CONCEPTUAL FIGURES OF FRAGMENTATION AND RECONFIGURATION

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INTRODUCTION:
THE CONCEPTUAL UNFOLDING
OF A COLLECTIVE PROJECT

Nélio Conceição
Maria Filomena Molder

1.

This volume is a collection of revised versions of the papers presented at the seminar "Conceptual Figures of Fragmentation and Reconfiguration", which took place at the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, between January and June 2019. The seminar is one of the core activities of the project "Fragmentation and Reconfiguration: Experiencing the City between Art and Philosophy", based at IFILNOVA – Nova Institute of Philosophy in Lisbon, and the present publication is an important outcome of the work developed within the project's conceptual framework.

By exploring a creative tension between fragmentation and reconfiguration that is capable of opening up critical and differential space – for thought and practices – the main goal of this research project is to delve into the different ways in which human experience and art practices absorb and respond to the fragmentation characteristic of modern cities. This space is able to disrupt the homogeneous images of contemporary cities that have been generated by seemingly inescapable austerity policies and by the production of a touristic "authenticity" imposed by globalization processes that obscure other forms of living. Thus, the concept of fragmentation does not point to nostalgia for a lost unity. On the contrary, it belongs to an unavoidable process at work in modernity that is felt as an intensification of the "shock experience" engendered by ongoing immense technological transformations – transformations which are constantly recreating the conditions of experience. Analysis of fragments and details provides critical access to an overarching understanding of our present time, however provisory it may be. On the other hand, the concept of reconfiguration invokes the very possibility of rethinking, reconstructing,

and reimagining urban space, which is of the utmost importance not only for philosophical reflection on the city but for the artistic practices that deal with it.

Taking this into consideration, this volume endeavours to reassess the relationship (of complementarity, tension and opposition) between fragmentation and reconfiguration, a relationship that is deeply engrained in the philosophical tradition and the contemporary pertinence of which can be appreciated by focusing on the experience of the city, in particular the aesthetic experience of the city. Making use of different approaches and styles – a diversity that brings to light the richness of the project's team – all of the chapters in this collection tackle this double philosophical dimension: on the one hand, they discuss different conceptual figures by drawing on key philosophical topics and authors (such as Goethe, Benjamin, Wittgenstein, Foucault, Deleuze, Joyce, Proust, and Perec); on the other hand, they make us think about the experience of the city at the intersection between fundamental topics of aesthetics and the examination of case studies from art (literature, painting, cinema, architecture).

2.

The volume comprises nine chapters: "An Unnatural History of Destruction" by Gianfranco Ferraro; "Ruins: Approximations" by Maria Filomena Molder; "Chaosmopolitanism: Reconfiguring James Joyce's Cities of *Thisorder* and Exiled Selves" by Bartholomew Ryan; "Morphogenesis of Urban Space – The Scars of a City" by Maurizio Gribaudi; "The Productive Disorder of the Atlas" by Nélio Conceição; "Alain Resnais's Entropic Archive" by João Duarte; "Collections: Paintings, Boxes, Sights and Clouds" by Maria João Gamito; "Panoramic Presentation: Conceptual and Methodological Aspects" by Alexandra Dias Fortes; "An Attempt at Elucidating a Philosophical Topic: Aesthetic Experience *of* or *in* the City" by Nuno Fonseca.

Each of these nine chapters focuses on a specific conceptual figure, following the structure of the original seminar presentations, which at the time fostered an ongoing debate among the research team and the seminar participants, gradually enriched with each encounter, creating resonances and counterpoints between the different figures: Catastrophe, Ruins, Chaosmopolitanism, Morphogenesis, Atlas, Archive, Collection, Panoramic Presentation, and Aesthetic Experience.

Placed at the beginning, the chapters on *Catastrophe* and *Ruins* deal most markedly with destruction and fragmentation, engaging in reflection on the transitory character of cities – and of human existence – as well as several ways of approaching and handling it. The third and fourth chapters tackle the historical, complex and conflictual dimension of modern experience, exploring in the first case the neologism *Chaosmopolitanism* (inspired by Joyce) and the condition of the exiled self and in the second case the *Morphogenesis* of the urban form of Paris. The following three chapters, focusing on *Atlas*, *Archive* and *Collection*, deal with gestures and practices that can reconfigure objects and knowledge, exploring the relationship, which comes in several forms, between order and disorder. The last two chapters address the experience of fragmentation and reconfiguration from a more methodological and broad perspective, the first expanding on Wittgenstein's *Panoramic Presentation* and the second developing a reflection on *Aesthetic Experience* of/in the city inspired by Perec's work.

The very notion of "conceptual figures" can also guide us in explaining the goals and methods behind the current publication. It accounts for a work that aims to maintain its lively and open-ended figurative character, thus allowing one to delve into a constellation of notions, authors and examples that imbue the notions of fragmentation and reconfiguration with a highly productive dynamic of *unfolding* (metamorphosis) and *detours* (following Benjamin's motto "method is detour"). This method responds to the project's guiding theoretical principles, inspired by the Goethian morphological method, in particular a dialectical tension of polarities whose poles do not cancel each other out. In this sense, the guiding concepts unfold fertilely in the different chapters. For example:

i)   Performing *dialectics*: between catastrophe, heterotopia and utopia, playing with the contrast between natural and unnatural history (Ferraro); considering ruins as communicated secrets, testimonies between recollection and expectation (Molder); between chaos, cosmos and chaosmopolitanism in a cultural and civilizational landscape in which language and the experience of the self undergo collapses and rebirths (Ryan);

re-examining order and disorder through the conception of a "productive disorder" in the atlas, in the tension between the sovereign materiality of things and the uses of memory and imagination (Conceição); in the connection between archive and entropy, with its insurmountable ambiguity manifested in the dark desire for chaos and the effort to cope with its entropic effects (Duarte).

ii)   Delving into *concrete gestures and practices*: the demolition of the urban fabric and its reconfiguration in the plans for Paris devised by Hausmann, whose description provides the economic, political and social conditions for deciphering the hidden aspects of the city's transformations (Gribaudi); tearing objects – paintings, boxes, sights and clouds, an enigmatic replication of the very concept of collection – out of their function to bring them together in a collection (Gamito).

iii)   Developing *comprehensive gestures*: arranging colours, architectural forms and words in a panoramic presentation, simultaneously as a clear view of things/images and as a methodological concept (Fortes); questioning the multiplicity of the sensorial, multifaceted, fragmentary and intense urban experiences that provide a fruitful atmosphere for a myriad of aesthetic experiences (Fonseca).

iv)   Explicitly or implicitly, and in different ways, all of the chapters explore the tension between construction and destruction, between fragment and whole, between the singularity of each thing and the theoretical tendency to seek a wide-ranging synthesis.

3.

The reader of this volume will notice that its conceptual figures necessarily give rise to a manifold reflection on time and history, which intersect with the spatial dimension of cities. Both the paired concepts of fragmentation and reconfiguration and the experience of the city itself force us to think temporally

and historically. It is within time that the dialectical relationship between reconfiguration and fragmentation takes place (note that the terms are infinitely interchangeable; in a similar way, human constructions are infinitely threatened by destruction, or at least touched by the awareness of their ephemerality). Maria Filomena Molder's analysis of the "destructive character" (both the title of an essay by Walter Benjamin and a challenging way of seeing the relationship between nature and history) touches on the core of this character in all its fecund ambivalence. While it says something very intimate about ruins, it also says something about the archive and its entropic dimension, about the atlas and its struggle against disorder, about collection, about urban "renovations", about exile and wanderers…

Cities are historical "subjects" *par excellence*, stages and dramas of the multiple lives that inhabit and disappear in them. There is clearly a destructive side to fragmentation, linked to oblivion and the constant threat of the disappearance of communities and forms of life. On the other hand, fragmentation can also be on the side of life when it implies giving attention to details and to the life of each thing, when it presupposes the capacity to integrate the singular and the plural – beyond a reduction to the generic or to a systematic totality given beforehand. In this sense, this book makes an important contribution to our understanding not only of time, history and memory, but of how to philosophically approach such complex subjects as cities and urban aesthetic experiences.

AN UNNATURAL HISTORY OF DESTRUCTION:
CATASTROPHE AND THE CITY

Gianfranco Ferraro[1]

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the urban space as a space of catastrophe. In particular, it considers earthquakes and human-caused destructive events. By drawing on Foucault's notion of heterotopias, De Martino's reflections on cultural apocalypses and Assmann's notion of cultural memory, it reveals the key role played by catastrophes in the recreation and re-imagination of urban spaces. It also considers their relevance to art – in particular architecture, sculpture, and poetry – when it comes to reconfiguring forms of living and recreating a common ethos for survivors and inhabitants.

KEYWORDS

Heterotopia, Catastrophe, City, Earthquake, Reconstruction.

> "*All is good,* you say, and all is *necessary.*
> What? Would the whole universe, without this infernal abysm,
> without devouring Lisbon, have more evil?
> Voltaire, *Poem on the disaster of Lisbon*

What does it mean to be born or to live in a place where a catastrophe has occurred, or in a place that is vulnerable to catastrophe? What does it mean to live in a world, made of symbolic relations and gestures – the very gestures that permit us to recognize that world as ours, and ourselves as its inhabitants – that is at the point of disappearing? Throughout this paper, I do not simply aim to approach the phenomenology of catastrophe as a human place (ontologically speaking). Such an approach would begin with an analysis of the epiphanies through which individuals face their own finitude: the extreme weakness of the body and the voice, the possibility of disappearing. Instead, my aim is to approach the catastrophe as a social and collective experience that, rather than merely implying the disappearance of the individual, implies the actual or possible disappearance of an entire world. I thus wish to consider the cultural meaning of such apocalypses for concrete forms of life. Whereas the individual, facing the end, can still hope that the world will survive her, in the case of a "cultural apocalypse" death corresponds to the death of the world. In this case, throughout her unique life, the individual lives and experiences the progressive death of her world. What is at stake is thus the notion of a world as experience that carries the possibility of disappearance. From this perspective, the world must be considered the techniques of life that produce the symbolic and relational field of those who inhabit a present. In itself, a "world" thus contains the various techniques through which it can survive and give the individual at least the perception that her specific individuality can be transcended. The symbolic, cultural horizon of a world implies the belief that this world will exist indefinitely: its techniques are thus designed to resist the possibility of disappearance.

Nevertheless, approaches based on cultural and anthropological studies of apocalyptical phenomena[2] allow for an understanding of the notion of a "world" as an experience exposed to disappearance. These approaches clarify how the "world" contains its own negative, the image of its own end as its reverse image: no world exists without a memory – a terrible and agonizing memory – of the void from which it was born and the silence into which it is expected to fall. In this sense, beyond being a concrete event, the catastrophe is above all a "spectre", a ghost, a possibility, removed rather than present like all repressed memories.[3] A world without the memory of catastrophe is simply unimaginable: its techniques of living thus inherit, incorporate, the possibility of its own end. Following this approach, we must observe the world through this extreme boundary, through the possibility of catastrophe. Reading a world through the lens of catastrophe can mean the following: if a world is based on its – present, historical, or imaginary – catastrophes, then it is possible to understand it through the forms it adopts to survive. These forms are forms of looking, or specific ways of living.

A first theoretical consequence can thus be determined: the permanence of a world must be connected to its ability to be exposed to nothingness. The projection of the catastrophe onto the living, cultural world is what permits the latter to challenge and continuously verify and fortify its boundaries. In this case, as memory and/or prevision, the catastrophe is also what allows a world to change its forms. But even if we can understand the relation between

2   An anthropological approach to apocalyptical events is offered by the Italian anthropologists Ernesto De Martino (2002) and Vito Teti (2017), who consider experiences of the end in their studies on the villages of Southern Italy, stressing their paradigmatic aspects. A more philosophically based point of view on these themes cannot omit the works of Andrea Tagliapietra (2010) and Augusto Placanica (1985). Where Bronisław Baczko's (1999) pivotal text studied the effects of historical catastrophes on eighteenth-century thought, more recently, François Walter (2008) has offered a wider panorama of the cultural history of catastrophes. Also important is the interdisciplinary study of contemporary apocalyptical experiences commonly designated as "collapsology" (cf. Cochet, 2019; Durieux, 2020). Some contemporary philosophical approaches to the Anthropocene likewise fall under apocalyptical thought (cf. Giuliani, 2020).

3   The Freudian category of "repression" is used by the theorist Francesco Orlando in his studies on literary images of non-useful, non-functional things, which are explicit paradigms, on his view, of repressed, unconscious cultural memories of death: on his view, literature becomes "the site of an antifunctional return of the repressed" (Orlando, 2006, p. 13).

catastrophe and world from an abstract perspective, how are we to spell this out more concretely? The city appears in this case as a perfect field of analysis: as a cultural, anthropological phenomenon in which the human "world" is concretely exposed to forces that provoke the catastrophe. The city appears as a knot in which cultural and natural forces, techniques and materials, come together. To look at the form of a city is therefore to look at the compromise between the catastrophe and the resistance it meets. For the city, a catastrophe can be both a condition of its existence and a fear: in some cases, such as those cities that have suffered (or are vulnerable to) earthquakes, the catastrophe appears as a cultural image that is part of their effort to constitute a living place. As the opposite of the city, as a rupture that breaks the compromise between the forces that constitute the city, the catastrophe exposes the cultural world of the human being to an irruption of the forces it seeks to dominate: as a threat to the city's ability to persist within its form, the catastrophe acquires the semblance of evil.

1.

In the 1950s, the Italian anthropologist Ernesto De Martino developed an anthropology of cultural apocalypses.[4] His point of departure was the fact that the cultural world is above all a collection of signs and relations. These signs and relations constitute what he calls the "enhanceable horizon". In other words, our living experience is always situated within a perspective from which it is transcended, from which it is observable in terms of the relations it has with other living experiences. In this way, it acquires a sense: in this sense, a "world" can only exist when this perspective is reached, when the signs and the relations continue to permit the individual to transcend his or her own limited experience. Opposing this, we have a "psychopathological past", which every culture lives out in its own way: this is a lived experience, typical of agony, in which it is possible to experience death as the experience of the end, not just of that specific world but of any possible world. In this experience, the world becomes cold, static; it "lives its 'dying'" (De Martino, 2002, p. 631):[5]

4   Cf. De Martino, 2002.

5   If not stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

> As the psychopathological past, the end of the world is the experience of radical risk, incompatible with culture, the experience of not being able to start any possible world, of not being able to pass beyond the situation, into the realm of value. Precisely because we are in-the-world as operative presences, we emerge and remain in it; inasmuch as we carry out the valorizing energy of transcending the situation, the risk of not being able to carry out this energy, experiencing its fall assumes the form of the radical risk of a final and definitive catastrophe […]. (De Martino, 2002, p. 632)

The tools through which a world can be useful are precisely what constitutes an intraworldly ethos, an "ethos of transcendence", according to De Martino, based on the presence of intersubjective values: it is the "human past par excellence as energy trespassing situations, as enhanceable making and, at the same time, operative valorization" (De Martino, 2002, p. 674). In other words, a world exists to the extent that it contains an ethos of transcendence. The end of the world, by contrast, can be approached as a phenomenon that concerns the disappearance of this intraworldly ethos. Taken together, aptitudes, gestures, and relations thus constitute this ethos. A world can maintain itself only by maintaining this ethos. Nevertheless, it is equally true that every world faces the possible disappearance of this ethos as its most terrible risk. At base, this ethos is comparable to that which the ancient Greeks associated with *bios*, life characterized as human life, that is, containing all habits, gestures, and forms that distinguish the human ability to exercise its freedom in order to model life. This is a characteristic that animal life does not share. Animals do not have the same ability to model their habits, their forms of life, and thus their bare form of life was called *zoē*. As such, "the world of the animals 'cannot' finish": its end simply corresponds to a catastrophe for the race itself. By contrast, "man 'goes beyond', from one world to the other, precisely because he is the moral energy that survives the catastrophes of his worlds" (De Martino, 2002, p. 631). We can thus affirm that it is precisely *bios* that is in question at the end of the world, and therefore in the catastrophe. The human horizon must be characterized as a space in which this ethos of transcendence is preserved.

As a way of life and an object of cultural transformation, the ancient *bios* was recovered by Michel Foucault in the 1980s. In particular, Foucault developed a complex analysis of the techniques or technologies of the self that give form to the subject. The several examples offered in antiquity in this field concern, for instance, daily rules, confession, and examination of one's conscience: all ways of defining habits and exploring the means by which humans define their aptitudes in order to construct themselves (Foucault, 2001b, p. 1607). The object of these techniques continues to be *bios*. Through the technologies of the self, the individual transcends herself: what is at stake is not merely her survival but the existence of her culture. In other words, what is at stake is the possibility – inherent in the human being – of developing a world as an *ethos*. Foucault clarifies that the ancient notion of *ēthos*, built through the cultural uses of the *bioi*, corresponds precisely to the modern notion of aptitude. A life deprived of its techniques, of the ability to transform itself and to ethically create its own worlds, would merely be a life reduced to *zoē* (see Foucault, 2001, p. 1607).[6] It is *bios* that is thus at stake both in the case of these technologies of the self and in the case of De Martino's ethos of transcendence.

The characteristics examined by De Martino when he writes about the ethos of transcendence are not dissimilar to those considered by Foucault when he writes about the techniques of the self. The *ethos of transcendence* is what guarantees the permanence of *bios*, preventing the reduction of human life to *zoē*. Nevertheless, just as bare life is the phantom of all forms of life, the possibility of any individual life's falling into the simple necessity of satisfying biological needs, the "crisis of the presence" – the cultural catastrophe – seems precisely to be the phantom of any ethos of transcendence. The catastrophe can thus be read as the crisis of that field in which the *bios* is based: all forms of life run this risk, as De Martino says, and because of this they develop specific techniques for avoiding the precipice. The *ethos of transcendence* thus manifests itself in the techniques developed to maintain a world in which, through a cultural labour of sorts, its crises can be made useful. In this sense, every world is also

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6　Following Foucault's approach to *bios*, Giorgio Agamben developed his paradigm of *Homo sacer*, the individual reduced to pure *zoē* (exemplified by the prisoners of Auschwitz), who can be killed without its being a crime from a legal point of view: cf. Agamben, 1998.

characterized by an effort directed at working on and transforming suffering: all the cultural practices of expiation, of remembering, of grief, must be approached as techniques that aim to prevent cultural traumas from becoming individual psychopathological crises, or "ends of the world": "Nevertheless, the pivotal point remains the following, to carry the proof, to model again and again, through the enhancing work, the domesticity of the world" (De Martino, 2002, p. 479).

Can we approach the urban space as a scenario in which what is at stake is the ethos of transcendence, in which a culture manifests its own techniques, aimed at guaranteeing the cultural and psychological permanence of a "world"? If we consider cities of catastrophe in particular, we must answer in the affirmative, and this for two reasons: on the one hand, because in these spaces we observe concrete ways of overcoming trauma through a reconstruction – sometimes utopian – of the city and through the construction of memorials or monuments dedicated to traumatic events; on the other hand, because the city is the scene of a catastrophic past that can be narrated anew, becoming an object of historical and artistic forms of re-presentation.

2.

Taking as an example the relation between the city and the catastrophe, as an event and cultural phenomenon, we are not far from the contexts in terms of which Michel Foucault explains his own concepts of *utopia* and *heterotopia*. For the French philosopher, utopias are simply imagined places, whereas heterotopias are very real: both are characterized as reverted images of real, living places, however, and of the cultures in which they manifest themselves. They are thus mirrors of culture: techniques through which a society provides a reflection of itself. Through these mirrored images, a culture is able to look at its forms, at its concrete ways of living. It defines itself, its ability to be a world:

> In the mirror I see myself where I am not, in an unreal space that opens up virtually behind the surface; I am over there where I am not, a kind of shadow that gives me my own visibility, that enables me to look at myself there where I am absent – a mirror utopia.

> But it is also a heterotopia in that the mirror really exists, in that it has a sort of return effect on the place that I occupy. Due to the mirror, I discover myself absent at the place where I am, since I see myself over there. From that gaze which settles on me, as it were, I come back to myself and I begin once more to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am (Foucault, 1998, p. 179).

Utopias and heterotopias are thus symbolic, cultural institutions, the aim of which is precisely that of collaborating to constitute the form of that culture, from many points of view. Just one year before writing the text quoted above (1967), in *Les mots et les choses*, Foucault explained the inventive capacity of utopias and heterotopias in more detail. Belonging to the same "order of discourse", utopias and heterotopias provoke different effects on the real body of the city by questioning its orders of discourse and by transforming them:

> *Utopias* afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. *Heterotopias* are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to "hold together". This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the *fabula*; heterotopias (such as those to be found so often in Borges) desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences (Foucault, 2002, p. 19).

Utopias and heterotopias seem to be two different plants with the same root: utopias define the forms of the expected transformation of an order of discourses; heterotopias put in question the grammar, norms and obviousness of a legitimated discourse. They both make sense within a heteropoietic approach: a cultural world is not simply composed of its evident and explicit norms, but rather of other tools that allow for critical consciousness of its boundaries. In this sense, Foucault writes of a "heterotopology", a "sort of systematic description that would have the object, in a given society, of studying, analyzing, describing, 'reading', as people are fond of saying now, these different spaces, these other places, a kind of contestation, both mythical and real, of the space in which we live" (Foucault, 1998, p. 179). This method should study limit places such as cemeteries, forms of transportation, literary images, specific techniques of living in architecture, urbanism, art, and even forms of modifying and transforming the body, all of them characterized – even in their differences – by a specific, reverted relation to "normal" ways of living, normal structures of the city.

Based on these Foucauldian suggestions, our question is thus: Can we see "images" – the figurality – of the catastrophe as a possible object of a "heterotopology"? Does the catastrophe occupy, within the life of a culture, a place similar to that occupied by utopia or heterotopia? What is common to these places is their specific kind of existence: apparently non-useful, these images and places play a role in the normativity of a culture. Where a catastrophe has occurred, we find remains. A piece of an ancient building, a church: ruins are similar wherever a catastrophe has occurred, but they are not equal. These remains continue to characterize the place, reflecting its memory and establishing it as the location of precisely *that* catastrophe and no other. What remains of a church in Lisbon, a city destroyed by an earthquake in 1755, is not the same as what remains in the rotten walls of ancient buildings in Messina, a Sicilian town destroyed by an earthquake in 1908. The ways in which these remains are included within the structure of a city can also vary. In the case of a monument to preserve the memory of a human catastrophe, such as the *Gedächtniskirche* in Berlin, the *Genbaku Dome* in Hiroshima, and the *National September 11 Memorial* in New York, we encounter a similar problem.

These remains are not neutral in themselves: they are used to redefine the space of the rebuilt city. The techniques that were applied to "make something"

of these non-useful images and places are precisely those that belong to utopias and heterotopias. These techniques build "places" where new cities – or more generally, post-catastrophic forms of living – can mirror themselves. These places are real in different ways, in the sense stressed by Foucault: their truth is not understandable just by looking at them, but rather through a relation with normal space. At the same time, they are places, devoid of life, that are themselves located in spaces. They *do not* merely exist to preserve the memory of a past form of life: rather, their function is that of rendering the present place unfamiliar and strange and of offering a point of escape from the "normal", daily gaze of their inhabitants. In this sense, ruins and rubble can have different destinies following a catastrophe: they can become both "monuments" and the rubbish of history, something that must be removed as soon as possible. However, a heterotopology of catastrophe must investigate not only objects – ruins, images – but the techniques that are developed to make them useful. These techniques can tell us much more about the form in which a culture pretends to live and to survive. In this sense, the use of the catastrophe – the image or memory of an event – can tell us how a culture conceives of danger and the spectre of its end through an image of it: an image that is embodied in its own forms.

3.

As in the case of heterotopias, "places of catastrophe" become a mirrored technique through which a traumatic, cultural memory is included in the space of living activity. In order to understand the connection between the mirroring techniques of utopia and heterotopia and the techniques through which a traumatic experience is absorbed and represented in a culture, it is worth considering what Jan Assmann has said in this regard. For him, cultural memory must be separated from personal remembering:

> However, this *art of memory* has very little in common with what is subsumed here under the concept of memory culture (*Erinnerungskultur*). The art of memory relates to the individual and presents techniques to help form personal memory. By

contrast, "memory culture" is concerned with a social obligation and is firmly linked to the group. The question here is: "What must we not forget?" (Assmann, 2011, p. 16).

Remembering a past, traumatic experience is pivotal to many therapeutic approaches. We find examples of this in those approaches to critical situations in which an individual is taken to determine the genealogy of a present crisis through a narrative that recovers a path that reverberates in the present. The therapeutic approach of psychoanalysis is a clear example of this, both with regard to the interpretation of dreams and in the case of jokes and (Freudian) slips of the tongue. This individual practice of remembering can be traced back to ancient mnemo-techniques, the use of which was studied by Foucault and Hadot, who sought to understand the development of technologies of the self and spiritual exercises in antiquity (cf. Foucault, 2001). By contrast, cultural memory appears in this sense as a set of collective practices that aim to include in the present experiences that are other, belonging to both a past and a future generation, for instance when the memory of a catastrophe is transformed via the expectation of a future catastrophe. Different spaces, but also different times, intersect in these cultural techniques:

> Through cultural memory, human life gains a second dimension or a second time, and this remains through all the stages of cultural evolution. The heterogenization of time, the production of nonsimultaneity, the possibility of living in two times, is one of the universal functions of cultural memory or, to be more precise, of culture as memory (Assmann, 2011, p. 68).

By absorbing the event of the catastrophe culturally, the fatal destiny of the place, a community re-writes both its history and its own present. Through its ruins, the memory of a catastrophe also draws a specific cartography of a place, of a city: a re-writing of its roads, of its squares, a new relation between the past, the present and the possibilities of the future. A city that has lived through a catastrophe necessarily has its own inner relations, its models of cartography: ruins occupy a specific place, define an order of discourse that

involves a way of conceiving of the space and its languages. In this sense, the city of the catastrophe can produce its own architectonic or urban utopias, can invent "models of being" that are necessary both for moving beyond the trauma and for reinventing a way of reimagining the possibility of living through another catastrophe, should one occur in the future. Its cultural techniques develop utopias based on new materials, on new kinds of construction. In the city of catastrophe, the images of apocalypse and utopia find a common root. The city itself represents a heterotopia for its inhabitants: their steps remain in a present that is intersected by the steps of other times. The steps taken by unknown people, citizens of the same space, persist in the present, through the habitual paths along which the present layout of the city forces its inhabitants to walk. Like utopias, which present mirrored forms of life in another hemisphere, and like heterotopias, which represent a space of exception in the middle of normal spaces, the cities of catastrophe live continually at the junction between normativity and the disruption of norms. In this sense, the place of the catastrophe is a place of effective experimentation with utopia and dystopia – a void in which it is possible to imagine an entirely new way of life, experimenting, for instance, with new materials, new construction techniques and new political paradigms.[7] Also in this sense, the most representative place of catastrophe is without doubt that of the city: an archetypical place, because it implies a direct confrontation between the forces of nature and human attempts, a place in which the human effort to construct is above all an effort of imagination born in a mirror-like reflection.

The city is represented as a site of catastrophe not only in Western culture but in other cultures as well.[8] The long-term cultural memories involving cities appear anew in the cases of cities of catastrophe. Also in modernity, the city reappears as the place of catastrophe *par excellence*. Lisbon's earthquake undermined both the eighteenth-century notion that this is the "best of all possible worlds" and the basis of the theology of the age. The theologians

7 In reference to Lisbon, cf. Carreira, 2012. On urban catastrophes as moments of construction of new political paradigms (particularly in the case of the earthquake in Messina), cf. Dickie, 2008; Farinella and Saitta, 2019.

8 Examples include the biblical archetypes of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen, 19, 24-28), the destruction of Atlantis in Plato (*Timaeus*, 24d-25d; *Critias*, 108e-121c), and the Apocalypse of Saint John (*Apocalypse of Saint John*, 18, 17-24).

asked, "Why did God want Lisbon to be destroyed?" The answer, following biblical exegeses, was that the cause was the evils of the world. Could God want there to be evil? The "libertine" philosophers answered that perhaps God does not exist – or if he does, he is indifferent to what happens on Earth, and thus his existence is likewise indifferent to us. Either way, the catastrophe threatening the city is an epiphany that reveals the terrible loneliness of the human path: a loneliness that can be mitigated through the establishment of a "human chain", as expressed by the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[9]

The catastrophe enters into the cultural memory of the West as a catastrophe of the city: the *forma urbis* is the setting in which evil enters history. The catastrophe is above all a cultural phenomenon that appears as such not just through destruction but through reconstruction and understanding the present through the imagistic repetition of a traumatic history (cf. Walter, 2008; Tagliapietra, 2016). In the ruined city, the catastrophe expresses not only its natural but also its cultural power – the emergence of evil not in an abstract void but in a concrete human history, at an intersection that realizes the mediation between unconscious nature and human agency: collective, repressed angst and normal life.

9 Important references regarding the impact of Lisbon's earthquake on the culture of its time are undoubtedly Voltaire, who writes on the topic in his *Candide* and in his *Poem about the disaster of Lisbon*, as well as Kant's essays *On the causes of earthquakes on the occasion of the calamity that befell the western countries of Europe towards the end of last year*, *History and natural description of the most noteworthy occurrences of the earthquake that struck a large part of the earth at the end of the year 1755*, and *Continued observations on the earthquakes that have been experienced for some time*. In the case of Giacomo Leopardi, the reference is not Lisbon but the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, which destroyed the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum. This topic can be found in his poem *Wild Broom, or the Flower of the Desert*. Even though he focuses on a different setting, Leopardi uses arguments that are already present in the works of Enlightenment authors to explore the human condition in the face of evil and nature. On this theme, see also Baczko, 1999, pp. 55-80, and Placanica, 1985.

4.

On the morning of 28 December 1908 – when the telegraph was still the preferred means of communication – the Sicilian city of Messina awoke completely in ruins following a terrifying earthquake, followed by a seaquake. The first responders were alerted to the fact that something had happened precisely by the lack of "sound" in the city: a complete lack of telegraphic communication. A great silence descended on what had been a tumultuous harbour just moments before. With more recent events, such as the earthquakes in Belice (1968), Irpinia (1980), and Friuli (1976), we have recordings of sounds interrupting radio programs and family conversations. In these situations, the catastrophe appears clearly as a negative force, inundating, unexpectedly, the minute gestures of daily life: those gestures that are represented – in another example – in the plaster casts of the inhabitants of Pompeii, which mirror their gestures at the precise moment the ash cloud hit the city (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Pompeii's gypsum casts

The signs of the disasters in Lisbon and Messina evoke the condition of anomie into which an urban community falls: the survivors, naked or covered only with bedsheets, the pillagers assaulting the ruins of houses, the bodies abandoned

in the open air, the cries arising from mountains of walls and stones. Where before there was a city, built on daily habits, we now face a collection of dispersed phenomena, the almost impressive characteristic of which is a break with social ties: what defines the specifically human type of behaviour – *bios* – is its collapsing in on itself, surrendering to the bareness of life. Instead of human works, the catastrophe seems to leave space for the absence of work, of techniques. More recently, the earthquake that touched the city of L'Aquila (2016) left the large historical centre completely deserted; especially in the inland villages, catastrophes are frequently followed by a state of abandon.[10]

Where this state of radical absence does not occur, the "absence" holds the space of a moment: the catastrophe immediately becomes a human phenomenon, giving form to gestures – such as those of the first responders, of the workers who begin to arrange and accommodate. In the midst of roads full of stones, life begins to effervesce: accounts, conversations, open life in a place that has been destroyed, where a city once stood (Figures 2 and 3). In this sense, the cultural work on the catastrophe begins in the moment immediately following. The reconstructed city is a "place of catastrophe", a space that lives through a reflection (via signs, memories) of its catastrophic past.

Figure 2
Messina's harbour, after the earthquake, 1908

10 As clarified, in this sense, by the anthropologist Vito Teti, 2017.

Figure 3
A street in Messina, after the earthquake, 1908

It is the work of reconstruction that gives form to and makes possible the place of catastrophe. What does this work consist of? It consists of all those specific techniques of human knowledge in which the catastrophic event becomes a scene or object. In his documentary *La terra trema* [*The Earth Trembles*], the director Mario Martone depicted the immediate rise, stemming from the needs of the survivors, of bread factories. The same types of themes can be seen in other films, such as Roberto Rossellini's *Stromboli* and – in the context of a man-made catastrophe – *Germania, anno zero* [*Germany Year Zero*]. For the centenary of Messina's earthquake, the poet Jolanda Insana dedicated a collection of poems to the forms of life, the gestures (movements, first signs of activity), that arose just after the earthquake (cf. Insana, 2017. See *infra*). Clearly, speaking about reconstruction implies above all speaking about urbanistic and architectonic techniques, as well as those "governmental" measures that imply the governance of places of catastrophe.

What are the techniques that define the forms of life in places of catastrophe? As many studies demonstrate, places of catastrophe are not neutral: they are spaces of experimentation with new urbanistic paradigms and variations on a defined paradigmatic model. This is the case, for example, with the application of the model of a "theatre of the sea" to the buildings that dominate the harbour of Messina: following a first baroque construction in 1623

by Simone Gullì (Figure 4), which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1783, the same model was applied to the subsequent construction (the "Palazzata") by Giacomo Minutoli (Figure 5).

Figure 4
Simone Gullì's "theatre of the sea", destroyed in 1783

Figure 5
Giacomo Minutoli's "Palazzata" (before 1908)

The latter was destroyed by the earthquake of 1908. In Lisbon, a similar kind of experimentation, with the application of the neoclassical scenographic model instead of a labyrinth of medieval streets, was evident in the construction of the *Baixa Pombalina*.

The work of reconstruction does not end when the building is completed, however. When reconstructed, the city grows a new, urban skin within its own cartographic conformation, and thus within the contract that gives rise to a new urban *corpus*: something of its own catastrophe, of the event that gave rise to its reconstruction and experimentation. If it continues to exist, the urban space survives with its own heterotopias, with its negative passing through memory. The gestures of the survivors and its own space continue to live in the city: the accounts of ghosts seen on dark nights are the *controcanto* of the ruins of the dead city that still inhabits the new city, or of the slums that the utopian reconstruction locates concretely in its suburbs.[11] As a place of catastrophe, the city is always followed by another city, one that coexists with it, sometimes repressed, sometimes by giving form to its own body.

5.

In 1983, fifteen years after the earthquake in Gibellina, Sicily, the artist Alberto Burri was called on to create a memorial "work" for the new village that was being built twenty kilometres away from the old one. Burri's idea was to make something out of the ruins of the old village, assembling them into blocks of white armoured concrete, separated by small trails that, seen from above, seem to redraw the old

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11 I myself recall hearing accounts from older people referring to appearances of "ghosts" in the old houses of Messina, many decades after the earthquake. Many of these appearances can be directly connected to the traumatic experience: an abandoned dog, a crying girl in the ruins of a house, the sound of steps in rooms where no one was present. In truth, the new city was built thanks to the migrants of other Sicilian cities and villages: in some cases, these accounts seem to testify to the feeling – and the fear – of living in a place that was not built for those who currently occupy it. Some familiar stories refer to real escapes from these houses, precisely because of that feeling. Of course, Messina's inhabitants experienced a second trauma with the Allied bombings during the Second World War: in the period between July 19 and 17 August 1943, 6,532 tonnes of explosives were flung onto the city, even though this resulted in fewer victims than the earthquake. The recent horror film "Cruel Peter" (2020) is partially based on Messina's images of traumatic ghosts.

streets. In this way, visitors could travel through the memory of the village, not simply by looking at a monument but rather by miming the steps taken by the ancient inhabitants (Figure 6). At the same time, the huge construction – a "cretto", a "land crack"– appears as the effect of the earth's movement: movement that could have been provoked by summer dryness or indeed by an earthquake. Burri had already created (in the 1970s) works using the technique of dryness, an artifice miming nature's work. In them, the force of nature acts together with the human artifice to give form to matter (Figure 7). The memorial work that substitutes the old village of Gibellina thus aimed to reveal this connection between forces of nature and the human hand: a whole miming the work of reconstruction and at the same time constituting a heterotopia of memory, a "place" that can be crossed through giving life to what was apparently silenced. The steps taken by the visitors are not the same as those of the ancient inhabitants, but the movements of the former are forced to mirror those of the latter: the Great Cretto of Gibellina permits different times to meet within any given new step, and the image of the earthquake is established in memory through big, white blocks. In this sense, Burri gives form, through a "living technique", to the cultural memory of the catastrophe.[12]

Figure 6
Alberto Burri, *Grande Cretto di Gibellina*, 1984-1989. Gibellina.

12 A similar approach was taken by Peter Eisenmann in his *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* in Berlin. Here too, the visitor is forced to walk through a village of silent blocks.

Figure 7
Alberto Burri, *Cretto bianco*, 1975.
Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini, Collezione Burri e Città di Castello

A technique of poetic crossing through the ancient roads of a city can be found in the "Oratorio", dedicated by the poet Jolanda Insana to the earthquake of Messina, a work on the event that embodies the aim of intervening directly in the memory of living inhabitants through the presentation of images of disaster:

> They move from one shelter to another
> and hope to meet someone they know
> a face, they know
> and stumble among the debris
> canes and sticks
> dispersed hands and feet
> in nooks of hutches and bricks
> heads decapitated by mirrors and glasses
> of broken palaces[13]
> (Insana, 2017, p. 49)

13 "si spostano da una tettoia all'altra / sperando d'incontrare qualcuno che conoscono / qualche faccia nota / e inciampano tra i rottami / canne e pali / mani e piedi dispersi / negli anfratti di credenze e mattoni / teste decollate da vetri e specchi / dei palazzi sbriciolati".

Here, oral memories are transformed into a poetic text by preserving the realistic gaze of the former. The objects of the poem are not emotions, feelings, but rather names, facts, personal stories and even the names of the city that still exists.[14] This poetic technique preserves the characteristics described by Foucault in the context of heterotopias and gives the time of the poem the characteristic of being intersected. In this sense, this poetic technique connects Insana to Burri: the movements of the earth – which once destroyed human artefacts, fear of which runs through the present – are contained in the poetic and architectural images. They reveal what happened, forcing the living to traverse and to bring the event into the present, at the same time allowing them to perceive the fragility of the form of life that returned to these places. Like a meditation on the past, or on death, they represent forms of spiritual exercise that create, through the "different places" of art, the possibility of life where a catastrophe has occurred. This need for expression ultimately concerns Burri's influence on Insana, particularly in her choice to accompany her poetic work with paintings that are very similar to Burri's crettos (Figure 8).[15]
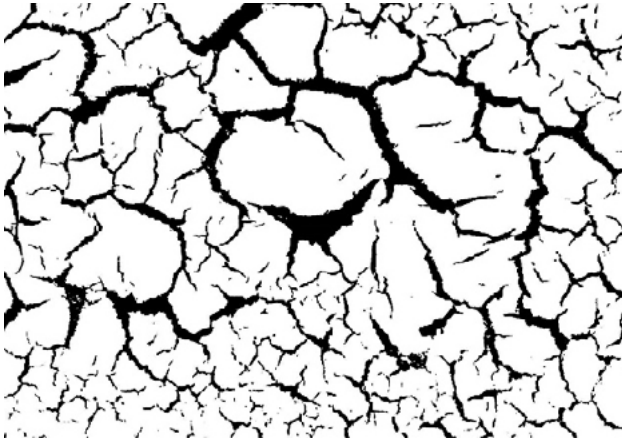
Figure 8
Jolanda Insana,
Cretto della Fiumara di Monforte, 1976

14 "Lost the municipal archive / lost the judicial archive / Messina city / is no more […]" ("perduto l'archivio municipale / perduto l'archivio giudiziario / Messina città / non c'è più […]") (Insana, 2017, p. 53). "Lillu Parapanti / after the shake / that lasted 31" and 42 / found himself in open air […]" ("Lillu Parapanti / dopo la scossa / che durò 31" e 42 / si ritrovò all'aria aperta […]") (Insana, 2017 p. 56).

15 Cf. also Enrico Crispolti's essays on Burri (2015).

6.

This memorial work of art on the site of a catastrophe results, finally, in an attempt to recreate a conscious ethos of transcendence for the survivors. On the other side of the catastrophic event, we can highlight attempts to deal with human catastrophes. We have already mentioned the use of ruins in Berlin and Hiroshima, but the trauma of Allied bombings has been the subject of other narrative recreations, such as the journal of the Japanese doctor Hachiya, commented on by Elias Canetti in *Das Gewissen der Worte* (cf. Canetti, 1984). After the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (Figure 9), in which, De Martino argues, "politics coincide[d] with the instinct of death" (De Martino, 2002, p. 476), Hachiya – a survivor – returns to encounter the place of the dead:

> "It was a horrible sight," said Dr. Tabuchi. "Hundreds of injured people who were trying to escape to the hills past our house. The sight of them was almost unbearable. Their faces and hands were burnt and swollen; and great sheets of skin had peeled away from their tissues to hang down like rags on a scarecrow. They moved like a line of ants. All through the night, they went past our house, but this morning they had stopped. I found them lying on both sides of the road so thick that it was impossible to pass without stepping on them" (Hachiya, 1955, p. 14).

Figure 9
Hiroshima after the bombing in 1945

Here too, we see a need to return to the site of the catastrophe and to face it through the lens of one's own life:

> He turned to Dr. Sasada and said brokenly: "Yesterday, it was impossible to enter Hiroshima, else I would have come. Even today fires are still burning in some places. You should see how the city has changed. When I reached the Misasa Bridge this morning, everything before me was gone, even the castle. These buildings here are the only ones left anywhere around" (Hachiya, 1955, pp. 14-15).

A new, terroristic mode of war, directed at civilians, the final chapter of which was Hiroshima, had already begun during the Spanish Civil War, in which German and Italian bombing had destroyed Guernica. Just after that episode, Pablo Picasso decided to paint his *Guernica* for the 1937 World Exposition in Paris. An act of denunciation, the image is also a sort of artistic heterotopia of that catastrophe.

More difficult was the attempt to remember and deal with the destruction of the bombing of German cities in the post-World War II era. Only in 1997, following the reunification of Germany, did W. G. Sebald return to that trauma, through conferences devoted to the "natural destruction" of German cities such as Hamburg and Köln. The unstoppable mechanisms of war are similar to the power of nature, as are their consequences. Sebald describes the experience of the RAF's "Operation Gomorrah" against the city of Hamburg as follows:

> the fire, now rising two thousand meters into the sky, snatched oxygen to itself so violently that the air currents reached hurricane force, resonating like mighty organs with all their stops pulled out at once. The fire burned like this for three hours. At its height, the storm lifted gables and roofs from buildings, flung rafters and entire advertising billboards through the air, tore trees from the ground, and drove human beings before it like living torches. Behind collapsing façades, the flames shot up as high as houses, rolled like a tidal wave through the streets at a speed of over a hundred and fifty

kilometers an hour, spun across open squares in strange rhythms like rolling cylinders of fire. The water in some of the canals was ablaze. The glass in the tram car windows melted; stocks of sugar boiled in the bakery cellars. Those who had fled from their air-raid shelters sank, with grotesque contortions, in the thick bubbles thrown up by the melting asphalt. No one knows for certain how many lost their lives that night, or how many went mad before they died. When day broke, the summer dawn could not penetrate the leaden gloom above the city. The smoke had risen to a height of eight thousand meters, where it spread like a vast, anvil-shaped cumulonimbus cloud. A wavering heat, which the bomber pilots said they had felt through the sides of their planes, continued to rise from the smoking, glowing mounds of stone. Residential districts so large that their total street length amounted to two hundred kilometers were utterly destroyed (Sebald, 2003, pp. 29-30).

Sebald's accounts of the bombing appear as a re-presentification of a trauma on which none had had the courage to write in Germany. What is at stake in these pages is not just a chronical or a recovery of proofs but, as was the case in Insana's poetry, an attempt to recover images by transforming them into the heterotopian space of a literature based on cultural memories. At the new beginning of German history, those images of trauma had to be recalled, just as the images of the "great guilt" of the Holocaust were recalled. Only if the experience of one's own collective suffering is made explicit (and not omitted) can a new *ethos* be successfully recreated, according to Sebald.[16] For his study, Sebald recovers the words, and even the title, of a report that a witness to Köln's destruction – as an enemy – decided not to write, overpowered by the emotion of what he saw. Nevertheless, through Sebald's recovery, the "natural history of destruction"

16 "And in addition to these more or less identifiable factors in the genesis of the economic miracle, there was also a purely immaterial catalyst: the stream of psychic energy that has not dried up to this day, and which has its source in the well-kept secret of the corpses built into the foundations of our state, a secret that bound all Germans together in the postwar years, and indeed still binds them, more closely than any positive goal such as the realization of democracy ever could. Perhaps we ought to remind ourselves of that context now, when the project of creating a greater

becomes an "unnatural" history, belonging to the field of cultural techniques of memory. A photo, an account, an image of the trauma re-establish for the living city the possibility of resisting the extreme apocalypse it lived through – an apocalypse that, if not elaborated, risks inhabiting its memory as a dark spectre, representing itself in unexpected forms. Like a living heterotopia, the literary image of the blackened cathedral permits the present to face its mirror image:

> On his return to London he still felt overwhelmed by what he had seen, and he agreed to write a report for Cyril Connolly, then editor of the journal *Horizon*, to be entitled "On the Natural History of Destruction." In his autobiography, written decades later, Lord Zuckerman mentions that nothing came of this project. "My first view of Cologne," he says, "cried out for a more eloquent piece than I could ever have written." When I questioned Lord Zuckerman on the subject in the 1980s, he could no longer remember in detail what he had wanted to say at the time. All that remained in his mind was the image of the blackened cathedral rising from the stony desert around it, and the memory of a severed finger that he had found on a heap of rubble (Sebald, 2003, p. 33).[17]

As in the case of Burri and Insana, and also in Hachiya's and Sebald's accounts, we can observe artistic techniques aimed at reconstituting an "ethos of transcendence". For preserving this ethos, the abovementioned "places of catastrophe" must preserve, and mirror, their "cultural memory" through the re-presentification of the event. Those who are born and live in such places are thus continuously forced to face the catastrophe as a foundational event in

Europe, a project that has already failed twice, is entering a new phase, and the sphere of influence of the *Deutschmark* – history has a way of repeating itself – seems to extend almost precisely to the confines of the area occupied by the *Wehrmacht* in the year 1941" (Sebald, 2003, p. 16).

