic insofar as they are displaced both spatially and temporally with respect to the structuring coordinates of the world. This paradoxical extimacy of the objectality of architecture requires a special kind of materiality that Čeferin defines as a Twofold in One, an issue also addressed in Riha’s essay. In its capacity to bring into existence objects that are always something other than what they are, architecture, like any other creative practice, calls for a creative repetition of architectural solutions that “set our thinking in motion.”

Barbara Predan's essay, "Design for Life: The Struggle for Utopia?" provides an epilogue to this collection dedicated to reflection on utopias and alternatives, two perspectives that open the space for thinking otherwise, by re-posing a question raised by a number of essays included herein: how to rekindle not only the courage of resistance, which is necessary for bringing about radical change in the world we live in, but even more so the courage of imagination. It is not by chance that the emphasis is placed on the courage to imagine. In the world of consumer capitalism, which pretends to exhaust the realm of the possible by promising full satisfaction to everyone, thus thwarting from the outset any attempt to look for a feasible alternative to the here and now in some unfathomable "elsewhere", the explosive force of the transformation is, paradoxically, to be found in the usually invisible, anonymous, yet gradually changing everyday life. It is precisely here that the utopian moment in design brings the emancipatory function of design to the fore. Taking up Clive Dilnot's definition of design as an act that is "wedded to the possible" since it "comes into being only in so far as the possible is present as possibility – i.e. the capacity for change," Predan takes an additional step forward by claiming that design is capable of actualising the potential inherent in everyday life by focusing on "the impossible within the possible," more specifically by identifying "the structural impossibility within the potential for designing our everyday life" in order to turn the impossible "into a new possibility." It then follows that the principal role of design is "no longer [to] provide the final, unalterable solution to potential users," but, rather to "allow (as well as empower) the community of users to address – autonomously, independently, according to a given situation – the issues and needs they are faced with." In encouraging passive consumers to invent new ways of use, design contributes at the same time to creating new ways of thinking.

16

Writing, as Lacan suggests, is "a trace in which an effect of language can be read."⁹ Beyond what the essays gathered here can say about the specific issues they address, it is to be hoped – following and further developing Lacan's idea – that they may also engender certain effects in their readers' ways of thinking and thus encourage further explorations of thinking differently.

⁹ J. Lacan, *Encore. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book XX*, trans. Bruce Fink, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, London 1998, p. 110.

II. Utopia and Imaginary / Utopie et imaginaire

Jean-Jacques Lecercle*

Utopie et langage

1. Introduction

Le célèbre essai de Karl Mannheim, « La conscience utopique »,¹ commence par la phrase suivante : « Utopique est la conscience qui ne coïncide *pas* avec l' « être » à ses alentours ». La suite de la page indique que cette non-coïncidence est partagée avec l'idéologie, qui pratique en tant que fausse conscience la même transcendance à l'égard de l'être, la caractéristique spécifique de la conscience utopique étant que cette transcendance à la réalité « au moment de passer à l'agir, dévaste, partiellement ou entièrement, le régime ontique du moment ». L'utopie est donc définie non par son contenu, plus ou moins imaginatif et plus ou moins pittoresque, mais par sa forme, qui est celle d'une conscience brutalement critique. Je vais tenter de poursuivre ce déplacement, du contenu vers la forme, en m'éloignant de ce que le recours à une « conscience » a, sinon de trop psychologique, du moins de trop spéculatif. Je propose donc une première hypothèse : l'utopie (le besoin d'utopie, la pulsion utopique) est le fruit non d'une imagination débordante, mais de la structure du langage humain. Il me faut donc, pour développer cette hypothèse, envisager les rapports entre utopie et langage sous la forme d'un détour par les rapports entre trois utopies et le langage.

2. Trois exemples de rapports entre utopie et langage

19

The Coming Race, d'Edward Bulwer Lytton,² paru en 1871, est un récit utopique qui tranche avec le reste de l'œuvre d'un romancier populaire, aujourd'hui complètement oublié, dont un seul roman, *Les derniers jours de Pompei*, a laissé quelques traces dans la littérature pour la jeunesse. L'intrigue ne surprendra pas les ama-

¹ K. Mannheim, « La conscience utopique », in *Idéologie et utopie*, Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris 2006, pp. 159–213.

² E.G.E. Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race*, Alan Sutton, Stroud 1995 (1871).

teurs de Jules Verne : au fond d'une mine, une fissure brillamment éclairée, et un monde des cavernes, dans lequel vit une race de surhommes, qui finiront un jour par émerger à la surface et nous supplanter, d'où le titre (car cette utopie a quelques penchants dystopiques). Le contenu, la description de cette société supérieure, est dûment imaginatif (les femmes, et elles seules, y ont des ailes, qu'elles perdent en se mariant ; et seules les femmes, sans doute faut-il y voir quelque compensation, peuvent devenir professeuses d'université). L'intrigue elle-même ne peut guère se comparer à celle de Jules Verne en matière d'aventures et de rebondissements (une complication amoureuse finira par forcer le héros à revenir au monde du dessus) : il s'agit plutôt d'un récit de voyage, voire d'un traité sur les institutions et les mœurs des *vril-ya* (c'est là le nom de ce peuple).

Ce qui m'intéresse ici, c'est que, au milieu des chapitres attendus sur les institutions politiques, les pratiques économiques et religieuses et les us et coutumes qui règlent les rapports entre les sexes, il y a un chapitre entier consacré au langage des *vril-ya* : cette utopie contient en son sein une grammaire, et le récit de voyage se fait traité scientifique. N'est-il pas d'ailleurs dédié à Max Müller, linguiste célèbre, qui fut professeur de grammaire comparée à l'université d'Oxford ?

En un sens, il n'y a pas d'utopie sans une position vis-à-vis du langage, ne serait-ce que par le biais de la nécessité, pour les visiteurs venus de notre monde, d'apprendre le langage du monde autre pour entrer en contact véritable avec ses habitants. Le héros de *The Coming Race* est endormi par ses hôtes et il apprend leur langue dans son sommeil, tandis que les héros de *Herland*, l'utopie féministe de Charlotte Perkins Gilman, apprennent la langue selon une méthode plutôt désuète, des listes de mots.³

20

Mais *The Coming Race* va plus loin, car son chapitre douze est un véritable, quoique bref, traité du langage. Il commence d'ailleurs par une citation de Max Müller, avec sa référence, comme il se doit dans un ouvrage scientifique. Et c'est bien à une sorte de précis grammatical du langage des *vril-ya* que nous avons affaire. Bulwer traite successivement de l'origine et de l'histoire de la langue, de sa morphologie, des procédés de dérivation et de composition. Puis il passe à la déclinaison des noms, avec une table de déclinaison (la langue possède

³ C.P. Gilman, *Herland*, The Women's Press, Londres 1979 (1916).

quatre cas : nominatif, accusatif, datif et vocatif, ce qui en fait une sorte de latin simplifié, puisqu'il n'y a ni génitif ni ablatif) et à la conjugaison. Comme l'anglais cette fois, celle-ci s'effectue non par suffixation (comme dans les langues romanes) mais par auxiliation, par deux auxiliaires (un auxiliaire qui veut dire « aller » pour marquer le futur, comme en anglais ou en français et un qui veut dire « rester », par symétrie, pour marquer le passé). De là, l'exposé passe à la phonétique, sous la forme de ce que les linguistes appellent aujourd'hui des phonesthèmes, c'est-à-dire des parties de mots qui ne sont pas des morphèmes indépendants mais qui néanmoins transmettent une forme de sens. Puis l'exposé évoque la corruption que font subir à la langue les formes dialectales. Enfin, la grammaire nous dit à quelle famille appartient cette langue et évoque le problème des emprunts (car on parle diverses langues dans ces immenses cavernes). Bref, un précis grammatical, aussi complet que sa brièveté le permet.

Mais là n'est pas l'objet véritable de ce chapitre, car cette grammaire fait partie intégrante du contenu de l'utopie. La citation de Müller par quoi commence le chapitre a pour fonction de marquer la perfection de cette langue, en ce qu'elle inscrit et synthétise les trois moments ou stades de l'évolution (qui est un progrès) de tout langage : le stade isolant, le stade agglutinatif et enfin, *last but not least*, le stade inflexionnel, qui seul permet l'économie d'expression à quoi se reconnaît le degré de perfection d'une langue. Sur ce point, la langue des *vril-ya* n'est pas différente des langues artificielles dont le 18^e et le 19^e siècle furent notoirement friands. Un des objets de l'utopie est donc l'élaboration d'une langue parfaite, en l'occurrence une langue qui ici ressemble à un latin amélioré, c'est à dire simplifié. Et cette langue parfaite remplit une fonction politique. Dans le cas de *The Coming Race*, il est noté qu'il s'agit d'une langue d'origine aryenne, par quoi se marque sa supériorité : on ne s'étonnera donc pas que les *vril-ya* pratiquent la colonisation des races inférieures, par la force si besoin est – c'est qu'ils parlent la langue des seigneurs. Mais, pour ce qui nous concerne directement, on en conclura surtout que la question du langage est partie intégrante du contenu de l'utopie.

Mon second exemple illustre ce lien tendanciel entre utopie et langage de façon directe, sans s'embarasser du contexte (ou prétexte) narratif. Car l'*Inter-glossa*, langue artificielle auxiliaire créée et publiée en 1943 (dans la collection des livres de poche Pelican) par le biologiste Lancelot Hogben, ne se présente pas comme une utopie, mais comme une proposition sérieuse pour promouvoir

l'intercompréhension et mettre fin à la malédiction de Babel. Elle n'eut, comme on peut l'imaginer, et contrairement à l'esperanto ou même au *Basic English* de Ogden et Richards, aucun succès. Mais il y a quelque chose qui relève de ce que j'ai appelé la pulsion utopique dans l'exposé des motifs, que je me permets de citer un peu longuement, dans ma traduction :

Je propose l'esquisse d'une nouvelle langue artificielle *auxiliaire*. Je pense que l'alternative à la barbarie est le renoncement à la souveraineté nationale pour constituer des unités de coopération démocratique de plus grande taille, et qu'aujourd'hui la coopération des hommes ordinaires à l'échelle de la planète n'est possible que si les institutions d'enseignement des différentes nations adoptent une seule et unique deuxième langue. L'espoir d'inciter les dites institutions à adopter cette solution n'a rien d'utopique. Dans plusieurs pays, l'enseignement d'une seconde langue à tous les élèves fait déjà partie des programmes.

Pour atteindre le but fixé, il faudra que la seconde langue universelle soit telle que les élèves puissent l'acquérir plus rapidement qu'ils ne le font habituellement. Si le choix se porte sur une langue naturelle, ce sera sans doute une forme d'anglais simplifié, comme le *Basic English* d'Ogden. Mais il n'est pas sûr que le choix d'une langue *naturelle* soit la meilleure solution. Car il est difficile de réfuter l'argument selon lequel l'adoption d'une langue naturelle comme langue auxiliaire donnerait à ceux qui la possèdent déjà comme leur langue maternelle un avantage culturel injuste, ce qui en ferait un *Herrenvolk* linguistique et provoquerait contre ces eux un ressentiment contre-productif. Une bonne langue auxiliaire sera la langue de tous seulement si elle n'est la langue de personne.⁴

22

A l'heure de la mondialisation de l'anglais, langue de tout le monde qui est aussi la langue de l'impérialisme, et à l'heure du Brexit, ces paroles prennent un sel particulier. On aura noté le contexte historique, bien marqué dans le texte par le mot « *Herrenvolk* », et son allusion aux Nazis : il s'agit d'inciter les scientifiques du monde entier à œuvrer pour la paix et la coopération entre les peuples en adoptant une langue commune, comme l'indique clairement le sous-titre de l'ouvrage, « Esquisse d'une langue auxiliaire en vue d'un ordre mondial démocratique ». Les propositions concrètes qui font le corps du texte de Hogben ne sortent pas de l'ordinaire, à ceci près que la base de cette langue mondiale est

⁴ L. Hogben, *Interglossa*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1943, p. 9.

fournie par les vocabulaires de sciences et de la technologie, avec leurs racines grecques plutôt que latines, comme le montrera cette phrase simple, *bi melano anthropi kine a kinema*, « deux hommes noirs vont au cinéma ». On aura noté également l'aveu par dénégation qu'il s'agit bien d'une utopie, avec ses deux vecteurs temporels, tournés vers le présent, sous la forme d'une critique implicite (que le mot « *Herrenvolk* » suffit à engager), et vers l'avenir, sous la forme de la paix entre les peuples, par l'intermédiaire de la science et des scientifiques. Et l'on notera pour finir que dans ce second exemple le langage n'est pas seulement partie intégrante du contenu de l'utopie, mais qu'il est à lui seul ce contenu.

Avec mon troisième exemple, je reviens à l'origine, l'*Utopie* de Thomas More. Et je me trouve face à un paradoxe, car de langage dans ce texte il n'est jamais question. Nous ne savons pas quel langage, ou type de langage, les Utopiens parlent, ni comment Hythloday est entré en contact linguistique avec eux. Tout ce que nous apprenons, c'est que quand il leur a parlé de la langue et de la culture grecque, ils ont été intéressés au plus haut point et lui ont demandé de leur apprendre le grec.⁵ Ici, donc, le langage ne fait pas partie du contenu de l'utopie, il ne fait pas question. Pourtant, nous disposons d'un texte en langue utopienne, car le récit lui-même, dans la traduction de Ralph Robinson, est suivi de deux annexes, dont la seconde propose quatre courts poèmes utopiens en traduction (le premier nous est d'abord donné dans le texte original). Certaines éditions⁶ nous donnent même l'alphabet utopien : voilà que ce langage, absent du texte, se met à envahir le paratexte. Il semble donc que la question du langage se déplace, et passe du contenu de l'utopie à sa forme narrative.

Je commence par rappeler ce qui est la caractéristique la plus frappante du texte : le récit utopique n'occupe que 60% du texte, les autres 40%, qui précèdent le récit, étant consacrés à la description que fait Hythloday de l'Angleterre contemporaine. Cette partie, que l'on peut qualifier de *pars destruens*, contient certaines des pages les plus célèbres du texte, en particulier l'évocation des moutons carnivores (ils ont indirectement dévoré les hommes que, par le biais des enclosures, ils ont chassés et remplacés). C'est seulement dans un second temps qu'apparaît la *pars construens*, avec ses pages non moins célèbres (re-pas pris en commun, toilettes en or massif, diplomatie machiavélique, etc.). Les

⁵ T. More, *Utopia*, Dent, Londres 1985, p. 94.

⁶ T. More, *Utopia*, Norton, New York 1992, p. 114.

deux vecteurs temporels de l'utopie sont donc d'emblée séparés, et le langage réapparaît sous la forme de la discussion, entre Hythloday et Thomas More, le narrateur, ou entre Hythloday et le prêtre de mauvaise foi. C'est d'ailleurs une caractéristique frappante du texte que la multiplication des locuteurs. Thomas More est le narrateur, celui qui met sur le papier ce que Raphael Hythloday lui a raconté. Mais avant cela Hythloday a parlé à Peter Giles, qui a parlé à Thomas More. Et après cela, une fois Hythloday disparu (est-il mort ? est-il retourné en Utopie ?), Thomas More écrit une lettre, qui précède le texte, à Peter Giles, tandis que celui-ci écrit une autre lettre, qui suit le texte, à Jerome Busleiden. Il est donc clair que ce qui caractérise l'utopie de Thomas More et l'oppose à la plupart de ses successeurs, c'est la complexité de la mise en scène narrative. Revenons donc aux deux lettres qui encadrent le texte, car ce paratexte n'est nullement innocent, en ce qu'il pose systématiquement la question du mensonge et de la vérité, c'est-à-dire de la fiction. Dans sa lettre introductive, More insiste sur le peu de fiabilité de ses souvenirs : il croit que Hythloday lui a dit que le pont d'Amaurote, la capitale d'Utopie, était long de cinq cent pieds, tandis que son assistant, qui était présent lors de l'entretien, assure qu'il avait seulement trois cent pieds. Il insiste aussi sur les déformations que le passage de l'oral à l'écrit risque de provoquer, d'autant plus que l'écrit est en latin, et que Hythloday (dont le nom veut dire « Roi des balivernes » en grec) parle plutôt grec. La lettre de Peter Giles, qui clôt le texte, est du même acabit, qui avoue que son auteur a trouvé plus sous la plume de More qu'il n'en a entendu de la bouche de Hythloday. Il apparaît donc que More est bien l'auteur du texte, en son sens étymologique d'augmentateur, et que ce narrateur est *unreliable*, comme disent les anglais : le paratexte donne au texte l'apparence d'un canular, et les romanciers postmodernes n'ont rien inventé. Le contenu de l'utopie est encadré et gauchi par sa forme, qui elle-même s'appuie sur une caractéristique fondamentale du langage humain, qui est de dire le faux aussi bien que le vrai.

Mes trois exemples montrent donc que le langage ou bien est partie intégrante du contenu de l'utopie ou bien gouverne la forme du texte. Il nous faut donc aller plus loin et envisager une *grammaire de l'utopie*. Il s'agit ici de prendre au sérieux ma première hypothèse en se demandant s'il n'y a pas des caractéristiques intrinsèques du langage humain qui encouragent, favorisent produisent ce que j'ai appelé la pulsion utopique. Autrement dit il me faut esquisser une grammaire de l'utopie, c'est-à-dire aller plus loin que la proposition triviale : il y a effectivement des utopies qui impliquent le langage, dans leur contenu ou dans leur forme.

3. Grammaire de l'utopie

Voici une première caractéristique de cette grammaire. Le langage humain construit et organise le temps, c'est-à-dire dépasse le présent pour faire retour sur le passé en anticiper sur l'avenir. Il permet de dire non seulement ce qui est présentement, par exemple par évidence perceptive, mais aussi ce qui n'est plus et ce qui n'est pas encore. Ce débordement de l'évidence perceptive est ce qui nourrit la pulsion utopique, sous la double forme de l'hypothétique (qui dans les langues indo-européennes emprunte sa formulation aux temps du passé : « si cela était, alors il serait possible de... ») et de l'anticipation (« quand cela sera... », ou « cela sera... »). L'utopie, comme on l'a vu, se nourrit de ces deux possibilités que lui offre la structure du langage.

Voici une seconde caractéristique. Le langage humain n'a pas seulement une dimension temporelle, il a aussi une dimension modale. Il ne dit pas seulement l'actualité (« cela est ») ou la nécessité (« cela est par nécessité, ou par apodicticité » ; « il faut que cela soit » - et ici, la nécessité se faisant éthique, l'utopie peut apparaître), il dit aussi la possibilité, qui ouvre des mondes : de « il se peut que cela soit » à « Raphael Hythloday m'a dit que cela était », le passage est facile, et l'utopie prospère. L'utopie est ici solidaire de la fiction, ce qui peut également se dire : toute fiction est virtuellement utopique. Même la fiction dite réaliste pourra s'interpréter non comme relation de faits mais comme position critique vis-à-vis d'eux (car il n'y a pas dans l'utopie de *pars construens* sans une *pars destruens*). Il apparaît donc que la modalité du possible est l'équivalent linguistique de l'expérience du miroir, en ce que celle-ci ouvre des mondes.⁷

Et voici une troisième caractéristique : la prise de distance du locuteur vis-à-vis de son énoncé. Car c'est bien une caractéristique du langage humain que d'être réflexif, non seulement en ce que le retour du langage sur lui-même ajoute un niveau métalinguistique au niveau linguistique, mais en ce que l'énonciateur n'est pas toujours directement le locuteur. Car un énoncé, cela peut se rapporter, au style direct, au style indirect ou au style indirect libre. Comme on l'a vu, l'*Utopie* de Thomas More thématise cette pratique (alors que Bulwer ou Gilman nous présentent de récits en première personne, le voyageur de retour au pays

⁷ Cf. J.J Lecercle, « Napaka/ogledalo : kako proizvajati fikcijo ? », in: *Filozofski vestnik*, XXX-IV, 3, pp. 111-123.

natal racontant ses aventures utopiennes). Et même si le discours est directement celui de l'énonciateur, toutes sortes de figures de rhétorique ou d'effets stylistiques, la prétéition, l'ironie, etc. permettent à l'énonciateur de prendre ses distances avec son énoncé. L'utopie est solidaire de cette inscription linguistique d'une altérité, elle s'en nourrit. En un sens, toute fiction est un moyen d'échapper à l'enfermement dans notre conscience et notre monde pour accéder à d'autres consciences et d'autres mondes.⁸ L'utopie pousse à l'extrême cette sortie, en nous poussant à sortir non seulement de notre conscience, mais du monde vécu de nos habitudes et de notre sens commun.

Enfin, il est une caractéristique du langage humain qui fonde les trois autres et qui est le cœur de la relation entre utopie et langage. Il s'agit bien sûr de la négation : le langage humain peut en effet et nier ce qui est et dire ce qui n'est pas, avec toutes les variations que ce négativisme permet (ainsi, la prétéition déjà mentionnée refuse de dire ce qui est au moment même où elle le dit). Les innombrables formes linguistiques que peut prendre l'énoncé utopique sont toutes fondées sur la négation : « Le capitalisme ne sera plus » ; « Si le capitalisme n'était pas... » ; « More et Marx nous font imaginer que le capitalisme ne sera pas » ; « Ce n'est pas moi qui dirai que le capitalisme n'est pas ». Toutes ces phrases, par où s'exprime la pulsion utopique, inscrivent un « non » retentissant, expression de la *pars destruens* qui précède logiquement la *pars construens*, même si elle reste implicite (de ce point de vue l'*Utopie* de More non seulement distingue les deux moments, mais elle les place dans le bon ordre : Hythloday commence par critiquer sévèrement l'Angleterre contemporaine avant de décrire le pays d'Utopie). On comprend pourquoi je parle d'une « pulsion » utopique, terme dangereusement biologique : on a affaire à ce que le marxiste irlandais John Holloway appelle le « non » militant de la révolte et de la critique, expression d'un affect rageur qui précède toute analyse de la situation.⁹ On comprend également la formulation que donne Mannheim de la conscience utopique, déjà évoquée, cette « orientation 'transcendante à la réalité', qui, au moment du passage à l'agir, dévaste [...] le régime ontique du moment »¹⁰ : le terme de « dévastation » est fort et suggère bien la violence de la négation utopique.

26

⁸ P. Macherey, *Proust entre la littérature et la philosophie*, Editions Amsterdam, Paris 2013, p. 257.

⁹ J. Holloway, *Change the World without Taking Power*, Pluto, Londres 2002.

¹⁰ K. Mannheim, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

Il nous faut donc ici une théorie de la négation. Je la trouve chez Paolo Virno, un des philosophes contemporains qui a le plus systématiquement tenté de penser le langage. Dans son *Essai sur la négation*,¹¹ il développe une telle théorie autour des trois hypothèses suivantes. (i) Il y a une intersubjectivité originaire de l'animal humain, qui précède la constitution des sujets individuels. Le lieu matériel de ce champ intersubjectif est l'ensemble des neurones miroirs, producteurs d'empathie. (ii) Le langage, loin d'être la caisse de résonance de cette socialité originaire, provoque la débâcle momentanée de ce sentir empathique : la maîtrise de la syntaxe entrave et parfois suspend l'empathie neurophysiologique. L'évidence perceptive qui nous fait dire de l'immigré, « C'est un homme », cesse d'être incontestable dès qu'elle est soumise au travail du « non ». L'énoncé « Ce n'est pas un homme » est grammaticalement impeccable, il est doué de sens, il peut fort bien se sédimenter sous la forme du sens commun. (iii) Mais le langage fournit un antidote au venin qu'il a inoculé dans la socialité innée de l'esprit. Il peut saboter à son tour le sabotage initial. La sphère publique est le produit de cette lacération et de cette suture : elle tire son origine de la négation d'une négation. Mais cette seconde négation (« On ne peut pas dire que ce n'est pas un homme ») ne rétablit pas pour autant l'harmonie pré-linguistique primitive : le risque de la non-reconnaissance (« Je refuse de dire que c'est un homme – il n'est pas comme nous ») est inscrit de façon irréversible dans l'interaction sociale.

La négation est donc à la fois *ontologique*, en ce qu'elle marque dans le langage la constitution négative du système de la langue en tant que système de différences, et *empirique*, en tant qu'elle est un des marqueurs de ce système, sur le même plan que les autres. C'est pourquoi elle n'a pas pour Virno valeur métalinguistique (comme elle a chez la plupart des linguistes), mais réflexive, en tant qu'elle est la marque de la constitution du système et en même temps un élément de ce système. En ce sens, nous dit Virno, elle a la même fonction que l'argent chez Marx : la négation est l'argent du langage.

Ce qui m'intéresse dans cette philosophie de la négation, outre la distinction entre l'ontologique et l'empirique, qui montre que les marqueurs linguistiques ont une tout autre portée que grammaticale, outre le caractère réflexif, qui fait de la négation une caractéristique fondamentale du langage humain, c'est l'ambivalence de la négation ontologique, à la fois poison et remède : la négation

¹¹ P. Virno, *Essai sur la négation*, Editions de l'Eclat, Paris 2016.

n'est pas seulement l'argent du langage, elle est son *pharmakon*. Et de nouveau cela nous permet de comprendre la pulsion utopique, inscription de la dialectique de la destruction (le langage venin, par le biais de la négation) et de la construction (le langage antidote, par le biais de la négation de la négation) : j'ai déjà insisté sur l'étroite imbrication, dans l'utopie, de la *pars destruens* et de la *pars construens*. La fonction de l'utopie est de transformer la lacération de l'intersubjectivité produite par le travail du non, ce risque de non-reconnaissance inscrit dans l'interaction sociale, en ouverture à l'autre. Et cela m'incite à formuler une seconde hypothèse.

4. Seconde hypothèse

Le passage par la grammaire de l'utopie et la portée ontologique de la négation me permet de généraliser ma première hypothèse : la pulsion utopique est l'expression de l'opération de contre-interpellation, qui est nécessaire à la constitution des sujets.

Vous aurez reconnu le langage de la théorie de l'idéologie d'Althusser,¹² dont la thèse principale est que l'idéologie interpelle les individus – tous les individus – en sujets, au double sens de sujets assujettis (à l'idéologie et à ses appareils) et de sujets de plein exercice, centres de conscience, d'action (*agency*) et de responsabilité, autrement dit, de sujets libres. A cette théorie, j'ai proposé deux additifs. La première est l'insertion, dans la chaîne de l'interpellation (qui va des appareils aux rituels, des rituels aux pratiques et des pratiques aux sujets dûment interpellés) du maillon des actes de langage, dernier maillon avant els sujets, pour marquer la fonction subjectivante du langage, qui interpelle els individus en sujets d'énonciation, c'est à dire en sujets tout court. Et la seconde est le passage du sujet assujetti au sujet libre par le biais de la contre-interpellation (de l'idéologie interpellante par le sujet interpellé) : pas d'interpellation qui ne suscite une contre-interpellation.¹³

28

¹² L. Althusser, « Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'Etat », in: *Positions*, Editions Sociales, Paris 1976.

¹³ J.J. Lecercle, *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, Macmillan, Londres 1999, chap. 6 ; *Une philosophie marxiste du langage*, PUF, Paris 2004, chap. 6.

La pulsion utopique est donc inséparable de la constitution des individus en sujets : elle exprime le moment de la contre-interpellation. Et puisque le langage est l'expression de cette pulsion (l'interpellation est d'abord, et principalement, linguistique), l'analyse de l'utopie doit passer, de nouveau, par la grammaire, en l'occurrence les grammaires de l'interpellation et de la contre-interpellation.

5. Grammaires

Qu'il y a une grammaire de l'interpellation, partie intégrante de notre usage le plus quotidien de la langue, est clair. Elle est inscrite dès le niveau abstrait des six fonctions du langage de Jakobson, sous la forme de la fonction conative, avec ses caractéristiques grammaticales (le pronom personnel de deuxième personne est un pronom de placement – comme dans le fameux slogan de l'affiche représentant le maréchal Kitchener : « Your country needs YOU ! », l'impératif, le point d'exclamation, etc.).¹⁴ Elle est également inscrite dans les trois fonctions du langage de Bühler sous le nom précisément d'*Appell*, c'est à dire d'interpellation.¹⁵ Et nos grammaires font preuve d'une grande inventivité pour inscrire cette fonction d'interpellation, y compris en sauvant la face de l'interlocuteur interpellé (ce qui n'empêche pas de le manipuler – on relira sur ce point la description que Longin fait, dans son traité du sublime, de l'action de l'orateur sur les juges du procès).¹⁶ On trouvera donc dans toutes les bonnes grammaires la description de questions à réponse incluse (« n'est-il pas vrai que... »), toutes sortes de présuppositions (« as-tu cessé de battre ta femme ? ») et d'actes de langage indirects (de « ouvrez la fenêtre ! » à « pourriez-vous ouvrir la fenêtre ? » et à « il fait froid dans cette pièce ! »).

La possibilité, et la fréquence de cette indirection dans l'interpellation sont dues à une caractéristique générale du langage : qu'il n'a pas pour (seule) fonction de transmettre de l'information (c'est la fonction référentielle de Jakobson), mais aussi d'exprimer des affects (c'est sa fonction émotive) et de « communiquer » non des informations mais des forces, car dire, c'est aussi faire, le contenu locutoire d'Austin est pénétré de force illocutoire et d'effet perlocutoire.

¹⁴ R. Jakobson, « Closing statement: linguistics and Poetics », in: T.A. Sebeok, ed., *Style in Language*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1960, pp. 363–8.

¹⁵ K. Bühler, *Sprachtheorie*, Gustav Fischer, Jena 1982 (1934).

¹⁶ Longin, *Traité du sublime*, le Livre de Poche, Paris 1995.

Une brève illustration. La scène se passe dans le métro parisien. Un monsieur fort en colère déclare à une dame accompagnée d'un petit chien, à haute voix et donc à la cantonade : « Moi, madame, votre chien, si ça continue, ce n'est pas dans son cul à lui que je vais le mettre, le mien, de pied ».¹⁷ Si on compare la phrase telle qu'elle se présente avec le contenu informationnel transmis (qui est lui-même chargé d'affect, puisqu'il s'agit d'une menace : « je vais vous botter les fesses ! »), on se rend compte que les opérations grammaticales de topicalisation multiple et de dislocation, bref toutes les ressources de la focalisation ont une seule fonction: interpeller la destinataire de la menace avec un force illocutoire accrue mais aussi interpeller l'auditoire, les autres passagers, en complices de la menace, grâce à ce qu'on devra appeler la verve du texte.

De même que l'interpellation ne peut être séparée de la contre-interpellation qu'elle incite, la grammaire de l'interpellation est étroitement liée à une grammaire de la contre-interpellation. Ce que Judith Butler appelle la « resignification », c'est-à-dire le renvoi à l'interpellateur de l'énoncé interpellant (elle analyse les insultes homophobes) engage et une rhétorique et une grammaire.¹⁸ Comme la contre-interpellation est une réaction à l'interpellation, la grammaire de la contre-interpellation ne sera pas indépendante mais réactive : elle aura pour mode d'opération le refus, l'évitement ou le retournement, et la resignification butlérienne en sera l'opération majeure. Ce faisant, elle fera appel précisément aux caractéristiques du langage que nous avons dégagées dans l'analyse de l'utopie, du « non » de Holloway, sous toutes ses formes, y compris l'insulte directe ou le renvoi au destinataire des mots de son interpellation, à toutes les formes de prise de distance de l'énonciateur vis-à-vis de l'énoncé d'autrui (c'est-à-dire toutes les variétés de discours rapporté – et l'on se souviendra que pour Deleuze et Guattari, dans leur critique des postulats de la linguistique, tout discours est indirect),¹⁹ comme vis-à-vis de son propre énoncé (ironie, prétérition, etc.).

30

Cette distance prise par la contre-interpellation ne concerne pas seulement le discours de l'autre qui interpelle, mais également le langage lui-même, en

¹⁷ J.J. Lecercle, « Of Markov chains and upholstery buttons: "Moi, madame, votre chien..." », in: O. Fischer & M. Nänny, eds, *The Motivated Sign*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2001, pp. 289–302.

¹⁸ J. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, Routledge, Londres 1995.

¹⁹ G. Deleuze & F. Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, Minuit, Paris 1980.

ce qu'il est instance interpellante : avant de parler la langue, il faut bien, si je dois être sujet, c'est-à-dire sujet d'énonciation, que je sois parlé par elle. La « grammaire » de la contre-interpellation pourra donc aller jusqu'à ce que j'ai appelé les « petites agrammaticalités », qui caractérisent un style,²⁰ ou ce que Laurent Jenny appelle le figural.²¹ Bref, la grammaire de la contre-interpellation est ce qui anime le style, dans la définition qu'en donne Gilles Deleuze, comme bégaiement du langage, roulis et tangage, et passage à la limite de l'agrammaticalité.²² On se souvient qu'il qualifie la célèbre formule de Bartleby d' « agrammaticale », ce que strictement parlant elle n'est pas (c'est une phrase elliptique, mais nullement incorrecte). Cette homologie entre l'opération linguistique de la contre-interpellation et l'analyse de l'utopie me permet de poser une première thèse : le style, c'est l'utopie dans le langage.

6. Utopie et contre-interpellation

Derrière cette thèse locale se cache une thèse générale, qui est ma deuxième thèse : l'utopie est une composante essentielle de l'opération de l'idéologie, au sens où Althusser entend ce terme.

Ici, je me sépare de mon point de départ dans l'essai de Mannheim. Comme on l'a vu, pour lui idéologie et utopie sont deux espèces distinctes d'un même genre, dont la caractéristique est la transcendance par rapport à l'être environnant. La différence spécifique est que l'utopie est dévastatrice et l'idéologie conservatrice, étant essentiellement la fausse conscience qui permet l'adaptation à cet être qu'elle transcende. Althusser défend au contraire une conception spinozienne de l'idéologie comme nécessaire mélange d'allusion et d'illusion. Dans ce cadre l'utopie ne s'oppose pas à l'idéologie, elle en est un moment, le moment négatif, celui de la contre-interpellation qui fait passer l'individu du statut de sujet assujetti au statut de sujet de plein exercice, sujet-agent, c'est-à-dire doué d'*agency*. D'où ma troisième hypothèse.

31

²⁰ J.J. Lecercle, « La stylistique deleuzienne et les petites agrammaticalités », in: *Bulletin de la SSA*, 30, Société de stylistique anglaise, Nanterre 2008, pp. 273–86.

²¹ L. Jenny, *La parole singulière*, Belin, Paris 1990.

²² G. Deleuze, « Begaya-t-il », in *Critique et clinique*, Minuit, Paris 1993.

7. Troisième hypothèse

Je poursuis ma généralisation, et je tente de tirer de ma description de la pulsion utopique, c'est-à-dire la pulsion de contre-interpellation, une théorie de l'imagination, en tant qu'elle passe par plus d'un sens, et potentiellement par tous. Ma première hypothèse était que l'utopie était déterminée par la structure du langage ; la seconde hypothèse généralisait cette intuition en faisant de la pulsion utopique l'expression du moment de la contre-interpellation dans le processus, qui affecte tous les individus, de subjectivation. Ma troisième hypothèse généralise cette généralisation : elle pose que la contre-interpellation (et donc avant elle l'interpellation) n'est pas le fait exclusif du langage, même si l'interpellation langagière est la plus importante, mais affecte tous les sens – elle prévoit donc, *horribile dictu*, la possibilité d'utopies visuelles, tactiles ou olfactives.

Je vais aller au plus immédiat et envisager la possibilité d'une utopie visuelle. Qu'il y ait une forme visuelle de l'interpellation est clair. Nous l'avons déjà rencontrée avec le Maréchal Kitchener et « Your country needs YOU ! ». Mais qu'en est-il d'une contre-interpellation visuelle et de ses possibilités utopiques. Une étude de cas s'impose.

L'*Annonciation* que l'on peut voir dans l'église de Santa Maria Annunziata del Meschio, à Vittorio Veneto est sans doute le chef d'œuvre d'Andrea Previtali, peintre bergamasque et disciple de Giovanni Bellini. Elle fut peinte aux alentours de 1520. Elle réutilise sans vergogne des éléments empruntés à des prédécesseurs plus illustres : la chevelure de l'ange est imitée de Léonard de Vinci, la fenêtre à deux arceaux au milieu de la paroi du fond vient de Cima da Conegliano, le paysage qu'elle révèle est emprunté à Dürer, et le tapis que l'on aperçoit derrière la Vierge et l'Ange vient de Holbein. Même la contradiction assumée entre les sources de lumière et donc d'ombre est traditionnelle : l'ombre sur la colonne au milieu de la fenêtre du fond suggère que la source de lumière est située au Nord Ouest, tandis que l'ombre portée par l'ange suppose une source de lumière située au Sud Ouest. C'est qu'il y a bien sûr deux sources, la source naturelle, le soleil, et la source divine, qui éclaire et l'ange et la Vierge, et qui représente Dieu le Père et la Colombe du Saint Esprit, habituellement présents dans le tableau mais ici représentés par leur absence même. Previtali n'est pas l'inventeur de cette contradiction faste, que l'on trouve par exemple dans la fresque de Carpaccio, la *Vision de St Augustin*, à la *Scuola degli Schiavoni* à Ve-

nise. Plus originale (mais pas entièrement) est la mise en scène de cette Annonciation : le tableau est encadré par une arche, qui en fait une chapelle en trompe l'œil. Cet effet est augmenté par les trois marches qui, au premier plan, incitent le spectateur à entrer dans la chapelle.

Pour rendre compte de la force visuelle du tableau, ce que j'ai ailleurs appelé sa force invisionnaire et son effet pervisionnaire (ces deux termes sont imités des concepts austiniens, dont ils traduisent la pragmatique linguistique en termes visuels),²³ on fera appel à trois dialectiques.

La première est la dialectique de la *Vorstellung* et de la *Darstellung*, qui sont au cœur de l'esthétique d'Althusser. Il oppose en effet *Vorstellung*, le re-présentation, étymologiquement ce qui est devant le représenté et le cache, version spatiale de la temporalité qu'implique le terme latin, et *Darstellung*, la présentation, étymologiquement l'être-là de quelque chose qui n'a pas de face cachée. L'œuvre d'art est alors entendue comme *Darstellung*, non *Vorstellung* du réel, c'est-à-dire de la formation sociale dans la conjoncture historique. Cette « présentation » permet à l'œuvre d'art de sortir du cercle de l'idéologie : l'œuvre présente le réel dont elle produit une *connaissance*, et elle nomme la *reconnaissance* idéologique pour ce qu'elle est, c'est-à-dire idéologique.²⁴ Dans le cas du tableau de Previtali, le moment de la représentation est celui de l'approche du tableau, lorsque le spectateur se rend compte qu'il s'agit d'une Annonciation, comme il ou elle en a vu tant d'autres. Et le moment de la présentation est celui où ledit spectateur entre dans la chapelle. Car il où elle y entre bien. Si l'on regarde la base du lutrin derrière lequel est assise la Vierge, on constate qu'y est inscrite la signature du peintre : Andreas Bergomensis Ioannis Bellini Discipulus Pinxit. A ceci près qu'en rétablissant la totalité de la signature, j'ai triché, car elle est en partie cachée par le montant gauche de l'arche qui encadre l'entrée de la chapelle. Si donc j'ai pu lire la totalité de l'inscription, *c'est que je suis entré dans la chapelle*. La représentation a fait place à une présentation, dans ce cas littéralement, car la représentation cache ici matériellement une partie

²³ J.J. Lecercle, « Epiphany to ecstasy: the dialectics of image and text », in: A. Locatelli (a cura di), *La conoscenza della letteratura/. The Knowledge of Literature*, Bergamo University Press, Bergamo 2011, pp. 13–20.

²⁴ L. Althusser, « Le Piccolo, Bertolazzi et Brecht », in: *Pour Marx*, Maspero, Paris 1965 ; M. Sprinker, « Imaginary Relations: Althusser and Materialist Aesthetics », in: *Imaginary Relations*, Verso, Londres 1987, pp. 267–95.

de l'inscription, devant laquelle l'arche se tient, tandis que la présentation nous donne l'objet directement et dans son entier.

Cette dialectique en implique une autre : la dialectique de la reconnaissance et de la connaissance. En m'avancant vers le tableau, je *reconnais* la scène – moment de la représentation. Et si je suis féru d'histoire de l'art, je reconnais les allusions, puisque, je l'ai dit, ce tableau n'est pas particulièrement original. Mais l'entrée dans la chapelle, c'est-à-dire le moment de la présentation, ajoute à cette reconnaissance une connaissance : le jeu contradictoire des ombres m'ouvre la révélation de la lumière divine dans le monde humain qui est le mien. Si je suis entré dans la chapelle, je participe à la scène sacrée, comme un de ces donateurs que l'on voit parfois aux côtés de la Madone et j'en tire la connaissance que procure la révélation. Et c'est bien là, dans l'analyse qu'en donne Daniel Arasse,²⁵ la fonction de l'Annonciation : donner au spectateur, qui est aussi un fidèle, la connaissance de l'interpénétration des deux mondes, le monde humain et le monde divin. Il y a pour lui une affinité entre le thème de l'Annonciation et la perspective centrée toscane, le rôle de la perspective étant de faire entrer l'infini divin dans le monde humain fini, l'incommensurable dans la mesure, l'infigurable dans la figure.