17 Zuckerman's (and thus Sebald's) reference to this "natural history of destruction" may trace back to the *Vestiges of a Natural History of Creation*, written by the pre-Darwinist philosopher Robert Chambers. In any case, Sebald clearly aims to reverse the progressive image of evolution, the "natural" – precisely because human – conclusion of which is the destruction of the bombing.

their "cultural memory". Their present always lives at the intersection of that traumatic past, and their steps always risk slipping into the ghost steps they are forced to follow by the form of the city around them. In this sense, places of catastrophe are not heterotopias that are detached from "normal" ways of living, providing a reflected image of them. They are living heterotopias. As such, they are among the places in which new utopian urbanisms are produced. As proved by the cases of Lisbon and Messina, new urbanisms are indeed encouraged for the redefinition of the space and the forms of buildings. The places of catastrophe imply destruction as a constant memory (and sign of the possibility) of the catastrophic event: the "new city" rises precisely with the aim of avoiding, or delaying, a new catastrophe in the future. In doing so, places of catastrophe inscribe in their bodies both what happened and the highest risk, on which the new "urban contract" is written. New urbanisms in this sense also imply new utopias of memory. As Yona Friedman argues, if "*the city is in itself a realized utopia*" (Friedman, 2020, p. 156, *my translation*), this appears to hold even truer in the case of a city of catastrophe, present and living *in spite of* its past and possible annihilation. In this sense, places of catastrophe need utopian architectonic and memorial tools to ensure the specificity of their boundaries. As "realized", utopias in these places acquire a sense akin to Foucault's conception of heterotopia: to make places of catastrophe living heterotopias is to use utopias as specific urbanistic and architectonic techniques.

The catastrophe is precisely what makes the city recognizable to its inhabitants. Because of this, only by developing specific techniques that are able to absorb (to assume) the trauma without pretending to remove it – i.e. through a detached memory embodied by a monument – can the memory and the presentiment of the end be prevented from becoming angst provoked by the feeling of the end of all possible worlds: "The catastrophe of the world and of being-in-the-world constitutes a more impressive risk, as more limited and precarious is the field of the world of the usable and of technical, material and mental tools to be used" (De Martino, 2002, p. 643). If narrated, mediated, and transformed into a social and cultural value, the image of the natural or human catastrophe turns that original event into the result of an unnatural, cultural effort in which human beings, the inhabitants of the city, reinvent their norms and their forms of life, in full consciousness of the extreme fragility of their finitude.

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RUINS: APPROXIMATIONS

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ABSTRACT

As the title suggests, in this chapter I trace several ways of approaching ruins, in an attempt to draw a provisory landscape. The four sections, some of them divided into subsections, form an arch between two personal experiences with ruins in Lisbon, one as a child, the other as an old woman. In between, there are several meditations on life, time, memory, and death, the resources for which are provided by Piranesi, Goethe, Baudelaire, Benjamin, and Aldo Rossi (through the eyes of Diogo Seixas Lopes). First, however, I draw on Wittgenstein in examining questions about forged ruins, houses and foundations. The chapter's central idea is that ruins communicate a visible secret.

KEYWORDS

Ruins, Ruins of Cities, Ruins of Buildings, Nature, History.

1.
RUINS AND THE COMMUNICATION OF A SECRET

> *Motto*: When, as children, we come
> across unfamiliar ruins, we sense that a manifest
> secret is being communicated.

Lisbon is rich in such secrets. Examples include the ruins of the Carmo Convent, those almost exultant remains of the 1755 Earthquake. But in Lisbon there are also other, less well-known ruins that have always troubled me, such as those on the Rua do Alecrim, for instance (which have since vanished due to recent construction work). I felt that the ruins were imbued with something, something that emanated from them, a sort of manifest secret which one day became communicable through words: other human beings existed before me. In ruins, we glimpse an interrupted transmission that is also the condition of the possibility of any transmission; i.e., ruins are testimonies. Matters of temporality and recollection are inscribed here.

1.1.
WHAT SECRETS DO FORGED RUINS COMMUNICATE?

> Indeed, even in places where human beings
> actually build ruins, they take the form of
> collapsed houses.
> Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Remarks on Frazer's
> *Golden Bough*", p.149

Let us start with the fanciful creations of certain artists, particularly from the 1700s – Canaletto, Piranesi, Guardi, among others – who painted ruins in accordance with their desire and understanding, often associating them with the way in which nature takes possession of ruins, and also with ruined nature, such as trees with cracked trunks or desolate landscapes. Forged ruins communicate an aesthetic and nostalgic love of ruins, a variation on a vision of history absorbed by nature that stems from the Baroque experience.

In fact, the Baroque age announces all the elements of modernity that remain valid today: in the wake of the violent disaggregation of religious unity and the tendential disappearance of all theological images, history has been reduced to nature, turning into a pile of debris. Pascal indicates "ennui" as the key symptom of the malaise that affects the subject faced with this disaggregation. Benjamin reminds us that "from the perspective of spleen [the modern version of ennui] the buried man is the 'transcendental subject' of historical consciousness" (Benjamin, 2003a, p. 165). Thus we move from ruins to ruined experience (more on this below).

Let us now turn to the epigraph to this section, but not before stressing that the notes on Frazer's *Golden Bough* are themselves scattered fragments of the act of reading (from two periods: 1931 and 1936 or 1948, the dating is uncertain), which suits Wittgenstein's aphoristic style of thought and his unconventional, discontinuous writing. These notes belong to the image-rich, conceptual atmosphere of the language game, but the object in question, the rites and associated beliefs of the peoples studied by Frazer (always indirectly, via the testimonies of others), favoured unprecedented developments of the evidence that no image precedes the language game – the game itself provides the images, and thus no definition is possible – suspending the effects of the concept of a cause. In this ethnological and anthropological atmosphere, Wittgenstein states the following:

> Isn't that like my seeing a ruin and saying: that must have been a house at one time, for nobody would have put up such a heap of hewn and irregular stones?[2] And if I were asked: How do you know that? I could only say: from my experience with human beings. Indeed, even in places where human beings actually build ruins, they take the form of collapsed houses. (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 148)

2   This question follows a series of considerations on the Beltane Festival (of Celtic origin), which led to the realization that ethnological and anthropological studies have always focused on the vestiges of dramatic actions – rituals, in this case – whose form does not emerge from a cause but rather gives in to life's occasions and maladjustments, which incorporate themselves in the form of life, contributing to its transformation and permanence. In fact, the rituals' form is a patchwork quilt, an amalgam of overlapping elements.

Such is the wordplay of forged ruins (strictly speaking, a *Gedankenexperiment*) that occurs in a mode of life in which humans have become aware of the ruins. They are thus prepared to recognize the remains of something that once lived, as a unity. Because even invented ruins correspond to our expectations regarding the process of ruination.

1.2.

WHAT SECRET IS COMMUNICATED BY THE RUINS
OF WITTGENSTEIN'S HOUSE IN SKJOLDEN, NORWAY?

> *Motto*: It is the house that carries the foundations, contrary to the notion that has been held in philosophy since Plato (its second proclamation articulated by Descartes, at the dawn of modernity): the foundations carry the house. This, of course, is not a matter of symmetry, or even a simple inversion.

Here is a photograph of the ruins of Wittgenstein's house in Skjolden. The odious prospect of its reconstruction is in the air, to cater to philosophical tourism, I suppose. Next to it is a picture of a front elevation of the same house. This is not part of a reconstruction plan; it is simply the work of a group of architects from the University of Vigo, meant to help us visualise it. We see the profile of the house above the promontory from various angles.[3] While the Skjolden house was the only house Wittgenstein called his own, his stays there were generally brief, even though his intermittent retreats were a regular feature of his life from very early on, whenever he needed solitude.

Let us return to the picture of its ruins. What do they show? Something quite important, which Wittgenstein himself pointed out in one of the notes written between 1949 and 1951, ruled by a constellation of certainty, confidence and belief, posthumously gathered in a book entitled *On Certainty*: "I have arrived at

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3   These pictures were published in the catalogue of the exhibition *Cabañas para pensar*, a project by Eduardo Outeiro Ferreño, curated by Alfredo Olmedo and Alberto Ruiz de Samaniego, presented at Fundación Luis Seoane, Coruña, 2011.

the rock bottom of my convictions. / And one might say that these foundation-walls are carried by the whole house" (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 33, § 248).

In philosophy there is an ancient image, inaugurated by Plato and revived by Descartes: the house and its foundations. From it, various ontological and epistemological conclusions have been drawn: a house on poorly built foundations will crumble. Wittgenstein does not question this. But he draws our attention to a yet unobserved aspect.

Wittgenstein's house, Skjolden, Norway
By courtesy of Alberto Ruiz Samaniego, Fundación Luís Seoane, La Coruña

Let us look again at the photograph of the ruins of Wittgenstein's house in Skjolden. What do we see? Here are the foundations on which the house stood, but the house is gone. Yes, nothing is left but the foundations. And what secured those foundations? Even though Wittgenstein conveys – in a reserved tone, "one might almost say" ["könnte man beinahe sagen"] – the limits of his convictions, i.e. that the foundations are carried by the whole house, their applications are enlightening. One of the most eloquent is the haunted house, the inhabited house that eventually becomes uninhabitable except by the sorts of forces a derelict house breeds.

There is a very beautiful text by Agustina Bessa-Luís, a newspaper article from 1996 in which she describes her journey at the age of seventeen to a house, property of her family, where she goes to be alone and to write. On her arrival, the house is fully locked, its shutters closed. Agustina feels that the house is completely possessed by ghosts. Her first gesture is to open the shutters. As the light flows into the house through the windows, touching the furniture, the floor, the doors, the cupboards, the ghosts fade away, saluting her. We can imagine that the books she would later write were assisted by the recollections of these indoor ghosts.

The house secures the foundations because the life of its inhabitants sustains it. An uninhabited house either falls prey to ghosts or else nature takes possession of it, causing it to rot and collapse. The foundations incorporate the endeavour to sustain the house from a mechanical, physical point of view – no one disputes that the concept is sound, but that concept alone is not enough to speak of houses and foundations. There is another perspective that Wittgenstein helped us to consider, for which the present condition of his Skjolden house has provided the most appropriate touchstone.

2.
PIRANESI'S *PIANTA DI ROMA* (1756): *PEZZI* WITHOUT A SOURCE

> *Motto*: "Col sporcar si trova": instead of saving the classical tradition, Piranesi contributes to its destruction.

Forma Urbis Roma[4] is a marble map of Rome, created between the late second and the early third century, during the rule of Septimius Severus, and also known as *Forma Urbis Severiana, Pianta Marmorea Severiana* or *Forma Urbis Marmorea*. At a scale of 1 to 240, it presented detailed floor plans of Roman buildings, including their columns and inner stairs. It was based on

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4   For all historical aspects, I have drawn on a very useful article by Diego Suárez Quevedo, "Roma fragmentada, fragmentos de Roma. Gianbattista Piranesi y sus *vedute* de lo Urbs y Tibur, reflexiones". (Quevedo, 2013, pp. 147-175).

Roman property records, likely drawn on papyrus with data on the buildings' owners and their measurements. This planimetric map was mounted on an interior wall of Vespasian's Temple of Peace, in one of the rooms of its southern angle. It was 13 metres high and 18 metres wide and was held in place by 150 rectangular props of varying sizes. The carving of the map was undertaken precisely where it was displayed.
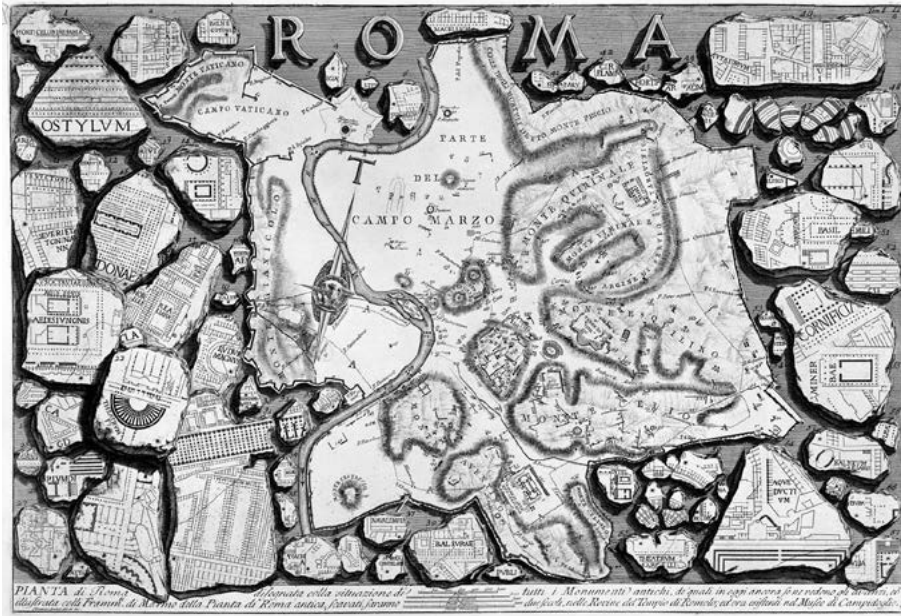
Pianta di Roma
Giovanni Battista Piranesi

Like all that exists on Earth, this marble map of Rome eventually fell to pieces, which were later repurposed; for instance, fragments from the map were used to build the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian. In 1562, many fragments were found, some quite a distance from the Temple of Peace. Many of them are now kept at the Capitoline Museums, former Roman palaces atop the Capitoline Hill. Despite their large number (there are 1180 fragments), they amount to roughly 10-15 per cent of the original planimetric map.

I first saw the *Pianta di Roma* as a reproduction in the book *Melancholy and Architecture. On Aldo Rossi*, by Diogo Seixas Lopes (2015, pp. 42-43).[5] Before discussing Aldo Rossi's architecture, Diogo Seixas Lopes takes a journey of sorts through the concept of melancholy. During this journey, he comes across Piranesi's work, in particular this print (more on this book below).

We know that two Popes, Benedict XIV (1740-1758) and Clement XIII (1758-1769), exerted their influence on architects and painters to preserve the traces of ancient Rome, at a time when their plundering and destruction were at their highest. Thus, Piranesi's print is part of a salvage operation.

Considering that there are 1,180 surviving pieces, what is seen on the print is a tiny fraction of the extant fragments, which reinforces our sense of their insusceptibility to reconfiguration. In Benjamin, we find not only the concept of the shards of the pure language's vessel, but also the concept of the picture puzzle. The first belongs to the context of affinity; the pieces of the vessel can associate with one another in the same way that a translation and the original text can fit each other as fragments of a vaster language, the pure language.[6] In the case of the picture puzzle, we enter the realm of allegory. The allegorist is characterized by the gesture of attempting to fit pieces together without knowing the image they make up; during this fitting, which is deprived of all traces of affinity, the allegorist composes images and meanings separately: "the allegorist rummages here and there for a particular piece, holds it next to some other piece, and tests if they fit together – that meaning with this image or this image with that meaning. The result can never be known beforehand, for there is no natural mediation between the two" (Benjamin, 1999b, p. 368 [J 80, 2; J 80a, 1]).

In Piranesi's print, we also observe an association of fragments in which reconfiguration has been obstructed, a sort of splendour of fragmentation. The technical term for this is *Pezzi*: "the fragments of the *Forma Urbis Roma* must

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5   Originally published in English in 2015, the book was then translated into Portuguese and published by Orfeu Negro in 2016.

6   "Fragments of a vessel that are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of imitating the sense of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's way of meaning, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of the vessel" (Benjamin, 1996, p. 260).

be seen as true *pezzi*, in the Italian sense of the term, that is, literally pieces, as regards time or the moment [...]" (Quevedo, 2013, p. 152).[7]

Piranesi engraved many Roman *vedute*. What strikes us about these views of Rome? The darkness, the spectral atmosphere (which will reach its climax in the famous "Prisons"). According to Piranesi, the "dirt of time", all that blackness, all that gathered dust, provides a source of understanding and discovery. He adds: "col sporcar si trova". This means that the dirt is a heuristic pictorial instrument: this is why he is constantly darkening things, darkening even that which is not dark but can only be deciphered by means of its dirt. In these actions of darkening and *sporcar*, we can hear the harmonics of the final line of Baudelaire's poem *Destruction*: "L'appareil sanglant de la destruction".[8] While salvaging tradition, Piranesi contributed to a tenebrous vision of its ruin.[9]

2.1.
GOETHE AND THE TASK OF RECONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE OF SOMETHING THAT CAN NEVER BE ANYTHING OTHER THAN A RUIN: *THE ITALIAN JOURNEY*.

> *Motto*: Rome is an image lost in the ruins of history, an eternal, labile image of ruin. A presentment of the incommensurable: a non-historical irradiation of the ruins.

"Everything that was important to me in early childhood is again, thank God, becoming dear to me, and, to my joy, I find that I can once again dare to approach the classics. Now, at last, I can confess a secret malady, or mania, of mine."

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7   My translation. Diego Suárez Quevedo further explains that *pezzi* was also the name given to the "fleshless bones of the relics" (Quevedo, 2013, p. 165; my translation), a harsh phrase that was in use from Raphael to Pope Leo X.

8   "[T]he grim regalia of Destruction" (Baudelaire, 1952, https://fleursdumal.org/poem/177) [transl. Roy Campbell]). All quotations from Baudelaire in French are from Baudelaire, 1980.

9   "With his *vedute di Roma* drawings, Piranesi carries out one of the most disquieting readings of the classical tradition, contributing to its destruction" (Delfino Rodriguez Ruiz, *apud* Quevedo, 2013, p. 161).

(Goethe, 1992, p. 89) These are the words that, in Venice, having stayed little more than a month in Italy, Goethe writes to point out and make intelligible to the reader, and to himself, the feeling of having previously seen things one is actually seeing for the first time. If he had not decided to take this trip, "slipping out" of Karlsbad on 3 September 1786, he would have completely sunk into the overwhelming vertigo of his immense, nostalgic, and unfulfilled love for the ancients. Such was his desire to see Rome, where he arrived on 1 November, that he dashed through Florence in a carriage without stopping. How could anyone pass through Florence without lingering there? You see, Goethe thirsted for ruins; his supreme desire was to reach them, and the journey had been longer than his longing allowed:

> I hope they will forgive me for my secretiveness and my almost subterranean journey to this country. Even to myself, I hardly dared admit where I was going and all the way I was still afraid I might be dreaming; it was not till I had passed through the Porta del Popolo that I was certain it was true, that I really was in Rome. (Goethe, 1992, p. 115)

In spite of this, let us return to Venice:

> Architecture rises out of its grave like a ghost from the past, and exhorts me to study its precepts, not in order to practise them or enjoy them as a living truth, but, like the rules of a dead language, in order to revere in silence the noble existence of past epochs, which have perished for ever.
> Venice, 12 October 1786 (Goethe, 1992, p. 89)

Here we encounter the difference between them and us, the leitmotif of this *Journey* – the way we look at death and the way the ancients looked at death – and this difference generates Goethe's powerful image for architecture: "out of its grave like a ghost from the past" (Goethe, 1992, p. 89). Like ruins, graves – even more so if predatory time has already gnawed at them – are eloquent instances of time-saturated spaces. Graves are monuments, i.e. acts

of memory. The kinship between funerary monuments and architecture was pointed out by Adolf Loos in his book *Ornament and Crime*: "When we come across a mound on the wood, six feet long and three feet wide, raised to a pyramidal form by means of a spade, we become serious and something in us says: somebody lies buried here. This is architecture".[10]

For Loos, architecture is a memorial gesture; it begins with the funerary monument: here lies someone who died. Thus, it is not a *memento mori* but rather a *memento mortuos*. Of course, the dead have to do with death, but the stance here is different, namely that death is a law of necessity, that the dead are our brothers, our family, the past of a constellation favoured by the living. "Now" is a very important concept in Benjamin's theory of history. Here, historian Walter Benjamin's rememorative action comes in: he knows that the one who lived was not a corpse; he knows that it is always about a life in a present of its own, and that only the actual present can polarize existence into past and future (cf. Benjamin, 1999b, p. 147 [N 71, 8] and p. 476 [N 11, 5]).

Goethe often stresses the importance of having an affinity with the ancients, but he is also aware that there is an immeasurable (and yet unabsorbed) element in the difference between them and us. In this, he was following a rule that is present in the Venice excerpt: we must strive to understand what we can understand and to show reverence for what we do not understand. This regime of admiration protects us from the destruction that something superior to us can wreak. The contrast between them and us attains its highest potency when Goethe, once again stressing his affinity with the ancient way of looking at nature and art, discovers in it a disproportion, an incommensurable element that is alien to the construction of art history, in Winckelmann's view:

> Everything I see around me suggests two lines of inquiry which I shall
> not fail to pursue when I see my way more clearly. The first is this:
> At the sight of the immense wealth of this city, even though it
> consists of scattered fragments, one is inevitably led to ask about
> the age when it came into being.

10 Loos, 1985, p. 23. Loos's presence – the relationship between architecture, memory and funerary ritual – is also felt in the previously mentioned work by Diogo Seixas Lopes, where Aldo Rossi's interest in Loos resounds (Lopes, 2015, pp. 25-26).

> [...] any serious student will understand that, in this field as in others, judgment is impossible without a knowledge of historical development.
>
> The second line of inquiry is concerned exclusively with the art of the Greeks: [...] My instinct tells me that they followed the same laws as Nature, and I believe I am on the track of these. But there is something else involved as well which I would not know how to express.
>
> 28 January 1787 (Rome)
>
> (Goethe, 1992, pp. 155-156)

In fact, just two days after his arrival in Rome, on 3 November 1786 – still intoxicated with the joy of finally being there – we can already observe in Goethe an acute awareness of the effect provoked by "inestimable art", here not from the ancients but from more recent figures, the Renaissance painters. In a less nostalgic fashion, and with unshakeable vehemence, Goethe yields to the overwhelming pleasure of abandoning himself to contemplation, setting all historical pretensions aside: "We do not ask how or why; we take it as it is and marvel at its inestimable art" (Goethe, 1992, p. 119).

Let us return to the ruins. In Terni, a few days before arriving in Rome, Goethe would arrive at the most penetrating formulation of the relationship between ruins, testimony, historical awareness of the amalgam that is human life and cognisance of the precariousness of their reconstructions:

> The strange wayside chapel of San Crocefisso is not, in my opinion, the remnant of a temple which once stood there. Evidently, columns, pillars and entablatures have been found and patched together. The result, though not unskilful, is absurd. [...] The curious difficulty about trying to form an idea of antiquity is that we only have ruins to go by, so that our reconstructions must be inadequate.
>
> Terni, 27 October.
>
> (Goethe, 1992, p. 112)

Here we taste the spice of Goethe's humour: "trying to form an idea of antiquity [when] we only have ruins to go by" (Goethe, 1992, p. 112). Strictly speaking, this idea will never be fully formed. Ruins always exude an incommensurable something.

3.
RUINS AND ALLEGORY

Allegory is a constructive method in poetry and art, particularly painting. Benjamin's studies focused on literature, especially on the *Trauerspiele*, stage plays from the German Baroque era. Even though it can be said that allegory existed as far back as antiquity, and also during the Middle Ages, it was during the Baroque period that it became a method, taking on extreme preponderance and constancy. The allegorical method is both a contemporary and a product of the religious conflicts in Europe that put an end to any possibility of unification; i.e., there is no longer a unifying concept of religious belief, compounded by forces of resistance to religious belief – effects of the scepticism cultivated by Montaigne, which would influence future libertines.

In the Baroque period, the allegory is both a symptom and a defence: a symptom of a state of crisis and a defence to keep from yielding to that state of crisis; for that reason, it becomes a construction method. The writers of *Trauerspiele*, mourning plays (translated literally), thought them to be a repeat of Greek tragedies. Benjamin would show that this is not the case, that Greek tragedy is a literary genre with no descendants, an inaugural form that devoured itself. Yet to the moderns, tragedy was an aegis and an inspiration.

Strictly speaking, mourning is a tragic ingredient, immersed in a theatrical game that implies, as Nietzsche showed us, a link between two gods, two forces, two aesthetic principles: Apollo and Dionysus. In other words, we have here an idea of theatre that occurred only once, part of a form of life that has also never been revived; life is a spectacle (which has nothing to do with Guy Debord's "society of spectacle").[11] Among the Greeks, tragedy appears as an internal resolution between what is perishing and what is barely being born, a turmoil that Benjamin calls "origin". What is perishing is the whole archaic and classical Greek

11 Giorgio Colli offers the clearest view of this difference: "The man of today goes to

culture, particularly the awareness of the rift between gods and men. Let us linger briefly on the example of *Antigone*, which provides the best touchstone for this. This woman feels in her body the discrepancy between the laws of the heart, those known to the gods, and her death sentence. She walks to her grave while still alive, desperate, lost, because the gods are silent and will not save her, and she does not want to die. Tragedy is the poetic resolution of a peerless crisis.

This means that, like philosophy, tragedy follows the crisis that led to the dismantling of inherited beliefs, which originated in powerful outbreaks of sceptical thought – a tradition that was taking its first cosmopolitan steps when the powers of the city-states were being broken into splinters. It is important to remember that Aristotle was the private tutor of the one who would take supreme advantage of those splinters, with no reconfiguring intent whatsoever: Alexander of Macedon.

In the case of the *Trauerspiele*, what we have is, on the one hand, the invasion of the scene by the chaos of historical life and, on the other, the invasion of the poetic form by awareness of the artifice. This last aspect is the most important because theatrical images act powerfully in tragedy – not only in Dionysus' Apollonian mask, but also in its various performative and architectural layers: the scene, i.e. the web of the characters' actions and reactions, and the orchestra, i.e. the choir. In addition, and particularly in Euripides' *The Bacchae*, there is also the influence of the theatrical instruments in the very construction of the characters, especially observable in the relationship between Pentheus and Dionysus,[12] who together prepare a sacrificial ritual that is at once religious and theatrical. There is no flavour of artifice in this; life is supposed to be like that.

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the theatre to relax, to free himself from the weight of everyday life, because he needs something that is 'just' a spectacle, because he comes from outside and he knows what is real. The spectator of Greek tragedy came and 'knew' something more about the nature of life, because he was contaminated from the inside, invested with a contemplation – that is, with a knowledge – that already existed before him, that emanated from the orchestra and elicited his contemplation, mingling with it. What if the path of the spectacle were, after all, the path of knowledge, of liberation, of life? That is the question asked by *The Birth of Tragedy*" (Colli, 1995, pp. 17-18; my translation).

12 This is the only instance where the god Dionysus appears as a character in a tragedy. He also appeared only once in a comedy, Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, a precious instrument in the confirmation of the close connection between tragedy and Dionysus.

Even though life is on the verge of becoming meaningless in Greek tragedies, they are nonetheless suffused with a sort of delirious, redemptive expectation incarnated in the god Dionysus, while in the plays of Calderón or Shakespeare – and most blatantly in the *Trauerspiele* – the images of the theatre help to convey the meaninglessness of life while offering protection from its chaotic effects. With allegory, the experience of affinity (the proper context for the symbol) has been torn apart, and all that is left is the search for protection from the ruins that keep growing, the debris that keeps piling up, by means of a movement that refurbishes this debris, namely an artificial image. In the Baroque age, this image coincides with the image of the theatre. In fact, the allegorical method presupposes the theatrical metaphor, since both inner and mundane life are read through it.

This is still present in Baudelaire, for instance in the poem *L'Irréparable*, where he speaks of his soul as a theatre that is being undermined by a futile expectation: "Mais mon cœur, que jamais ne visite l'extase, / Est un théâtre où l'on attend/ Toujours, toujours en vain, l'Être aux ailes de gaze!"[13] And yet the clear awareness of the image's artificiality ceases with the Baudelairean allegory, which makes it more terrifying. By this I mean that he uses the images in a manner that is almost violent and coarse, now that the awareness of their artifice is gone. Consequently, a sort of merging occurs between the ruined experience and the image that exalts and protects it. There is yet another differentiating feature: while the Baroque allegory sees a corpse – history is a pile of corpses – Baudelaire's allegory looks at the inside of the corpse; it opens up the corpse and describes it. In fact, as we know, this is a consequence of the Baroque period, during which the most important anatomy studies were carried out.[14]

13 "But my heart, which rapture never visits, / Is a playhouse where one awaits / always, always in vain, the Being with gauze wings!" (Baudelaire, 1954, https://fleursdumal.org/poem/149 [transl. William Aggeler]).

14 In fact, the medical experience among the moderns leads to an extreme form of nihilism: seeing the body, a living unit, being cut open confronts us with the total lack of affinity between outside and inside, severely disrupting our understanding of what the body is. Benjamin detects this nihilism in his contemporaries Gottfried Benn and Céline, medical doctors and writers (cf. Benjamin, 1999b, p. 472 [N 8a, 1]). This severe disruption existed since Baroque times, but Baudelaire takes it to abyssal levels.

Wrath is another innovation of the Baudelairean allegory. In the final section of *Les Fusées*, "Le monde va finir", the poet's rage and wrath are directed against the debasement of hearts – the cause of the world's announced annihilation – against the cities' chaotic wretchedness, and in compassion to all those whose lives have been ruined.

3.1.

RUINES.

MA FAMILLE, BAUDELAIRE,

"LES PETITES VIEILLES", *LES FLEURS DU MAL.*

> Je suis comme un peintre qu'un Dieu moqueur/
> Condamne à peindre, hélas ! sur les ténèbres;/
> Où, cuisinier aux appétits funèbres, / Je fais
> bouillir et je mange mon cœur.[15]
> Baudelaire, *Un Fantôme* (part of the *Les
> Ténèbres* poem cycle)

As is the case with other poems by Baudelaire, we find in these lines from *Un Fantôme* a full, concise *ars poetica*. The poet, a cook of funereal appetites, boils his own heart in darkness and then eats it. What agent boils Baudelaire's heart? Suffering, "la noblesse unique" (*Bénédiction* I). Benjamin highlighted this with unparalleled skill:

> The structure of *Les Fleurs du Mal* [...] results from the relentless
> exclusion of any lyric theme that does not bear the stamp of
> Baudelaire's own profoundly sorrowful experience. And precisely
> because Baudelaire was aware that his form of suffering – spleen,
> the *taedium vitae* – is a very ancient one, he was able to make the
> signature of his own experience stand out in bold relief against it.
> (Benjamin, 2003b, p. 62)

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15 "I'm like a painter whom a mocking God / Condemns to paint, alas! upon darkness; / Where, a cook with a woeful appetite, / I boil and I eat my own heart" (Baudelaire, 1954, https://fleursdumal.org/poem/206 [transl. William Aggeler]).

In all of his poems, we see Baudelaire rising up from the harmonics that compose the landscape of suffering. Here, suffering is incarnated in the sublime and brutal image of boiling one's heart; no less sublime and brutal is the related image in which the poet-cook savours his delicacy, eating his own heart. In this passage between boiling the heart and eating it, we witness the development of an *ars poetica*, giving voice to the poet's dazzling ability to turn suffering into poetic lines. Let us now look at *Les petites vieilles*.

"Je guette, obéissant à mes humeurs fatales. / Des êtres singuliers, décrépits et charmants."[16] Decrepit and charming creatures: such are the little old women whom the poet follows and watches. In the next verse, he calls them "Monstres brisés, bossus ou tordus".[17] It should be mentioned that in French, "monstre" is a masculine word. For several verses, the poet applies the masculine French pronoun "ils" to the little old women, thus making their decrepitude more painful: "Ces monstres disloqués furent jadis des femmes"; "pareils à des marionnettes / Se traînent, comme font les animaux blessés"; "Ou dansent, sans vouloir danser, pauvres sonnettes"; "Ils ont des yeux perçants comme une vrille"; "Ils rampent"; "Ils trottent"; "Tout cassés / Qu'ils sont"; "Ils ont".[18] Up to this point, Baudelaire depicts the little old women, who have lost their feminine identity, as entities without a life of their own, like marionettes, massacred animals – they drag themselves like wounded beasts – their eyes as piercing as a gimlet, a T-shaped drilling tool used in carpentry, a lifeless mechanical instrument. They are fully deprived of all humanity.

"Luisants comme ces trous où l'eau dort dans la nuit / Ils ont les yeux divins de la petite fille";[19] this is the line that tears the little old women away from the inanimate world and the world of massacred animals, the line in which, through the evocation of childhood, "ils" become "elles". They, the monsters,

16 "I watch, obedient to my fatal whims, / For singular creatures, decrepit and charming" (Baudelaire, 1954, https://fleursdumal.org/poem/222 [transl. William Aggeler]).

17 "Monsters, hunch-backed, broken / Or distorted" (Baudelaire, 1954, ibid.).

18 "These disjointed monsters were women long ago"; "They trot exactly like marionettes; / They drag themselves like wounded animals"; "Or dance, against their will, poor little bells"; "they have eyes as piercing as gimlets"; "they creep"; "they trot"; "Broken / Though they are"; "They have" (Baudelaire, 1954, ibid.).

19 "That shine like those holes in which water sleeps at night; / They have the divine eyes of little girls" (Baudelaire, 1954, ibid.).

the little old women, have the divine eyes of little girls. "Toutes m'enivrent". In Baudelaire, inebriation is a life energy, a poetic origin, a ground for brotherhood, a source of compassion. In this line, the poem's final outpour is being prepared.

"Ah ! que j'en ai suivi de ces petites vieilles !/ Telles vous cheminez, stoïques et sans plaintes, / À travers le chaos des vivantes cités".[20] Through the disorder of streets and multitudes, the city had already infiltrated all the moments in which the poet pursued the objects of his love, be they mothers, courtesans or female saints. But it had yet to be named: the chaos of living cities. Compassionately, echoing the return to childhood of those "petites vieilles", the poet becomes a father, thus doing justice to his own image: they are little girls. "Mais moi, moi qui de loin tendrement vous surveille / L'œil inquiet, fixé sur vos pas incertains, / Tout comme si j'étais votre père, ô merveille ! / Je goutte à votre insu des plaisirs clandestins", "as if I were your father":[21] those ruins from which he draws "clandestine pleasures" are the poet's family: "Ruines ! ma famille !"[22]

3.2.
"THE DESTRUCTIVE CHARACTER":
APOLLO VERSUS THE ANGEL OF HISTORY.

WB – and this is not the case with all authors
– but he sees his task and due right in it –
has *two* hands. One day when I was fourteen
years old, I got it into my head that I had
to learn to write left-handed. And I can still
see myself today sitting at my school desk
in Haubinda for hours and hours, practising.
Today, my desk is in the Bibliothèque Nationale

20 "Ah! how many of these women I have followed!"; "Thus you trudge along, stoical, uncomplaining,/ Amid the confusion of cities full of life" (Baudelaire, 1954, ibid.).

21 "But I, I watch you tenderly from a distance; / My anxious eyes are fixed on your uncertain steps, / As if I were you own father; how wonderful! / I taste unknown to you clandestine pleasures." (Baudelaire, 1954, ibid.).

22 While analysing this poem, Benjamin comments on the huge detour Baudelaire makes to return to childhood via old age, bypassing the whole weight of adult life (cf. Benjamin, 1999b, p. 355 [J71a, 4]).

> – I have resumed these writing studies there –
> temporarily! – at a higher level. Would you not
> like to *join* me and look at it in this *way*, my
> dear Felizitas?
> Letter from Benjamin to Gretel Adorno,
> 1 September 1935

Benjamin's question to Felizitas, i.e. Gretel Adorno, has to do with a sort of ambiguity that runs throughout his work, although it is most visible from the 1930s on. We find its most disquieting version in the opposition of the destructive character and the angel of history:

> The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room [*Raum schaffen*]. And only one activity: clearing away [*räumen*]. His need for fresh air and open space is stronger than any hatred.
> The destructive character is young and cheerful. For destroying rejuvenates, because it clears away the traces of our own age [...] Really, only the insight into how radically the world is simplified when tested for its worthiness for destruction leads to such an Apollonian image of the destroyer. This is the great bond embracing and unifying all that exists. It is a sight that affords the destructive character a spectacle of deepest harmony.
> [...] It is Nature that dictates his tempo, indirectly at least, for he must forestall her. Otherwise she will take over the destruction herself. (Benjamin, 1999a, p. 540)

Fresh air and open space are apolitical, anti-messianic needs. To the destructive character, it is a matter of finding ways, avoiding any consideration of earthly finality; at the same time, it is devoid of a redemptive term, because "to wait" is not a part of its vocabulary. Blazing paths, clearing the way, is the complete opposite of leaving traces, thus cancelling the notion that "then our coming was expected on earth" (cf. Benjamin 2003b, p. 390). To praise life and birth is not something that befits the destructive character, but neither does cursing

them. There is no place for hatred when the decisive task is to throw away, erase, empty, make room.

> There is a picture by Klee called Angelus Novus. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps pilling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while   the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm.
> (Benjamin, 2003b, p. 392)

Momentarily torn out of the void, to be returned to it once their instantaneous task is fulfilled, myriad angelic hosts are created solely to praise God in the splendour of his throne. These angels are discussed by means of the Kabbalah in "Agesilaus Santander", and all Benjaminian angels are similar to them. In Benjamin, the angel largely has a sacrificial value and is always short-lived, or at least flightless, which is precisely the case with the angel of history, the *Angelus Novus*, whose wings are spread, immobilized by the power of a stormy wind; unable to close them, he is being dragged, incapable of generating the cadence that would impel his wings to lift him above the storm and allow him to dwell on the wreckage, on the maimed limbs of those who are no more. The tempest that drags him blows from Paradise, and its name is "progress", Benjamin tells us, appropriating, in a supremely ironic move, the modern finalistic concept that was most alien to him. Though akin to the rememorative historian because of his relationship and attitude towards the debris, the ruins, the angel of history cannot, however, linger long with them, being unable to discover in the present the past's more intimate image. In "A Christmas Angel", Benjamin describes the attempt to fixate the one who announces his future life to him, his secret

name, and the disaster that attempt involves: the angel disappears at the moment of his apparition, and the child's voice sings a praise that fails to be heard.[23]

Likewise, the destructive character is a sort of messenger for this lineage of extremely short-lived praising angels, but instead of intoning songs of praise, he acts in accordance with his awareness of how brief his apparition will be in the space of existence, and his task is precisely to make this space visible, intensifying it with his annihilating gestures. He needs little and ignores what will replace what has just been destroyed. For once, frugality appears to be associated with the title of executioner: where the victim once lived, an empty path is now seen. To see paths everywhere, to turn obstacles into paths, to clear paths, to see crossroads everywhere: all this comes from recognizing the evanescent quality of everything. Naturally, ruins would always appear; thus a transient victory over nature is achieved. He is not responsible for the rubble; he makes rubble to find a way through it. What sort of a historian is this?

> The destructive character has the consciousness of historical man, whose deepest emotion is an insuperable mistrust of the course of things and a readiness at all times to recognize that everything can go wrong. Therefore, the destructive character is reliability itself.
> [...] Because he sees ways everywhere, he always stands at a crossroads. No moment can know what the next will bring. What exists he reduces to rubble – not for the sake of the rubble, but for that of the way leading through it.
> The destructive character lives from the feeling not that life is worth living, but that suicide is not worth the trouble. (Benjamin, 1999a, p. 542)

Indeed, the most disturbing point in the description of the destructive character is the attribution of a historical consciousness to him. For Benjamin, knowing

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23 Cf. "Agesilaus Santander (First Version)" (Benjamin, 1999a, pp. 712-713; "A Christmas Angel" is a section of *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (Benjamin, 2002, pp. 377-378). As for the angels of the train stations, see *The Arcades Project* (Benjamin, 1999b, p. 843 [Gº, 25]).

things just as they are at the precise moment they are not lies at the source of the only truly concrete representation we can make of human beings: to make manifest our memory of them (cf. Benjamin, 1999b, p. 363 [J 76a, 4] and p. 833 <Dº, 4>). The destructive character affords a glimpse neither of that knowledge nor of that memory.

Here, childhood is concealed, and youthful amnesia reigns, serene. When the years of our life are erased, we become young again. The world is ready for destruction. Such is the Apollonian tie that makes the world a world: reduce, remove, extract the root. This Apollonian embrace releases the only possible harmony, which has nothing to do with redemption. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche presents Apollo as a physician who heals our Dionysian wounds and at the same time as a mask worn by Dionysus. In fact, Apollo is the source of one of the most important Greek dramatic creations, the oracular system of Delphi, with its formal hierarchy between those touched by the deity and their interpreters, the most famous of which was Tiresias.

Benjamin highlighted this more archaic trait of Apollo, the god of destruction, a destruction that is not linked to forthright, direct violence, as is the case with Ares, the god of war – Apollonian violence is always indirect, for Apollo's weapon is the bow, a dealer of death from a distance. The bow is joined, however, by another weapon, Apollo being the only manifestation of the divine rift that takes this form: the word, the logos, which coagulates in the oracle while at the same time expanding in all its splendour. The word is ambiguous; the woven fabric of the words is an enigma to be deciphered: the maddened words flow from the lips of the pytoness, and then a number of skilled exegetes set to work interpreting them. Apollo is the devious, oblique one, *Loxias*. It is this name that Cassandra uses to invoke the god, at the moment when, during prophetic delirium, she announces her own death (cf. Aeschylus, 1962, pp. 154-155).

To this humorous, cruel, curious, inquisitive power is added that of surmising harmony (the world's docility regarding its own extermination). Heraclitus, the obscure, the Apollonian philosopher *par excellence*, points out that secret harmony, the most powerful of all, between the bow and the lyre. As Benjamin's text explains, violence is not always carried out by violent means; it also has a subtle version.[24]

24 We can find other instances of what could be called the Hellenic heritage in Benjamin,

The explanation given for the origin of the text, of the character it discusses or portrays, is entirely insufficient for what is at stake here: what led Benjamin to express himself so precisely, writing two versions of the essay and publishing the one he saw as most precise? Benjamin even mentions a physiognomy while reminiscing about sending the text to G. Scholem. But of whom?

The destructive character always expects everything to go wrong, but he does not avoid this; hence the statement that "the destructive character is reliability itself". He sees all events through the disciplined eyes of the historian, without any optimistic expectations, but also without thinking that he has "no other choice", fully aware that, whatever turn this takes, things will not end well, uncovering the world's worthiness of destruction. For that reason, life is not worth living. Furthermore, killing oneself is not worth the trouble. This essay by Benjamin is manifestly one of the most disturbing approximations to the destructive and self-destructive tendencies of the sort of thinking he frequently described as saturnine. And Saturn is, as we know, another name for the god of tortuous thoughts: Chronos, the devourer.

4.
RUINS AND MELANCHOLY: THE THALIA THEATRE IN LISBON. FORM, FUNCTION AND METAMORPHOSIS

> "[C]ities […] are […] great encampments of the living and the dead."
> Aldo Rossi, *Scientific Autobiography*, p. 20

> *Motto*: The Thalia Theatre was inaugurated in 1843, as a private venue for the Count of Farrobo. It was located just outside of Lisbon, facing a palace and gardens also owned by the aristocrat. A lover of the arts, the Count

comprising every variation in the initiatic experience of the threshold, namely in *Berlin Childhood* and *The Arcades Project*. And there are further traces of the Apollonian element in Benjamin: the labyrinth is one of the most recurring concept experiments in his thought, from the beginning to the end. We have already looked at its role in "The Destructive Character".

of Farrobo used the Thalia Theatre to stage
theatre and opera shows as well as extravagant
parties for his own amusement. In 1862, a fire
burned down the building with all its luxurious
decoration of gilded wood, mirrors, and
chandeliers. By then, the Count of Farrobo had
lost his fortune and eventually died penniless.
For the next 150 years, the Thalia Theatre stood
in ruin.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Science ordered a study to convert the
Thalia Theatre into a multi-purpose space (exhibitions, congresses, concerts,
celebrations and radio performances). Two different generations of Portuguese
architects were entrusted with the project: Gonçalo Byrne and Diogo Seixas
Lopes/Patrícia Barbas:

In order to retain the old walls of the Thalia Theatre, the exterior
was entirely covered by a shell of terracotta concrete that forms
a massive and monolithic body. It is composed of the original
volumes of the audience and the stage, 23 meters high. Inside these
two voided spaces, the ruins are left untouched in a spectacle of
their own. (from the flyer of the project)

The preserved ruins ushered in a metamorphosis that is also a new use,
unforeseen in the text written by the architects themselves (two excerpts of
which have been quoted above). What metamorphosis and what use? The
transition from the theatre as a place of laughter (Thalia was the Muse of
comedy) to a funereal apparatus in which sorrow dwells. I know of no place in
Lisbon where the elegiac feeling is more at home. The Thalia Theatre received
this funerary purpose from one of its architects, Diogo Seixas Lopes, precisely
the one who better understood the importance of keeping the ruins as ruins. It is
not by chance that his most relevant book on architecture is titled *Architecture
and Melancholy. On Aldo Rossi*, or that the unfinished project of the Modena
cemetery is both the heart of Seixas Lopes's book and the sinew of the work of

Rossi, an architect who thinks that buildings' functions are constantly changing and being contaminated in/by people's forms of life; i.e., the relationship between form and function is far from being reducible to a rule. The following is an instance of this:

> [...] I have seen old palaces now inhabited by many families, convents transformed into schools, amphitheatres transformed into football fields; and such transformations have always come about most effectively where neither an architect nor some shrewd administrator has intervened. (Rossi, 1981, p. 115)

Teatro Thalia, Lisbon Portugal
Photograph of Daniel Malhão

"I was born in a time when the majority of young people had lost faith in God, for the same reason their elders had had it – without knowing why." Diogo Seixas Lopes chose these lines from Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet* as an epigraph to his *Architecture and Melancholy*. Once religious buildings ceased to make sense to those who lacked religious belief, it became necessary

to find other spaces to host funereal rites and ceremonies. The Thalia Theatre is one of these spaces in Lisbon. And it was the preservation of its ruined but protected interior that allowed for this transition from incinerated laughter to mourning and melancholic meditation. Thus the memory of an architectural ruin is engendered and renewed.

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CHAOSMOPOLITANISM:
RECONFIGURING JAMES JOYCE'S CITIES
OF *THISORDER* AND EXILED SELVES

Bartholomew Ryan[1]

ABSTRACT

In two books (*Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*), an itinerant-revolutionary-artist-city-dweller created, what I call, *chaosmopolitanism*. In colliding chaos with order (cosmos), the word "cosmopolitan" for the urban dweller is not sufficient. As is well known, James Joyce is both the local writer officially dedicating his art to a single city; and the world author appropriating so many other facets of cities, languages and international cultural literary figures and motifs and weaving them into a revolutionary literature. In his work, he was a master of expressing the modern experience on a grand scale of fragmentation, reconfiguration, and the disorientation and reorientation of space, time and identities in the city; in his life, he moved from one European city to the next: from Dublin to Pula to Trieste to Zurich, and then from Zurich back to Trieste and unto Paris, and then escaping Nazi-occupied Paris to return to Zurich. I see Joyce's "chaosmos" as the expression of his art and vision and which emerges out of experiencing the myth, logos and life of the modern city and the exiled self of modernity.

KEYWORDS

Chaosmopolitan, Trieste, Jewgreek, Exile, Neologism.

> What went forth to the ends of the world to traverse not itself, God, the sun, Shakespeare, a commercial traveller, having itself traversed in reality itself becomes that self. Wait a moment. Wait a second. Damn that fellow's noise in the street. Self which it itself was ineluctably preconditioned to become. *Ecco!*
>
> James Joyce, *Ulysses*

> he forged himself ahead like a blazing urbanorb
>
> James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*

In two books (*Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*) that together took a quarter of a century to write, an itinerant-revolutionary-artist-city-dweller created, what I call, *chaosmopolitanism*. In colliding chaos with order (cosmos), the word "cosmopolitan" for the urban dweller is not sufficient. As is well known, James Joyce is both the local writer officially dedicating his art to a single city (Dublin); and the world author appropriating so many other facets of cities, languages and international cultural literary figures and motifs and weaving them into a revolutionary literature. In his work, he was a master of expressing the modern experience on a grand scale of fragmentation, reconfiguration, and the disorientation and reorientation of space (see Benal, 2002), time and identities in the city; in his life, he moved from one European city to the next: from Dublin to Pula to Trieste to Zurich, and then from Zurich back to Trieste and unto Paris, and then escaping Nazi-occupied Paris to return to Zurich where he died and was buried. I see *chaosmos* – a word that Joyce coined in *Finnegans Wake* (Joyce, 1999, p. 118) – as the expression of his art and vision and which emerges out of experiencing the myth, logos and life of the modern city and the exiled self of modernity. In this essay, I will present this idea of *chaosmopolitanism* via three sections: 1) chaos and cosmos in the modern age; 2) cacophonies, symphonies and multiplicities of the city; and 3) the art and expression of the exiled wandering self.

1.
CHAOS AND COSMOS IN THE MODERN AGE

Harold Bloom called the twentieth century to which its literature belongs "The Chaotic Age" (Bloom, 1995, pp. 343-479). It is the age of acceleration, rapid increase of the world's population, massive urban city construction, accelerated travel, new advanced pharmaceuticals, and widespread sharing of information; it is an age of technological global wars, totalitarian societies, mass human displacement, and the saturation and collapse of empires and colonialism. Amidst these tensions, erosions and fall of patriarchal systems, the cosmopolitan morphs into the *chaosmopolitan*. *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are both the products and pioneers of the Chaotic Age and of the *chaosmopolitan* self, giving voice to disillusion, disorder and reordering. On the two novels, Umberto Eco writes: "Joyce clearly thought of his novel [*Ulysses*] as a summa of the universe" (Eco, 1989, p. 33); and "If *Finnegans Wake* is a sacred book, it tells us that *in principium erat Chaos*" (Eco, 1989, p. 87). Words such as "microchasm" (Joyce, 1999, p. 229) and "pancosmos" (Joyce, 1999, p. 613) are chanced upon in *Finnegans Wake* – a book that is like a vast deep ocean, filled with an onslaught of intimidating sentence structures and strange new phrases and words of *bricolage* and portmanteau on every page. These two books embody chaos and order in one, and they are the ultimate anti-totalitarian totalizing novels[2]. This is the *chaosmos*: a deconstruction and interpenetration of contradictions and opposites; a destabilisation and undoing of antinomies and binaries; a disempowering of orthodox and patriarchal laws and systems; a fragmentation and reconfiguration of things and events into micro-totalities; a treacherous, heretical, and joyously subversive vision. In their final book together, Deleuze and Guattari borrow Joyce's word to define art: "Art is not chaos but a composition of chaos that yields the vision or sensation, so that it constitutes, as Joyce says, a chaosmos, a composed chaos – neither forseen nor preconceived" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 204)[3]. At the beginning of his

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2   *Finnegans Wake* is described by Philippe Sollers as "an active transnationalism, disarticulating, rearticulating and at the same time annulling the maximum number of traces – linguistic, historical, mythological, religious", and that it "is the most formidably anti-fascist book produced between the wars" (Sollers, 1977, p. 109).

3   In their earlier book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, where "the world has become chaos", *chaosmos* turns up again – as "radicle-chaosmos rather than root cosmos" (Deleuze

book *Chaosmos: Literature, Science, and Theory*, Philip Kuberski defines what he means by *chaosmos* which I follow:

> The structural and thematic focus of the book is the paradoxical coincidence of order and disorder, cosmos and chaos, apparent within the atom but also within analogous nuclear sites such as the self, the word, and the world. The term I have chosen to describe and dramatize these coincidences is taken from *Finnegans Wake*: by "chaosmos" I mean a unitary and yet untotalized, a chiasmic concept of the world as a field of mutual and simultaneous interference and convergence, an interanimation of the subjective and objective, an endless realm of chance which nevertheless displays a persistent tendency toward pattern and order. (Kuberski, 1994, p. 3)

Joyce is not a Cartesian in a post-Cartesian era such as Sartre and his protagonist Roquentin from the existential novel *Nausea* (published in 1938) were. Joyce's humanity embraces pluralities everywhere, and includes life, death and ghosts, and myth in logos and vice versa in his novels. Joyce's city is not a refuge or asylum from nature as Roquentin's was[4]; rather his

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and Guattari, 2005, p. 6). Félix Guattari's final book is called *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm*. On the first page, he states that "Subjectivity is in fact plural and polyphonic [...] It recognizes no dominant or determinant instance guiding all other forms according to a univocal causality" (Guattari, 1995, p. 1). He explains his "chaosmosis" later on: "So chaosmosis does not oscillate mechanically between zero and infinity, being and nothingness, order and disorder: It rebounds and irrupts on states of things, bodies and the autopoietic nuclei it uses as a support for deterritorialisation; it is relative chaotisation in the confrontation with heterogeneous states of complexity. Here we are dealing with an infinity of virtual entities infinitely rich in possibles, infinitely enrichable through creative processes" (Guattari, 1995, p. 112). Curiously in *Chaosmosis*, Guattari never once mentions Joyce's *chaosmos* from *Finnegans Wake*, which he most probably borrowed the term and just added the letter "e" to make it *chaosmose* (translated as "chaosmosis" in the English edition).

4   In his book on *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization*, Robert Pogue Harrison wrote that "the city remains the ultimate fortress of any humanism whatsoever" (Harrison, 1992, p. 147). But again, unlike Sartre's Roquentin, Joyce's city is not a refuge or asylum from nature, but rather part of the expression and vitality of nature. Harrison gives an impressive analysis of the hangover from the Enlightenment via Sartre's *Nausea* (Harrison, 1992, pp. 144-148).

city is the pulse of nature manifesting all its indeterminate chaos and order. The self is no longer "an enclosed rational entity defined by the Cartesian *res cogitans*" (Kuberski, 1994, p. 53) nor is the world "a material and mechanical construct" (Kuberski, 1994, p. 53) as it was for Descartes, Locke and Newton. Joyce completely disrupts mind/body distinctions and separation; rather, everything is entanglement, interconnectivity and interpenetration. The exposition of the world and self that is now a *chaosmos* is constantly exploding: it is an "explosion" (Joyce, 1999, p. 419). In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce loves to create neologisms that contain opposite words or double or multiple meanings, such as chaosmos, thisorder, collideorscape, apologuise, penisolate, stolentelling, escapology, explosion, nightmaze, meandertale, woid and even Finnegans Wake.[5] These are forms of transgression, indeterminacy and "exploiting the uncertainty principle" (Gibbons, 2015, p. 3) – which is at the heart of both faith and nihilism. Or as one of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms from the nineteenth century wrote: "Without risk, no faith" (Kierkegaard, 1992, p. 209). That line in the penultimate episode of *Ulysses* – "ineluctably constructed upon the incertitude of the void" (Joyce, 2008, p. 650) – could well serve to be Joyce's definition of modernism, beauty, art and *Ulysses* itself.

5   Joyce, 1999, pp. 118; 540; 143; 414; 3; 424; 428; 411; 18; 378. The last addition in this list – "Finnegans Wake" (of death and resurrection) – contains a myriad of multiple meanings and allusions which incorporates all the elements of Joyce's interpenetrative strategies and visions. *Finnegans Wake* is an Irish-American song about a hod-carrier who – like the egg oracle Humpty Dumpty – falls off his ladder while working and dies. "Finn" is also a name borne by countless legendary figures in Irish history and mythology. The most famous of them being Fionn mac Cumhaill – an Odysseus-like figure in Irish mythology who is a warrior, a seer, a hunter, lover, husband and leader. In the Irish language, Finn/Fionn can mean bright, clearing, fair or lustrous; *Fin* means "end" in French; and *Finne* means "to find" in Norwegian. And then we have the second part of Finnegan, which can be a negation (negan) and a repetition (egan alluding to "again", a repeat, a return). Thus, we have a title of "end-negating", "clearing again", "finding again" and "the coming again of Fionn the mythological hero". "Wake" implies the night before the funeral where the body or corpse is laid out for viewing for people to pay their last respects and be together; it is to wake up from sleep; and it can be the tracks on water on the sea or rivers that are formed from a boat passing through. Finally, there is no apostrophe in the word "Finnegans" in Joyce's title, which implies an imperative to all Finnegans – which is all of us – to awake us to the new and endlessly returning and recycling (a ricorso) vision of the book and of life and death.

Many initial readers of *Ulysses* saw *Ulysses* as nihilistic and didn't even attempt to open *Finnegans Wake* which went even further in expressing *chaosmos*. For many bewildered readers, chaos as a manifestation of nothing had now gained the upper hand in his last monstrous book[6]. A passage from Ernst Robert Curtius' 1929 article on *Ulysses* is worth quoting here:

> Joyce's work springs from a revolt of the spirit and leads to the destruction of the world. With implacable logic he presents in his Walpurgis-night amid larvae and lemurs, a vision of the end of the world. A metaphysical nihilism is the substance of Joyce's work. The word, macro- and microcosm, is founded upon the void... All this wealth of philosophical and theological knowledge, this power of psychological and aesthetic analysis, this culture of a mind schooled in all the literatures of the world, all these gifts serve but to spend themselves, to refute themselves in a world-conflagration, a flaming welter of metallic iridescence. What's left? An odor of ashes, the horror of death, sorrow of apostasy, pang or remorse – Agenbite of Inwit. (Gilbert, 1958, p. 226[7])

In 1934, Karl Radek, a leading Bolshevik and close associate of Lenin, Trotsky and then Stalin (before being executed in one of Stalin's purges), described *Ulysses* as "a heap of dung, crawling with worms, photographed by a cinema apparatus through a microscope" (McSmith, 2015, p. 119). In this disdainful critique, Radek marvelously captures central aspects of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. For Joyce, "dung" (faeces and rot) and "worms" (animals that recycle organic material in the soils of the earth) are the very fabric of existence that are played out on an equal footing as the sublime art of Beethoven and Shakespeare; the "microscope" alluding to the obsessive detail in and of space and time through the last two books; and the moving image alluding to cinema is exactly what Joyce was trying to capture.

6   Joyce wrote in a letter: "My eyes are tired, for over half a century, they have gazed into nullity where they have found a lovely nothing" (Joyce, 1966, pp. 359; 361f.).

7   This review was first published in *Neue Schweizer Rundschau Heft* I, January 1929.

One of the great observers of modernism and the urban landscape, Walter Benjamin, wrote that "it is a common feature of this literature [baroque] to heap up fragments uninterruptedly, without any well-defined idea of a goal, and, in the unremitting expectation of a miracle" (Benjamin, 2019, p. 189). Joyce is doing this in his two monumental works except that there is always paradoxically an order in the expression of chaos. And rather than a goal, there is a vision, and there is a celebration of the electricity of life – both literally and symbolically. If, in *Ulysses* – the book of the day, "history is a nightmare" from which he is trying to awake (Joyce, 2008, p. 34); in *Finnegans Wake* as the "book of the dark" (Joyce, 1999, p. 251) and "traumscrapt" (Joyce, 1999, p. 623) that "recorporated" (Joyce, 1999, p. 228) the nocturnal geographies of the world[8], history becomes a "nightmaze" (Joyce, 1999, p. 411), and a sham (as Anthony Burgess says: "*Finnegans Wake* is to demonstrate that history is a sham" [Burgess, 2019, p. 185]). Thinking and moving with Joyce, this word "sham" can allude to a number of words and meanings that help or muddle the reader into understanding or at least entering the *chaosmos* of both the artist and history. It is Joyce's "Shem the Penman" in *Finnegans Wake* who may be creating an alternative history (or various histories changing for the future). "Shem" alludes to sham, shame, same, shaman, and even alchemist ("the first till last alshemist" [Joyce, 1999, p. 185]). It also means "name" in Hebrew; and it refers to the Shemites who were the tribe responsible for helping build the Tower of Babel – a story that fascinated the philosopher of deconstruction and inspired reader of Joyce – Jacques Derrida.[9]

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8   Elsewhere in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce also refers to his book as "this nonday diary, this allnights newseryreel" (Joyce, 1999, p. 489).

9   Geoffrey Bennington writes in his text on Derrida in the section called "Babel": "To serve as a sort of emblem of this situation, Derrida chooses the 'example' of Babel, which ties together the themes of translation and the proper name. […] This story [the story of the tower of Babel], to which Derrida returns several times, fascinated […], contains resources we shall not exhaust here. The essential fact hangs on this: by imposing his name (confusedly perceived as 'confusion') against the name of name (Shem), God imposes both the necessity and the impossibility of translation" (Bennington, 1993, pp. 174-175). In a footnote in *Dissemination*, Derrida writes of "the whole of that essay [*La Pharmacie de Platon*], as will quickly become apparent, being itself nothing but a reading of *Finnegans Wake*" (Derrida, 1993, p. 88). In one of his essays on Joyce, Derrida admits further that *The Postcard*, *Glas* and his introductory essay "Scribble" are all indebted to and haunted by *Finnegans Wake* (Derrida, 2013, p. 27).

In *Ulysses*, the whole book has a spacial and temporal scheme; in *Finnegans Wake*, the author attempts to conquer space and time, conflating chaos and order into an "Immensipater" (Joyce, 1999, p. 342) of non-linear, non-sequential, non-teleological *chaosmos*. Before Joyce advances to create the *Ding an sich* in an artwork, in *Ulysses* Stephen Dedalus ponders on space and time: "I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final flame. What's left us then?" (Joyce, 2008, p. 24). There is plenty left: the creation of *Finnegans Wake* or "work in progress", and the experience of the city with its infinite possibilities, fragmenting and reconfiguring, where the modern exiled self will wander.

2.

CACOPHONIES, SYMPHONIES AND MULTIPLICITIES OF THE CITY

Certain masterly writers of European modernity are forever linked to the city of their birth, bringing to life the city by etching its street names into masterful works, giving voice to its denizens, and revealing its peculiarities. Such iconic examples of modernity are Pessoa and Lisbon, Dostoevsky and Saint Petersburg, Baudelaire and Paris, Kierkegaard and Copenhagen, Kafka and Prague, and Joyce and Dublin. Joyce devotes all his writings to Dublin but lives elsewhere throughout his entire adult life. Focusing on a defeated, colonized minor city of Europe, he captures the soul of modernism, and offers the world the "great symphony of cities" (Banville, 2001), the epicentres of modernism, the crowds of people and those crossroads of futurism and nostalgias of Baudelaire's "Ant-seething city, city full of dreams, / Where ghosts by daylight tug the passer's sleeve [*Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves, / Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant*!]" (Baudelaire, 1997, p. 230). The city accommodates rising and collapsing cultures, conflates space and time, and contains a cacophony of human accents, dialects, languages and sheer noise. Joyce dedicates a whole section of *Finnegans Wake* to traversing the names of the world's great cities (see Joyce, 1999, pp. 532-554) which Joycean scholar John Bishop attributes to "distinguishing civic features and monuments" and giving "an evolutionary record of urban development" (Bishop, 1999, p. x). Joyce's city and the *chaosmopolitan* that wanders along its streets is not a facile

globalization perspective, but rather combines parochial/cosmic visions of disintegration and renewal with the vigour of heresy and subversive joy. Joyce prioritises disorder by reordering ("thisorder") and creating at the same time a literature of presence ("Yet is no body present here which was not there before. Only is order othered. Nought is nulled. Fuitfiat" [Joyce, 1999, p. 613]).

"Eyes, walk, voice" (Joyce, 2008, p. 109) – these are the prerequisites for being on the city streets. God has dissipated into the "shout in the street"[10] (Joyce, 2008, p. 34) which Stephen Dedalus listens to for inspiration and sometimes in irritation in the "noise on the street" (Joyce, 2008, p. 475). In his book *All that is Solid Melts into the Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Marshall Berman connects Joyce's "shout in the street" with the modern city streets that are "experienced as the medium in which the totality of modern material and spiritual forces could meet, clash, interfuse and work out their ultimate meanings and fates" (Berman, 1988, p. 316). While in *Finnegans Wake*, "the man in the street can see the coming event" (Joyce, 1999, p. 583). The modern city is the landscape of the *flâneur* – alert, masked, nonconforming, that Baudelaire and Benjamin so marvelously evoked. Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus are the two great *flâneurs* of *Ulysses*: the former, an advertising agent with his all-seeing eye, infinite curiosity, intuitive responses and humble kindness; the latter, a young arrogant insecure poet with his ashplant and cerebral observations and guarded ambition. Never have the scientific and the artistic interpenetrated so well as in both these voyeurs of the city. Stimulus is everywhere in the urban landscape, and Joyce presents the decentering polyphonic[11] city of various opinions, colours, odours, sounds, lights, visions, movements, fashions, tastes and caresses. The cacophony of the five senses, all interwoven, is the symphony of the city. In the section on Shem the Penman

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10 See also Luke Gibbons chapter "Shouts in the Street: Inner Speech, Self, and the City" in *Joyce's Ghosts* (Gibbons, 2015, pp. 53-78). Gibbons reads this expression as "the inner speech of the city" which is brought to life in Joyce's artistic project of transferring "thinking out loud" into literature.

11 I am thinking here of "polyphony" that Bakhtin uses in analysing Dostoevsky, but I am also keeping with the word as it originally arose for describing two or more simultaneous lines of independent melody – given that *Finnegans Wake* and much of *Ulysses* are aspiring to be musical works through literature, where the demand of course is for them to be read aloud.

(a thinly disguised self-portrait) in *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce asks the question: "Do you hear what I am seeing?" (Joyce, 1999, p. 193). In *Ulysses*, the middle episode "Wandering Rocks" – containing the body symbol of Blood, the art symbol of Mechanics, the symbol of the Citizen and the technic of the Labyrinth – is set on the streets where space, time and movement are all in flux. In the episode "Aeolus", occurring at midday, reporting and the newspaper are at its centre, where the city is caught up by the wind and each passage is accompanied by a headline as the prose shifts gears and conveys different newsreels and messages of the day. As John McCourt writes, this episode "begins with a depiction of a modern means of transport, the electric tram, and a celebration of a certain 'busy-ness' that is reminiscent of the Futurists' ideals of dynamism and speed" (McCourt, 2001, p. 163). In the city, time and space are always vivid. Dedalus struggles with them both in pondering on the words *nacheinander* and *nebeneinander* in the Proteus episode (Joyce, 2008, p. 37), and he begins to interlink space and time from his experimentation with language and with what he sees, hears and voices as he walks along the beach into Dublin city. *Nacheinander* literally means "one after another successively"; and *nebeneinander* means "next to one another, adjacent". These are distinctive characteristics of time and space respectively (as Stephen reflects: "A very short space of time through very short times of space" [Joyce, 2008, p. 37]). Joyce's final passage in all his published work is his famous soliloquy by the river-character Anna Livia Plurabelle, as she weaves her way through the city and out into the Irish Sea. It is Joyce's and the river's farewell, and they speak and hail to the city as they make their final journey. And so the final soliloquy begins: "Soft morning, city! Lsp!" (Joyce, 1999, p. 619). There is always a reciprocal relationship between rivers and cities: European capital cities grow up by the river and that river is immortalized by human history. For example, there is Dublin and the Liffey; London and the Thames; Paris and the Seine; Lisbon and the Tagus; Rome and the Tiber; Berlin and the Spree; and Budapest, Belgrade, Bratislava, Vienna and the Danube.

    Chaosmos exists rather than simply as a cosmos or chaos, as all things, language, people and events pass and disintegrate into ruins or faded memories and remerge again. They never remain the same or kept in place (cosmos); nor do they truly enter into oblivion (chaos) as the poet is nature's memory. In his

brilliant essay on *Finnegans Wake*, Umberto Eco writes: "Here everything moves in a primordial and disordered flow; everything is its own opposite; everything can collegate itself to all the others [...] each event is simultaneous; past, present and future coincide" (Eco, 1989, p. 65). In the *Wake* itself, the author of "the Haunted Inkbottle" (Joyce, 1999, p. 182) writes of the book as "one continuous present tense integument slowly unfolded all marryvoising moodmoulded cyclewheeling history" (Joyce, 1999, p. 186). There are many examples of the almost mystical or biblical narrative of fading away and renewal. For a start, both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* end with this vision. Declan Kiberd writes that a "biblical narrative that comes out of chaos and returns to chaos suggests that evolutionary optimism offers little hope" (Kiberd, 2009, p. 215). The Irish writer James Stephens, who was also friend to Joyce (and holds a peculiar place in Joyce's biography, as Joyce once hoped that Stephens would finish *Finnegans Wake* for him[12]), captured every generation's relationship to their city (and ultimately to history), full of memory, forgetfulness and eternal recurrence: "No city exists in the present tense, it is the only surviving mass-statement of our ancestors, and it changes inversely to its inhabitants. It is old when they are young, and when they grow old it has become amazingly and shiningly young again" (Stephens, 1923, p. 42). The idea of the transience of the city is always evoked in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. In *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom reflects:

> Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too: other coming on, passing on. Houses, lines of houses, streets, miles of pavements, piledup bricks, stones. Changing hands. This owner, that. Landlord never dies they say. Other steps into his shoes when he gets his notice to quit. They buy the place up with gold and still they have all the gold. Swindle in it somewhere. Piled up in cities, worn away age after age. Pyramids in sand. Built on bread and onions. Slaves Chinese wall. Babylon. Big stones left. Round towers. Rest rubble, sprawling suburbs, jerrybuilt. Kerwan's mushroom houses built of breeze. Shelter, for the night.
> No-one is anything. (Joyce, 2008, pp. 156-157)

12 See Joyce's letter on 20th May 1927 to his patron Harriet Weaver on this matter (Joyce, 1966, p. 253 / Ellmann 1982, pp. 591-592).

It is very significant that in *Finnegans Wake* the only unaltered quotation in the whole book is a passage that beautifully captures the transience of space and time in the rise and fall of history and cities. The quote is from Edgar Quinet's introduction to his 1827 translation of Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* [*Outlines of Philosophy of the History of Man*]:

> *Aujourd'hui comme aux temps de Pline et de Columelle la jacinthe se plaît dans les Gaules, la pervenche en Illyrie, la marguerite sur les ruines de Numance et pendant qu'autour d'elles les villes ont changé de maîtres et de noms, que plusieurs sont entrées dans le néant, que les civilisations se sont choquées et brisées, leurs paisibles générations ont traversé les ages et sont arrivées jusqu'à nous, fraîches et riantes comme aux jours des batailles.*[13] (Joyce, 1999, p. 281)

Very significantly, this sentence also appears in distorted form at the beginning and end of the *Finnegans Wake* (Joyce, 1999, p. 14; p. 615).

Language is also an example of transience and of memory and forgetfulness in the city of the *chaosmopolitan*. Wittgenstein compares language to a city: "Our language can be seen as an ancient city; a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses" (Wittgenstein, 1958, p. 8). Gibbons eloquently articulates what *Ulysses* has achieved in regard to the city and language: "*Ulysses* is a portrait of a city like no other in that, through an array of narrative strategies, language is not at one remove from reality but is

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13 Translation by Richard Ellmann (Ellmann, 1982, p. 664) of Quinet's passage from his *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire de l'humanité*: "Today, as in the days of Pliny and Columella, the hyacinth disports in Gaul, the periwinkle in Illyria, the daisy on the ruins of Numantia; and while around them the cities have changed masters and names, while some have ceased to exist, while the civilisations have collided with one another and shattered, their peaceful generations have passed through the ages, and have come up to us, one following the other, fresh and laughing as on the days of the battles."

stitched into the very fabric of the world it evokes" (Gibbons, 2015, p. xv). In the modern city we hear accents, dialects, and various languages; the city and Joyce's final works are the "panaroma of all flores of speech" (Joyce, 1999, p. 143). The neologism encompasses both the all-distinctive smells ("pan-aroma") and wide and expansive view in every direction ("panorama"); and the Spanish/Portuguese word *flores* alludes to both flowers and flaws. The city hosts a veritable Babel where language conceals and reveals the city's infinite secrets, there is "sintalks" (Joyce, 1999, p. 269) instead of mere syntax, and Joyce's knowledge of various languages unleashes his "verbivocovisual" (Joyce, 1999, p. 341) final book. The fourteenth episode of *Ulysses* is a *tour de force* in making language the main character. Known as the "Oxen of the Sun" episode, it takes place in the maternity hospital on Holles Street in Dublin city, and it is where Bloom spots Stephen with his dubious friends and worries about him enough to follow him, and where we witness the birth, evolution and return to the chaos of language itself. As Kiberd puts it, "'Oxen of the Sun' moves from the chaos of language at its opening to the chaotic medley of words and phrases at its conclusion" (Kiberd, 2009, p. 214). The evolving inventiveness and living contaminated material that is language is at the heart of the city and the *chaosmopolitan*. And as Anthony Burgess writes in his book on Joyce: "The greatest of man's achievements, after language, is the community, and Joyce's Dublin stands for every city-state that ever was" (Burgess, 2019, p. 184).

The cosmopolitan port city of Trieste plays a central part in all this talk of the *chaosmopolitan*. This is the city, "that absendee tarry easty, his città immediata" (Joyce, 1999, p. 228), where Joyce lived for seven years and where he wrote most of *Dubliners*, all of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, his only play *Exiles*, and parts of *Ulysses*. It is where he would befriend the Jewish Triestine writer Italo Svevo (the principal model for Leopold Bloom), teach at the Berlitz English school to students from all over the Hapsburg Empire, and where he would witness the collapse of that decentralized imperial rule and the rise of nationalism and separatism. Colonialism and cosmopolitanism, and de-colonialism and *chaosmopolitanism* often go hand in hand. At the age of twenty-one, Joyce and Nora Barnacle left Ireland at the height of the new Irish Revival and celebration of Yeats' Celtic Twilight of which the urbane Joyce

later sarcastically referred to in *Finnegans Wake* as the "cultic twalette"[14] (Joyce, 1999, p. 344). Joyce seemed to feel at ease in Trieste because of its cosmopolitan yet eccentric feel, being an important port city (at the end of the nineteenth century, Trieste was the world's seventh busiest port, and second after Marseilles in the Mediterranean), its nightlife (as a line in the middle of *Finnegans Wake* goes: "And trieste, ah trieste ate I my liver!" [Joyce, 1999, p. 301]), its rich combination of commerce and culture, its crossroads status between eastern and western Europe, its multitude of languages, the tensions brimming there between empire and nationalism, and its size (not dissimilar to Dublin). Gibbons hones in on the cities that Joyce lived in before Paris: "[...] part of the attraction of Pola, Trieste, and Zurich for Joyce lay in the resemblance of these cities to Dublin, a divided city on the edge of a ramshackle empire" (Gibbons, 2015, p. 25). For a young polyglot, an exile and urbane poet with a sensitive ear, listening to the voices and sounds on the windy streets of Trieste must have been very stimulating. In his book *The Years of Bloom*, John McCourt writes that the language or dialect of "*Triestino* was essentially an inclusive force which, in each of its varieties, embraced different civilizations and became a living encyclopaedia of the cultures, nations and languages that had been assimilated by the city" (McCourt, 2001, p. 52).

This was a city that absorbed both reactionary and revolutionary traditionalism, expatriates and exiles, and which contained strong hints of both fascist and communist movements that would soon turn Europe upside down. Again, McCourt is helpful here as he writes:

> Trieste itself produced a number of writers whose world reveals all the typical stylistic features of Futurism – the destruction of syntax, the presentation of multiple images simultaneously, the abolition of punctuation, the use of "parole in libertà" (the free placing of words) – as well as its thematic obsessions, the conquest of time and space, the refusal of orthodox sexual morality, the celebration of war, of industrialization, of strength, daring and love of danger, of feverish insomnia. (McCourt, 2001, p. 159)

14 As well as the allusion to celtic, cultic and toilet, in French "cul" means "arse", and "toilette" means "dressing".

When we read evocative sentences of Paris in *Ulysses*, Joyce is sometimes thinking about Trieste. In *Ulysses*, he writes: "Paris rawly waking, crude sunlight on her lemon streets". Yet, previously, in his Triestine prose poem *Giacomo Joyce* which he left behind in Trieste, he writes, "Trieste is waking rawly: raw sunlight over its huddled browntiled roofs, testudoform; a multitude of prostrate bugs await a national deliverance" (Joyce, 1968, p. 8 / McCourt, 2001, p. 99).

The maritime spirit of the haunted city is a homecoming or quasi-*nostos* site for a *chaosmopolitan*. That other restless wandering poet and contemporary of Joyce, the heteronym poet Álvaro de Campos (which his creator described as "vaguely corresponding to the Portuguese Jewish type" [Pessoa, 2001, p. 258]), signed off his first three publications with: "March 1914. Aboard Ship in the Suez Canal" (for "Opiary"); "London, June 1914" (for "Triumphal Ode"); and finally, just his name and profession – "Álvaro de Campos, Engineer" (for "Maritime Ode"). These three sign-offs express the restless modernist spirit – of technological innovation; living on a boat; the commercial, cosmopolitan-colonial capital of the world; and the signing of a name and profession that expresses a declaration, a builder of machines, an invention of a persona, and a forgery (in the double sense). Joyce signs off *Ulysses* with "Trieste-Zurich-Paris 1914-1921", and with "Paris 1922-1939" for *Finnegans Wake*. These are European cities of the *chaosmopolitan*, of the exiled modern self; and these are years of chaos and of extreme order trying to enforce new systems that will lead to global carnage. Amidst chaos and cosmos, totalitarianism and anti-totalitarianism, and disintegration and renewal in this age of extremes, the exiled innovator writes and forges his reconfigurations of the city and the self.

3.

THE ART AND EXPRESSION OF THE EXILED WANDERING SELF

The title of Joyce's book of a single day is of course the latinized version of the heroic Greek *Odyssey*; it is set in a defeated, colonized peripheral city of a predominantly Catholic island; its central figure is a Jewish-Protestant "keyless citizen" (Joyce, 2008, p. 650) whose Hungarian father committed suicide, whose wife is committing adultery on that day with his knowledge, and whose only son died after eleven days of being born (ten years ago from

the day *Ulysses* is set); and it is where a frustrated and precocious Stephen Dedalus moodily saunters about, ruminating on Aristotle, Shakespeare and himself, and wondering how to activate his weaponry of "silence, exile and cunning" (Joyce, 1999, p. 269). It is not for nothing that *Ulysses* has been described as the "Bible of universal homelessness" (Slezkine, 2004, p. 79). This is a Jew-Greek-Irish epic: the *chaosmos* and *chaosmopolitan* contains the motif of the Wandering Jew, the maritime Odysseus trying to return home, the culture of diaspora, a lost language and an emerging nation. Deleuze and Guattari's "excluded middle" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p. 22), Gillian Rose's "broken middle" (Rose, 1992, p. xii), and Joyce's "jewgreek is greekjew" (Joyce, 2008, p. 474) are expressed and magnified in Joyce's *chaosmos* and *chaosmopolitan*. The heretical Leopold Bloom is this "broken middle" who carries out acts of kindness "in orthodox Samaritan fashion" (Joyce, 2008, p. 569). See the conscious oxymoron here – as there is nothing orthodox about a Samaritan. Bloom, the advertising agent, has to adapt, and, as a result, is one step ahead of all the other characters in *Ulysses* in terms of curiosity, empathy, tolerance, self-questioning, flexibility, cosmopolitanism and love. Maybe, after all, this quintessential city dweller is the ambiguous figure of possibility and capitalism that Deleuze and Guattari speak of: "The man of capitalism is not Robinson but Ulysses, the cunning plebeian, some average man or other living in the big towns, Autochthonous Proletarians or foreign Migrants who throw themselves into infinite movement – revolution" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 98).

Joyce's cities – Trieste, Zurich, Paris – provide refuge to strangers from foreign lands. On the eve of leaving Dublin forever with Nora Barnacle, Joyce writes to Nora in a letter that he "cannot enter the social order except as a vagabond" (Ellmann, 1982, p. 169). The stranger[15] – from the Wandering

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15 Although there is neither the space or time here to discuss differences between the wanderer, outsider and stranger (which I hope to write about in the future), it is worth at least mentioning Georg Simmel's essay "The Stranger" (*Der Fremde*, 1908) where he differentiates the stranger from the wanderer. The first sentence begins: "If wandering, considered as a state of detachment from every given point in space, is the conceptual opposite of attachment to any point, then the sociological form of 'the stranger' presents the synthesis, as it were, of both of these properties. [...] The stranger will thus not be considered here in the usual sense of the term, as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the man who comes today and stays tomorrow [...]. (Simmel, 1971, p. 143)

Jew to the *chaosmopolitan* – negotiates, adapts, negates and invents his or her identity in hostile territories. In the pub in the Cyclops episode of *Ulysses*, Bloom is mocked and treated with hostility when he says that Ireland is his nation to the jeering bigoted Irish nationalists' questions on whether he knows "what a nation means" and what his nation is (Joyce, 2008, p. 317). At the beginning of *Finnegans Wake*, Dublin appears as "Dyoublong" (Joyce, 1999, p. 13). The urbane Joyce's nomadic home is far off from the rural, bucolic dream of Heidegger's "dwelling"[16] place, in a sense that Joyce's law or *nomos* and the modern city's *nomos* are nomadic, malleable and fluid, and he accepts this and feels at home in voicing the "noise on the street", the "chapter of accidents", the "the new womanly man", and the "nighttown" of the city where "we eat electric light"[17]. His and the city's vitality are always on a wayward pathway to *nostos* without ever achieving a complete reconciliation. Witness the end of *Ulysses* where Dedalus refuses Bloom's invitation to sleep at his home, and instead wanders off directionless into the dark night. There is some reconciliation between Molly and Leopold as he climbs into bed. She thinks of him with love and desire as she finally drifts off into sleep, even though she has had sex with someone else in that same bed earlier that day. It is these weak, unstable reconciliations and unresolved openings in *Ulysses* that angered official Soviet and Fascist critics and the guardians of English literature. Just as many nations, regimes and individuals were suspicious of the "planetary homelessness" of the Wandering Jew, it is central to the fluid, meandering pulse of *Ulysses*.

The Wandering Jew as a mythological symbol of despair in Western civilization really took root in the Middle Ages. The name of Ahasverus

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16 See Heidegger's essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (Heidegger, 1971, pp. 143-161). Heidegger concluded the essay: "Dwelling, however *is the basic character* of Being in keeping with which mortals exist. [...] The real plight of dwelling is indeed older than the world wars with their destruction, older also than the increase of the earth's population and the condition of the industrial workers. The real dwelling plight lies in this, that mortal ever search anew for the nature of dwelling, that *must ever learn to dwell*. What is man's homelessness consisted in this, that man still does not even think of the *real* plight of dwelling as *the* plight? Yet as soon as man *gives thought* to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that *calls* mortals into their dwelling" (Heidegger, 1971, pp. 160-161).

17 See Joyce, 2008, pp. 475; 483; 465; 408; 514.

became synonymous with the Wandering Jew who never finds a place of rest. The motif of the Wandering Jew perhaps has become for many outsiders, revolutionaries, pioneers of art and literature, experimental thinkers in philosophy and science, cosmopolitan vagabonds, and heretics of theology and religion an identity they can feel at home with. George Pattison writes in a chapter called "Cosmopolitan Faces" in his book *Kierkegaard, Religion and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Culture*: "The fate of the Wandering Jew, condemned to a life without end or purpose, has to be seen as the fate of all who bear within themselves the condition of modernity" (Pattison, 2002, p. 95). The motif of the Wandering Jew in modern cities of multiple languages, crossroads and rootlessness is like the fabric of *Finnegans Wake* as a "whorled without aimed" (Joyce, 1999, p. 272). Modernity itself is the age of despair. It is helpful to note here that Kierkegaard, in his early notes (and which he subsequently wove into his published works) chose three mythological figures – Faust, Don Giovanni and the Wandering Jew – as the personifications of doubt and despair for the modern age. It is important to think of "despair" not only from the meaning in the Latin etymology of "without hope" (*de-spero*), but more precisely, in thinking of the challenges of living in the age of information overload and technology, in the etymology of the word in Danish and German (*Fortvivelse* and *Verzweiflung*) meaning literally "too much doubt" (*for-* [too/too much] and *tvivl* [doubt/two] and which Kierkegaard analyses in his masterful late work on despair called *The Sickness unto Death*). Human freedom and anxieties, double-mindedness, recipients of the bombardment of consumer fetish advertising, a Godless world, nomadic lifestyles, an age of acceleration where nothing is permanent, and where the firmament of Kant's starry sky and moral law within are no longer solid, is another prevailing landscape of modernity. And, as Pattison writes, "*Modernity, in an essential sense, is urbanity*" (Pattison, 2002, p. 21). Two critics and innovators of modernity – George Lukács and Martin Heidegger – are situated in opposing political spectrums; yet on the eve of converting to Bolshevism, Georg Lukács captures the state of despair and "transcendent homelessness" in modernity in *Theory of the Novel* in his struggle to find a new meaning to live and die for in the twentieth century (Lukács, 1971, pp. 41; 61; 121); and Heidegger frequently speaks of

"planetary homelessness [*Heimatlosigkeit*]" (Heidegger, 1998, pp. 257-259; Pattison, 2002, p. 244)[18]. More recently, at the end of the twentieth century, the Irish shamanistic philosopher John Moriarty ponders:

> The Wandering Jew is the born outsider. Civilization or culture can never claim him. Even when he is doomed to live within a culture he will not be domesticated by it. [...] Endlessly enduring, he will, given time, adapt to anything man or God can impose upon him. Given time he will adapt to the terrible Kalahari of Cartesian European. He will adapt to the most deeply burning brimstone of the deepest hell. In him totalitarianism, divine or human, runs into its own limitations. (Moriarty, 2014, p. 155)

Returning again to Joyce and that letter to Nora before setting sail for mainland Europe forever, we see the artist declaring his zest for the exiled wandering life, his link to the Wandering Jew whom he will find in abundance in his three cosmopolitan urban homes – Trieste, Paris and Zurich – and nurture into the two male urbane protagonists of *Ulysses* where "Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet." (Joyce, 2008, p. 474):

> My mind rejects the whole present social order and Christianity – home, the recognised virtues, classes of life, and religious doctrines. How could I like the idea of home? […] Now I make open war upon it by what I write and say and do. I cannot enter the social order except as a vagabond. I started to study medicine three times, law once, music once. A week ago I was arranging to go away as a traveling actor. […] I spoke to you satirically tonight but I was speaking of the world not of you. I am an enemy of ignobleness and slavishness of people but not of you. Can you not see the simplicity which is at the back of all my disguises? We all wear masks. (Ellmann 1982, 169)

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18 See also O'Donoghue, 2011. I have written elsewhere on exile and homelessness as conditions of modernity. See, for example, Ryan, 2013; and the sections on "Homelessness" in Ryan, 2014, pp. 81-86; and p. 143.

Joyce says to his friend near the end of his life: "You have to be in exile to understand me" (Ellmann, 1982, p. 693).

Many of the most innovative and influential radical European political philosophers and critical theorists of the twentieth century, and when Joyce was writing *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, were Jewish of some kind. Alongside Lukács, there is Rosa Luxemburg, Walter Benjamin, Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, and Leon Trotsky (who perhaps is the ultimate modern Wandering Jew who was without a visa for the last twelve years of his life). In the same period, modernist writers of Jewish heritage, examples of the "self exiled in upon his ego" (Joyce, 1999, p. 184), include Franz Kafka, Marcel Proust, Joseph Roth, Italo Svevo and Gertrude Stein; while the two totems of a radical new psychology and science were also exiled Jews (Freud and Einstein respectively). Yuri Slezkine's thesis for his book *The Jewish Century* is that the Jewish Age *is* the Modern age, in that what it means to be human in modernity is that we have in all, in a sense, become Jewish in the twentieth century. What he means by this is that it is about "everyone becoming urban, mobile, literate, articulate, intellectually intricate, [...] learning how to cultivate people and symbols, not fields or herds" (Slezkine, 2004, p. 1). In the modern cities and in Joyce's colossal, *chaosmos* works *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, two works created in cities in "the Jewish Century", we begin to learn to decolonize our languages, people, sex, nations, identities, traditions, histories, religions.

But what of the meaning of "jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet"? I will close this essay with just a few remarks which link them to *chaosmos*, the city, and the exiled wandering self or often better to call it a persona, in my overall idea of the *chaosmopolitan*. As another example of the "twosome twimind" (Joyce, 1999, p. 188), Stephen Dedalus, as the jewgreek, is named after St. Stephen – the first Christian (and everyman) martyr; and Dedalus – the Greek artificer who invented and designed the labyrinth for King Minos on the island of Crete, and then later made wings for himself and his son Icarus to escape the labyrinth, but his son flew too close to the sun and his wings melted and he fell to his death. And there is also Leopold Bloom – the modern day Odysseus – now a kind of marginalised jewgreek, whose father was Jewish (which does not really make Leopold even officially half-Jewish), and whose

mother was a Protestant Christian (a group which will soon be marginalised in the newly independent Free State of Ireland). In his book *Demythologizing Heidegger*, John D. Caputo – largely inspired by Derrida and thus also implicitly and explicitly by Joyce, brings up the "jewgreek is greekjew" motif to expose and critique Heidegger's thought which can allude to exclusion, purity and fascist thought. Caputo writes in the introduction that the "jewgreek is the miscegenated state of one who is neither purely Greek nor purely Jewish, who is too philosophical to be a pure Jew and too biblical to be a pure Greek, who is attached to both philosophers and prophets" (Caputo, 1993, p. 6). He explains that "demythologising Heidegger means disrupting this Greco-German myth of Greek purity, the myth of Heidegger's aboriginal and incipient Greeks, Heidegger's private Greeks, who fueled the flames of his private National Socialism" (Caputo, 1993, p. 7). In *Ulysses*, Heidegger couldn't be further away from Leopold Bloom's tastes; Spinoza is Leopold's philosopher of choice to Stephen's (and the early Heidegger's) Greek Aristotle. Spinoza is the seventeenth century Portuguese exile born in the Jewish quarter of the mercantile city of Amsterdam, later excommunicated from the Jewish community, working as an optical lens grinder all his life while producing some of the most remarkable (and heretical) works in philosophy which beautifully epitomized freedom of thought, joy and excellence. He is explicitly mentioned six times[19] in *Ulysses* – all references intimately related to Leopold Bloom. As Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus traverse the chaosmos of the city captured in a single day in the novel, the former seeks to come to the aid of the latter, jewgreek, younger counterpart and poet.

Always haunted by Joyce's work, Derrida concludes his essay "Violence and Metaphysics": "Are we Jews? Are we Greeks? We live in the difference between the Jew and the Greek, which is perhaps the unity of what is called history. We live in and of difference, that is, in *hypocrisy* […]." (Derrida, 1978, p. 320). *Finnegans Wake* revels in these collapsing antinomies and antipathies that disintegrate and reemerge in new forms, as "thisorder" (Joyce, 1999, p. 540), "two thinks at a time" (Joyce, 1999, p. 583), "duasdestinies" (Joyce, 1999, p. 92), and on the first page – as "violer d'amores" (Joyce, 1999, p.