Et cette deuxième dialectique en implique une troisième, qui est celle qui m'intéresse directement ici : la dialectique de l'interpellation et de la contre interpellation. Car interpellé à ma place de spectateur je suis, et matériellement : la perspective m'indique le point de distance où je dois me tenir pour voir le tableau (on se souvient du jeu sur ce placement dans *Les Ambassadeurs* de Holbein, avec leur anamorphose), point situé sur une ligne qui partant du point de fuite, traverse le tableau et en sort pour placer le spectateur. Dans le tableau de Previtali, cette ligne est matériellement inscrite dans la colonne qui sépare les deux arcs de la fenêtre géminée, dans la rangée centrale de la marqueterie du plafond, et dans la ligne orange qui, au centre du carrelage, sépare l'ange et la Vierge. Mais cette interpellation visuelle, par laquelle se manifeste la force invisionnaire du tableau, suscite comme il se doit une contre-interpellation. Le spectateur placé, c'est-à-dire interpellé à sa place par la perspective, contre-interpelle cette interpellation en entrant dans la chapelle (il y a là en quelque

34

²⁵ D. Arasse, *L'Annonciation italienne*, Hazan, Paris 1999.

sorte une physique de l'imagination) et en interprétant le tableau, c'est-à-dire en construisant un monde vécu avec et contre le monde de la transcendance.

Je reviens à mon sujet. En quoi cette Annonciation inscrit-elle la forme visuelle de ce que j'ai appelé la pulsion utopique ? Par le moment de la contre-interpellation quasi-physique qu'est l'entrée dans la chapelle, qui m'incite, en tant que spectateur, à quitter le monde de ma vie quotidienne, monde de la Chute et de la préparation à la mort, pour entrer, ne fût-ce qu'un instant, et en imagination dans le monde divin de la promesse du Salut. Il y a donc bien une forme visuelle d'utopie. Mais ici il faut noter que quoique visuel, ce moment d'utopie est encore largement tributaire du langage, qui littéralement imprègne la scène, car cette scène est toujours déjà textuelle, ayant son origine dans le Livre sacré. C'est une scène d'interlocution, les postures et les gestes des participants étant la représentation imagée de leurs paroles (*Ave Maria, gratias plena...*, etc.). Ces paroles qui sont parfois matériellement inscrites, en bas relief, sur ma toile, comme dans *l'Annonciation* gothique de Simone Martini, aux Offices à Florence. Et dans ce tableau, la fenêtre bigéminée inscrit, au centre de la toile, le M majuscule de Marie.

8. Conclusion

J'en propose trois.

1) Ce qui est important dans l'utopie, ce n'est pas son contenu, c'est a) sa forme (et en ce sens *l'Utopie* de More est le modèle de toute utopie) et b) l'affect (ce que j'ai appelé la « pulsion ») qu'elle porte (c'est ce qui selon moi incite Mannheim à parler de « conscience utopique » plutôt que d'utopie).

2. Par sa forme l'utopie est conditionnée par les caractéristiques du langage. Ici, on pourra faire retour sur les fonctions du langage de Jakobson, pour montrer que l'utopie s'appuie non seulement sur la fonction conative, d'interpellation, mais aussi sur les fonctions émotive, métalinguistique (la prise de distance) et poétique (le style comme contre-interpellation de la langue).

3. Parce que l'utopie s'appuie sur les fonctions non-référentielles du langage, qui supposent que le locuteur a un corps, elle dit la vérité de l'imagination en tant que celle-ci n'est pas simple reproduction ou représentation, mais création.

Claire Sibony*

Virginia Woolf La stratégie du grain de raisin ou l'utopie d'un corps translucide

Parfois, on doit se contenter de petites trouvailles, et tout tient dans un détail. Tout tient, ici, à deux grains de raisin que j'ai trouvés en lisant deux écrivains que l'on rapproche souvent, Virginia Woolf (1882–1941), et Clarice Lispector (1920–1977). Dans deux passages revient la curieuse image d'un grain de raisin. Pour Virginia Woolf, la sensation *d'être à l'intérieur d'un grain de raisin* est le nom d'un fantasme, le fantasme d'un corps originaire, inviolé, flottant et merveilleux ; et c'est le nom de la grande source de l'écriture, ces souvenirs de l'enfance dont l'intensité déborde la possibilité de dire complètement, et que nous lisons à l'état d'esquisse dans les *Moments of being*¹.

¹ Voici le premier grain de raisin, celui de Virginia Woolf :

« Je commence : mon premier souvenir. Il y avait des fleurs rouges et violettes sur fond noir – la robe de ma mère ; et ma mère était assise dans un train ou dans un omnibus, et moi j'étais sur ses genoux. [...] Peut-être allions-nous à St. Ives ; plus probablement, car d'après la lumière ce devait être le soir, nous rentrions à Londres. Mais il est plus commode du point de vue artistique de supposer que nous allions à St. Ives, car cela m'amène à mon autre souvenir, qui semble être aussi mon premier souvenir et, en fait, est le plus important de tous mes souvenirs. Si la vie repose sur une base, si c'est une coupe que l'on remplit, que l'on remplit indéfiniment – alors ma coupe, à n'en pas douter, repose sur ce souvenir. Je suis au lit, à demi réveillée, dans la chambre des enfants, à St. Ives. J'entends les vagues qui se brisent, une, deux, une, deux, et qui lancent une gerbe d'eau sur la plage ; et puis qui se brisent, une, deux, une, deux, derrière un store jaune. J'entends le store jaune traîner son petit gland sur le sol quand le vent le gonfle. Je suis couchée et j'entends ce giclement de l'eau et je vois cette lumière, et je sens qu'il est à peu près impossible que je sois là ; je suis en proie à l'extase la plus pure que je puisse imaginer. [...] [Mais naturellement] il y avait une cause extérieure à l'intensité de cette première impression : l'impression des vagues et du store ; la sensation, telle que je la formule parfois pour moi-même, d'être à l'intérieur d'un grain de raisin et de voir à travers une pellicule d'un jaune semi-translucide. Cela venait en partie de tous ces mois que nous passions à Londres. Le changement de chambre représentait un grand changement. Et il y avait le long voyage en train ; et l'excitation. Je me rappelle l'obscurité, les lumières, l'agitation quand on montait se coucher. [...] Si j'étais peintre, je rendrais ces premières impressions en jaune pâle, argent et vert. Il y avait le store jaune pâle ; la mer verte ; le gris-argent des fleurs de la passion. Je représenterais une forme sphérique, semi-translucide. Je représenterais des pétales recourbés ; des coquillages, des choses

Pour Clarice Lispector, la question se dit : « qu'ai-je à voir avec l'opacité des choses ? »

Michel Foucault, dans *Le Corps utopique*, écrit ceci :

L'utopie, c'est un lieu hors des lieux, mais un lieu où j'aurais un corps sans corps, un corps qui sera beau, limpide, transparent, lumineux, vélocé, colossal dans sa puissance, infini dans sa durée, délié, invisible, protégé, toujours transfiguré ; et il se peut bien que l'utopie première, celle qui est la plus indéradicible dans le cœur des hommes, ce soit l'utopie d'un corps incorporel³.

Utopie, ou fantasme ? Les deux ?

A travers l'image du grain de raisin, V. Woolf crée dans l'écriture un corps minuscule, condensé, fantasmagorique, où se condense avec intensité le sentiment d'être, qui abolit la question d'être soi – ou du moins la rend secondaire. C'est l'utopie d'un autre corps qui soit vécu comme corps propre, mais non comme un moi ; c'est un corps de sensations, transfiguré, condensé dans une jouissance sensorielle à demi-transparente, toujours au bord de l'élucidation impossible

semi-translucides ; je tracerais des formes arrondies, à travers lesquelles on verrait la lumière, mais qui demeureraient imprécises. Tout serait vaste et indistinct ; et ce qu'on verrait on l'entendrait aussi ; des sons sortiraient de tel pétale ou de telle feuille – des sons indissociables de l'image. [...] L'appel des freux ne fait qu'un avec les vagues qui se brisent – une, deux, une, deux – et le clapotis, quand la vague reculait, se reformait encore, et que j'étais couchée là à moitié éveillée, en proie à une extase que je ne saurais décrire. » Virginia Woolf, *Instants de vie*, « Une esquisse du passé », Stock, Le Livre de Poche, Paris 1976, pp. 67–70.

² Le second grain de raisin, de Clarice Lispector :

« Les raisins, une grappe de raisins ronds et pulpeux et liquides et faussement transparents parce qu'ils donnent l'impression d'être transparents, mais on ne voit pas l'autre côté, tu es totalement opaque même si tu donnes une impression de transparence diable va en enfer qu'ai-je à voir avec l'opacité des choses et la tienne le taureau de la fazenda est corpuent les vaches ont une odeur de champs et de champs inédits le champ est à l'air libre entre la campagne et le ciel je respire l'air qui vole vole léger quand il commence à éventer mon visage nu et fou sans gouverne quand les fenêtres claquent et que battent les bourrasques de vent j'aime tellement être éventée comme de m'exposer à la bourrasque qui fait claquer portes et fenêtres de toute la maison. » Clarice Lispector, *Un Souffle de vie*, L'Ecole des femmes, Paris 1998, p. 108.

³ M. Foucault, *Le Corps utopique, les hétérotopies*, Nouvelles Editions Lignes, Paris 2009, p. 10.

des souvenirs littéralement archaïques. Par ce fantasme scopique du grain de raisin d'où l'on verrait le monde se trouve atteinte une extase d'exister, un ravissement de soi à soi ; le plaisir d'être sans être *soi* peut poétiquement et picturalement prendre forme. Le grain de raisin n'est pas un corps complètement transparent, c'est un corps translucide – c'est-à-dire qu'il se laisse traverser en résistant de sa matière, et en retenant captive, atténuée, une partie de la lumière, ce qui émousse la vision et adoucit les contours.

La chair du raisin est intermédiaire entre la matière opaque et la lumière, elle a cette rare qualité de médium qui, par définition, est l'élément qui *permet* la traversée. La chair du grain de raisin garde cette *translucidité*, c'est-à-dire les propriétés d'un filtre qui retient : au contraire de la transparence qui laisse passer toute la lumière, sans souligner l'élément qu'elle traverse. C'est cette translucidité qui m'intéressera ici particulièrement, comme trait d'un fantasme, et que résume le grain de raisin. Longtemps, dans l'art classique, la transparence absolue a été un impératif esthétique, ce que Roland Barthes a montré pour l'art classique. A présent, avec Virginia Woolf, le grain de raisin est la source de l'écriture comme un rêve à son ombilic, comme le nomme Freud : deux métaphores pour imaginer (pour rêver) les limites de ce qui peut être écrit et interprété... Comme l'écrit Freud, « Chaque rêve a au moins un endroit où il est insondable, pareil à l'ombilic, par lequel il est rattaché à l'*Unerkannt*, l'inconnu, le non connu. » L'ombilic est l'utopie d'un lieu d'où surgit le sens, en même temps que tout sens vient s'y abolir.

La psychanalyse « étendue » par la littérature

Qu'est-ce que, pour un psychanalyste, faire état de quelques pages de littérature ? Quelle méthode pour lire ces deux passages de Woolf et Lispector – une méthode qui ne soit pas de la psychanalyse appliquée ? Comment interpréter ? Quel est le sens à expliquer le choix de ces textes ? Choisir un passage, rapprocher des passages, c'est la fin de l'arbitraire, et par la force du rapprochement, c'est le début d'une anthologie. La pratique de l'anthologie est, comme Pascal Quignard l'indique dans son dernier livre, *Une Journée de bonheur*, une pratique poétique presque aussi ancienne que la poésie elle-même. Imaginons que nous fassions un bouquet non de fleurs (car étymologiquement, l'anthologie est un florilège) mais d'ombilics, une anthologie de grains de raisin : une coupe de fruits...

En psychanalyse, l'association libre ne fait pas anthologie ; elle crée, en se dépliant, en se liant, un réseau, un filet ou une trame d'associations qui permettent la surdétermination et les spirales du temps. Il y a un cas pourtant, où un psychanalyste s'est intéressé à la formation proprement *poétique* de l'anthologie : le psychanalyste anglais Bion (1897–1979), peu de temps avant sa mort, avait formé le projet de réunir une anthologie de poèmes à l'usage des *psychanalystes*. Lier, relier en une gerbe des poèmes à l'usage des psychanalystes, c'est le renversement de la psychanalyse appliquée à la *poésie*. Pour Bion, les poèmes de cette anthologie seraient choisis « non pas pour la pratique de la virtuosité psychanalytique à donner de soi-disant interprétations psychanalytiques, mais parce qu'une capacité psychanalytique étendue préparerait le lecteur à avoir une nouvelle expérience, si familiarisé qu'il puisse se croire avec l'expérience antérieure des mots. » C'est l'effet que produisent les quelques paragraphes de Virginia Woolf, comme si on n'avait jamais lu auparavant une telle manière d'évoquer un souvenir d'enfance.

Le projet de Bion d'une anthologie de poèmes, dont la finalité est une « capacité psychanalytique étendue » et la recherche d'un « langage d'accomplissement » pour le psychanalyste⁴ est une invitation à relier sa propre anthologie – échafaudages pour la pensée, pour la rêverie, c'est-à-dire aussi pour une « meilleure » écoute de l'analyste ? Bion n'a pas pu réaliser cette anthologie programmatique, mais il a lu les poètes à son propre compte, et en particulier le poète romantique anglais John Keats. Il lui a emprunté son idée de « capacité négative », qu'il nomme aussi « principe d'incertitude⁵ ». Pour Keats, la « capacité négative » est une « qualité qui contribu[e] à la formation d'un Homme d'Accomplissement. » Cela dans une lettre du poète à ses frères, citée par Bion dans *L'Attention et l'interprétation*), au début du chapitre 13 :

40

[nous avons disserté sur divers sujets ; plusieurs choses se sont raccordées dans mon esprit, et j'ai été immédiatement frappé de la qualité qui contribuait à la formation d'un Homme d'Accomplissement, particulièrement en Littérature, et que Shakespeare possédait à un degré si considérable –] je veux dire la capacité négative, celle de l'homme quand il est capable de se trouver au milieu d'incer-

⁴ Voir l'excellent article de J. Poulain-Colombier, « Lire Bion avec Keats. De la “capacité négative”, comme “principe d'incertitude” », *Le Coq-héron*, vol. 216, no. 1, 2014, pp. 114–116.

⁵ Bion écrit : « Keats découvrit un “principe d'incertitude” qu'il appela “capacité négative”. »

titudes, de Mystères, de doutes, sans irritation impatiente de parvenir à un fait et à la raison⁶.

Ainsi :

Toute séance doit se juger par comparaison avec la formulation de Keats (je veux parler de cette faculté négative, la capacité d'être dans l'incertitude, le mystère, le doute, sans s'irriter à quêter les faits et une raison), ceci afin de préserver d'une erreur qui reste couramment inaperçue et qui conduit à l'analyse interminable. Il s'agit du défaut d'observation et l'erreur est encore aggravée par l'inaptitude à évaluer la portée de l'observation⁷.

« Capacité psychanalytique étendue », voilà la question d'un psychanalyste qui par ailleurs s'interroge sur les formes de figurabilité et de formalisation des processus analytiques ; et sur le rapport entre l'observation, les sens, et le langage. Lire un écrivain en étant prêt à laisser s'étendre sa capacité psychanalytique par le texte est une authentique méthode de lecture. Je propose de lire dans cet esprit les souvenirs d'enfance, quasi-hallucinés, de Virginia Woolf, tels que nous les trouvons à titre posthume publiés dans *Instants de vie (Moments of being)*.

A ceci, ajoutons un deuxième élément de méthode, un corollaire, pour ainsi dire, emprunté cette fois à Blanchot, dont on connaît la mystérieuse et fondamentale (autant que rare) occurrence d'un souvenir d'enfance dans *L'Écriture du désastre* dans le fragment qui s'intitule « Une scène primitive ? ». Ce qui constitue le corollaire (ou peut-être est-ce une condition) de la capacité psychanalytique étendue, c'est l'aptitude à un flottement, à une indécidabilité. Dans *Le Livre à venir*, à propos de la nouvelle *Le Tour d'écrou*, de Henry James, Blanchot résume les termes du problème interprétatif. C'est un peu ce que Derrida pratiquera sous le nom d'« indécidabilité » ou ce que Ricœur appellera un « conflit d'interprétations ». Quand il écrit : « Gide découvrit que *Le Tour d'écrou* n'était pas une histoire de fantômes, mais probablement un récit freudien » c'est pour ajouter ensuite, que *précisément*, toute la force du récit réside dans ce

41

⁶ W. R. Bion, *L'Attention et l'interprétation*, Payot, Paris 1987, trad. J. P.-C., d'après *Letters of John Keats*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1954, pp. 51-54.

⁷ W. R. Bion, *ibid.*, 1987, p. 207. Voir aussi W.R. Bion *Réflexion faite*, PUF, Paris 1983, pp. 175-177, p. 185.

« probablement », « probablement un récit freudien », c'est-à-dire que si ce n'est que probable, cela demeure incertain, et l'on ne peut pas clore sur lui-même le cercle de l'interprétation. Ainsi, aucun geste critique ne peut, sauf à être abusif, fermer l'éventail des interprétations. « À la vérité, l'interprétation freudienne, si elle s'imposait avec l'évidence d'une solution, le récit n'y gagnerait qu'un intérêt psychologique momentané, et il risquerait d'y perdre tout ce qui fait de lui un récit⁸. » Freud ne donne pas de solutions. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'élucider un texte, mais de le laisser dans sa demi-transparence...

Tout ceci étant posé, il est temps d'en venir aux textes eux-mêmes. *Une Esquisse du passé* est un texte que Woolf a commencé le 18 avril 1939, pour se délasser d'une biographie qu'elle était en train d'écrire. Je précise que Virginia Woolf n'a lu Freud que très tard dans sa vie, et s'est défendue, même, de l'avoir lu attentivement. Alors même que son mari, Leonard Woolf, accueillait dans sa maison d'édition les premières, pionnières, traductions de Freud en anglais⁹. Il flotte sur Bloomsbury un parfum de psychanalyse, et le plus jeune frère de Virginia Woolf fit des études de médecine pour devenir psychanalyste, tout comme sa femme. Les Woolf ont rencontré Freud, Anna et Martin, au moment de leur arrivée à Londres, en 1938. Le récit de cet après-midi-là est à la fois touchant et guindé. Or dans l'évocation qui nous intéresse de quelques souvenirs d'enfance à la force infiniment germinative, c'est Virginia Woolf elle-même qui, comme en passant, fait le rapprochement avec le travail analytique sur les souvenirs comme si l'écriture de *Promenade au phare* était une sorte d'auto-analyse : « Je suppose que je fis pour moi-même ce que les psychanalystes font pour leurs malades. J'exprimai une émotion très ancienne et très profondément ressentie. Et en l'exprimant je l'expliquais et ensuite l'ensevelissais¹⁰. »

Virginia Woolf dans un grain de raisin

Je présenterai Virginia Woolf à travers des dates choisies. Certaines dates ont leur importance, nul ne l'a mieux dit que Paul Celan dans son *Discours du méridien*. Ce sont des dates de deuil, de deuils à répétition. Le 5 mai 1895, c'est le jour de la mort de Julia Stephen, la mère de Virginia Woolf. Deux années plus

⁸ M. Blanchot, *Le Livre à venir*, Gallimard, Paris 1959, p. 177.

⁹ A partir de 1924, travail conjoint de James Strachey et Ernest Jones.

¹⁰ *Instants de vie*, p. 90.

tard, c'est la mort de sa demi-sœur adorée Stella, emportée par la maladie en quelques semaines. En 1904, c'est la mort de son père Leslie Stephen. En 1906, la mort de son frère bien-aimé Thoby, emporté par la typhoïde. La mémoire des morts, l'importance de l'absence et des absents, sont ainsi omniprésents dans les romans de Virginia Woolf. Et peut-être que ses cahiers de souvenirs, et même ses romans, sont ce grand récit freudien dont Gide parle à propos de James.

Dans le passage proposé, le premier souvenir est de fait un souvenir de la mère. Dans toute l'œuvre de Virginia Woolf, la mère apparaît comme le « *personnage central*¹¹ » ; elle était d'une beauté légendaire et « à l'époque où nous, ses enfants, la connûmes, elle était le plus spontané, le plus actif et le plus exubérant des êtres humains¹². » Woolf évoque son hyper-sensibilité au temps qui passe, « ...comme si elle entendait perpétuellement le tic-tac d'une immense horloge et n'oubliait jamais qu'il cesserait un jour pour nous tous¹³. » C'est ainsi que les enfants voyaient leur mère prise constamment d'un « doute solennel », poursuivie par des « échos mélancoliques », qui répondaient « à quoi bon ? Peut-être n'y a-t-il pas d'avenir¹⁴ ». Sa mort en 1895, quand Virginia Woolf a treize ans, ouvre l'abîme d'un deuil indéfiniment traumatique : « A sa mort, le 5 mai 1895, commença une période de deuil à l'orientale... [...] quelque chose qui dépassait les limites normales du chagrin¹⁵... », ce qui eut pour conséquence « d'irréparables dommages en substituant à l'image d'une mère véritable et très vivante un simple fantôme sans attraits¹⁶ ».

Ce deuil découpe la vie de Virginia Woolf en séquences traumatiques à plusieurs temps : « la mort de la mère m'était restée un chagrin latent¹⁷, » et la mort de Stella peu après intervient comme « *le second coup de la mort*¹⁸ ». Ainsi, Virginia Woolf est-elle en mesure d'écrire : « Jusqu'à la quarantaine [...] la présence de ma mère m'obséda. J'entendais sa voix, je la voyais, j'imaginai ce qu'elle fe-

¹¹ *Instants de vie*, p. 41.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 27. Ici, *Memento mori. Et in Arcadia ego* : la mort, même au paradis.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

rait ou dirait, tout en vaquant à mes occupations quotidiennes¹⁹. » Cela se passe ainsi jusqu'à *Promenade au phare*, peut-être le plus « freudien » de ses romans – freudien, non pas donc au sens d'illustrer Freud, mais au sens d'une capacité à élargir l'apport freudien sur tel ou tel aspect. A propos de ce livre, elle dit :

Mais j'écrivis le livre très vite. Et quand il fut écrit, je cessai d'être obsédée par ma mère. Je n'entends plus sa voix ; et je ne la vois plus. Je suppose que je fis pour moi-même ce que les psychanalystes font pour leurs malades. J'exprimai une émotion très ancienne et très profondément ressentie. Et en l'exprimant je l'expliquais et ensuite l'ensevelissais²⁰.

Dans ce roman familial tourmenté, la fratrie joue un rôle essentiel mais d'une extrême ambivalence. Les frères et sœurs sont : Stella, Vanessa (dite Nessa), Thoby, Adrian. A la mort de la mère et de Stella, les enfants les plus jeunes créent « un cercle privé. Je le vois comme un petit centre délicat de vie intense, de sympathie spontanée, au sein de la vaste coquille pleine d'échos qu'était Hyde Park Gate²¹. » Mais il y a aussi les deux frères aînés, George et Gerald Duckworth, les deux demi-frères, issus du premier mariage de la mère de Virginia. Ils sont beaucoup plus âgés, et il ne fait plus guère de doute que Virginia a subi leurs violences incestueuses. On en trouve comme nulle part ailleurs témoignage (un témoignage cru) dans « Une esquisse du passé ». Woolf associe ces *épisodes* avec la terreur du miroir et des affects puissants de honte (de honte du corps, notamment).

Quant au père, c'est un personnage à la fois autoritaire et admiré, tyrannique et mettant sa bibliothèque à la disposition de sa fille. Ce n'est qu'après la mort du père qu'elle publie *Traversée des apparences*. Sans la mort du père, il lui aurait été impossible de mener une vie d'écriture, dit-elle (Journal, le 28 novembre 1928). Ce ne sont pas simplement des remarques biographiques : c'est ici même la possibilité de l'écriture qui est en jeu ; le choix des souvenirs hallucinés qui fournissent la source vive et intarissable de l'écriture.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Une Esquisse du passé. A sketch of the past

En effet, avec *Une Esquisse du passé*, nous sommes dans le vif du processus d'écriture de Virginia Woolf, et nous allons voir ce que résume le grain de raisin à soi seul : une utopie du corps, un fantasma essentiel. L'écriture est pour Woolf une impulsion/composition : une impulsion irréprouvable, et composition extrêmement complexe du passé, des souvenirs, des sensations et de scènes. Elle appelle cela dans son lexique « monter des scènes ». Voyons les différents noyaux, les différents grains constellés de cette impulsion/composition. Ce sont toujours des souvenirs d'enfance qui explosent dans leurs qualités sensibles, sensorielles. La chambre d'enfant en est l'épicentre.

« Je le vois – le passé – comme une avenue qui s'étend derrière moi ; un long ruban de scènes et d'émotions. Là, au bout de l'avenue, se trouvent encore le jardin et la chambre des enfants²². » Quelques lignes après, on lit l'expression d'un fantasma de l'origine, le fantasma de « revivre notre vie depuis le commencement », grâce à l'imagination fantaisiste d'un appareil qui enregistrerait et archiverait les impressions d'une si forte intensité qu'elles ont « une existence indépendante de notre esprit²³ », de sorte à pouvoir les revivre à l'identique. Leur intensité rendrait ces sensations, dans cette hypothèse de pure fantaisies, isolables car objectivables, séparables de l'esprit qui les a éprouvées.

C'est l'intensité qui signale une économie du souvenir affolé jusqu'à l'hallucination. Comme nous pouvons le lire dans le long passage cité, les souvenirs « premiers » ont en commun leur simplicité et leur intensité. Ici, on pense à la philosophie de Hume qui distingue les impressions et les idées, seulement par l'intensité avec laquelle elles nous affectent. Un souvenir premier est encore et toujours une sensation, et reste à l'état de sensation. Or la sensation passe à l'écriture par cette *image* de sensation, « la sensation, telle que je la formule parfois pour moi-même, d'être à l'intérieur d'un grain de raisin et de voir à travers une pellicule d'un jaune semi-translucide. »

Dans ce travail de remontée des sensations, Woolf est au bord de la dépossession de soi :

²² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

²³ *Ibid.*

le trait distinctif de ces deux souvenirs si vifs est la simplicité. Je suis à peine conscience de moi-même, mais seulement de la sensation que j'éprouve. Je ne suis que le réceptacle d'un sentiment d'extase, d'un sentiment de ravissement. Peut-être est caractéristique de tous les souvenirs d'enfance²⁴.

Etrangement, ce qui est un premier souvenir a toujours avant lui un souvenir premier : cette logique anti-linéaire est celle qui opère quand on travaille depuis la sensation. C'est pour cela que Woolf peut écrire « Je commence : mon premier souvenir », puis associer sur un souvenir, second dans l'ordre de l'association, mais qui pourrait bien être antérieur, ou plus originaire, en tout cas plus important. Elle témoigne par là de la fécondité de la construction – qui est une construction d'écriture, il ne peut pas en être autrement : après avoir commencé par son « premier souvenir », le fil des associations « [l]'amène à [s]on autre souvenir, qui semble être aussi [s]on premier souvenir et, en fait, est le plus important de tous [s]es souvenirs... » Peser le poids affectif d'un souvenir : c'est qu'il n'y a pas d'autre moyen pour approcher l'originaire, et cela, quand on est psychanalyste, on le sait ; on sait aussi, et Woolf en a l'intuition, que toute remontée du fil analytique, notamment l'interprétation du rêve, cesse d'être possible au point de l'ombilic du rêve. Mais pour avoir seulement accès à la source du souvenir d'enfance, il y a cette bulle qui traverse le temps et qui ajuste la vision : il y a ce grain de raisin depuis l'intérieur duquel tout serait observé, la femme adulte retrouvant l'*infans* en elle-même...

Comme le récit de rêve, l'écriture procède à l'organisation de ces souvenirs et c'est très exactement ce que Woolf nomme les « scènes ».

46

Ces scènes, soit dit en passant, ne sont nullement un truc littéraire, un moyen de rassembler, pour les nouer ensemble, d'innombrables petits fils. Innombrables, ils l'étaient en effet. Si je prenais le temps de les démêler j'en récolterais un bon nombre. Mais quelle qu'en soit la raison, je m'aperçois que monter des scènes est ma manière naturelle de témoigner du passé. Il y a toujours une scène qui refait surface ; tout arrangée, significative. [...] Serait-ce cette disposition aux « scènes » qui est à l'origine de mon impulsion d'écrire²⁵ ?

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Quelque chose d'un arrangement (d'un travail psychique, incontestablement) est toujours déjà à l'œuvre y compris dans la manière même que les « scènes » ont de remonter à la surface, mais ce travail psychique n'est en rien un « truc » : c'est *ainsi* et pas autrement que les sensations et les souvenirs viennent à être représentés et à passer à l'écriture.

Pour Woolf, l'écriture procède de chocs, et en particulier de chocs sensoriels. La sensation, et ce qu'elle appelle « la traversée des apparences » sont le propre d'« un destin psychique » façonné par des expériences de terreur et des chocs de « bonheur exceptionnel ». Ainsi dit-elle :

Je persiste à croire que l'aptitude à recevoir des chocs est ce qui fait de moi un écrivain ; c'est le témoignage d'une chose réelle au-delà des apparences ; et je la rends réelle en la traduisant par des mots. C'est seulement en la traduisant par des mots que je lui donne son entière réalité. Cette entière réalité signifie qu'elle a perdu son pouvoir de me blesser ; elle me donne, peut-être parce que, en agissant ainsi, j'efface la souffrance, l'immense plaisir de rassembler les morceaux disjoints²⁶.

La négativité explosive du choc des sensations est inséparable de leur l'éclat, de leur éblouissement et de leur « luminosité » ; et dans le même temps advient un *sens*, sur le mode d'un *insight*, d'une image mentale (« Alors, pendant cet instant, elle avait vu un embrasement ; une allumette brûlant dans un crocus »). « L'image mentale qui surgit inopinément est un événement linguistique, elle est supportée par une *métaphore*. »

C'est ce qu'elle appelle ses *moments of being*, ces « instants d'être ». Ces moments d'être se dressent « comme des échafaudages à l'arrière-plan : étaient la part invisible et silencieuse de ma vie d'enfant²⁷. » L'enfance est l'arrière-monde absolu de l'écriture. Chez Woolf, une scène construite est d'abord une scène à retrouver. Et bien sûr, une *scène matricielle* de l'écriture n'est pas nécessairement une scène primitive. Ce qui est intéressant, et que vous retrouvez dans ce passage, c'est tout le processus de passage du souvenir à la scène d'écriture (la première scène et les autres). Peut-être que ces indications éclairent-elles les

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

raisons pour lesquelles j'ai retenu ce passage, cité en note au début de ce texte, comme la possibilité d'une capacité psychanalytique étendue. Encore faut-il pour cela rêver, fantasmer, être à l'abri dans un grain de raisin, protéger par la chair douce et par une membrane souple et solide. L'image de la membrane revient de nouveau dans un autre passage :

Le souvenir suivant – tous ces souvenirs de couleur-et-son sont groupés à St. Ives – est beaucoup plus consistant. Il est extrêmement sensuel. C'était plus tard. Il me donne encore une sensation de chaleur ; comme si tout était mûr, bourdonnant, ensoleillé, embaumé d'innombrables odeurs à la fois. [...] Du jardin montait un murmure d'abeilles ; les pommes étaient rouges et or ; il y avait aussi des fleurs roses ; et des feuilles grises et argentées. Le bruissement, le fredonnement, l'odeur, tout semblait se presser voluptueusement contre quelque membrane ; non pour la rompre, mais pour vous entourer du bourdonnement d'une ivresse de plaisir si totale que je m'arrêtai net, humai l'air, regardai. Mais là encore je ne puis décrire ce ravissement. Il était ravissement, plutôt qu'extase²⁸.

La membrane à la fois protège et est sensible, hyper-sensible aux vibrations, à la chaleur...

Terreur du miroir

Vient un troisième souvenir, où le miroir a une fonction centrale et puissamment désorganisatrice (paradoxalement). Le miroir, c'est la honte et la culpabilité, non sans liens possibles avec le souvenir de l'agression sexuelle, de l'effraction du corps par ses frères aînés. Elle évoque l'insupportable précision de l'image dans le miroir²⁹. Ici, il est vraiment intéressant de lire cette auto-analyse :

A Talland House il y avait un petit miroir dans le hall. [...] En me dressant sur la pointe des pieds, je voyais se refléter mon visage. Vers six ou sept ans à peu près, je pris l'habitude de me regarder dans le miroir. Mais je ne le faisais que lorsque j'étais certaine d'être seule. J'avais honte. Un violent sentiment de culpabilité y semblait naturellement attaché. Mais pourquoi en était-il ainsi ?

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁹ Sur la menace représentée par le miroir, voir la nouvelle *The Lady in the Looking Glass* (1929), traduit par *La Dame dans le miroir*.

Suit toute une série d'associations, sur le principe de la surdétermination freudienne, associations qui lui permettent de remonter de l'horreur du miroir à la honte du corps. Comme dans une séance, comme dans une cure, le travail associatif se poursuit autour de l'exploration de cette haine du miroir. Et l'extraordinaire, c'est qu'elle raconte ensuite un rêve. « J'ai rêvé que je me regardais dans un miroir quand un horrible visage – une tête d'animal – est apparue soudain derrière mon épaule. Je ne peux être certaine qu'il s'agisse d'un rêve, ni que ce soit réellement arrivé. » « Ce sont là certains de mes premiers souvenirs³⁰. »

C'est ce chemin hybride, fait de reconstruction de souvenirs et de récit de rêve, qui lui permet d'écrire le récit de l'agression incestueuse de son frère, noyau traumatique rarement approché de si près dans toute son œuvre, à mi-chemin du littéraire et de la confession analytique... mais évidemment l'analyste est absent. Il y aurait maintes façons toutes différentes de l'aborder, car cela résonne en tous sens, dans une chambre d'échos agrandie. La tentative d'anamnèse passe par la fiction de la remontée au premier souvenir (« base »). C'est, je l'ai dit, une scène construite comme scène à retrouver. A retrouver comme prenant départ de l'impossible que « je » soit là. On pensera à Rousseau, dans les *Rêveries*, ce sentiment de naissance à l'existence³¹. Mais c'est un peu autre chose, car il y a toujours un passé *en amont du texte*. Il y a toujours une part invisible en amont, où se trouve le contexte éludé. Et c'est l'enfance, cet échaudage sur lequel tout s'appuie. Le Journal de Hyde Park Gate en témoigne : [dans le temps de l'enfance] « le monde nous donnait satisfaction³² ». Mais cette enfance, ce n'est pas l'enfance réelle, quoiqu'elle soit peut-être plus réelle que réelle. C'est une enfance reconstruite « du point de vue artistique », c'est-à-dire une utopie de l'enfance, un autre lieu en amont de l'écriture, qui tisse le traumatique et le fantasmatique.

L'utopie du corps : être dans un grain de raisin pour mieux être et mieux écrire

49

Le grain de raisin, c'est ainsi : un lieu utopique et fantasmatique. Dans le texte qui nous occupe, les vagues de la conception sont observées depuis la scène

³⁰ *Instants de vie*, p. 74.

³¹ Ou à Blanchot : « expérience métaphysique évidée », « condition de l'existence poétique » (Lacoue-Labarthe).

³² *Instants de vie*, « Réminiscence », p. 18.

fantasmatique de la vie intra-utérine qui va en découler, le grain de raisin avec le germe au milieu de l'ovule, la paroi translucide, « semi-transparente » de la matrice, et la « coupe » comme « base » de l'être ; c'est aussi le fantasme de coïncider avec l'instant de sa conception, joie suprême (« l'extase la plus pure »), mais dans le même temps impossible (« je sens qu'il est à peu près impossible que je sois là »).

La translucidité par excellence : les vertus de l'opacité. Les fonctions de l'écran. Les bienfaits de l'ombre. On l'a vu, le souvenir est soit protégé par l'enveloppe du grain de raisin, soit menaçant dans le miroir. Le souvenir, c'est à travers la lumière tamisée d'un grain de raisin, ou dans le miroir. C'est-à-dire : le grain de raisin, translucide, contre le miroir, ou plutôt que le miroir. L'épaisseur du raisin est non spéculaire, non réfléchissante. Cette propriété non réfléchissante est importante pour faire barrage. Le grain de raisin et sa translucidité sont l'élément, le *médium* à travers lesquels passe la lumière, le jour, quoique pas dans leur éclat maximal. Il y a l'idée de *traversée* par la lumière (et traversée des apparences), mais aussi les bienfaits de l'ombre.

La pellicule qui recouvre le grain de raisin est une enveloppe corporelle qu'il est toujours possible de perdre : « Je crois qu'en vérité nos corps sont nus. L'étoffe boutonnée ne nous couvre qu'en surface ; et sous ces trottoirs il y a des coquillages, des ossements et du silence³³. »

Et l'on se souvient de la métaphore de Freud dans *Au-delà du principe de plaisir* (*Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, 1920), pour donner une représentation figurée de la relation élémentaire entre un organisme et son milieu, il parle d'une « vésicule vivante », tenue à l'abri des excitations externes par une couche protectrice ou pare-excitations qui ne laisse passer que des quantités d'excitation tolérables. Cette couche vient-elle à subir une effraction étendue, c'est le traumatisme : la tâche de l'appareil psychique est alors de mobiliser toutes les forces disponibles afin d'établir des contre-investissements, de fixer sur place les quantités d'excitation affluentes et de permettre ainsi le rétablissement des conditions de fonctionnement du principe de plaisir³⁴.

50

³³ *Les Vagues* (1931), Virginia Woolf (trad. Michel Cusin), Gallimard, Paris 2012, p. 158.

³⁴ S. Freud (1920), *Au-delà du principe de plaisir*, OC, XV, PUF, Paris 1996, pp. 71, 97.

Woolf parle par images de cette paroi, de cette pellicule si nécessaire. C'est d'ailleurs un écran de fleurs qu'un des personnages féminins des *Vagues* interpose entre elle et la vie pour tenter de tamiser la violence de ce qu'elle en perçoit : « La vie était si terrible, que j'ai interposé entre elle et moi mille écrans. J'ai regardé la vie à travers des pétales de roses, à travers des pampres³⁵. »

Dans tous les cas, être dans un grain de raisin, c'est se prémunir contre les ténèbres et le non-être. Le grain de raisin est une petite monade protectrice et floue, non dépourvue de chaleur et de luminosité : car les rayons du soleil sont pour ainsi dire présumés par l'existence même du grain de raisin. C'est le contrepoint des *ténèbres* qui menacent toujours d'engloutissement, dans tous les romans. Engloutissement, profusion de ténèbres sans limites : les choses perdent alors leurs contours, sont toutes confondues. Car Virginia Woolf passe par des « moments d'être » *pleins*, mais aussi des moments de déréalisation, des moments d'éclipse de l'être et du sujet, où elle ne sait plus qui elle est : « Il y eut le moment de la flaque dans l'allée ; où sans raison imaginable tout devint soudain irréel. J'étais en suspens ; je ne pouvais franchir la flaque. J'essayai de toucher quelque chose. Le monde entier devint irréel³⁶. »

Le grain de raisin : ni transparence (du miroir) ni obscurité impénétrable. Le grain de raisin est l'huître perlière de Freud, c'est la perle et le grain de sable. (Charbonnier) « Elle est présente dans la pensée de Freud au moins depuis l'analyse de Dora (Freud, 1905) et s'offre à plusieurs lectures : le symptôme psycho-névrotique s'est formé à partir d'un symptôme de névrose actuelle (Freud, 1915-1917, p. 404), le fantasme est une perle qui contient un grain de sable traumatique, un reste pulsionnel non lié, déchargé dans le corps. Alors l'opposition entre traumatisme et fantasme est dépassée : le fantasme est la nacre formée, la transformation effectuée à partir du grain de sable traumatique. »

51

Le grain de raisin est une réponse à la question de Quignard : « Comment faire deux avec soi seul, faute qu'un autre être s'approche dans le monde et vous porte secours ? » Où l'on voit la nécessité de fantasmer un corps incorporel, ce grain de raisin charnu et translucide, à la membrane vivante et vibratile, où se secrète l'écriture magnifique du traumatique.

³⁵ V. Woolf, *Les Vagues*, LGF, Paris 2003, p. 200.

³⁶ *Instants de vie*, p. 70.

Rok Benčin*

“*Sans cause*”: Affect and Truth in Marcel Proust

There is a strong correlation between affect and truth in the work of Marcel Proust. In the narrative and conceptual framework of *In Search of Lost Time* there is no real truth without affect and no genuine affect without truth. Philosophical readings of Proust have indicated that the notion of truth found in his novel – one based on encounter and affect – has substantial implications for philosophy. Gilles Deleuze argued that Proust invented a new “image of thought” to rival the one proposed by philosophy: while the philosopher is a *friend* of thinking, the writer is *forced* to think.¹ More recently, Pierre Macherey followed this lead by claiming that Proust laid out a new “regime of the idea” based on affect.² As I will show in what follows, the new conceptualisation of truth developed in Proust’s novel does not suggest a reduction of truth to affect. Rather, the affective nature of truth in turn implies a certain metaphysics of affect.³

1. “... *en dehors des possibles*”

As explained by the narrator in *Time Regained*, the verity that the intellect on its own is able to extract from “immediate reality” in “full daylight” appears

¹ “Truth depends on an encounter with something that forces us to think and seek the truth.” Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. by Richard Howard, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2000, p. 16. See also the chapter “The Image of Thought”, pp. 94–102, where the implications of Proust’s critique of friendship for philosophy are laid out.

² Pierre Macherey, *Proust: entre littérature et philosophie*, Éditions Amsterdam, Paris 2013, p. 49.

³ Apart from the philosophical readings mentioned, the motivation for this essay also stems from a *missing* philosophical reading of Proust. While Alain Badiou is not a reader of Proust, it could be shown – although I will not pursue this reading here – that in his recent work on the immanence of truth and the metaphysics of happiness, he comes close to properly Proustian territory. As noticed by Jean-Jacques Lecercle, Badiou lacks a proper reading of prose (*Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2010, p. 158). While there is a poetry of being and event in Badiou (Mallarmé), there is no prose of the worlds. Perhaps Proust could be read as such.

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to be merely a “possible truth.”⁴ A real truth, on the other hand, is something that occurs and affects us, something that – although obscure at first – presents itself to us as necessary and inevitable, with the potential to reframe what we perceive as reality. For Proust’s narrator, possibilities are mere imaginary interpretations, while the real can only appear beyond the realm of the possible: “The infinite field of possibilities extends before us, and if by any chance the real presented itself to our gaze, it would be so far beyond the bounds of possibility that, dashing suddenly against the boundary wall, we should fall over backwards.”⁵ According to Macherey, it is not so much the content of the idea that is essential here, but rather the manner in which it appears or emerges as passing in flight. It can only be seen from a certain biased perspective and grasped (or missed) at a certain moment in time.⁶

While the Proustian notion of truth is thus marked by a constitutive *impurity*, the notion of affect is characterised by a fundamental *displacement*: the impressions gained in the haze of the presence of a beloved person are stored up as negatives to be developed later in the solitary inner darkroom; the sufferings of the jealous lover turn out to be the royal road to the joy of gaining knowledge of the general laws that govern human behaviour; mourning for a deceased grandmother takes place more than a year after her death (due to “that anachronism which so often prevents the calendar of facts from corresponding to that of our feelings”⁷), and, finally, the immense joy of reminiscence leaves the narrator with nothing but the seemingly unsolvable enigma of its truth. The displacement at the core of affect removes it from its immediacy and transforms it first into an indicator of another affect still to come and then into a sign that inevitably triggers the work of interpretation. Sticking to the photographic metaphor, the narrator describes the affect as a negative that has to be developed by the intellect: “Only when the intelligence illuminates it [...] we distinguish, and with how much difficulty, the shape of that which we have felt.”⁸ The de-

54

⁴ Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebookso3/0300691.txt>. (Citations from Proust are from C. K. Scott Moncrieff’s translation, available online at Project Gutenberg Australia; all accessed on 1 November 2017. The exception is *Swann’s Way*, where a more recent translation is used due to greater accuracy.)

⁵ Marcel Proust, *The Captive*, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebookso3/0300501.txt>.

⁶ Pierre Macherey, *Proust*, pp. 48–49.

⁷ Marcel Proust, *Cities of the Plain*, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebookso3/0300491.txt>.

⁸ Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*.

velopment of the negative, it has to be added, is not merely an interpretation but also a form of intervention. When the feeling of the grandmother's absence finally sinks in, the narrator reflects that "reality has no existence for us, so long as it has not been created anew by our mind."⁹

The affect is simultaneously the truth's index, ensuring its realness, and the sign of an evasive truth that still needs to be extracted from it. Truth and affect thus signify each other's immanent difference. Truths without affects are empty; affects without truths are blind. Following up on Macherey's assertion that what matters to Proust is the occurrence of truth, the manner of its apparition and the way it can be grasped or missed, one could say that the reflection on the relation between affect and truth is Proust's way of thinking *subjectivation*. A truth that is not empty is a truth that turns an individual into a subject, a truth that is only developed in the course of the process of subjectivation. This process, however, requires affects that are not blind, i.e. affects that are not only felt by the individual, but rather affects that give rise to another being from within the individual that can be the bearer and the developer of a truth.

Affect does not guarantee the realness of truth in the sense that a truth would only be real if an individual genuinely feels it to be true. Rather, affect is the Proustian way of bridging the gap between the individual, who can hold on to empty truths and feel blind feelings, to a subject that is able to develop a truth. The narrator is a witness of "the being within him," which "tasted the impression" brought about by reminiscence, "a being which only appeared when through the medium of the identity of present and past, it found itself in the only setting in which it could exist and enjoy the essence of things, that is, outside Time."¹⁰ From within a finite individual, concerned by his or her travails and pleasures, rises a subject that exists on the level of infinity, developing a truth.

Despite existing on an extra-temporal level, the occurrence of this being is completely dependent on an event of the reminiscence, the "miracle of analogy," as the narrator calls it, that might just as easily never have happened. The event, as Macherey observes, triggers the interpellation by which this being forces

⁹ Marcel Proust, *Cities of the Plain*.

¹⁰ Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*.

itself upon the individual.¹¹ These events are not particular to an individual, they are a singularity out of which something universal can be developed. The affect may first be personal, but subjectivation is a process of depersonalisation, which, as Macherey analyses, transforms the narrative subject from “*je*” to “*nous*”. The experience now no longer belongs only to the individual, but can be transmitted and shared by others.¹² Such a transmission is only possible if an affective experience of reminiscence is developed, if the affect is followed up by the work of writing, which enables the subject to trace the temporal existence of the extra-temporal.

2. “... *sans la notion de sa cause*”

This immortal subject enters the stage in the famous madeleine scene, some fifty pages into the novel. The narrator suddenly ceases to feel mediocre, contingent, and mortal, all on the merit of a specific kind of pleasure, provided by the taste of the tea-soaked cake. The affect is described as follows: “A delicious pleasure had invaded me, isolated me, without my having any notion as to its cause.”¹³ Contrary to the ordinary pleasures of cake eating, the madeleine is not the cause of the affect. The pleasure – in isolation – invades the narrator as something that suspends the immediate reality and, as can be read in a later scene, attaches him to another reality in which a “true life” could be led. In his attempts at interpretation, the narrator is perplexed by this experience that “infinitely” exceeds the immediate sensation of taste:

Where could it have come to me from – this powerful joy? I sensed that it was connected to the taste of the tea and the cake, but that it went infinitely far beyond it, could not be of the same nature. Where did it come from? What did it mean? How could I grasp it?¹⁴

56

The pleasure is not only without a cause, but challenges the very notion of causality. The sensation, concludes the narrator, leads to a truth that cannot mere-

¹¹ Pierre Macherey, *Proust*, p. 191.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹³ Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, trans. by Lydia Davis, Penguin Books, London 2004, p. 45.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

ly be discovered but that will still have to be created – as a cause: “Seek? Not only that: create. It is face-to-face with something that does not yet exist.”¹⁵

The joy of the madeleine, however, is *not* the affect that sets the novel in motion. According to the very logic of *Search*, the novel should not have started without an affect related to a reminiscence, an instance of involuntary memory that enables the lost time to be regained and thereby the novel to start. And yet, dozens of pages precede the madeleine scene, pages that introduce us to the town of Combray, to the young narrator’s sensibilities that will subsequently develop into a love of art, to his relation to his mother, which sets the tone for his later behaviour towards women, and to the figure of Mr Swann, who introduces the complexity of social relations that will come to be examined in great detail. All the great subject matters of the novel are thus laid out *before* the joy without a cause announces the central enigma to be unravelled.

The novel actually starts with another affect, the affect of *étonnement*, i.e. amazement or astonishment, brought about by a sudden awakening from a light slumber. In the very first paragraph, the narrator recounts how he would often fall asleep reading a book, his immersion into the fictional world lingering on in his mind. The awakening would disperse this immersion – not by delivering the narrator back to reality but by plunging him into the worldless dead of night: “immediately I recovered my sight and I was amazed to find a darkness around me soft and restful for my eyes, but perhaps even more so for my mind, to which it appeared a thing without cause, incomprehensible, a thing truly dark.”¹⁶ The amazement brought about by this “*chose sans cause [...] chose vraiment obscure*” reveals both a physics and a metaphysics of affect, which pave the way for the logic of reminiscence that will structure the novel as a whole.

If one wakes up after falling asleep in an unfamiliar position, one loses the sense of orientation that informs the awakening body of its coordinates in time and space. The body’s memory thus recalls other nights and other rooms in which it has woken up in a similar position: “the memory of its ribs, its knees, its shoulders, offered in succession several of the rooms where it had slept, while around

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

it the invisible walls, changing place according to the shape of the imagined room, spun through the shadows.”¹⁷ This is how the narrator is first, well before the madeleine scene, transported back to his childhood bed in Combray, waking up wondering why his mother failed to come and kiss him goodnight.

The physics of uncomfortable limbs is supplemented by a metaphysics of darkness. The narrator imagines the time of sleep as the simultaneity of possible worlds, while the moment of awakening into darkness seems much like a moment of uncertainty in the decision process of the Leibnizian creator. “A sleeping man holds in a circle around him the sequence of the hours, the order of the years and worlds,” explains the narrator.¹⁸ However, faced with the thing without cause, “their ranks can be mixed up, broken.”¹⁹ The obscure thing without cause seems to suggest the Leibnizian question that Heidegger regarded as fundamental for any metaphysics: Why is there something rather than nothing? Since it implies the contingent nature of the world as a construction, it might very well provoke the anxiety of worldlessness, disregarding any construction of a world as merely a phantasy. If a man

dozes off in a position still more displaced and divergent, after dinner sitting in an armchair for instance, then the confusion among the disordered worlds will be complete, the magic armchair will send him travelling at top speed through time and space, and, at the moment of opening his eyelids, he will believe he went to bed several months earlier in another country.²⁰

In the very moment of awakening one is stuck in between worlds. Robbed of the sense of being-in-the-world, one becomes, to follow up on the Heideggerian reference, like an animal, poor-in-the-world: “when I woke in the middle of the night, since I did not know where I was, I did not even understand in the first moment who I was; I had only, in its original simplicity, the sense of existence as it may quiver in the depths of an animal.”²¹

58

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

However, the affect the narrator describes as a consequence of the encounter with darkness is not anxiety, but amazement. The obscure thing is not the ultimate real beyond the construction of the world, but the gap that makes the world reconstructable. The Proustian logic of worlds is more cosmogonic than it is apocalyptic. The amazement based on the thing without cause is thus the logical precondition of the joy without cause that itself leads to the truth of the recreation of the world of Combray.

The affect of amazement, however, cannot be subjectivised. It is the affect of possibility, while a truth – as we have already observed – requires an encounter, which introduces a degree of necessity or at least inevitability. Subjectivation requires a passage from the thing to an object, i.e. the passage from possibility to necessity via contingency. “There is a great deal of chance in all this,”²² the narrator reflects when – just before the madeleine scene – he asks himself if the past, and with it the world of Combray, is lost forever. The past world can be recreated only if we have the luck to stumble upon the right object: “The past is hidden outside the realm of our intelligence and beyond its reach, in some material object (in the sensation that this material object would give us) that we do not suspect. It depends whether we encounter this object before we die, or do not encounter it.”²³ The nature of the object is purely contingent, but the chance encounter with the object provides a degree of necessity to the world to be recreated.

Combray might not be the best of possible worlds, but it is the necessary, inevitable one. The Proustian metaphysics is thus a certain kind of dismantled Leibnizianism. On the one hand, there is the multiplicity of possible worlds and, on the other, the isolated monad, i.e. an alien object out of which a whole world could be unfolded, like the Japanese game described by the narrator, the game of putting folded pieces of paper into a bowl of water and watching them unfold into the shape of flowers, houses, or human figures.

This dismantled Leibnizianism actually corresponds to the dual use of Leibniz in 20th century aesthetics. On the one hand, many philosophers and theoreticians tried to use the notion of a possible world to describe works of fiction. On

²² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

the other, Adorno used the concept of a windowless monad as a conceptual metaphor for the modern work of art. The monad in this sense is not an element of the world but an object alienated from it. Being windowless, it does not represent reality, but rather conveys its truth: not the theological, pre-established harmony, but the socially pre-established disharmony.

Nonetheless, none of these options are applicable to Proust. The fiction created by the novel cannot be explained as a possible world since possibility implies arbitrariness, lacking the verity that can only be provided by an encounter with something real outside the realm of possibility. On the other hand, the encounter with the worldless monadic object resulting in an affect without a cause is merely a negative imprint of a world still to be developed by the work of art. For Proust, the artwork is not a windowless monad harbouring the truth of the world's disharmony, but rather a monadless window enabling the *work* of fiction, i.e. the work of reframing and recreating the world.

3. “... *un plaisir irraisonné*”

This allows us to propose a metaphysical definition of the Proustian affect. An affect related to truth is an affect brought about by the detachment of objects from the frame of the world. On the one hand, the frames of other possible worlds invade the actually existing one, frames lacking in objective materiality, while on the other hand, one stumbles into objects that appear alien to this world, monadic objects that contain, in a folded way, a negative of another world that may or may not be developed, depending on an event.

60

This takes us back to the “*plaisir irraisonné*” first evoked in the madeleine scene, the joy without a cause but not without an object in which an object is isolated from its immediate spatial and temporal reality, but which already implies the work of development and reframing. After the world of Combray is reconstructed, we gain insight into the childhood promenades of the narrator, during which sensible events begin to invade him:

[S]uddenly a roof, a glimmer of sun on a stone, the smell of the road would stop me because of a particular pleasure they gave me, and also because they seemed

to be concealing, beyond what I could see, something which they were inviting me to come take and which despite my efforts I could not manage to discover.²⁴

Trying to think of a serious philosophical topic to once write about, the young Marcel is instead subject to the "unreasoning pleasure" brought about by "a particular object with no intellectual value and no reference to any abstract truth."²⁵

Hence, the madeleine reminiscence has two predecessors: the amazement linked to darkness as a logical predecessor and the childhood sensible events as a temporal predecessor. What is striking is that the secret to be developed has already announced itself in the impressions of a child, who strictly speaking has nothing to remember, no different temporal layers that could coincide (which would also confirm Deleuze's claim that memory is a topic of secondary importance to Proust). Thus, what I am proposing is a reading that puts the emphasis not on the relation between different temporal layers and the continuity of time – and, for that matter, not even on the relation between spatial continuity and discontinuity – but rather on the relation between isolated, worldless impressions and the reframing of the world, or, in other words, the relation between monadic objects and "monadless" frames.²⁶

One of these childhood impressions, the famous observation of the church towers of Martinville from Dr Percepied's carriage, delivers an illusionistic specta-

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²⁶ For Proust, one of the primary devices that manage to isolate objects by cutting the symbolic and imaginary ties that place it into the world is photography. In a scene from *The Guermantes Way* (<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebookso3/0300411.txt>), the narrator suddenly sees his grandmother outside the "animated system" of his affection. The unexpected and depersonalised gaze allows him to see her mechanically, as on a photographic plate, as "a dejected old woman whom I did not know." In *The Captive*, the photographic metaphor is evoked again in relation to Albertine, the narrator's great amorous obsession. Albertine is imagined as a fragmentary series of "snapshots", while the totality of Albertine remains unreachable, fuelling the narrator's jealousy: "We imagine that love has as its object a person whom we can see lying down before our eyes, enclosed in a human body. Alas, it is the extension of that person to all the points in space and time which the person has occupied and will occupy." Albertine exists simultaneously in several worlds, many of which remain obscure, undevelopable to the narrator. While photography provides the metaphor of "development", it does not itself allow the passage from a monadic object to the reframing of the world.

cle of otherwise immobile objects changing their position in space. Macherey comments that Proust is implying not only the lesson of Kant's Copernican revolution (Proust himself compares Kant's revolution to the one implied by Flaubert's style), but also that *a priori* transcendental forms are not unchangeable, which renders the artistic reframing of the world possible.²⁷ Macherey suggests that the ultimate meaning beyond the secret of the Proustian joy is precisely its lack of a reason itself. The truth can only, at first, be revealed by the intermediary of an affect because it is a truth that does not yet exist, that still needs to be developed. Joy stands for "the radical experience of rupture," which demands "a jump into the void, replacing the world full of acquired certainty with a network of uncertainties that unwinds in a precarious equilibrium between the lost time that leads from existence to death and the time regained that opens the path to eternity, constantly threatening to turn from one side to the other."²⁸ Monadic objects are thus joined by excessive frames that rival the general framework of reality. Such aesthetic reframings of the world are first observed in Elstir's painting. The narrator perceives the painter's studio as a "laboratory of a new creation of the world."²⁹ Elstir manages to capture in his paintings what the narrator can only fleetingly perceive in the singular impressions that bring him such joy. The narrator describes how sometimes, when observing the sea through a window, he would be "led by some effect of sunlight to mistake what was only a darker stretch of sea for a distant coastline, or to gaze at a belt of liquid azure without knowing whether it belonged to sea or sky."³⁰ As soon as the impression passes, reason would re-establish the distinctions of reality and find the causes of the illusory impressions. However, nature is itself ultimately unreasonable, which is why only art's fiction can properly represent it: "But the rare moments in which we see nature as she is, with poetic vision, it was from those that Elstir's work was taken."³¹

62

The aim of art, the narrator explains, is a "revelation, impossible by direct and conscious means, of the qualitative difference there is in the way in which we look at the world." This world-view, however, is not an expression of individu-

²⁷ Pierre Macherey, *Proust*, p. 134.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²⁹ Marcel Proust, *Within a Budding Grove*, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebook03/0300401.txt>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

ality, but rather a subjective development of a "reality far removed from the one we live in," which is made possible by art:

By art alone we are able to get outside ourselves, to know what another sees of this universe which for him is not ours, the landscapes of which would remain as unknown to us as those of the moon. Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world, our own, we see it multiplied and as many original artists as there are, so many worlds are at our disposal, differing more widely from each other than those which roll round the infinite and which, whether their name be Rembrandt or Ver Meer, send us their unique rays many centuries after the hearth from which they emanate is extinguished.³²

The rupture of the sensible experience takes us from *the* world as reality and totality to the precarity of *a* world that still has to be fictionally constructed.

4. "... les anneaux nécessaires d'un beau style"

The correlation between affect and truth thus implies another correlation, the one between event and world. *The* world as a frame of totality is dissolving due to events: appearances of worldless objects and excessive frames that suggest a multiplicity of worlds. On the other hand, the events disappear without a trace if the truth they imply is not developed. The truth, as we have seen, is not individual but singular and universally addressed; it entails the construction of *a* world to be shared, which is the task, according to Proust, of an "original artist." The concept of world that Proust invents here is not a reference to the ultimate reality or totality, nor to a transcendental construction, but rather a properly fictional concept of world, inasmuch as fiction entails the work of developing a truth, the negative of which appeared as a sensible event.

63

The concept of fiction implied here resonates with the one developed recently by Jacques Rancière: "A fiction is not the invention of an imaginary world. Instead it is the construction of a framework within which subjects, things, situations can be perceived as coexisting in a common world and events can be identified and linked in a way that makes sense. Fiction is at work whenever a sense of

³² Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*.

reality must be produced.”³³ The problem for Rancière, but also for Proust, as I would like to argue, is what kind of narrative and temporal structure will come to shape the world, or, in other words, which of the possible worlds will come to be the common one.

The intrusion of sensible events isolated from the plots that shape the narrative reality is what defines modern literature, according to Rancière. Plots and characters dissolve into a series of sensible micro-events – the “shower of the atoms”, to use the reference to Virginia Woolf – in which the literature of the aesthetic regime discovers its metaphysics, a Deleuzian molecular ontology. Rancière claims, however, that while the “the ontology of the new fiction is monist, [...] its practice can only be dialectical: [...] a tension between the great lyricism of impersonal Life and the arrangements of the plot.”³⁴ Rancière has often discussed this tension of modern literature via the opposing principles of Proust’s novel, in which the linear logic of the plot is opposed to a string of metaphors and sensible epiphanies.

Two kinds of temporality are implied here, according to Rancière, the ones that Aristotle described as separating poetry and historiography. On the one hand, the causal linkage of what could have happened, according to the possibilities of character and plot formation, and on the other, the purely metonymical succession of events that simply occur. While the former provides a framework that implies division and hierarchy, the latter implies a “democracy of sensible coexistences.”³⁵ Again, the sensible events should not be understood as monads, harbouring the affective truth of the moment against any kind of duration, but as windows allowing “unexpected connections from this random point,” thereby “engendering another line of temporality.”³⁶

64

From this perspective, the question is whether Proust’s novel is built around a paradox of simultaneously building the Aristotelian plot and dissolving it in a series of micro-events, as repeatedly suggested by Rancière himself, or if the

³³ Jacques Rancière, *Modern Times: Essays on Temporality in Art and Politics*, Multimedialni institut, Zagreb 2017, p. 13.

³⁴ Jacques Rancière, *The Lost Thread: The Democracy of Modern Fiction*, trans. by Steven Corcoran, Bloomsbury, London 2017, p. 62.

³⁵ Jacques Rancière, *The Lost Thread*, p. 13.

³⁶ Jacques Rancière, *Modern Times*, pp. 33–34.

Proustian narrative is an attempt to construct an alternative to the Aristotelian temporal logic and to provide a model of establishing another kind of temporality based on the connections that can be established on the basis of singular sensible events.

The Proustian loss of time indicates that the continuity of the world and the succession of time are broken. However, *Search* is not aimed at regaining this continuity through involuntary memory. The time regained rather refers to the development of a truth out of the sensible events that themselves are isolated both from the continuity of the world and the succession of time. Nevertheless, if the affect of joy stemming from sensible impressions suspends the continuity of time, why, then, was it necessary to introduce the reminiscence and the seeming reconstruction of the same continuity through memory?

Sensations by themselves cannot form a relation nor develop the truth of the affect. Such a development is triggered by involuntary memory, which does not, however, reveal a pre-established relation. Rather, it is completely dependent on the contingent connections that can only be formed once the continuities of time and the world have been lost and certain objects have been affectively isolated. If another kind of temporality is to be constructed, the affect induced by the sensible event must form connections and reframe the world, i.e. transform the monad into a window. According to the narrator, the writer posits reality as "a relation between those sensations and those memories which simultaneously encircle us[;] that unique relation which the writer must discover in order that he may link two different states of being together for ever in a phrase."³⁷ Such a relation does not entail a reconstruction of reality, but a recreation of the world through style:

In describing objects one can make those which figure in a particular place succeed each other indefinitely; the truth will only begin to emerge from the moment that the writer takes two different objects, posits their relationship, the analogue in the world of art to the only relationship of causal law in the world of science, and encloses it within the circle of fine style.³⁸

³⁷ Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

The reference to science does not imply a reconstruction of the Aristotelian narrative logic, but rather the necessity missing from an ornamental conception of style. In this sense, style is a procedure of the development of a truth from the negative of an affect, a singular window, through which a world is to be framed by the writer as subject. The narrator concludes: “The relationship may be of little interest, the objects commonplace, the style bad, but unless there is that relationship, there is nothing.”³⁹ Instead of a good description – a bad style: this is the Proustian formula for (artistic) truth.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Christoph Sökler*

“White-heating the Real” – On Music’s Force Towards Impossible Nudeness

In what follows I would like to develop some thoughts about music and – maybe – a force towards a utopian and impossible state of nudeness that the experience of music can bring about, as I would like to argue. For this argument I will reconstruct something Alain Didier Weill first brought up in 1976 in the form of an intervention at Jacques Lacan’s seminar.¹ This intervention is a particular – even singular – one in all of Lacan’s seminars, as it is about music. While Lacan – and Freud – famously commented many times on literature or the visual arts – music almost never functions as a field of reference in Lacan’s speaking and writing. And that is also true for the other way around: In the aesthetics of music psychoanalysis has not played a major role – at least not to the extent that it has done so in the aesthetics of the visual arts, the aesthetics of cinema, or literature studies.²

The lack of references to music in Lacan is, as François Regnault has pointed out, not due to the fact that Lacan was not interested in music. On the contrary: According to Regnault, Lacan was an eager follower of contemporary music, which at the time in Paris was very much a lively scene. Regnault offers another explanation for the lack of musical reference in Lacan: Whatever Lacan does

¹ He has later published a script for his intervention: Alain Didier Weill, “Quand la musique nous entend. Contribution à la question de la pulsion invoquante.”, accessed 23 May 2017, https://www.alaindidierweill.com/app/download/5782699042/Quand+la+musique+nous+entend_1.pdf. As far as I am aware, there is no English translation of Didier Weill’s text. Every quotation is therefore my own translation from the original French text. There is also another version of Didier Weill’s intervention available at *staferla*: Alain Didier Weill, “Intervention”, in: *L’Insu que sait de l’une bévvue s’aile à mourre*, 21–25, accessed 31 July 2017, <http://staferla.free.fr/S24/S24%20L’INSU....pdf>. I will use this version when indicated, again in my own translation.

² For the purposes of this article, I will not give a definition of what I take to be music in the first place. As these thoughts are still tentative and preliminary, I would for the moment rather have it the other way around and try to think different forms of organised sounds via the notion of music that I would like to outline here. Certainly, for a more detailed argument both a more precise definition of music and the implications of its positioning in the symbolic order would be necessary.

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with art, it never functions as a philosophical comment; he is not interested in the field of aesthetics as such. If art is mentioned, it is always used to make it somehow productive for Lacan's sole purpose: a return to Freud in psychoanalysis. So maybe the point is – Regnault claims – that music is in no way *useful* for psychoanalysis.³

And at first glance that seems rather convincing: Psychoanalysis, the talking cure, depends on signifiers that can be metaphorised and metonymised. It works with double meanings, sliding meanings, ambi- and polyvalences. In short: if the unconscious is structured like a language, music might just not be something useful in order to advance psychoanalytical theory. While the concept of the gaze as object cause of desire is partially developed by analysing or at least referencing actual paintings, the voice as partial object and the singing voice may be something completely different: Jacques-Alain Miller once said that the voice as *objet a* in no way belongs to the register of sound.⁴

On the other hand, “psychoanalysing” music also has its difficulties: either it is done mostly by focusing on the lyrics (in the case of music with words) or the drama (in the case of opera) or it plays around with associations that are themselves uttered and then treated as signifiers. Or – and that option is certainly the opposite of psychoanalysis – it makes sense of music or detects a deeper meaning of music, be it in respect to the composer or the lyrical Ego of the poem that was set to music. None of these strategies are able to point out in which way music differs from language. All of them treat music as if it were a language. Insofar as music is something that differs from language, music and psychoanalysis might just be of no use to each other.

68

There have been many attempts to read music as language. In fact, one might even say that conventional (and by conventional I mean conventional in the second half of the 20th century) analysis of music is always structural. It is about rhythms, harmonies, single tones, relations, repetitions, structures. And of course there have been refinements and criticisms of such an analysis, which still refer to themselves as a “semiology of music”. Jean-Jacques Nattiez in his

³ See François Regnault, *Lacan'sche Ästhetik: Vier Vorlesungen*, trans. Christoph Sökler, Tura + Kant, Vienna, Berlin 2016, p. 36. Again my translation.

⁴ See Jacques-Alain Miller, “Jacques Lacan et la voix”, *Quarto*, No. 54 (June 1994).

“Discourse and Music” widens the scope of his semiology by including not only the structural analysis of the work, but also its history and perception.⁵

It does not come as a surprise that in recent years neuroscience has also offered theories as to the relationship between language and music and as usual falls back on paradigms that seemed to be out-dated long ago. I do not want to dive into this more deeply, but I would like to argue one point: There is no doubt that music speaks to us, that music can be thought in relations of signifier and signified, that a structuralist or a semiotic or even a linguistic approach to music is possible. Music can be thought of and it can be researched as a language. But I do think that this approach to music misses what is most musical in music. Music is not reducible to any symbolic order. And it is certainly not – and I quote here from an interview with the neuroscientist Francis A. Sooy – another means of communication, which communicates “some message of significance using sound” and it does not simply involve “the sharing of ideas and experience.”⁶

I agree with Nattiez that the relation between music and language (and again: a great deal of musicology depends on just that relation) has to be thought by including the listening subject. But I think the analysis has to be taken a step further: I want to suggest that music is situated at the rim of language, at the border between language and non-language. Music is neither just another language with its own rules, conditions, and possibilities, nor is it a universal language, as the above-quoted neuroscientist would have it. But neither is it the opposite of language as that which can communicate what is not communicable in words, or as that which could facilitate an experience of the sublime.

Music – to quote and refute one last position regarding the relationship between music and language – is certainly not the paradisiacal precursor of language. In a speech Peter Sloterdijk delivered at the opening of the Luzern Festival in 2005, he claimed that music is a regression towards our being inside the body of the mother, her heartbeat and the sound of her voice being the referent for what we

⁵ Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Toward a Semiology of Music*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1990.

⁶ “Music as the Brain’s Universal Language”, accessed 19 May 2017, http://www.dana.org/Briefing_Papers/Music_as_the_Brain_s_Universal_Language/.

basically hear when we listen to music.⁷ I do not want to go more deeply into an analysis of Sloterdijk's claim here, but from what I will say it will become clear that what I think is quite the opposite of that position.

I want to present an account of listening to music that could be (and has been by Alain Didier Weill) called experimenting with lack. One way of saying this is to put it topologically: Music is always on the other side. If you think of it as language, it will make your thinking collapse; if you think of it as the other of language, it will do the same. And only as this neither/nor could music – I think – facilitate another kind of thinking or another relationship to the Other.

That is my claim and, as I said, I want to call on Alain Didier Weill as a witness – via a reconstruction of his intervention at Lacan's seminar. Didier Weill distinguishes certain logical times in the experience of listening to music. They are logical times because they cannot be put into any chronological order, they sort of happen all at the same time and are only distinguished for the sake of their "*Darstellbarkeit*", their ability to be represented. They are times because they happen as relations or as "torsions between the subject and the Other."⁸ To be clear: he is talking about the experience of *listening* to music, about the effects that are produced in a listener. It is not about making music, performing music, or composing music.

The first logical time of the listener's experience according to Didier Weill is characterised by music responding to a question that inhabits the listener without him knowing it. Or to be more precise: music makes this question appear as antecedent. The listener is inhabited by a lack and music makes this lack appear by responding to it without filling it. It just "says it directly."⁹ So it is as if there were a "music-making subject"¹⁰ that responds to a lack that inhabits "me" as a listener. The response is somehow inspired by that lack which is unconscious – I do not know anything about it. The only thing I know is that music responds

70

⁷ Peter Sloterdijk, "La musique retrouvée", in: *Der ästhetische Imperativ: Schriften zur Kunst*, Peter Weibel, Fundus-Bücher (eds.), Philo & Philo Fine Arts, Hamburg 2007, pp. 10ff.

⁸ Didier Weill, "Intervention", p. 21.

⁹ Didier Weill, "Quand la musique nous entend. Contribution à la question de la pulsion invoquante.", p. 2.

¹⁰ Didier Weill, "Intervention", p. 21.

to this lack that I have not known before. But the music that responds does not know anything about that lack either. It is in no way a question of knowledge.

Maybe that lack that inhabits the listening "me", Didier Weill goes on, is the lack of the music itself. It was maybe music's own lack that made the lack in the listening subject appear in the first place.

With the meeting of these two lacks Didier Weill comes dangerously close to the notion of fusion: Via music it would be possible to fuse with the Other. It would enable the listener to get rid of that alienating lack, which finally would dissolve in an oceanic feeling. If it were like that the non-chronological series of torsions would either end here or repeat itself on and on. No matter how impossible it would be to remain fused with the other, music would be an occasion of experiencing this never-to-be-realised state of completeness. In short: music would be a narcissistic experience. Is not the child in front of a mirror in Lacan's text about the mirror stage experiencing such an imaginary fusion?¹¹ Music as imaginary completeness would function as nothing more than a mirror, a pacifying response to the split subject.

Or – and this would be just the reverse side of the same thing: Music as a feeling of fusion would function as the dissolution of the subject, as a Dionysian feeling of the subject, which would be falling apart into affects, intensities, and becoming. The fusion of lacks could either fantasmatically stabilise the subject or dismantle him. And it could do both at the same time. Stopping here would bring about identity *and* dissolutive repetition. We could here recall the famous passage in Deleuze's and Guattari's "A Thousand Plateaus": "Music is never tragic, music is joy. [...] Music has a thirst for destruction, every kind of destruction, extinction, breakage, dislocation."¹² This thirst for destruction that is attributed to music brings to mind the strong connection between narcissism and aggressiveness so predominant in Lacan, for example in "The Mirror Stage" when he speaks about the "evident connection between the narcissistic libido

¹¹ Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience", in: *Écrits: The first complete edition in English*, Norton, New York; London 2006, pp. 75–81.

¹² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1996, p. 299.

and the alienating function of the I, the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other.”¹³

But for Didier Weill the two lacks do not fuse with each other, not as a narcissistic experience and not as a Dionysian feeling – they remain separated, as the lacks are not “identical” but “similar”¹⁴. This leads to a second relation (again, not in a chronological way) – quite the opposite of the first one: The listening subject now responds to the lack in the musical Other. The subject uses the very notes that responded to him, which “were chanted for him”, to “enchant” the other.¹⁵ At this point Didier Weill recalls the strange motion that while listening to music it is as if the music were produced by the listening subject himself: “The subject can cease to be the one who is apprehended by the desire of music to become the one who desires to make himself heard.”¹⁶ This is the first torsion in the relation between the subject and the Other.

It is at this point that Didier Weill – being the Lacanian that he is – points to an analogy in structure. If listening to music were based on this first torsion and if it circled around these two separated, non-identical but similar lacks, the relation between music and the listening subject would simply have the same structure as love. Is not Lacan’s myth of love in the seminar on transference exactly this: The hand that reaches for the ripe fruit or the flower in full bloom only to discover that the ripe fruit or the flower becomes a hand that is reaching itself for the other hand, which then becomes a fruit or a flower? And Lacan is careful not to stop here as this could be misunderstood as some kind of symmetry: “The structure in question is not this symmetry and this return. So that this symmetry is not really one. Insofar as the hand stretches out, it is towards an object. It is in the hand that appears from the other side that the miracle lies.”¹⁷

¹³ Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience”, p. 79.

¹⁴ Didier Weill, “Quand la musique nous entend. Contribution à la question de la pulsion invoquante.”, p. 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Jacques Lacan, “The Seminar of Jacques Lacan VIII”, trans. Cormac Gallagher, 46, accessed 23/5/2017, www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/THE-SEMINAR-OF-JACQUES-LACAN-VIII-Draft-21.pdf.

But Didier Weill does not stop there either. He describes yet another logical time, another torsion, another relation between the subject and the Other. He thinks of this third logical time as a possibility for the subject to experiment with two different lacks – its own lack and the lack of the Other “without the mediation of a fantasmatic object.”¹⁸ Music – so he claims – opens up the possibility of directly enjoying the barred Other, the Other that is fundamentally inconsistent and lacking. Let me quote a longer passage here:

The subject – after having encountered the impossibility of meeting both the object that the Other lacks and the object which he himself lacks – [decides to jump] into the void by not tackling one *or* the other lack, but both of them: In this moment the subject and the Other would not fuse. On the contrary, their separating lacks would be put together. At this point the real as impossible would be set alight, it would be white-heated in a shared experience: the subject and the Other both as close as possible and as far apart as possible as well. Time, therefore, ceases and in this sublimation of time we could advance the hypothesis that everything that happens is a sort of commemoration of the founding act of the unconscious insofar as it is snatched from the real via a fundamental symbolisation that is carried towards the impossible embracing of the two voids.¹⁹

So what can this passage tell us about my initial claim, i.e. that music is situated at the border of language and non-language? What could non-language even mean? In the second part of this paper I would like to make an attempt at interpreting this quoted passage. I will do that tentatively and with the help of Deleuze – not the Deleuze of the *Anti-Oedipus*, nor the Deleuze of the *Logic of Sense*, but with the help of Deleuze's early book on Kant, particularly its introduction, which was added much later. I will also use Deleuze's development of the rather short introduction in his seminar on Kant.²⁰

73

Let us focus for a moment on this rather strange deduction in this longer passage from Didier Weill's intervention: The real would be set alight, it would be white-heated – and “time *therefore* ceases.” How is it possible to understand

¹⁸ Didier Weill, “Quand la musique nous entend. Contribution à la question de la pulsion invoquante,” p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Gilles Deleuze, “On Kant”, accessed 23 May 2017, <http://deleuzelectures.blogspot.com/2007/02/on-kant.html>.

that, if we do not just take it as an obscure reference to a certain feeling of timelessness we sometimes experience when we listen to music?

It is at this point that I want to call on Deleuze's notion of time in Kant. Kant, says Deleuze, introduces an understanding of time that is completely new. Up until Kant time was measured by movement, it was subordinated to movement, whereas Kant liberates time from its subjugation to anything: "time is no longer coiled up in such a way that it is subordinated to the measure of something other than itself, such as, for example astronomical movement. [...] time is liberated, stretches itself, ceases to be a cosmological or psychological time, [...] to become a formal time, a pure deployed form."²¹

So now that we have time as a "pure deployed form", what does this time do to the subject? This liberated time, Deleuze goes on, is the "form of auto-affection, the form under which I affect myself."²² For Deleuze, the problem of the transcendental Ego is a problem of time. He starts with Descartes: "I think therefore I am. I am a thing that thinks." And he goes on:

If it is true that the *I think* is a determination, it implies in this respect an indeterminate existence (I am). But nothing so far tells us under what form this existence is determined by the *I think*: it is determinable only in time, under the form of time, thus as the existence of phenomenal, receptive, and changing ego. I cannot therefore constitute myself as a unique and active subject, but as a passive ego which represents to itself only the activity of its own thought, that is to say, the I, as an Other which affects it. I am separated from myself by the form of time.²³

Of course, Deleuze is referring to Kant's notion of the "inner sense" which is time and also the "*Inbegriff aller Vorstellungen*". In English: "For the original apperception is related to inner sense (the sum of all representations), and indeed related *a priori* to its form, i.e., the relation of the manifold empirical consciousness in time."²⁴ It is crucial to note here that the pure form of time is filled with activity and passivity. It is the form of time that determines the

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, A23ff. / B37ff.

split between "passive ego which represents to itself only the activity of its own thought." Something is at work here, something is moving – determined by the form of time.

So what happens to this movement, the movement of the split subject, when "time ceases"? Does the subject fantasmatically cease to be split and acquire fullness and completeness at last? Are we referred back to the first logical time in experiencing music and its implied and then refuted notion of fusion? Not at all, because there is a third aspect of Deleuze's interpretation of Kant's conception of time that is important here.

Deleuze speaks about one chapter in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the "The Anticipations of Perception". This chapter is about "*Empfindungen*", i.e. sensations, and the conditions of their possibility.²⁵ For Kant, time and space are extensive magnitudes, which means that everything that is perceived in space and time is perceived as a multiplicity and as a unity at the same time. "An extensive magnitude is one whose parts are apprehended successively so that [...] extensible or extensive magnitude will be defined in the following way: The multiplicity refers to a gathering of parts into a whole."²⁶

But space and time are not only filled with extensive magnitudes; they are also filled with intensive magnitudes, such as temperature, for example, and Deleuze points out two characteristics of intensive magnitudes: They are perceived instantly (and not successively) and the multiplicity perceived in them no longer refers to a succession but to a degree, which is to say, it "refers to a variable proximity to degree zero."²⁷ So every intensive quantity implies a "degree zero". Every perception in space and time is also one of intensive quantity and is thus related to "degree zero". And therefore the question is not "if there is an empty space or an empty time," but "if there is an empty consciousness of space and time."²⁸

²⁵ *Ibid.*, A166 / B207-A176 / B218.

²⁶ Deleuze, "On Kant".

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Now I would like to suggest that the “ceasing of time” Didier Weill talks about has something to do with this “degree zero” implied by the perception of intensive quantities. If the split subject in his activity and passivity is determined by the form of time, “degree zero” could mean just that: pure form of time without the mediation of the activity and passivity of the split subject. It is tempting here to analogise “passivity of the subject” (the subject is sought by the desire of the Other), “activity of the subject” (the subject now seeks the Other by way of its own desire), and “pure form of time” (time ceases) to the three logical times in musical experience.