19 See Joyce, 2008, pp. 273; 327; 640; 661; 719; 897.

3)[20] – which can be a musical instrument, violent transgression or betrayal, and an expression of love all in one, much like the exasperating text itself. Perhaps the greatest description of the *chaosmopolitan* as exiled wandering self is to be found in the chapter on Joyce's Shem the Penman where the "twosome twiminds" is expressed:

> "[...] a nogger among the blankards of this dastard century, you have become of twosome twiminds forenenst gods, hidden and discovered, nay, condemned fool, anarch, egoarch, hiresiarch, you have reared your disunited kingdom on the vacuum of your own most intensely doubtful soul [...]" (Joyce, 1999, p. 188).[21]

In conclusion, the idea of the *chaosmopolitan* grafted from Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* is a complex and constantly unfolding and disruptive vision and experience. There are various ways to approach Joyce's two colossal works and, as he said himself on the eighteen episodes that make up *Ulysses*: "The task I set myself technically in writing a book from eighteen different points of view and in as many styles" (Joyce, 1966, p. 167 / Ellmann, 1982, p. 512). In order to conquer time, Joyce is even said to have worn four watches at the same time while writing the book (Kiberd, 2009, p. 230). We have travelled through the clashes, symbioses and interpenetrations of chaos and cosmos that epitomize modernity; and through the cacophonies, symphonies and multiplicities of the city; and finally through the art, experience and expression of the exiled wandering selves in attempting to present this *chaosmopolitan* figure. Stephen Dedalus' question

20 One can also see here the inspiration and influence of the Renaissance philosopher Giordano Bruno on Joyce throughout *Finnegans Wake* in the forging of these neologisms containing opposites. As Joseph Campbell writes on the vision of Bruno (and Hegel's dialectic of world history): "Everything can come to a knowledge of itself only though contrasts with its opposite" (Campbell, 2005, p. 184). Bruno was burnt at the stake in 1600 for professing similar ideas to Joyce. At one point of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus writes: "He said Bruno was a terrible heretic. I said he was terribly burned" (Joyce, 1992, p. 271).

21 An attempt of a translation could be: "a nigger among the white bastards of this dastard century, someone who has developed a dual or conflicting mind, going against the gods, condemned and foolish, containing elements of the archetype of the anarchist, egoist and heretic, and raising up your disunited kingdom upon the void of your own most doubtful or despairing soul".

rears its head again: "What's left us then?" I am suddenly reminded of Jan Morris's exquisite ode to the *città immediata* called *Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere*. Here is a writer who knew a thing or two about local and global living, sexual identities, world wars, haunted cities and an exiled soul. At the end of her love letter to Trieste she comes to the conclusion that it is perhaps kindness that is "the ruling principle of nowhere" (Morris, 2001, p. 186), and that is where "Citizens of nowhere unite" (Morris, 2001, p. 187). McCourt recounts that Joyce once referred to Trieste as a "city of the many kindnesses" (McCourt, 2001, p. 26). This is not some whimsical gesture of hopelessness or sympathy, but rather perhaps is the invisible strength and heartbeat of the *chaosmopolitan* under scrutiny here. Kindness turns up in another polyphonic literary work largely set around one of the darkest and cruelest places of the twentieth century – in apocalyptic Stalingrad during World War II. This is a city that for almost four centuries was called Tsaritsyn, then changed to Stalingrad after its Soviet dictator, and during the de-Stalinization program became known as Volgograd after the river. In his novel *Life and Fate* (which only first saw publication twenty years after his death), amidst the purges, genocides, mass starvation, executions, gulags, relentless battles, merciless freezing winter, and brutality and fear, the author Vasily Grossmann writes of a "senseless kindness" and "an unwitnessed kindness" (Grossmann, 2006, p. 392) that still exists. This is "a kindness outside any system of social or religious good" (Grossmann, 2006, p. 392). It is this kindness that elevates Leopold Bloom (the character that is born and developed in Trieste) above everyone else in the city of Dublin. This everyman in the modern city can breathe life to the *chaosmos* of the senseless kindness "in the orthodox Samaritan fashion". The city of *chaosmos* rises, falls and rises again by the running river; and then the protean river of the "meandertale" begins, ends, and begins again in the city of "lovesoftfun at Finnegan's Wake" (Joyce, 1999, p. 607).

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MORPHOGENESIS OF URBAN SPACE
– THE SCARS OF A CITY[1]

Maurizio Gribaudi[2]

ABSTRACT

Depending on the scale levels and temporal range employed, the morphogenesis of a city is perceived through the dimension of continuity or of rupture. Observed globally and over a wide temporality, the evolution of its main structures (networks of streets, roads, services and monuments) appears as a continuous and linear unfolding. On the contrary focusing on its architectural, institutional or technical dimensions reveals discontinuity. However, in this paper I try to show, by a closer analysis of the dynamics that mark the city of Paris between the Revolution and the Second Empire, that continuity and rupture are one and the same, both aspects of a morphogenetic process that deploys and updates its forms on the front of history. From this point of view, the evolution of a city must be considered less as the expression of the unfolding of a unique structure than as the often-unforeseen succession of forms generated in a context marked by contradictory visions and varying power relations. The forms of a city are therefore marked by the history of the numerous ruptures and discontinuities that have accompanied its development. They also bear the traces of the many dramas and violence that punctuate its past. Even the most careful observer will be able to discover them only by getting closer to the ground of a city, walking its streets.

KEYWORDS

Urban History, Haussmannisation, Morphogenesis, Social Dynamics, Modernity.

1.

PROLOGUE

> The power of a country road when one is walking along it is different from the power it has when one is flying over it by airplane. (…) Only he who walks the road on foot learns of the power it commands, and of how, from the very scenery that for the flier is only the unfurled plain, it calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects at each of its turns like a commander deploying soldiers at a front. (Benjamin, 2003, pp. 447-448)

In the sentence quoted above, Walter Benjamin reminds us of the importance of finding the right posture to grasp the nature of an object in all its complexity. The image of the landscape which reveals the variety of its forms only to the eyes of the hiker is used to suggest the importance of going through a text in the same way, discovering its coherence from the inside by the methodical transcription of every word and sentence assembled by its author.

Benjamin's text is luminous and anyone who practises the art of hiking and who is still able to patiently transcribe the key pages of a book will know how important these remarks are.

But if I evoke this text here it is because, taken literally, the first term of the metaphor suggested by Benjamin fits perfectly with the aporias that we encounter in the analysis of the evolution of urban landscapes.

In this case too, the perception we have of the evolution of a city, of the phenomena that help to shape its forms, the practices of its inhabitants, even the nature of the forces that work on it, change according to the level of scale at which the observer is placed. Thus, if we observe the evolution of a city "from a bird's eye view", that is to say at the scale of its main structures, its road networks and its blocks, which is the case in many works of urban history, its evolution appears as the natural deployment of forms inscribed since its birth. This is what Marcel Poëte suggested in his introduction to urban history in 1929, when he evoked the weight of the shapes of original foundations in the future of a city (cf. Poëte, 1929).[3] Notably, for him, the fact of its being situated by a

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3 Similar readings can be found in several works by architects and urban planners. On

river or on a hill, of being located at a certain height and/or latitude... But also, the nature of the first monuments (camps or castles, palaces or farms) and finally the layout of the main roads that connect it to the outside world. This is to some degree also true, more recently, of the numerous works that analyse urban evolution by basing their conclusions on the measurement and mathematical formalization of these same structures (Batty 2007; Barthelemy 2018).

However, by changing the scale, closer observation over shorter time frames has led other historians and urban planners to focus research on the forms and practices that seem to characterize architectural periods, institutional or technical practices. From this perspective, the emphasis has been placed more on discontinuity and rupture, as recalled in a now classic text by the architect and urban planner Aldo Rossi, for whom, although "it may seem that the permanent nature of the city absorbs all the continuity of urban events, [...] this is certainly not the case, since not everything in the city lasts, or lasts in such different ways that they are often no longer comparable" (Rossi, 1981, p. 57).[4]

Rupture or continuity are obviously not the only axes evoked in these approaches. At both levels, the specific question of determining factors is raised. Whether the forms and practices of a city are fundamentally determined by all-encompassing decisions, capable of imposing a normative vision on the whole of its space, or whether they are rather, through a dynamic of self-organization, the product of a non-programmed collective construction, developing from the interaction between multiple actors.

Despite the pertinence of many contributions, the overall effect of these studies is the segmentation of urban phenomena. Taking up the Benjaminian metaphor, we could say that if, from above, the evolution of a territory appears singularly coherent, observation on a meso-analytical scale produces a fragmentation of a phenomenon into different disciplinary fields, blind to each other.

Spinning out the metaphor, I would like to suggest here that if we try to gain a foothold in the city from the perspective of its actors, we can see that all of these dimensions are present permanently and simultaneously.

the evolution of Paris, cf. for example Chadych, Leborgne and Lebar 2018; Pinon, 2002.

4   My translation.

However, their relative weight and impact fluctuate constantly as a function of ever-changing power relations, which are also the expression of different and sometimes contradictory visions and interests.

The imprint of the original features is certainly fundamental. A city on the seafront will never be able to deploy a radio-centric structure. Traces of the first roads and the remains of ancient monuments, temples, squares, arenas, castles, churches will always exist. In the same way, the sum of beliefs and knowledge coagulated around the practices of an institution, a professional group, the inhabitants of a building, a street or a neighbourhood are also important. But all these characteristics constitute only the weaving of a moving matrix structure. Never stabilized, the configuration of practices and visions that weigh on the city, the questions and actions of its inhabitants, whatever their role, level or social status, are intertwined, opposed and articulated by the constant reinterpreting and reinventing of its forms.

The real continuity that can be observed at a general level in the evolution of a city must be thought of less as the expression of the deployment of a single, fundamentally determined structure than as one of the innumerable consequences that the same structures can generate at each moment of its evolution. Its forms therefore bear the history of the many ruptures and discontinuities that have accompanied its development. They also bear the traces of the many dramas and violence that punctuate its history. The historian will discover them only if he is able to get even closer to the ground of a city, *walking* its streets.

Among the capitals of the western world, Paris is certainly an exemplary case study for observing such dynamics. Despite appearances, its landscape is deeply marked by the ruptures and discontinuities caused by the numerous conflicts and tensions of its history. From this point of view, the period from 1789, date of the Revolution, to 1860, when the city was enlarged to its present borders with the incorporation of the old suburbs, is particularly interesting. In this relatively short time, three revolutions, two coups d'état and some twenty bloody riots broke out, while seven different political regimes succeeded one another, at least three of which carried out intensive interventions on the most intimate fabric of the city.

I will confine myself here to considering the most important elements of continuity and rupture that mark the city during this period. In order to better

grasp them, I will first evoke the macroscopic forms of this evolution. Then I will show how, from the revolutionary period until the 1850s, the urban space was transformed by at least three major forms of intervention that reflect different ways of perceiving the city, of using its resources, of considering its history and imagining its evolution. Finally, without going fully into the content of these practices, I will recall that they also induce the development of antithetical political projects, which in turn engender several choices of urban programming. In this context, the Haussmannian upheavals that closed the period by opening up to contemporary urbanism can be explained as the product of a continuity that is grafted onto part of the city's morphological heritage and, at the same time, as the authoritarian outcome of the conflict which developed over the previous decades on the nature of social space and its forms of political and spatial organization.

2.

FROM THE "BIRD'S EYE VIEW" – THE MORPHOLOGICAL
EVOLUTION OF PARIS BETWEEN 1789 AND 1888

If we observe the evolution of the Parisian road network between 1789 and 1880 on the scale of the entire city, we can read just as easily the characteristic features of continuity as those of rupture. As Marcel Poëte suggested, we find elements of continuity in its older forms. Three of these mark its structure on the threshold of the Revolution: the ancient roads that crossed the city from its origin, ensuring communication with the suburbs and the provinces; the networks of streets, successively opened, which favoured lateral connections within the city; the avenues and boulevards opened in the 17th century that linked sites and monuments of the monarchy and which constituted the royal setting: the Louvre, the *Champs Elysées* and the castles of Neuilly and Saint Cloud; the *Invalides* with the *École Militaire* and so on (Fig. 1a).[5]

5   In Figure 1a are shown the outlines of the walls that surrounded the city between 1787-1859 and 1860-1929. In the first period it was a relatively small (3.24 mt. high), stone masonry enclosure with an essentially fiscal purpose. Supposed to protect the capital in case of invasion, the Thiers enclosure consisted of a wide wall of 80 km punctuated by 95 bastions and protected by several forts. Abolished in the 1920s, its old layout still marks the limits of the city of Paris and the right-of-way of the ring road built in the 1950s.

Formed over several centuries, these ancient roads articulate very different forms and functions, extremely stable, they remain practically intact to this day. We can easily find their traces at successive dates (in red in figures 1b to 1e).

However, even at this level of scale, one can see that the structure of the city's road network is far from stable. The articulation of streets, squares, passages and alleys opened over time shows the presence of at least three phases marked by significant reorganizations of the urban fabric.

A first phase, from the Convention to the Restoration, marked by numerous openings, transformations and subdivisions favoured by the sudden availability of buildings and land nationalized during the Revolution. During this period, there is a significant densification of the built-up area within the *Fermiers Généraux,* the walls that defined the limits of the city until 1860. The road network becomes denser with a dynamic that, at this level of scale, appears purely geometric. Each ridge of the old network generates new branches, giving rise to various shapes depending on the area of the city: complex in the city centre, simple on its edge (Fig. 1c). This deployment intensified under the July Monarchy, doubled by the growth of the suburban area. The city begins to spill out beyond its boundaries and to connect with the surrounding villages. The 1849 map shows it still enclosed within its former limits, but already pushing against the imposing fortifications built by Adolphe Tiers in 1841 (Fig. 1d).

From this date, growth accelerates. In 1860 the city limits widen by integrating all the outlying villages. After the demolition of the Farmers' Wall, the two spaces continued to grow by linking with the network of new avenues opened by Prefect Haussmann.

In the 1871 map, drawn up after Haussmann's resignation and the fall of the Second Empire, the new openings stand side by side with the old structures and seem to fit harmoniously into the evolution of the urban fabric (Fig. 1e). The comparison of the openings between 1849 and 1927 with the main roads of the old town gives a less clear picture. The network of monuments, boulevards and avenues imagined by the Emperor and built by his prefect, spreads through the city by shifting its axis. The framework of the ancient city appears in transparency. A ghost of a distant past, it calls out to us and suggests a less linear story.
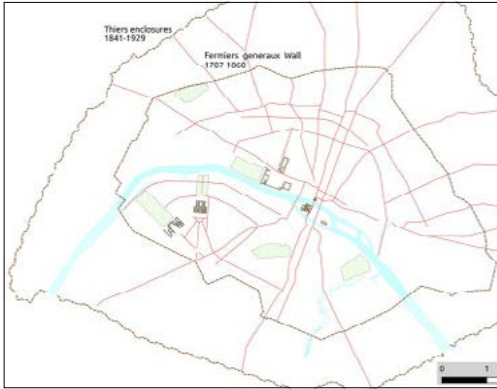
Figure 1a
1789 – main ancient roads
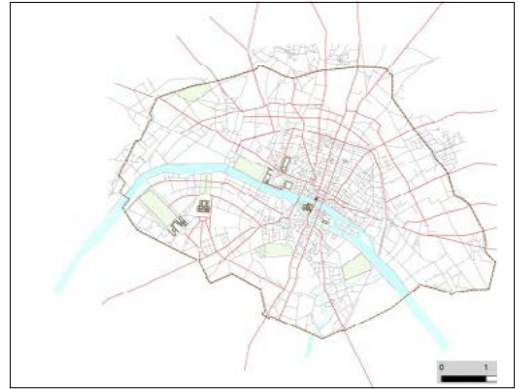
Figure 1b
road network in 1789

Figure 1c
road network in 1836
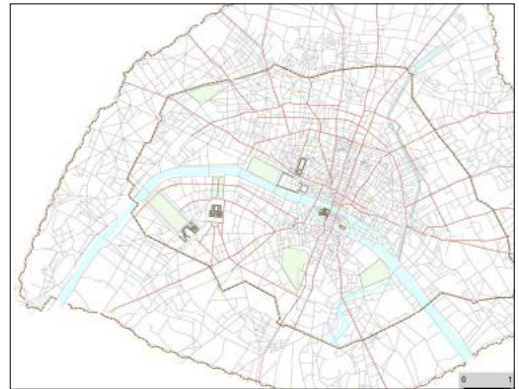
Figure 1d
road network in 1849
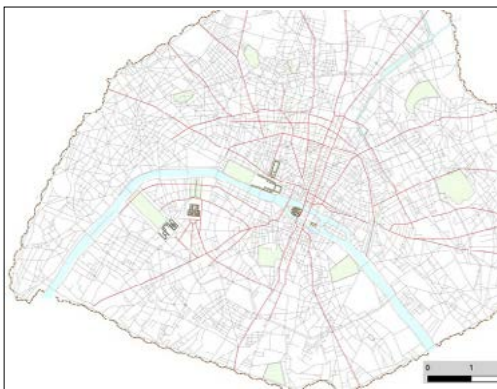
Figure 1e
road network in 1871

Figure 1f
New openings and old roads

3.
"DESCENT" ON THE CITY
– THE REVOLUTION AND NATIONAL PROPERTIES

A major political event, the Revolution was also a major breakthrough in the city's development. To replenish the empty state coffers, the Convention decided to confiscate the properties of the old elites and sell them for the benefit of the Nation. Between May 1790 and July 1793, the properties of the crown, religious congregations, corporations, political emigrants, the Order of Malta, colleges and Jesuits were gradually nationalized. We can estimate the impact of the phenomenon on the city from the map in Figure 2, which shows the areas occupied by the main properties nationalized during this period.

Figure 2
Surfaces occupied by the main national properties in Paris

As we can see, the nationalized properties occupied an extensive area. But to fully appreciate the importance of the phenomenon, it would also be necessary to add the many smaller buildings scattered around the city that belonged to religious communities, hospitals and colleges. All these properties followed the same fate, but a precise and exhaustive census has never been established.[6]

The first impact of nationalization on the structure of the urban fabric was determined by the political situation. As the sale of buildings began, the Republic was threatened by the armies of the European coalition. The National Convention launched an extraordinary plan to increase military production in order to supply the revolutionary armies (cf. Carnot, 1820, pp. 180-207). A large proportion of the nationalized properties was given over to numerous factories intended for the production of everything necessary to clothe, arm and supply an army at war. In several churches, convents and mansions, spinning mills, foundries and tanneries were set up to make uniforms, harnesses, shoes, saddles, as well as firebombs, guns, rifles, helmets and bayonets.

The war effort introduced new and larger factories into the city. But it led also to a first major wave of demolitions in order to supply the production of gunpowder with the saltpetre extracted from the stones of the old buildings.[7] It is difficult to estimate the exact number of buildings demolished for this purpose. While many demolitions occurred under joint pressure from local developers and speculators, it is certain that a first impulse came from the requirement to supply the saltpetre factories with raw materials. Whatever the causes, we know that by the arrival of the allied troops in 1814, 75 of the 117 convents nationalized in 1790 had been totally or partially demolished (cf. Tourneaux, 1900).

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6   For a more in-depth analysis of the sale of national property in Paris, cf. chapter 4 by Gribaudi, 2014.

7   Saltpetre crystals extracted from the stones of old buildings were particularly prized for their quality. Mixed with one eighth of sulphur and one eighth of charcoal, they made one of the best gunpowders available at the time.

4.

TWO MODALITIES OF TRANSFORMING SPACE

Mobilisation and wartime industrialisation marked the face of the city in a way that historians have never been able to perfectly define, but which was certainly not negligible. The demolition of many buildings had involved the dismantling and reorganisation of the freed space and the expansion of industrial production had attracted a large workforce to the city centre by increasing population density. However, the most important transformations took place from the *Directoire* and the First Empire onwards. During this period the sale of national properties accelerated, paving the way for housing speculation. On the one hand, this manifested itself in transactions by groups of private investors, often in conjunction with the state, who subdivided large portions of land freed up by the demolition of national property on the edge of the city centre. On the other, numerous operations were carried out by groups of small or medium speculators who acquired properties nestled in the heart of the old blocks of the central districts in order to restructure them and assign them to new functions.

A clear example of the first type of operation is the opening of the first section of the Rue de Rivoli. Begun under the Consulate and completed at the end of the Restoration, this operation revived a project envisaged as early as the 17th century, but which proved impossible because of the many convents and properties that would have had to be demolished. The nationalization of the clergy's property and the advent of the Consulate modified the situation. From 1801, the convents of the Assumption, the *Capucins* and the *Feuillants*, as well as the Royal Armoury and the *Hôtel de Noailles*, were demolished.

All these buildings were part of the city's older historical heritage and covered an area of 13 hectares (see Fig. 3). The space freed up was divided into lots sold by auction by the estate's management, with the purchasers being responsible for building according to plans and facades furnished by the government architect. The outcome of this operation, extended over three decades, is twofold. On the one hand, an important part of western Paris was redeveloped with wide openings connecting the royal castles to the *grand boulevards* and the *Palais Brongniart*, the new temple of finance then under construction. On the other hand, many speculators are allowed to make investments that would prove

to be very advantageous over the long term. Among the purchasers of the lots, noted in the land register, we found bankers, major suppliers to the army, high-ranking officers of the Napoleonic army, but also some members of the nobility.

Figure 3a
1789 – The convents of the *Assomption*, *Capucins* and *Feuillants*, the Royal Armoury and the *Hôtel de Noailles* according to the Verniquet plan (cf. Verniquet, 1793)
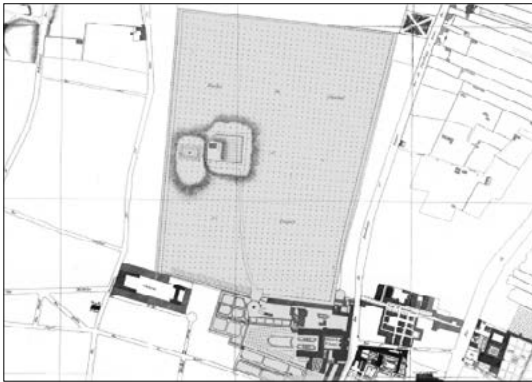

Figure 3b
1836 – The allotment of the streets Rivoli, Castiglione and Neuve Luxembourg with the shadow of the old buildings according to the Jacoubet plan (cf. Jacoubet, 1836)

Similar operations were also launched in other areas of the city occupied by large national properties. On the left bank, for example, the demolition of the convents of the *Visitation de Marie,* the *Feuillantines* and the *Ursulines* allowed the creation of the large allotment of Rue d'Ulm, while on the right bank, several groups of private investors intervened on extensive nationalized plots of land that led to the creation of large allotments. The outcome of all these operations was the redevelopment of wide areas of the urban periphery, giving rise to new districts dedicated to real estate speculation and characterized by a road network with a large and regular mesh.

A good example is provided by the Poissonnière housing estate developed on the thirty hectares of land formerly occupied by the Convent of Saint-Lazare. Begun in 1821 on the initiative of a joint venture involving the bankers André, Cottier and Laffitte, the architect Constantin and the Duke of Bassano, the project was intended to be aesthetically and socially innovative. Deployed on a radial mesh structure, that can be seen in numerous projects developed during the same period on the edge of the city centre, it was explicitly aimed at an affluent population (see Fig. 4 a-d).

Figure 4a
1789 – The convent of Saint Lazare
according to the plan of Verniquet

Figure 4b
1836 – the Poissonnière allotment
with the shadow of the land
and convent of Saint Lazare

Figure 4c
2008 – the Poissonnière allotment with the incorporation
of the northern and eastern stations

Figure 4d
1841 – Place Lafayette (now Franz Liszt)
nodal point of the allotment

The second type of operation is based on the sale of the multiple properties nestled in the dense neighbourhoods of the old city centre. Unlike the previous one, they do not involve the redevelopment of large estates by a group of investors, but the division of properties into several lots that are sold separately and to different buyers.

Cases of this type are numerous. At the outbreak of the Revolution, many nationalized churches, chapels, convents, but also hospitals and private mansions, were scattered throughout the districts of the old city centre. Built for the most part during the Middle Ages, they were surrounded by a dense fabric of houses, often owned by these same institutions, which is why, as early as 1790, the Convention developed an almost surgical model of operating by auctioning off these kinds of properties, piece by piece.

An example is given by the sale of the properties of the convent of the *Filles Dieu* and the gardens of the *Ladies of Saint Catherine* located between the old streets of Saint Denis and Bourbon-Villeneuve (now Aboukir). The *censive,* the cadastral map drawn up in 1772 by the archbishopric of Paris, clearly shows the characteristics of the two properties and the surrounding context (Fig. 5a). Typically for this area of the city, buildings and gardens are totally surrounded by houses of five floors each, many of them built over time by the convents for investment purposes. The properties nationalised and put up for sale from 1789

onwards were therefore numerous but scattered. In the triangle illustrated by the *censive* there are the buildings and gardens of the *Filles Dieu* and *Dames de Sainte Catherine*, as well as twenty-four houses of their property. Inside this space there are also twenty buildings owned by other religious orders, as well as the houses of two expatriates.

Figure 5a
Convent of the Filles Dieu and gardens of the Dames de
Sainte Catherine in 1772
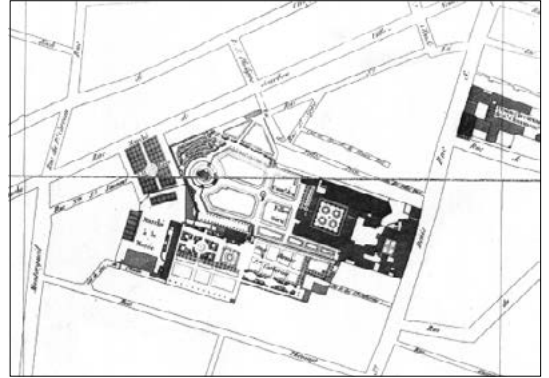
Figure 5b
in 1789

Figure 5c
in 1836

Figure 5d
in 2008 with the shadow
of disappeared buildings

Sales started in December 1790 and were spread over ten years with several interruptions. Without dwelling on these aspects, we can note the physiognomy of the purchasers and the use they made of their acquisitions. In seventy percent of the cases, the buyers were craftsmen or merchants living and working in the same neighbourhood or within five hundred meters. Those who bought a house rented out part as flats and converted the remaining space to accommodate their own activities. Conversion is also the solution for the lots formed in convents, which are totally invested by crafts and tradesmen. The garden of the *Dames de Sainte Catherine* provides a good example: it was occupied primarily by a wholesale wood merchant and then by a carrier of merchandise. In parallel to this population of local buyers, various types of speculators also appear. These were "proprietors"[8], architects and, after 1795, in the atmosphere of economic recovery of the Directory, groups of speculators[9]. This is notably the case of the sale of the monastery buildings and the gardens of the *Filles Dieu*, acquired in October 1797 by the *Caisse des rentiers* and transformed, two years later, into the Passage du Caire, a gallery hosting 101 small properties dedicated to craft activities[10].

In Figure 4c we can see the impact of the transformations carried out by these new buyers. In thirty years, the mesh of the local fabric has thickened. New passages and alleys have been pierced. The garden of the *Dames de Sainte Catherine*, famous for its flowers and vegetables, has disappeared, giving way to a large courtyard in which the coaches and carts of a transport company are parked. The heart of the Convent of the *Filles Dieu* hosts the Passage du Caire while the lateral structures, including the cloister and the old church, have been transformed into depots and rental houses. The same goes for the houses that surrounded the convents.

8   For the 19th century the status of "proprietor" does not only indicate a social position but a real "professional activity" that can be assimilated, in contemporary language, to the real estate speculator.

9   On the division of these assets and auctions, cf. Lazard, 1920.

10 Founded in March 1797 by merchant and notary, the *Caisse des Rentiers* was a private organization that offered to collect funds from Parisian savers to invest them in the purchase of national properties, betting on the increase in their value over a ten-year period.

5.

URBAN FORMS AND SOCIAL PRACTICES

In the preceding pages, I have summarised a more complex process. To be more accurate, it would be necessary to describe in detail each of the two forms of intervention presented. In both cases, we could see a wider range of ways of perceiving, using and transforming available resources. Among the major interventions, for instance, we observe that sensitivities vary depending on the composition of the group of promoters: bankers or contractors, engineers or civil administrators. Similarly, significant differences can be observed for smaller interventions. A property nestled in a down-town neighbourhood will undergo a very different transformation if the acquirer is a merchant, a craftsman, a proprietor or a speculator.

Having said this, the difference between the two forms of intervention highlighted is real and particularly significant. On the one hand, we do indeed see large-scale operations aimed at reorganizing the city, which require the active intervention of groups of promoters able to mobilize large sums. On the other hand, we have more limited interventions that fit into the existing architectural fabric by modifying for the owner's use or for local needs.

Clearly, the two types of interventions attract different populations and encourage different social practices. A large part of the Parisian middle and upper classes settles gradually in the houses built for investment by real estate speculation on the edge of the old city centre. The presence and the way of life of this population attract an impressive number of theatres, cafés, restaurants and fashion stores that provide the framework and unique reference for a model of urban life based on leisure and the consumption of luxury goods.

Widely disseminated from the beginning of the century by a vast self-referential literature, this model was conceived and represented as the most advanced expression of a new European modernity. This was the birth of the "culture of the boulevard", expressed by an anecdotal sociology which, over the course of time, would produce dozens of literary works which, following Walter Benjamin's definition, would come to be known as *panoramic*[11]. But it is also the

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11 The repertory of the main *panoramic* literary works drawn up by the curators of the Musée de Balzac records 153 major works published between 1800 and 1899,

culture of romantic youth, torn between social utopias and economic pragmatism, with its literary fervour and political passions. It is above all the culture of industry and merchandise, with the birth of trade and mass consumption, advertising and the great popular press. In short, the culture of a new modernity that many contemporaries had perceived and recorded as such by transmitting to us an imposing corpus of texts, anecdotes, images, music and objects.

In contrast, in the central neighbourhoods, the transformation and redevelopment of convents, mansions and churches into workshops, rental houses and warehouses encouraged the development of a system of industrial production based on the integration of the work of a large network of workshops, factories and stores located in the same block, street or group of streets. It was nourished by a growing number of highly specialized workers who gradually settled in these already densely inhabited areas, where, at the beginning of the 1820s, more than 60% of the Parisian population was living.[12]

The important concentration of workers within the old city centre naturally encouraged the development of an extremely vivacious sociability and a hitherto unprecedented political project, based on the demand for new forms of work organization and real democratic participation.

Although physically close, the two spaces are thus opposed by the nature of the social physiognomies they housed, as well as by the attitudes they encouraged as to the identity of the city, its structure and its possible future. On the one hand, the model is that of a city enlightened by broad, well-aligned openings and structured by functions. From this point of view, the old buildings in the city centre gradually came to be perceived as a dilapidated and degraded mass that should be completely redeveloped, with only the most important older buildings being preserved. On the other hand, the urban space is thought of in function of its use, which is therefore linked to the adaptation of the old buildings to the forms of work, leisure and sociability of the thousands of workers, manufacturers and shopkeepers working and living in these districts.

54% of which were published in the first half of the century.

12 It is possible to calculate the population of the old city centre only for the first decades of the century, for which we have the figures by district. An estimate, based on partial figures, shows that as late as 1851, these districts were home to 50% of the Parisian population.

It is therefore interesting to note that these two ranges of perception induce practices that activate and develop different elements of the city's morphological heritage. The first are very clearly part of the legacy of royal staging, and result in a broad revival of the forms that marked the articulation of the monuments of the monarchy: a juxtaposition of orthogonal and triangular structures, very often organized around a central axis constituted by a roundabout, a square or a church. These articulations are very clearly visible in figure 6, in which all the streets opened in Paris between 1789 and 1848 are indicated in blue. As can be seen, the new streets opened by real estate speculation are mostly located on the edge of the city centre and constitute a large structure whose shape is the product of various declinations of these same basic elements.
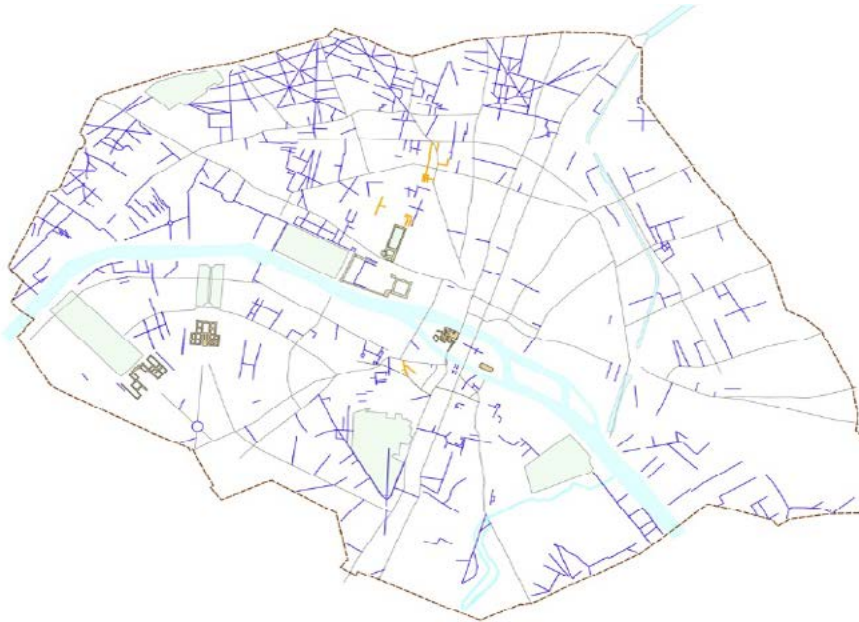
Figure 6
Streets opened between 1789 and 1849

On the other hand, the second perceptions activate and develop the morphological elements specific to the pre-existing building by modifying them according to the new usage to which they are assigned. Old convents, buildings, courtyards and gardens are transformed by vast collective actions that are not programmed but which nevertheless generate a highly coherent space structured around industrial production and worker sociability. The most obvious result of these practices is the progressive densification of the constructed environment, which requires the opening of new cul-de-sacs and passages for access to the interiors of the blocks, while facilitating transversal communications through the dense downtown road networks. Figure 7, in which all the passages, cul-de-sacs and courtyards opened between 1800 and 1849 are marked, illustrates the importance of this phenomenon and the particularity of the forms it generates.
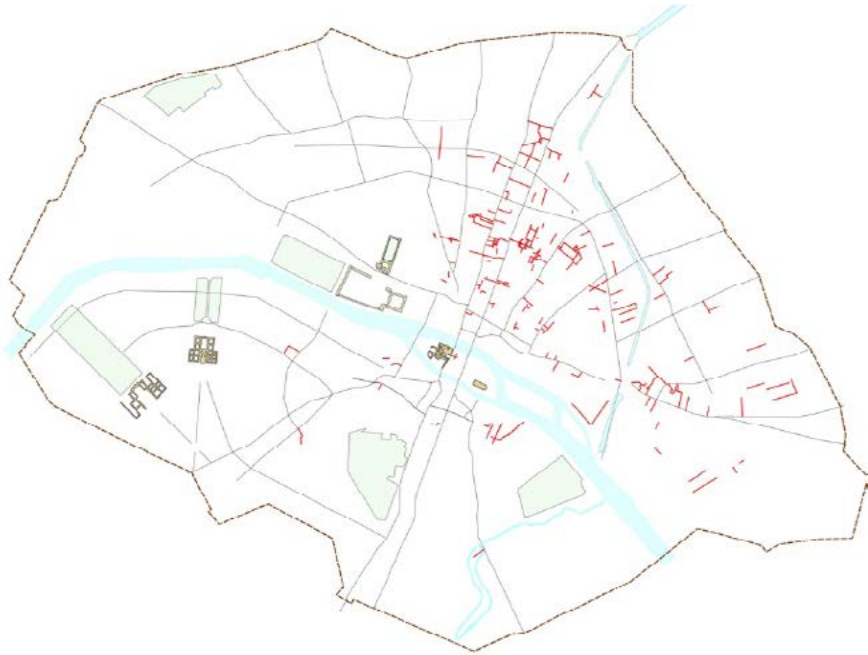
Figure 7
Passages, cul-de-sac and courtyards opened between 1789 and 1849

6.

SOCIAL CLEAVAGES AND MORPHOLOGICAL RUPTURES.

The Paris of the 18th century, known for the physical and social heterogeneity of its old neighbourhoods surrounded by a large ring of religious and aristocratic domains, has thus gradually evolved into a fractured space, largely marked by the opposition between the industrial centre and the bourgeois periphery, between the city of leisure and the city of work, between liberal and social visions.

It is a slow and contradictory trajectory, however. Multiple connexions between the two spaces remain important throughout this entire process. While the upper bourgeoisie has gradually deserted the city centre, many of its trades and workshops remain there. And large areas of communication and sharing remain at the border of the two worlds. Whereas, from the *Madeleine* to the *Porte de Saint Martin*, the *Grands boulevards* have been totally occupied by sites of leisure and the "mise-en-scène" of the bourgeoisie, on the boulevards *Saint Martin* and *du Temple* it is the entire city that meets. In the twenty odd theatres, ballrooms and cafes that have flourished on the *Boulevard du Temple* a population greedy for varied and carefree leisure comes together. They are thrilled by melodramas of passion and crime, but also by pantomimes and circus shows.

Above all, the two worlds meet and cross paths in moments that seem to temporarily suspend social distances, giving place to curiosity. In the numerous *guinguettes* and popular dance halls opened in the 1820s, we also see a bourgeois population that relishes the unbridled strength and vitality that emanates from these places. During this period, we witness the development of musical groups specialized in the production of a particularly deafening and rhythmic ballroom music with an audience success comparable to the phenomenon of rock music in the second half of the 20th century.

It was also during this period that the Parisian carnival revived, surpassing, in the eyes of contemporaries, the hitherto unequalled splendour of Venice and Naples. For years, the week before Lent was marked by a festive outburst that attracted the whole city, reaching a crescendo on Shrove Tuesday with a parade of floats, masks and revellers who, after a night of debauchery in the taverns of Belleville, descended on the city to enjoy one last night of collective madness.

I mention these aspects here because they render one of the features that express the tensions running through the city during the first half of the 19th century. In all the testimonies that speak of the places and moments when the different strata of the population encountered each other, one can feel their strength. They are both positive and negative. On both sides, one notices the attraction and the fear of mixing, in an uncertainty that could open a thousand possibilities. All these tensions smoulder in the city and charge it with a force that more sensitive contemporaries felt rising with fear and fascination. A look that we find in Baudelaire's eyes a few years later when he found in Méryon's illustrations of Paris the city of his youth. A city with architectures "of a spider-web and paradoxical beauty, the foggy sky, full of anger and resentment, the depth of perspectives increased by the thought of the dramas contained therein" (Baudelaire, 1868, p. 335).[13]

"We are dancing here on a volcano, but we are dancing" wrote Heinrich Heine in 1842, quoting the words of the Count of Salvandy on the occasion of a court ball (Heine, 1855, p. 233). At any moment "anger and resentment" can erupt. They do so in numerous riots and revolutions. In my opinion, one of the most telling examples of the contradictory tensions characterising the Parisian "volcano" is the sudden and totally unexpected burst of anger on Shrove Tuesday on February 15th, 1831. On that day, the eruptive forces of the carnival and the riot mingled in an outburst of collective violence sparked by the religious ceremony convened by the legitimist party in memory of the assassination of the Duke of Berry. It was just six months after the Bourbons had been ousted from the throne by the bloody July Revolution. And it was also after four months of hard strikes endured by Parisian workers. In a riot that lasted a whole night and most of the following day, a masked crowd of workers, young republican bourgeois, down-town residents and occasional revellers devastated the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, where the ceremony had been held, and then spread throughout the city, ransacking the archbishopric and several churches.

When studying the changes in the structure of a city, we must therefore take into account the life that pulsates in its bowels. Decisions taken under the pressure of the multifarious demands which arise in a fragmented and shifting horizon of possibilities.

13 My translation.

Only at a micro-analytical scale, by "walking through the labyrinthine Parisian landscape", can one discover the enormous quantity of images that, at any given moment of its evolution, weigh on the perception of conceivable futures. Although it is impossible in this text to evoke them in detail, one can at least imagine their presence through the number, strength and forms of the numerous revolutionary outbreaks that their underground ebullition provoked. There is of course the first revolution of 1789. But it is also necessary to remember the series of tensions that rose to the surface as early as the 1820s, provoking almost annual riots, before causing a major deflagration. The first was the revolution of July 1830, desired and initiated by the liberal bourgeoisie, but won with the fundamental support of the workers of the city centre. It was also a brief moment in which the accumulated tensions seemed to die down, opening up new perspectives. But the cycle began anew. Ever stronger, the tensions returned, bringing new hopes and new projects that fed the whole city.

Unexpectedly, a new explosion occurred in 1848. By the night of February 23rd, the entire city was in the streets. Hundreds of barricades appeared. As in 1830, they grew in the liberal bourgeois areas, as well as in the city centre. Once again, a sense of community seems to have been established between the two worlds. After three days of fighting, a provisional government was formed to prepare the implementation of a republican regime.

"We had the gaiety of a carnival, the look of a bivouac; nothing was as amusing as the look of Paris in the early days" (Flaubert, 1870, p. 91)[14], wrote Gustave Flaubert in *Sentimental Education*, quoting word for word the descriptions left by contemporary witnesses of the atmosphere of joy, of the sudden opening in which the city found itself in the following days.

However, as Flaubert goes on to remind us, the consensual atmosphere that followed the battle lasted only for an instant. It was crushed on the ground of the old opposition between the bourgeois and the working city. The former imagined a republic of law and order, the latter envisaged the establishment of a democratic and social republic. In the feverish atmosphere of the spring of 1848, the various projects confronted each other in an increasingly tense dialogue.

14 The first chapter of the third part is based directly on the descriptions given by Ménard and the Countess d'Agoult (alias Daniel Stern) in their accounts published in 1849; cf. Ménard, 1849; Stern, 1850.

Misunderstood or accused of being unrealistic, and in any case challenged, the workers' project of a Democratic and Social Republic would be fractured in blood on the barricades they erected in June to defend "their republic".

The arc of this evolution and the dramatic rupture that followed could not be better illustrated by the maps of the barricades erected in February and June:
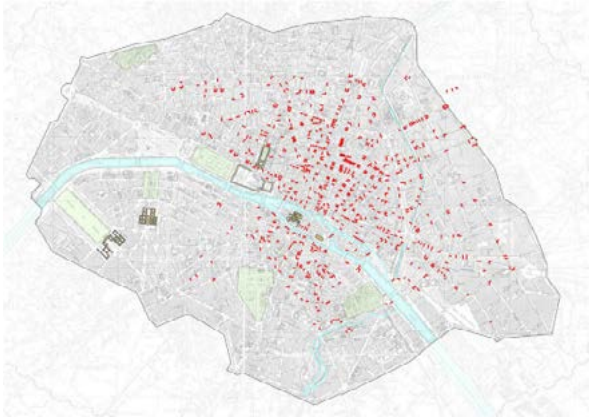
Figure 8
Barricades erected in February 1848

Figure 9
… and in June 1848

Carefully erased from the official memory ever since, the workers' uprising of June 1848 marked the dramatic end of a political movement that had tried to construct a republic based on direct democracy. The repression was fierce. For four days, the army, flanked by battalions of the National Guard from the bourgeois and provincial neighbourhoods and cities, attacked the workers barricaded in the centre and the east of the city. The fighting was fierce. The number of dead was never precisely counted. Official figures give 703 deaths for the "defenders of order" and 3035 for the insurgents. Contemporary testimonies corroborated by recent discoveries suggest that these figures must be more than doubled. They also speak of a considerable number of insurgents killed after the fighting, stabbed or shot on street corners. For more than a week the round-ups in working-class neighbourhoods continued. 1,057 workers were arrested and brought before a military court…

7.
THE SECOND EMPIRE AND THE NEW URBAN MODERNITY

Two years after the June uprising, and having come to power following a bloody coup d'état, Louis Napoleon, supported by Prefect Haussmann, systematically implemented plans for the cleaning and the re-gentrification of the city centre, designed by the most radical hygienists and aldermen over the previous decades.

Twenty years of work completely transformed the structure of the city. Almost all the buildings on the *Ile de la Cité*, the historical heart of Paris, were razed to make way for baroque monuments housing the institutions of the new power: the Police Headquarters, the Chamber of Commerce, the new central hospital and the *Palais de Justice*. Wide openings pierced the fabric of the old central neighbourhoods to make way for broad avenues bordered by long lines of bourgeois buildings. Wherever possible, the streets were straightened, and the land was levelled.

Begun during the Second Empire and continuing during the first decades of the Third Republic, this work was considered by most observers as a necessary and inevitable modernization process. A closer examination of the forms of urban evolution shows that these interventions were above all the expression of political choice, retrieving from the city's complex morphological heritage the features corresponding to a hierarchical and bourgeois reading of the capital. By reproducing the long and wide royal perspectives, Haussmann's urban planning was directly in line with a centralizing vision of power. By switching the focal points of its boulevards from the monuments of the Ancient Régime to theatres, chambers of commerce, train stations and markets, it clearly assigned these forms to the practices and representations of the new elites. Through the scale and nature of the demolitions and openings carried out, through the nature and function of the high buildings, it deliberately broke with the social and morphological evolution of the city centre. A close analysis of the Haussmann interventions shows that the new boulevards, buildings and public monuments rose on precisely those spaces and nodes that had favoured the birth and development of the workers' movement and the project of a democratic and social republic.
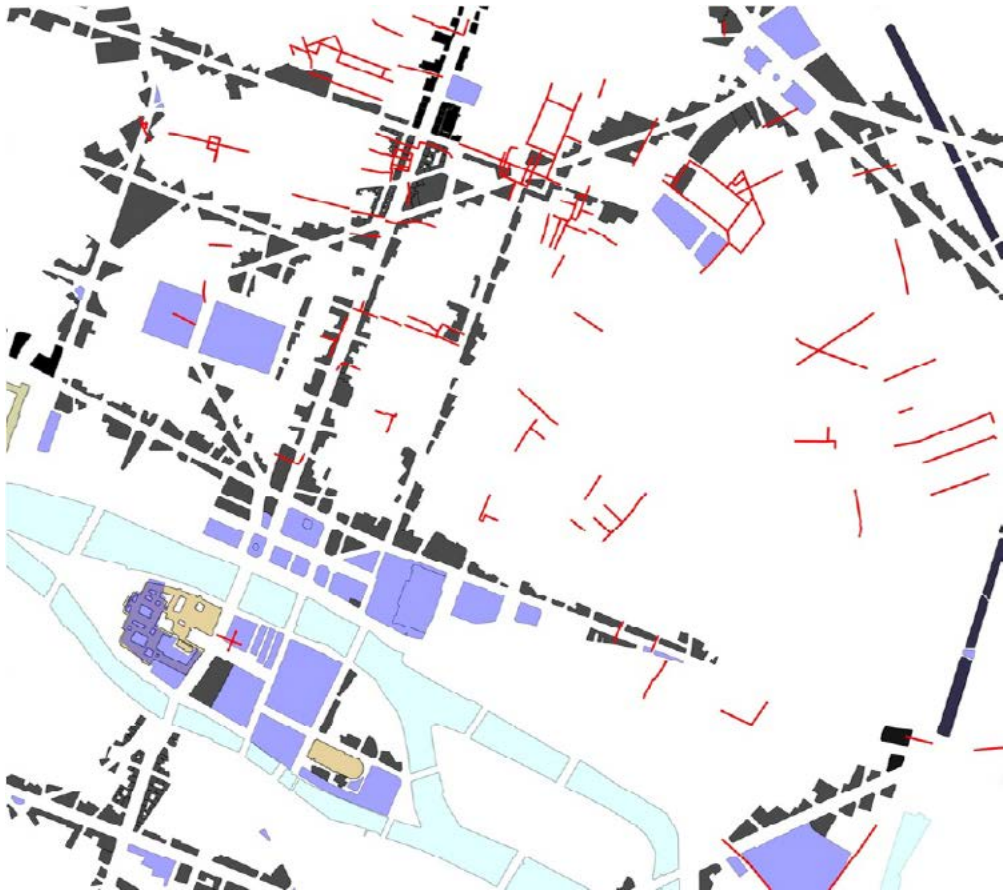
Figure 10
Major buildings constructed after the openings and demolitions in the central area during
the Second Empire – in red are marked the old passages, courtyards and dead-ends

The real continuity inherent to the forms of the city thus appears less as
the necessary result of the deployment of a single original form, than as the
unpredictable consequence of a series of conflicting interventions that read,
interpret and decline the forms of urban building according to different
perceptions and intentions. By designating the rectilinear forms of Parisian
morphology as the main elements of the city's identity, the Haussmannian reading
aims to establish itself as a direct descendant of the great royal developments. In
so doing, it blocks the development of any alternative reading and intervention

on urban structures. Of the complex forms and practices that characterized and animated the space of the old city centre, only a few disjointed vestiges remain, whose original logic, now illegible, is in turn redefined by a heritage reading adapted to the demands of power.