Let us take this back to a more Lacanian perspective: There can be no doubt that for Lacan, following Freud, activity and passivity are parts of what Freud calls the “vicissitudes of the drive”, “*Tribschicksale*”. The first torsion in Didier Weill’s account is nothing more than a “*Verkehrung ins Gegenteil*”, a reversion of the drive. But let us not forget: The very fact that there are subjects and drives is due to the subject being a “*parlêtre*”, a being that speaks. If we follow Didier Weill and discern a third torsion in the relation between subject and Other in the musical experience, in which the subject can experiment with both lacks, his own so-to-speak, and the lack in the Other “without the mediation of a fantasmatic object,” what would that “degree zero”, this sublimation of activity and passivity, mean for the speaking subject? The subject, in this third logical time, is led to a state in which he can almost no longer be called a subject, as this “degree zero”, the ceasing of the activity and passivity of the subject managing his split, is like a pre-subjective state of the subject in which intensity is brought to its full potential, which means to degree zero, as the reference of every intensity. So it is the opposite of fullness, it is emptiness. As for Lacan a subject is not thinkable without language (let us just recall his definition of the subject as that which is represented by a signifier for another signifier), the ceasing of the subject’s time, its reduction to degree zero brings it to this border I discussed earlier: the border between language and non-language.

76

To be clear: it is certainly impossible to cross that border. The subject has always been and will always have been a “*parlêtre*”, but he can get close to this border between language and non-language via the experience of music. Let us also not forget that the third logical time is not to be severed from the first two times. It is neither their result, nor their aim or their goal. They all happen at once and bring the listening subject to that border without ever letting him cross it.

To end my paper I would like to make another connection between this border position – I am, by the way, not sure if the border between language and non-language is the only way of thinking that borderline position of music – and possible consequences on ways towards another thinking.

In her paper "Dying of Shame, Consumed by Anxiety: Moods and the Body",²⁹ Ruth Ronen calls shame a "primordial affect" (along with anxiety), which is to say that the relationship to the Other is different than with any other affect: "The primordial affect relates to the Other's presence without falling back on the protection of the Other as a source of meaning and value." The Other as symbolic is not only that which inaugurates a lack, an alienation and a separation. It is also something that protects – although never enough and always too strongly. Being affected by shame and anxiety means losing this protection. When Didier Weill calls the third logical time of listening to music "a sort of commemoration of the founding act of the unconscious insofar as it is snatched from the real via a fundamental symbolization," he speaks about this borderline between being protected and being helpless. I think it is possible to experiment – in a playful way – at this borderline by experiencing music.

Let me – on a less theoretical note – illustrate this with a work of art: In 2015 the artist duo Anna Romanenko and Björn Kühn presented a work called "Blush"³⁰. They asked their fellow students to sing a short part of a Schubert song while being videotaped. After that, they made them watch the video and took pictures of them watching it. The artists drew on some study that had tried to find a way to make people blush. The best way the scientists could find was to gather a group of friends and make them do exactly what Anna Romanenko and Björn Kühn did with their fellow students. While the scientists found out that this works best with a group of friends, the artists tried the experiment the other way around: Would this collective blushing create friendship?

I am not interested in the empirical outcome of this experiment, but in the subjective structure it deals with and in the hypothesis it formulates. First of all, the blushing – and for the moment I would like to take blushing as an index of

²⁹ Ruth Ronen, "Dying of Shame, Consumed by Anxiety", *Hurly-Burly* 4 (2011).

³⁰ I did have the honour of helping the artists with that work by teaching singing to the students. That is why I can give a first hand account of the process of the work.

shame – did not occur when people sang, but only when they listened to themselves singing. Obviously, there are many things at work here: There is an intersubjective dimension as well as an intrasubjective dimension. But I would like to focus on this one thing: Singing as perhaps the most imminent way of making music (and *making* music in this case, as in Didier Weill's account, means *re-making* it by listening to it – in this case helped by the fact that it was in fact the students themselves who had produced the music in the first place) might be able to produce a helplessness that is experienced as playful (the blushing while listening was not accompanied by crying or shock, but by laughter and jokes) and that might recreate intersubjective relations.

Obviously, one does not feel bare shame and anxiety when listening to music – if not in a playful way. Music rather seems to function as a last resort against that abyss of shame and anxiety that enables us to experiment or to play right at the border. It could well be called a becoming-music of another type than Deleuze and Guattari might have imagined. Not as positive disintegration and unavoidable reintegration, but as a playfulness in the face of the abyss.

Helmut Draxler*

Traumatic or Utopian Other? Conditions of Emancipation: Phantasy, Reality, and Depression

In this presentation I will try to approach the questions of utopia, otherness, and what liberation and redemption could possibly mean, from the perspective of fantasy. Fantasy necessarily seems to inspire terms like utopia and otherness as horizons for the idea of emancipation, but it also infects them with the haunting suspicion that they are merely fictional. There will be no utopia without fantasy, but fantasy is also the reason why utopia remains simply utopia and cannot be realised. However, this does not entail that utopia cannot become reality altogether. Something seems to happen in the moment of its realisation that turns utopia traumatic. You might object that not every utopia ends up in trauma, and you would certainly be right; nevertheless, it is not arbitrary that utopia so easily collapses into trauma. At least there seems to be an intrinsic relationality at play between utopia and trauma, and the task will be to understand this relationality, and how it relates in turn to fantasy and reality. What becomes visible here is a symbolic matrix linking utopia and trauma on its vertical axis, and fantasy and reality on its horizontal axis. I will suggest that we should locate all claims to embody or understand emancipation within this matrix. It is the symbolic matrix of emancipation.

To address emancipation from the viewpoint of the symbolic already implies an understanding of politics that is neither purely phantasmatic nor strictly realistic, neither strictly revolutionary nor purely reformist. Politics itself appears here as a symbolic category, for concepts like emancipation are just certain facets of politics: a value or ideal we try to ascribe to our political ambitions and actions. However, ambitions and actions rarely meet their goal, and the fundamental desire motivating them never does – as we learn from psychoanalysis. Any volition deviates on its way into practice, and yet there is no way of thinking political subjectivity outside of volition. If voluntarism represents a limit to any political ambition, it certainly also works as its condition. Without an idea

of subjectivity that is to some extent naïve with respect to the impact and the consequences of one's voluntary actions, no political practice will be possible.¹

The difference between regulative ideas of emancipation and politics, between subjectivity and collectivity, on the one hand, and concrete forms of practice on the other, is decisive here. There is no direct connection or identity between theory and practice, between ideas and their incarnation. Rather, this difference between ideas/ideals and acts/practices is constitutive of the symbolic understanding of politics. Voluntary acts directed towards ideas or ideals – existential ideals like autonomy, authenticity, and sovereignty, communal ideals like equality, justice, and solidarity – have to be performed within a socially symbolic space. In this respect, utopia indicates the final achievement of at least one of these ideals, and trauma its complete loss. Utopia is a fundamental fantasy inseparable from the ideal of emancipation and politics, subjectivity, and collectivity, and even trauma or pure negativity necessarily contain an aspect of fantasy that has to be adjusted towards another idea/ideal: that of reality. Every single act is not only trapped within that symbolic matrix, it also generates this matrix first of all by means of its differentiation and “dynamicisation”. Neither ideas nor practices alone can be considered to be political. Single acts are symbolically determined as political only in and through the relations that structure them. Not only the relation of ideas to practices, but also the relation to other ideas and practices define both the condition and limitation of political practice. However, this structural ambivalence should not be considered the universal condition of power relations as such, as is the case with Foucault and Butler; it rather indicates the conditions of power under certain very specific historical circumstances.

80

These historical circumstances are defined by the fact that there is no instance of absolute decision – no God, Emperor, nor Party – that could decide on the

¹ Not even a purely aestheticised gesture, an “*acte gratuit*”, could succeed in this respect, because its transgressive, non-voluntary effect must still be wanted – or the famous, psychotic “*passage à l'acte*”, which seemingly transgresses all symbolic boundaries, can achieve a state of politics beyond volition. Because in order to be understood in any political sense, it has to be interpreted as such, thus realising at least its implicit message or meaningfulness.

achievement of these acts.² These acts remain categorically imaginary, perspectival, and competitive. Any claim, e.g. to universal equality, remains constitutively unequal, a competitive speech act situated against other, similar claims. And any radical gesture shares to some minimal degree the symbolic, institutional, and mediated space of its emergence (e.g. as a lecture or a publication). As a typically modern symbolic formation, politics cannot synchronise content and form; their difference enables the symbolic space of politics. Political acts therefore do not realise the idea or the universal ideal they strive for; rather, the act brings about something else, a particular kind of event that escapes such intentionality. Volition seems to slip constitutively from its imaginary aims into reality despite its best intentions, slipping into the reality of the symbolic – a kind of Heideggerian *Gestell* – which seems to inspire yet another imaginary act of its own overcoming, which in turn must be repeated over and over again.

The paradox of political voluntarism lies in the fact that as voluntarism it has to imagine some sort of result emerging from its competitive actions; actions and practices, however, count as political if and only if they transcend these results. Without the promise of transcendence, politics would just be a question of the correct administrative commitment to following a certain idea, and that is precisely *not* what politics is about. Politics is never only a means; it always also represents ends. Thus, political practices are defined precisely by the lack of any voluntary, controllable, and stabilised meaning. The symbolic matrix of emancipation and/or politics altogether indicates the absence or non-existence of any pre-given normative order, what one might call the big Other. Politics is the symbolic space of that absence or non-existence of unity, stability, and control. Or at least, politics is one of the symbolic formations articulating that absence/non-existence in addition to culture, science, economy, technology, art, and even religion under the conditions of modernity (i.e. at least since the 17th century). Although I do not support one-dimensional secularisation theories, I would prefer the term “absence” compared to non-existence. It does not seem to be the categorical non-existence of a cosmological myth that serves to found any social order, but rather the absence of an inclusive, integrational narrative: a function which supposedly had been fulfilled by magic, myth, and religion in previous eras. The absence of an integrational narrative seems indeed to be

² At least no instance was able to establish itself definitely within the last 500 years of European or even world history.

constitutive of the modern symbolic. Its differentiation into quasi-autonomous fields is the very indicator of that absence. And yet, they can only be understood in their mutual connection, because science and religion, technology and art, politics and economy differentiate themselves in and through acts of mutual and complementary reference.³

In addition to the specific kind of autonomy generated by the fundamental heteronomy of the fields, there is also the claim to hegemony that each field raises against the others. Their claims to autonomy and to hegemony derive from their attempt to *positively* represent the big Other. That means that otherness is always implicitly at play within the modern symbolic. For example, science can be understood as a symbolic formation or matrix making it possible to understand aspects of the world beyond everyday empirical experience. In a similar way, politics performs the symbolic function allowing one to imagine a world beyond the existing normative order, and the possible realisation of utopian ideals, or the overcoming of one's own existential and social conditions or privileges. And art is a symbolic formation that enables a glance into the unknown, unseen, and even unexpected. Obviously, these symbolic determinations are highly ideological. Hence – if the modern symbolic formations do not only indicate the absence of the big Other, but also represent it as being absent – otherness is implicitly always at play within these formations. This direction towards otherness – we might call it an immanent transgression or even transcendence – is intrinsic to modern symbolic forms: a transgression, however, that does not lead to the open horizon beyond the scope of the modern symbolic, but rather represents that scope and continuously expands its reach. There is no fundamental transgression but only continuous displacement between the fields.⁴

82

This intrinsic and immanent transgression of the modern symbolic indicates a sort of order that precisely does not work as a strict law defining specific rules that one has to follow or obey. It rather institutes the imaginary in order to break the rules and to articulate alternative rules. Given the absence of a one, uni-

³ Art, e.g., is precisely what science is not, but in order to find out about that difference they have to have some kind of exchange going on, an exchange that is frequently misunderstood as a dissolution of the difference in the name of some trans-category.

⁴ This categorical displacement of transgressive rhetorics in contemporary activist and artistic discourse was the starting point of my project “Phantasm and Politics”, which I organised for the theatre “Hebbel am Ufer”, Berlin, 2013–2015.

versal law for all, every claim towards such universality can be criticised and questioned from other perspectives. Interpellation here does not subject us to the law, but to the production of alternative rules. Thus, the agonistic struggle for such rules between claim and critique defines the horizontal axis of any symbolic matrix, comparable to fantasy and reality, and which is always related to the more antagonistic one between positivity and negativity on the vertical axis. Within such matrices, agonism and antagonism do not define fundamental oppositions; they rather refer to each other, generating the symbolic matrix precisely through their mutual referentiality. Thus, the space of the symbolic does not merely sketch out or map the social space of individual acts; in obstructing the realisation of a true autonomy or hegemony of any single claim, it implicitly always invites and asks for more acts or practices. The symbolic operates on implicit alternatives, always instigating new ones. Hence, we are not suffering from a lack of alternatives – that there is supposedly no alternative – but from an abundance of alternatives. The symbolic frames our actions and volitions always already as alternatives. Paradoxically, the whole symbolic order thus often appears to be without an alternative. However, misunderstood as personal freedom or as the possibility of a meaningful life, alternatives do not resist the existing order but express it. Misrepresenting their own conditions, the search for alternatives keeps us trapped within the narcissistic and competitive aspects of the imaginary.

Within such a theoretical framework, neither politics nor emancipation can be conceived in terms of pure negativity. Politics does not indicate a fundamental rupture or break in relation to the established order or master discourse, since it always also represents that order or discourse. There is an intrinsic positivity at play within every negativity, which is the condition of the symbolic. The existing orders and master discourse should most certainly be questioned and under the right conditions even political voluntarism and organisational power can overthrow existing normativities, replacing them with new ones. This is clearly the case. However, all such attempts remain within the boundaries of the modern symbolic, as I defined it, which frames these attempts and makes them appear desirable. Reformism and radicalism, agonism and antagonism, affirmation and negation; all these only represent the different options within the symbolic matrices of the modern world. To struggle between these options defines politics, and political struggle will always be necessary to aspire to another world, to more social justice, gender equality, a non-racist and non-hetero-normative

world; but obviously *politics is not enough*, if what is at stake is the symbolic as such, because as a historically specific symbolic matrix, politics is already part of that symbolic order, and thus, in order *to think otherwise or other things*, it might be necessary to look beyond the realm of the symbolic formation of politics and search indeed for an “immanent way out,” as Jelica Sumic phrased it.⁵ The problem, however, is not only that the terminological polarities of inside and outside, fantasy and reality, positivity and negativity clearly operate already within the modern symbolic, but that the desire itself to find a way out is part of that same structure. It institutes itself in and through its attempt to find a way out. As an “immanent way”, it has to be rooted within these distinctions, but as “a way out” it would have to be directed towards a state of affairs precisely beyond such distinctions, towards something not merely outside or other, but towards something other than other, or better stated: towards something beyond the distinction of inside and outside, sameness and otherness. This might indeed be a zone of in-distinction or a zone in which the distinctions open up towards new, maybe less polarised multiplicities, or even to a new symbolic. I will, however, not speculate on that here. That is none of my business. And I am not even sure if such a new symbolic would be desirable. A world beyond the specific symbolic formations of modernity – politics, art, culture, science, technology, media, and theory – does not sound very appealing to me. And I neither have a desire to fantasise a new integrational narrative, fabulating some supposed myth beyond myth, a new religion, nor would I like to avoid falling prey to my own private, doctrinal fantasy.

So, obviously, I cannot offer you a way out. I can only sketch out the dimensions of the problem, indicating why politics and voluntarism do not suffice, but are nevertheless indispensable. This is the case not only because politics is part of the struggle for a better life, but also because this struggle is part of the effort to understand its intrinsic potentials and limitations. To grasp the symbolic dimensions of politics and voluntarism alike is crucial for any understanding of emancipation, enlightenment, and radical politics, and in order to challenge their intrinsic limitations and contradictions. Since enlightenment implies a certain en-darkening, some sort of trauma, or at least a crucial dependency

⁵ Jelica Sumic, “Politics and Psychoanalysis in Times of the Inexistent Other”, in: Samo Tomšič, Andreja Zevnik (eds.), *Jacques Lacan, Between Psychoanalysis and Politics*, Routledge, London, New York 2016, pp. 28–42.

inside utopia and some implicit conformity within radicalism.⁶ Therefore, emphasising the symbolic dimension of politics does not mean neglecting its real dimension, or preferring a moderate version of politics. My point is rather that politics can only be *symbolically* radical and this binds radicality to its reformist or consensual alternative. A *radical* immanent way out would therefore ask again for a state of affairs beyond the difference of radicalism and reformism – and thus would no longer be simply radical. But there is doubtlessly something to be done before we reach such a state, because its precondition – in order to not simply fantasise reality and/or radicalism – would be to differentiate utopia from trauma, fantasy from reality, and radicalism from reformism. Not to overcome, “sublate”, or abolish such dichotomies, but to sharpen their differences and possible relations on the grounds of their historical, social, and cultural implementations and realisations. This clearly can only happen as a work within the symbolic and leads back to the question of the kind of subject that would be capable of achieving this state of reflexion and integrity within its political voluntarism.

Methodologically, as preconditions for such a reconstruction of the conditions and relations of political voluntarism – as it appears necessarily within any idea of emancipation, enlightenment, or radical politics – I would suggest two essential concepts. Firstly, a post-Lacanian understanding of the symbolic order, and secondly, a post-Kleinian conception of the relation between phantasy⁷ and reality as being fundamental to any understanding of subjectivities and collectivities. Post-Lacanian in this perspective means: unlinking the symbolic – Lacan’s great innovation – from a direct relation between structural anthropology, linguistics, and the psyche. This is necessary in order to open up the diachronic or historical dimension of the symbolic. This historical dimension, however, is crucial to understanding the specificities of the modern symbolic, how it can instigate otherness by means of permanent change, improvement, reform, and revolution. Therefore, we have to relate the category of the symbolic order to the main sociological theories of modernity or modernisation as field or system theories. It is here that we gain an understanding of the specific symbolic formations of the modern world. However, these theories do not un-

⁶ That is why I am not so interested in how radical one can be, but more in the way one would perform conformity within the proclaimed radicalism.

⁷ Klein writes phantasy with a ph. From now on I will refer to her term.

derstand their own categories as symbolic. There are indeed the *fields* of politics, art, science, law, culture, psychology, or economy, but they are organised neither by pure internal relationality nor by strict functional differentiation. They are rather shaped by symbolic mobilisation through continuous acts of differentiation and “dynamicisation” by means of mutual, complementary operations, thus realising more and more subfields, which increasingly become semi-autonomous fields themselves. Thus, the diachronic does not oppose the synchronicity of the structures of the symbolic order; it rather defines these structures in a specifically modern way. In this sense, there is no clear distinction between the social and historical, on the one hand, and the symbolic, on the other. The social and the historical are clearly part of the modern symbolic. In a certain sense, history and society even define the meta-structures or meta-fields of the modern world, within which the specific fields of science, politics, art, culture, law, economy, technology, media and even theory might establish themselves. The single fields are always organised around a singularised, generalised, and highly substantialised term: such as *art*, *politics*, *science* or *culture*⁸; and the practices in these fields try to enact and to perform the identity assigned by their respective term. However, incapable of integrating their identities, and slipping from their idealised goals, they generate the symbolic matrices by structuring the crucial oppositions in each field, like the opposition between utopia and trauma, fantasy and reality, in the case of the subfield of emancipation within the wider field of politics. Thus they create specific contents for the terms art, politics, or culture, showing as such specific historical and cultural imprints; in the case of utopia and trauma, for example, their opposition can be clearly localised within the tradition of the messianic and/or apocalyptic thinking of the Judeo-Christian world. In this tradition, redemption and damnation appear as strictly related to a decisive event; reality as we experience it in everyday life is nothing other than a sheer deceit, and subjectivity is constructed through acts of belief and not through knowledge or feeling. Hence, their universalism is always already historically and culturally specific, a particular kind of universalism. One cannot sever utopia from trauma, because the decision on their relational difference is not ours to make.⁹

86

⁸ My theoretical approach is essentially motivated by an attempt to understand the function of these terms and the problem they indicate that we cannot get rid of.

⁹ I think it is precisely this aspect, which should be reflected more clearly within the aftermath of that tradition in contemporary political philosophy. Especially in terms of the model of Pascal’s wager: that there is nothing to be lost but everything to be won seems

The most fundamental question, however, in relation to this specific “historicist” view of the symbolic is whether there is an underlying principle that generates and directs these symbolic operations in terms of differentiation and “dynamicisation”. Is there something we could consider to be real and not symbolic, or even “real” in the Lacanian sense? History – in the Marxian understanding of “real history as a mere sequence of class struggles” – and capital have frequently been appealed to in this regard. With respect to history, I think, it is relatively easy to show that it is precisely its symbolic form as a “sign of the modern” (Nicolas B. Dirks) that allows for its conception of a universal principle, but a more historicist and symbolic perspective seems possible for capital as well. This is the case not only because any claim as to the “real”, as important as it is as a theoretical category, becomes imaginary in its act of enunciation and thereby inscribes itself into the symbolic, but also, more concretely, if we refer to the argument of the British Marxist historians Robert Brenner and Ellen Wood, the specificity of capital relations can only be grasped within agrarian capitalism, which only developed in the 17th century. This argument clearly indicates that capital relations are effects of and not reasons for the modern symbolic order.

For this reason, I do not see any way to overcome, outdo, or bypass the symbolic; it rather seems to constitute the condition for the very understanding of any practice and any theory as being political. The last question of my presentation concerns how voluntarism here comes into play. A post-Kleinian perspective understands voluntarism as a way of not only articulating politics within the symbolic order, but perhaps also hints at the politics of that order itself. Within the history of psychoanalysis, Melanie Klein, her school, and the whole post-Kleinian field represent a very specific and genuine position, and that means more than a mere “fleshing out” between Freud and Lacan, as Jacqueline Rose phrased it in her essays on a “Return to Melanie Klein” from the early 1990s.¹⁰ These specificities mainly concern three aspects: phantasy as the

to be especially problematic: because obviously a lot of being might be lost, especially in such case the utopian bet turns into trauma.

¹⁰ Jacqueline Rose, *Why War? – Psychoanalysis, Politics and the Return to Melanie Klein*, Blackwell, Oxford (UK), Cambridge (MA) 1993.

crucial term of the whole concept, a very particular understanding of the Ego, and finally, a special emphasis on forms of collectivity, essentially the group.¹¹

The Kleinian concept of “unconscious phantasy” is almost identical to the unconscious itself. As such, phantasy becomes a fundamental concept, which distinguishes it clearly from the Freudian fantasy, which concerns mainly the wishful thinking of children, poets, and neurotics, as well as from the Lacanian *fantasme* understood as a strictly defensive screen protecting one from the real. Kleinian phantasies are immediately productive and are not necessarily related to any lack (one can thus see the attraction of the concept for Deleuze and Guattari). However, something seems to happen between different phantasies: especially with the transition from the direct alteration of love and hate phantasies, typical of the paranoid-schizoid position, to phantasies of grief, guilt, and an overwhelming sadness at the beginning of the depressive position. With grief, guilt, and sadness aspects of retrospection and reflexion emerge. The Ego of the depressive position is still clearly a phantasy – a phantasy, however, trying to integrate its split inner and outer objects, to reflect its own orally-sadistic impulses, and the destructive, ruinous effects they generated, and finally to repair or compensate for these effects. Obviously, there is no stable identity waiting at the end of this process; further splitting is lurking everywhere, and the phantasies of integration, reflexivity, and reparation might even be implemented only by further acts of splitting.

Hence, the Kleinian Ego, as it shows up in the depressive position, is neither a pure pleasure Ego nor a mere reality Ego; it can neither be understood as autonomous nor as completely decentred. As an essentially depressed Ego, it learns to distinguish inside and outside, projection from introjection, partial object and total object/person, but only at the price of grief, guilt, and sadness. Phantasy here is not just limited by some outer reality – a reality principle; it rather produces all too many realities, which seemingly collapse within the essential psychotic core of our psychological existence. However, the Ego recognises different phantasies, it opens a marginal space between them, and thus learns to distinguish the sheer categories of phantasy and reality – a phantasy-phantasy

¹¹ For a discussion of the political dimension of Kleinian thought, see: Eli Zaretsky, “Melanie Klein and the emergence of modern personal life”, in: John Phillips, Lindsey Stonebridge (eds.), *Reading Melanie Klein*, Routledge, London, New York 1998, pp. 32–50.

and a reality-phantasy. Thus, the Ego is not a complete illusion and its reality is not a total deceit. But at the same time, it is not much more.¹² Precisely because reality is essentially phantasmatic, it cannot be recognised as such by pure thought. *Reality has to be felt* by the Ego in order to distinguish its more or less phantasized moments. It is the “Ego feeling”, to allude to Paul Federn’s discussion in 1925,¹³ in and through which phantasy and reflexion can be separated from each other, a separation that makes possible a reality that is not merely a phantasy.

Thus, this Ego has to be phantasized, but it does not represent a mere phantasy. But neither does it constitute a purely reflexive, rational instance; it has to be essentially felt. Finally and most importantly, the Ego’s reality cannot be its own possession. There is no way that reality is just *my* reality – if that were the case, it would be a total phantasy. Through moments of projection and introjection and the exchange of inner objects in various object relations, the Kleinian Ego is thoroughly social. That is why neither liberal individualism nor radical collectivism, neither strict particularism nor unconditional universalism, adequately characterise the options here. It is rather the group as a specifically social entity in and through which individualism and collectivism, particularism, and universalism find themselves mediated. In Wilfred Bion’s concept of group analysis this approach has even found a clinical form. And I would suggest, to explore its political implications, it is the group and not the master who is the political agent here.

Within this scenario the subject of politics cannot be understood as being completely de-centred, de-individualised, and de-psychologised. It remains essentially psychological, but at the same time socially and culturally mediated in many ways. The group does not transcend or erase individuality; it remains dependent on its deliberate ambitions. Therefore, political subjectivity is not tainted by moments of integration, individuality, and psychology. Rather, such moments have to be performed in order to articulate any kind of voluntarism. This voluntarism therefore is not naive, but highly fragile, offering only within

¹² Kleinians, e.g., are the most ardent critics of a scientific understanding of objective reality. You can still find that in Jacqueline Rose. And there is a fundamental lack of understanding in terms of the symbolic formations; this was Lacan’s critique.

¹³ Paul Federn, “Das Ichgefühl im Traume”, in: Paul Federn, *Ichpsychologie und die Psycho-sen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1978, pp. 53–83.

its most precious and precarious moments the possibilities of distinction between phantasy and reality, utopia and trauma. Voluntarism has to invest in “traversing the phantasies”, one might say, in terms of their integrational, reflexive, and emotional capacities, capacities that are at the very core of any understanding of emancipation. Essentially, this voluntarism is based on a “will” directed less towards power and enjoyment than towards survival and to the endurance of the depressive conditions of its being. However, such a post-Kleinian approach has to be related to the category of the symbolic, i.e. the “topology” of the symbolic order, as I have tried to sketch it. Voluntarism can become political voluntarism only in relation to the symbolic category of politics. In this understanding, neither politics nor voluntarism appear as mere means to achieve certain goals, e.g. of otherness, authenticity, or equality; they always already represent these goals within different symbolic matrices (the matrix of politics and the matrix of the psyche). The invocations of the symbolic towards permanent change, alternatives, and otherness work in both matrices. They operate as two different sorts of phantasies, which allow these invocations to be both articulated and reflected. This perspective avoids either the imaginary identification of politics and voluntarism in the sense of a will to power or enjoyment or the strict separation of these categories. The symbolic, as I have here construed it, does not simply integrate all perspectives, but functions as a necessary precondition for the possibility of any qualification of thought. Neither politics nor voluntarism exhaust the symbolic as such. Doubtless, another turn against themselves might indeed be needed in order to further reflect, to mourn and to repair their own intrinsic transcendence. However, such a turn should not be understood in terms of political negativity, but only in terms of a more fundamental political negation of politics, and a volition turned towards the involuntary. Thus, a political voluntarism might appear in the categorical slippage from politics and volition alike. The uncontrollability of such an event could perhaps be conceived as an *aesthetics of implosion*, performing and reflecting the subversion of the symbolic invocations, while at the same time maintaining their emancipatory achievements.

Rado Riha*

What is the Object of Thinking Differently?

I will begin with two remarks. The first concerns the title of our meeting, “Penser autrement / Penser autre chose (To think differently/to think something different). The title reminded me of a line by Gerard Lebrun, an expert on German idealism, from his book *Kant et la fin de la Métaphysique*. In this book Lebrun wrote that Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment* “teaches us to think differently.”¹ This “thinking differently” is contained in that which constitutes the central problematic of Kant’s third *Critique*, i.e., as the title already suggests, the power of judgment, more precisely, the reflecting power of judgment.

What I will address here, therefore, are the following questions: How can we say that Kant’s concept of the reflecting power of judgment teaches us to think differently? What kind of thinking is this different way of thinking? And, what kind of object corresponds to this different way of thinking that is required or contained in the reflecting power of judgment? But let me first move on to my second remark.

This remark concerns the place of our meeting, the Museum of Modern Art. This place belongs primarily to the field of art. Which is why I will connect an illustration of the effects of thinking differently, which can be produced by reflective judgment, with the field of art – more precisely with the visual arts. I have to say first that as a philosopher I do not work with art. But I have had the opportunity to become closely acquainted with some of the works of a Slovenian contemporary artist, Jože Barši. His work, which I highly appreciate, is interesting for me in part because it is situated on the border between art and architecture – and architecture is already closer to what I work on in my philosophical work.

Below I will therefore also reference the work of Jože Barši. With the help of his work I will attempt to show how thinking differently is connected with the

¹ Gérard Lebrun, *Kant et la fin de la Métaphysique*, Librairie Armand Collin, Paris 1970, p. 13.

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reflecting power of judgment. The artwork I will discuss is *Public Toilet*, which Barši made in 1999. This work, which is a functional sculpture, was included in the first public presentation of the international Arteast collection in Ljubljana; there the structure actually also served its purpose.

My starting point employs two principles that Barši himself uses to define contemporary art. I think that both principles connect, in the most direct way, art with the reflecting power of judgment; even more, they present art as an operation of the reflecting judgment. And with the help of *Public Toilet* it is then possible to show what or what kind of structure the object of reflecting judgment has. By the way, here I could also connect to what Petra Čeferin told us about the object of architecture as a creative practice, as this object has the same structure as Barši's art object.

The first of Barši's principles posits that art is without particularity, more precisely, without that particularity that demands expertise, knowledge. Contemporary art is not a thing of those in the know, it is not a thing of experts. *Anyone* can be a member of the community of lovers of contemporary artistic practices. How many people constitute this community is unimportant; what counts is that it is an example of a community "for all". It is an example of a community that only counts on viewers who think because they want to think and who observe because they want to see. With this, art is placed in the domain of public use: art is all around us, and artworks are dispersed in a variety of other, also everyday, practices.

The second principle more precisely determines, in an essential way, the first. This principle states that an artwork cannot be *anything* and *whatever*. Indeed, in its works contemporary art does not refer to the particular that is subsumed under expert knowledge. However, it still lays a wager on the particularity of an artwork, one due to which the work is presented in its irreducible uniqueness, in short, in its *singularity*. An artwork is something singular that is, regardless of the difficulty that may accompany its reception, in principle accessible "to all", and thus is directly also universal. It is a kind of singular universality.

Reading the two principles together, that is, the way they actually work in Barši's artistic practice, leads us – in the third step – to the following conclusion: Although contemporary art is *anybody's* domain, it is not the domain of relativism,

the domain of the noncommittal pluralism of arbitrary interpretations, views, and opinions. The reason for this is precisely because an artwork *cannot be anything or whatever*, even if art itself knows neither norms nor regulations. To repeat, an artwork is something irreducibly singular that, at the same time, attributes to itself universal validity.

But to be able to read Barši's two principles together we need something: the power of judgment. If we want to think an artwork, if we want to answer the question of what it is that is not a *derivation* of a given rule or regulation, of *given knowledge*, and is at the same time not merely *anything*, we need the power of judgment, the power of judgment such as is elaborated in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*.

Below, I will first focus on three elements crucial for Kant's understanding of the power of judgement in the third *Critique*:

1. the extension of the notion of the transcendental aesthetic defined in the first *Critique*;
2. the comprehension of the particular in its irreducible particularity, i.e. singularity; and
3. the concept of aesthetic reflective judgment (judgment of the beautiful and the sublime).

As to the first point, in the first *Critique* Kant defines the transcendental aesthetic as a science of all principles of *a priori* sensibility². In fact, in this critique *a priori* sensibility is considered only as a function and element of *cognition*. It is considered only as a sensibility of the objective *sense*, *Sinn*. The third *Critique* adds to the notion of *a priori* sensibility that is the representation of the object: firstly, that which is *only subjective*, i.e. sensible; secondly, that which does not belong to the order of the empirical, but rather to the order of *a priori*, and thirdly, that which has no *cognitive, objective* function, i.e. a function that is constitutive for the object.

93

Any relation of our representations can be objective, that is, a constitutive part of the cognition of the object as an appearance, even if the representation is

² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. P. Gruyer, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000, B 35/A 21.

in itself only subjective, such as the representation of space, which merely expresses the subjective aspect of our representations. The only thing that in our representations cannot but be subjective and cannot become an element of cognition at all is the feeling of pleasure or displeasure: “by means of which nothing at all in the object is designated, but in which the subject feels itself that it is affected by the representation.”³ Under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life.⁴

Concerning the second point, the notion of the sensibility of feelings, in the third *Critique*, is closely connected with the *Critique*'s second central problem. What is at stake here is the question of knowing how to make available to cognition that which by definition resists a cognitive determination, the particular in its irreducible particularity, namely its *singularity*. Kant provides a twofold response to this question – and I will allow myself a simplification here. To the view that cognition of the singular is not possible because singularity is, for the cognition of Understanding, something that is through and through contingent, lawless, unordered, Kant responds with an oppositional thesis, which is developed with the notions of the Beautiful and the Sublime. According to Kant's first answer, singularity is recognised as such, precisely as something that is through and through contingent, lawless, unordered, and constitutive for cognition. The reflective power of judgment is a thought protocol that is based on the decision or declaration that there exists in objective reality constructed from the universal and the particular also that which does not exist in it, the singular, an example of the inexistent. It is a declaration and affirmation of the existence of the inexistent. But in the third *Critique*, based on this thesis, Kant also invents a new notion of the universal. This is the universal that constitutes itself as universal by including the moment of singularity, a moment that supplements the universal in its universality from the outside. This moment of singularity is what Kant calls *a case*, a case of the Idea.

As regards the third point, the main conceptual innovation of the third *Critique*, its central issue and a primary conceptual tool, is the concept of reflective power as an independent faculty of cognition, i.e. the concept of the *reflecting power*

³ *Op. cit.*, § 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

of judgment. In this concept both of the aforementioned problems of the third *Critique* – the extension of the notion of the transcendental aesthetic and the determination of irreducible singularity – are directly connected. Kant considers it to be “a direct relationship” between the *faculty of cognition* and the *sensibility of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure*, this direct relational junction of the faculty of cognition and sensibility is conceived of as that “which is precisely puzzling in the principle of the power of judgment,”⁵ and which gives the reflecting power of judgment its stamp of uniqueness.

As we know, Kant distinguishes between two kinds of power of judgment. The power of judgment in general is the faculty for thinking of the particular as contained within the universal – the law, the principle, the rule. But – and this is where the distinction originates – the universal can be given, in which case the power of judgment is *determining*. When we come across an unknown phenomenon in nature, culture, or society and want to know what it is, we solve the task by finding a corresponding universal concept for this particular of the world by which we can determine it, and thus understand it. This is a kind of power of judgment made to the measure of the globalised world in which we live. For this world there only exists the particular, which can be put in the box of the universal, in which there are other, similar particulars. That which is singular does not exist for this world, strictly speaking.

Kant’s other kind of power of judgment is more interesting: the *reflecting* power of judgment. The reflecting power of judgment, which is the central problem of Kant’s third *Critique*, is at work when, as Kant says, only the particular is given. That is, when we see before us something about which we are not quite certain, as to what it is, and do not have a universal concept, law, rule, etc., to help us pigeonhole it, that is, understand it.

We do not have the universal, but – and this is Kant’s main point – not because we are unable to find it or do not know about it, even though it is given. We do not have the universal because there simply is no universal for what we see before us. The task of the reflective power of judgment is precisely to *invent*, in the very process of judging, a universal concept for something that does not fit in any cognitive box because it is singular. It must invent a universal rule for

⁵ *Op. cit.*, B 4.

that which defies any universal rule and exists as the absence of any rule, for that which is contingent per se, non-cognitive, in short, for the particular in its irreducible particularity, that is, its singularity.

Now I would like to emphasise two elements that are of key significance for the reflecting power of judgment. The first one concerns the specific cognition that is connected with the reflecting judgment; the second one concerns the specific object of cognition characteristic of the reflecting judgment.

I will begin with the first element, the orientation of the sensibility of feeling to cognition. The extension of the notion of the aesthetic is based on the fact that Kant no longer connects the sensible character of representation with the representation itself, but rather connects it with the “act of the *power of judgment*,”⁶ and namely with the act of the power of judgment that is considered only in its *subjective dimension*. The feeling of pleasure/displeasure is produced in the act of the reflecting judgment, which turns from the object to the representation of the object and to its subjective conditions of possibility. In this feeling we realise – in an aesthetic, i.e. sensible, way – that in the representation of an object given in experience, in its mere apprehension prior to any concept, there is that unity between imagination and understanding at work, the unity that is the elementary condition for any kind of effect of cognition.

Despite the fact that the aesthetic judgment does not concern the objective cognition of the object, the reflective judgment does not give up on every orientation towards cognition. Just the opposite, Kant attributes to the feeling of pleasure/displeasure the function of a kind of undetermined cognition, the cognition without (objective) cognition, which he calls “cognition in general”⁷ in the third *Critique*.

96

In short, and this is essential, the withdrawal of the feeling of pleasure/displeasure from the cognition of understanding is not an affirmation of the “logic of heart” against the “logic of understanding”. The reflective judgment is conditioned by the *general communicability* of the feeling of pleasure/displeasure that the judgment produces. And, according to Kant, only cognition can be commu-

⁶ *Op. cit.*, I. Intro., VIII, p. 351.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, § 8,9.

nicated generally. The feeling of pleasure/displeasure is “cognition in general”; because with this cognition we ascribe to everyone else that what we see and feel as beautiful or sublime, he/she too will necessarily judge in the same way.⁸ Let me now move to the second key element of the reflecting judgment. Where for Kant’s philosophy there is cognition, although only “cognition in general”, there namely is necessarily also the *referent* of this cognition. The referent of a reflecting judgment is what Kant calls “a case”, *der Fall*. A case is that which represents the irreducible particularity of each particular instance of such a judgment: that is, a singularity. Hence, it corresponds to this particularity itself in its irreducible singularity. The singular is that which, in a particularity, is more than that particularity itself – without being truly, empirically, or objectively, something more. On the one hand, the singular is inseparable from the particularity in which it is embodied. On the other hand, this singular only becomes a *case* due to its immediate connection to the generic universal, to the universal of the idea of reason. It is something that can be immediately universalised, something that could hold, as Kant would have put it, “for all times and all peoples.”⁹ The singularity of a case corresponds to that element of the particularity that only exists in the multiplicity of its possible trans-temporal and trans-historical consequences. Hence, it only exists in the form of a decision ceaselessly renewed. “This is a case of the generic Idea of Reason.” Thus, it could be said that the universal too exists only to the extent that it is possible to affirm the singular in the potentially infinite multiplicity of its universally valid consequences.

With this we have entered the domain of art practices. The power of judgment in its reflecting form is, to simplify a bit, everything we need when dealing with an artwork. With a work that is, as Barši says, without particularities – but not, for that reason, just anything. It is not anything because it is singular. In order not to be anything but to have the potential of being an artwork it has to be produced and accepted as something irreducibly singular. As such, an artwork is an example of the existence of the non-existent and pertains to the domain of the reflecting power of judgment. Because the latter is a thought protocol that is based on the decision or declaration that there exists in objective reality constructed from the universal and the particular also that which does not exist in it, the singular, an example of the non-existent. It is a declaration and affir-

⁸ *Op. cit.*, § 8, 9.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, § 17.

mation of the existence of the non-existent. A declaration and affirmation is a thought act that realises, in the given world, something that does not have an objective existence, something that therefore does not exist in it, but has to be realised and represented precisely as such, as the existence of the non-existent. I will return now to Barši's *Public Toilet*.

For me, *Public Toilet* belongs to a sequence of art operations of the de-realisation of reality and the de-sublimation of the sublime that are characteristic of contemporary art. In this sequence, Barši's project works in a specific way; with it, art, so to speak, directly invades the world of reality, and a consequence of this invasion is a radical de-realisation of reality. Indeed, what Barši creates by making a public toilet is the art object *Public Toilet*. But this *Public Toilet* is not a sublimation of an ordinary public toilet, or its elevation to the dignity of the Thing. Barši's *Public Toilet* only exists in a de-sublimated form; indeed, it is not a trivial public toilet, but neither is it anything other than a trivial public toilet. The fact that Barši built a trivial public toilet as part of his artistic activity says that this trivial object is built as *Public Toilet*, that the "thing" of art is created in it, that it has found its place in it. However, the trivial object public toilet is preserved as the trivial object public toilet, never becoming a bare shell of the sublime object *Public Toilet*.