The new forms induce also the re-actualization of the image of modernity by recuperating and amplifying the dimensions of a sophisticated city already present in the culture of the boulevards. However, this revival takes place through the rigid and ostentatious translation of the social strata that have joined the imperial adventure. The new boulevards no longer have the sinuosity of the old ones, but are deployed in straight lines, as are all streets and avenues. The new buildings succeed one another in perfect alignment, their facades heavily adorned with stuccoes and other embellishments.

In spite of the wall of silence imposed after the coup d'état, several contemporaries expressed their criticism. In their eyes, the new face of the city erased the fundamental features of its deeper identity. They regret the loss of a city open to the unexpected, marked by ever-changing assemblages of streets, alleys, courtyards and squares. They complain of the new geometry imposed on the development of a city "administered by surveyors and centralised in the hands of an inflexible bureaucracy" (Fournel, 1865, p.14).

These criticisms were numerous, but it is well-known that the new city had, and still has, many enthusiastic admirers. In this context, it becomes impossible to describe the terms of a very broad and complex debate correctly. I would just like to underline that, on the one hand, we have attentive observers such as Baudelaire, Heine, Marx, Benjamin and Kracauer, who saw, in turn and at different times, in the Paris of the Second Empire the depiction of a farce, the construction of an operetta society and the formation of a phantasmagorical city generating alienation[15]. While on the other hand, equally numerous, the defenders of the Haussmann city read in these same forms the first and most perfect application of a restructuring model, which allowed old towns to move into modernity based on international trade, mechanical transport and the integration of hygiene into the urban structures.

I hope that I have been able to show that a morphological vision based on a close analysis of urban dynamics makes it possible to see that, in any

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15 Cf. Marx, 1928; Heine, 1857, p. 343; Benjamin, 1997; Kracauer, 2018.

case, the forms of evolution of a city are always the unpredictable product of choices which are made at every moment in a context of tensions and marked by variable power relationships. There is therefore continuity in the evolution of a city. However, this continuity is only provided by the way in which the city comes to terms on a daily basis with the turns and breaks which mark its history.

Although well buried, past dramas have left their mark. As a foreigner, living in Paris for forty years, I confess to thinking that the heavy Haussmann aesthetic is largely responsible for the suffering of many Parisians.

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THE PRODUCTIVE DISORDER
OF THE ATLAS

Nélio Conceição[1]

ABSTRACT

In *The Arcades Project*, Walter Benjamin suggests that a kind of "productive disorder" is the canon of both the collector (*Sammler*) and involuntary memory. This chapter investigates how this "productive disorder" can apply to the conceptual figure of the atlas. Following closely – although with some detours – Georges Didi-Huberman's *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science* and its characterization of the atlas as a visual form of knowledge, it explores a thought space in which fragmentation and reconfiguration emerge as fully operative notions. The different sections complement each other and unfold the "essential dialectic" of the atlas: on the one hand, a materialist dimension linked to the sovereign individuality of things; on the other hand, a psychic dimension linked to association, memory and imagination. The atlas takes part in a struggle against dispersion and chaos and makes productive certain principles of observation linked to morphology and physiognomy. In addition, it entails various forms of exercise related to aesthetic and political issues, to *correspondances* and to the infinite interplay between childhood and adulthood. Two features make up the ambivalence of the atlas and threaten its productivity: the risk of the ever-new and the risk of forgetting the ragpicker (*Lumpensammler*), a figure whose spirit of "collection" becomes an intrinsically economic and urban matter.

KEYWORD

Atlas, Productive Disorder, Exercise, Involuntary Memory, Childhood and Adulthood.

1.
PRODUCTIVE DISORDER(S)

> Everything we call invention, discovery in a higher sense, is the significant practice [*Ausübung*], activation of an original instinct for truth, long developed in secret, which suddenly and at lightning speed turns into a fruitful perception.
>
> Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections*, 416.

Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* (*Das Passagen-Werk*) is an unfinished work of philosophy of history that delves into nineteenth-century Paris in order to apprehend the features and ambiguities of modernity in its complex relation to the ancient and the present. It consists of a massive collection of quotations and insightful remarks organized thematically in convolutes, the latter bringing order to the seemingly scattered elements and allowing one to more easily detect connections and affinities between them – not only across specific convolutes, but across the entire volume. It is thus a project that is open to countless interpretations and whose fertility extends far beyond the thematic and formal scope envisaged by its author.

Convolute H focuses on the figure of the collector. One of its remarks suggests that a kind of "productive disorder" is the canon of both the collector (*Sammler*) and involuntary memory (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 211 [H 5, 1]). It is important to stress that central figures of *The Arcades Project*, such as the collector, the allegorist and the *flâneur*, are touched "by the confusion, by the scatter, in which the things of the world are found" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 211 [H 4a, 1]). Hence, this scattered state of things can be considered a condition for the emergence of the productive element. In other words: disorder becomes productive if one confronts it directly and "takes up the struggle against dispersion" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 211 [H 4a, 1]). The three figures – collector, allegorist and *flâneur* – reveal a heightened capacity to take up this struggle, and apart from their differences this binds them together. The collector rescues objects from their previous function and from their commodity character,

introducing them into a new and magical world with laws of its own. The allegorist takes things out of their context, transforming them into a fragment that initiates an unpredictable process of meditation. The *flâneur*, part stroller, part detective, deals with the countless stimulations of urban life, reacting in his own rhythm and observing details that reveal the ambiguous confluence of the archaic and the modern in the industrialized and ever-changing city of Paris.

The heightened capacity to counteract disorder is not far removed from the qualities of the physiognomist's gaze, and at times Benjamin uses the semantic field of physiognomy to characterize the task of both the materialist historian and some of the pivotal characters of *The Arcades Project*.[2] Despite the seemingly "dispersive character" of the latter, several of its quotations and remarks were used as source material in important (and finished) essays on Charles Baudelaire, Franz Kafka, Eduard Fuchs, and photography, to name just a few, and even in short stories such as "The Lucky Hand", an enigmatic tale that touches upon another ambivalent figure of modernity: the gambler. Gambling can be conceived of as a "decayed form of divination" (Dolbear, Leslie and Truskolaski, 2016, p. xxix), and, in fact, a theme that underpins the remarks on gambling in *The Arcades Project* and "The Lucky Hand" is the intuitive presence of mind that involves subliminal bodily knowledge. Gambling, although spoiled by money, is a concrete school for this gift, which in its own way deals with chance and disorder – and, against and through them, allows one to make a successful move.

There are several theoretical gateways to the themes of dispersion, disorder and chaos. Philosophy itself, and the manifold concepts that form its history, can be understood as an attempt to deal with them. A good example is to be found in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's definition of the plane of immanence in *What is Philosophy?* If philosophy consists in the creation of concepts, the plane of immanence is the very instituting of philosophy. Although pre-philosophical, it "does not exist outside philosophy" but "implies a sort of groping experimentation[,] and its layout resorts to measures that are not very

2   For instance: "To write history means giving dates their physiognomy" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 476 [N ll, 2]. And: collectors "are physiognomists of the world of things" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 207 [H 2, 7; H2a, 1]). This physiognomic strand equally applies to Benjamin's overall approach to the urban as a space whose traces can be read and deciphered. On this subject, see Gilloch, 1996, pp. 5-7.

respectable, rational, or reasonable" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 41). It operates by sectioning chaos and "acts like a sieve":

> Chaos is not an inert or stationary state, nor is it a chance mixture. Chaos makes chaotic and undoes every consistency in the infinite. The problem of philosophy is to acquire a consistency without losing the infinite into which thought plunges (in this respect chaos has as much a mental as a physical existence). (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 42)

According to this framework, and relying on Jean-Pierre Vernant, the Greek Logos is characterized as a seminal "plane-sieve", i.e. the first philosophical response "to conceive of a strict immanence of Order to a cosmic milieu that sections chaos in the form of a plane" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 43).

How do these different motives – the productive disorder and the struggle against chaos – converge in the conceptual figure of the atlas? In *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science*,[3] Georges Didi-Huberman makes use of the Deleuzian and Guattarian notion of "sections of chaos" when referring to Aby Warburg's seminal *Atlas Mnemosyne*, an iconographic project by the German art historian that brings together, in the same plates, images from different epochs and styles, creating a montage of heterogeneous elements (see Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 153). In a more general way, one may concede that there is "an unexpected complicity – of the kind that particularly worries philosophers descended from Plato – between classification and disorder or, if we prefer, between reason and imagination" (Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 42). This remark stresses that the atlas form potentiates the tension and complicity between the classificatory arrangement and the possibility of the constant rearrangement of things by way of montage. Moreover, in several respects, this process resembles ancient practices of divination. Although seemingly irrational in the light of a rationalist conception of science, these practices are devoid neither of a spirit of ordering and classification, as anthropology has shown for decades, nor of the capacity to integrate sensible things and their intelligible relations, however "primitive"

3   Written on the occasion of an exhibition designed for the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in 2011.

they may seem (see Didi-Huberman, 2018, pp. 34-46). Besides these practices, there are gestures in gambling that resemble those that potentiate the "heuristic configurations" of an atlas:

> To shuffle and to redistribute cards, to disassemble and to reassemble the order of images on a table to create "quasi-divinatory" heuristic configurations, that is, which are capable of glimpsing the working of time in the visible world: Such would be the basic operating sequence for any practice that we call here an *atlas*. (Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 48)

Strictly speaking, making an atlas is not equivalent to making a collection (nor is it equivalent to creating philosophical concepts), but the activity of collecting and the mechanisms of its "productive disorder" add important elements to the theoretical elaboration of this conceptual figure. An atlas, like a collection, results from and is indicative of a tendency to arrange things according to their correspondences, and at the core of this tendency lies an acute awareness that things in the world are in a state of dispersion. This is a variant of a general struggle with different names and different forms, a "*struggle against chaos* [that] does not take place without an affinity with the enemy" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 203). As for the productive disorder of the atlas, which often merges various disciplines and forms, Aby Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne* can be considered a shining example (this is further developed in section 4 below).

On the other hand, it is not by chance that Didi-Huberman connects the themes of dispersion, disorder and chaos to both the philosophical-historical endeavour of *The Arcades Project* and the methodological principles of Goethean morphology. Which features of the latter allow for this connection? First and foremost, the principle of polarity and the need for organization that can be related to certain principles of observation, comparison and ordering. Putting these principles into practice can offer a glimpse, a point of access, if only momentary, into that which is a primal phenomenon (*Urphänomen*) in them and which is intrinsic to the singular occurrences and the laws that guide their metamorphosis. Moreover, it is a process that knows no end. On this topic, Maria Filomena Molder recalls Johann Wolfgang Goethe's description of the link between authentic

theory and "the inexhaustible life of each and every thing: 'on a daily basis, more relations between the things and ourselves are found, there is always something, coming from things, which awakes in us. I mean, things are infinite'" (Molder, 1995, p. 290).[4] In the first place, the heuristic principles of morphology respond to this "excess of forms" through a description of each singular thing that should avoid any determination that is exterior to it; in the second place, they respond by relating it to the whole. And since a sensitive gaze and the use of memory are not enough to achieve this, the conjunction of comprehensive intuition (*Einsehen*) and judgement (*Urteil*) becomes necessary (see Molder, 1995, p. 220). A delicate form of empiricism (*zarte Empirie*)[5] is the basis for a theory that is intrinsically linked to facts. At the same time, this method allows for the discovery of affinities between the diverse manifestations of the singular.[6]

It is beyond the scope of the present chapter to thoroughly explore the fertility of morphological concepts, but it is symptomatic that Didi-Huberman takes them as one of the main theoretical resources for reflecting on the atlas form. Apart from the aspects mentioned above, he stresses the morphological character of the polarities – between *astra* and *monstra* – and the affinities between images that are made manifest in the montages of Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne* (see Didi-Huberman, 2018, pp. 116-138).

Let us now return to the entry from *The Arcades Project* mentioned at the very beginning of this section, which relates collection and *mémoire involontaire* by way of productive disorder. Benjamin refers to a passage from Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*:

4   The quotation at the end of this excerpt comes from a conversation that Goethe had with Riemer on 2 August 1807. As with all other quotations in this chapter that do not refer to an existing translation, the translation is my own.

5   Maxim 565 reads: "There is a delicate form of empiricism which enters into the closest union with its object and is therefore transformed into an actual theory" (Goethe, 1998, p. 75).

6   Benjamin mentions that his project on "the origin of the forms and mutations of the Paris arcades from their beginning to their decline", grounded mostly in economic facts, owes a lot to morphological notions, and he compares the unfolding "of the arcade's concrete historical forms" with a leaf that "unfolds from itself all the riches of the empirical world of plants" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 462 [N 2a, 4]). This entails a transposition of the concept of "primal phenomena" from the domain of nature to that of history. On this transposition, see Molder, 2020.

"And I had already lived long enough so that, for more than one of the human beings with whom I had come in contact, I found in antipodal regions of my past memories another being to complete the picture. […] In much the same way, when an art lover is shown a panel of an altar screen, he remembers in what church, museum, and private collection the other panels are dispersed (likewise, he finally succeeds, by following the catalogues of art sales or frequenting antique shops, in finding the mate to the object he possesses and thereby completing the pair, and so can reconstruct in his mind the predella and the entire altar)." Marcel Proust, *Le Temps retrouvé* (Paris), vol. 2, p. 158. The *mémoire volontaire*, on the other hand, is a registry providing the object with a classificatory number behind which it disappears. (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 211 [H 5, l])

Two aspects of this piece are deserving of attention. The first concerns the pivotal role played by objects in collecting and involuntary memory; in both of them, and contrary to what occurs in voluntary memory, objects do not disappear behind a simple "classificatory number". Another entry in *The Arcades Project* goes in this direction, as the collector and remembrances of the solitary are said to imply a "tête-à-tête with things" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 866 [Q°,6]). In remembrance we are alone with things that, over time, are silently ordered around us, forming the invisible threads that bind them together and that we might one day be capable of apprehending. A few lines after the piece quoted by Benjamin, Proust adds that these invisible threads are also linked to the different roles a person or an object has played in our lives. He then concludes:

If after an interval of several years I rediscovered in my memory a mere social acquaintance or even a physical object, I perceived that life all this while had been weaving round person or thing a tissue of diverse threads which ended by covering them with the beautiful and inimitable velvety patina of the years, just as in an old park a simple runnel of water comes with the passage of time to be enveloped in a sheath of emerald. (Proust, 1993, pp. 416-417)

Not only does the unfolding of these roles played by persons and objects require time, but all this has, for Proust, the quality of oneiric images. Benjamin doesn't further develop the reasons behind the proposed kinship between collector and involuntary memory. Nonetheless, the passages that explicitly or implicitly point to productive disorder and the role objects play in it seem to be the glue that holds this kinship together. In this Proustian context, it also accounts for the working of time – and of forgetfulness and recollection as the two poles with which life silently weaves its "diverse threads".[7]

Secondly, the art collector and the one who remembers are not given the ability to find the beings and objects that complete each other from the outset, as this can only be achieved after one lives "long enough". Whether this ability is ever attained is another question, but it nonetheless seems to presuppose a particular kind of life experience, and not so much a specific and quantifiable age (more on this in section 5).

The different aspects of the "productive disorder" seen until now can be brought together around two key features of the atlas, which Didi-Huberman, in the wake of Benjamin's work on memory, collection and the world of images, pinpoints as its "essential dialectic": on the one hand, a materialist dimension linked to the sovereign individuality of things, to the attention demanded of us by the endlessness of phenomena; on the other hand, a psychic dimension linked to association, memory, the magic of play and imagination (see Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 63). The following sections will unfold this "essential dialectic" and various forms of the "productive disorder", some of them already outlined above.

2.
ATLAS AND EXERCISE

A particular use of the term atlas by Walter Benjamin allows new aspects of this conceptual figure to be developed. In "Little History of Photography", August Sander's portraits of German society in the first decades of the twentieth century are described as follows: "Sander's work is more than a picture book:

7 For an interpretation of Proust's *Recherche* as a Penelopean work in which recollection and forgetting are interwoven, see Benjamin, 1999d, pp. 237-238.

an exercising atlas [*Übungsatlas*]" (Benjamin, 1999b, p. 520).[8] The "very impartial" but "delicate" form of observation they entail can be considered an heir of Goethe's "delicate empiricism [*zarte Empirie*]" (Benjamin, 1999b, p. 520), i.e. an observation that gives objects a central role.[9] In addition, Sander's work also belongs to a physiognomic tradition and, in particular, to the way cinema and photography depicted anonymous faces. Yet there is more to this:

> Work like Sander's could overnight assume unlooked-for topicality. Sudden shifts of power such as are now overdue in our society can make the ability to read facial types a matter of vital importance. Whether one is of the Left or the Right, one will have to get used to being looked at in terms of one's provenance. And one will have to look at others the same way. (Benjamin, 1999b, p. 520)

The physiognomic character of Sander's work unfolds in two essential themes: on the one hand, it concerns reading faces, bodies and the social context (often professional) immobilized in each of the portraits; on the other hand, and concomitantly, it concerns a practical purpose that is social in nature, appropriate to a time of rapid political change and growing racial tensions. Benjamin realizes that the physiognomic question might be the order of the day, but not as a pseudo-scientific revitalization of the positivist approaches developed in the nineteenth century, often with a simplistic reading of the relationship between the exterior (the traits of the person) and the interior (personality, moral characteristics). Rather, it is a matter of attending to a particular social and historical moment. By and large, Sander's work belongs to a Western physiognomic tradition whose main roots are to be found at the end of the eighteenth century, in authors such as Lavater and Goethe, and which in the first three decades of the twentieth century gained renewed impetus and even a social field of action that went far beyond the simple search for a correspondence between anatomical features and the internal characteristics of individuals (see Somaini, 2015, pp. 87-96). In this sense, as

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8 Translation slightly modified.

9 For a broader account on this topic, see my "Images to Exercise Ourselves. Morphology between August Sander's Photographs and Gerhard Richter's *Atlas*" (Conceição, 2013).

Antonio Somaini points out, Goethe's morphology, and in particular the assertion that "Everything factual is already theory" (Goethe, 1998, p. 77), helped to renew physiognomy in the sense that the surface, the phenomenal manifestation, dissolves the fallacies of the relationship between interior and exterior. On the other hand, the "exercising atlas" responds to a tradition in the field of children's literature with a pedagogical goal, developed over the centuries and particularly since Johann Amos Comenius's *Orbis Pictus*, from 1658 – a tradition that explored not only various areas of knowledge but also different forms of presenting textual and visual data. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the atlas *Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft* (*Society and Economy*), published in 1930 by Otto Neurath and Gern Arntz. Illustrating the state of affairs of the world in different areas, it stemmed from previous experiments in graphic design, thus providing an album whose images could be "rearranged in different configurations" (Somaini, 2015, p. 100).

Whether or not Benjamin's interpretation was directly influenced by this second tradition, Sander's work, ordered in series with a view to a very particular social typology, contributes to a pedagogy of the gaze that is invested with the aesthetic and socio-political potentialities of documentary photography – at the threshold between art and science. Sander's atlas is infinite, as is the task of visually ordering the scattered elements of society, a relentless exercise whose goal is not given beforehand but rather demands a bold and delicate form of observation.

Childhood is the age of exercise (*Übung*, also translatable as *practice* or *training*) *par excellence*, and in Benjamin's work it is often associated with the mimetic faculty and with play. But to trace the presence of this notion in his early work, one needs to consider a collection of notes entitled "Learning and Exercising" ("Lernen und Üben"), in which the progress of learning is associated with continuity, and exercising with a discontinuity that comes about suddenly. The latter is not a form of acquiring knowledge but the acquisition of the ability (*Fähigkeit*) to have it at one's disposal. In this sense, it corresponds to an intuitive understanding/insight (*Einsehen*) rather than a having (*Haben*) (Benjamin 1991, pp. 77-78).

Besides, exercising, as painters and jugglers well know, has much to do with the repetition of gestures that allow the body to attune its own mechanisms, a repetition that demands pausing and intervals. In this respect,

the juggler Rastelli is the main character of a thought-image (*Denkbild*) that is a little treatise on the virtues and secret mechanisms of exercising (Benjamin, 1999e, pp. 590-591).

By evoking a link between exercise and physiognomy, Benjamin is drawing attention to a "matter of vital importance" that has to do with the historical tensions of his time, but also with the importance of a type of knowledge that is linked to practical life. In "Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm", Carlo Ginzgurg describes an epistemological paradigm that connects venatic lore, the history of medicine, the analysis of certain details in works of art, psychoanalysis, detective stories and divination practices. It is a "conjectural knowledge" that also has deep roots in practical life (see Ginzburg, 1989). After establishing the necessary differences between the various domains and the developments that some of them underwent throughout the nineteenth century – moving closer to a positivist approach that understands traces as evidence within the framework of societies of control – Ginzburg poses a question about the scientific character of "conjectural knowledge": is the precision sought by the scientific and quantitative approach important for everyday life? In fact, there are situations in which the "flexible rigour (pardon the oxymoron) of the conjectural paradigm seems impossible to suppress" (Ginzburg, 1989, p. 124). Physiognomy is a good example of this, and in particular the term *firãsa*, a complex notion that was the basis of ancient Arabic physiognomy, implying the use of clues in order to draw a connection between the known and the unknown. Though reluctantly, Ginzburg uses the term "intuition" to describe what is at stake here. *Firãsa* has less to do with any mystical intuition or modern forms of irrationalism, however; rather, it is a "low intuition" based on the senses, implying various forms of life and bringing the human animal closely together with other animals.

Apart from Lavater's naturalistic endeavour and later tendencies that would couple it with phenomena such as eugenics, physiognomy's history is a much more complex issue. Arabic physiognomy, whose roots are prior to its contact with the Greek tradition, had two impulses at its origin: the naturalist impulse, linked to medicine, and the astrological impulse, linked to divination. More than a science, *firãsa* was an art, an exercise of the gift of judging a person on the basis of external signs, "a practice of the *glance* and the art of *detail*" (Courtine and Haroche, 1997, p. 31). This exercise demanded an experienced

gaze and had eminently practical purposes, linked to justice, commerce, sexuality and, sometimes, to predicting the future.

The multitude of faces that compose the ebb and flow of big cities, in a mass movement that makes it difficult to perceive identities and singularities, offers new challenges and new functions to this physiognomic heritage. Nineteenth-century metropolises clearly strengthened and further entrenched the notion that social conditions can have an impact on faces and expressions, and the popular Parisian novels called physiologies are a seminal testimony to the attempt to decipher urban traits. Prior to this, however, ancient practices connected to daily life presuppose that the ordinary man is a physiognomist without knowing it whenever this exercise of the gaze is used to choose one's company, and whom to avoid (see Courtine and Haroche, 1997, pp. 32-33). Thus, it would be no exaggeration to say that Sander's atlas enters fully into a social and political game of differentiations and precautions, of choices and warnings. Benjamin's essay on photography, published in Germany in 1933, foresaw it as an atlas for an endangered daily life.

3.
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL EXERCISES

> *The narrator*. – He who narrates something soon reveals whether he is doing so because the subject interests him or whether by doing so he hopes to arouse interest. In the latter case he will exaggerate, employ superlatives and the like. He will then usually narrate badly, because he is thinking not so much of the subject as of himself.
> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, § 343

This singular relationship between exercise and the conceptual figure of the atlas raises yet another question: who is given the chance to make an atlas? On the one hand, we can be detached spectators and researchers of the aesthetic forms and theoretical aspects of the "productive disorder"; on the other hand, we can be an active part of its elaboration, each time we actively take on – from within – the task of putting into practice and reorganizing an atlas according to our interests.

On 20 February 2019, I held a seminar that was the basis for the present chapter, risking what I called at the time "my exercise with the atlas". Having worked on different occasions on the atlases of August Sander, Gerhard Richter and Aby Warburg, the time had come to set my own productive disorder in motion under the guise of montage. The autobiographical part of the seminar was tied to a particular constellation of names, places and objects related to the cities in which I was born and grew up, between Germany and Portugal, and crystallized in the *Neue Weltatlas* (*New World Atlas*) that my parents still have in their bookcase, a constellation that cannot be reproduced here. Two years on, its dreamlike character seems to have vanished, or perhaps to be hiding in a secret place. But the tensions brought up by the preparation of the seminar led to the formulation of three heuristic principles.

The first principle is that the most important thing is not the truthfulness of the narrative but the way the selected clues and objects of the past are combined – interwoven, to recall Proust's "invisible threads" – with narrative elements, establishing a game of resonances that is projected into the present. My personal indifference towards the *Neue Weltaltas* was interrupted by a gesture of fragmentation: fragments were torn from it and set a reconfiguration in motion. Its cartographic, social and economic character did not disappear but was combined, as it were, with the aesthetic powers of memory and imagination.

The second principle is that the names of cities, places and streets, as well as certain people's names, acquire a specific connotation for each of us, and it is symptomatic that the cities we know by heart rarely seem to be the cities that others know by the same name. Proust shows this in a subtle way: the names of cities and places – some unknown by the narrator – that populate the *Recherche* are loaded with expectations and fantasies built on fragmentary information. On the other hand, urban places, like objects, can ignite remembrance and the power of evocation. Walter Benjamin extended some of these Proustian themes in *Berlin Chronicle*, and later in *Berlin Childhood around 1900*. In the former, he reflects on the characteristics of remembrance as a "deadly game": "What Proust began so playfully became awesomely serious. He who has once begun to open the fan of memory never comes to the end of its segments. No image satisfies him, for he has seen that it can be unfolded, and only in its folds does the truth reside"

(Benjamin, 1999a, p. 597). Filtered through expectation and remembrance, names and places are to be found in the folds – and cities "are" unfolded images.

The third principle attempts to answer the following question: how can individual accounts of the past connect with the present, and thus gain historical relevance? In the prologue to the final version of *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, Benjamin refers to the dangers enclosed in the nostalgic dimension of the memories of a bourgeois child. Hence the need to "inoculate" his images of metropolitan childhood with the vaccine of the irretrievability of the past, "not the contingent biographical but the necessary social irretrievability" (Benjamin, 2002, p. 344). It is this inoculation and the experimental form of the images that grant them the capacity to preform "later historical experience" and that link individual and collective life. Benjamin's "'autobiographical' fragments are thus exercises in critical historiography rather than wistful nostalgia" (Gilloch, 1996, p. 60). In this sense, the images of Berlin are also deeply connected with – and somehow anticipate – the physiognomic and materialist approach further developed in *The Arcades Project*.

4.

A VISUAL FORM OF KNOWLEDGE

In its most common sense, an atlas is a collection of maps with graphic representations that may include geographic, social, historical, economic or climatic data. It was Gerardus Mercator (a Flemish mathematician, geographer and cartographer) who, in 1595, first used the term "atlas" in connection with cartography. The name was inspired by the Titan Atlas, who was condemned by Zeus to hold the celestial heavens on his shoulders, but Mercator retrieves a complex mythological genealogy and draws inspiration from the philosopher, geographer and mathematician King Atlas of Mauritania. This is not the place to delve into the cartographic definition of the term "atlas", much less to examine mythological themes and their artistic representations (such as the sculpture Farnese Atlas, the oldest and perhaps the most famous of all). Although cartography can be said to account, in its own way, for a struggle against the dispersion that makes up the world, let us instead analyse the atlas as a visual form of knowledge, on the footsteps of Didi-Huberman's essay.

The gaze that delicately surveys the images and the diverse elements of an atlas, whether it belongs to medicine, cartography or contemporary art, often focuses on a detail, a particular sequence or constellation, an analogy or synthesis, and this presupposes a tension between the singularity of each element and the whole of which it is a part. As with any open device, each visitation can harbour discoveries. According to Didi-Huberman, the atlas implies two paradigms: the aesthetic, linked to the visual, and the epistemic, linked to knowledge. Furthermore, and in the face of the rationalist certainties of science and the predetermined models of art history, it has a destabilizing power, deeply rooted in the procedures of montage: "Against all epistemic purity, the atlas introduces the sensible dimension into knowledge, the diverse, and the incomplete character of each image. Against any aesthetic purity, it introduces the multiple, the diverse, the hybridity of any montage" (Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 4). Its driving force is imagination, understood not as a personal and gratuitous fantasy but as a transversal faculty that allows for the discovery of "the intimate and secret relations of things, the correspondences and the analogies" (Baudelaire's words in "Notes Nouvelles sur Edgar Poe", recovered by Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 5).

Among the vast theoretical references in *Atlas, or the Anxious Gay Science*, the role of four themes and authors should be highlighted: the restlessness of Friedrich Nietzsche's gay science; Goethean morphology and its principles of observation and synoptic presentation, through which one can approach primal phenomena (*Urphänomena*); Walter Benjamin's thought, namely his reflections on the concepts of origin and dialectical image, which take elements from Goethean morphology while focusing on the domain of history (and, as seen above, the entire question of productive disorder); and finally, Aby Warburg's intersection of image and memory, which takes the atlas form to a whole new dimension. It is worth emphasizing the central role that his science of culture attributes to the notion of *Nachleben*, of survival. Leaning on it, Warburg's studies on art history establish direct relationships between distant epochs, such as antiquity and the Renaissance. These relationships are not strictly formal, stylistic or thematic, however; they involve a whole series of polarities that unfold the conflicts between the rational and the magical-religious dimension of the human being, between

the Apollonian and the Dionysian, between calm contemplation and orgiastic fervour. As a reader of Nietzsche, Warburg finds in this intensified psychic dynamic the substratum of artistic creation itself (see Warburg, 2003, p. 3). Additionally, the notion of *Pathosformeln*, or "formulae of pathos", concerns the gestures that fixate the deeply rooted energetic and conflicting forces that run through the images. These reflect the schizophrenia of Western culture itself, its psychic conflicts and repressions, its expressive gestures and repetitions. All this presupposes a conception of memory that is not governed by a chronological and sequential order, and the montage that Warburg develops in *Atlas Mnemosyne*, a work that would remain unfinished, aims precisely to create a "thought space" (*Denkraum*) with which to approach a cultural memory whose engrams result from the intersection of the individual and the collective, the cosmological and the corporal. Its goal is to illustrate the process of de-demonization of the heritage of phobic impressions, revealing pre-existing expressive values through the presentation of life in movement (Warburg, 2003, p. 3). Between 1924 and 1929 (the year of his death), and after recovering from psychosis, Warburg worked on this atlas, exploring the possibilities of constructing a history of art and culture through visual means. According to Didi-Huberman,

> The *Bilderatlas*, for Warburg, was neither a simple aide-mémoire, nor a "summary by images" of his thinking; instead, it offered an apparatus for putting thought back into movement where history had stopped, and where words were still lacking. It was the matrix of a desire to reconfigure memory by refusing to fix memories – images of the past – in an ordered or, worse, a definitive narrative. (Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 12)

It is its open character and its visual intensity, linked with memory, that make Warburg's atlas so disconcerting and stimulating.

5.

CHILDHOOD AND ADULTHOOD

It is now time to explore how the conceptual figure of the atlas relates to childhood, or rather, to the powers of childhood that can be recovered and exercised at different stages of human life. For Benjamin, childhood is the age at which the mimetic faculty is most active, and with it the magical powers that tend to vanish in adulthood. As the "organon of experience" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 868 [Q°, 24]), this faculty lies at the basis of our exercises with objects and matter; not only does it entail a power of imitation and (self-)transfiguration, but it is also what allows us to recognize similarities.

This topic takes us to a set of notes in which Benjamin (see 1999c, pp. 684-685) seeks to lay the foundation for rational reflection on astrology – reflection that is not ruled by the doctrine of magical "influences" or "radiant energies". To do so, it is necessary to start with the question of similarity: on the one hand, from the recognition that, beyond "chance comparisons from our part", there is a "mimetic force working expressly inside things"; on the other hand, from the recognition that the mimetic faculty inherent in the human being has undergone changes throughout history, weakening in certain fields to strengthen in others, and that our ability to create and recognize resemblances (between faces, in architecture and plants, in clouds and skin stains) reaches only a tiny part of those that exist in the "cosmos of similarity".[10]

The exercises with the atlas manifest a desire for clairvoyance, or at least a fascination with the possibility of organizing that which is dispersed and liable to be forgotten or devoured by chaos. But even if this fascination contains something of a childhood playfulness, the truth is that clairvoyance requires accepting that there are things that cannot be controlled, that involuntary manifestations and the need to forget are part of the process. Fed by the "cosmos of similarity", absorbing the dynamism of the faculty of imagination, the atlases that involve traumatic historical events (or at least our own individual traumas and personal *Recherche*, when taken seriously), cannot but respect the destructive forces of time. In an annotation to *Atlas Mnemosyne* (published in

10 For an interpretation of the role of mimesis in Benjamin's thinking, focusing particularly on the notion of a "cosmos of similarity", see Fittler, 2005.

Mnemosyne. Grundbegriffe, dated 2 July 1929) that describes an understanding of its iconography, Warburg says that the story of the influence of the ancients has fantastic elements and can be narrated like a tale, although it is a "history of ghosts for big people [*Gespenstergeschichte f(ür) ganz Erwachsene*]" (Warburg, apud Didi-Huberman, 2018, p. 197).

This "history of ghosts" points to an unconscious life of culture that can be extrapolated to more general considerations about the figure of the atlas. If on the one hand the latter draws something from the powers of childhood, on the other it presupposes a maturing of "productive disorder", and therefore a new relationship with life (or a new relationship between history – individual and collective – and life). The unresolved dialectical tension between childhood and adulthood can enrich an atlas as it concerns the need for an exercise in matters of "vital importance". A sentence by Proust already quoted in the first section of this chapter ("And I had already lived long enough…") may set the tone for a further exploration of this dialectical tension. In *Swann's Way*, the first volume of *In Search of Lost Time*, precisely before the famous episode of the madeleine, he speaks about the limitations of voluntary memory (linked to the intellect) and the existence of two types of chance that condition the possibility of attaining a true image of the past through involuntary memory. The first concerns the impossibility of knowing in advance which object conceals the past; the second concerns death and its unpredictability:

> And so it is with our own past. It is a labour in vain to attempt to recapture it: all the efforts of our intellect must prove futile. The past is hidden somewhere outside the realm, beyond the reach of intellect, in some material object (in the sensation which that material object will give us) of which we have no inkling. And it depends on chance whether or not we come upon this object before we ourselves must die. (Proust, 1992, p. 60)

In "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", Benjamin reacted against the inevitability of chance, stating that it is not at all evident but rather part of a context of profound transformations in human experience, linked, among other aspects, to transformations in narrative forms (see Benjamin, 2003, pp. 315-316). For

Benjamin, a thinker of history and collective experience, this reduction of chance to an external coincidence related to individual experience could only cause reluctance. Given that chance is not dispelled that easily, however, it is perhaps necessary to think of it not as an external coincidence but as something that requires work, an exercise in the deepest sense of the word, linked, in Jeanne Marie Gagnebin's words, to an effort of attention and to *kairos*, the time of opportunity that must be seized (see Gagnebin, 2002, pp. 119-120). Therefore, adulthood concerns those who have exercised this attention longingly, but also the capacity to integrate the destruction and reconstruction of the connections between things and beings, the passage of time, forgetfulness, death. Hence the importance that Proust concedes to the Baudelairian *correspondances* when, in *Time Regained*, he returns to the theme of the madeleine, commenting on the careful, selective capacity of Baudelaire's poetry to follow the scent of a woman and to link it allegorically to an ideal that exceeds chance.[11] *Correspondances* are the foundation of art that Proust makes his own, though by other means.

Independently of the type of force that is at work in involuntary memory, correspondences, or the cosmos of similarity – which also presupposes the mitigation of chance when understood as an external coincidence – the fact is that the three concepts form a web that is fundamental to the conceptual figure of the atlas: this web works with and against chance; it adds a further order of exercise to productive disorder; it makes the infinite interplay between childhood and adulthood a constructive one.

6.
COMPLEMENTS AND DANGERS

Throughout this chapter, several approaches have been explored in order to better characterize the atlas as a conceptual figure. Defining it in terms of productive disorder allowed us to investigate other features that complement each other – some encompassing the idea of visual knowledge from the outset. In this sense, the struggle against disorder and chaos under the auspices of

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11 *Correspondances* are also crucial for Benjamin's reading of these topics, since they are capable of poetically integrating both the historical and the prehistorical (see Benjamin, 2003, pp. 333-334).

careful observation, as well as the aesthetic, political and daily bodily-rooted exercises, often linked to physiognomic perception, are complemented by the relationship between autobiography, memory and life, which in turn demands the infinite interplay between childhood and adulthood.

Nevertheless, there are two risks that threaten the productive side of disorder and the game of shuffling and redistributing cards, risks that lurk within the figure of the atlas like a thief lurking behind a door, waiting for his chance. The first has to do with the modern temporality of the *ever-new*, embodied by mechanized work, by the constant sensorial stimuli in big cities, by the gambler's gestures. After all, the table of heuristic operations may also be the table where the myriorama is laid out, a popular nineteenth-century toy composed of a set of illustrated cards, often representing a landscape, meant to be arranged and re-arranged in order to form different combinations and pictures. According to Benjamin, it provides a paradigmatic account of a world of the most rigid discontinuity, the "time of hell" (Benjamin, 1999f, p. 843 [G°, 19]). If discontinuity and intermittence are part of the exercise of the atlas, the misuse of this ambivalent gesture can create an empty temporality devoid of history, memory and expectation. The disorder that never becomes productive and capitalist productive order are two sides of the same coin of modernity – the cult of novelty that feeds its voracity and its abyss. Our own epoch, dealing with the availability of an overwhelming amount of information about the world and connections that are made ever more quickly and invisibly, is experiencing new forms of voracity and empty temporality, which also raise new challenges. What practices remain to keep the reshuffling game productive? And how does this affect the images we build of our cities? The answer to these questions will have to be reserved for another occasion.

The second risk has to do with *forgetting* a figure that is in the vicinity of everything that has been dealt with thus far: the ragpicker (*Lumpensammler*). As a dialectical counterpoint to the collector (*Sammler*), the ragpicker is someone who collects rags and waste from the streets as a means of survival, thus integrating in a particular way the economic and social system of the city and making us think of a form of collection (and also of a metaphor that is applicable to the historian, as Benjamin proposed) that entails everything that may become valuable. Forgetting this figure is risky because it means forgetting

the intersection between the economic condition of modernity and the fractures of history, as well as poverty itself, literally and metaphorically. In the chapter "Atlas and the Wandering Jew, or the Age of Poverty", Didi-Huberman connects the ragpicker with both the modern city and the figure of the atlas. Portrayed in Eugène Atget's photographic encyclopaedia and included in the gallery of figures of *The Arcades Project*, ragpickers belong to the nameless (*Namenlosen*), to whom Benjamin sought to dedicate his historical approach. Moreover, the task of drawing up modern atlases in the wake of great metropolises, the two World Wars and all the decisive events that shape our (natural) history cannot escape the struggle against a chaos made of poverty, wanderings and restlessness.

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ALAIN RESNAIS'S ENTROPIC ARCHIVE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to show that Alain Resnais's documentary *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* establishes a parallel, a symbiosis, between order and disorder, between classification and entropy. The bureaucratic procedures, the "Fordist model", the shadowy figures in the documentary, all of which imbue the *Bibliothèque Nationale* with an air of science fiction, have a sombre counterpart: the badly lit basements, the chaotic boxes filled with books and papers awaiting retrieval. By comparing Resnais's documentary, Borges's *Library of Babel* and Kafka's work, this chapter reveals a secret desire for the senseless chaos of unread books.

KEYWORDS

Memory, Archive, Alain Resnais, Bureaucracy, Entropy.

1.

PETRIFIED CHAOS

What do the initial shots of Alain Resnais's *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* show? Rooms full of stacked and dusty papers, boxes filled with forgotten books. A *petrified chaos* that seems to reign in the poorly lit rooms[2] (Figures 1 and 2). We don't know, and Resnais's documentary doesn't tell us, where they are situated, what their function is, whether they have one:[3] do they correspond to the place where the books are brought, prior to their classification, or, on the contrary, do they remain a negative illustration of Dumesnil's voiceover, a chaotic sea of documents, papers, books, all those memory supplements that don't supplement anything, in the imminence of submerging anyone who ventures to cross the threshold of this mute space.

This is the archive, Resnais seems to be telling us, in its most dreadful aspects, beyond all order, the hellish nightmare that it never stops dreaming of: crammed, forgotten books, meaningless words that no one has ever read, an almost inaudible lament that rises from the ocean of unread pages that stand there, *waiting*.[4] But for what? For whom?

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2   According to the script by Remo Forlani: "The camera slides from one room to the other, under arched cellars with low ceilings and lighting. It shows, in passing, apparently abandoned stacks of newspapers, boxes overabundantly filled with books, or else large collections where the badly cropped sides show the weight of time" (Forlani, 1965, p. 65). Apart from the texts that have been published in English, all translations are mine.

3   "The three-minute sequence contains only five shots, four of them tracking shots with durations ranging from eight to thirty-eight seconds. All are set within a dimly lit space filled with piles of newspapers and topless crates of books. The disordered belowground contrasts with the ordered spaces that will soon be seen aboveground. What place do these disordered objects have among the BN's collections? Are they newly arrived items not yet processed? Are they rejects, somehow unworthy of the treasures on display above?" (Ungar, 2018, p. 194).

4   "Visible to the spectator, the camera and the microphone travel through a dark basement. Briefly aided by a guard's flashlight, it finds stacks of books and newspapers, boxes, statues, ancient vases and dusty manuscripts. This fantastic storage space, this basement where the accumulated objects seem to have been forgotten by everyone, is the last crypt of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*: we are in the presence of treasures that belong to us. These yellow papers, these damaged treasures, are not lost. They are waiting" (Douin, 2013, p. 44).

One leaves this nightmare, this infernal landscape,[5] but not to the light, to broad daylight (this will appear only at the end of *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*, when Resnais speaks of an enigmatic happiness). One leaves these crammed rooms full of dust and debris, this entropic space, to enter the shadowy functioning of bureaucratic apparatuses, a mechanical world full of ghostly beings, repetitive gestures and abstract reasoning.

There's some irony in Resnais's quasi-unconscious reference to the Fordist factory model, with the many tubes depicted in the documentary, the factory-like movement, the workers, stunned, as if living examples of what Heidegger and Agamben called *Benommenheit*.[6] Hopelessly locked in their repetitive gestures, blind to whatever lies outside the scope of mechanical functioning, these workers (Figures 3 and 4) stand in dialectical tension with the treasures of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* – treasures that embody the world's memory.

Beyond this common reading of Alain Resnais's short film, however, *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* presents a set of details, of motifs, that can be related to a well-known short story by Jorge Luis Borges, *The Library of Babel*. The details that relate this documentary to the Borgesean universe are easily identified: first, there's the aforementioned reference to a totality in the first sentence of the short film and in the title of Resnais's documentary. There's also the presence of the bookshelves, filmed as if to give a sense of infinity, the circularity of the library's dome or the growth of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* of which Resnais speaks, a

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5   Alain Carou speaks of a purgatory: "Between the first version of the script and the second, without any risk of error, Resnais and Fornali visited a fantastic underground purgatory, where thousands of books (or tens of thousands) await better days to join the library's catalogue and shelves" (Carou, 2007, p. 127).