Barši's art object *Public Toilet* is a body with a double minimal difference. It is the embodiment of the difference between, firstly, a public toilet and a public toilet, and secondly, between *Public Toilet* and *Public Toilet*. The difference between the trivial object and the Object is minimal, negligible, both constituting and marking the ordinary object as the sublime "thing itself". The de-sublimation of the sublime object *Public Toilet* is also the de-realisation of the trivial object public toilet: the trivial public toilet does not manage to be "itself", to be just a trivial object, and the sublime *Public Toilet* does not manage to be "itself", it does not manage to really shine forth as a sublime art object, but is reduced, in the same instant it appears as such, to the level of a trivial object. Barši's art object is something that *exists* precisely as being neither a public toilet nor *Public Toilet*. It is a materialisation of the double absence of this "neither the one nor the other"; in it, the existence of the non-existent has found its body.

A specific trait of Barši's operation in which the art object is created as an object of a special kind lies in the fact that this object remains a solid component of

our everyday reality. In *Public Toilet* the de-realisation of reality prevails over the play with the de-sublimation of the art object. The fact of it prevailing has very material effects: it opens our eyes so that we can see that our objective reality is objective only under the condition that we are capable of understanding and using it as a place where also something non-existent is present. We do not need much for this – and therein lies the answer to the question of what an art object has to do with the power of judgment – we only need our power of judgment. That form of rationality, that operation of the inseparability of thought and action that, supported by the point of singularity, invents in this world the universal rules for the absence of rules.

There are artworks that are dispersed in everyday and other practices, the works that with their *No* to art indicate that art is all around us – that is what Barši says. Art that is everywhere does not mean: art is everything. It means: art works, it *can work* as one of the thought operations that open up, in the middle of our everyday world, the possibility of seeing that this world is not everything, that this world is at the same time also something more and something other than what is shown to us, without being really something more and something else. Thereby it enables us to see that the world we live in is not the only world possible for us.

In conclusion, I will advance a claim that, while going beyond Kant's self-understanding, strictly speaking, nonetheless opens up the horizon of something that could be called the "second Copernican turn" of his philosophy. The crucial issue here is that the existence of the case of the reflecting power of judgment is *decided existence*, more precisely the existence that is decided by thought. The reflecting judgment is based on the decision that the only true or real thing in every thing is the thing decided by thought, in short, the *thing of thought*. This decision is connected with another decision, namely that we truly think only when we try to bring that thing which affects our thought and which only really affirms thinking as a generic human faculty, that is, as more than a mere survival tool, to the point when it appears in empirical reality. The decision of the reflecting judgment concerning the existence of the case of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure is more than the mere realisation that in the world of appearances there also exists something which is inexistent. It is a decision about the point that only the existence of the inexistent, conceived of as the existence

of some universally valid singularity, gives the empirical world the stamp of the *world for all*.

The view that the subject, as Kant points out, feels himself or herself in the feeling of pleasure or displeasure entails a re-orientation in the thinking of the one who thinks; a re-orientation from the object and objectivity as the *norm* and *aim* of cognition, to the singularity of the case, which is decided by thought, as the *cause* and *driving force* or *incentive* of thinking and action. What assures thought its orientation is not the idea of reason in itself, an idea in the heaven of ideas, nor the cognitive machinery of understanding, which knows no orientation of its own. It is instead the thing of thought, the existence of the case of the singular, which can only be decided through thinking, in the act of the reflecting power of judgment, and which is affirmed in the world as something universal. Cognition in general, which presents itself in the feeling of pleasure or displeasure, does not have the status of non-objective cognition because it withdraws itself from the constituted objective reality, but because it is a *re-constitution of this reality*. There where the power of judgment is at work the world is no longer only a realm of objectivity; rather, it becomes the scene of its re-constitution. Kant's formulation that the feeling of pleasure or displeasure is the *feeling of life* can in this regard be understood in the following way: the reflecting power of judgment is life that is endowed with an orientation. Put differently, it is the orientation towards that which is its *Triebfeder*, incentive or drive, towards the cause of thinking and action, more exactly, towards the thing of thought.

To return now to the question that I posited at the beginning of this presentation: How then does Kant's third *Critique* and its concept of the reflecting power of judgment teach us to "think differently"? We can draw at least two conclusions on the basis of the operation of the reflecting judgment. Firstly, the starting point and the foundation of a different thinking is an affirmation that in the given reality there also exists something that exceeds this reality or lacks therein. In the given reality there also exists something non-existent. And secondly, the affirmation of the existence of the non-existent in the given reality is at the same time also the operation of the de-constitution or de-realisation of this reality. Not the de-realisation of the given reality in the name of some higher, more sublime, merely utopian reality, but rather, the de-realisation of reality in the name of this same reality, which is, however, understood and lived as something that is also something other than what it is.

Dominik Finkelde*

Anamorphose und Subjektivität - Zu den Beugungsgesetzen von Bewusstsein und Wirklichkeit

Jacques Lacan hat am Beispiel des Gemäldes „The Ambassadors“ von Hans Holbein dem Jüngeren die Maltechnik der Anamorphose in den Untersuchungsbereich der Epistemologie übertragen. Er kommentiert das Bild prominent in seinen Seminaren VII und XI, denn es offenbart für ihn sinnbildlich, wie das visuelle Feld der Perzeption nicht den ganzen Raum der Wirklichkeit / der Welt, die sich vor ihm wie ein Tableau ausbreitet, ausmessen kann.¹

Bekanntlich markiert die Anamorphose bei Holbein den Ausschluss zweier Perspektiven auf ein und dasselbe Gemälde. Die beiden Botschafter am englischen Königshaus von Heinrich VIII., Jean de Dinteville und Georges de Selve, und das Vanitas-Motiv des anamorphotisch verzerrten Totenschädels im unteren Bilddrittel, sind im selben Gemälde aber nicht auf gleicher Gegenstandsebene sozusagen. Denn um den Totenschädel zu erkennen, muss die Betrachterin den Blickwinkel mit den Botschaftern im Fokus des zentralperspektivisch konstruierten Augenpunkts verlassen, während von dieser letzten Perspektive aus wiederum der Totenschädel allein nur als querer Balken im Bild erscheint. Der Effekt des Bildes liegt deshalb in der bewussten Teilung der scheinbar homologen Form der Abbildung durch die Konstruktion verschiedener Blickpunkte.

Als Ganzes wird das Gemälde durch sich ausschließende Gegenstandsbereiche mit sich selbst uneins bzw. durch eine parallaktische Lücke von zwei logischen Repräsentationen auf einer Bildfläche *dehegemonialisiert*. Darauf beruht sein ästhetischer Effekt. Für Lacan veranschaulicht es damit sinnbildlich Eigenschaften der menschlichen Erkenntnis, die ebenfalls von einer inneren Spaltung, der Formbedingung des Erkennens und der sich daraus ergebenden immer auch mangelhaften Inhaltsbestimmung des Erkannten (als Erscheinung)

¹ Siehe Jacques Lacan, *Die Ethik der Psychoanalyse. Das Seminar Buch VII*, Quadriga Verlag, Weinheim 1996, S. 166f.; Jacques Lacan, *Die vier Grundbegriffe der Psychoanalyse. Das Seminar Buch XI*, Quadriga Verlag, Weinheim 1987, S. 73–126.

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geprägt ist. Der Erkenntnisakt kann nicht die Struktur der Zuwendung zu den Gegenständen selbst im Bereich der Gegenstände, d.h. im Bereich möglicher Erfahrungen zur Repräsentation bringen. Diese Kluft, die bekanntlich auch im Zentrum der Kantischen Differenz zwischen Erscheinung und „Ding an sich“ steht, sieht Lacan sinnbildlich in der Logik der Anamorphose bei Holbein in Szene gesetzt. (Dafür sprechen zahlreiche Verweise Lacans auf Kant.)² Für Lacan inszeniert das Gemälde die parallaktische Lücke, die die Wirklichkeit von sich selbst trennt. Dies geschieht ihm zufolge durch die Einschreibung eines geometralen Augenpunkts in das Tableau eines den Augenpunkt immer schon unterminierenden Blickfeldes.

Im Seminar XI behauptet Lacan, dass das Holbein-Gemälde uns zeigt, wie wir als Subjekte „auf dem Bild buchstäblich angerufen sind und also dargestellt werden als Erfasste.“³ Dies ist so, da der Blick des Subjekts ist immer schon als Formalbedingung von Erkenntnis überhaupt in das wahrgenommene Objekt eingeschrieben ist und zwar in Gestalt des – wie Slavoj Žižek es nennt – „blinden Flecks, also dessen, was in dem Objekt mehr ist als das Objekt selbst“. Jede „epistemische Verschiebung des Standpunkts des Subjekts“ führe dann zur „ontologischen Verschiebung im Objekt selbst.“⁴

Worauf Žižek mit diesen vorerst enigmatisch klingenden Worten hinweist, ist der Umstand, dass die Erkenntnisform des menschlichen Verstandes – von Kant transzendental ausgemessen – selbst dazu führt, dass das Objekt der Erkenntnis, der Bereich veridischer Tatsachen und Fakten, im Netz unserer Begründungen sich von sich distanzieren muss. Warum? Weil, wie oben angedeutet, die Modalität der Wissensform überschüssig und exzessiv auf die Wirklichkeit zugreift, und diese, die Wirklichkeit bzw. das transzendente Phantasma *der Wirklichkeit* in der Bestimmungsform einer bestimmten Urteilsform und deren ‚Koordinatensystem‘ immer auch verzerrt. Kant leitet diese Erkenntnis ein, wenn er die These expliziert, dass die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit der Erfahrung gleichzeitig „die Bedingungen der *Möglichkeit der Gegenstände der Erfahrung*“ seien.⁵ Und das heißt, dass der Raum der Erfahrung immer ein durch die Wissensfor-

102

² Siehe Lacan, *Die vier Grundbegriffe*, S. 100, 113.

³ *Ebd.*, S. 98.

⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *Parallaxe*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2006, S. 21.

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Akademieausgabe, Berlin 1902-, B 197.

men des Menschen gestalteter ist und als solcher nicht gemäß einer vor-kritischen und d.h. metaphysisch-naiven Korrespondenztheorie der Wahrheit, die glaubt frei über alle möglichen Entitäten quantifizieren zu können, verlassen werden kann. Mit Willard V. O. Quine, den wohl berühmtesten analytischen Philosophen ontologischer Relativität, gesagt: das Koordinatensystem, in dem sich das Sein der Gegenstände in Form gebundener Variablen offenbart, kann nie durch eine scheinbar direkte „Referenz“-Korrelation von Subjekt und Objekt ersetzt werden, da der Glaube an ein Koordinatensystem-freie Referenz – Quine zufolge – „Unsinn“ sei.⁶

Man könnte auch sagen: das Subjekt hält seine Vernunft wie einen Spiegel auf die Wirklichkeit, aber es ist dabei immer auch schon im Spiegel unthematisch selbst verborgen: als der zentralperspektivische Fokus demzufolge sich die Mannigfaltigkeit von Vielheiten unterordnen muss im regulativen Ideal einer immer schon potenziell nach ausschließlich vernünftigen Kriterien zu ordnenden Außenwelt. Dieses Moment eines paradoxen Selbsteinschlusses sieht Lacan bei Holbein sinnbildlich durch ein Objekt thematisiert, das den Betrachter von einem Außerort seiner Wirklichkeitskonstruktion remarkiert. Gemeint ist natürlich das Vanitas-Motiv des Totenschädels.

Damit untermalt Lacan zugleich, inwiefern überhaupt das symbolische Netzwerk nur durch ein Moment radikaler Verzerrung – oder auf das Subjekt hin formuliert – erst durch ein Moment subjektverbürgten Vernunft-Wahns eröffnet werden kann. Momenthafter Wahnsinn, wie er besonders von Lacan prominent im Cartesischen *cogito* sich ausdrückt, erweist sich sowohl für einzelne Vertreter des Deutschen Idealismus wie auch für die Psychoanalyse als die zentrale Ursprungsgeste menschlicher Vernunft. Dieser „Wahn“ bewirkt die Transsubstantiation vom vollständig in seiner Umwelt eingebetteten Tier hin zum Menschen als Bewohner der Welt des Symbolischen und treibt, so Žižek, als Spur des „traumatischen Übergangs aus jener ‚Nacht der Welt‘ in unser ‚tägliches‘ Universum des Logos“ die individuelle Psyche in die Magie ihrer Selbstreflexivität.⁷ Diese Überzeugung ist in Hegels Werk, wenn auch unter den Vorzeichen von im Deutschen Idealismus verankerten Prämissen, allpräsent. Es gibt keinen

⁶ Willard V. O. Quine, „Ontological Relativity“, in: *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, Columbia University Press, Columbia 1969, S. 26–68, hier: S. 48.

⁷ Slavoj Žižek, *Die Tücke des Subjekts*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2001, S. 52.

Bereich veridischer Tatsachen und Fakten, ohne dass dieselben vom anamorphotischen Ort eines Koordinatensystems aus erstehen. Dieser Ort nennt sich für Hegel wie für Lacan Subjektivität. Das Subjekt ist der Metarahmen in dem Objektivität fassbar wird und es ist zugleich mereologischer Teil dieser im Rahmen umfassten Objektivität. Von hier aus muss man Lacans Faszination an der Anamorphose verstehen, um im Anschluss daran zu begreifen, warum für ihn ein jedes Subjekt anamorphotisch in den Bereich des Seins eingeschrieben ist.⁸ Es gibt keinen Bereich veridischer Tatsachen und Fakten, ohne dass dieselben vom anamorphotischen Ort eines Koordinatensystems aus erstehen; ein Ort, der für Hegel wie für Lacan notwendig in Subjektivität (auch verstandene als kollektive Subjektivität) verankert ist.

Hegel offenbart in seiner Lehre vom Ich nicht wie sich der Mensch „über“ die Dinge verständigen kann. Hegel legt stattdessen offen, inwiefern der Mensch von seinem Ich aus als „*Einzelheit, absolutes Bestimmtheit*“⁹ die Möglichkeit des wahrhaften Aussprechens der Dinge und damit die Dinge in ihrer Wahrhaftigkeit verbürgt. Wahrhaftes Aussprechen der Dinge kopiert nicht die Dinge in einem Fakten-Teppich, der in einem logischen Raum der Erfahrung oder in den Gegenstandsbereichen „da draußen“ ist. Das Ich webt diesen logischen Raum selbst, wenn man berücksichtigt, dass Bedingungen dazu aus dem Rücken des Ichs (als kollektives oder singuläres) dazu kommen und somit das Subjekt paradoxal selbst als *ein-* und *ausgeschlossen* in seinem eigenen logischen Raum platziert.

Für Hegel legte Kants Prinzip synthetischer Einheit des transzendentalen Ichs den Grundstein dafür. Kant zeigt, dass das Ich eine aktuelle Vollzugseinheit ist. Für Hegel heißt das, dass das wahrhafte Ergreifen der Dinge in Propositionen nicht ohne die *Form* des Ich, d.h. des Selbstbewusstseins möglich ist, denn Subjektivität ist als die von Hegel freigelegte Selbstbeziehung letztlich das wahrheitserschließende Prinzip aller propositionalen Gehalte. Hegel: „Das *Begreifen* eines Gegenstands besteht in der Tat in nichts anderem, als daß Ich denselben sich *zu eigen* macht, ihn durchdringt und in *seiner eigenen Form*, d.i. in

⁸ Siehe zu dieser Thematik auch Mladen Dolars herausragenden Artikel, „Anamorphosis“, in: *Journal of the Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique*, 2015, Nr. 8, S. 125–140.

⁹ Georg W. F. Hegel, *Die Lehre vom Begriff (Wissenschaft der Logik II)*, in: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Bd. 6, hrsg. von Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1986, S. 253.

die *Allgemeinheit*, welche unmittelbar Bestimmtheit, oder Bestimmtheit, welche unmittelbar Allgemeinheit ist, bringt. [...] Wie er [der Gegenstand] aber im Denken ist, so ist er [wahrhaft] *an und für sich*.“¹⁰ Demnach besteht die Objektivität der Erkenntnis tatsächlich in der *Subjektivität der Dinge*, d.h. in der *Form* des wahrheitserschließenden Ichs. Hegel entfaltet diesen Gedanken in seiner Logik, wenn der Raum abstraktester Denkbestimmungen in den beiden Teilen des „Seins“ und des „Wesens“ in der Begriffslogik sozusagen beredet wird. Die Denkbewegung der Logik mündet in die Lehre vom Begriff und der Bedeutung des Ichs.

Für Hegel ist Subjektivität am Urgrund seines Begriffs und damit der Wirklichkeit immer schon die Bedingung von Wahrheit und er behauptet, dass auch schon Kant mit seiner Theorie des transzendentalen Ichs der reinen Apperzeption den Grundstein für diese Überzeugung gelegt hatte. Lacan schließt sich dieser Lehre an, wobei er sie durch seine eigene Begehrensepistemologie erweitert. Ein Feld der Erfahrung von Dingen, Fakten und Tatsachen ergibt sich für ihn durch einen konstitutiven Mangel, der mit dem Mangel im Subjekt selbst verbunden ist.

Das Ziel der folgenden Ausführungen besteht darin, die hier nur schemenhaft und metaphorisch entfaltete Bedeutung der Anamorphose für Fragen der Epistemologie in Bezug auf Hegel und Lacan herauszuarbeiten. Auch wenn der Begriff der Anamorphose der Bildtheorie entstammt, so verweist er doch auf eine paradoxe Verzerrung zur Konstitution von Repräsentation / Kohärenz, die weit über den Bereich der Bildtheorie hinausgeht und den Bereich begrifflicher Bestimmungen von Objektivität in veridischen Urteilsstrukturen betrifft.

Im Zentrum steht dabei das Thema einer Kluft inmitten des Begriffs der Identität. Oder mit anderen Worten: Sichselbstgleichheit soll als ein reflexiver Erklärungsbegriff des substantiell Seienden nach Lacan und Hegel von seiner strukturellen Nicht-Identität her erläutert werden. Und es ist besonders Hegels Philosophie, die sich dieser Thematik widmet, d.h. der Thematik, inwiefern Begriffe und Kategorien das Netzwerk, in dem sie inferentiell eingebunden sind, vom Mangel ihrer sich als unterdeterminiert erweisenden Bestimmungskraft zur radikalen Umwälzung bringen können.

¹⁰ *Ebd.*, S. 255.

Subjekt als Lücke in der Substanz

Hegel thematisiert den in Holbeins Gemälde in Szene gesetzten Gedanken einer dialektischen Verwindung von Markierung und Remarkierung indirekt in seiner „Einleitung“ zur *Phänomenologie des Geistes*.¹¹ Dort setzt er in kritischer Abgrenzung zu Kant das Erkennen mit einem Medium gleich, das gemäß dem „Gesetz seiner Strahlenbrechung“ einen Zugang zur Außenwelt eröffnet, der Welt von objektiven Tatsachen und Fakten.¹² Dieses klassische Bild vom Erkenntnismedium, das Hegel in Kants Philosophie wiederentdeckt, stellt das Subjekt wie vor ein Teleskop stehend dar. Das Medium bündelt das Licht der Wahrheit, schreibt Hegel. Damit erschafft es einen Zugang zur anderen Seite: zur Objektivität von Fakten und Tatsachen. Aber Hegel entfaltet diese Teleskop-Allegorie, um zu betonen, dass nicht „das Brechen des Strahls, sondern der Strahl selbst [das Erkennen ist], wodurch die Wahrheit uns berührt.“¹³ Er drückt damit den scheinbar von Kant vernachlässigten Gedanken aus, dass das Subjekt den Strahl der Wahrheit auf dem Weg zum Objekt *mitbringt*. Mit Lacan gesagt: Das Subjekt mag sehr wohl das Bild sehen, aber es selbst steht im „Tableau“, d.h. – Lacan zufolge – in einem nicht extensional bestimmbar Metarahmen, der ihm die zu verkennende Bedingung seines Einblicks in veridische Tatsachen und Fakten ist. Woraus besteht dieser Metarahmen? U.a. aus der Genese diverser – modern gesagt – „Meme“, also derjenigen inferentiell begründbaren Datenpakete für die herrschenden Objektivitätsbedingungen einer Epoche, die ein jedes Subjekt in der Erkenntnissituation, in der es sich befindet, als seine zweite Natur verinnerlicht hat. Wie Hegel sagt, verbürgt das Subjekt den Strahl der Wahrheit in sich. Damit trägt es in sich den Maßstab seiner Beziehung zur Außenwelt als veridisches Koordinatensystem zur Entzifferung von Fakten und Tatsachen. Die Subjekt-Objekt Grenze fällt in das Subjekt. Letzteres ist als Medium seiner Erkenntnis Teil seines Erkannten. Es ist Teil seines Erkannten, weil es im Medium seines Geistes – ein Medium, das durch die Menge historisch-sozialer Meme immer schon „extended“, – ist in die Bedingung von Objektivität eingeschrieben ist. Das Subjekt ist der Metarahmen in dem Objektivität fassbar wird und es ist mereologischer Teil dieser im Rah-

106

¹¹ Diesen Hinweis verdanke ich Mladen Dolars Artikel „Anamorphosis“.

¹² Georg W. F. Hegel, *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Bd. 3, hrsg. von Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. S. 69.

¹³ *Ebd.*

men umfassten Objektivität. Und diesen Moment sieht Lacan, wie gesagt, bei Holbein sinnbildlich thematisiert.

Dieser Gedanke bekommt bei Hegel seine eigene ontologische Begründung in der Einleitung zur *Phänomenologie* wo es heißt, Substanz „sei auch als Subjekt“ zu denken und d.h. als das besondere Element eines nicht anders als paradox zu verstehenden Selbsteinschlusses. Hegel legt hier die Grundlage seines Verständnisses einer in sich ontologisch aufgespaltenden Wirklichkeit. Sie erlaubt zahlreiche Lebensbereiche des Menschen als wesentlich anamorphotisch zu beschreiben, d.h. als abhängig von einer Wirklichkeits-generierenden Verzerrung, die als Verzerrung gerade nicht wahrgenommen werden kann, da sie den Bereich objektivierbarer Tatsachen eröffnet. Oder mit anderen Worten: Eine Totalität (egal ob in Wissenschaft, Kunst, Religion oder Recht) schließt ein besonderes Element ein, das sowohl das Strukturprinzip der Totalität verkörpert als auch dieselbe Totalität in Form eines Besonderen. Es betrifft einen Ort der Nicht-Identität in diese Totalität *durch sie selbst en miniature*. „Subjekt“ daher auf eine Ebene mit „Substanz“ als Synonym für die Primärstruktur der Wirklichkeit zu stellen, ist für die philosophische Tradition ein widersprüchliches Unterfangen. Hegel rezipiert hier nicht den aristotelischen Gedanken, dass ein „Subjekt“ die Formidee der Gattung Mensch verkörpert und deshalb auch Substanz sei im Gegensatz zu einem Tisch, der für Aristoteles ‚nur‘ ein Aggregat sein kann. Er meint vielmehr, dass das Subjekt an der Substanz substantiell Anteil hat, ja *Substanz ist*. Das kann gemäß der inhaltlichen Bestimmung des Substanzbegriffs – vor Hegels Neuinterpretation – jedoch eigentlich nicht gedacht werden. Substanz kann für den menschlichen, erkennenden Verstand Träger von Akzidentellem jedoch nicht selbst von Akzidentellem getragen sein. Wer dies behauptet, nihiliert im selten Moment das begründende Kriterium, von der her der Begriff Substanz spätestens seit Aristoteles und dann besonders in der Frühscholastik seine Wesensdefinition erfuhr.

Für Hegel ist Substanz folglich im Subjekt-als-Substanz durch ein paradox-Besonderes, das in sie eingeschlossen ist, von einer verfehlten Begegnung mit sich betroffen. Dieses Besondere mag, wie wir noch genauer offenlegen werden, innerhalb der Reihe von Einzelnem für das Allgemeine wiederum selbst stehen. Denn, wie gesagt, liegt „Subjekt“ nicht nur auf der Substanz wie eine akzidentelle Eigenschaft auf. Es *ist* (auch) Substanz.

Hegels Rede von der Substanz, die „auch als Subjekt“ gedacht werden solle, entspricht daher rein strukturell betrachtet der Ontologie der Lacanschen Logik der Anamorphose: der Logik einer parallaxtischen Lücke in einer Totalität, durch ein ihr zugehöriges ein- und ausgeschlossenes Element. Subjekt als Substanz ist dann sowohl Partikularität als auch das die Partikularität umschließende Allgemeine.

Diese Struktur ist Menschen vertrauter als sie glauben mögen, da sie konkret in jedem Selbstbewusstsein anzutreffen ist und besonders von der Philosophie der Psychoanalyse natürlich immer wieder thematisiert wird. Selbstbewusstsein verkörpert die formallogische Struktur einer paradoxen Selbstbeziehung, die sich aus ihrer Allgemeinheit auf ihre Partikularität zurückbiegt: eben diejenige, dass ich mir als partikuläres Ich aus den Höhen meiner Selbstreflexivität angeblich bewusst sein kann. Diese Bewusstheit zu verneinen führt (wie auch schon Descartes offenlegt) zu einem performativen Widerspruch, denn wer außer mir sollte die Frage nach meinem Bewusstsein überhaupt stellen?

Aber unabhängig davon steht Bewusstsein eben von den Allgemeinformen seiner Eigenschaften (Vernunft, Autonomie, Reflexivität) her einer individuellen, falliblen und kontingente Partikularität des Ichs gegenüber. Das Ich spricht sich zwar dann die positiven Eigenschaften des Allgemeinen (Klugheit, Objektivität, Vernünftigkeit etc.) zu, und doch weiß es, dass es auf seiner konkreten Subjektebene diese Allgemeinheit nie hinreichend letztbegründen kann. Der Ort des sprechenden Ichs bleibt, wie Lacan wiederholt betont und wie schon Émile Benveniste sprachwissenschaftlich in Bezug auf Personalpronomen aufgewiesen hat, immer Teil eines paradoxen Selbstbezugs. Selbstbewusstsein ist der Struktur des Lügnerparadoxes deshalb auch nicht unähnlich: Das Subjekt der Aussage „Ich bin autonom, selbstbewusst, denn was sollte sonst dieses Ich, das ich bin, sein?“ wird performativ vom Subjekt des Aussagens zurückgenommen. Bevor wir uns dieser Thematik in Bezug auf Hegels Philosophie in seiner Rede von „konkreter Allgemeinheit“ als der begrifflichen Chiffre der erwähnten dialektischen Struktur eines (paradoxen) Selbsteinschlusses, widmen wollen – soll vorerst im Werk von Lacan der Gedanke der Logik der Anamorphose bzw. die Theorie von paradoxen Selbsteinschlüssen näher aufgewiesen werden.

Lacans „suture“

Lacan thematisiert die Anamorphose, weil die dort aufweisbare Struktur eines paradoxen Ein- und Ausschlusses eine Grunderkenntnis der Psychoanalyse verkörpert. Eine verdrängte Wahrheit kommt z.B. in Gestalt einer Fehlleistung zum Vorschein und offenbart, wie die ‚Totalität‘ des menschlichen Subjekts durch ein oder mehrere pathologische Symptome herausgefordert ist. Symptome mögen dann offenbaren, wie im offiziellen Bild des Subjekts etwas Signifikantes sich zeigt, obwohl es im Subjekt sozusagen nicht repräsentiert ist.¹⁴ In diesem Sinne zeigt Freud, dass all das, was der Mensch an sich durch sein Verständnis von Identität und Autonomie als eine Ganzheit erfasst, nie ganz gewesen ist.

Man denke an die Struktur des Witzes, die von Freud und Lacan wiederholt erörtert wird. Das inferentielle Netz einer Erklärungsstruktur wird kurzfristig durch ein Detail, das sich quer zum totalitären Feld der Wahrheit stellt, erschüttert und offenbart die Fragilität des inferentiellen Netzwerks. Hier durchdringt ein Anderes eine normative Textur und erscheint sowohl ein- als auch ausgeschlossen. Eingeschlossen dadurch, dass es eine verborgene Wahrheit / Pointe offenbart, die plötzlich zum Amüsement aller zum Vorschein kommt; ausgeschlossen dadurch, dass das Ganze eines Bedeutungsfeldes erst durch einen Ausschluss des Witzigen seine objektive Kohärenz erfährt. Ein anderes Beispiel liefert der Lapsus. Er figuriert sinnbildlich wie ein Kippbild, das gegenüber meiner symbolischen Rolle nach Außen eine gegenteilige mentale Gesinnung aus dem mir nicht direkt zugänglichen Innern her offenbart. Als Symptom zeigt es, dass das hegemoniale Feld meiner Totalität (d.h. meiner Rolle) als selbstwidersprüchlich, antagonistisch und inkonsistent sich offenbaren kann. Dann ist die ernste Rede, welche das propositional Wahrheitsfähige vermittelt, zwar scheinbar das Ganze der Rede, aber im Versprecher erweist sie sich in ihrer Zerbrechlichkeit dann doch als Symptom eines anderen Symptoms. In solchen Situationen ist der oder die Betreffende bekanntlich nicht selten darum bemüht, das – was einem gerade über die Lippen gegenkommen ist – im weiteren Gespräch verlegen wegzureden.

Nun ist es besonders ein Theorem, das im Kontext von Lacans Epistemologie der Struktur eines paradoxen Selbsteinschlusses, wie wir sie im Holbein-Gemäl-

¹⁴ Siehe dazu Slavoj Žižek, *Weniger als nichts. Hegel und der Schatten des dialektischen Materialismus*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin 2012, S. 717.

de sinnbildlich in Szene gesetzt sahen, am nächsten kommt. Dieses Theorem ist unter dem Begriff „suture“ bekannt, der als „Vernähung“ übersetzt werden kann, und erstmals von Jacques-Alain Miller aus Lacans Werk herausgearbeitet worden ist.¹⁵

Die Bedeutung der „Vernähung“ beschreibt den rekursiv strukturierten Verankerungsprozess, mit dem in einem Bereich differentiell zueinander stehender semantischer Werte bzw. Signifikantenketten eine hybride Wirkkraft klare Stabilisierungen von inferentiellen Wahrheits-Wert-Hierarchien eröffnet.

Signifikantenketten sind mit Dateneigenschaften quantifizierte Zeichen, die das Subjekt im Bereich des Symbolischen umgeben und die es benutzt. Aufgrund ihrer dynamischen Offenheit sind sie durch disparate Ausnahmeelemente hegemonialisiert, die eine Grenze zum Anderen außerhalb der Signifikanten markieren aber eine Grenze, die wiederum selbst nur von der Binnenperspektive des Symbolischen aus beleuchtet werden kann. Der Lacansche „Herrensignifikant“ ist beispielsweise das Medium einer solchen Vernähung. Er ist das Element innerhalb diverser Signifikantenketten, das letzteren Stabilität verleiht, ohne darin selbst Teil des Differenzbereichs, wie sie Signifikantenketten prägen, zu sein. Das notwendige Scheitern einer stabilen Grenze zum Außen wird im Herrensignifikanten durch seine Symbiose camouffiert, Nullstelle und Einsstelle zugleich zu sein. Er ist Mangel und Exzess in einem, grundlos und erster Grund.

Miller hat in seinem berühmten Aufsatz *La suture* von 1966 die „suture“ als Beziehung des Subjekts zur Kette seines Diskurses beschrieben. Die Vernähung taucht als fehlendes Element auf, wie auch als eine Form des Ersatzes dieses fehlenden Elements. Miller: „Suture steht für die allgemeine Beziehung eines Mangels zu der Struktur, von der er selbst das Element ist, insofern er die Position eines Denk-Platz-Einnehmen-Von impliziert.“¹⁶ Die im Akt einer Vernähung entstandene inferentielle Bedeutungslogik verhandelt die paradoxe Aufgabe ihrer Abgrenzung zum Außen in ihrem Inneren – eine Aufgabe, die nach immer neuen, instabilen, vorläufigen Lösungen verlangt.

110

¹⁵ Jacques Alain Miller, „La Suture (Éléments de la logique du signifiant)“, in: *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, 1966, S. 37–49.

¹⁶ *Ebd.*, S. 39.

Lacan bezeichnet diese die Außen-Innen-Grenze verhandelnden paradoxen Sondersignifikanten auch als „points de capiton“, als Polsterknöpfe. In der Vernähung schaffen sie ein hegemoniales Bedeutungsfeld und löschen dabei gleichzeitig ihre eigenen Spuren auf. In diesem Sinne bringen Ankerpunkte zwar Bedeutungswandel zum Stillstand (was zur Generierung von stabilen Sinnfeldern nötig ist), aber zum Preis eines Einschnitts, der selbst nicht erkannt werden kann. „Suture“ bedingt und verbirgt die inhärente Kluft aus der jedes Feld von Bedeutung hervorgeht. Und auch dieser Gedanke ist natürlich Lacans Interpretation des Holbein-Gemäldes verwandt. Dann haben wir zwar eine ganzheitliche Bedeutungsstruktur, die durch Begründungsformen innerhalb ihrer Prämissen abgesichert erscheint, aber just am Ort, an dem sie verankert ist, ein paradoxes Element einschließt, nämlich sich selbst.

In diesem Sinne kann man Bertolt Brechts Frage aus der *Dreigroschenoper* verstehen, wenn es dort heißt: „Was ist der Raub einer Bank verglichen mit der Gründung einer Bank?“ Der „point de capiton“, der ein Bankenwesen normativ verbürgt, muss die Illusion einer von natürlichen Wesenheiten geprägten Totalität erschaffen: die angeblich natürliche und legal erworbene Akkumulation von Privateigentum. Dieser Einklang von Einheit und Identität ist aber retrospektiver Effekt der Setzung eines Bankensystems in kapitalistischen Strukturen und entspricht keiner dem Effekt vorausgehenden natürlichen Situation, wo uns Privateigentum als eine Art Naturrecht begegnet. Beim Erwirtschaften von Mehrwert und deren Banken-geleiteter Neuinvestierung zur Mehrgenerierung von Kapital handelt es sich nicht um natürliche, sondern um „politische“ Prozesse. Der „point de capiton“ verkündet eine Harmonie von Bedeutung, die sich durch die Vernähung etabliert, wobei die Vernähung sich durch das Phantasiebild von Harmonie und Natürlichkeit dezent ausblendet. Die Totalität des Feldes, die erst durch die Vernähung auftritt, muss so artikuliert werden, dass sie keinen Ursprung *in* der Vernähung hat. Ähnlich beschreiben Laclau und Mouffe die Konstitution einer politischen Gemeinschaft. Diese erschafft sich aus gleitenden politischen Partikularwillen durch die Eröffnung eines Meta-Willens, der alle vereint. Dieser Meta-Wille muss jedoch als solcher verborgen werden.¹⁷

¹⁷ Siehe Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, Verso, London 1985.

Im Folgenden wollen wir noch einmal auf Hegel eingehen, um die uns interessierende Struktur eines paradoxen Selbsteinschlusses am Beispiel des Begriffs der „Selbstidentität“ zu erläutern. Hegels Anmerkungen dazu sind herausragend. Sie zeigen, wie die Struktur der Wirklichkeit notwendig durch Negativierungen, d.h. in der Unterscheidung und Trennung von immer neuen Wahrheitsgehalten, voranschreitet und damit in „absoluter Zerrissenheit“ zu sich selbst steht.

Die Kluft zwischen Denken und Sein

Hegels Bestimmung der begrifflichen Primärstruktur des Seins hat unmittelbar mit dem Sein der Dinge zu tun. Schließlich machen Dinge, Fakten und Tatsachen die Wirklichkeit aus und müssen als solche begrifflich bestimmbar sein. Hegel spricht in diesem Zusammenhang von einer Symbiose von Sein und Denken. „Sein“ sei „Reflexion in sich selbst“,¹⁸ „absolut vermittelt“ und zwar insofern es sich in seiner Fülle von Dingen, Fakten und Tatsachen als ein durch die begrifflichen Bestimmungen des Denkens „substantieller Inhalt“ erweist.¹⁹ Ein inhaltlich bestimmter Gegenstand des Denkens ist „Eigentum des Ichs“, wie derselbe Gegenstand „selbstisch“ durch sein Bestimmt-Sein (im Subjekt) ist.²⁰ Ein Seiendes ist „in seinem Sein“, insofern es seinen „Begriff“ hat, wie auch der Begriff das „eigene selbst des Gegenstandes“ also des Objektes ist.²¹

Eine Symbiose von Sein und Denken kann für Hegel aber nur dann erfolgen, wenn der Gegenstand in seinem Begriff sinnbildlich gesprochen ‚Platz nimmt‘. Dies geht nur, wenn Sein und Denken zwar aufeinander bezogen, aber nicht eins sind. Denn wo die Differenz zwischen Sein und Denken spannungslos aufgelöst ist, da würden wir, wie Hegel schreibt, „sowohl leiblich als geistig als bald verhungern.“²² Eine Kluft zwischen Denken und Sein ist also Bedingung beider und sie offenbart sich bis heute in der Pluralität unserer Bezugnahmen, wo Plu-

112

¹⁸ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, S. 29 (FN 40).

¹⁹ *Ebd.* 39.

²⁰ *Ebd.*

²¹ Siehe zu der Thematik den herausragenden Artikel von Wilhelm Lütterfelds: „Hegels Identitätsthese von der Substanz als Subjekt und die dialektische Selbstauflösung begrifflicher Bestimmungen“, in: *Synthesis Philosophica*, 2007, Nr. 1, S. 59–85.

²² Georg W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse 1830*, I, in: *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Bd. 8, hrsg. von Eva Moldenhauer und Karl Markus Michel, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1986, S. 264.

ralitäten von Gegenstandsbereichen eine Pluralität von Gegenständen eröffnen, die mit sich selbst identisch sind.-

Der Begriff der Identität, bzw. der „Sichselbstgleichheit“²³ eines Dings oder Gegenstands mit sich gilt als ein sogenannter primitiver Begriff. Als ursprünglicher Begriff kann er nicht weiter analysiert werden. In diesem Sinne steht er für die Gleichheit eines Dinges mit sich selbst und wirkt deshalb schon mehr als künstlich. Denn ein jeder Bezug auf eine Entität, sei sie abstrakt, empirisch oder phantasiert, setzt immer den Begriff der Identität der betreffenden Entität voraus.

Identität ist das, was jedem Einzelding – besonders in der Raumzeit – zukommen muss und daher drückt die Rede von „Sichselbstgleichheit“ rein logisch die Reflexivität der Identität aus. Gottlob Frege benutzt den Begriff der „Identität“ kritiklos in seiner Theorie der Zahlengese, aber Willard V. O. Quine und Ludwig Wittgenstein lehnen ihn als nichtssagend ab. Wittgenstein schreibt prominent in den *Philosophischen Untersuchungen*: „Von zwei Dingen zu sagen, sie seien identisch, ist ein Unsinn, und von *Einem* zu sagen, es sei identisch mit sich selbst, sagt gar nichts.“²⁴

Wittgenstein macht dann eine Einschränkung, wenn er darauf hinweist, dass eine Proposition, die die Selbstgleichheit eines Dinges ausdrückt, im besten Falle als ein „Spiel der Vorstellung“ verstanden werden könnte.²⁵ Demzufolge würde ein Ding in diesem Sinnbild „seine eigene Form“ bezeichnen worin der Gegenstand – wie Wittgenstein sagt – genau „hineinpasst“.²⁶ Wittgenstein versteht das Sinnbild des „Hineinpassens“ kontextuell. Ein Gegenstand ist für ihn mit sich identisch, wenn er in seiner Form in Beziehung zu seiner „Umgebung“ Platz nimmt. Während das Bild des „Hineinpassens“ mehr als treffend – und wie wir zeigen wollen auch herausragend bei Hegel zu finden ist – so ist die Auslagerung des Hineinpassens in einen Kontext wenig aufschlussreich darüber, welche Konsequenzen das für den Begriff der „Identität“ hat. Wittgen-

²³ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, S. 25.

²⁴ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, in: *Werkausgabe*, Bd. 1, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1984, Proposition 5.5303.

²⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, in: *Werkausgabe*, Bd. 1, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1984, § 216.

²⁶ *Ebd.*

stein sieht scheinbar nicht, dass der Identitätssatz ($A=A$) nicht inhaltlich sondern rein formal etwas zur Darstellung bringt: nämlich, dass Einzeldinge erst aus einer intrinsischen und rein formal auszulegenden Selbstdistanz zu sich kommen. Zwar ist diese Selbstdistanz durch das Symbolsystem verbürgt, wo das Symbolsystem nur durch Differenzen geprägt ist, aber nur das System von seiner Differenzialität her und diese von der Differenz zwischen den einzelnen System-Elementen her auszulegen, vernachlässigt den Umstand einer Binnendistanz der betreffenden Entitäten *zu sich selbst* durch das holistische System in dem sie (die Entitäten) als Elemente dann auch in Differenz zu allen anderen Elementen stehen. Hegels Rede von „Sichselbstgleichheit“ geht deshalb einen Schritt über Wittgensteins Kritik an sinnlos und rein formell selbstbezüglichen Identitätsaussagen hinaus. Er zeigt nicht nur, dass eine Struktur zur Objektivierung eines Dinges notwendig differentiell ist, sondern auch, dass sie *in* das einzelne Ding / Element, in den einzelnen Gegenstand unter Gegenständen ein Anderes ihrer selbst hineinträgt.