6   In *The Open: Man and Animal*, Agamben understands the term *Benommenheit* as the absence of proper action: "The mode of being proper to the animal, which defines its relation with the disinhibitor, is captivation (*Benommenheit*). Here Heidegger, with a repeated etymological figure, puts into play the relationship among the terms *benommen* (captivated, stunned, but also taken away, blocked), *eingenommen* (taken in, absorbed), and *Benehmen* (behavior), which all refer back to the verb *nehmen*, to take (from the Indo-European root **nem*, which means to distribute, to allot, to assign). Insofar as it is essentially captivated and wholly absorbed in its own disinhibitor, the animal cannot truly act (*handeln*) or comport itself (*sich verhalten*) in relation to it: it can only behave (*sich benehmen*)" (Agamben, 2004, p. 52).

growth both upwards, towards the sky, and downwards, into the middle of the earth (conjoining heaven and hell). But there's also a spiral, a typical Borgesean motif, which opens the library to infinity (Figures 5 to 8).[7]

2.
MEANINGLESS LOGIC

It's a sombre short story. The world, Borges begins by saying, is a library – or, put differently, the Library is the world: "The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite, perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries":

> The arrangement of the galleries is *always the same*. Twenty bookshelves, five to each side, line four of the hexagon's six sides; the height of the bookshelves, floor to ceiling, is hardly greater than the height of a normal librarian. One of the hexagon's free sides opens onto a narrow sort of vestibule, which in turns opens onto another gallery, *identical to the first – identical in fact to all*. To the left and right of the vestibule are two tiny compartments. One is for sleeping, upright; the other for satisfying one's physical necessities. Through this space, too, there passes a *spiral staircase*, which winds upward into the remotest distance. In the vestibule there is a mirror, which faithfully duplicates appearances. (Borges, 1999, p. 60)

An everlasting sameness, devoid of any kind of difference, of novelty, galleries upon galleries where beings wander in no direction in particular, full of books written in languages no one can understand. No one could ever visit all those hexagonal galleries; no one could ever read all those strange and for the most part incomprehensible books. The universe, that is, the Library, contains

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7   Andrew Tracy also underscores the idea of the labyrinth: "With Resnais's probing and moving camera work and a commentary by French writer Remo Forlani, *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* transforms the library into a mysterious labyrinth, something between an edifice and an organism: part brain and part tomb" (Tracy, 2013, p. 49).

everything, encloses all the various times and places, but places everything in the never-ending sameness of the galleries. Recalling Pascal's statement about God, Borges claims that the "Library is a sphere whose exact center is any hexagon and whose circumference is unattainable" (Borges, 1999, p. 60). It amounts to negative knowledge, a negative infinity or a dark and melancholic knowledge. Given the unattainability of the circumference, no one can ever fully grasp the Library; every hexagon is followed by another hexagon, exactly the same as the one before.

Like the archive, it is a heterotopia,[8] in itself devoid of time but enclosing all of time. While it could be read as praising bookish knowledge (the world as a library, or a library containing the entire world), *The Library of Babel* presents us with a world devoid of sense, or a world in which sense and non-sense are no longer distinguishable. In its mechanical production of words, sentences and books, Borges's universe seems strangely close to the initial shots of *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*: sombre galleries, packed with books, words that have come together by sheer luck, without reason or logic: "Light is provided by certain spherical fruits that bear the name 'bulbs'. There are two of these bulbs in each hexagon, set crosswise. The light they give is insufficient, and *unceasing*" (Borges, 1999, p. 60):

> Those examples allowed a librarian of genius to discover the fundamental law of the Library. This philosopher observed that all books, however different from one another they might be, *consist of identical elements*: the space, the period, the comma, and the twenty-two letters of the alphabet. He also posited a fact which all travelers have since confirmed: in all the Library, there are no two identical books. From those incontrovertible premises, the librarian deduced that the library is *"total" – perfect, complete, and whole* – and that its bookshelves contain *all possible combinations of the twenty-two orthographic symbols* (a number which, though unimaginably vast, is not infinite) – that is, *all that is able to be expressed, in every language*. (Borges, 1999, p. 61)

8   Not a real heterotopia, of course. I am using this concept as a metaphor for the type of space that Borges creates.

This "totality" – "perfect, complete, and whole" – the "fundamental law" that comprehends "all that is able to be expressed, in every language", is the effect of a blind logic, a purely mechanical functioning: the vast but not infinite possible combinations of the twenty-two orthographic symbols. Since all books, regardless of what is written, can be reduced to a mechanical logic (each book must contain *one* possible variation of the twenty-two orthographic symbols, with the additional rule that no two can be alike), the universe, that is, the Library, is nothing but a space filled with an undistinguishable noise devoid of sense – even when we can *read* the text. All sense retreats, giving way to a sheer accumulation of words and a combination of letters that, even when sense is achieved, bears the mark of mechanical production.

After this sombre picture, Borges presents us with one of the lists he seems so fond of, full of marvellous details and eccentric descriptions. The Library contains everything, "all that is able to be expressed, in every language":

> All – the detailed history of the future, the autobiographies of the archangels, the faithful catalog of the library, thousands and thousands of false catalogs, the proof of the falsity of those false catalogs, a proof of the falsity of the true catalog, the gnostic gospel of Basilides, the commentary upon that gospel, the commentary on the commentary on that gospel, the true story of your death, the translation of every book in every language, the interpolations of every book into all books, the treatise Bede could have written (but did not) on the mythology of the Saxon people, the lost books of Tacitus. (Borges, 1999, p. 61)

This vertiginous list strikes us with its sheer non-sense, despite all its eccentric details. It contains everything: what has been lost forever (Tacitus' works), the possible (the treatise Bede *could* have written), the contradictory (the "proof of the falsity of the true catalog"), the false, the impossible (the autobiographies of the archangels).

Indeed, one can draw a parallel between this passage from Borges's *The Library of Babel* and a well-known story told by Leibniz in his *Theodicy*. Extending the story told by Lorenzo Valla in *De Libero Arbitrio*, Leibniz speaks

of a Palace of the Fates, where all possible worlds are present in a pyramid-shaped building at the top of which resides the actual world:

> At the command of Pallas there came within view Dodona with the temple of Jupiter, and Sextus issuing thence; he could be heard saying that he would obey the God. And lo! he goes to a city lying between two seas, resembling Corynth. He buys there a small garden; cultivating it, he finds a treasure; he becomes a rich man, enjoying affection and esteem; he dies at a great age, beloved of the whole city. Theodorus saw the whole life of Sextus as at one glance, and as in a stage presentation. There was a great volume of writings in this hall: Theodorus could not refrain from asking what that meant. It is the history of this world which we are now visiting, the Goddess told him; it is the book of its fates. You have seen a number on the forehead of Sextus. Look in this book for the place which it indicates. Theodorus looked for it, and found there the history of Sextus in a form more ample than the outline he had seen. Put your finger on any line you please, Pallas said to him, and you will see represented actually in all its detail that which the line broadly indicates. He obeyed, and he saw coming into view all the characteristics of a portion of the life of that Sextus. They passed into another hall, and lo! another world, another Sextus, who, issuing from the temple, and having resolved to obey Jupiter, goes to Thrace. There he marries the daughter of the king, who had no other children; he succeeds him, and he is adored by his subjects. They went into other rooms, and always they saw new scenes. (Leibniz, 1985, p. 376)

All of Sextus' possible lives are present in the Palace of Fates (every hall has, or so it seems, a book that contains the history of that particular variation), all the countless differences, all the variants that could either amount to a small departure from the actual world or contain an unimaginable Sextus.

As in Leibniz's Palace of Fates, in Borges's Library we find all possibilities. But whereas in Leibniz none of these variations exist, lacking actuality and

thus allowing Agamben's Messiah to descend to the myriad of possibilities (Agamben, 1999, pp. 266-267), trying to retrieve the lament for the possibility enclosed in Leibniz's Tartarus, in Borges the possible is always already actual, real. As a matter of fact, Borges's Library lacks possibility, given that the possible is real, and all possible variations exist in a hexagon. Tacitus' lost works *actually* exist (but what does it mean to say that the lost works really do exist, without saying that they are not lost at all?), as do the archangels' autobiographies and the treatise Bede *could have* written. Even the "proof of the falsity of the true catalog" exists, or rather coexists, with the actual, true catalogue. The abyssal logic followed by Borges goes even further, however, by refusing to ascribe Reason of any kind to the universe. We might also recall another famous quote by Pascal, a thinker who would seem to be decisive to understanding Borges's short story: "the eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me" (*le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie*) (Pascal, 1910, p. 78). It is this eternal silence that in the end follows, as a consequence, the senselessness of the Library:

> In order for a book to exist, it is sufficient that it be possible. Only the impossible is excluded. For example, no book is also a staircase, though there are no doubt books that discuss and deny and prove that possibility, and others whose structure corresponds to that of a staircase. (Borges, 1999, p. 62)

Following this logic, alongside all those eccentricities listed by Borges, the myriad of marvels and wonders that can be imagined (the "detailed history of the future" alongside false histories, given that one can only distinguish one from the other if one has access to the Library's "circumference"), we find "the formless and chaotic nature of virtually all books" (Borges, 1999, p. 60) – the endless variation, lacking all reason, of the letters of the alphabet:

> One book, which my father once saw in a hexagon in circuit 15-94, consisted of the letter MCV perversely repeated from the first line to the last. Another (much consulted in this zone) is a mere labyrinth of letters whose penultimate page contains the phrase:

> *Oh time thy pyramids.* This much is known: for every rational line or forthright statement there are leagues of senseless cacophony, verbal nonsense, and incoherence. (Borges, 1999, p. 61)

This lack of sense invades everything: entire sections of the Library containing a "senseless cacophony, verbal nonsense, and incoherence", followed by one book, one bookshelf, containing a "rational line". The difficulty, however, lies precisely in this distinction: if every book contained in the Library is nothing but *one possible* variation among others of the letters of the alphabet, then every book is, in itself, nothing but a fiction – a fiction devoid of sense, owing its being to a mechanical logic.

From this combination of logic and illogic, Borges draws a melancholic conclusion:

> There is no combination of characters one can make – *dhcmrlchtdj*, for example – that the divine Library has not foreseen and that in one or more of its secret tongues does not hide a terrible significance. There is no syllable one can speak that is not filled with tenderness and terror, that is not, in one of those languages, the mighty name of a god. To speak is to commit tautologies. *This pointless, verbose epistle already exists in one of the thirty volumes of the five bookshelves in one of the countless hexagons – as does its refutation.* (Borges, 1999, p. 63)

"To speak is to commit tautologies": there's nothing one could say or write that isn't always already inscribed in the "senseless cacophony, verbal nonsense, and incoherence" of the Library. Indeed, everything one could write is always submerged by this "senseless cacophony", which emerges from the chance variations of the letters of the alphabet. And Borges seems to point in this direction. Why does he say, turning this logic against his own short story, that it is a "pointless, verbose epistle" if not due to the fact that the "senseless cacophony" is always already there, conditioning every single sentence? "You who read me – are you certain you understand my language?" "The universe (which others call the Library)" is nothing but an indistinct mass of books,

piled up without any order whatsoever, eternally frozen, to which nothing can be added. A petrified chaos, a calm and steady catastrophe, full of "verbal nonsense, and incoherence".

3.
GREY NEUTRALITY

In *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*, one likewise encounters a sort of list. It's not the same type of list that Borges was so fond of, full of logical conundrums and bizarre details. Its logic, on the contrary, is quite easily grasped, even if we don't regard Alain Resnais's documentary as an encomium to the grandeur of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*.[9] It reveals several treasures from different times and places, now housed in the Parisian library: the unpublished manuscripts of the *Journal des Goncourt*, the Codex Peresianus, Goncourt's unpublished manuscripts, diaries that can only be opened on a specific date (1974), the manuscript of Pascal's *Pensée*s, Zola's complete works, the Michaux Pebble, from Baghdad, an album of sketches by Villard de Honnecourt, Victor Hugo's manuscripts, Sébastian Cabot's World Map, a liturgical book, the first book ever printed in Paris, Charlemagne's *Evangeliarum*, Saint-Sever's Apocalypse, etchings by Mantegna, Dürer and Redon. "Everything here is rare, unique, precious, unobtainable", as we are told by Dumesnil's voiceover (Figures 9 to 11).

However, this idiosyncratic collection of disparate (and priceless) objects, which could resemble a curiosity cabinet, finds its possibility in the library's logic – not in the sense, we are told in the first sequences of the short film, that the library contains, *saves*, "all the memory in the world", in the sense that it holds and protects memory (such that the library functions as an enormous supplementary memory), but in the sense that the library is primarily an archive, an accumulation of time, built *against* time itself. As mentioned above, and following Foucault's analysis, a library is no longer "the expression

9   João Bénard da Costa sees in *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* a turning away from a politics of praise by the French Ministry: "It was produced by one of Quai d'Orsay's cultural departments at a time when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sought to foster the making of documentaries that spread the greatness of one of France's largest cultural institutions" (Costa, s/d, p. 131).

of an individual choice" but a sheer accumulation of objects and documents, a historical endeavour in which books are sorted, classified, analysed and numbered:

> Museums and libraries have become heterotopias in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit, whereas in the seventeenth century, even at the end of the century, museums and libraries were the expression of an individual choice. By contrast, the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this way a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity. (Foucault, 1986, p. 26)

In this sense, those treasures that Alain Resnais shows us are part of a more general logic in which what needs to be emphasized is this endless accumulation of time – always already in danger, however, of collapsing into sheer compulsive hoarding. This "general archive" thus institutes a different logic than that of the treasure that is preserved for the future, saved from the ravages of time. This different logic has to do with all the ghosts we've already encountered, with this world of clerks, with blind bureaucratic procedures. And to some extent, Resnais's documentary enhances this grey machine. It's not just all the mechanisms, the tubes and machines, that we are shown in the short film. It's this door (Figure 12): anonymous, neutral, numbered, contaminating from the outset everything that is presented to us after, as if to mark a difference between spaces. These treasures are always already plunged into this grey world of equivalence, in which Rimbaud's manuscript is equal, from an archival point of view, to every other book, no matter how insignificant it is in the history of literature.

Therefore, the "idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive" has, as a consequence, a sort of calm, frozen, ocean of documents and objects, in which they are all reduced to the same grey neutrality.

There aren't any treasures at all, only objects that must be catalogued, placed in their proper location, dealt with from an administrative point of view. Hence, the library as archive – as a heterotopia[10] – is not just a matter of accumulating everything. It's a question of procedures, of establishing a general equivalence, of the blind administration of papers and documents, of classification and cataloguing.

This idea of a general equivalence finds an ironic, playful example in *Les Nouvelles Aventures de Harry Dickson*. After establishing a negative limit on our knowledge in the form of a hidden, unknown treasure ("who knows whether these papers hold other revelatory texts?"), Dumesnil asks an impossible question: "who knows what will someday bear best witness to our civilization?" In the form of an impossible address, this question carries with it an insane injunction: to save everything, to hold, in a place outside of time, every text, every document, all the books (an out-of-joint undertaking about which the Nietzsche of *Untimely Meditations* (2007) would have something to say, with his defence of forgetfulness as a condition of life itself). Prior to this mad injunction, as a kind of proof of this compulsion, we hear Dumesnil speak of an incomplete collection:

> An incomplete collection depreciates in value. This is why the slightest lack of attention is not allowed. If an issue is missing, it will be requested. Even if some are only ever consulted once, *they must be conserved. That's the rule*. Among them, Rimbaud's first publication was discovered in an obscure newspaper from the Ardennes. (Resnais, 1956: emphasis added)

The idea conveyed by the voiceover, which is accompanied by images of someone in the repetitive act of storing newspapers, seems to be divided into two dimensions: first, *one must save everything* so that those in the future *can decide* what bears witness to our civilization. One must protect everything from the ravages of time, as Foucault said, but one must also take away from time itself the possibility of deciding. Therefore, one must call upon oneself to decide

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10 As an endless accumulation of time, the library in *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* (a library that really exists) functions as a real heterotopia.

what the future *will be able* to decide, withholding that decision from time itself and deciding *in advance* – even if this decision is not a decision, even if it is in fact a decision *not to decide*. Second, to save, to conserve, is to pile up, to stack, to accumulate indefinitely, that is, to build a general archive that is always already on the verge of becoming an entropic archive, a chaotic mass of unread documents, a story of layered dust sedimented through time.

Among the treasures I have listed, Resnais includes *Les Nouvelles Aventures de Harry Dickson* (Figure 13). The effect is quite easily grasped, given its insertion between the Codex Peresianus and the private diaries that should not be opened until 1974: a semantic asymmetry, portrayed by this mass media document, inserts itself among the national and priceless treasures.[11]

It could be argued that, more than merely being proof of Resnais's lifelong interests, the presence of these mass media products – Harry Dickson, Mandrake – is one way of responding to the question of what bears best witness to our civilization. In the answer to this question, we find an archival point of view: given the general equivalence that the archive imposes, what bears witness to our civilization are all these minor documents, these unnoticed publications.

Another dimension that opposes the exuberance of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*'s treasures is the fake volume of the *Petite Planète* (a collection curated by Chris Marker). The irony contained in this obviously fake book (a Mars travel book) consists in the bureaucratic blindness of the library's workers (figure 14). Resnais uses this volume to accompany the "production process" that renders the book, from the mass of indistinguishable documents to its final "resting place" in the library's abstract memory. From the moment he arrives to the different stages of the cataloguing process, we are presented with images

11 According to Ungar, "the fake book was more than an inside joke. Much like shots elsewhere in the film featuring comic-strip characters Mandrake the Magician, Dick Tracy, Terry and the Pirates, and pulp detective Harry Dickson, it expresses Resnais's lifelong interest in mass-market print cultures, including comic books and detective fiction. The inclusion of these materials also raised questions concerning their physical and figurative place among the BN's collections. Were these materials part of the BN's collection? Or had Resnais placed them in his documentary as a provocation, in line with similar provocations in films by Buñuel and Jean Vigo? (...) Their inclusion expressed Resnais's personal take on the BN and its collections as a means of dislocating the vision of the library as a repository of national treasures that the French Foreign Ministry had presumably intended the film to convey" (Ungar, 2018, p. 192).

of different workers holding the volume – *absolutely indifferent* to the content, interested only in bureaucratic procedures, closed to all gestures beyond those that have an administrative function. This is something between the science fiction reference that was already present in the documentary's initial synopsis[12] and the Fordist production model.

4.
GHOSTLY FIGURES

At the end of the bookshelves, barely visible, a human figure (Figure 8); other figures (Figure 3), descending to the basement, as if entering the purgatory that we see in the documentary's first sequences; workers with mechanical, repetitive gestures, breaking time into discrete units, folded onto themselves; shadowy figures who appear and disappear (Figures 15 and 16); guards watching, spying on their prisoners (the books or the researchers?).[13] These are the bureaucrats of knowledge in *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*, parts of a "cash machine of knowledge",[14] for the most part unaware and insensible to all the books they hold, all the books they keep – ambiguous figures, since they can also *keep hold* of all that knowledge.

Of all the strange beings we encounter in the documentary, two are particularly interesting: the two guards (Figures 17 to 19). They are barely

12 When commenting on the sequence in the temperature control room (which contains a reference to Jules Verne), Carou speaks of a gigantic, futuristic machine and Douin of a futuristic atmosphere: "This sequence needs to have a 'science fiction' style. Imagine a gigantic machine (a robot) capable of responding to everything with the ease of the machines in the subway that measure weight" (cit. in. Carou, 2007, p. 125); "'[w]e sensed a certain atmosphere, of a type reminiscent of Louis Feuillade, that reigns from the basement to the roof of this remarkable bazaar of knowledge', said Resnais, fascinated by the pneumatic tube conveyor and the futuristic design, à la Jules Verne, of the heating system" (Douin, 2013, p. 45).

13 At the beginning of the documentary, we hear a voiceover saying that "in Paris, words are imprisoned in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*".

14 "Resnais plans to keep from the primitive scenario if not the theme of the initial confusion then at least the department store aspect of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. It's in this context that he will present what the public doesn't necessarily expect to find in the *Bibliothèque*: a boiler room, machinists, etc. (…) the theme of the automatic machine will also be maintained" (cit. in. Carou, 2007, p. 134).

visible, shadowy *apparitions* that seem to fade away as quickly as they appear: incarnations of the library *as* archive – close and yet different from the other figures that, with their repetitive gestures, bring the library and the factory together.

We are no longer in the dim glow of the clerk's universe. We have left behind the tubes, the strange machines, and the mechanics of knowledge (figure 20) – in a literal sense. We have left behind the classical image of the archive with the ever-expanding catalogue of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and the file cabinet. We have now passed the faint but rigorous frontier that separates the bureaucracy, the "universal memory", "abstract and indifferent", as we are told,[15] from those "false, paper-eating insects" that, each in its own domain, contribute to the "civilization of specialists"[16] of which Jacques Rivette speaks.

The higher shots (Figure 21) allow us to see these curious "insects" labouring in their own particular domain, *indifferent* to those sitting next to them (there's a parallel between these insects and the library's workers) – "insects", as Rivette says, that are incapable of seeing the cunning of happiness.[17] But this doesn't explain the guard, of whom we catch a brief glimpse, looking at the same spectacle that we are seeing.[18]

15 "Just then, it was part of a universal memory, abstract and indifferent, in which all books are equal" (Resnais, 1956).

16 In a conversation between Godard, Jean Domarchi, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Pierre Kast and Eric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette points to the danger of this "civilization of specialists": "There is no one nowadays who has the capacity to decipher both an ancient inscription and a modern scientific formula. Culture as the common treasure of mankind has become the prey of the specialists. I think that was what Resnais had in mind when he made *Toute la mémoire du monde*. He wanted to show that the only task necessary for mankind in the search for that unity of culture was that of trying, through the work of every individual, to reassemble the scattered fragments of the universal culture that is being lost" (Hillier, 1985, p. 60).

17 All of them are working for the "lost secret of humanity", even if they aren't aware of this.

18 Ungar defends the proximity of *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* to *Nuit et Bruillard*: "In this instance, the two shots of the reading room guard recall the archival photograph in *Nuit et Bruillard* of a figure whose uniform and cap identify him as a military guard at Pithiviers detention camp (this was the image that French censors had insisted on removing from the film). Aligning the two photographs supports my sense that the happiness or peace to which *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*'s commentary refers as the

One way of viewing this guard is as a veiled reference to censorship. This may be a metaphor for the *Centre Nationale de la Cinématographie*, the institution that censured the last part of *Les Statues Meurent Aussi*, an institution that, like the guard in *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*, guards knowledge while at the same time guarding itself, "saving" us from knowledge.

Hidden behind his glasses and partly obscured by a column, in a darker part of the library's reading room, this guard is all the more present insofar as he remains always already unnoticed. A "visor effect", to recall Derrida's concept (Derrida, 2006, p. 6), destabilizes all visibility – a gaze, like that of an animal, that one cannot cross, both visible and invisible.

Both guards are reminiscent of Kafka's characters, however. It's not only the *Centre Nationale de la Cinématographie* that censures without quite censoring, that doesn't agree with *Les Statues Meurent Aussi* without saying what it is, exactly, that it doesn't agree with – protecting itself by saying that it shouldn't replace the authors,[19] a decision that seems to emanate from the world of Kafka. It's also this ghostly logic. In *The Trial*, Kafka's characters situate themselves at the threshold of visibility, appearing in the most unexpected of places and disappearing after a short time – just like the figures who, like ghosts, wander through the bookshelves: the guards at the beginning of *The Trial*, for example, who disappear as soon as K. leaves his house, only to reappear in the strangest place of all, a storage room at the bank in which K. works; the children, constantly peeking and spying when K. visits the painter; the woman who disappears with the student in an ambiguous scene; the judge at the lawyer's house, who remains half hidden until he is "forced" to emerge. But there's also the officials in *The Castle*, never to be seen but always present.

This gaze, directed behind the columns, just like the gaze of the other guard, looking into the street – doesn't it tell us something about desire? Doesn't it carry with it lustful desire? And what is the object of this desire? Is it the ordered "insects", each and every one of them occupied with their own subject matter? Or is it the architecture of power and knowledge inscribed in the library, this well-oiled machine full of movement, ever expanding, producing countless

library's secret contains a second secret, seen in the film's final sequence as an agent of surveillance kept almost – but not completely – out of sight" (Ungar, 2018, p. 194).

19 Chris Marker reproduces the letter in an appendix to his *Commentaires*.

other words that are always already inscribed in the library – in an endless circular movement? Or perhaps there's a strange proximity between this guard and the first sequences of the book, as if a parallel could be drawn between the administrative apparatuses, the bureaucratic procedures, and an entropic movement – as if these power-knowledge apparatuses had a *secret desire* for chaos, for the dusty rooms, badly lit, full of unread papers.

In Kafka's *The Castle*, in a scene in which K. speaks with the village mayor, the latter asks his wife to find a particular document:

> The woman opened the cupboard at once, while K. and the mayor watched. It was stuffed with papers, and when it was opened two large bundles of files fell out, tied up as you might tie up bundles of firewood. The woman flinched in alarm. "Try lower down, lower down", said the mayor, directing operations from his bed. The woman, gathering up the files in her arms, obediently cleared everything out of the cupboard to get to the papers at the bottom. The room was already half full of papers. "Oh, there's been a lot of work done," said the mayor, nodding, "and this is only a small part of it. I keep the larger part of what I have here in the barn, but most of it has been lost. How can anyone keep all this together? (…)" (Kafka, 2009, p. 56)

This tide of papers that threatens to fill the entire room is evidently the consequence of an administrative apparatus that allows no mistakes whatsoever[20] – nothing, no decision, can ever be forgotten. However, this mass of paperwork, the administrative dimension of every archive and one of the best-known aspects of Kafka's writing, is not the most interesting part of the conversation between K. and the village mayor. At one point, K.'s assistants enter the room:

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20 "It is a working principle of the authorities that they do not even consider the possibility of mistakes being made. The excellent organization of the whole thing justifies that principle, which is necessary if tasks are to be performed with the utmost celerity. Sordini therefore could not enquire in other departments; moreover, those departments would not have responded to his enquiries, because they would have noticed at once that they were being asked to look into the possibility of some mistake" (Kafka, 2009, p. 60).

"Well, they bother me", said K. frankly, letting his gaze wander
from the assistants to the mayor and back to the assistants, and
finding it impossible to tell their three smiles apart. "However,
since you're here," he suggested tentatively, "you can stay and
help the lady look for a file with the words Land Surveyor on it
underlined in blue." The mayor did not object to that; while K.
wasn't allowed to search the papers the assistants were, and they
flung themselves on the files immediately, *but just churning up the
heaps rather than searching properly, and while one of them was
spelling out the words on a piece of paper the other kept snatching
it from his hand*. As for the mayor's wife, *she was kneeling in front
of the empty cupboard and no longer seemed to be searching at all*,
or at least the candle was a long way away from her. (Kafka, 2009,
p. 57, emphasis added)

What is interesting about this passage is not so much the *lack of will* to find
K.'s file – as if the assistants and the mayor's wife *didn't want* to find it. What
is striking is the extent to which they seem to relish the chaotic disorder of the
files, as if this disorder were the true object of their desire.

The gaze of the guard in *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* becomes
contradictory, directed both at this mechanics of knowledge, the organic
metaphor that Sebald uses to characterize the Parisian National Library, and at
the disorder we see both in the initial shots of the documentary and in Kafka's
The Castle. In fact, we cannot decide what comes first: this desire for order, for
the purely mechanical functioning of the library – we are not far from Kafka's
bureaucratic world – or a desire for chaos and entropy, a desire for rooms full
of dust and unread papers. We can only say that, given the proximity of these
objects of desire to each other, we can establish a parallel between order and
chaos, as if the distinction were just a matter of perspective.

The first shots of *Toute la Mémoire du Monde* are therefore neither
the beginning nor the end of the library, neither a principle nor a teleological
goal (as if all libraries where destined to become either an indistinct mass of
papers or, as in the case of the Library of Alexandria, a pile of ashes); this
desire for chaos accompanies the library in all its moments as its double, both

visible and invisible, tracing an obscure desire. Likewise, the ghostly figures we encounter in Resnais's documentary are both folds of the mechanical ordering of the library and the embodiment of a desire for entropy, a desire for the masses of unread papers, of dust-covered documents, on the brink of disappearance.

5.

A MECHANICAL AND ORGANIC METAPHOR

At one point in W. G. Sebald's novel *Austerlitz*, mention is made of Alain Resnais's *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*. Before this mention, however, as a reading prior to any reading, Sebald speaks of a "continual regression", a perpetual motion that continuously adds details:

> In the week I went daily to the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in the rue Richelieu, and usually remained in my place there until evening, in silent solidarity with the many others immersed in their intellectual labors, losing myself in the small print of the footnotes to the works I was reading, in the books I found mentioned in those notes, then in the footnotes to those books in their own turn, and so escaping from factual, scholarly accounts to the strangest of details, in a kind of continual regression expressed in the form of my own marginal remarks and glosses, which increasingly diverged into the most varied and impenetrable of ramifications. My neighbor was usually an elderly gentleman with carefully trimmed hair and sleeve protectors, who had been working for decades on an encyclopedia of church history, a project which had now reached the letter K, so that it was obvious he would never be able to complete it. (Sebald, 2011, pp. 446-447)

Interestingly enough, this "continual regression", which keeps jumping from one detail to the other, producing endless ramifications,[21] is somewhat related to the Library's constant production of words. And if Sebald brings together,

21 There is a melancholic side to these endless ramifications, which Agamben

even if only indirectly, Resnais's documentary and Kafka's work (the curious reference to the "letter K", but also a subsequent reference to a penal colony, recalling a well-known and much-debated story by Kafka), this proximity has to do with this endless production of words but also with an organic and mechanical metaphor:

> Some years later, said Austerlitz, when I was watching a short black and white film about the *Bibliothèque Nationale* and saw *messages racing by pneumatic post* from the reading rooms to the stacks, along what might be described as the library's *nervous system*, it struck me that the scholars, together with the whole apparatus of the library, formed an *immensely complex and constantly evolving creature which had to be fed with myriads of words, in order to bring forth myriads of words in its own turn.* I think that this film, which I saw only once but which assumed ever more monstrous and fantastic dimensions in my imagination, was entitled *Toute la mémoire du monde* and was made by Alain Resnais. Even before then my mind often dwelt on the question of whether there in the reading room of the library, which was full

underscores: "Study, in effect, is *per se* interminable. Those who are acquainted with long hours spent roaming among books, when every fragment, every codex, every initial encountered seems to open a new path, immediately left aside at the next encounter, or who have experienced the labyrinthine allusiveness of that 'law of good neighbors' whereby Warburg arranged his library, know that not only can study have no rightful end, but does not even desire one. Here the etymology of the word *studium* becomes clear. It goes back to a st- or sp- root indicating a crash, the shock of impact. Studying and stupefying are in this sense akin: those who study are in the situation of people who have received a shock and are stupefied by what has struck them, unable to grasp it and at the same time powerless to leave hold. The scholar, that is, is always 'stupid.' But if on the one hand he is astonished and absorbed, if study is thus essentially a suffering and an undergoing, the messianic legacy it contains drives him, on the other hand, incessantly toward closure. This *festina lente*, this shuttling between bewilderment and lucidity, discovery and loss, between agent and patient, is the rhythm of study. (…) This also explains the sadness of the scholar: nothing is bitterer than a long dwelling in potential. Nothing shows better what disconsolate gloom may derive from an incessant postponement of the deed, than the *melancholia philologica* which Pasquali, feigning to transcribe it from Momsen's will, sets down as the enigmatic sum of his own existence as a scholar" (Agamben, 1995, pp. 64-65).

> of a quiet humming, rustling, and clearing of throats, *I was on the Islands of the Blest or, on the contrary, in a penal colony* (…). (Sebald, 2011, p. 488)

Although this last sentence seems to be a clear reference to Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*, what strikes us is this equation between a machine ("messages racing by pneumatic post") and the organic metaphor (the library as a body with a "nervous system") as a means of understanding the function of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Between a machine and this "immensely complex and constantly evolving creature", with its own nervous system, the Library produces and feeds itself with a "myriad of words". These words, ironically, are not due to any sort of hermeneutic reasoning – in the end, they are not to be read; they are what propels the Library.

However, this being which is both creature and machine is always already breaking down, collapsing, always already embracing an entropic dimension:

> Sitting at my place in the reading room, said Austerlitz, I thought at length about the way in which such unforeseen accidents, the fall of a single creature to its death when diverted from its natural path, or the recurrent symptoms of paralysis affecting the electronic data retrieval system, relate to the Cartesian overall plan of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, and I came to the conclusion that in any project we design and develop, the size and degree of complexity of the information and control systems inscribed in it are the crucial factors, so that the all-embracing and absolute perfection of the concept can in practice coincide, indeed ultimately must coincide, with its chronic dysfunction and constitutional instability. (Sebald, 2011, p. 479)

We already encountered this equation of the "Cartesian overall plan of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*" with "chronic dysfunction and constitutional instability" in Kafka's *The Castle* – the equation of order and disorder, ordering and entropy. The Cartesian plan, with its transparency, absence of error, with its mechanical functioning, leads to constitutional dysfunction, a machine *that*

can only produce mistakes and errors – even if, from the machine's perspective, mistakes and errors are impossible.[22]

There is nevertheless a difference between Kafka and Resnais, on the one hand, and Sebald on the other. For the latter, the entropic dimension of the Library as archive is the result of mechanical functioning, as if the blind mechanism can only lead to entropy, to rooms full of dusty papers. For Kafka and Resnais, however, this entropy is achieved not only via purely mechanical functioning but as a consequence of a desire, of the gaze we encounter in *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*: it *wants* the bureaucratic procedures, the order and the ordering it imposes on the Library, the mechanics of knowledge revealed in the documentary, but it also *wants* the disorder, the fake book, the entropic dimension of the archive. Giving itself a rhetoric in which this gaze is born within the brightness, and to the brightness, of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*'s reading room, the guard whom we barely see actually *wants* nothing more than those dusty, badly lit rooms.

22 This explains in part the fake book we see in Resnais's documentary. From a bureaucratic point of view, this book *cannot be* impossible.

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ATTACHMENTS

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Figures 3 and 4
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Figures 5 to 8
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Figures 9 to 11
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COLLECTION:
PAINTINGS, BOXES, SIGHTS AND CLOUDS

Maria João Gamito[1]

ABSTRACT

This chapter takes four literary texts – *Un cabinet d'amateur* by Georges Perec, *Die Neue Melusine* by Goethe, an excerpt from "Spielerglück" by E. T. A. Hoffmann (that appeared in French as "Deux Originaux"), and "El coleccionista de nubes" by Mauricio Montiel Figueiras – as a reference to address the sedentary nature of the collection (associated with a centre and a centripetal impulse, a name and its self-absorption, stable territoriality and its representation), as opposed to the nomadic nature of the contemporary metropolis (associated with decentralization and a centrifugal impulse, anonymity and its multiplication, unstable territoriality and its attendance). The world in a painting, the world in a box, the world as a picture-image and the world as a trace are understood as circumstances of a culture of curiosity that both figure that world in the endless logic of the collection and reconfigure it in the fleeting images of eccentric crowds that circulate, transporting places to other places, each time making them the impermanent landscape of an origin.

KEYWORDS

Collection, Miniature, Fragment, Frame, Deposition.

1.
INTRODUCTION

Collecting, gathering, conserving and classifying the fragmentary and the dispersed are acts of permanence that programmatically invest in the missing element, valuing rarity up to the final object. This object coincides with the collector, who in this sense constitutes the last term of his collection, as Jean Baudrillard (1968) proposed, and the exiled figure in the redemptive experience of the useless and in the contemplative closure of his presence. At the juncture of the two, or in their complicity, possession equates to rescuing objects that, finally freed from the functional pragmatism that justified them, acquire an aura of uniqueness and, coincident with that of the collector, their singular narrative, the same narrative that illuminates all completed places on the notable points of a map drawn from the subjectivity of a point of view. On this map, any point constitutes the visible mark of a personal experience subtracted from the homogeneity of time because only in this way can it refer to the heterogeneous particularity of days.

In "Collection de Sable", Italo Calvino compares a collection to an intimate diary in which the collector inscribes himself day after day, transforming "the course of his existence into a series of objects saved from dispersion" (Calvino, 1986, p. 13). In the same text, and before it, in the vision that elects a sand collection from among all that constitutes an exhibition of "bizarre collections", the sand bottles are understood as samples of the world and its metonymy – the sand in the name of the place, and the place in the name of the collector – which on a reduced scale shows it in the plural fragmentation of its apparitions, forever subtracted from the topological continuity of the visible in the intention that deposits them in its circumstance. A fragment of an interrupted totality, this circumstance obeys both the centripetal impulse of stable territorialities and the impulse of that which – after sending the centres to the visitable ruins of history – tends toward the exteriority in which everything that awaits its representation accumulates, in the out-of-scene – the obscene – in which reside the non-eligibility of the anonymous and the territorial instability of its successive and transitory depositions.

Miniature, fragment, frame, and deposition are the concepts that run through the four literary works that underpin this text. In each of them, the

world concludes itself in the exclusivity of what inhabits it – scenery and the object of the collector's activity – as occurs in a collection, revisited here in the probable declinations of its correspondence to the world: paintings (the world in a painting), boxes (the world in a box), sights (the world as a picture-image) and clouds (the world as a trace).

2.
MINIATURE

The miniature implies a reference, and therefore a lack. Both refer to the model of which it is a reduced scale, the wrong scale, as Susan Sontag (1981) observes, inscribing in it the conditions of its liberation: liberation from the demands of functionality, already compromised by the loss of the relationship with the human body and the measures associated with it – the foot, the fathom, the inch, ... – in which Le Corbusier founded the concept "solidary objects", objects invested in the common cause of the human and in its cooperative mediation with the world; liberation from increasingly shorter cycles of existence, generated by the fascination with the new and the "minimal difference" which the abstraction of technical and technological automatisms makes possible (see Baudrillard, 1968), unrelated to the anthropomorphic or zoomorphic resemblance on which the first automata were based; and finally, liberation from the chains of belonging to the day-to-day of things, which leads them back to the rarity of the unique object and the phantasmagorias that fictionalize it.

In this way, the reduced scale simultaneously embodies a subtraction from the world and an addition to the staging that is confused with it, because only on the condition of its inoperability can the objects figure the spectrality of their representation. In this theatre of the world (*theatrum mundi*), the world itself is miniaturized in the objects that lead the encyclopaedic and circular predisposition of a portable totality – natural objects (*naturalia*), works of art and scientific objects (*artificialia*) – which, in the cabinets of curiosity (*Kunstkammer*) and the cabinets of wonder (*Wunderkammer*), marks the humanism of the Renaissance. In the passage from a readable world to a world cognoscible by the senses, it is the world itself that continuously expands, via the discovery of hitherto unknown territories, via the cult of nature, and via

the interest in science and new technical possibilities that reveal it as a space of floating limits.

The boundless experience of this space is hereafter delegated in the plurality of points of view, established by perspective as a method for representing a world whose centre is for the first time occupied by the human, which constitutes its ordering principle. And if ordering presupposes disposition (putting things in the proper place) and composition (giving each one a turn in everyone's place), it also presupposes the existence of microcosms in which the world contracts in a painting (an amateur cabinet), in a box (a portable museum), in a sight (an image perceived in the disorder of the territory) or in a cloud (a body that is an image).

3.
FRAGMENT

Part of, belonging to. Reference and lack again. Reference to the object and its lack of integrity but also, in the context of a collection, reference to the body-flow attached to the purpose of its completeness, of which it constitutes a part, and the lack of its presence. In this sense, any collection constitutes a body of fragments that flow through continuity and contiguity in the expectation of a conclusion, coincident with the death of the collector. The palpable postponement of this death is then fulfilled in a double operation: the operation of rescuing objects from the inevitability of entropy and that of the unifying acts that synthesize distinct times in the narrative of the symbiotic body – collector and collection – to which they give rise. Upon this body, permanently under construction, hangs the imminent threat of failure, both that which covets the incorruptible totality of the body and that which tends to hold it down in the circularity generated by the centripetal movement that contains it. And it is in this perimeter, irreducible to the probable sequences, that the collection provides – as a text or an image – the absolute experience of totality and the absolute experience of the fragment's completeness.

In the text in which he dedicates the prose poems of *Le spleen de Paris* to Arsène Houssaye, Charles Baudelaire observes that this work has no head or tail – beginning or end – since, "on the contrary, everything in it is simultaneously

head and tail, alternatively and reciprocally" (Baudelaire, 2008, p. 3). He then adds:

> … what fine advantages this combination offers to all of us, to you, to me, and to the reader. We can cut wherever we like – me, my reverie, you, the manuscript, and the reader, his reading; for I don't tie the impatient reader up in the endless thread of a superfluous plot. Pull out one of the vertebrae, and the two halves of this tortuous fantasy will rejoin themselves painlessly. Chop it up into numerous fragments, and you'll find that each one can live on its own. (Baudelaire, 2008, p. 3)

Separated from the totality to which it belongs, the fragment lodges the reader in the perfection of the text, just as a collection places the collector at the centre of the collection and a panorama inscribes the observer at the centre of the image. But because the survival of a text, collection or image lies only in the assumption of its exterior – its eventual redemption – it extends in the space-time adjacency of its off-field, opening itself to the marginal possibility of the framework that defines the limits of a painting (Hermann Raffke's collection), a box (Melusina's palace), a sight (Baron of R.'s collection) or a cloud (Franco's collection).

4.
FRAME

"Framing is … the activity of the frame" (Aumont, 2009, p. 109). It is therefore the frame that generates the image, attracting the visible to its centre or repelling it to its margins, in both cases assuming it – as a place to see and, according to the etymology of the concept of theatre, a place that offers itself to sight: a scene.

The scene is simultaneously the observation device and the presence – or the "presence effect" referred to by Jacques Aumont – revealed in the place that the frame establishes, subtracting it from the observer space and at the same time fixing within it its conditions of existence. It is in the context of this inevitable porosity that Jacques Derrida problematizes the concept of the *parergon*, in terms of that which opposes the work (*ergon*), attributing to it

responsibility for, if not existing, then opening up an absence within it: "[the *parerga*] have a thickness, a surface that sets them apart ... from the integral interior, from the *ergon's* own body, but also from the exterior, from the wall on which the painting is suspended, from the space in which the statue or column is erected" (Derrida, 1978, p. 71). The absence is filled by the frame, "the place of meaning", which, following Derrida, Lynda Nead considers "the place that guarantees the coherence between the object seen and the subject who sees it" (Nead, 1993, p. 6) – a borderline place because it is only at the limit that unity, and the union (coherence) that it requires, is established.

Concretized in the frame, this place of separation – which guarantees the existence of the subject, who, from a distance, observes the stability of a world in which everything can be convincingly represented (possessed) according to the empirical truth of this observation – is also a place of passage which both hides and exhibits itself, retaining and releasing the images and objects that watch the world and fictionalize it in the abyss of narratives and their self-absorption. Therefore, the in-itself of the frame houses the world's inclination toward its own representation, but also the subject, who, inside and outside of it – in this passage – learns the world in a miniaturized and fragmentary way. It is in the absorption of this learning that the collector is absorbed in his collection, whether materialized in a painting (the *mise en abyme* in which it multiplies), in a box (which unfolds in the many rooms of a palace), in a sight (which corrects the territory so it can be constituted as a landscape) or in a cloud (which wears away in its impermanence).

5.

DEPOSITION

Regarding the representation convention established by the practice of oil painting, which, in Renaissance Europe, was contemporary with the advent of perspective, John Berger argues that this kind of painting invented a "way of seeing" whose model "is not so much a framed window opened on to the world as a safe let into the wall, a safe in which the visible has been deposited" (Berger, 1977, p. 109). For it is the visible – and by extension the sensitive – that is desired in the many forms of wealth subtracted from the world, as a presence

or representation, to be deposited in a safe, still obedient to the inertia of the classical frame and the territorial stability it guarantees. But contradictorily, it is in the stillness resulting from this deposition that the world becomes invisible – insensitive, by extension – a lying body asleep in the eternity of its sleep, with the gravity of that which is lowered to earth.

This will be the most radical sense of a sedentary lifestyle, also evident in the persistence of remembrances that scan the accumulation deposited in the worlds-a-part of collections. On its reverse, one will also find the most radical sense of nomadism that characterizes contemporary metropolises, where belonging to the world in which one permanently arrives, without a chance to return, occurs in the perseverance of what is remembered in the deposition of the aura of the world, which transits in anonymity with no traces of common people: people who, eccentric and irreducible to commemorative programs, live their foreign condition everywhere, contextual and intrusive in places and images.

The deposition of the visible and the sensitive, the deposition of the signs that designate them to silence the absence and postpone oblivion. The deposition of singularity and its surrender. Common to all of these is a reference and a lack, or rather a reference to the world and to what is missing from it, fragmentarily experienced as a totality, which the place of meaning – the frame – guarantees in the commitment of opposite gravitational movements. In this place, any collection acquires the meaning of a microcosm collected and inhabited by the collector, one that delegates its own conclusion, understood in the double sense of completion and closure: in a painting (the prefiguration of the tomb in which the collection and the collector will be deposited), in a box (the deposition of the world in the world), in a sight (the revelation of the territory in the fleeting image of a landscape) or in a cloud (the trace of the body that resembles it).

6.

PAINTINGS

Taking as a reference the painting *Le cabinet d'amateur de Corneille van der Geest lors de la visite des Archiducs* (1628) by Willem van Haecht, in *A Gallery Portrait* Georges Perec (1996) describes in detail the painting collection of the brewer Hermann Raffke, reproduced in the painting that gives the book its title.

Paintings representing amateur cabinets – maintaining the relative proportions, and on the scale of the illusory three-dimensionality of the space that integrates them – succeed one another in the juxtaposition of the frames that cover the walls, making them disappear, as they do in the cabinets themselves. Victor Stoichita (1999) calls them chambers of rhetoric given that the cabinets are organized in the manner of the palaces and theatres of memory and, like them, constitute mnemonic devices of discourse spatialization. A frequent peculiarity of these paintings is that they show the collector presenting his collection, being a point of convergence of all the presences because he is the ordering centre of the visible and the origin of the self-reflective discourse that displays them.

The painting *Le cabinet d'amateur* (Perec, 1996) shows on the background wall, and on the axis of the collector's gaze, the painting that represents him in front of the collection, absorbed in the painting that multiplies in a false *mise en abyme* because, in each repetition, it is corrupted by imperceptible changes that divert the narrative to an unexpected conclusion. The *mise en abyme* corresponds to the spatial limit of the depth of the painting, to the maximum exponentiation of its geological character, which, in turn, corresponds to the deposition, in the abyss, of the matter of the visible, which, in order to be seen – to become spatially and temporally diegetic – requires the invisibility of matter.