Der Identitätssatz „ $A=A$ “ drückt den Gedankengang Hegels zur Sichselbstgleichheit dann auch mustergültig aus: „ A “ rückt als Teil eines symbolischen Netzwerkes im „ $=A$ “ auf Distanz zu sich und die Distanz offenbart sich mit der Proposition, dass A gleich A ist, rein formal aus. A „passt“ in seine Hohlform hinein. Aus dem ersten A , das die Rolle eines prädikativen Subjekts einnimmt, wird das Objekt A der Prädikation. Das erste kommt im zweiten zur Deckung und besagt, wenn auch wenig Inhaltliches, so doch eben sehr viel über die Selbstreflexivität von Entitäten in Strukturen ihrer Verobjektivierung. Hegel schreibt dazu in der Vorrede der *Phänomenologie*: „die Entzweiung des Einfachen, oder die entgegengesetzte Verdopplung [...] ist das Wahre“;²⁷ um auszudrücken, inwiefern jeder Entität eine doppelte Negation eingeschrieben ist: einerseits der Unterschied von anderen Bestimmungen zu sein und andererseits durch Anderes in einer rein formalen Selbstbeziehung zu stehen.²⁸

114

Man kann hier zur Veranschaulichung der Rede von der inhärenten Lücke des Identischen an einen Zirkelkasten als den Ort einer Einschreibung einer Entität in ihre Formbestimmung denken. Die Entität liegt in ihrer eigenen Hohlform,

²⁷ Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, S. 23.

²⁸ Siehe auch Dirk Quadflieg, *Differenz und Raum: zwischen Hegel, Wittgenstein und Derrida*, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld 2007, S. 36.

die ihr die Struktur zuweist, und nur von dieser Hohlform in der Struktur ein Einzelnes ist. D.h. nur von der Leerstelle her, die eine Struktur ermöglicht, kann ein Ding seinen positiven Begriff erfahren und Sein und Denken sich in der Übereinstimmung von Proposition und Faktum aufeinander beziehen. Daher ist es auch selbstverständlich, wenn ich glaube bei Ikea ein Buch in einem Ausstellungsregal zu ergreifen, und mich wundere, stattdessen einen Pappband in Händen zu halten. Mein intentionaler Erkenntnisakt hatte einen strukturellen Ort, in dem ein Buch seine Selbstgleichheit hätte bestätigen können, schon eröffnet, als an seiner Stelle aufgrund meines Irrtums eine Leere, nämlich die Leere des nicht vorhandenen Buches in der Form einer Buchlücke (als bloßer Pappband) eröffnet wurde. Gleichzeitig erfährt die Entität sich aber auch durch die erwähnte Struktur, die ihr die Sichselbstgleichheit zuspricht, auch zu sich exterritorialisiert.

In der *Logik* schreibt Hegel, dass die Form des Identitätssatzes ($A=A$) mehr als die „einfache, abstrakte Identität“ aussagt. Die erste Hälfte der Proposition: „A ist“ steht ihm für ein „Beginnen, dem ein Verschiedenes vorschwebt, zu dem hinausgegangen werde.“²⁹ Hier verdeutlicht Hegel, dass im Symbolsystem immer „das Mehr jener Bewegung zu der abstrakten Identität hinzuzufügen“³⁰ ist, was für mich heißt, dass die Symbolstruktur, selbst immer schon das „Mehr“ verkörpert, das sie nie einholen kann. Denselben Gedanken veranschaulicht Hegel an der Proposition „Gott ist Gott“.³¹ Was nach einer langweiligen Tautologie klingt, ist für ihn die Mehrform von der her die Dinge sich selbst Identitäten werden wie auch die Symbole ihrer Absenz.

Wir erwähnen diesen Zusammenhang hier, um den eingangs erwähnten anamorphotisch-paradoxen Selbsteinschluss des Erkennenden Subjekts in die Struktur seiner Wirklichkeit als mereologisch verborgenes Teilobjekt dieser Wirklichkeit anhand der paradoxalen Struktur einer sich um die eigene Selbstdistanz artikulierenden Selbstidentität von Gegenständen bzw. Objekten deutlich zu machen. Oder anderes gesagt: Subjektivität und Objektivität verhalten sich jeweils durch eine exzentrische Verwindung zueinander, so wie diese Verwindung für Hegel alle Entitäten betrifft, die mit sich identisch sind. Exzentrizität kann nur möglich

²⁹ Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik II*, S. 44.

³⁰ *Ebd.*

³¹ *Ebd.*, S. 43.

sein, wenn Identität selbst exzentrisch ist: nicht nur auf der Ebene des Subjekts, auch auf der Ebene von Gegenständen, Tatsachen und Begriffen.

Der amerikanische Mitbegründer des sogenannten *St. Louis Hegelianismus*, William T. Harris (1835–1909), bringt diesen Gedankengang in seiner viele Jahrzehnte zurückliegenden aber immer noch sehr erhellenden Auseinandersetzung mit dem der hegelschen Dialektik skeptisch gegenüberstehenden Charles S. Peirce zum Ausdruck. Harris schreibt: „[W]enn jemand der Ansicht ist, dass jedes einzelne Ding von dem abhängig ist, was jenseits seiner unmittelbaren Grenzen liegt, so ist er im Grunde genommen der Ansicht, dass [...das] wahre[] Sein [des einzelnen Dinges] jenseits von ihm liegt oder – genauer – dass sein unmittelbares Sein nicht identisch mit seinem ganzen Sein und dass es daher immer im Widerspruch mit sich selbst steht und daher veränderlich [...] ist.“³² Harris erläutert hier treffend, inwiefern die Identität eines einzelnen Dinges, durch die Identitäts-„Grenze“ schon durch den strukturellen Platz seines Außerhalb auf sich bezogen ist. Peirce macht dann in seinen Erwiderungen deutlich, dass er diesen Gedankengang, einer sich sowohl bestätigenden als auch unterminierenden Entität, nicht akzeptieren kann

Um diesen Gedanken einer Kluft in der Identität von Personen, Fakten und Gegenständen alle Art noch einmal zu veranschaulichen, mag folgendes Beispiel hilfreich sein. Ich kann beispielsweise mit einer Zeigegeste auf einen Gegenstand auf meinem Schreibtisch deuten und diesen in seiner Selbstgleichheit bestätigen. Doch wenn eine andere Person diese Geste nicht in der Struktur einer Verweisung erkennt, wüsste sie nicht, warum mein Zeigefinger, der auf den Tisch deutet, von mehr Belang sein sollte, wie der Palmenzweig meiner Büropflanze, der auf die Decke deutet. Das Zeigen eröffnet eine Struktur für geistige Wesen und eröffnet damit auch die Leere auf den Ort, auf den ich zeige, die dann vom Tisch, auf den ich zeige, aufgefüllt werden kann. Dann erscheint der Tisch genau an diesem Ort, den er selbst ausfüllt. Er ist der Tisch am von der Zeigestruktur geöffneten Raum seines Tischseins.

116

³² Charles S. Peirce / William T. Harris, „Nominalismus versus Realismus“, in: Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Hg.), *Dialektik in der Philosophie Hegels*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M 1989, S. 177–193, hier: S. 188.

Genauso gibt auch erst ein Symbolsystem dem Kugelschreiber in meiner Hand die Möglichkeit ebenso mit sich identisch zu sein, wie es mir die Möglichkeit eröffnet, diesen Kugelschreiber sprichwörtlich aus meiner Hand zu nehmen und in diesen Text einzufügen. Dann ist er einerseits identisch mit dem raumzeitlichen Objekt am 14. Juli 2017 um 18 Uhr 03 in München zwischen meinem Daumen und meinem Zeigefinger, aber außerdem auch noch dieser Kugelschreiber, von dem hier sehr viel später ein Leser einmal etwas in ganz unterschiedlich raum-zeitlichen Indexikalstrukturen, von denen ich nichts weiß, erfahren wird. Wäre der hier von mir erwähnte Kugelschreiber nicht mit sich identisch, so wie die Worte, mit denen ich seine Identität in ein Feld von Tatsachen integriere, würde ein Leser nicht verstehen können, was Verstehen sei. Dieses Beispiel mag ebenso wie die oben erwähnten zumindest ansatzweise verdeutlichen, dass die Rede von Sichselbstgleichheit eines Dings mit sich, nicht einfach tautologisch und müßig erscheint, wie es Wittgenstein und Quine nahelegen.

Auch die Entwicklungspsychologie kennt übrigens das Phänomen bedeutsamer „Selbstgleichheit“ als Grundstruktur sprachlicher Differenz, wie sie der Identitätssatz ($A=A$) ausdrückt. Und zwar begegnet uns diese bedeutsame Struktur der Sichselbstgleichheit in zweisilbigen Worten bei wenige Monate alten Säuglingen. In Worten wie „da-da“, „Pa-pa“ und „Ma-ma“ spaltet die zweite Silbe die erste und eröffnet einen Ort, indem der Signifikant der ersten Silbe in sich selbst, in den Ort seiner Einschreibung zurückfallen kann. Zweisilbige Worte sind Urformen höherstufiger Signifikanten und als solche mehr als nur Zeichen wie sie die Tierwelt kennt. $A=A$ ist dann auf die unmittelbare Umgebung des Kindes bezogen z.B. „Ma=ma“, „Pa=pa“, „da=da“. Die Identität der Personen und Dinge wird für das Kleinkind in eine Wiederholungsstruktur als rudimentäres Symbolsystem gebunden. Dann ist „-ma“ wie der Zirkelkasten eine Hohlform in einem Symbolsystem und „Ma“, die Identität der Mutter, die darin Platz nimmt. Die erste Silbe ist dann erst sie selbst, wenn die zweite Silbe ihr den Ort der Selbstbeziehung eröffnet. Das Gegenstück zu einer Entität ist nicht nur eine andere Entität im „Netzwerk der Überzeugungen“ oder pure Differenzialität, sondern die Leerstelle, in die es sich innerhalb von sich selbst platziert. Diese Leerstelle ist es, was Lacan an Holbeins Gemälde fasziniert.

Im $A=A$ ist folglich die Einheit der einzelnen Entität mit ihrem eigenen Anderen reflektiert. Deshalb ist auch die Proposition „A gleich A“ in Beziehung zu Hegels berühmter Rede von der Substanz, die auch als Subjekt zu denken ist, zu brin-

gen. Denn man könnte sagen, dass zumindest *ein* A in der Gleichung „A gleich A“ partikulär und *das zweite* A totalitär sein muss, damit die Selbstbezugnahme aufgeht. Anders gesagt: Ein A muss die Hohlform sein bzw. auf eine rudimentäre Form von Strukturalität verweisen (=Prädikat), damit das andere A genau darin zu sich kommt.

Wenn Hegel behauptet, Substanz sei auch als „Subjekt“ zu verstehen, dann meint er genau eine solche Struktur, die er in eine Genese von inferentiellen Objektivationsstrukturen zwischen Subjekt und Objekt über verschiedene Bewusstseinsformen in der *Phänomenologie des Geistes* ausbreitet. Er erwähnt damit dann auch die potenzielle Umkehrbarkeit, die ebenso im „A=A“ anklingt. Sie kann dies in Bereichen der sogenannten Realphilosophie Hegels, d.h. in nicht-formalen, sondern die politische Lebenswelt des Menschen betreffenden Analysen für radikale Konsequenzen für Individuen und Gemeinwesen einsehen. Ein Subjekt kann die Prädikativ-Struktur, von der her es Subjekt ist, so auf sich zurückwerfen, dass die Struktur selbst durch das Subjekt sich verändert: Das Prädikat verschiebt sich auf die Position des Subjekts. Dann wäre das A, das traditionellerweise erst im Prädikat („=A) Platz nimmt, plötzlich eventuell schon an der Subjektstelle die neu bestimmte Hohlform. In diesem Falle träfen wir auf den Ursprung einer konkreten Allgemeinheit, worüber ich an anderer Stelle wiederholt Bezug genommen habe.³³

³³ Siehe Dominik Finkelde, *Excessive Subjectivity. Kant, Hegel, Lacan, and the Foundation of Ethics*, Columbia University Press, New York 2017.

Christopher Dell*

Towards the Improvisation of Space

Reading urban reality

Urban agglomerations are currently undergoing a process of change and concentration, moving towards an ambiguous network of varied living spaces and different activities of human and non-humans, which somehow appears to develop from the opportunities and material constellations available. At the same time, there is evidence that this network cannot dispense with normative parameters altogether – the rules of urban organisation that influence the direction of urban transformations. What is more, the conflicts surrounding this exertion of influence, as well as interpretations of urban populations and their right to interpret, are on the increase, as the examples of Gezi Park in Istanbul, Right to the City in Hamburg, Stuttgart 21, the riots in Sao Paulo, and the *banlieus* in Paris have demonstrated, just to name a few.¹

These urban transformation processes have resulted in a fundamental shift in their meaning: the city is evolving into a significant social category in itself – and, conversely, society is perceived as becoming ever more urbanised. However, according to Lefebvre, this social dimension of urbanisation, the expansion of the urban sphere, is not yet visible, or, more accurately, it remains hidden and unrecognisable to us.² He concludes from this that “[k]nowledge of the urban phenomenon can only become a science in and through the conscious formation of an *urban praxis*.”³ For town planners, urban developers, architects, and urbanists, this urban practice represents a blind spot or “blind field”:

¹ As witnessed by the social movements that have been forming in recent years under the banner “Right to the City”, and which have received a great deal of media attention. Cf., among others, Andrej Holm and Dirk Gebhardt (eds.), *Initiativen für ein Recht auf Stadt*. VSA Verlag, Hamburg 2011.

² Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, University of Minnesota Press, London, Minneapolis 2003, p. 29.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

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[T]hey don't see it, and certainly cannot grasp it as such. With complete peace of mind, they substitute its representations of space, of social life, of groups and their relationships for praxis. They don't know where these representations come from or what they imply – that is, the logic and strategy that they serve.⁴

In other words, by being part of a complex of city planning, which is not only highly specialised but connected to a centralised form of organisation and representation, the professional designers of the urban miss out on the superseding practices of the everyday. Consequently, for urban development work to succeed in the broadest sense, and cooperatively, the crucial factor will be to find new forms for investigating everyday urban practice and for developing the skills needed for it. This thesis is supported by Lefebvre's argument that a certain knowledge (which might be called upon) is expressed and unlocked in this practice, and stored within it as "silent", "implicit", or "tacit" knowledge. Lefebvre even goes so far as to say that the urban sphere itself is the key area of knowledge in the present and for mastering the tasks of the future. Hence new forms of investigation that lead to this practice are needed as well, in order to incorporate and utilise them. The recognisable phenomena of urban living environments do not reveal how the rhythms of the city are connected, nor does written documentation of everyday life alone provide access to the impacts of urban processes.

Somehow, in strange contrast to the fixed representations and plans of urban design, the urban sphere today articulates itself as being full of change, intersecting movements, and unforeseeable situations. The inhabitants of cities seem to be passionate about the "here and now". One can even claim that the urban sphere has become a social laboratory itself: even under its most normative regulations, the city is, and remains, a "space of possibility" in a constant state of flux, where no social condition can be captured permanently, or even definitively translated and frozen into a structural state. In other words, the constructive basis of the city is its contingency.

Putting contingency at the fore as a positive resource of the city not only shifts the focus away from the city as object towards the city as process, while making the analysis of urban practice all the more important for all attempts at exert-

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

ing targeted influence on changes to the city. It furthermore implies a different reading of practice itself, drawing attention away from any substantialisation of action and to the constitutive effects of action. On the basis of this reading, one can claim that the condition for planning and architecture has changed. Its role is not to offer resolution and inherently new *tabula rasa* designs, but instead to carefully examine urban praxis in contingent situations. In accordance with this observation, my argument is that urban practice can essentially be read as the technology of improvisation. In this context, the term improvisation technology indicates the attempt to move away from conventional courses of action and planning strategies, and to engage “in urban situations”: the aim is to explore the capacity and strength of change, and to make new links in a relational manner with actors and resources striving for transformation, thus facilitating or stimulating new relationships and assemblages of actions, actors, and discourses on urban sites. The following examples give an indication of what this could mean in practice.

European urbanity

In his study “Hollocore Ruhrgebiet, 2002”, Rem Koolhaas shows that – and how – the so-called European city is being converted into a new form of European urbanity. In this project it finds its structural and geographic expression in the amorphous super-region linking Brussels, Amsterdam, and the Ruhr Valley: 32 million inhabitants – 9% of Europe’s population – live there in cities and towns where no urban population exceeds a million, and where approximately 67% of the population live in cities with fewer than 200.000 inhabitants, in places no one has ever heard of. In order to create an “identity”, city centres are reduced to their traditional shopping streets, while the peripheries are filled with a mixture of commercial, shopping, and industrial spaces, along with mansions and innovation parks – faceless urban matter embedded within massive new varieties of greenery.

This type of fluctuating urbanity cannot be influenced by planning directed towards either function or form. Instead of its actions being based on creative drive, planning must resort to learning to interpret the increasingly disparate social claims to the city, so that new types of activity can be derived therefrom.

One has to concur with the writer Robert Musil: “It is reality that awakens possibilities, and nothing would be so perverse than to deny it.”⁵

Creating a square

Lacaton & Vassal are team of architects who try to deal constructively with what already exists. The office’s interventions are based on the urban situation itself, in the “identifying elements, forces and energies which are genuinely determining the spatial performance of a given situation.”⁷ Lacaton & Vassal attempt to create spatial structures that will allow new appropriations of space. “For us, this is very often not architecture, but the activities that take place in or around it, thanks [to] or despite the architecture.”⁸ So how does it work? In 1996 Lacaton & Vassal were commissioned to renovate Place Léon Aucoc, a square in the working-class quarter of Bordeaux. The architects began by spending a lot of time in the square, as a way of ascertaining its use. Through this phenomenological approach they were able to establish that the square already had everything it needed in terms of structures. Consequently, they dispensed with architectural measures and instead set out a framework for the straightforward maintenance works that are typical of improvisation, and in this way they increased the utilisation of the square. This form of improvisation relies, admittedly, on intuition, but it cannot be achieved without the method of phenomenological analysis (with an attempt to reveal the structures of subjective experience to themselves and others) and knowledge of how to change materials minimally and then reconfigure them anew.

Everyday expertise

122

Such an approach also requires a steady move towards being an “expert in the everyday”. Permanent repurposing is taking place in the course of urban usage, operating on the fringes of the logic of recycling of the established economy; this conversion process invents its own economies, which are to some extent informal, including the donation, reuse, and conversion of waste and rubbish, as can be seen in Europe’s cities. A migrant from Africa, with his or her minimal structural and economic resources and links to the complex network of his or

⁵ Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*. Rowohlt, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1978 [first published in 1930], p. 17.

her *community*, might introduce a new form and style into the function of “living” or dwelling and thus “transforms” his standardised council apartment. A Turkish taxi service that sets up a booth in an IKEA car park introduces a new style to the “transport” function by offering visitors to the furniture store an informal way of getting their purchased items home more quickly and cheaply. These instances are not reflected in any statistics, but are examples of a whole range of urban lifestyles. On a daily basis, they enable the urban production of space, which has the capacity to make planning for urban development productive through improvisation alone.

Premises of the analysis

In order to examine how city space results from urban practice, precautions must be taken. Firstly, one has to take into account the historical dimension, although it is not fashionable among many critics of the New Economy. By disqualifying the new forms of capitalism as the end of history, they lose sight of the historical developments under which a development such as the subjectivation of work could arise in the first place. For the fusion of life and work, flat hierarchies and patchwork identity are by no means phenomena *ex nihilo*. However, the relationship between practice and history cannot be taken as a criterion of truth in so far as that which prevails in practice holds automatically true. Nor is the negation of absolute truth intended as a speculative endeavour. In contrast to purely pragmatic as well as speculative thinking, no equation between the truth and the success of an action is assumed. So it is not about the success of a form of action in justifying a political and social theory. Rather, urban practices should be examined as an expression of social reality, which unfold performatively. Only then can the political power relations that constitute and regulate the city be criticised, not in spite of, but because they produce forms of action that carry possibilities of other social forms within themselves. Theory must reflect actual production.

This does not imply withdrawing to an historicist point of view that claims one is dependent on the course of history. Rather, there is a dialectical process at work: In (everyday) urban practice, I performatively participate in the production of the urban form (whether I want to or not), and at the same time I am influenced by this form as a time-specific situation or event. What to do can therefore not be determined in a linear chronological manner, but only with

regard to the quasi-invisible palimpsest of the unfolding history and its everyday expression. That does not imply the neglect of theory in favour of activism (however pragmatic), but is intended for the conceptualisation of practice to advance in a kind of reverse applied theory, which revolves around the tactical elements and dimensions of practice in their political importance. To do this it is necessary to clarify and thus strategically reveal and make visible the structure of subjective experience so that it can unfold as a vector in the political field.

This strategy, however, does not imply a denial of the increasing economisation of the social. Furthermore, to derive from that an overarching theory of the social would be to take it too literally. For example, both systems theory, which assumes autonomous subsystems, as well as neo-Marxism as economic determinism, or conservative cultural pessimism, assume a certain helplessness of the individual with respect to society. The urban experience, however, is precisely characterised by the fact that it is permanently differentiated and that it is not reducible. This understanding of the city is related to its reading from a performative perspective, which entails reading the city as an unfolding of action situations. Politically, it follows from this that it is always possible for urban actors to find a gap in any power regime in order to try out and experiment on new ways of socialising spatially.

Having stated that, it is important to locate the resources for thinking about urban practices in investigating the shifts and turns of the planning discourses of the 20th century. Generally speaking, the planning literature of the 20th century aimed at theorising the city as an organic whole, as a system with a driving logic behind it. Using different methods and perspectives, these theories opened up a new view on the particular way of life in the city, such as being a place of civic engagement (Wirth⁶) and anonymity (Simmel⁷). While Simmel demonstrated how the individual tries to develop forms to cope with the masses of city life, Wirth and the Chicago School exposed how communities organise in spatial forms and create spaces of difference as well as homogeneity. More recent

⁶ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life", in: *American Journal of Sociology* 44 (1) (July 1), 1938, pp. 1–24.

⁷ Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life", Berlin 1903. Adapted by D. Weinstein from Kurt Wolff (trans.), *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, Free Press, New York 1950, pp. 409–424.

analyses by scholars such as Bauman⁸ and Sennett⁹ observe a process of negotiating the distance between the civil and the civic, the withdrawal from active citizenship into self-preservation in the city. However, having determined the spatial form, there still is a need in planning, as Thrift and Amin point out, to get to know how the extraordinary variety and complexity of the city as a place of multi-function, multi-use, of “work, consumption, circulation, play, creativity, excitement, boredom.” While they stated that the contemporary city “supports unimaginably diverse social practices,”¹⁰ it can no longer be regarded as a system with its own internal coherence. Consequently, Massey interprets the spatial formations of the city as a “dense network of interactions”¹¹ produced by differentiation processes. The core of Massey’s reading is grounded on the specific theory of the production of space of Henri Lefebvre, which has also been taken up by many others, among them the American geographer Ed Soja. This theory understands urban space as a social product, which unfolds in an historical process. Social relationships exist inasmuch as they exist in space; they are realised as space, write themselves into space, and are produced as this very space. Thus, one has to point out that the change in the social and social space does not only take place in the forms of production, but also and especially in the relations of production.

Space is no longer the indifferent medium, the sum of places where the surplus value is formed, realized and distributed. It becomes the product of social labor, the very general object of production and consequently the formation of surplus value. This is how the production becomes socially within the very framework of neo-capitalism. In the recent past this would have been unforeseeable, since production and the social nature of production were thought of only in terms of the enterprise and the productive forces, it is apparent in the social production of space. [...] today, space as a whole enters into production as a product, through the buying, selling and exchange of parts of space.¹²

125

⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, *City of Fears, City of Hopes*, Goldsmiths’ College, Centre for Urban and Community Research, London 2003.

⁹ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, London, Melbourne 1977.

¹⁰ Ash Amin, Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Remaining Urban*, Wiley, Cambridge 2002, p. 3.

¹¹ Doreen B. Massey, John Allen, Steve Pile, *City Worlds*, Routledge, London, New York 1999, p. 160.

¹² Lefebvre, *Urban Revolution*, pp. 154–155.

The reading explained above sheds light on two distinctive features of the urban: Firstly, it implies that one can no longer conceptualise urban space as a container, as a fixed object or form. Rather, one must understand it as a dynamic constellation that is produced performatively. Secondly, the city can no longer be generalised. As the geographer David Harvey makes clear, the heterogeneous experience and design of time-making is a crucial phenomenon of urban practice. “Multiple processes,” he argues, “generate multiple realities as opposed to Leibniz’s ideal differentiation in spatio-temporalities.” The *how* of praxis comes to the forefront: “the way in which multiple processes flow together to construct a single consistent, coherent, though multi-faceted time-space system”¹³. The urban is determined by a large span of stored and heterogeneous space-time processes, it “cannot be examined independently of the diverse spatio-temporalities such processes contain.”¹⁴

This approach sees itself complemented by the actual theoretical conceptions that emerge, for example, from the actor-network theories of Michel Callon¹⁵ and Bruno Latour¹⁶. They emphasise the (full) contingent and relational view of social organisation. Refuting essentialist or technological determinism, these theories replace the concept of absolute space by a relational conception. The decisive idea here again proves to be the understanding of agency as a purely relational and performative process. “In this perspective, social ordering occurs through complex efforts of both humans and non-humans to engage other actors through performative actions that are fundamentally heterogeneous and impossible to generalize,” write Amin und Graham. They define agency as a “precarious, contingent effect, achieved only by continuous performance and only for the duration of that performance.”¹⁷ This focus on the heterogeneous modes of superposition and interactions, the polyrhythmic interconnections of urban actors, allows simplistic determinism to be overcome and at the same opens the way for an emphasis on the immense differentiation of the space-

126

¹³ Lefebvre, *Urban Revolution*, pp. 154–155.

¹⁴ David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Wiley, Oxford 1997, pp. 259, 260–261.

¹⁵ M. Callon, P. Lascoumes, Y. Barthe, *Acting in an Uncertain World: An Essay on Technical Democracy*, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA 2009.

¹⁶ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005.

¹⁷ Ash Amin, Stephen Graham, “The Ordinary City”, in: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Volume 22, Issue 4, pp. 411–429.

time opportunities of different social groups in the city. It is from this differentiation that the new conceptualisation of an urban practice can emerge, a conceptualisation that asks how people improvise and appropriate space and time in a performative dimension.

In addition, the definition of agency as the impact of action brings the question of the scale of the political back into view. The citizens began, as a result of financial crises, to realise what is happening: The crisis first arrived in the cities. There was a lack of funding for kindergartens, schools, the fire department, building renovation, social housing, etc. In sum, the functioning of the city as a generator of the public became at risk. As a result, the city was rediscovered as a political issue. While the protests of the 1960s and 1970s, for example in Germany, were located in either squats (listen, for example, to the “Rauch Haus Song” by the 1970s German band Ton Steine Scherben) or the street (“Reclaiming the Streets”), or later in the 1980s, as in the case of the nuclear movement directed to the countryside – Brokdorf, Mutlangen, and Wackersdorf – the slogan now is: “Who owns the city?” This environs the city as a new scale of political agency. For in relation to questions of national or federal agricultural-related decisions, citizens are too far removed, and have little or no agency; the scale is too large. In contrast, the city with its everyday functions and use of services provides a scale in which concern for the distribution of and access to the common good can be articulated. On this scale, it is obvious that the citizens do not want to give up the power to act on their city – here is the place where people want to create and provide a comprehensive and comprehensible form of politics. Starting from an as yet undefined feeling, a process of transformation that changes the interpretation of the city develops. The result is a process that allows the conditions and relations of the right to the city to appear and, in Hegel’s phrase, *Bildung* (education).¹⁸

¹⁸ “Culture or education is, as we may thus conclude, in its ultimate sense a liberation, and that of a high kind. Its task is to make possible the infinitely subjective substantiality of the ethical life. In the process we pass upwards from the direct and natural existence to what is spiritual and has the form of the universal. – In the individual agent this liberation involves a struggle against mere subjectivity, immediate desire, subjective vanity, and capricious liking. The hardness of the task is in part the cause of the disfavour under which it falls. None the less, it is through the labour of education that the subjective will itself wins possession of the objectivity, in which it alone is able and worthy of being the embodiment of the idea.” G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. S.W Dyde, Batoche Books Ltd., Ontario 2001, p. 158.

The issue of the right to housing, with respect to the displacement of low-income resident groups from the centres of access to community facilities and the use of public space, is only one of the more important aspects Lefebvre (1967) subsumed under the phrase the “right to the city.” With the resurrection of this idea, a fundamental debate has opened up as to how the appropriation of space and production in the city might look today, and how this would be understood as the “politics” of social space. Nevertheless, the search for a form that would instantiate this, and how the concomitant crisis of representation could be defined and handled, is still in its infancy.

From the Production to the Performance of Space?

If I may recapitulate: Soja makes it clear at the outset that the aim of planning must be to develop new forms of organisation of the city, where producers of the urban act as political agents on different scales.¹⁹ Fundamental to this consideration is the notion that space is socially produced. But this thesis has to be refined: while the term production traditionally has a teleological connotation,²⁰ the city can no longer be defined as a teleological process. This is where the term performance comes into play. In this context, performance does not mean a theatre or speech act (although, there are perspectives of philosophy or performance studies that relate to these notions), but rather refers to the conceptualisation and acknowledgement of the non-teleological and non-intentional levels of production of space which express themselves in the non-simultaneous developments of the city. The question of the city, the reorganisation of the urban, is a matter of compression as well as differentiation, the heterogeneity of co-habitation, not, however, as a result but as a condition of spatial production. The latter produces the different conjunctures of urban existence and thus, *inter alia*, the normative question of the right to the city or of the right to housing. But how do we redefine the functionalist order when working, dwelling, and living one’s life converge? In any case, the performative turn not only forces a change in focus, shifting from the “what” to the “how”. The further funda-

128

¹⁹ See also Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, Verso, London 1989.

²⁰ See, e.g., Georg Lukács, *Ontology of Social Being*, Vol. 3: Labour, trans. David Fernbach, Merlin Press, London 1980.

mental aspect of the concept of performativity to consider is the inclusion of indeterminacy in the concept of action, as Mersch has shown.²¹

Subsequently, not only the question of the change from conceptualising the space as given fact to its production is crucial. Also the teleological concept of production is undermined by the contingency of the observed urban phenomenon. Taking into consideration this distinctive orientation is crucial to understanding the epistemological consequences illustrated by the actual shifts in representations and the current evolution in mapping techniques and concepts applied by urban designers. The raft of case studies we see in books such as *Made in Tokyo*, *Behaviourology*,²² *Plus*, or *Learning from Las Vegas* fulfil their function in the course of the broadening of the discussion of the actual discourse on the urban. I see this discourse – with all its semantic and semi-otic crises which undermine representation while producing it – as an inventory, and a step towards broadening the discourse on what Sophie Wolfrum has termed “performative urbanism”²³. And as Mersch has pointed out, there is only one performative scene – we cannot help but deal with the uncertainty of the urban.²⁴

It is against this background that the social dimensions of architectural thinking and acting take on relevance. The effects of this transformation are not only a shift in focus away from the city as an object towards the city as a process, but also from production to performance. One conceives of architecture as not merely object-related, but also as situation- and context-related. With this shift

²¹ Dieter Mersch, “The Power of the Performative”, in: Sophie Wolfrum, Nikolai v. Brandis, (eds.), *Performative Urbanism. Generating and Designing Urban Space*, (JOVIS), Berlin 2015. One has to remark that pointing out, as Mersch did, that performance theory is of limited use for architecture or not compatible with it is simply a presumption of the theorist. Two points are worth mentioning: firstly, the practitioners have the right to make use of the theory to reorient themselves. Secondly, it is possible that the proscription of the use of the performance concept in architecture and urban design in fact shows that performance theorists are not aware of the latest developments in urban theory.

²² *Atelier Bow WOW: Made in Tokio*, Tokyo 2001; *Atelier Bow Wow: Behaviourology*, Rizzoli New York 2010; Druot, Lacaton & Vassal, *PLUS – Les grands ensembles de logements – Territoires d’exception*, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona 2007; Venturi, Scot-Brown, Izenour: *Learning from Las Vegas*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA 1972.

²³ Sophie Wolfrum, “Performative Urbanism”, in *Performative Urbanism*, *op. cit.*

²⁴ See also Christopher Dell, *Das Urbane*, JOVIS, Berlin 2014.

of focus questions arise concerning the relationship between structure (object), performance (situation), and acting subject. Currently, a strategy of urbanism is emerging from this reflection that I would like to describe as a transition in urban planning, a “reverse functionalism, a functionalism from below that results from the use of the city, from the operative interconnections of a topography of potentialities that are functionally led to their actualization.”²⁵ This strategy recognises that the city qua phenomenon is embedded in the context of a process that cannot be interpreted as a closed, completed product with implemented or projected functions, but instead must be conceived as a performative practice, in which the use determines the form. But again, one has to ask what the notion of the performative could mean in the context of the city and its reverse functionalism.

Today, performance seems to appear as the modality that pervades all areas of production in capitalist societies, whether socio-cultural, technological, or organisational. Performance is the hallmark of the current relations of production in society. If, following Henri Lefebvre, we conceive of space as something that is produced, performance thereby becomes the practical element of the way in which this space is “made”. Accordingly, every type of social organisation generates a living space that is in a direct causal context that encompasses social relations. In this way, a dialectic of space unfolds that interprets space as both a medium of social relations as well as a product that, as something that has been produced, can in turn retroactively affect society. This also entails that space is not objectively given, but instead is produced through social forces. Produced space is therewith dependent above all on our performance, and the performance of the technologies we utilise. Space and performance thus represent an interplay of relationships that permeates everyday life and has far-ranging effects on the intermeshing of the individual and society. In summary, in industrial society, the individual was exposed to absolute external control and supervision, and disciplined according to the principle of “discipline and punish”. In a post-industrial, urbanised society, in contrast, the performance principle tends to prevail inasmuch as supervision is shifted into the subject himself and social norms are internalised. Foucault formulated a the-

130

²⁵ Christopher Dell, “Reverse Functionalism. Deleuze and the Structure of Diagrams”, in: Valena, Avermaete, and Vrachliotis (eds.), *Structuralism Reloaded*, Axel Menges, Stuttgart 2011, p. 288.

oretical basis for this power shift from a disciplinary to a performative model in his study “The History of Governmentality”.²⁶ Therein, he describes how the unfolding of power in modern society never occurs one-sidedly, but is instead always characterised by an interplay of self- and other-determined governance. Not only is this interplay the Archimedean point of almost all social problems of our times thus described, but our relationship to space – and therefore our role as subjects in space, more concretely as users and actors – can also be attributed to this interplay.

Cedric Price’s Fun Palace

Prototypical of this development was the emergence of a new tactic with the aid of which marginalised groups or individuals aspired to the “centre” in the 1960s. Instead of organising a majority by means of a protracted political struggle, marginalised groups and persons sought to penetrate directly into the centre of societal debate from – seen in social terms – the outer point by means of maximally performative effects. What previously could only be achieved by means of securing a majority now functioned with the implementation of a tactic of positing. In this context, the “Fun Palace” project of the English architect Cedric Price can be highlighted as a central prototype from the 1960s. As a round-the-clock multi-purpose entertainment centre, the Fun Palace combined communication technologies and building components into a performative machine aimed at adapting to the needs and wishes of its users.

In order to meet the requirements of convertibility, the Fun Palace’s flexible structure was constructed along the lines of a shipyard and, depending on the changing situations, could be converted at the roof level by a crane structure. The circulating movement was made possible by connecting bridges and conveyor walkways. The concept of architecture as built space makes way here for the concept of a controlled space: functional governance regulates the constellation of construction. Symbolic expression makes way for a time-based automation: moveable sun shields replace the function of the roof, spatial division is organised by screens, optical barriers, and steam zones. Specifically

131

²⁶ See Michel Foucault, “Governmentality”, in: Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1991, pp. 87–104.

functional requirements such as sanitary facilities and kitchens are installed in standardised modules on mechanically moveable decks, thereby ensuring improvisational options. Here, built space is replaced by the concept of the abstract meta-machine. Nevertheless, the Fun Palace had serious drawbacks: it was an externally controlled field, a cybernetic illusion of planning all possible solutions and situations in advance, or even worse: a manipulative space governed by the imperative to perform.

Per-formed space

Cedric Price's Fun Palace demonstrated in exemplary fashion how architecture can function as a temporary expository machine of this transition in the social production of space. Thereby socio-political effectivity – in other words: the effects of the socio-cultural performance of architecture – likewise takes centre-stage. As an aesthetic form of action, architectural practice can also be a platform for new forms of political performance. In this connection, Rancière speaks of the creation of stages for lending visibility to new political actors.²⁷ When such stages of enablement are created, not only political goals play a role, but also the form in which they are per-formed. In this way, aesthetics can be regarded as central to politics, because it determines what Rancière calls the distribution of the sensible, which comes into form as aesthetic 'regimes'. One should understand these as different forms of organisation encompassing forms of visibility, ways of making form, and ways of conceptualising these.

At first, form sounds alluring to architects: the discourse of form seems to confirm an understanding of space as pure form, as something transparent and intelligible. This conception makes it seem possible that the chaos of the world can be tamed rationally by means of an intellectually understood space, as if the complex tangle that is the city can be "generated" with a series of precisely defined operations. But this is deceptive. According to Lefebvre, in the urban context we experience a non-transparent, occult form: "Urban space purports to be transparent. Everything is symbolic [...], everything stands in relation to pure form, is the content of this form [...]. But one [...] notices that this transpar-

²⁷ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill, Continuum, London and New York 2004.

ency is deceptive. The city, the urban, is also a mystery, occult.”²⁸ Lefebvre’s point about form here can be easily misunderstood. This is due to his definition of form in relation to movement, to time. Space is interpreted as a storyline/course of action, as a dynamic entity that has a structuring influence on the fabric of social relations and is co-determined by the latter at the same time. In this process, everyday life retroacts systematically on the performance of space. The possibilities of constituting spaces performatively are dependent on the given symbolic and material factors found in an action situation, on the habits and disposition of the actors, on the access control embedded in the structure, as well as on physical options. A shift in focus thereby begins, away from objects and towards that which objects make possible. Complexity and disorder arise from a field of urban actors, interactions, sites, and discourses that constitute the urban. The critical analysis offered in this article thus draws attention to improvisation as the mode of urban practice that seeks constructive ways of dealing with disorder on the basis of the performative. Here, it is of decisive importance to interpret the outward form of performance not as a determinant, but instead solely as the point of departure for new forms. On the basis of this reading, I suggest turning the conventional understanding of form on its head. This is unspectacular, and for this very reason so effective. Those who assume that movement follows from form, can, for instance, as a city planner maintain that sufficient planning also produces the right urban movement. My view is the exact opposite: form emerges from movement and not the other way around!

By re-reading the production of space as the improvisation of space, urbanism becomes situative: in the recognition that the doable, the real, the potential of the situation is drawn from the interplay of mutually influencing factors. If one desists from spending time pressing reality into forms, one gains the opportunity to analyse those structures that regulate the course of the process of transformation. It has the effect of liberation: discovering structural coherence in material disorder instead of avoiding disorder as form, and thereby taking urban practice and life itself as the point of departure. Instead of a call to order and a return to an overriding subject perspective, the issue now is the possibility of urban subjects to reconfigure themselves through improvisation. This also means: the consistency of the subject also does not remain untouched.

²⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, p. 120.

But what is the relationship between performativity and improvisation? One can maintain that action is a performative act: in other words, something that is carried out and that is full of indeterminacy. And vice versa: in order to become an emancipatory force, performance presupposes an art of action, a practical-reflective knowledge, a constructive, intersubjective approach with disorder: *improvisation*. If one speaks of improvisation as performance here, one is dealing with improvisation's "showing of itself" in its cultural, technological, and social meanings as concurrent representation, achievement, and execution.

Lacaton & Vassal revisited – An architecture of enablement and improvisation

In order to indicate how a shift from performance to improvisation can be tackled, I want to again draw on and look more closely at the example of the above-mentioned work by Lacaton & Vasall. They are an architectural office that is expressly committed to opening up individual free spaces. Anne Lacaton and Jean Philippe Vassal seek to grasp the essence of improvisation, form from movement, and to transport this into architecture. Here, they do not take as their point of departure the event-oriented programme of the 1980s and 1990s that aims to supply forms in order to generate events. They also do not conceive of form as an architectural problem of continual elaboration, but instead: form is the aggregate of an architectural analysis of a particular situation. Architecture is then primarily something that emerges from a situative movement: first life, the appropriation, the enabled improvisation are what constitute the spatial quality. In the case of Lacaton & Vassal, we can therefore speak of an architecture of enablement, a second-level production of space. They produce spatial structures that in turn enable the production of space. For Lacaton & Vassal, the spatial added-value is measured not in additional square meters alone, but also in the added potential of living movement, lived experience, and ultimately in the quality of life. The connection with time produces a lightness in architecture that counters the idea of the monumental, the eternal, removed from time. We discover a direct line to Price here. But inasmuch as architecture includes time as a factor of life and production in a building, it becomes lighter, more capable of transformation; even its own disappearance has been taken into consideration as well.

One could claim that Lacaton & Vassal proceed analogously to conceptual art: they analyse the interior of a situation and from this develop a conceptual programme that transforms itself as long as it remains open until the time is ripe for admitting formal determinations. The given is what determines: the question is posed in accordance with the consciousness for the situation. This can go so far that the architects refrain from intervening because they recognise that the situation already functions just as it is, as in the case of Place Leon Aucoc in Bordeaux. Changes in the previously existing, subtle balance of the place are out of the question. Lacaton & Vassal restrict themselves to simple maintenance work. Period!

Just as a place can become a ready-made, technology can become an instrument of reinterpretation, of *détournement*: hothouses are transformed into housing machines (Le Corbusier, *unité d'habitation / Wohnmaschine*). And since hothouses are also inexpensive and at the same time generate maximum openness, the view of the economy is likewise changed. Paradoxically, Lacaton & Vassal have integrated the economy as a driving force in such a calculated fashion that, on the other hand, they liberate themselves from it: "We never start from the idea that we're going to build inexpensively; we ask ourselves how we're going to be able to offer ourselves everything we want."²⁹ The buildings are so inexpensive that they enable luxury without a great deal of money: luxury for all. "*Se libérer de l'idée de forme*" thus does not mean dispensing with form, but deriving form from movement. This frees our attention for the significance of people's everyday life and its movements generated from within.

Improvisation of space

On account of the above, the key hypothesis would be that improvisation as a technology could be the mode of practice that enables not only navigation through the new urban spaces but also to produce them *in situ*. This implies understanding improvisation as a model of action that is to be regarded as a socio-material resource of the city. It acts as its facilitating structure in urban spaces that are characterised by dimensions of abrupt change, uncertainty, and insecurity. But that implies reconfiguring the term in question. Originally the

²⁹ A Conversation with Patrice Goulet, in: 2G, *International Architecture Review*, Barcelona 2002, p. 123.

term improvisation was used to describe a stage of repairing situations, to correct in a sloppy way what went wrong. Although improvisation is inherently associated with flexibility and mobility, it was only ever meant to be in temporary use. When cities become transit places, the situation turns around: complex urban space takes on the qualities of permanent improvisation. The form of transition becomes one of the key features of the everyday life of people living in the improvisatory state and improvisation technology becomes the technology of the self³⁰ that facilitates that individuals intersubjectively produce and use space. Yet the notion of improvisation as it is coined here does not speak of naïve vitalism or a socio-romantic notion of the everyday, but rather questions new modes of politics. In this way, the contemporary city is interpreted rather as a space of transition: In the actualities of change that can arise from the unexpected reaction to and the spontaneous productions of urban life there lies the possibility of transformation, and, in general, the invention of new forms of organisation and thus new spaces of the political.

³⁰ Foucault, Martin, Gutman, and Hutton (eds.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst 1988.

Petra Čeferin*

Architecture: Constructing Concrete Utopias

The history of architecture presents us with numerous examples of drawings of utopian worlds that were designed to exist in some other place or in some other time – ideal worlds beyond reality. For those utopias conceived by architects, however, what is also characteristic is that not only have they been interested in drawing, in depicting these ideal worlds, but also particularly interested in how to realize them, how to build them. Such thinking can already be clearly seen at the end of the 18th century, when some of the best-known projects of ideal cities were designed, based on the conviction that with the means of architecture and urban planning at their disposal a better, highly moral and just society could be constructed. Among this group of utopian projects, however, are often counted also modernist projects from the early 20th century that were not conceived as depictions of ideal worlds but were “real projects”, explicitly designed to be built and in some cases were indeed actually built. These include urban planning schemes, projects for social housing, and public buildings, all of which tried to follow the latest developments introduced by modern science and technology, and that were designed with the goal of creating a truly modern, quality living environment for all – even for the poorest or lowest social strata.

One example of just such a project is Le Corbusier’s project for the low-cost Cité Frugès housing complex, partially realised in 1924 in Pessac, on the outskirts of Bordeaux. Cité Frugès was planned as a garden city for workers employed in the industrial complexes owned by the Bordeaux industrialist Henry Frugè. Frugè read Le Corbusier’s celebrated *Vers une architecture*, was fascinated by his progressive views on modern architecture and commissioned the architect to design a complex of 200 houses on a piece of land he owned. Some 50 of these houses were built. This was an experimental project in many respects: in its use of an advanced system of industrial prefabrication and standardised building units, and the use of colour to compose, or, as Le Corbusier put it, to sculpt space.

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According to the official story, however, all of these projects failed miserably – because they were doomed to fail. Supposedly they were blind idealisations conceived without consideration for the people, for the inhabitants, without paying attention to local cultures and traditions; they have been seen as banal, rootless, determinist, devoid of any civic, historical and human component and similar. This is also why they are considered utopian projects: it is true they were planned to be built, to be realised, but they were imagined and conceived in a way that their ideas and ideals could not be realised; to put it simply, they were unrealistic – in short, utopian.

This interpretation is (still) generally accepted today. Recent years have seen an increasing interest in the modernist project of building a better world – but with a certain reservation. According to this view it is necessary to work toward constructing a better world, but in the process of this pursuit one should leave behind the utopian dimension of the project and instead focus on concrete problems and address the concrete conditions that characterise today's reality.¹ In short, it is time to give up drawing ideal worlds and to focus instead on solving the challenges of this world.

I hold a different position, which is that architecture need not choose between these two options. The dilemma – whether architects should plan visions of the future, conceive new utopias, or instead put an end to such notions and focus on solving concrete problems and face the concrete conditions of the present – is, for architecture, not a relevant dilemma whatsoever. Why? Because architecture – insofar as it is practiced as a creative practice – is always, already, utopia realised. To be more precise: architecture is a utopian practice by virtue of its structural logic; that is, by the way the activity of architecture itself is structured, and by the way this activity appears and functions in the world. And if we really are interested in constructing a better world with architecture, we should insist precisely on its utopian structure, on enacting architecture in the world as a utopian, that is, creative practice.

¹ Some of the problems architects consider to be the problems that need to be addressed by architecture include homelessness, the growing crisis in affordable housing, the loss of environmental quality, the challenge posed by traffic-choked, increasingly unmanageable urban areas, the proliferation of slums, and similar.

When I say that architecture is a utopian practice, however, I understand utopia in a specific sense. To explain briefly: one has to make a distinction between two definitions of utopia: utopia as simple imaginary impossibility, and utopia in the more radical sense of enacting that which within the framework of existing social relations appears “impossible.”² This second utopia is a-topical only with regard to these relations. In both cases we have to deal with something that is impossible, that doesn’t have its place within the existing reality, that is a non-place with regard to this reality – that is *a-topical*. In the first case this is a vision of some better world – a world that enjoys a perfect, harmonious social order free of antagonisms – that is unattainable, nothing but a hope, a dream. It is something radically *other*, *outside* the given world. In the second case, however, this otherness, this exteriority is actually enacted *in* this world, *inside* the given world. And it is enacted precisely as *otherness*, as *exteriority*. The imagined better world thus functions in the way of opening up a space in the given world for something that is radically heterogeneous to it. It is a piercing of a world where everything has its place with a non-place, with a moment of the *a-topical*.

This is precisely what architecture as a creative practice does: it affirms something in the world that from the point of view of this world seems impossible, something that isn’t part of this world. More precisely, which *is* in this world as something that isn’t part of this world. In other words, architecture works in the way that in the situation, that is, within the set of various possibilities, affirms its *impossibility*; something that for the given situation and its regimes of knowledge doesn’t count, that doesn’t actually exist. It does this in the form of the objects it produces, such as buildings and other built structures, structural details, drawings, digital renderings, texts.³ If it succeeds in doing this, such objects are objects of a special kind. They are an expression of the time and space in which they were made but can’t be reduced to this time and space. They are anachronistic and a-topical objects: objects that are of and within the time in which they were made and simultaneously outside that time; and which are inside the space in which

² Here I refer to an elaboration of the meaning of utopia developed by Slavoj Žižek. See: S. Žižek, *The market mechanism for the race of devils*, <http://www.lacan.com/zizliberal2>.

³ It is unimportant whether products of architecture are built or only remain depictions of some other, utopian worlds that are not even meant to be built. It matters only that they are constructed in the way – and such a construction does not need to be a built structure, it can also take the form of a drawing, a model, a text – that the moment of that which for the given situation is impossible, is affirmed, articulated in them.

they were made and simultaneously outside it. In other words, they are objects that pierce their given temporal and situational or cultural determination. They are trans-historical and trans-situational objects. They persist in *different* times and are valid for *different* cultures as something significant for architecture and society. Just such an object of a special kind is, in my view, also the Cité Frugès housing complex, and this is why it is worthy of attention. We will return to this assertion once we have moved through certain key constituent precepts.

Some starting points: Tectonic construction and the joint

Such a-topical and anachronistic objects are produced by all creative practices, and all such practices produce them in their own particular ways. Architecture – more precisely, the design practice of architecture – produces them in the way of construction, in the construction of joints, architectural or tectonic joints. With this claim I subscribe to one of the established views in architecture, according to which architecture is the art of construction or the poetics of construction. This view was brought back into the foreground of the larger architectural discussion by architect Kenneth Frampton in the late 1990s. In so doing Frampton succeeded to develop and present such position as a productive starting point for the contemporary thinking of architecture, both in theory and design practice. Let me summarise his theory in a few points, which also serve as the starting points for what I will try to develop herein.

That architecture is the poetics of construction is Frampton's response to what he recognised as the process of the trivialization or commodification of architecture. He further delineated this process as the understanding of architecture as scenography and its reduction to a commodity – or, as he put it, a giant commodity.⁴ In order to stop or avoid this process one has to return to that which is both intrinsic to architecture and specific to it. And this is the way architecture produces its products – in Frampton's view this specific architectural way of production is tectonic construction. Frampton explains tectonics as craft in the original Greek sense of *poiesis*, the craft of making, that is, the making of mate-

⁴ Kenneth Frampton, "Rappel à l'Ordre: The Case for the Tectonic", in: K. Frampton, *Labour, Work and Architecture. Collected Essays in Architecture and Design*, Phaidon Press, London 2007, p. 91. Frampton further develops his theory of tectonics in his major work: *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture*.

rial products. On the one hand tectonics is thus the craft of making, of handling materials, which is what both an architect and a carpenter-craftsman have in common. But on the other hand, as Frampton emphasises, tectonics shouldn't merely be understood in an instrumental, technical sense, as the craft of making that follows established procedures and techniques. In architectural or tectonic construction something else is at stake – but an adequate technical solution of what we could call a mere utilitarian object. What is at stake – and this is one of Frampton's key theses – is the production of *things*, *architectural things*. It is, however, important how Frampton understands that which he designates as an (architectural) thing.

Firstly, he describes architectural things in a way similar to that which I described architectural objects earlier. Frampton writes that they are time-bound, but at the same time they are “excised from the continuity of time”;⁵ he defines architecture as an activity that “is anachronistic by definition”, and emphasises that “duration and durability are its ultimate values.”⁶ In short, he describes them as the objects that are within their space and time in such a way as to be irreducible to them. Secondly, Frampton determines the status of architectural things – and here he refers to Heidegger – in opposition to a sign. This is how he explains such in one of the key paragraphs of his essay “Rappel à l'ordre: The Case for the Tectonic”:

Thus one may assert that building is ontological rather than representational in character, and that built form is a presence rather than something standing for an absence. In Martin Heidegger's terminology we may think of it as a 'thing' rather than a 'sign'.⁷

Based on this opposition between a thing and a sign, the built form as a thing appears as something that is directly given in what it is. A thing presents itself in its being or in its ontological meaning. As such it is supported in itself and

⁵ Frampton, “Rappel à l'Ordre”, p. 103.

⁶ Frampton, *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture*, MIT Press and Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, Cambridge, Mass., London and Chicago 1996, p. 27.

⁷ Frampton, “Rappel à l'Ordre”, p. 93.

in this sense it is self-supporting, independent.⁸ In contrast to this, a built form as a sign is something that is not self-supporting, that does not present itself. Its fundamental function is in this case representational: as a sign, a built form represents or shows something that is not already itself, it exhibits or reveals something else, something absent or hidden. Architecture, which is a thing, to repeat once again, is not therefore primarily representational – such architecture Frampton calls “architecture as scenography” – but counts as a material object, in its immediate corporeal or material presence. Of course architecture also represents or bears various meanings, but this is secondary. What is of primary importance is that it presents itself, that it is the appearance of architecture itself, in its meaninglessness.

I will focus on that which Frampton considers to be the appearance or the embodiment of architecture at the smallest scale, as a kind of an atom of architecture, which is a detail of a structural joint.⁹ Frampton describes such a joint as “the fundamental nexus around which a building comes into being, that is to say, comes to be articulated as a presence in itself.”¹⁰ So, in architecture a structural joint isn’t simply a connection. But it is, according to Frampton, the fundamental architectural element, it is the *presence of architecture*. He formulates this even more explicitly when he writes that a structural joint is “a point of ontological condensation”.¹¹ What does this mean? It means that an architectural joint is that key architectural element around which architecture as a thing is articulated. In a joint, with a joint, the *architecturalness of architecture*, or better, the *materiality of architecture as a thing* is present.

⁸ Cf. Martin Heidegger, “The Thing”, in: *Poetry, Language, Thought*, transl. Albert Hofstadter, New York 1971, pp. 163–180.

⁹ An important ground for Frampton’s theory of tectonics and in particular for his thesis that a structural joint is a fundamental element of architecture, are the writings of Gottfried Semper and Karl Bötticher. Both 19th century architects advocated the view that architecture was a poetics of construction. It has to be mentioned that they were both interested also in the question how to understand materiality that is characteristic for architecture and that results from tectonic construction.

¹⁰ Frampton, “Rappel à l’Ordre”, p. 95.

¹¹ “There is a spiritual value residing in the »thingness« of the constructed object, so much so that the generic joint becomes a point of ontological condensation rather than a mere connection.” Frampton, “Rappel à l’Ordre”, *op. cit.*, p. 95. It seems that here Frampton withdraws from the radicality of his thesis that architecture is a material thing, as he simply replaces the thingness of the thing with a spiritual value. In so doing he reduces the product of architecture, in opposition to his own theory, to a sign.

The question that occurs at this point – and which Frampton does not address – however, is what kind of materiality is at stake here, what is the materiality of architecture as a thing. Keeping in mind the fact that a thing is an object of a special kind, that it is an a-topical and trans-temporal object, this can't simply consist in the materiality of building materials. It can only be a special kind of materiality. I would argue – and this is the first point with which I supplement Frampton's theory – that this special kind of materiality is that which in the process of architectural construction is produced or created anew. It is produced precisely in the way of constructing tectonic joints – and appears in the world in the form of joints. The second point that I bring to Frampton's theory is this – that it is produced and appears in the form of joints of various scales. Not only does it appear in the small scale of the details of structural joints, but also in larger scales, all the way up to the largest scale of what I call a gigantic joint. With this I mean the connection between a building or some other built structure and its context. Let me begin with a small joint, a detail of a structural joint.

Constructing Tectonic Joints – Constructing Architectural Materiality

I. Small Joints

As an illustrative example I will use a structural detail of a church and community centre in Viikki, Finland, designed by JKMM Architects.

Here we see six wooden structural elements, four vertical and two horizontal; and at the same time we don't see simply these six connected elements. We also see something else: we see before us – as we would probably all, or at least most of us, agree – a *successful architectural solution*. In what is this successful architectural solution?

As “objectively speaking” there is nothing else before us but six connected elements, there is only one answer to this question: a successful architectural solution is contained precisely *in the way these elements are connected* – in short, *in the joint*.

So, how does their connection work? What is produced with it?

Here we have just six connected elements. Their joint, the specific scheme according to which these elements are connected, is not present as some addition-

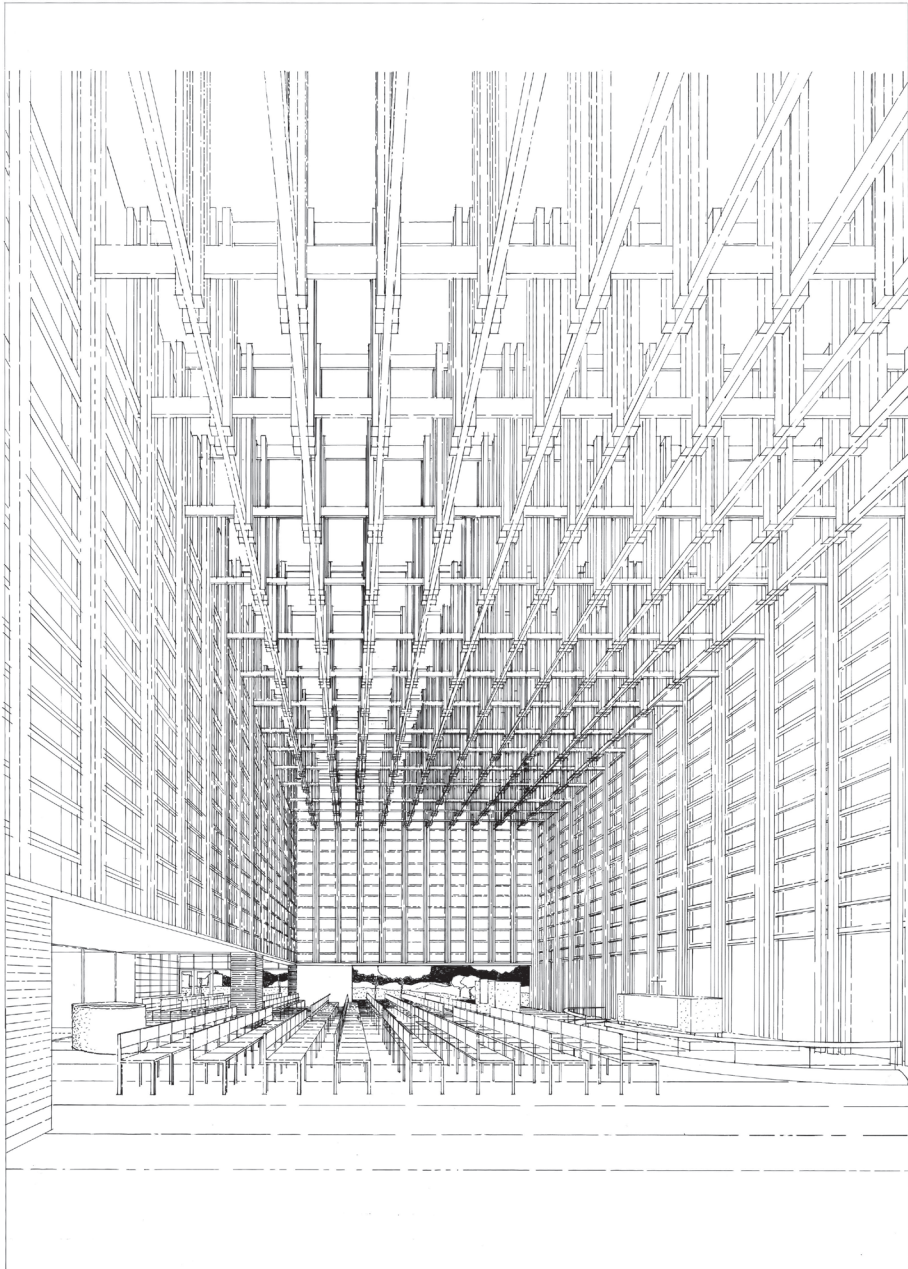


Fig. 1: Church and community centre in Viikki, Finland, designed by JKMM Architects; drawing of the interior by Samuli Miettinen (JKMM)

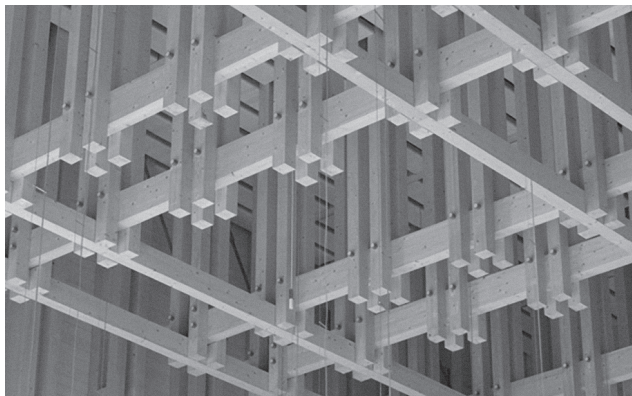
al, seventh element. Strictly speaking, we can't see the connection as such. We can't see the joint itself. The joint is present only in its *material effect* – in the way that we see or can see the connection of the six elements as a *successful architectural solution*. We see them as the *materialisation of architecture*.

The joint disappears, so to speak, in the solution and comes to life as the solution itself. It has a paradoxical status: *it is present as absent*. We can't see the joint – in that sense it is *absent*. And it is *present* in the sense that it produces material effects: it makes it possible to see the six wooden elements as a *body of architecture*, although “objectively” speaking we have nothing else in front of us but six connected elements.

So, as the result of a successful articulation of the joint we get an object that is Two at the same time: it is an architectural object, a materialisation of architecture; and at the same time it is an entirely ordinary object, a technical, structural detail.

This happens if the connection of elements is successfully articulated, if they are brought together well. If the connection isn't successful, if the joint is poorly articulated, we see only the elements and a failed attempt to connect them. In this case there is no architecture present, only a technical, structural detail. If the joint is successful, however, things become more complex. Let's look at this in the case of the structural detail depicted in the photograph.

Fig. 2: Church and community centre in Viikki, structural detail / architectural joint; photo by Kimmo Räisänen



This detail is a structural joint, an element of the bearing structure, that is to say, an ordinary, useful or utilitarian object; and yet it is not only that. It is a utilitarian object in the way that it is at the same time also *something else* – it is also a successful architectural solution, a materialization of architecture. To which one must add: *without positively being that “something else”*.

The same can be said for the other dimension of this detail, for the detail as an architectural object. It is an object that sparks our sensual perception and expresses an idea of architecture. In short, it is an aesthetic object of architecture. But it isn't only that. It is an aesthetic object of architecture in the way that it is, at the same time, also *something else* – it is also a structural detail, that is, an ordinary, utilitarian object. And we must add here as well: *without objectively being “something else”*.

What does this mean, that each of the two objectal forms of the structural joint is something else or other than itself, without *objectively* or *positively* being “something else”?

This simply means that this “something else” isn't a kind of addition that could be subtracted from either of the two objects, be separated from them. It is not possible to subtract this “something else” from the utilitarian object and arrive at a pure utilitarian object, to a “pure usefulness” or “pure utility”. Nor is it possible to subtract this “something else” – the utilitarian value – from the aesthetic object and arrive at “pure aesthetics” or “pure architecture”.

The two components or dimensions of the object are in this structural detail connected in the way that they are inseparable. But they are not fused into one. This structural detail, which is an example of an architectural thing, is Two at the same time – or more precisely, it is Two in One. The simultaneity of Two in One is the result of an *architectural or tectonic joint*. The architectural or tectonic joint is the joint that works in two distinct ways at the same time. It simultaneously connects AND separates the Two.

The dimensions of utility and architecturalness are in the architectural thing connected such that the result of this connection is a single object, and yet in this single object a difference is articulated – a difference that is at the same time also a joint between both dimensions. This difference/joint is *intrinsic* to the

object. And it is from this joint/difference that the object or architectural thing is made. To put it briefly: an architectural thing is an *object with an internal difference*. Because of this difference it is an object of a special kind – one that is always also something else, something other than what it is. It is an object that is not identical to itself.

In this simple example of a structural detail we can see the logic that is characteristic for the constructing of architecture in general. It is the logic that is in a way illogical. The operation of constructing architecture – and this is clearly seen in the case of this detail – is not merely the process of adding parts and elements in accordance with a simple formula, like $1+1=2$. In order to define architectural joints, we must abandon the elementary logic of mathematical addition. We can describe the operation of architectural construction only with an in-equation – $1+1\neq 2$. Or in our case: $1+1+1+1+1+1\neq 6$.

II. Gigantic joints

The same logic is at work in the case of the gigantic joint, that is, in the connection between a built structure and its context. Architects, if they work seriously, never design just a building, but think about a building together with the site for which the building is planned. And if they succeed in designing a building-on-site well, then it seems as if, together with a new building, also its site, the context itself appeared, as if anew. It seems that only as the result of their successful connection did they both come into being. As a simple example of such a successful connection – a successful gigantic joint – let us take the example of a bridge.

If a bridge is well constructed, that is, architecturally constructed, the connection between the bridge and the landscape is not simply the sum of the two – the bridge and the landscape, its context – but we can actually say that their connection too, is indirectly present, their joint. This connection is present *indirectly* in the way we see *both the bridge and its context as a place* – the *place where the bridge is*. In short, we see the bridge and its context as the *place of the bridge*. A *place* is a successful joint – in our case this is the joint of the bridge and the landscape – into One, which is in itself already Two. (This Two is the place of the bridge, of course.) Which is why we can call examples of a successful or well-articulated gigantic joint simply a *place*.



Fig. 3: An example of a gigantic joint: bridge Høse in Suldal, Norway, designed by Rintala-Eggertson Architects 2008-2013; photo by Dag Jensen.

Just as in the case of a small joint the joint itself is not directly visible; also in the case of a gigantic joint, the place itself is not directly visible. It is not a positive element of the situation, it is not something objectively given. Instead of a place, *topos*, it would thus be more appropriate to call it a non-place, *a-topos*. Because, to repeat once again, it is not an additional element that would appear on-site; we have before us only a bridge and its context. And yet it works, it has effects. It is present in its material effects, in the way that both the bridge and the landscape appear as objects of a special kind. As was formulated earlier, it seems as if they both appeared anew.

The bridge isn't simply a useful and usable object that enables the crossing of the river, but it is also something else – it is also an *instance of architecture*. And the context isn't simply a set of specific local conditions, but it is also something else – it is also a *localised context*. They both appear as objects of a special kind, objects that are always also something else than themselves without actually being something else. They appear as objects with an internal difference.

148

An architect is one who succeeds in creating such objects with an internal difference. Of this difference we can say that it is minimal or even null, as it were. Why null? Because it is not directly visible – we have only a single object in front of us, like a bridge in its context, and a context with its bridge. At the same time, however, it is not really something null. For architecture it is crucial. This minimal, as it were null difference, works in the way – and this is what is essential here – that we see in a perceptibly sensorial way, some material object: a detail, a bridge, its context, as a *materialization of architecture; as its body*.

This is why, for such a structure we can say that it has a *double materiality*: the ordinary materiality of building materials, wood, concrete, bricks, steel, and the materiality of architecture itself. Both materialities are inseparably connected: there is only a single object in front of us (a bridge in its context, a structural detail, etc.). The materiality of architecture itself is not visible as such. Yet it is more durable and enduring than the materiality of wood, concrete, bricks or steel. It is that which gives successful architectural products – architectural things – their particular resilience and resistance in the face of time and situation. It is that which in an architectural thing is the trans-situational and trans-temporal.

This special materiality is that which in an architectural thing is created *anew*. It is created as the result of a successful construction, a successful articulation of the architectural or tectonic joint. This is the materiality of architecture as a *thing*.

III. Joints of the object and the subject

Until now we have focused on the production of a special kind of materiality of architectural things, that is, we have focused on the “objective” side of this production. But what about the “subjective” side? The “subjective” side are the human beings, the people who are involved in the process of the production and reception of architecture, that is, its producers and users. Let us first focus on the producers, the architects.

I said earlier that an architect is one who succeeds in creating objects with an internal difference. To be yet more precise, however, only when an architect creates an object with an internal difference does she become an architect. An architect who practices architecture as a creative practice isn't simply one who as a sovereign actor creates her objects. It would be better to say that exactly the opposite is true: it is the object that creates the architect. This object is an object of a special kind, one that is not directly visible and yet for architecture is crucial. It might be best to describe this object using Lacan's concept of the object-cause of desire – here as the object-cause of architecture; or, in short, as the architectural cause. We can also define it as that specific architectural idea that an architect tries to realise in the construction of her objects. The architectural cause is a firm presupposition as well as that which guides and drives an architect in her work. But as such a driving force and a presupposition it exists only in architect's capacity to construct and re-construct it in her products again and again. It manifests itself in the form of that minimal, internal difference that

gives a successful architectural product, an architectural thing, its special materiality, and as the result of which this thing remains eternally something else, something that differs from itself.

It is owing to this internal difference that an architectural thing itself works as an open question. It is an object with a hole of meaning; or, as I also designated it here, an object with an internal difference. Its internal difference works as a ceaseless call to repeatedly rethink architecture, it is something that triggers our thinking and acting, each new attempt to repeat that which in an architectural solution set our thinking in motion. Not, of course, to repeat the solution itself, but rather to repeat that *cause* that manifests itself in it – the architectural cause. This way of acting – which is summarised by the formulation “to create oneself as an architect” – can be called the process of subjectification of an architect. This is the process in which those who enter architecture – from the architect to the many possible users of architecture – become subjects.

The figure of subject on the most elementary level designates, as we know, somebody who thinks independently. It is a synonym for independent thinking. However, for the process of subjectification – which is the *modus operandi* not only of architecture but of all creative practices – a specific independence is characteristic. This is a double independence; that is, the coinciding of independent *thinking* and independent *acting*. Subjectification or the becoming of a subject therefore means to be in the process of becoming an actor of independent thinking and acting.¹²

This kind of acting is characterised by an inner necessity, almost an enforced action. Such a condition is well expressed by architect Zvi Hecker, when he says he “draws because he has to think”.¹³ According to Hecker, an architect *has to* think. I understand this in the following way: what literally *forces* him to think is the *cause* that guides him as an architect and which he, as an architect, tries to *objectify*, render *present*, *visible* in the world. He is trying to do that in order to be – to be as an architect. And this is why he draws. Drawing is a way, one of the ways, of constructing “the cause of architecture” in the world. Only by

150

¹² This is a “shared independence”; the subject shares her independence with that cause which drives her in her thinking and acting, that is, with the architectural cause.

¹³ Zvi Hecker and Andres Lepik (eds.), *Sketches*, Hatje Cantz, Ostfildern 2012, p. 24.

constructing it in the world, in the form of material objects, such as drawings – or structural details, buildings, bridges – can he find it. And precisely because of what he *finds* in a drawing can he continue, make another drawing, another construction, so that he can *find again* that which he is looking for, so that he can repeat that encounter through which he becomes what he *is* – *is as an architect*.

An architect that is driven by the architectural cause thus not only produces objects with a potentially trans-situational and trans-temporal materiality, but also acts in a potentially trans-situational and trans-temporal way. She is in the given world in the way that in the midst of that world and its logic acts regardless of that logic. The firm point of support or grounding of her acting is that specific architectural cause or idea which is, in relation to the given world, its moment of a-topical, and which exists only in new attempts to objectify it in the world.¹⁴ She pursues her own logic, the logic of the architectural cause – that is, the logic of creativity. In this way she tears herself out of the mechanism of the market-instrumental logic that so organises the world today.

By creating the possibility to tear oneself out of the mechanism of the given world, architecture – like all creative practices – opens up this possibility not only to architects, but to all. Not only to those who themselves construct architecture, not only to the producers, but also the observers and users of architecture. Here lies the universal dimension of architecture.

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This is precisely how the project Cité Frugès, designed by Le Corbusier, worked and continues to work. It has triggered the thinking and acting of architects, has inspired various attempts to repeat, in their own way and in different situations, that which in their view succeeded in this project and which they recognised as a good solution. Another such successful housing project, which is in a specific sense a repetition of the Cité Frugès complex, is the PREVI housing project designed in Lima in the late 1960s. This is a project for low-cost hous-

151

¹⁴ The subjectification of an architect is that way of working that is not driven by financial motives, nor by the challenge of (creating) the new or the creation of various “architectural effects”, nor by an appeal to put architecture in the service of society. Rather, it is the way of working that is driven by the architectural cause – that is to say, by something that is, with regard to the given world, something radically other.



Fig. 4: Cité Frugès Housing in Pessac, France, designed by Le Corbusier 1923–1926; photo by Jeff Bickert.

ing for 1,500 families that also includes community facilities such as schools, sports centres, services and infrastructure. Another such project is the Quinta Monroy housing complex designed by the Elemental collective in Chile in 2006.

It is important to note, however, that the Cité Frugès complex hasn't only functioned as good architecture for architects alone, but also for its users, for its inhabitants. When it was built, it was very poorly accepted and actually remained uninhabited for years. It actually didn't quite fully come to life until the 1970s. Then it was precisely the inhabitants who recognised it as a successful housing solution, as good architecture, at which point they began the process of acquiring heritage status for the houses. Today the complex is included in the Unesco Cultural Heritage register.¹⁵ But what is more important is this: that the users recognised the complex as good housing can be seen in the fact that these houses and gardens live on, most animatedly, that the users have been

152

¹⁵ Cf. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1321> (28.8.2016).

developing them both in tune with the starting points outlined by Le Corbusier and in their own specific ways.

The central architectural capacity of this project – which in my view is also one of the key characteristics of good housing solutions in general – lies in the fact that it allows, even encourages such development, such continuation. Le Corbusier did not plan it as such, but it is contained, nevertheless, in his project. This is evidenced by the condition in which the complex and many of its houses stand today, in the fact that they work as a distinctly good living environment. And this is also what has been systematically, in a planned way, developed in the aforementioned examples of low-cost housing projects that were inspired or indeed caused by the Cité Frugès. Both the Previ housing and the Quinta Monroy complex are explicitly designed as “unfinished” projects, they are envisioned as projects to be continued by their users – who would as a result become their inhabitants, would actually inhabit the projects.

In conclusion I would offer that the Cité Frugès is indeed a successful realisation of utopia – and it is successful because it is an instance of architecture, of good architecture. It is not a failed project; it is a project that truly lives, in the sense of both meanings that are important for architecture: it lives on its site in the way that its inhabitants keep developing it as an instance of architecture; and it lives in the form of different architectural projects that try to repeat that which succeeded in it.

To conclude by returning to the beginning: The utopia of the “impossible” connects in and by itself both of the definitions of utopia I mentioned in the beginning. It connects them in a way that the demand for a different, egalitarian world of free people no longer represents or works as an unattainable ideal of some other, radically different world – but as a point of orientation in our acting and thinking within this existing world. This is why, for the practice of architecture, it isn’t actually enough to confront the concrete problems and conditions of the here and now. It is of equal or perhaps even greater importance to preserve the “idealism” inherent in a stubborn militant insistence on the utopian structure of this very practice.

Barbara Predan*

Design for Life: The Struggle for Utopia?

In the first chapter of his book *Means without End*, Giorgio Agamben introduced the phrase *form-of-life*. As he explains it, it is “a life – human life – in which the single ways, acts, and processes of living are never simply *facts* but always and above all *possibilities* of life, always and above all power.”¹ It is precisely the *possibilities* of life – the ability to imagine or recognise the possibilities and have the power to choose between them – that offers the shortest description of what design can do in society, even though it is constantly being threatened by the demands of the neoliberal market. A large part of the design profession, education, and media promulgates the notion that the bond between design and the market is inextricable. The bond, however, is not as indivisible as it may seem.

Scientist and economist Herbert A. Simon stated: “To design is to devise courses of action aimed at changing existing situations into preferred ones.”² A similar point was made by design theorist Clive Dilnot. He described design as an act that “is wedded to the possible. It comes into being only in so far as the possible is present as possibility – i.e., as the capacity for change.”³ These conclusions establish the necessity of recognising an existing potential, and acknowledging our capacity to activate this potential. Design is not only capable of perceiving the impossible within the possible, but also of actualising these ideas in practice. It has the potential to shape our daily existence in accordance with Alain Badiou’s demands. Namely, design should, in any given situation, create the situation’s structural impossibility. That is to say, “a real point to hold on to, whatever the cost.”⁴

155

¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes on Politics*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2000, p. 4.

² Herbert A. Simon, *The Sciences of the Artificial*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1996 [1969], p. 111.

³ Clive Dilnot, “Ethics? Design?”, in Stanley Tigerman (ed.), *The Archeworks Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Archeworks, Chicago 2005, p. 17.

⁴ Alain Badiou, *The Meaning of Sarkozy*, Verso, London 2008, p. 34.

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The objective of this paper is to identify the structural impossibility within the potential for designing our everyday life. In other words, the goal is to make a case – through a discussion of active citizenship during the era of globalised capitalism – for the necessity of the existence of unregulated islands of design activity. I will try to show why focusing on everyday design – design for life – should be of much greater importance than it is now.

What do we mean by ‘designing our everyday life’? Design theorist Tony Fry describes the world we live in as a “world-within-the-world”. A world that is entirely designed by humans, and yet largely invisible.⁵ Siegfried Giedion defines it as a world of anonymous living, as “particles [which] accumulate into an explosive force.”⁶ It is this invisible, anonymous, gradually changing everyday world that is “continually shaping and reshaping the patterns of life.”⁷

It is precisely because of its ordinariness and commonness that it is repeatedly overlooked, that its significance remains unacknowledged. As we design (spontaneously or purposefully) our everyday environment, the latter, as Giedion noted, constantly redesigns us. This brings us to the assumption that the ordinary is, in fact, typically ignored, yet it is precisely in this ignored everyday life that one may find the possibility to resist, to transform the present situation. Historian and activist Howard Zinn refers to this transformation as a true revolutionary change:

It takes place in everyday life, in the tiny crannies where the powerful but clumsy hands of state power cannot easily reach. [...] It takes place in a hundred thousand places at once, in families, on streets, in neighbourhoods, in places of work. It is a revolution of the whole culture. Squelched in one place, it springs up in another, until it is everywhere. Such a revolution is an art. That is, it requires the courage not only of resistance, but of imagination.⁸

⁵ Tony Fry, “Whither Design/Whether History”, in Tony Fry, Clive Dilnot, Susan C. Stewart, *Design and the Question of History*, Bloomsbury, London 2015, p. 4.

⁶ Siegfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command*, Oxford University Press, New York 1948, p. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. VI.

⁸ Howard Zinn, “A Fresh Look at Anarchism”, in: Žiga Vodovnik, *A Living Spirit of Revolt. The Infrapolitics of Anarchism*, PG Press, Oakland (CA) 2013.

The ability to challenge convention is hidden in the possibility of (re)designing our everyday environment. However, this possibility must involve the active participation of every member of society. The process of redesigning our everyday environment introduces the aforementioned potential of impossibility and thus alters, step by step, the existing and the ordinary. In order to achieve this goal, we must establish some distance; we must create the potential for an outside-in perspective. Operating within the narrow parameters of the given context – or, better yet, of what *appears* to be the given context – is not enough. We must perceive what is seemingly unalterable, impossible, as well as what is regarded as trivial, mundane, and ordinary. The latter is, as we have already established, usually discarded and intentionally disregarded. Only a sweeping, comprehensive perspective will allow us to perceive the potential of the impossible and, consequently, reshape the existing into the preferred.

To help us achieve this, Tony Fry proposes a paradigm shift. To avoid passing the point of no return, we have to terminate the existing mode of operation wherein we first (re)design the world only to watch (or, caught off guard, subsequently address) the unanticipated implications of our actions. Instead, Fry's advice is to imagine the kind of world we wish to live in and then adjust design to what we have imagined in such a way that it will yield the preferred result.⁹ The essence of this proposal lies in imagining and constructing a world as an alternative to the existing one. Moreover, the proposal envisages agreement on the kind of world we want to live in. As we know, this is where problems usually arise – with the question of whether it is *worthwhile* to imagine an alternative in the first place. The sheer thought of even starting to consider an alternative discourages many from thinking.

According to Stephen Duncombe, the rationale behind this is evident: the majority does not believe an alternative is possible at all. Duncombe writes: "The dominant system dominates not because people agree with it; it rules because we are convinced there is no alternative."¹⁰ We reject alternatives based on the assumption that they are, at present, simply impossible. More so, alternatives

⁹ Tony Fry, *Becoming Human by Design*, Berg, London 2012.

¹⁰ Stephen Duncombe, "Odprta utopija [Open Utopia]", in: Thomas More, *Utopija*. Studia humanitatis, Ljubljana 2014, p. 140. English version available at: <http://theopenutopia.org/full-text/introduction-open-utopia/> (accessed 2 May 2017).

are not possible because we doubt our own capacity to even conceptualise anything that deviates from the norm. Or worse yet: we reject alternatives because it is impossible, using standard measures of comparison, to compare them to that which exists. Consequently, we are not capable of comprehending them, and therefore we dismiss and thwart the work and creativity of others. We reject exactly that which is – according to Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben – necessary. Namely, in the act of creativity, there is always also an act of rebellion.¹¹ The action of the deed can only follow the preliminary idea: the idea of an alternative to what exists.