It is in this double and opposite deposition that the picture painted by Heinrich Kürz prefigures the safe and the tomb and, in both, the impossibility of leaving the space of representation, coincident with the microcosm of the collection and the collector and the prediction of his inseparable grave. When he dies, Raffke is buried according to the provisions of his will: dressed in the robe he is wearing in the picture, sitting in the same armchair and enclosed in a basement which, to scale, reproduces the space depicted in the painting. The only difference is that on the easel, situated to the right of the collector, the *Portrait of Bronco McGinnis* – who boasted of being the most tattooed man in the world, although only the tattoos on his chest were real – has been replaced by Raffke's portrait.

This exchanging of portraits integrates itself into the puzzles that involve the alteration of the paintings, constituting clues to their solution, posthumously

revealed in the purpose of the painting and the collection represented in it. A few years following the death of Heinrich Kürz, whose real name was Humbert Raffke and who was the collector's nephew, the buyers of the collection's works were informed by letter that all of the works had in fact been created by him as part of a revenge plot devised by his uncle, conceived upon the latter's discovery that the first paintings he had bought were fakes. *Le cabinet d'amateur* (Perec, 1996) was thus the painstaking staging of a counterfeit collection miniaturized in a painting and the *mise en abyme* enclosed upon its repetition – apparently equal – within the limits of the painting and beyond any possibility of redemption. This is because the collection never existed, and the collector, who is its sole inhabitant, can only be absorbed in the contemplation of the posthumous future of his death.

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7.

BOXES

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In Johann W. Goethe's text *The New Melusina*, a box travels the world, entrusted by a mysterious girl to a boy with the instructions that he transport it, "hold it level and do not shift or shake it in the slightest" (Goethe, 1983, p. 103), and that he place it, at night, on a table in a locked, vacant room. One night, when peeking through a slot in the box from which light is radiating, he sees

> ... a room brightly lit with candles and furnished with much taste, even magnificence, exactly as if I were looking down from an aperture in the ceiling into a drawing room of royalty. It is true that I could see only a part of the room, but from that I could surmise the rest. ... Meanwhile a young woman with a book in her hand approached from the other side of the room, and immediately I recognized her as my wife, although her figure had shrunk to the smallest proportions. ... [I]mmediately after, just as I was on the point of looking in again to convince myself that it had not been a dream, the light went out and I peered into blank darkness (Goethe, 1983, p. 108).

In the aloofness of the journey of which it constitutes a fixed point, the box is simultaneously a reduced model of the royal palace and the palace, closed upon itself and the lives of its inhabitants. And if, as Susan Sontag writes, "[t]o miniaturize is to make portable – the ideal form of possessing things for a wanderer, or a refugee" (Sontag, 1981, p. 124), then what is possessed by owning the box is the collection of inhabitants who, protected by invisibility and secrecy, live on the Liliputian scale of a portable museum – not what Marcel Duchamp applied to the *Boîtes-en-valise*, which contained miniaturized reproductions of his works, but a museum of originals delivered to a life that animates them day and night, in ignorance of what occurs beyond the walls of the box, where the boy who transports them lives in ignorance of its interior.

In this reciprocal inaccessibility, one loses the circumstances of contemplation and the intentions of the creator, who, following the creation of the world, needed to create those who would contemplate it. It is the girl's task – who in the end is a princess leaving the palace to emerge in the world, to ensure the continuity of the dwarves' lineage – to explain the mystery of the box and the reduced world that replicates the world, travelling inside it with no horizon. And just as the horizon is the first trace of the landscape, its abolition converts the box into an autonomous world that is accidentally accessed, peeking through a slot, in anticipation of the black box of photography, from which, in its predisposition to the image, the world comes out miniaturized.

If the slot transforms the observed into an image, then the door that opens, in the unfolding of the box that reveals the palace, is the threshold – the frame – that the boy crosses to inhabit it, on the condition of reducing his stature, forgetting his previous life and the scale on which he had lived it. After becoming one of the inhabitants of the palace and one of the objects of the collection he transported, the boy regains his stature and returns to the world, next to the box that, containing only coins, is much heavier than it was when it guarded the palace that travelled the world, and where it can only land as a staging, on various scales, of the world deposited in the world.

8.
SIGHTS

The Baron of R. is a collector of sights and the protagonist of the short story "Deux originaux" by E. T. A. Hoffmann.[2] Always on the go, he travels everywhere, observing his destinations via telescope from an elevated point of view, looking for the landscapes (the images) that are hidden in them, which only the gaze can discover through a continuous framing. This framework, interrupting the extensive continuity of the territory, aims not at its reproduction but at the suppression of everything that interposes in it as an obstacle to the full enjoyment of the landscape that coincides with it territorially, on the condition that the observer does not belong to the reality he observes, which is manifested in the distance that allows him to observe it from a fixed point.

When, in order to access the landscape, it is necessary to chop down parts of a grove, the Baron of R. pays the owner to cut down the trees that, inside the frame, compromise the visibility of the following plans. Or, when a property obscures his perspective – simultaneously sight and point of view – he negotiates the possibility of setting it on fire, a purpose which, ultimately unsuccessful, does not prevent him from continuing to search for what is not immediately present. "To look upon nature is a fact of culture", writes Régis Debray (1992, p. 264), a fact the intentionality of which is projected onto everything that can be painted – wherein resides the picturesque – but also onto everything that can become a picture: "A new rectangle of visibility here insulated by a 'window' (the window that is already the Albertinian picture), put there by a 'history of art', which is another window cut out in the general history of men" (Debray, 1992, p. 265).

These rectangles of visibility – or legibility – are pictures in which the world fragments itself, obeying the centripetal or centrifugal nature of the framework and, in this opposite movement, temporarily withdrawing from its

2   To be sure, "Deux originaux" is the title of the story in the French ed. only (Hoffmann, 1836). The latter consists of a French translation of an excerpt of the short story "Spielerglück" (Hoffmann, 2001, pp. 255-295), namely, of a story told by one of its characters – a tale within a tale – about Baron von R.

entirety. The same is true of the landscapes built by the Baron of R., intervening by subtraction in the territory that is deposited in them, making it coincident with them, in the exact overlapping of objects and objects made signs, one and the other subject to a single process of dissolution, one and the other in process and already ruins, entrusted to the presence of a gaze and to everything it retains.

Having achieved his goal, and after briefly admiring the landscape the construction of which he ordered and to which he attended, the Baron of R. resumes his march in another direction, without ever returning to the same place. In this project of correcting the world, suppressing the unimaginable in the image, it is the very world that is collected, as an unrepeatable and ephemeral experience – as reality, and therefore as a representation, not that representation of the map which, in Borges's tale, lies in rags on the world it overlays but rather, also resulting from the projection of a gaze, that which one moves through and remembers, from window to window – from frame to frame – between the various frameworks that constitute the collection and the immateriality in which it subsists.

A memory of the world and its representation, a proof and an essay deposited in that memory without traces, this collection consists of the experience of the fleeting presences that are collected: the presences and the desire to contemplate them, as enduring as the collector's lifetime.

<div align="center">9.</div>

<div align="center">CLOUDS</div>

When asked about what he was dedicated to, Franco replied that he was a cloud collector because he was the clouds. In Mauricio Montiel Figueiras's short story "El coleccionista de nubes", the life of the collector – of whom nothing else is known – is divided into two "hemispheres": the first corresponding to the collection and accumulation of photographs of cloudy skies, on postcards or in clippings from newspapers, magazines and encyclopaedias; the second filled with the production of his photographs, i.e. with his clouds.

The collection of photographs is a collection of clouds. As Susan Sontag observes, "[t]o collect photographs is to collect the world" (Sontag, 2002, p. 3)

miniaturized – photography being miniaturization *par excellence*, Sontag also says – which adheres to them as a fragment of a totality out of which it has been cut. A double clipping operation obeys the two phases of Franco's collection. In the first he cuts out the photographs, removing them from the entirety of a text or an image; in the second what is cut out is the sky itself, surrounding the capricious body of the clouds that temporarily cover it up.

As both revelations and traces of its presence – from its here and now – Franco's clouds accumulate, like photographs, to produce a place, a place that is identical to itself, covering the earth and reflected in it, relegating it to the place of the frame. Or on the contrary: an earth that is identical to itself and that, surrounded by the sky, in place of the frame – and out of it – is reflected in it. In this reflexivity of places and images and the equivalence of their reciprocal projections lies the concept of contemplation and of what, within it, combines the traceless flight of birds in a fragment of the sky with the consecration of a place on earth, open to the possibility of its desecration. Decentred and centrifugal, as nomadic as the clouds and as anonymous as the crowds that roam it, the desecrated place is the contemporary metropolis that circulates the world, in the migratory flow of places and images that invariably repeat it.

In the porosity of the frame, this migratory flow is led by the crowds that, carrying the signs of their humanity, glide in the obscure procession that will always leave them in the same place – the place of the frame and the place of the world – which is the place they occupy in William Kentridge's *Atlas Procession* (2000) and the place occupied by Franco until the day he decided to fade into his collection. On that day he spread out his best photographs in the bathroom, got into the bathtub, which he had filled with gasoline, and, before setting himself on fire, thought about how his whole life was justified at that moment and in the metamorphosis it guaranteed: to be a cloud, even if a cloud of smoke; to be the brief trace of his body, now a cloud.

Everywhere a foreigner, he could be the "enigmatic man" who, when asked by Baudelaire what he likes the most – family, friends, homeland, wealth, all stable circumstances that are unknown to him – answers: "I love the clouds… the clouds passing… up there… up there… the marvelous clouds!" (Baudelaire, 2008, p. 5).

When Italo Calvino moves away from the window where the sand collection was displayed, he considers it a "graveyard of landscapes reduced to a desert, deserts over which the wind no longer blows" (Calvino, 1986, p. 16). Yet he also thinks that the collector's intention may have been to move away from the turbulence of the lived so that he could have "the sandy substance of all things, touching the silica structure of existence" (Calvino, 1986, p. 17).

Exiled to the objects of his collection, the collector is in this sense a collector of sand into which the world is eroding: in the painting of an amateur cabinet (Hermann Raffke's collection) and in the *mise en abyme* in which it multiplies, prefiguring the tomb in which the collection and collector will be deposited; in the box that is a portable museum (Melusina's palace), unfolding in the many rooms of the palace, where the world is deposited in the world; in the sight (the Baron of R.'s collection) that corrects the territory and transfers it to the fleeting landscape that temporarily reveals it; in the cloud, the remains of a body that is an image (Franco's collection), consumed in the impermanence of the trace with which it is confused. Yet therein lies the possibility of its liberation because, as Calvino concludes, "perhaps it is in fixing the sand as sand, the words as words, that we can come close to understanding how and to what extent the eroded and crushed world can thereby still find its foundation and its model" (Calvino, 1986, p. 17).

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PANORAMIC PRESENTATION:
CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The idea of a panoramic presentation (*übersichtliche Darstellung*) is of fundamental importance. One the one hand, it denotes a clear view, for example of a landscape, a language game, or a city; on the other, it denotes a concept that proceeds from a comparative movement that assembles and integrates images, ways of speaking, fragments, etc., bringing them together by way of intermediate links forming a meaningful whole.

What is it about panoramic presentations that allows us, with each new view, to see with greater exactness and precision all that we perceive? Why can it be said that they are an exercise in fairness, that is, justice in relation to the facts described? Things are newly displayed; aspects revealed. Where once there was misunderstanding, transparency is made possible. For these reasons, Wittgenstein considers the idea vital, and what he says in connection with it is truly instrumental to grasping its worth and breadth. This chapter attempts to shed light on some of the important aspects of Wittgenstein's use of the expression.

It also briefly deals with Aldo Rossi's analogues, viz., his analogical thought, which he applied to architecture and the city, since they can also contribute to the characterization of such a view. For Rossi, analogy involves creating associations by way of remembrance, thus finding similarities between things, salvaging them from the passage of time (retrieving them from their chronological order by integrating and relating them according to their affective weight), and presenting them anew – in a plan, in a drawing, or in writing.

KEYWORDS

Philosophical Methodologies, Conceptual vs. Empirical, Analogy, Affinity, *Philosophical Investigations*, § 122.

> *Cartographers call blank spaces on a map "sleeping beauties".*
> Annie Dillard, 2016, p. 178

> *I always write fragments, but those who understand*
> *will glimpse a unified world view.*
> Ludwig Wittgenstein, 2000, Ms 108, p. 152 (8.5.1930)

1.
THE COLOUR-OCTAHEDRON

Far from being a fixed and closed totally, a panoramic presentation is a perceptual operation, a rational and imaginative action. Given its dynamic character, conceptually delimiting and fixing it is a challenging task – it is prone to slipping through our fingers; we run the risk of stopping it in its tracks, thus obstructing it. This does not mean, however, that we cannot attempt to trace aspects of its physiognomy and to decipher its internal logic. How do we elaborate panoramic presentations? The plural is more fitting than the singular, for it is an endless endeavour, reproduced in moments of clear comprehension, in revealing synopses of what we observe: in ways of acting, speaking, valuing, relating, retelling, etc. Yet its complexity and extended dilation should not lead to a muddled grasp of the idea. Quite the contrary. Hence the need to bring to light its conceptual and methodological aspects.

There is no better place to begin to characterize panoramic presentation as a concept and as a method than Wittgenstein's philosophy, thanks especially to a specific remark: *Philosophical Investigations* § 122 (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 54-55ee).[2]

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2   It is worth noting that "panoramic presentation" is a translation of the German expression "übersichtliche Darstellung" (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 54) – addressed in paragraph 122 of the *Investigations* – that differs from Elizabeth Anscombe's translation, and Peter Hacker and Joachim Schulte's as well. There are several other good ways to translate the phrase, such as "synopsis" and "clear view". Elizabeth Anscombe's "perspicuous representation" is of course adequate and scholarly. Nevertheless, "representation" (even if accompanied by the word "perspicuous")

Here, Wittgenstein speaks of the fundamental importance of panoramic presentation, claiming that it designates "our form of presentation" [*Darstellungsform*], the "way we see things", and asking whether it is a "worldview" [*Weltanschauung*]. But what is it, exactly? The only concrete, definite image that Wittgenstein comes up with to illustrate what he means – namely, the colour-octahedron – appears in the first observation in which he

cannot but carry the weight of what can be called a somewhat Tractarian stillness and rigidity (the same goes for Hacker and Schulte's "surveyable representation"). Lest we forget, "representation" figures prominently in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein, 2015), a book that is intent on showing how language represents the world utterly and completely, without leaving room to manoeuvre any reflection besides it, that is to say, any attribution of meaning external to the connection established within a proposition with sense between *a* name and *a* thing. A representation of a state of affairs is quite different from a panoramic presentation, despite the active element of *Abbildung* that it involves. Be that as it may, this critique is not expressly worried about the fact that "representation" is not as faithful a rendering of *Darstellung* as the word "presentation", and that it is better as a translation of *Vorstellung* – which, when translated into English as "representation", loses, at least partially, the animated and energetic aspect of that operation, which in the original also designates the imagination (among other things). In the *Tractatus*, representations are images and thoughts that duplicate – adamantly, steadily – a given state of affairs (moreover, Wittgenstein uses the verb *darstellen* only rarely to refer to language in the *Tractatus*). It is well known that Wittgenstein would go on to almost completely forsake his fixed (some would say obdurate or unyielding) Tractarian stance (for example, so-called "resolute" readings such as Conant, 2000, Conant and Diamond, 2004, and Diamond, 2000) and gradually adopt a different view of language that better accommodates its plasticity in terms of meaning. (Meaning would become synonymous with use.) "Presentation" seems to better account for the open-ended, fluid and flexible appeal of a *Darstellung* – and for Wittgenstein's unique brand of philosophical research after the *Tractatus*. In the *Tractatus*, it is language, not the subject, that represents the world – although the subject is given the possibility of (mystically) experiencing the world as a limited whole. In the *Investigations*, the way we see the world loses its former rigidity; an active element marks the contemplation, one that was not there before. How we present facts in panoramic presentations is bound to how words acquire meaning through use. True, contemplation in the *Tractatus* did not simply amount to a passive taking in of the world around us. Really accepting the world of fact takes true grit. The subject realizes that the world is independent of his or her will and that the only way to become independent of all "happening and being-so" (Wittgenstein, 2015, p. 233, n. 6.41 [C. K. Ogden and F. P. Ramsey transl.]) is to come to terms with the impossibility of bending whatever happens to his or her will. The change that the *Investigations* brings about does not give itself easily to an effortless, smooth reconstruction; still, the fact that in it there is little to no residue of the earlier quiet observation of the world should at least be mentioned. Still reflection becomes a creative process when form is given to a panoramic presentation.

uses the expression:[3] "The octahedron presentation is a panoramic presentation of the grammatical rules" (Wittgenstein, 2000, Ms 108, p. 89, [23.02.1930]).[4] Wittgenstein reworks this observation in various manuscripts (Mss) and typescripts (Tss), and it is noteworthy that the octahedron is continually associated with clarity, grammar, and rules. In Ts 213, for instance, he says that:

> Colour space is *roughly* presented by an octahedron, the pure colours being at the corners – and this presentation is grammatical, not psychological. On the other hand, to say that under such and such circumstances – say – a red after-image appears *is* psychological (*it* may or may not occur, the other is *a priori*; the one can be ascertained through experiments, the other can't).
>
> What Mach[5] calls a thought-experiment is of course not an experiment at all. At bottom it is a grammatical examination.
>
> The colour-octahedron is grammar because it tells us that we can talk about a reddish blue, but not about a reddish green, etc.

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3   Why a Platonic solid is a very interesting question, though one that I cannot investigate here. Geometers have studied Platonic solids for ages; their name derives, of course, from Plato, who in the *Timaeus* argues that the four elements – earth, water, air, and fire – were made of these regular solids. This elemental dive into the fabric of things, viewed side by side with Wittgenstein's chosen example of a panoramic presentation, leads to viewing the fact that colour is how the real reveals itself (we could describe our field of vision using colours and stating their relation in space) under a more metaphysical light than usual.

4   If not stated otherwise, all translations are my own. Cf. also Wittgenstein, 2000, Ts 209, p. 1 [1.05.1930?-30.11.1930?]: "The octahedron presentation is a clear presentation of the grammatical rules. Above all, our grammar lacks clarity". The importance of the colour-octahedron for Wittgenstein cannot be stressed enough. Eighteen years after it first appeared in his remarks, he says the following: "I could imagine someone looking at the colour-octahedron & saying: 'It's wonderful how everything here corresponds to the nature of colour!' So a differently arranged scheme would not be so good. – Or would it be just as good but present something else? (I.e., correspond to another concept?) Or should I say of some scheme that it corresponds to no concept at all, or to a concept that is not important? Should I say: 'The colour-octahedron presents a tremendously important concept'?" (Wittgenstein, 2000, Ms 137, p. 6b [5.02.1948].

5   Ernst Mach (1838-1916), Austrian physicist and philosopher.

The presentation via the octahedron is a *panoramic* presentation of the grammatical rules.

If someone were to state: "Our visual space is in colour", then we'd be tempted to answer: "But we can't even imagine (conceive of) it otherwise". Or: "If it weren't in colour then it would differ from our visual space in the sense in which a sound differs from a colour". But one could say, more correctly: "Then it simply wouldn't be what we call 'visual space'". In grammar the application of language is also described – what we would like to call the connection between language and reality. If it weren't described then on the one hand grammar would be incomplete, and on the other it couldn't be completed from what was described. In the sense in which we can't think of it otherwise, "being coloured" is contained in the definition of the concept "visual space", i.e. in the grammar of the words "visual space" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 322e/Ts 213, p. 441r [19.03.1933?-15.04.1933?]).[6]

Some preliminary comments are in order. A constant feature of Wittgenstein's thought is that he never equates or approximates philosophical research, which is conceptual in nature, to scientific research, which is markedly empirical. He always takes great care to separate the waters: in the *Tractatus*, for example, he states that philosophy is something above or below science, but not alongside it (cf. Wittgenstein, 2015, p. 167, n. 4.111). That he takes such care is not the result of a naïve conception of science on his part.[7] The distinction between philosophy and science results rather from an acute awareness of the difference between the two – as regards the substance of their work and their aims – and from a conviction that the search for causes, the testing of hypotheses and the realization of explanations and theories concern not philosophy but science

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6 Translation slightly modified. On the topic of Wittgenstein and colour after the *Tractatus*, see, e.g., Lagerspetz, 2009.

7 Wittgenstein was not unaware of its contributions – we would do well to recall his background in engineering and the fact that, while studying in Manchester, before moving to Cambridge and dedicating himself to philosophy, he invented and patented a new aero-engine, for which he built a (highly complicated for the time) combustion chamber. Cf. Cater and Lemco, 2009.

alone. His harsh criticism of belief in progress and unshakeable faith in the ability of scientific innovation to bring peace to people's search for meaning and the sense of life is an effect of that awareness; from early on, Wittgenstein holds that human problems are not solvable via the advancement of science.[8]

After the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein's interest in the resolution of scientific questions did not increase whatsoever – even though the nature of his work had broadened, extending beyond the task of drawing the limits of sense from within language to include observations on words and depth grammar (cf. Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 176e-177e, § 664), their intimate connection to a form of life (cf. Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 11e-12e, § 19 and pp. 14e-15e, § 23), and how expectation and fulfilment make contact in language (cf. Wittgenstein 1982, pp. 35-36 and see Gil, 1998, pp. 65-78) – observations whose scope properly surpasses those limits, thus launching a mode of philosophizing that differs from the previous one. Although clarity about facts continues to be a core value, there is not *one* single method for achieving it but several (cf. Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 56e-57e, § 133). Besides, logic is no longer possessed of a sublime and unique aura *qua* singular structure (cf. Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 46e-47e, § 89) and takes on a stylistic quality, namely through grammar, which expresses the coherence of uses of words (that is to say, its rules) and which we can try to elucidate via a series of methods – for example thought experiments, which are not empirical but conceptual exercises. The colour-octahedron drives the point home, since it decisively and positively places the investigation on conceptual ground. Our immediate reaction to colour may well be that of thinking that it is an empirical matter; however, a clear presentation of the grammatically allowed moves in speaking of colour with sense by means of a geometric model should suffice to show that we have left the empirical behind and have entered the realm of the philosophical – although not to the extent that we find ourselves so completely removed from our ordinary experience of the world that we end up adopting a position like the Tractarian view, which resulted in the colour exclusion problem (which, as luck would have it, ended up bringing the whole edifice down) (cf. Wittgenstein, 1993, pp. 29-35). Indeed, it could be argued that, far from it, since what Wittgenstein is

8   Cf. Wittgenstein, 2006, pp. 7e-8e, 20e, 33e, 56e, 65e, 69e, 70e, 72e, 82e. See also Monk, 1999.

aiming to do is "to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use" (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 53e, § 116), what matters is "the *speaking* of a language", which "is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 14e-15e, § 23). For our form of life, "visual space is in colour"; we humans "can't even imagine (conceive of) it otherwise". It is a fact (though not factual, i.e., once again, it is conceptual – not empirical).[9] To say that "visual space is in colour" is to make a philosophical remark that highlights an aspect of reality; it is not a true/false thesis to the degree that it actually does not say something that can be disproved.[10] We can imagine facts that are comparable or similar to a fact we are considering – i.e. analogues that may help us to better understand what lies before our eyes – but can we picture its contradiction?[11] We would not be able to find or come up with something – an experiment – that would controvert the fact that "visual space is in colour". When Wittgenstein says that the colour-octahedron is a grammatical presentation, he distinguishes it from the psychological proposition that declares that "under such and such circumstances – say – a red after-image appears". The latter, being probable, may or may not occur; we can test its actuality by conducting

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9   The difficulty here is indeed enormous; as Wittgenstein says elsewhere, "[n]ot empiricism and yet realism in philosophy, that is the hardest thing" (Wittgenstein, 1978, p. 325, VI, § 23). For a thorough discussion of this remark, see Diamond, 1991. See also Moyal-Sharrock, 2004, p. 4: "(…) Wittgenstein never wavered: from his explicit expulsion, in the *Tractatus*, of the empirical from the realm of philosophy, to the realization, in the *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, of the difficulty in keeping the empirical outside the periphery of philosophy without thereby losing touch with life."

10 On this cf. Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 312: "What is the nature of our investigation? Am I investigating the cases that I give as examples with a view toward their probability, or their actuality? No, I'm just presenting what is possible, and am therefore giving grammatical examples". In addition, see, Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 179: "One might also give the name philosophy to what is possible / present / before all new discoveries and inventions."

11 Consider, for instance, what Wittgenstein says, much later on (Wittgenstein, 2000, Ts-233a, p. 72, [1.08.1948?-31.10.1948?]) about thinking of "certain facts differently" and in completely unrelatable and extraneous ways: "you can no longer imagine the application of certain concepts, because the rules of their application have no analogue (*kein Analogon*) under the new circumstances. 'If men did not generally agree about the colours of things, if disagreements were not exceptions, our concept of colour could not exist.' No: – our concept of colour would not exist."

an experiment. The former he describes as *a priori* since it cannot be ascertained thus. If we examine the colour-octahedron and find that "we can talk about a reddish blue, but not about a reddish green, etc.", that is because it is a "thought-experiment", "of course not an experiment at all. At bottom it is a grammatical examination" given that it shows the moves in language that we can perform with sense – not because of some causal link between such and such circumstances and a coloured image eventually appearing, e.g., in our mind's eye – related to our having learned to recognize a certain point in our visual space as a specific colour, which we can locate in between other shades, and to see that it is internally related to differently coloured points.[12]

What a grammatical examination is – what grammar is – is a question that can no longer be put to the side at this point. Answering it fully, however, would require a book-length study.[13] A speedy description – for the purposes of briefly illustrating what grammar means for Wittgenstein – suffices to elucidate what is on the table. Following what we have seen thus far, it can be said that grammar describes the rules of language for using words with sense. That is why the octahedron is a grammatical presentation: it shows the rules for speaking of colour with sense, for instance when describing visual space. Of course, rules are another concept in need of clarification, but it will suffice to say that they constitute the directions or instructions for using words. These are not written

12 As in the following observation: "If I am given two shades of colour that are close together – let's say they're reddish – then I can't possibly be in doubt whether both are situated between red and blue, both between red and yellow, or the one between red and blue and the other between red and yellow. And when we determine this we will also have determined whether both are mixed with blue, or with yellow, or whether the one is mixed with blue and the other with yellow; and this holds true no matter how close together one makes the shades of colour, so long as we're able to distinguish between the pigments in these colours at all" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 345e). Also consider what Wittgenstein says immediately before: "To be sure, one can also arrange all the shades of colour along a straight line, say with black and white as borders, as is often done. If one then applies some rules so as to exclude certain transitions, the resulting picture of the line will then have the same kind of topological nexus as on an octahedron. This is completely analogous to the relationship between ordinary language and a mode of expression that is 'logically clarified'. Both are completely equivalent to each other; it's just that in the one the rules of grammar are expressed simply by its outward appearance" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 345e).

13 Luckily, such a study already exists in the literature (cf. Uffelmann, 2018).

anywhere,[14] but grammatical examinations such as those afforded by the colour-octahedron allow us to get a grip on them, precisely because grammar not only describes the rules of language for using words with sense (this is its methodological aspect) but also reveals something about their meaningful utterance (this could be termed its conceptual aspect), which, as it were, exceeds the surface effects – what "immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word… the way it is used in the sentence structure, the part of its use… that can be taken in by the ear" (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 176e-177e, § 664) – and accounts for the different meanings a word can have on different occasions, thus showing its depth of signification, or "depth grammar" (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 176e-177e, § 664).

Finally, Wittgenstein considers the investigation of grammar to be "fundamental in the same sense in which we may call language fundamental – say its own foundation" (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 169).

2.
INFLUENCE AND CRITIQUE OF SPENGLER
AND APPRAISAL OF FRAZER

It is on some of the above-mentioned methods, that is to say, the techniques that help to illuminate the grammar of the use of our words, that we should focus our attention, since they are key to panoramic presentations. And these – which might involve or come about through thought experiments, analogies, descriptions, the detection and invention of intermediate links, as well as the recognition of affinities – in turn, are key to gaining a clearer view of grammar. In fact, since the former are not final but a series of exercises and the latter is ceaselessly in need of clarification, their adequacy – or appropriateness – is manifest. Although Wittgenstein does not think that we must "refine the system of rules in fantastic ways" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 203e) or complete it,[15] he does want "to remove the confusions and anxieties that stem from the difficulty

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14 And there are cases where we "make up the rules as we go along… even where we alter them as we go along" (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 43e-44e, § 83).

15 Cf. the above quotation from Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 322e/Ts 213, p. 441r [19.03.1933?-15.04.1933?].

of seeing the system all at a glance" (Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 203e). He also holds that our idea of the geography of language is not sufficient to allow us to orient ourselves by its rules at all times (cf. Wittgenstein, 2005, p. 312). We need only consider the great diversity of language games – itemized below – and their variation over time (the probability of their falling into disuse and other ones taking their place, thus configuring new possibilities of meaning that will eventually require clarification)[16] to become attentive to and heedful of that difficulty.

Thus, before going on to see what Wittgenstein says about the concept of a panoramic presentation in the *Investigations*, we should first continue to attempt a kind of natural history of the term in his thought – one that, albeit concise, should not fail to mention the authors who possibly inspired him. The aim is to give an overarching view of what this type or style of philosophical viewpoint might encompass and to then turn to Aldo Rossi in an attempt to gather useful insights on analogical thought that may enlighten us further. The latter will help us to delineate how a panoramic presentation is actualized (and moreover, how we can attain it when trying to understand urban life and the experience of the city).

The many panoramic presentations called for by the aforementioned diversity of language games and uses should give rise to increasingly comprehensive synopses, not a discombobulated profusion of vistas. The former should generate confidence in the meaning of words. Even if departing from multiple and sometimes fragmentary experiences of the real, they should facilitate a clear vision of the world and, moreover, a clear vision of our situated experience and the many narratives we might come up with to describe it and give it sense. But how do we achieve such a reconfiguration of our experience – one that does justice to the facts without compromising the clarity of our account? How do we reach the equilibrium necessary to describe an immense, vibrant variety while remaining clear? The difficulty lies in the fact that such a description has as its object not a dead, congealed reality but a living organism: human expression. The answer lies in part with analogy as a method, and a

16 Cf. Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 14e-15e, §23: "this diversity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten."

consideration of Spengler and his influence on Wittgenstein is crucial if we are to understand its import and consequences, beginning with the dictum: "The means of knowing dead forms is mathematical law. The means of understanding living forms is analogy" (Spengler, 1997, p. 4).

In his famous biography of Wittgenstein, Ray Monk considers Spengler an important figure in the gallery of thinkers from whom Wittgenstein drew inspiration – in addition to possibly having detected in his work a pessimistic voice similar to his own. In *The Decline of the West* (*Der Untergang des Abendlands*), Spengler distinguishes between the "Principle of Form" and the "Principle of Law": "with the former stood history, poetry and life; with the latter physics, mathematics and death" (Monk, 1991, p. 302). This distinction survives in Wittgenstein's thought; it is very much alive in the way he puts analogies to good use, namely in the service of the form of presentation that he qualifies as vital. Thus, it is worth enquiring into the extent of Spengler's influence and how it manifests itself in Wittgenstein's thinking, especially his writing from the 1930s (on this matter, see Schulte, 2017), a remarkable period if we are to try to understand the path that led from the *Tractatus* to the *Investigations*. G. H. von Wright, for example, observes that Wittgenstein took up Spengler's idea of an *Ursymbol* – although Wittgenstein instead uses the word "*Urbild*" (translated as "prototype" in the quotations below) – to arrive at his notion of "family resemblances".[17] Wittgenstein held that despite many "irresponsibilities", there were "many real, significant thoughts" (Wittgenstein, 2003, p. 25 [6.5.1930]) in the *Decline of the West*, many of them close to what he himself had often thought. However, although he was undeniably influenced by Spengler's writings, Wittgenstein did not merely digest them passively:

> Spengler could be better understood if he said: I am *comparing* different periods of culture with the lives of families; within the family there is a family resemblance [*Familienähnlichkeit*], while

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17 "This characterizes each of the great cultures and constitutes for Wittgenstein, when he writes about it, what he calls 'family resemblances' among the various manifestations of culture – its mathematics, architecture, religion, social and political organization, and so on" (von Wright, 1982, p. 213).

you will also find a resemblance between members of different families; family resemblance differs from the other sort of resemblance in such & such ways etc. What I mean is: We have to be told the object of comparison [*Vergleichsobjekt*], the object from which this approach [*Betrachtungsweise*] is derived, so that injustices [*Ungerechtigkeiten*] do not constantly slip into the discussion. Because then we shall willy nilly ascribe what <u>is true</u> of the prototype [*Urbild*] <u>of the approach</u> to the object to which we are applying the approach as well; & we claim "it *must always be…*" (…)

But since we confuse prototype & object we find ourselves dogmatically conferring on the object properties which only the prototype necessarily possesses. (…)

One should thus always ask when exaggerated dogmatic claims are made: What is actually true in this. Or again: In what case is that actually true (Wittgenstein, 2006, pp. 21e-22e [Ms 111 119: 19.8.1931]).

Wittgenstein's assessment is not inessential – although this is not the place to analyse it properly – since he believed that Spengler ended up imparting and forcing onto the object properties that belong only to the prototype used for studying it, thus turning it from a term of comparison into an explanatory model. Clearly, Wittgenstein does not want to impute to what is observed the properties of the image used as a simile for it – that would be taking it too far for the sake of the approach, something that would result, or which results, as he points out, in dogmas and injustices. And since Wittgenstein thought that the "only task is to be just" – "[t]hat is, we must only point out and resolve injustices in philosophy, and not posit new parties – and creeds" (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 181)[18] – it is easy to see why his critique of Spengler's method is not unimportant.

Transparency and justice to facts are Wittgenstein's true guides, and thus it is unsurprising that when he reads James Frazer's *Golden Bough* he

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18 Cf. also Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 171, viz. the title of section 89: "The method of philosophy: the panoramic presentation of grammatical // linguistic // facts. The goal: the transparency of arguments. Justice" (translation slightly amended).

is taken aback – or better yet, is exasperated – by the Englishman's attitude and by the way he talks about the rituals that he judges, unjustly, under the magnifying glass of his scientist outlook, distorting and making them look stupid, ridiculous and irrational.

Frazer is not so much interested in presenting the rituals' unique aspects as in proving his epoch's supposed superiority in relation to times past. This attitude clearly tapers his analysis, as he tries to subsume a wealth of practices under a common denominator. Wittgenstein, on the contrary, greatly praises all that wealth – all the different practices and all the differences between them, which are determinant, above all because they reveal a plethora of motifs that he would not like to obliterate in the least or level out. The variances make up the background against which this affluence is finally made visible, instead of being concealed or disguised by an explanation, and it is also then that one finds affinities, whether among "different periods of culture" or "families" – or rituals. For this reason, when Wittgenstein remarks on the rituals recounted by Frazer in his *Golden Bough*, he comments:

> What strikes me most, apart from these similarities, are the dissimilarities of all these rituals. It is a multiplicity of faces with common traits that continually emerge here and there. And we would like to draw lines connecting all the common ingredients. But then one part of contemplation would still be missing, the part that connects this image with our own feelings and thoughts. This part gives contemplation its depth (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 142).

The prodigious multiplicity contained in a synopsis affords a perspective imbued with value, sense, and depth. This is overall a perceptual exercise that is simultaneously philosophical, aesthetic and, moreover, ethical insofar as the recognition of differences and variances is a form of justice and fidelity to facts and to nature. The examples in "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*", composed through the trialling of different points of view, each one highlighting a singular aspect of the rituals, give rise to rich descriptions that do not dispense with our own experience as a simile for understanding practices that are distant

from us – both in time and in place – namely through the unearthing and detection of intermediate links between them.[19]

By contrast, in the *Golden Bough* Frazer tries to list an entire array of things (both similar and dissimilar) under a single idea: he extracts something from the rituals that he identifies as a common law operating in all of them (what he calls the law that "like produces like" (Frazer, 1990, p. 11)), ignores the traces that are not shared by all, and proceeds to judge them as foolish practices foolishly created, all the while failing to appreciate their profoundest and deepest aspects. This happens mostly because he is trying to explain the rituals, which he believes were invented with the goal of producing all sorts of effects, a belief that results in his being blind to everything that he cannot translate according to the principal of causality.

The act of describing, which Wittgenstein prefers to explaining (cf. Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 52e, § 109),[20] shows that – from the get-go – we have some level of understating of what we are detailing; it requires that our intelligence and sensibility be applied to the clear observation and sketching of facts. In the preface to the *Philosophical Investigations*, it is clear just how fundamental this exercise is for his type of research. There, he says that the book really is just an album composed of such sketches.[21]

In the early 1930s, when Wittgenstein first wrote on panoramic

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19 See Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 123: "The religious actions, or the religious life, of the priest-king are no different in kind than any genuinely religious action of today, for example, a confession of sins. This, too, admits of being '*explained*' and not explained. Burning in effigy. Kissing the picture of one's beloved. That is *obviously not* based on the belief that it will have some specific effect on the object which the picture represents. It aims at satisfaction and achieves it. Or rather: it *aims* at nothing at all; we just behave this way and then we feel satisfied."

20 Also, Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 120: "I believe the attempt to explain is already therefore wrong, because one must only correctly piece together what one *knows*, without adding anything, and the satisfaction being thought through the explanation follows of itself."

21 "The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions, and new sketches made. Very many of these were badly drawn or lacking in character, marked by all the defects of a weak draughtsman. And when they were rejected, a number of half-way decent ones were left, which then had to be arranged and often cut down, in order to give the viewer an idea of the landscape. So this book is really just an album" (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 3e-4e). On this matter see Pichler, 2004.

presentation, this notion was always linked to the idea of clarification as a method, more a continuous process than a final destination or end goal. Later on, in 1947, adding to this idea, he says that he considers his investigations to have no purpose because they are not a means to an end (cf. Wittgenstein, 2000, Ms 134 pp. 154-155 [27.4.1947]).[22] This is absolutely right if we consider that grammatical examples elucidate but are not meant to be used as foundations on which to construct theories;[23] when applied to philosophical creativity, imagination, while inventing thought experiments, is not in the employ of finding new hypotheses to be tested through experimentation; rather, these inventions function as links that sharpen our eyes to a formal connection between concepts:

> A hypothetical link should (...) only draw our attention to the similarity, to the connection of facts. Just as we could illustrate the internal relation of the circle to the ellipse by gradually converting an ellipse into a circle; but not in order to argue that a certain ellipse in fact historically arose from a circle (evolutionary hypothesis), but only to sharpen our eyes to a formal connection (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 132).

The open character of the investigations when it comes to not having a definite purpose is also evident in how it organizes facts according to time – or, better yet, in how it does not concern itself with it:

> [A] historical explanation [*historisches Erklärung*], the explanation as a hypothesis of development, is only one way of gathering the data – its synopsis. It is equally possible to see the data in their relation to one another and to encompass them in a general picture without putting them in the form of a hypothesis about their temporal development (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 130).

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22 Cf. also Wittgenstein, 2006, p. 9e [Ms 109, p. 204, 6-7.11.1930]: "For me… clarity, transparency, is an end in itself."

23 Grammatical does not mean pragmatical; the examples are not practical, although they can matter to a philosophy occupied with human practices, such as pragmatism.

Historical explanation is only one way of placing the data together, and it can even become reductive. Indeed, with a view to obtaining a broad-spectrum picture, an ahistorical synopsis does not rely on linear temporality or on causality as explanatory principles that aim to say how one thing started or developed from another, making ostensible and perceptible the intermediate links between our ways of acting and other possible ways of acting, past or present, brought together according to their similarities without effacing their dissimilarities – in a panoramic approach that we might call unbiased, balanced and even-handed in the sense that foregoing time and causation does away with the impression that a more recent conception is more valuable and correct than a more distant one (solely because it is more up to date). In sum, such a synopsis consists neither in a reduction brought about by the scheme of time nor in a hierarchy of sorts, but rather in a juxtaposition of the "data in their relation to one another", which brings order to our conceptions without making demands at the level of what is being described (whether through forcing an object of study to fit into a model for studying it, whether by trying to decipher the temporal thread of cause and effect), and where what we know and what we imagine to be possible converge (for instance via thought experiments that follow from grammatical facts), allowing us to command an ever more thorough and exhaustive view of the real. Moreover, each thing is perceived or taken in as a centre of variation, its physiognomy and internal coherence maintained instead of being modified to fit a given prototype.[24]

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24 As a coda: the search for explanations is, for Wittgenstein, part of an attitude he vehemently dislikes, not only in Frazer (who thinks he belongs to a cleverer – more evolved – human community no longer reliant on rituals because of the existence of science), but also in philosophy: "Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics, and leads the philosopher into complete darkness. I want to say here that it can never be our job to reduce anything to anything, or to explain anything. Philosophy really is 'purely descriptive'" (Wittgenstein, 1998, p. 18). Wittgenstein's antipathy is of course interconnected with his unenthusiastic attitude towards progress: when it comes to human betterment and advancement arising simply from the passage of time, or from access to modern technology, Wittgenstein is a true sceptic. For him,

3.
INSPIRATION DRAWN FROM GOETHE

Goethe was Wittgenstein's model when it comes to the significance he ascribed to juxtapositions of the kind referred to above (cf., e.g., Wittgenstein, 2000, Ms 110, pp. 256-259 [1930-1931]).[25] The following passages in particular show precisely this, as well as the impetus that morphology gave to the methodological refinements that Wittgenstein carries out while leaving his Tractarian tenets behind him:

> What we are doing here somehow gets in touch with Goethe's observations on the metamorphosis of plants. What I mean is this: similarities in the appearance of bones of animals, led Darwin to the hypothesis that different species had evolved from a common ancestor. To a certain extent, this conception recognises only one scheme according to which it brings all similarities together, the scheme of time. That is, wherever we perceive similarities, we say: one evolved from the other. (This probably relates to the exclusive use of the scheme of cause and effect; for cause precedes effect.) Goethe thought differently about this (Wittgenstein and Waismann, 2003, p. 310).

> What I give is the morphology of the use of an expression. I show that it has kinds of uses about which they had not dreamed. In philosophy we feel forced to look at a concept in a certain

no such thing exists, for as long as we are human beings, we will be tormented by the same human problems that always manifest themselves in our lives in one way or another and that are solvable in time not due to an increase in knowledge (say, of the scientific kind) but only through the unravelling and loosening of the questions we formulate, most of the time owing to the mythology deposited in the forms of our language (cf. Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 197), in grammar – ever in need of being further illuminated. (If anything, the blind belief in science complicates those problems even more, since it gives air to the illusion that it will produce answers never seen before, which will conclusively solve them, and it inculcates our everyday language with extra jargon that does not help us to rid it of conceptual confusions.)

25 On Goethe's morphology, see Molder, 1995. On Goethe and Wittgenstein, see Molder, 1993, Capeletto, 2004 and Schulte, 1995.

way. What I do is suggest or invent other ways of looking at it. I suggest possibilities about which they had not previously thought. You thought there was one possibility, or two at most. But I made you think of others. Moreover, I made you see that it was absurd to expect the concept to conform to those limited possibilities. Thus your mental cramp is relieved and you are free to look around in the field of use of the expression and to describe different uses of it (Wittgenstein in Malcolm, 2001, p. 43).

Indeed, Goethe's method constituted for Wittgenstein a kind of paradigm of his own style of investigation. It was from Goethe that he drew inspiration, namely from the idea of affinity – which, unlike analogy, recognizes not only a parallel between two different things but a semblance, an aspect that is not easily describable and pinpointable but nonetheless decisive and central, particularly for understanding one of the most renowned and notorious possibilities suggested by Wittgenstein, viz. his comparison of language to a game (cf. Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 14e-15e, § 23). The notion of a language game – and its staying power and influence on philosophy – is supported by Wittgenstein's having detected an affinity and built on it an impressive conception whose scope is sweeping, extensive, and far-reaching, sustained by a relation that is seemingly never interrupted. It is unquestionably hard to conceive of a more wide-ranging and widely used idea in philosophy, and yet its inventor never defined it (owing to its very nature, which innately escapes definition):

Here we come up against the great question that lies behind all these considerations. For someone might object against me: "You make things easy for yourself! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what is essential to a language-game, and so to language: what is common to all these activities, and makes them into language or parts of language. So you let yourself off the very part of the investigation that once gave you the most headache, the part about the *general form of the proposition* and of language."

> And this is true. Instead of pointing out something common to all
> that we call language, I'm saying that these phenomena have no
> one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for
> all – but there are many different kinds of *affinity* between them.
> And on account of this affinity, or these affinities, we call them all
> "languages" (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 35e, § 65).

The role played by the recognition of affinities is fundamental – they make it less difficult to be held captive by an image or explanation with the power to erase the differences and lose sight of the rich specifics that give language abundance and depth. We should not leave analogies behind just yet, however, since they may also help us to see panoramically and since Wittgenstein dwelled at length on the advantages of constructing analogical patterns that bring together regions of language that are otherwise seemingly very far apart in the years from 1933 to 1934 (especially important for understanding the development of his new approach to philosophy after the *Tractatus* and leading to the *Investigations*), more specifically in the *Blue Book* (Wittgenstein 1998, p. 28).[26] Among the advantages associated with analogies are the discovery and the invention of intermediate links, without which the uses of words would seem disconnected and their meaning obscure, especially given that we would not be able to apprehend their depth grammar. (The latter results from abandoning the search for the meaning of words behind a fixed configuration – in a sentence, when we see them written down, or when isolated when heard – and turning our attention instead to the different aspects a term takes on in the various language games in which it plays a role, i.e., in the contexts in which it becomes alive and truly meaningful.)[27] Moreover, *Gleichniße* are the methodological devices that Wittgenstein thought he had in fact mastered: "What I invent are new

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26 Also, consider Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 43e-44e, §83, where he asks: "Doesn't the analogy between language and games throw light here?" ("here" being the question of rule-following).