As stated at the beginning, imagining change and possibilities has always been (and still is) an integral part of design. Its purpose has remained the same since the very first redesigned stone: it is about the process of imagining and changing the existing into the preferred. It is about building upon the potentiality of the new, while dismantling the old. It is about the potentiality of the world as it could be – or not. When both options are available, we gain the possibility of transversality, which is crucial for design. By imagining the possible and the impossible, as well as what could and could not be, we create the potential for changes. The effects of these changes open the space for new thinking. What used to be impossible becomes a new possibility. We prepare the ground for new utopias that serve as a constant potentiality of actuality and the non-existent.

The 20th century may provide a way to tackle this given task, despite legitimate observations that the rules and ethical foundations of the 20th century, which have governed the field of redesigning our environment, have crumbled. In their subordination to the market, they became unusable. In relationship to the environment, they became unsustainable. It is therefore hardly surprising that the 21st century has seen a number of experiments in design. These experiments – anarchic and oblivious to the dogmatic notion of acting *correctly* – are likely to provide new forms of agency. One of the earliest examples took place in the second half of the 20th century. This radical rebellion strived to defy the perversity of having the role and position of design in society imposed by the Other.

¹¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Resistance in Art*, European Graduate School, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=one7mE-8y9c (accessed 5 May 2017).

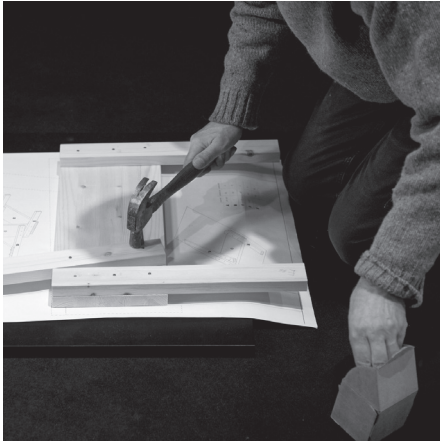


Fig. 1: Enzo Mari, *Proposta per un'autoprogettazione*, 1974.
Photo: © Artek (www.artek.fi)

I refer here to the thought and work of Italian designers such as Enzo Mari and the radical “antidesign” movements united in the Superstudio and Archizoom collectives. Seeing as how most designers accept the widespread notion that design should be subordinate to the market and function as a catalyst for consumerism, Mari and both groups turned their critical gaze inward, towards the design practice. With this self-criticism, they wished to subvert the foundations of uncritical, toothless design, which does not recognise (as well as does not look for) an alternative outside the given (and seemingly immutable) frames of the established market logic. This is precisely what Mari and both collectives offered: an alternative that would shatter social dogmas. Mari stated:

In my job as designer, or rather as an intellectual who contradicts the actual state of things, I try within the network of commissions and projects to ‘smuggle in’ moments of research and ways of creating the stimulus to free oneself from ideological conditioning, standard norms, behaviour and taste.¹²

With their critique, Mari and the collectives place emphasis on the aforementioned outside-in perspective. They encourage us to become aware of the ordi-

¹² Enzo Mari, *Proposta per un'autoprogettazione*, Edizioni Corraini, Milano 2002, p. 33, www.matthewlangley.com/blog/Enzo-Mari-Autoprogettazione2.pdf (accessed 15 June 2017).

nary, everyday environment that we have built and that we inhabit. By becoming aware of it, we would finally acknowledge it as merely another product of humanity's material culture. Thanks to this insight, we would recognise our capacity to influence the existing; we would recognise our ability to alter and redesign the whole. And therein actually lies the key to evolving from a passive observer into an active one. Viewed from the inside, our everyday environment seems to be an unalterable, given context. However, by establishing a view from the outside, it becomes something into which we can intentionally, actively interfere. The latter reminds us of the thesis of Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* and *The Emancipated Spectator*. In *The Emancipated Spectator*, Rancière points out two oppositional categories. In

those who possess a capacity and those who do not [...]. Emancipation begins when we challenge the opposition between viewing and acting; when we understand that the self-evident facts that structure the relations between saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection. It begins when we understand that viewing is also an action that confirms or transforms this distribution of positions.¹³

Rancière thus asserts that our position as an external observer is (inter)active. The latter is based upon the assumption that with our conscription knowledge we entangle ourselves in what we are seeing and thereby actively co-create the view of it. Similar holds true regarding education. We remain passive while someone else carries out the selection of knowledge for us. As such, we only seemingly move forward. The knowledge that has been received remains fragmented, since we still remain in the grip of someone who is leading us, who is measuring out knowledge that we still have to master. According to the method of emancipation, that which we learn ourselves, we relate to everything else. Or, to return to the position of a spectator:

We do not have to transform spectators into actors, and ignoramus into scholars. We have to recognize the knowledge at work in the ignoramus and the ac-

¹³ Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Verso, London 2009, p. 13.

tivity peculiar to the spectator. Every spectator is already an actor in her story; every actor, every man of action, is the spectator of the same story.¹⁴

This position is essential for redesigning the everyday. Since the mid 20th century the design discipline has been, as mentioned, all too often attached only to the position of the passive performer, too often helping in transmuting potential active users into passive consumers. As Andrea Branzi writes: “Sheltered from myths established by the Modern Movement, industrial societies did not realise until the 1960s that the Western World had evolved from an Architectonic Civilisation to a Commercial Civilisation.”¹⁵ Blinded by its own ideals about constructing a better world, the larger part of the design and architecture discipline simply did not recognise its gradual assimilation into the frame of the production system, of capitalism.

In time, through the mentioned transformation, the production system and capital became the authority that makes the selection for design. They assumed the role of the teacher, the role of the one that explains. And still today, the two are measuring out fragments of knowledge to designers, and because of its seeming complexity, the entirety remains split amongst many specialists. Capital is unsurpassable in persuading every specialist that he or she is irreplaceable, a key element of the whole. Thus, each element accepts the given situation without much doubt. All *inconsistencies*, all *discomforts*, are already adapted from the starting point or subsequently integrated – as a new trend – into the world of marketing.

On the other hand, the method of emancipation allows us to think about an alternative in the design discipline; about design as an independent discipline that is capable of existing outside the market-production system. It returns us to the aforementioned recognition of the potentiality the profession holds. The question is not whether we, as a profession, can do it. Rather, we are confronted with two choices, with two criteria for selecting the (future) role of design in society. We must choose between the existing (or, better yet, between *conforming* to the existing) and the emancipatory choice – a choice that regards the existing

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁵ Andrea Branzi, “The Primitive Metropolis”, in: *Andrea Branzi: Objects and Territories*, Constance Rubini (ed.), Editions Gallimard – collection Alternatives, Paris 2014, p. 100.

with scepticism and establishes design as an agency; a choice that implements structural impossibilities and, as a result, punches holes in the thick fabric of the ordinary. In other words: the emancipatory choice sets its task within the existing in order to create – by viewing the existing from the outside – the possibility of the impossible within the existing.

Let us look at two telling examples of practical experiments with decentralised structures of design potential: *Hacking Households* and *Cloning Objects*. Both projects can be perceived as an extension of Mari's 1974 project *Proposta per un'autoprogettazione*. Like Mari's work, *Hacking Households* and *Cloning Objects* question the established means of production and hand the latter – along with a set of instructions and tools – back to the individual. As Mari explained his objective: "In 1974 I thought that if people were encouraged to build a table with their own hands, for example, they would be able to understand the thinking behind it."¹⁶

Scepticism towards present-day design and the production of things prompted the authors of *Hacking Households* and *Cloning Objects* to consider and explore alternative ways of addressing the issues concerning the design process. The authors base their idea on identifying poorly adaptable and largely unsustainably produced household appliances. The main shortcoming of traditional household appliances is that they are created as a closed system: "when something goes wrong, the most cost-effective solution is to throw out the appliance and replace it with something new."¹⁷ For the user, this implies a predefined role in the process, allowing no active involvement or upgrades.

In *Hacking Households*, the proposed method of developing and producing objects draws on the development of open source software. The result is a system of programmed objects that allow for instantaneous adaptation of their function. This gives the consumer freedom to make decisions, and to design and develop products within a community. At first sight, what consumers receive seem to be *merely* pieces, blocks of material. Yet a set of blocks constitutes the desired object – an object we create ourselves according to what we need. As the final

¹⁶ Mari, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁷ *Hekanje gospodinjskih aparatov*, 2014, <http://50.bio.si/sl/teme/hekanje-gospodinjskih-aparatov/> (accessed 1 May 2017).

Fig. 2: Jesse Howard, Leonardo Amico, Tilen Sepič, Thibault Brevet, *Cloning Objects*, 2015.
Photo: Tilen Sepič



object will address our needs, the decision as to its nature and design is ours alone. “Objects can now be designed, developed, and produced democratically, rather than through a top-down approach from corporation to consumer.”¹⁸ In *Cloning Objects* the product contains embedded information needed for its re-production. Although products can still be distributed through the existing network and could even be manufactured within this network, individuals may also freely produce, modify, and redistribute the pieces as they see fit.¹⁹

The fact that designers no longer provide the final, unalterable solution to potential users is not the only reason why these projects are interesting. They also allow (as well as empower) the community of users to address – autonomously, independently, according to a given situation – the issues and needs they are faced with. With these projects, designers manage not only to give consumers access to knowledge, but also to provide them with the tools that empower them for further independent action, thereby succeeding in raising the presently often limited aspiration to participate in the design process. This results in the renunciation of material production as part of the market system. Rather than building its potential on manufacturing products, the solution is validated through the open-source production of ideas.

This brings us to the inevitable question: how do we protect newly generated ideas from the marketing system? How do we prevent ideas from becoming a

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Hacking Households*, 2015; www.hackinghouseholds.com (accessed 1 May 2017).



Fig. 3: Ernesto Oroza, Technological Disobedience: TV aerial made out of standardised metal trays from public diners, Havana, 2005. Photo: Ernesto Oroza

commodity? The authors' cogent response focuses on users empowered by freely shared knowledge. Individuals are tasked with finding their own answers to the given neutral network of knowledge and ideas, to the given set of blocks of material. Their task is to create a new use and to become active participants in the process of creating, and subsequently to reject the role of consumers that was defined by the Other. We are, once again, reminded of the designers from Superstudio, who presented – as far back as 1972 – the following demand: only by rejecting objects of possession, or, better yet, by eliminating objects prescribed in advance by the Other, will design finally evolve into a means of knowledge and thus become a foundation for real human existence. Namely:

When design as an inducement to consume ceases to exist, an empty area is created, in which, slowly, as on the surface of a mirror, such things as the need to act, mould, transform, give, conserve, modify, come to light. [...] The times being over when utensils generated ideas, and when ideas generated utensils, now ideas are utensils.²⁰

²⁰ *Italy: The New Domestic Landscape. Achievements and Problems of Italian Design*, Emilio Ambasz (ed.), The Museum of Modern Art and Centro Di, New York and Florence 1972, pp. 246–251.

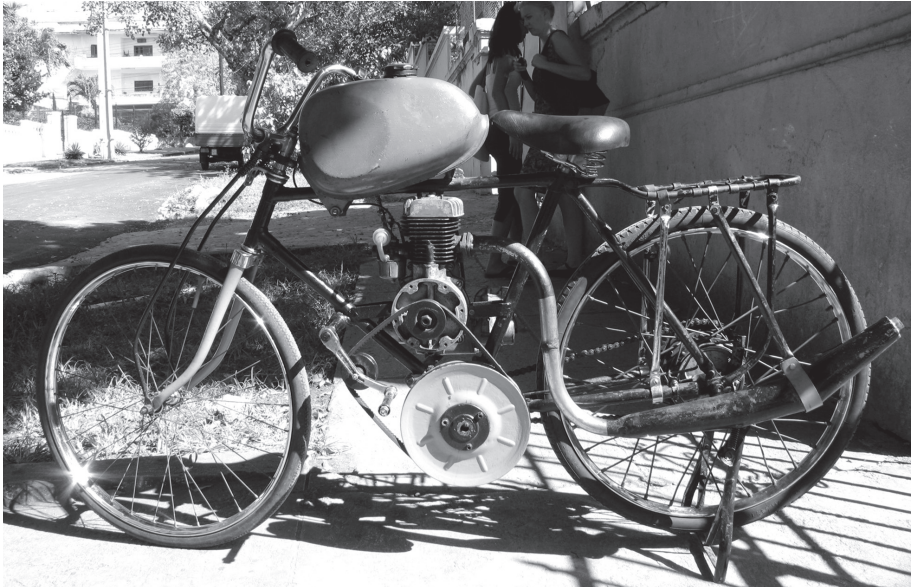


Fig. 4: Ernesto Oroza, Technological Disobedience: 'Rikimbili' bicycle fuelled by a military tank engine, Havana, 2005. Photo: Ernesto Oroza

An excellent example of the vast potential of the need to act and transform (as well as the quotidian participation of individuals) is a collection made by the Cuban designer and artist Ernesto Oroza. Over years of seeking and documenting, Oroza has amassed a collection of everyday objects that people in Cuba have ingeniously, creatively modified to make new everyday objects. These items were created by the Cuban people out of necessity, after the country was hit by a severe economic crisis in the 1990s. According to Oroza, the deeper the crisis, the bigger the potential for creativity among the people and the bigger the pool of inventive solutions to address their daily needs. Moreover, “as they were reinventing their lives, an unconscious mentality began to take shape.”²¹

165

²¹ Ernesto Oroza, “Technological Disobedience: From the Revolution to Revolico.com”, *Worker Build Your Own Machinery*, www.technologicaldisobedience.com/category/notes/ (accessed 3 May 2017).

Oroza considers the items collected from this period to be a perfect example of technological disobedience, blatant manifestations of complete disrespect for the final form and function of mass-produced everyday objects. The collected objects are new technological re-interpretations of knowledge in the fields of electronics, engineering, and design. “If an object broke, it was fixed. If the object worked to repair another object, it was used, whether in part or in whole. This contempt in the face of the consolidated image of industrial products could be understood as a process of deconstruction.”²² As a consequence, the products show a high degree of improvisation and artfulness that far exceed the versatility of the original idea. Nothing could escape being modified into a substitute. Clothes dryer drive motors have been turned into fans, shoeshine machines, and key cutting machines. Various motors and engines that had previously powered military tanks, spraying systems, or water pumps, have been used to construct motorcycles known as rikimbilis.²³

The selected projects (the last one mentioned born out of urgency, the first two out of a wish to design an alternative) actually represent two sides of the same coin. Their foundation is a thinking individual, the only intangibility that consumerism cannot subvert into unusable fetishism. When we recognise that, we recognise the goal of design. We recognise the essence of design, which does not lie in the creation of products, but rather in the creation of a new use, in the encouragement of potential new thinking. At the same time, the described situations position us in a network of decision makers, as well as producers. Everything places us in the position of a designer, of one who has knowledge (or is enabled to acquire it), and who, on the basis of the newly established possibilities, independently decides what one needs and what one will do. It places us among Zinn’s agents, operating in tiny, rebellious crannies, among Badiou’s creators of new thinking, among the architects of the new systems of symbolisation that the new world needs. In Badiou’s words: “Building is no doubt necessary; founding is necessary. But the world is vast, and it is on its scale that thinking must perceive and act.”²⁴

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Motherboard: The technological disobedience of Ernesto Oroza*, 2013; www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-XS4aueDUg (accessed 3 May 2017).

²⁴ Alain Badiou, *The True Life*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2017, p. 48.

Despite its good intentions and desire to aid in the creation of a better world for everyone, the modernist design of the 20th century eventually succumbed to the production system of capitalism. This raises the inevitable question: Are the described actions taking place within the matrix of the current prevalent system? Are perhaps the described actions only seemingly undermining the system, when in fact they are merely prompting – with the help of participatory open source design – the gradual assimilation of individuals and users into the frame of the capitalistic production system? The question, therefore, is how to avoid contributing “to the invention of formal ways of showing something that the Empire already regards as existing”?²⁵

In order to interpret the described seemingly active stance as merely another element in a series of formal manifestations of the already existing, the role of the user would have to be limited to the field of selection. However, the selected examples entail more than an ostensible creative act of choosing between pre-determined options. We must view the selected examples through the lens of Andrea Branzi, who no longer sees design “as a positive response to a functional requirement, but as creation of the demand itself, i.e. as active intervention in the modification of behaviour, creating new functions and new freedoms.”²⁶

Branzi introduces the challenging notion that the task of design is to design an original problem as such. The answers of design no longer offer solutions to known problems, but – as the above quote suggests – *create the demand itself*. In other words: we do not design the solution of a problem but a searched for and detected problem. In this context, we can better understand what Branzi means when he writes about the necessity to create a demand. What we are talking about here is the redesign of the recognisable problem, and the result of such redesign is the creation of the conditions for new ways of use and, as a consequence, the aforementioned new ways of thinking. The problem, as recognised in the selected examples, was that the designed products were trapped in a closed system of production and use. So, by redesigning the detected prob-

²⁵ Slavoj Žižek, “Étienne Balibar in problem nasilja”, in: Étienne Balibar, *Strah pred množicami. Politika in filozofija pred Marxom in po njem*, Studia Humanitatis, Ljubljana 2004, p. 490.

²⁶ Andrea Branzi, *The Hot House. Italian New Wave Design*, Thames and Hudson, London 1984, p. 49.

lem we alter the role of users, as well as the position of the product within the changing process of creation.

A similar thought can be found in Giorgio Agamben's short essay *In Praise of Profanation*. In it, Agamben focuses on the special relation between use and profanation. He writes: "The passage from the sacred to the profane can [...] come about by means of an entirely inappropriate use (or, rather, reuse) of the sacred, namely, play."²⁷ For a special relation between use and profanation to occur, Agamben introduces a third element into the formula, play. As an example, he mentions child's play because, through play, a child manages to modify something that is, at first glance, totally useless. In other words, through play, a child manages to create a toy in a new way. Play is therefore essential because it allows us to create a new use. This is also important because, according to Agamben, the ability to create a new use offers a response to consumer capitalism, which constitutes:

the pure form of separation, to the point that there is nothing left to separate. [...] In the commodity, separation inheres in the very form of the object, which splits into use-value and exchange value and is transformed into an ungraspable fetish. The same is true for everything that is done, produced, or experienced – even the human body, even sexuality, even language. They are now divided from themselves and placed in a separate sphere that no longer defines any substantial division and where all use becomes and remains impossible. This sphere is consumption.²⁸

If we want to return the usefulness to such product, we are forced to deactivate the old use and thus create the possibility for a new use.²⁹ In short, erasing the separations that make an object unusable is not enough. We have to create a new use – through play. Branzi and Agamben are actually talking about the same thing: they are talking about *play*, a design that will allow new functions, new freedom, new thinking, and the ability for active intervention in the modification of behaviour.

²⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, Zone Books, New York 2007, p. 75.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86–87.

In order to achieve this goal, design needs – as mentioned before – thinking individuals. It needs all those whose ordinary acts are overlooked today but are already happening in everyday life and are free from market domination. The task of design lies in recognising and empowering each of us. We are confronted with the systemic powerlessness of the individual and the fact that even the smallest production is immediately thrown into the domain of consumerism. Consequently, the role of design – as one of the key builders of our environment – lies not only in redesigning the environment in order for it to ensure the requisite empowerment of individuals, but also in establishing the conditions for creating and encouraging new functions, new ways of thinking. The latter must be based on the individual's capacity to think and to accept, generate, and share new knowledge and new dimensions of use.

This is the only way to ensure that the desire to exit the market system achieves the required separation and lays the foundation for a new culture, a new level of openness, a new approach in the field of exploring possibilities. Should we fail to achieve this goal, we will be forced to face a state of lost opportunities. Instead of empowerment through the creation of choices within the possibilities of life, there will be, as now, power that stems from the position of the apparatus, from the authority of the currently prevalent production system. The persistence of unregulated, anarchic, and experimental individuals and movements in the field of design is therefore of vital importance. Only by pressing on will we establish the possibility of devising an alternative, of preventing the loss of a potential future. That is to say, a world where we will not only be able to survive, but where we will aspire to live.

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Sökler, Christoph is a musician by training and has worked as an opera singer and as an art mediator for over ten years. He has always been interested in how we speak, think, and write about music and in how the relationship of music with the other arts can be thought, experienced, and worked with in artistic practice. Since 2014 he has been a research fellow in aesthetics at the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design. Currently, in 2017, he is also teaching at the Musikhochschule Mannheim and the LMU Munich. He has published a number of articles on several operas with the *Oper Stuttgart*, and in 2017 a paper on "Vermittlung" (mediation). In 2018 *Metzler* is to publish a longer article on the same subject in its new "*Handbuch des Kinder- und Jugendtheaters*" [Handbook of Theatre for Young People]. An article on "Music and Anxiety" is to be published by *RISS* in 2018.

Abstracts | Povzetki

Jean-Jacques Lecercle

Utopia and Language

Key words: utopia, language, negation, interpellation, counter-interpellation

The essay seeks to demonstrate that the Utopian impulse has something to do with the structure of human language. It starts by considering the theme of language in three utopias, Bulwer Lytton's *The Coming Race*, Hogben's *Interglossa*, and Thomas More's *Utopia*. From there, it proceeds to analyse the grammar of utopia, with special reference to Paolo Virno's theory of negation and to the Althusserian concept of interpellation: the utopian impulse corresponds to the moment of counter-interpellation. The operation of utopian counter-interpellation in the visual field is illustrated by an analysis of *Annunciation* by Previtali.

Jean-Jacques Lecercle

Utopija in govornica

Ključne besede: utopija, govornica, zanikanje, interpelacija, protiinterpelacija

Pričujoči članek skuša prikazati, da ima utopistični vzgib nekaj opraviti s strukturo človeške govornice. Prične s premišljanjem tematike govornice v treh utopijah: Bulwer Lyttonove *The Coming Race*, Hogbenove *Interglossa* in *Utopije* Thomasa Mora, nato pa nadaljuje z analizo utopistične gramatike s posebno navezavo na teorijo negacije Paola Virna in Althusserjevim konceptom interpelacije: utopističnemu impulzu ustreza moment protiinterpelacije. Operacija utopistične protiinterpelacije znotraj vidnega polja je ponazorjena z analizo Previtalijevega *Oznanjenja*.

Claire Sibony

Virginia Woolf. The Strategy of the Grape's Grain or the Utopia of a Translucent Body

Keywords: writing, psychoanalysis, transparency, psychic utopia

The dialectic of transparency and opacity permeates Woolf's writing. The feeling of "lying in a grape and seeing through a film of semi-transparent yellow" is a major pictorial pattern of her autobiographical posthumously-published autobiographical essay *Sketch of the Past*. More than a pattern, it is a concept for a psychic *utopia*, the image and the locus of an indescribable rapture. Through this metaphor, Woolf's writing on traumatic *memories* unfolds affective, visual, auditory, olfactory, and kinaesthetic early

experiences. We might compare this semi-transparent grape and Freud's "navel of the dream": Freud suggests that the psychoanalyst should pursue the analysis of a dream as far as possible, but this pursuit runs up against a point of impossibility, the "navel of the dream": it is less a question of deciphering than of grasping it as a space of writing in which the birth of the symbolic is conjoined with the origin of desire and *jouissance*. The "navel of the dream" allows one to ponder the limits of the possibility of the interpretation of the interpretable; Virginia Woolf's metaphor of the grape ponders the limits of the possibility of joining through writing the very source of the *sense of being*.

Claire Sibony

Virginia Woolf. Strategija grozdne jagode ali utopija prozornega telesa

Ključne besede: pisanje, psihoanaliza, transparentnost, psihična utopija

Dialektika prosojnosti in neprosojnosti prežema pisanje Woolfove. Občutje »ležanja v grozdu in gledanja skozi plast napol prosojne rumene« je pomemben slikovni motiv njenega posthumno izdanega avtobiografskega eseja *Sketch of the Past*. Bolj kot motiv je koncept za psihično utopijo, podoba in locus neopisne ekstaze. Woolfino pisanje o travmatičnih *spominih* s pomočjo dane metafore razvije afektivne, vizualne, slišna, olfaktorne izkušnje. Lahko bi primerjali takšno napol prosojno grozdje in Freudov »poppek sanj«: Freud predlaga, naj psihoanalitik sledi analizi sanj, kolikor daleč je mogoče, vendar takšno sledenje trči na točko nemožnosti, do »popka sanj«: ne gre toliko za vprašanje razvozlanja kot za njihovo zapopadanje kot prostora za pisanje, znotraj katerega se prostor simbolnega združi z izvorom želje in užitkom. »Poppek sanj« nam dovoljuje premislek meja možne interpretacije tistega, kar je mogoče interpretirati. Metafora grozdja Virginije Woolf preiskuje meje možnosti doseči s pomočjo pisanja sam izvir *smisla biti*.

Rok Benčin

"Sans cause": Affect and Truth in Marcel Proust

Keywords: affect, truth, joy, event, style, notion of the world, Marcel Proust

The essay explores the correlation between affect and truth in Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* and its implications for contemporary philosophy. For Proust, there is no real truth without affect and no genuine affect without truth. The affect designates an impurity of truth, while truth implies a displacement of affect. The sensible events experienced by the Proustian narrator give rise to a joy without a cause in which the negative of a truth still to be developed by the work of fiction is inscribed. The essay claims that a fictional conceptualisation of the notion of the world can be outlined through Proust's discussion of a reframing of the world through art.

Rok Benčin

»Sans cause«: afekt in resnica pri Marcelu Proustu

Ključne besede: afekt, resnica, veselje, dogodek, slog, pojem sveta, Marcel Proust

Esej raziskuje korelacijo med afektom in resnico v Proustovem *Iskanju izgubljenega časa* in implikacije te korelacije za sodobno filozofijo. Pri Proustu brez afekta ni prave resnice, prav tako pa brez resnice ni pristnega afekta. Afekt označuje nečistost resnice, resnica pa implicira premestitev afekta. Čutni dogodki, ki jih izkusi Proustov pripovedovalec, priključijo veselje brez razloga, v katerem se kaže negativ resnice, ki jo je treba šele razviti skozi delo fikcije. Esej postavi trditev, da lahko ob Proustovem razpravljanju o vnovičnem uokvirjenju sveta skozi umetniško delo zarišemo osnovne črte fikcijske konceptualizacije pojma sveta.

Christoph Sökler

“White-heating the Real” – On Music’s Force towards Impossible Nudeness

Keywords: music, language, psychoanalysis, subjectivity, temporality

The relationship between psychoanalysis and music has never been a very close one and there might be a reason for that. While psychoanalysis primarily deals with language, it can be argued that psychoanalysis can think music best if music is thought as structured like a language, like a text, as well. In this paper, I follow a different line of thought by reconstructing and analysing an argument Alain Didier Weill brought up in his intervention at Lacan’s Seminar XXIV in 1976, and by then bringing together Didier Weill’s claim that in music “time ceases,” with Deleuze’s reading of Kantian subjectivity. I argue that music in relationship to its other – the listener – is neither language nor non-language, but rather a force that at the same time constitutes and abolishes the border between language and non-language and can therefore be grasped as a force towards an impossible nudeness.

Christoph Sökler

»Razbeliti realno« – O zmožnosti glasbe za nemogočo golost

Ključne besede: glasba, jezik, psihoanaliza, subjektivnost, časovnost

Psihoanaliza in glasba si nikoli nista bili zelo blizu in morda obstaja razlog za to. Kljub temu, da se psihoanaliza primarno ukvarja z govorico, bi lahko trdili, da lahko psihoanaliza najbolje misli glasbo, če glasbo dojema, kakor da je tudi ona strukturirana kot govorica, kot tekst. Pričujoči tekst razvija drugačno linijo razmisleka, s tem da rekonstruira in analizira argument, ki ga je v svojem intervjuju na Lacanovem seminarju XXIV leta 1976 predstavil Alain Didier Weill, nato pa v naslednjem koraku poveže tezo Didiera

Weilla, da se v glasbi »čas ustavi«, z Deleuzovim branjem Kantove subjektivnosti. Trdim, da glasba v razmerju do svojega drugega – poslušalca – ni niti govorica niti ne-govorica, temveč je sila, ki konstituira in hkrati odpravlja mejo med govorico in ne-govorico in jo potemtakem lahko zgrabimo kot silo, ki meri na nemogočo goloto.

Helmut Draxler

Traumatic or Utopian Other?

Conditions of Emancipation: Phantasy, Reality, and Depression

Keywords: emancipation, voluntarism, phantasy, Other, utopia, trauma

If political voluntarism can be considered to be one of the crucial conditions of emancipation, enlightenment, and radical politics, what then are the conditions of political voluntarism? The author argues that neither an imaginary understanding of voluntarism nor a strictly realist take on the material foundations of politics can grasp what is here at stake. Rather, the symbolic dimension of politics and voluntarism has to be addressed in order to sketch out the potentialities as well as the limitations of the specifically modern forms of politics, which fundamentally intersect with subjectivities. Methodologically referring to a post-Lacanian understanding of the symbolic order and to a post-Kleinian conception of the relation between phantasy and reality, the essay attempts to envision the possibility of a politics of the symbolic. In keeping distinct from each other utopia and trauma, phantasy and reality, such a politics would not only resist the imaginary confusion of these categories as well as a realist determination, but it would also turn against its own idea of feasibility and control. Only by shedding its own ambitions, politics and volition alike, could it achieve its goals.

Helmut Draxler

Travmatični ali utopični Drugi?

Pogoji emancipacije: fantazija, realnost in depresija

Ključne besede: emancipacija, voluntarizem, fantazija, Drugi, utopija, travma

Če lahko politični voluntarizem razumemo kot enega izmed ključnih pogojev emancipacije, razsvetljenstva in radikalne politike, potem se moramo vprašati, kaj so pogoji političnega voluntarizma? Avtor trdi, da niti imaginarno razumevanje voluntarizma niti strogo realistično pojmovanje materialnih temeljev politike ne moreta dojeti, kaj je tu zastavek. Če pa se hočemo spopasti tako z možnostjo kot z omejitvami specifično modernih političnih oblik in voluntarizma, ki se inherentno križajo s subjektivnostjo, se moramo, nasprotno, soočiti s problemom simbolne razsežnosti politike in voluntarizmom. V prizadevanju zarisati možnost politike simbolnega se esej metodološko opira na postlacanovsko razumevanje simbolnega reda in na postkleinovsko pojmovanje razmerja med fantazijo in realnostjo. Z

razločevanjem utopije in travme, fantazije in realnosti, se takšna politika ne bi zgolj izognila imaginarnemu mešanju teh kategorij kot tudi realistični določitvi, temveč bi se tudi obrnila proti lastni predstavi o uresničevanju in nadzoru. Samo z opustitvijo lastnih ambicij, tako politike kot volje, bi lahko dosegla lastne cilje.

Rado Riha

What is the Object of Thinking Differently?

Keywords: thinking differently, reflecting power of judgement, de-sublimation, re-realisation, non-existent

“What is the Object of Thinking Differently” takes up G. Lebrun’s thesis according to which Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgement* “teaches us to think differently.” In accord with the author’s larger project of bringing to the fore Kant’s second Copernican turn, such as has been accomplished in Kant’s third *Critique*, this paper seeks to elaborate a theory of the kind of object that would correspond to the different way of thinking that is implied in the reflecting power of judgement. Drawing upon what the author calls the operation of the de-realisation and de-constitution of reality and the de-sublimation of the sublime, informed by his treatment of the contemporary Slovenian artist Jože Barši’s artwork *Public toilet*, the paper extends his notion of the “third” object, in which the existence of the non-existent finds its body and which, precisely as such, becomes the thing of thought that opens thought’s eyes.

Rado Riha

Kaj je objekt drugačnega mišljenja?

Ključne besede: mistili drugače, reflektirajoča razsodna moč, desublimacija, derealizacija, ne-eksistirajoče

Naslov se opira na misel G. Lebruna, da nas Kantova *Kritika razsodne moči* »učí misliti drugače«. V skladu z avtorjevim stališčem, da je Kantova tretja *Kritika* kraj drugega kopernikanskega obrata Kantove filozofije, skuša prispevek zarisati modus tistega objekta, ki bi ustrezal tistemu »drugačnemu mišljenju«, kot ga vsebuje reflektirajoča razsodna moč. Izhajajoč iz operacije derealizacije in dekonstitucije realnosti ter desublimacije sublimnega, kot jo je mogoče razbrati v delu Jožeta Baršija »Javno stranišče«, prispevek razširi pojem »tretjega« objekta, v katerem najde svoje telo eksistenca ne-eksistirajočega in ki prav kot tak postane stvar mišljenja, ki mišljenju odpre oči.

Dominik Finkelde

Anamorphosis and Subjectivity – On the Diffraction Laws of Consciousness and Reality

Keywords: subjectivity, perception, anamorphosis, normative orders, identity, knowledge

The article analyses the diffraction laws of perception between the conscious mind and the outside world with reference to the works of Hegel and Lacan. These authors underline that there is no area of veridical facts and states of affairs without derivation from an anamorphic location known to Hegel and Lacan as “subjectivity”. Subjectivity is not distinct from or opposed to reality, but a feature thereof.

Dominik Finkelde

Anamorfoza in subjektivnost – O difrakcijskih zakonih zavesti in realnosti

Ključne besede: subjektivnost, zaznavanje, anamorfoza, normativni redi, identiteta, vednost

Članek analizira difrakcijske zakone zaznave med zavestnim umom in zunanjim svetom, opirajoč se na Heglovo in Lacanovo delo. Navedena avtorja poudarjata, da ne obstaja poudrožje veridčnih dejstev in stanj stvari, ki ne bi bili izpeljani iz anamorfične lokacije, ki sta jo Hegel in Lacan poznala kot »subjektivnost«. Subjektivnost ni ločena od realnosti, niti ji ni zoperstavljena, temveč je njena lastnost.

Christopher Dell

Towards the Improvisation of Space

Keywords: space, improvisation, contingency, urban practice, form

Careful observation of contemporary urban agglomerations challenges planning and design disciplines to reconsider their inherited conceptions of the urban as a fixed, teleological, and universally generalisable form. Thereby, contingency, emerging as a constitutive resource of the city, provokes a rethinking of the epistemology of the urban. While the conceptual framing shifts from reading the city as object towards interpreting the city as process, emphasis is laid not only on an analysis of built structures, but also of urban practice. Against this background, this essay proposes a different reading of urban practice itself, drawing attention away from any substantialisation of action and to the constitutive effects of action. On the basis of this reading, one can claim that the condition for planning and architecture has changed. Their role is not to offer resolution and inherently new *tabula rasa* designs, but instead to carefully examine urban praxis in contingent situations. In accordance with this observation, my argument is that urban

practice can essentially be read as the technology of improvisation. In this context, the term improvisation technology indicates an attempt to move away from conventional courses of action and planning strategies and towards engaging “in urban situations.”

Christopher Dell

K improvizaciji prostora

Ključne besede: prostor, improvizacija, kontingentnost, urbana praksa, oblika

Natančnejše opazovanje sodobnih urbanih aglomeracij zahteva od načrtovanja in oblikovanja, da ponovno premislijo lastna pojmovanja urbanega kot fiksne, teleološke in univerzalno posplošljive forme. Kontingenca, ki vznikne kot konstitutivni resurs mesta, potemtakem zahteva ponovni premislek epistemologije urbanega. Vtem ko se konceptualno uokvirjenje premakne iz razumevanja mesta kot objekta k interpretaciji mesta kot procesa, poudarek ni zgolj na analizi zgrajenih struktur, temveč tudi na urbanih praksah. Na takšnemu ozadju esej predlaga drugačno branje urbane prakse, s tem da odvrne pozornost od vsakršnega substancializma akcije in jo obrne k njenim konstitutivnim učinkom. Opirajoč se na takšno branje, lahko trdimo, da so se pogoji načrtovanja in arhitekture spremenili. Njihova vloga ni ponuditi odločitve in inherentno nove *tabula rasa* načrte, temveč vse prej pozorno preiskati urbane prakse v kontingentnih situacijah. V skladu s takšnim opažanjem je moj argument, da lahko urbane prakse v bistvu beremo kot tehnologije improvizacije. V tem kontekstu termin tehnologija improvizacije označuje poskus premika od splošno veljavnih smeri delovanja in načrtovanih strategij k vključevanju »v urbane situacije«.

Petra Čeferin

Architecture: Constructing Concrete Utopias

Keywords: tectonic joint, place, a-topical, architectural materiality, creation

The central thesis of this article maintains that architecture is a utopian practice by virtue of its inner structure and by the way it functions. The article develops this thesis on the basis of the concept of *tectonic joints*. As an instance of a joint, we take the joint at its largest scale, the connection between a built structure and its context. If the connection/joint between them is successfully articulated, we see both elements in a new and different way. We see them as *a place*, which is what we call a joint of the largest scale. In this article, we demonstrate that a place is that which is, in the process of tectonic construction, *created anew*: a place can neither be reduced to an element of the given situation, nor can it be deduced from the situation. A place is a trans-temporal and trans-situational *creation* of architecture. Because of its trans-temporal and trans-situational character, *a place*, *a topos*, is in fact a *non-place*, an *a-topos*. This a-topical moment is that which

architecture creates and introduces into the world in the form of its successful material products. In so doing, it opens up the possibility of thinking and acting, different from the thinking and acting that is dictated by the given world. It opens up a possibility of thinking and acting that has as its sole point of support and orientation this explicit moment of the *a-topical*.

Petra Čeferin

Arhitektura: konstruiranje konkretnih utopij

Ključne besede: tektonska vez, kraj, a-topičnost, arhitekturna materialnost, kreacija

Osrednja teza članka je, da je arhitektura utopična praksa po svoji notranji strukturi in po svojem načinu delovanja. To tezo razvija in utemeljuje članek na podlagi koncepta *tektonske vezi*. Kot primer vezi jemljemo vez v največjem merilu, povezavo neke grajene strukture in njenega konteksta. Če je vez med njima uspešna, potem vidimo oba elementa na nov in drugačen način. Vidimo ju kot kraj. Vez v največjem merilu imenujemo kraj. V članku dokazujemo, da je kraj tisto, kar je v procesu tektonskega konstruiranja *ustvarjeno na novo*: kraja ni mogoče ne zvesti na element dane situacije niti ga ni mogoče iz nje izpeljati. Kraj je transtemporalna in transsituacijska *kreacija* arhitekture. Zaradi svojega transtemporalnega in transsituacijskega značaja je *kraj*, *topos*, v resnici *ne-kraj*, *a-topos*. Ta a-topični moment je tisto, kar arhitektura ustvarja in vpeljuje v svet v obliki svojih uspešnih materialnih produktov. S tem odpira v svetu možnost za mišljenje in delovanje, ki je drugačno od mišljenja in delovanja, ki ga narekuje dani svet. Odpira možnost za mišljenje in delovanje, katerega edina oporna in orientacijska točka je moment *a-topičnega*.

Barbara Predan

Design for Life: The Struggle for Utopia?

Keywords: design, potentiality, everyday, new functions

The objective of this paper is to identify the structural impossibility within the potential for designing our everyday life. In other words, the goal is to make a case – through a discussion of active citizenship during the era of globalised capitalism – for the necessity of the existence of unregulated islands of design activity. The paper tries to show why focusing on everyday design – design for life – should be of much greater importance than it is now. It also shows that in order to achieve this goal, design needs thinking individuals. It needs all those whose ordinary acts are overlooked today but are already happening in everyday life and are free from market domination. The task of design lies in recognising and empowering each of us. Consequently, the role of design – as one of the key builders of our environment – lies not only in redesigning the environment in

order for it to ensure the requisite empowerment of individuals, but also in establishing the conditions for creating and encouraging new functions, new ways of thinking.

Barbara Predan

Oblikovanje za življenje: prizadevanje za utopijo?

Ključne besede: oblikovanje, potencialnost, vsakdan, novi načini uporabe

Namen pričujočega besedila je v potencialu oblikovanja našega vsakdanjika iskati točko strukturne nemožnosti. Povedano drugače, preko obravnave aktivnega državljanstva v globaliziranem kapitalizmu besedilo kaže na nujnost obstoja samoniklih otokov v polju oblikovanja. Besedilo se osredotoča na oblikovanje vsakdana, na oblikovanje za življenje in posledično skuša pokazati na veliko večji pomen in nujnost, kot ju oblikovanje ima danes. Zato da bi naštetu oblikovanju uspelo, pa potrebuje misleče posameznike. Potrebuje vse tiste, katerih običajna dejanja so danes spregledana, a se že dogajajo v vsakdanjem življenju in so osvobojena dominacije trga. Naloga oblikovanja je v prepoznavanju in opolnomočenju vsakega med nami. Zato vloga oblikovanja kot enega od ključnih gradnikov okolja ni zgolj preoblikovati okolje, ki bo takšno opolnomočenost posameznikom omogočilo, temveč hkrati vzpostavljati pogoje za ustvarjanje in spodbujanje novih načinov uporabe, novih načinov mišljenja.

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3. Granger, *op. cit.*, str. 31.
4. *Ibid.*, str. 49.
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3. Granger, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
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