27 Wittgenstein discusses this point at the beginning of *The Blue Book* when trying to pin down what it is that gives life to a dead sign. He believes that use is the life of the sign and contrasts this with the view that its meaning is "an image built up in our minds when we see or hear the sign" (see Wittgenstein, 1998, pp. 4-5). (On the topic of "the life of the sign", see Schulte, 2004.)

comparisons (Gleichniße)" (Wittgenstein, 2006, p. 16e [Ms 154 15v: 1931]);[28] his inventions made it possible to imagine anew, i.e., to provide new ways of looking and really seeing: "A good simile (*Gleichniß*) refreshes the intellect" (Wittgenstein, 2006, p. 3e [Ms 105 73 C: 129]).[29]

4.

PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS § 122

A main source of our failure to understand is that we don't have
an overview of the use of our words. Our grammar is deficient in
surveyability. A panoramic presentation produces precisely that kind
of understanding which consists in "seeing connections". Hence the
importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links*.
The concept of a panoramic presentation is of fundamental significance
for us. It characterizes the way we present things, how we look at
matters. (Is this a *Weltanschauung*?)
(Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 54e-55e, § 122)[30]

The grammatical character of Wittgenstein's philosophical investigations shows itself in its ability to provide examples capable of making us see the error of a combination of words that confuses us, so as to drop it and let it go. This makes it possible to imagine new ways of expressing what we mean to say with

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28 What best illustrates and proves Wittgenstein's conviction and self-evaluation as sound is the authentic, unaffected way in which images that serve him as a term of comparison spontaneously come to mind for him: "I just took some apples out of a paper bag where they had been lying for a long time; I had to cut off & throw away half of many of them. Afterwards as I was copying out a sentence of mine the second half of which was bad, I at once saw it as a half-rotten apple. And that's how it always is with me. Everything that comes my way becomes for me a picture of what I am thinking about (…)" (Wittgenstein, 2006, p. 36e [MS 119 83: 7.10.1937]).

29 Emphasis on the "good". Analogies, for all their advantages, can also lead us astray. On the danger of taking them too far – or indeed on the perils that bad analogies represent – see Baker, 2004, pp. 158, 184, 267. See also my "Misleading Parallels: Wittgenstein, Analogy and Philosophical Problems" (Fortes, 2013).

30 Translation slightly modified.

sense, which are drawn from a kind of "natural history" (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 132e, § 415) of human concepts, that is to say, from observing how words are used and from trying to understand their situated character, for example by asking what role they play in a particular language game. Of course, it is also our situated character that comes to the fore, and perhaps it is for this reason that Wittgenstein finally asks whether what he is saying about the "fundamental significance for us" of a panoramic presentation amounts to a way of seeing the world, or a *Weltanschauung*. Of course, the question then is also: what does he mean when he says "for us"? "How we look at matters"? If making panoramic presentations is our default mode, why does Wittgenstein need to recommend it? It is unusual (although not unheard of) for Wittgenstein to use the first-person plural pronoun. Having gone over some of the conceptual aspects involved and some of the methodological practices called for by a panoramic presentation, it could be said that, while at our command, we do not normally – deliberately, knowingly, wilfully, or successfully – try to coalesce and synopsize our experiences and our momentous insights into meaningful wholes to which we can go on adding aspects and parts (thus adding, enhancing and complementing afresh our way of seeing the world – and of understanding it). (Sometimes, "[t]he proposition is before your eyes, but not a panoramic presentation of its use" Wittgenstein, 2000, Ts 248, pp. 236-237 [1938-01-01?-1938-12-31?].) This is perhaps because we do not continually find ourselves making philosophical clarifications (let alone good ones). We must not forget how specialized an occupation philosophy is (even though it can be argued that everyone is a philosopher at heart, or potentially, as a human being trying to figure out how to live a worthwhile life). In connection with this, it must be said that we do not always find that our grammar lacks surveyability. Once again, the type of confusion that needs to be addressed only – or usually – slides into our minds when we are philosophically engaging with a word or a problem (we might even say, with a word-problem).[31] Be that as it may, the fact remains that according to Wittgenstein, we do not have a clear overview of the use of

31 Cf., e.g., the title of section 91 in Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 189: "We don't encounter philosophical problems at all in practical life (as we do, for example, those of natural science). We encounter them only when we are guided not by practical purpose in forming our sentences, but in certain analogies in our language."

our words, and it is this lack that disorients us. In the end, it is not important whether Wittgenstein means to include everybody when he refers to the "way we present things" or whether he is referring only to himself. What is most important is the question he asks – and does not answer. Fully aware of the profound importance of a panoramic presentation (of its possible results and implications for our understanding), is it perhaps possible that it is – besides being a concept and a methodological device – a worldview?

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5.

AN *EXCURSUS* BEFORE CONCLUDING:
ALDO ROSSI'S ANALOGICAL THOUGHT

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Analogy also makes an important appearance in the work of Aldo Rossi, the famed Italian architect whose writings offer an enthralling view of urban life through the lens of architecture and the city, through artefacts and through relinquishment, through the lens of memory and correspondences, via analogues.[32] The relationship between human life and the built forms of the city, such as buildings, cathedrals, edifices, houses, and the smaller built forms that are also part of our everyday lives – bottles, coffee pots, glasses, spoons, the alphabet, the written word – constitute the primary sources of his thought and establish a link between his interior world and the exterior (cf. Rossi, 1981, p. 2). Forms we can enter, forms we cannot enter, come together in an imagery that is dreamlike and saturated with melancholy[33] and pensiveness, which seems to interrogate and call upon our "own feelings and thoughts" (Wittgenstein, 1993, p. 142).

Rossi's approach is at first forceful and assertive; later on, however, the way he talks about architecture is transformed, and there is a kind of surrender:[34] merely standing before a finished structure is a conduit for "everything that is

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32 His writings are interesting for the matter at hand also because he acknowledges Wittgenstein as one of his important influences (cf. Rossi, 1982, p. 46).

33 Cf. Lopes, 2016.

34 An aspect commented on by Patrizia Lombardo: "Rossi's poetic, almost intimate vision – architecture is like a love story, architecture should be forgotten – seems to be very much at odds with the positive tone of *L'architettura della città* (...). Aldo Rossi often remembers with tender irony his sound convictions at the time he wrote that book" (Lombardo, 2003, p. 97).

unforeseeable in life" (Rossi, 1981, p. 3), for a surprise to occur, for a new existence to take hold – even in ruins. The common thread that runs from his former view to his later conception is the internal relation between the object and the subject, i.e., the project and the architect's experiences, "construction and the artist's own life" (Lombardo, 2003, p. 97). Finally, Rossi asks us to consider architectural form on the page, in plans ("a graphic variation of the handwritten manuscript", Rossi, 1981, p. 6) and drawings ("where a line is no longer a line, but writing"), calling attention to his work, which, though "mute and cold," will still "creak" (Rossi, 1981, p. 44) – will still give rise to "new meanings" (Rossi, 1981, p. 44). These new meanings are what may help us to make sense, by correlation, of our everyday dealings with the forms we inhabit.

The idea of an artefact (cf. Rossi, 1982, p. 29) is crucial for Rossi and of great consequence in his 1971 book, *The Architecture of the City* (1982), when it comes to understanding how he conceives of architecture and its development: from planning, to construction, to use, and finally to abandonment (the latter being a first version of the inclination to forget architecture, about which he would speak at greater length in his 1981 *Scientific Autobiography*):

> Clearly, the Cathedrals of Milan and Reggio Emilia and the *Tempio Malatestiano* in Rimini were – are – beautiful in their incompleteness. They were and are a kind of abandoned architecture – abandoned by time, by chance, or by the destiny of the city. The city in its growth is defined by its artifacts,[35] leaving open many possibilities and containing unexplored potential. This has nothing to do with the concept of open form or open work; rather it suggests the idea of interrupted work. The analogous city is in essence the city in its diverse totality; this fact is visible in the echoes of the East and the North that one finds in Venice, in the piecemeal structure of New York, and in the memories and analogies that every city always offers (Rossi, 1982, p. 18).

35 I use the spelling "artefacts" instead of "artifacts" and would like to point out that they are not only something made by human hands but also, in relation to the Italian word "*fatti*", actions, facts, deeds, and things that have been accomplished. Artefacts are related to the history of the city; they share in its life and thus are not merely physical objects.

This passage requires some dissection, beginning with the idea that artefacts are what define a city and its growth, for, as such, this declaration likens the city to those forms that, over time, allow for its transformation from a characterless to a particular and unique place infused with spirit – with the *genius loci*.[36]

A good example of an urban artefact that was greatly praised by Rossi is the way in which Adolf Loos used a Doric column in a project for the Chicago Tribune. He was especially impressed with the style (the application of an antique element to a new time), which showed a real understanding of the American city – for Rossi, the "architecture of the city" *par excellence*.[37] For that reason, it also perfectly signals the creation of an analogue, since it results in the creation of a novel meaning via the use of an antique form, establishing an internal relation between the past and the present that allows for originality to be born out of it and to come forth in the "diverse totality" that makes up a city. (Rossi saw instances of this everywhere; hence his idea of an "analogous city".) Thus, creating an analogue does not mean simply copying a form and applying it elsewhere, but rather recognizing what is still thriving and can be reclaimed and revived anew. Creating an analogue – making an analogy – is also different from copying because it entails establishing a relationship by way of an abstract move that filters memory and finds a proportion, a correspondence between things and their meaning. Rossi declares that he found in Carl Jung's definition of analogical thought as "a meditation on themes of the past" "a different sense of history conceived of not simply as fact, but rather as a series of things, of affective objects to be used by the memory or in a design" (Rossi, 1976, p. 75). In light of this, consider how Rossi uses a line from Georg Trakl (after all, to quote is an analogical move of sorts) as a title for one of his most famous drawings, *Dieses ist lange her* – a title that imbues it with a certain mood and atmosphere that is inimitable, though it gains new meaning in Rossi's hands.

All of this has immense methodological value: we can use urban artefacts and analogy to investigate and make sense of the present. By way of

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36 According to Rossi, into a *locus* (Rossi, 1982, p. 103 and p. 130) – on this matter, see Dodds, 1992.

37 "American architecture is above all 'the architecture of the city': primary elements, monuments, parts" (Rossi, 1982, p.15).

comparison of different places, we can begin to understand our "individual experience of each particular place" (Rossi, 1982, p. 107), meaning that we can find an analogue in artefacts that helps us to come to grips with our own way of living, e.g., in a city. Given that none of it consists of merely repeating ancient formulas, it can be said that the result of an analogical transport forms a variance, an alteration that gives rise to something in the present that was unpredictable in the past, since the context was not there, taking us back to the idea hinted at before – one that became a sort of hopeful view for Rossi when, in his *Scientific Autobiography*, he reckoned that the "possibility of great [things] was historically precluded" (Rossi, 1981, p. 23), in particular, "everything that is unforeseeable in life":

> [A]rchitecture becomes the vehicle for an event we desire, whether or not it actually occurs; and in our desiring it, the event becomes something "progressive" (…) [I]t is for this reason that the dimensions of a table or a house are very important – not, as the functionalists thought, because they carry out a determined function, but because they permit other functions. Finally, because they permit everything that is unforeseeable in life (Rossi, 1981, p. 3).

With time, for Rossi, architecture becomes propitiatory, something that can trigger what we wish for, but also what we did not know we wanted and could not anticipate: the unexpected.

His recognition of all that was lost did not prevent him from conceding that other things are still possible in the future, things that stem from life. The city is fertile ground for this: through accumulation, layers, and strata, the assorted whole of built forms and how we dwell in them make up the phenomena and terrain necessary for attempting to synopsize our experience in a way that is meaningful and brings clarity and intelligibility to the miscellaneous sum of artefacts, including Rossi's own work, which "stands mute and cold" – though it can still "creak":

> To "creak" is the translation of the German *klirren*, which has always struck me in Hölderlin's poem *Halfte des Lebens*. The very

title of the poem seems to me a condition of suspension. The little iron banners which Hölderlin never drew himself subsequently invaded my drawings, and I am unable to answer any further the persistent questions I am asked about them except to say that I have translated the last lines of Hölderlin's poem into my architecture: "The walls stand / mute and cold, in the wind / the banners creak." I concluded one of my lectures at Zurich with this quotation, which I applied to my projects: My architecture stands mute and cold (Rossi, 1981, p. 44).

The importance of Rossi's approach for our analysis of the notion of panoramic presentation lies especially in the latter aspect, which shows the value of proceeding by parallels and connections in order to make sense of our experience by way of coalescing the features that stand out in their similarity – the artefacts and analogues whose shared attribute is their ability to function as steppingstones from which to see beyond them into new, uncharted territory.

6.
CONCLUSION

As noted above, the kinds of problems that a panoramic presentation might solve originate primarily in language, since they are due to the fact that our grammar lacks surveyability. This makes it all the more pressing to attempt to adopt such a view when philosophizing. This is not because philosophers are the custodians of language, however. Nobody is, or perhaps all of us are. If we find ourselves agreeing with Wittgenstein when he declares that "the *speaking* of a language is part of an activity, or of a form of life" (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 14e-15e, § 23), we can, or we must, likewise agree that we collectively contribute to the possible ways of making sense, and even to clarifying what making sense is. It seems to me that the worldview to which Wittgenstein refers is one to which any of us can relate, simply because it is fundamentally driven by a determination to better understand, to break ground and to command a clear view, be it of grammar, the world, what we call the real, our lives together as a community, or our more singular and intimate experience.

A panoramic presentation *qua* way of looking at things that "produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'" (Wittgenstein, 2009, pp. 54e-55e, § 122) has the advantage of composing a comprehensive outlook that does not have to travel far and wide to get to the raw material that will allow us to regain our orientation and to avoid living in darkness and confusion. The weave of life – the weave of language – is to be taken seriously.

> You must bear in mind that the language-game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable).
> It is there – like our life (Wittgenstein, 1969, p. 73e, § 559).

Just as architecture can be ritual (Rossi, 1981, p. 37), so too the rich and abundant naturalness of experience can wake belief and confidence, or even reverence and veneration; this much is clear from reading Wittgenstein's *Remarks on Frazer*. Incrementally, departing from our situated point of view and facilitated by affinity, analogy, description, and the inventiveness of thought experiments – or, as Rossi would say, by artefacts, by the work of memory, in plans and in drawings, or in writing (in a word, by analogues) – we may clarify our understanding. If we find that we cannot nourish our resolve with the great ideas and systems of the past, with "what has long been lost" – the grand stuff – or indeed, if we are dumbfounded by what life has thrown at us, we can always try to take a step back to reassemble, to rally what we know, so that we may be able to see and to understand newly and afresh.

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AN ATTEMPT AT ELUCIDATING A PHILOSOPHICAL TOPIC: AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE *OF* OR *IN* THE CITY

Nuno Fonseca[1]

ABSTRACT

The notion of aesthetic experience attempts to account for an important part of human experience and, although it embraces an immense and multifaceted variety, the complexity and vagueness of which have been an authentic challenge to its definition (to the point that some suggest its conceptual uselessness), it is still crucial and decisive for an entire philosophical discipline: aesthetics – which is not to be confused with the philosophy of art, although it often intersects with it. This chapter considers the case of the city – which is not so much an object as a multifaceted and fragmented environment where aesthetic experiences can occur – in order to attempt to elucidate (or at least to make a contribution to the elucidation of) the meaning and scope of this philosophical topic.

KEYWORDS

Aesthetic Experience, Experience of/in the City, Trivial Experience, Vagueness, Fragmentation.

1.

PROLOGUE, OR ELUCIDATING THE TITLE

In October 1974, over a three-day period, the French writer Georges Perec committed himself to an exhaustive description – an inventory – of everything he saw, heard and felt in a well-known location in the 6th arrondissement of Paris, Place Saint-Sulpice, flanked by the church of the same name. Perec placed himself in different spots in the square with the aim of taking note of the states of affairs and events – or, more precisely, the non-events – occurring around him, focusing, in his own words, on "that which is generally not taken note of, that which is not noticed, that which has no importance: what happens when nothing happens other than the weather, people, cars, and clouds" (Perec, 2010, p. 3) – in short, what he elsewhere called the "infra-ordinary". He thus installed himself in a tobacconist's, in a café by the "Mairie", in another café called Fontaine de Saint-Sulpice, "on a bench right in the sun, among the pigeons, looking in the direction of the fountain (sounds of traffic behind)" (Perec, 2010, p. 32), all at different times of day (10:30 a.m. on the first day (18 October), then 12:40 a.m., then 3:20 p.m., etc.), taking note of the weather, variations in the brightness of the day or the dusk, the passing of buses (the number 63, the number 87, the number 96, the number 70) – buses sometimes full of people, at other times emptier, buses that marked the rhythm of the square, themselves affected by the circadian rhythm of the city. He took note of the cars – a red Fiat, a green one, a German car, an apple green *deux chevaux* (Citroën 2CV), a yellow concrete mixer truck, a lady taking three children to school, a hearse and people gathered at the church's door, the ringing bells, a Basset Hound, two men smoking pipes, the wind shaking the leaves from the trees, advertisements on trucks and buses, letters of the alphabet, KLM, a P for "parking", the rain as it intensifies, a young woman smoking a cigarette, another truck from "Walon Déménagements", a Japanese woman preparing to take a photograph of it, the crushed stone or the sand on the ground, a man agitated by nervous tics, holding his cigarette just like Perec does (between his middle finger and his ring finger), the asphalt, the calm, the lassitude or tiredness of the eyes, "a cloud of pigeons that suddenly swoops down on the central plaza, between the church and fountain" (Perec, 2010, p. 6). These notes (and many more that I cannot

paraphrase here) were published as a short text in *Cause Commune* nº 1 in 1975 and would later, in 1982, be published as a book titled *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien* (the inspiration for the title of this chapter).

This work by Perec, like many others that intersect with it and are related to it, has many specificities that are irrelevant to what I wish to say in this chapter; in a certain sense, I could almost say that my choice to write about it is to some degree arbitrary. Nevertheless, there are many elements in it that are relevant to the attempt to understand the broader philosophical topic of aesthetic experience.[2] *Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien* is a literary work, and therefore a work of creative and artistic genius, but despite the rules and constraints (many of them self-imposed by the author) that characterize "Oulipian" literary games, it was born in the daily context of the trivial experiences of the city – experiences which, at a given moment or perhaps not at all (this is a controversial aspect that is at the heart of the matter), acquire the traces of aesthetic experience. If it is true that Perec's purpose is to describe, inventory, and exhaustively enumerate everything he sees, as if engaged in a methodical, almost scientific classificatory endeavour, it is also true that many of the aspects to which he attends have to do with sensory perception, with the way in which the objects being inventoried appear and manifest themselves: their colours, noises, fluctuations, rhythms, dispositions, interactions and their indistinct *je-ne-sais-quoi*, which, taken together, emotionally affect the writer-beholder and stimulate his or her imagination. The banality in all this is that perhaps all works of art go through these processes of transformation, from trivial experience to aesthetic experience. By this I mean that perhaps works of art are nothing more than the intensification, the problematization, the sensitive and imaginative reconfiguration of aesthetic experiences (some more intense, others more banal) which, in a discontinuous, if not fragmentary way, are condensed into the memories and nerves of their authors. This, of course, would already be a lot, making them extraordinary and worthy of our fascination.

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2   The basis of this chapter was a presentation in Portuguese, where the wordplay with Perec's French title is more obvious. There, I used the word "*lugar*", which immediately translates to "*lieu*" (place, but also topic) – as in "*lieu parisien*", "*lieu philosophique*". The use of "topic" in the English title still resonates with the etymology of the Greek *τόπος*, which relates both to "place" and to "subject", "theme" or "general idea".

Before delving into the matter, I wish to say something more about Perec's relationship with the places in the city. In 1969, Perec started planning a project that he called *Lieux* (Places). It consisted in choosing twelve locations in the city of Paris – streets, squares and crossroads – which he then set out to describe over a period of twelve years. He would describe two locations per month in two different ways: at first, he would sit in a café or walk in the street, a notebook and pen in hand, trying his best to describe, in the most neutral way possible, the houses, shops, and people he passed, the advertisements and, in general, all the details that meet his attentive gaze; at another moment, he would be away from the place he wanted to describe and would write a description from memory, drawing on the recollections evoked by that location, the events that occurred there, and the people he had met there. As soon as these descriptions were written, he would put them in an envelope sealed with wax, often accompanied by photographs taken by a male or female friend who accompanied him. He would sometimes also insert metro or cinema tickets, restaurant receipts, flyers, etc., into these envelopes. Over time, these descriptions, which comprised a set of 288 texts, revealed the transformations undergone by these locations, but also by his memory and himself, thus providing a record of the effects of time on the different locations in the city, on his memories and on his own ageing. This method – which he described in his 1974 book *Espèces d'espaces* (Perec, 1985, pp. 76-77)[3] and which he admitted he had not followed in 1973 because of the production of his film *Un homme qui dort*, but which he intended to resume immediately afterwards – was finally discontinued in 1975. Nonetheless, this unfinished project was echoed in several other works of description, such as the one that focused on Place Saint-Sulpice. Another, quite personal and intimate, project is called *La Rue Vilin*,[4] which is also the name of a popular street on the eastern side of Paris, in Belleville, in the 20th arrondissement, where he lived for the first six years of his life. This street was once photographed by Robert Doisneau and immortalized in films such as *Sous le ciel de Paris* (Julien Duvivier, 1951), *Du rififi chez les hommes* (Jules Dassin, 1955), *Orphée* (1950) by Jean Cocteau and even *Le ballon rouge* by d'Albert Lamorisse (1956). In

3   Although the book was originally published by Galilée in 1974, I have used the 1985 edition.

4   Published in the newspaper *L'Humanité,* nº 11, Novembre 1977.

the second half of the twentieth century, however, it became progressively degraded,[5] ultimately being urbanistically reconfigured in order to give way to the present Parc de Belleville. Today, it stands as a short, sloped pedestrian street that provides access to the park, nestled between residential buildings and the back of a clinical laboratory.

2.
A PHILOSOPHICAL TOPIC: AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Although it is not easy to ascertain exactly when the expression "aesthetic experience" first appeared in the philosophical discourse,[6] it is unlikely that it was before the eighteenth century, when the word "aesthetics" was substantivized in order to name a new philosophical discipline and "aesthetic" was used as an adjective for an old but unrecognized type of knowledge, *cognitio aesthetica* (or *sensitiva*).[7] In fact, this exact term does not even appear in Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, although it is clear that the kind of experience that underlies "aesthetic judgement" [*ästhetische Urteil*] is of the kind that would later be called "aesthetic experience".[8] It would seem that the expression only became common in philosophical discussion well into the nineteenth century, if not into the twentieth. However, this does not mean that certain aspects

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5 *En Remontant la Rue Vilin* (1992), a documentary by Robert Bober (Georges Perec's friend) made from old photographs of the street, narrates the story of the progressive dereliction of the famous street.

6 In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Polish philosopher Wladislaw Tatarkiewicz sketched a history of the concept (of "aesthetic experience") in his famous book *A History of Six* (aesthetic) *Ideas*. Despite some interesting intuitions concerning the semantic evolution of the idea, however, it still fails to provide a comprehensive account of its history. See Tatarkiewicz, 1980, pp. 310-338.

7 In the "Prolegomena" to his *Aesthetica* (1750), Baumgarten defines the new discipline as follows: "§1 Aesthetica (theoria liberalium artium, gnoseologia inferior, ars pulcre cogitandi, ars analogi rationis) est scientia cognitionis sensitivae" ["Aesthetics (the theory of the liberal arts, the logic of the lower cognitive faculties, the art of thinking beautifully, the art of the analogue of reason) is the science of sensible cognition."] (Baumgarten, 1750, p. 1).

8 In the "Analytic of the Beautiful" and the "Analytic of the Sublime", we encounter something like a phenomenology of the experience that gives rise to aesthetic judgment. See Kant, 2000, pp. 89 ff.

of what the expression is supposed to cover did not challenge ancient and medieval philosophers, even if their focus was usually more on beauty or the experience of beautiful things (symmetrical, congruent or harmonious things), not infrequently with metaphysical and religious connotations.[9] I am perhaps oversimplifying, but my argument is not intended to be essentially historical. In any case, it was only much later, in the modern era, in a world that was becoming disenchanted – where the human being was losing certainty and experiencing a divide between reason, which promised to understand and dominate nature, and the sensitive, emotional, and even animalistic side of human nature, which still escaped the control of the intellect – that the question of the sensitive and sentimental experience of the natural world and of human artefacts began to be given attention by philosophers. At first, they questioned our ability to have such experiences – the possibility of sharing them and discussing them – in a *theory of taste*. Indeed, it was no longer only the experience of the *beautiful* that was being discussed but also the experience of the *sublime* and the *picturesque*, as is evident in the works of various eighteenth-century British philosophers, namely Edmund Burke (on the *sublime*) and William Gilpin (on the *picturesque*). Unlike what would often occur in the nineteenth century (when aesthetics and philosophy of art were often confused), the objects that were thought to give rise to aesthetic experiences at this time were not only artistic but also natural objects and phenomena.

Some of the traits of such experiences have also become more philosophically explicit, such as the question of *disinterestedness*, which Kant would postulate in his characterization of the experience underlying aesthetic judgment, that is to say, a certain "psychical distance" (as Edward Bullough would later call it)[10] between the subject and the object, whose existence is less

9   We can probably think of the experience of the tragic, associated with the emotions of pity (φόβος) and terror (ἔλεος) (as described by Aristotle in his *Poetics*, see 1997, pp. 99-101 [1453b1-22]), or even the comic, as forms of aesthetic experience.

10 Edward Bullough introduced the notion of "psychical distance" as an aesthetic principle in an article published in 1912 in the *British Journal of Psychology*: "... the transformation by Distance is produced in the first instance by putting the phenomenon, so to speak, out of gear with our practical, actual self; by allowing it to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends..." (Bullough, 1912, p. 89). This certainly resonates with the Kantian notion of disinterestedness (Kant, 2000, pp. 90-91 [§ 2]).

relevant than its appearance when it comes to the possibility of that experience. The cognitive (but not necessarily conceptual or propositional) character of experience – the cognition present in aesthetic experience – is a sensitive, "inferior" cognition insofar as there is a certain obscurity in this type of intuitive perception, a certain *je-ne-sais-quoi*.[11] And indeed, vagueness will be inevitable in the conception of the aesthetic, for there is always something that escapes the abstract and determinate concept,[12] something that cannot be reduced to an apophantic proposition about a state of affairs. Finally, another trait that has become more explicitly relevant to its characterization is the emotional or hedonistic aspect of the experience, the pleasure that is produced by it[13] – or the combination of pleasure and displeasure that is produced in the experience of the sublime.[14]

These are the basic traits that are commonly identified and discussed in debates on the nature and content of aesthetic experience – an experience that is often confused with the experiences occasioned by contemplating works of art. This confusion is responsible for our inadequate understanding of aesthetic

11 This expression was used as early as the seventeenth century by painters, as Leibniz recalls in his *Meditationes de cognitione, veritate et ideis* (1978), which uses the Latin *nescio quid*.

12 Kant is of course responsible for the distinction between determining and reflective judgments. Aesthetic judgments are typical examples of the latter, since they occur in the absence of a determinate concept. The absence of a determinate concept in the representation of a beautiful object (or event) causes the cognitive powers – the understanding and the imagination – to stimulate each other continuously in what he terms the *free play* of these powers of representation. See, for instance, Kant, 2000, pp. 15-20 and 102-104 [§ 9].

13 Schopenhauer, for instance, would place great emphasis on pleasure (*Wohlgefallen*) in aesthetic contemplation (*aesthetische Betrachtung*), a different but very similar notion to aesthetic experience. See Schopenhauer, 2010, pp. 219-225 [§§ 38-39].

14 Although other eighteenth-century (French, British and German) authors certainly acknowledged the hedonistic aspect of aesthetic experience, it was again Kant who offered a deeper and more systematic articulation of the pleasure we take in the experience that generates aesthetic judgments. Moreover, and certainly inspired by the British tradition's attention to the ideas of the beautiful and the sublime (particularly in Burke), he distinguished between a positive and a negative pleasure, and even a feeling of displeasure, in the experience of the sublime. See Kant, 2000, p. 129 [§ 23] and 140-143 [§ 27]. For a historical perspective, see also Talon-Hugon, 2015, Part Three, chapter II.

experience to the extent that what determines whether or not we are dealing with an aesthetic experience should not be the type of object that arouses it.[15]

3.
THE SCOPE AND NATURE OF AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Not all authors have allowed themselves to be limited and obscured by this confusion, however. As early as the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke spoke of experiences of natural spaces and phenomena – green fields, abyssal canyons and volcanic eruptions – that generated feelings of pleasure or astonishment and amazement. Kant, too, allowed for aesthetic judgments in response to natural phenomena (see for instance §§ 4, 16-17, 25-29, 41-42 and 58 of the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (2000)), as did certain Romantic thinkers to follow (such as Hölderlin, Novalis, Schlegel and Schelling). In the twentieth century, authors such as John Dewey expanded the territory of aesthetic experiences beyond the fine arts and art in museums, focusing on the type of experience and no longer on the type of object involved.

Dewey characterized aesthetic experience as "an" experience that is out of the ordinary, that stands out from the humdrum of daily life because of its qualities of unity, internal coherence, completeness, and significance, and which is therefore as likely to occur in the resolution of a philosophical or mathematical problem, during a sports game or in a gastronomic experience as in the contemplation of a work of art. (Dewey, 1980, pp. 35-57)[16] As a result, Dewey expanded the field of aesthetic experience (even if, deep down, his project was also to redefine art in terms of that experience, which created another type of

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15 Aesthetic experiences cannot adequately be defined by the objects of experience. If they could, this would imply that only certain objects, with certain specific properties – say, aesthetic properties – have the ability to cause aesthetic experiences. This position has indeed been adopted by some, particularly by those who seek a realist or externalist account of aesthetic experience, most likely hoping to avoid the relativism of a subjectivist standpoint. What this approach cannot account for, however, is the fact that a subject of experience is always needed – not only for the very existence of an aesthetic experience but for the ascription and emergence of aesthetic properties.

16 John Dewey dedicates an entire chapter ("Having an experience") to the characterization of aesthetic experience.

confusion that I will not be dealing with here). Despite inheriting this qualitative characterization of aesthetic experience, another well-known American philosopher, Monroe Beardsley, took a step back and used this characterization to define art while simultaneously connecting aesthetic experiences with aesthetic objects. According to him, the distinctive function of art was precisely to create aesthetic experiences: intrinsically pleasing experiences, with a certain intensity, in which the subject's attention and a succession of mental states are focused and oriented in a way that generates a gratifying feeling of "coherence" or "completeness" (Beardsley, 1958, pp. 527-528). This characterization was met by a shower of criticism (the most well-known and radical of which coming from George Dickie)[17] to the effect that it was too subjectivist and phenomenological for some in the analytic camp. Beardsley was accused of simply transferring the properties of the objects of experience – their unity, coherence and completeness – to the psychological experience itself (Dickie, 1965, pp. 131-133). On Dickie's view, aesthetic experiences thus characterized are a metaphysical myth, a mere verbal construction without much theoretical utility, such that we might as well dispense with the concept. This radical view sounds quite exaggerated, but it reveals two possible conceptions of aesthetic experience (mostly from the Anglo-American tradition):[18] one based on an attempt to describe the quality or phenomenology of experience (which we find in Dewey and Beardsley), the other, which treats aesthetic experience as an experience of cognition, based on a description of its content – that is to say, of what it is capable of knowing – focusing not on what counts as an aesthetic object but on the properties or aesthetic qualities of the objects of experience.

I do not intend to dig too deep into the details of these controversies, which can be overly scholastic. I would point out, however, that this apparent dichotomy between the subjectivist or phenomenological perspective of aesthetic experience and the epistemic, objective or realistic perspective reveals old hesitations in aesthetics, which are nevertheless due to the mixed or even hybrid nature of these experiences (in fact, the hybridity we generally find in aesthetic concepts). On the one hand, the cognitive and the affective

17 In his famous paper "Beardsley's phantom of aesthetic experience" (Dickie, 1965).

18 For a survey of analytical approaches to the notion of aesthetic experience, see Iseminger, 2003, pp. 99-116.

features are interwoven; on the other, the determination of the qualities or aesthetic properties of the object of that experience cannot totally dispense with the consideration of its subjective character, or rather – to avoid being misunderstood – such qualities or properties emerge in the very experience that arises from the encounter between the subject of the experience and what he or she experiences. It is not just a matter of detecting previously existing aesthetic properties, as some epistemic theories claim, to the extent that such properties or qualities can only emerge from that very encounter. What is more, continuing to speak of a subject and an object of aesthetic experience likely obscures the specificity and uniqueness of that experience insofar as this kind of experience dissolves such distinctions, including the distinction between what is merely cognitive and merely affective, or between merely passive and merely active experience. Furthermore, even if aesthetics has historically been primarily concerned with issues related to aesthetic reception and has tended to convey aesthetic experience as a passive experience, I believe that one can also speak of it as an active experience. Someone who practices a creative, imaginative activity certainly, or potentially, has traces of aesthetic experience.

Summing up what I have been claiming thus far about aesthetic experiences: they can occur in the presence of or be related to any and all artefacts, phenomena, events, processes, practices or contexts, artistic or non-artistic, natural or human, rural or urban; they are clearly had *by someone*, and they must be experiences *of something*; in this sense, they consist not only in the detection and (sensible) cognition of aesthetic qualities and properties, but also in a set of emotional and imaginative effects on the subject (agent) of the experience that stimulate an effort to imbue the experience with meaning. This aspect anticipates the questions considered below.

4.

TRIVIAL EXPERIENCE VS. AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

If anything can be the object of aesthetic experience, how can we distinguish *aesthetic* experiences from *trivial* ones? We have already seen that the most phenomenological approaches to aesthetic experience (by Dewey and by Beardsley) have tried to characterize it by appealing to specific traits – namely,

focus, intensity, unity, coherence and *completeness* – which allow us to distinguish it from ordinary, everyday experience. In addition to giving the impression of simply transferring aesthetic qualities from objects to psychological experiences, however, such introspective characterizations still seem to carry with them certain moral and metaphysical prejudices regarding beauty and the intrinsic value of aesthetic experience, such that simply calling them aesthetic experiences gives them an honorific character. But perhaps not all aesthetic experiences have to be absolutely overwhelming, capable of fostering a(n) (almost mystical) feeling of unity and completeness in the subject of the experience. Perhaps aesthetic experience does not have to be "an" experience, as in Dewey's famous formula. In fact, we may have incomplete, fragmented, ambiguous, soft, delicate or even weak experiences that can and should be considered in the field of aesthetics.[19] Except for a few rare events that leave an indelible mark on our lives – and perhaps this even applies to them – it is not easy to identify "an" (aesthetic) experience, not easy to demarcate it clearly from the sphere of trivial experiences. How easily can we answer questions such as: when did this experience begin? When did it end? When did it become aesthetic, and when did it cease to be so? Instead of aesthetic experiences, as properly individuated psychological events, perhaps we should simply talk about "experiencing aesthetically", to use the adverbial formula employed by Robert Ginsberg (1986). Let us consider some examples.

19 Since the 1990s, some philosophers (particularly in the Anglo-American tradition, but also in the Nordic countries) have been extending the field of philosophical aesthetics to include aspects of everyday experience in their research. (Of course, philosophers from other traditions – Walter Benjamin, Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, etc. – occasionally treated such topics, but not necessarily in a systematic fashion.) One of the problems of "everyday aesthetics" has been the apparent contradiction between making an effort to consider ordinary humdrum experience while keeping a relevant notion of aesthetic experience that implies particularly rich and salient features of that experience, in order to justify its distinct character and intrinsic value. Different (and sometimes opposing) answers have been given to the issue of the "ordinariness" of everyday aesthetic experience, some trying to preserve the "ordinariness" and familiarity of experience by focusing mostly on the aesthetic qualities (cleanliness, tidiness, sloppiness) of daily activities (domestic chores, gardening, grooming), others allowing for the transfiguration of daily settings and situations with experiences that unveil "the extraordinary in the ordinary". One of the most systematic and comprehensive presentations of these topics is certainly that provided by Leddy, 2012, but see also Irvin, 2008 and the entry on "Everyday Aesthetics" in the *International Lexicon of Aesthetics*, Iannilli, 2018.

Imagine that a woman is walking down the street. She is restless, thinking of the terrible day she's just had at the office, worried about the tasks she still has to complete when she gets home. Suddenly, her attention turns to a fragile, almost inaudible but mellifluous chirping – a sound that is all but drowned out by the noise of the traffic around her. She directs her gaze to a tiny, exotic-looking bird that has landed on a utility pole, and she stops to appreciate the delicate and charming little animal, its harmonious chirping and colourful plumage, before continuing on her way with a smile on her face. In this scenario, we can perhaps isolate and identify what might be called an aesthetic experience. But now imagine a second scenario – one in which a different woman, on a sunny Sunday morning, is preparing to ride her bicycle through a picturesque district of the city. She stops at a lookout to enjoy the splendid view across the river, enjoying the distant whistle of the cruise ships (which is occasionally interrupted by the annoying ringtones of other people's mobile phones). Along her route, she is further disrupted by the sudden swerve of a car that almost crashes into her bicycle. After a while, she gets off her bike to pick up some unusual, eye-catching stones (one with an unusual, baroque configuration, another with a particularly crystalline surface, a third with a strangely symmetrical fossil) to add to her "cabinet of curiosities". Later that day, still riding her bike, she receives a phone call with bad news from the doctor while simultaneously spotting a perfect streak of twilight tones in the sky – a combination she does not recall ever having seen before – behind a magnificent cumulonimbus cloud that looks like Dumbo the elephant. Who can actually say whether this sequence was a continuous process or a discreet experience, or perhaps various short experiences interspersed with trivial ones that were concurrent with aesthetic perceptions? And even if certain particular experiences can be recognized, how can they be individuated, precisely demarcated from the rest of our humdrum experience?

Despite these challenges, it would seem to be true that aesthetic experiences (or *experiencing aesthetically*) are not the same as ordinary or trivial experiences (*experiencing trivially*, if you will). In the former, there seem to be particular modes of perception and attention that afford singular kinds of cognitive processes (mainly sensory, but with symbolic and conceptual elements) and emotional (affective, hedonic) responses and that enable particular forms of

engagement with what is being experienced.[20] Yet it would seem equally to be the case that there are no real differences between these kinds of experience when it comes to their cognitive or affective structure, even if there may be contextual and modal differences. What I mean is that the psychological and sensorial apparatuses that make both kinds of experience possible are structurally the same; they can be used in a distinct fashion or style, however, which enables qualitatively different experiences. The subject of the experience will likely be unable to completely control such modes of perception, even though she can become more alert, more aware, predisposed to these kinds of experience, etc. She will certainly be unable to control her emotional responses, the feelings that emerge during such experiences, although she will probably become more emotionally available if she consciously takes up what many have called an *aesthetic attitude*.[21]

20 Informed by psychological research on perception and attention processes, some philosophers have recently distinguished between different modes that may help us to understand aesthetic experience. According to Jean-Marie Schaeffer, even though we can find these different modes in most kinds of experience (both trivial and aesthetic), some modes are privileged in the "aesthetic regime" of experience. For instance, *distributed attention* (where the subject sweeps the perceptual field without any particular focus, as opposed to focalized attention) *polyphonic attention* (which, being without an assigned task, treats all elements and possible relationships between elements as potentially relevant, as opposed to monophonic attention, which is set a specific task, assigned to it by the subject or stimulus encountered, with the aim of arriving at the desired result by the most economical and reliable route) and *parallel attention* (which spreads itself over several different sources of information, since in certain situations contextual richness is actively sought, as opposed to serial attention, which is adopted when we want to arrive at the fixation of a particular belief as quickly as possible) are modes that are particularly fostered by the "aesthetic inflection" of attention. See in particular Chapter II of Schaeffer, 2015, where he develops these issues comprehensively. A young Hungarian philosopher, Bence Nanay, who has been dealing with aesthetics from the perspective of the philosophy of perception, has also emphasized the role of certain modes of attention in aesthetic experiences. See Nanay, 2016, pp. 12-35.

21 Theories that accept the idea of an *aesthetic attitude* or an *aesthetic state of mind* may be inclined to admit that any object whatsoever could be the focus of aesthetic experience as long as the subject of experience adopts an attitude, which usually implies some sort of detachment (or maybe even disinterestedness). But then again, the ensuing form of subjectivism cannot overlook the phenomenological fact that an aesthetic experience, like any experience simpliciter, necessarily implies a focus, a *something* that is experienced, its intentional content. Therefore, the structure of aesthetic experience will also depend on "what" is being experienced, in the sense

Many contemporary authors have criticized and fought against this other "myth"[22] of aesthetic discourse, but it will be difficult to eliminate it completely if we want to keep open the possibility of characterizing aesthetic experiences as being different from trivial experience, and this seems acceptable to me, provided that aspects such as the question of disinterest are also reviewed in order to ensure that not only observers, contemplators, spectators and merely passive audiences, but also participants, artists, performers, and those involved in creative activities (or in certain modes of perception and attention that are open to the possibility of aesthetic experience) can be subjects of aesthetic experience.[23]

5.
AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES *OF* OR *IN* THE CITY

How can we aesthetically experience *a* (or *in* the) city? We already know – or I hope the reader will at this point concede – that anything can be experienced aesthetically. Hence, there will be no problem in considering the city as the *focus or context* of these experiences. If I include this ambiguity (*focus or context*),

> that it is something that affects the subject and that she attends to. For instance, Thomas Leddy's account of aesthetic experience has no problem accepting the "aesthetic attitude" perspective but conversely focuses on objects that have "aesthetic properties". According to this approach, aesthetic experience is the "experience of objects with aura". No stranger to Benjamin's account of natural *aura* ("a strange tissue of space and time: the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be" [Benjamin, 2006, pp. 104-5]), Leddy's aura "is a phenomenological characteristic of an object experienced attended with pleasure or with some combination of pain and pleasure", something "experienced as having heightened significance", "emotional force", "*claritas*", in sum, "[a]ura is what aesthetic properties have in common". For his account, see Leddy, 2012, pp. 127-133. This notwithstanding, Jerome Stolnitz, the most famous proponent of the notion of an "aesthetic attitude", introduced it when surveying the history of disinterestedness in eighteenth century British philosophy. See Stolnitz, 1961, pp. 137-9.

22 Most famously, the same George Dickie who, in 1964, had already published a well-known article attacking the "Myth of the Aesthetic Attitude": "I shall argue that the aesthetic attitude is a myth and while, as G. Ryle has said, 'Myths often do a lot of theoretical good while they are still new,' this particular one is no longer useful and in fact misleads aesthetic theory" (Dickie, 1964, p. 56).

23 An alternative to the subject-object dilemma (and disinterestedness) in aesthetic experience is provided by Arnold Berleant (2013) with his notion of "aesthetic engagement".

it is because of the difficulty of thinking of the city as a whole, as a possible "object" that can be apprehended and contemplated in its entirety. Perhaps we can better conceive of this possibility by picturing the aerial view we have of a city when travelling by plane, although in this case it would no longer be a city what we are experiencing but rather a vague, blurry, almost formless blotch on the surface of the earth, with indefinite boundaries. Unlike the traditional image of a medieval city – a somewhat concentric and coherent set of buildings and structures clearly circumscribed by defensive walls, with an easily identifiable centre and correlate periphery – contemporary cities are a pervasive landscape of massive but heterogeneous built environments, dense areas of complex urban structures interspersed with sparser opened spaces, "*terrains vagues*", almost empty and sometimes resembling the countryside yet scarred by recognizable relics of a human presence: roads, bridges, derelict buildings, discarded machinery, landfills and other indications of previous or future urban activity.[24] Thus the city is more appropriately described as an *environment* of aesthetic experience than an *object* in a strict sense. In addition, cities are not only a set of architectural artefacts and urban equipment, but also networks of relationships and human activities. They are therefore highly complex and varied entities that offer, in a multiform and fragmented way, different contexts, situations, multiple events and objects to aesthetic perception. Experiencing the city aesthetically will always be a fragmented experience, depending on the physical and social and cultural context of each street, each crossing, each bridge, each plaza, each park, each borough. Of course, it also depends on the time of day or night, the season, weather conditions, lighting, the amount of traffic, whether there are crowds, etc. All this determines the rhythm, the *atmosphere*,[25] the sensorial,

24 Given the relentless contemporary process of urbanization, Arnold Berleant asks not what a city is but rather "Where is the city?": "The contemporary city has no perceptible boundary but is rather a node in a pervasive and seemingly endless industrialized landscape which most of its inhabitants rarely leave" (Berleant, 2016, p. 106).

25 The vague but evocative concept of "atmosphere" has been a part of the discourse of philosophical aesthetics at least since the German philosopher Gernot Böhme introduced it in his proposal of a "new aesthetics" (although he admittedly imported it from the New Phenomenology of Hermann Schmitz, and although it would be easy to find much earlier metaphoric uses of the notion in aesthetics, sometimes expressed through the terms *Stimmung*, *aura* and *genius loci*). The atmosphere

emotional and spiritual landscape that will tinge the experience(s) in the city.

Nonetheless, there is still a sense in which we can say that we experience *the* city, and not merely *in the* city. As we have seen, the city is not just a physical environment but a social one, a shared space where people pursue social and economic endeavours but also politics, religion, leisure and, most generally, culture – culture made of language, art, stories and myths that are constantly transforming the meaning of living in the city and that are inherited by its citizens and urban communities. There is also a historical and imaginary dimension to the city that helps to shape its identity, if not its urban aura. Thus, there is always a real or imagined city that is referred to by its dwellers and by its visitors as having a certain character, a certain appeal, a certain atmosphere, something that is expressed in literature, in movies, in popular culture, and that allows one to say that one – the subject – is aesthetically experiencing *a* city.

In any case, one of the best ways to experience the city aesthetically is to cross it, to endure it (we might recall here, with the help of Lacoue-Labarthe,[26] the etymology of the word "experience", from the Latin *experiri*, to test, to endure, to go through), which has to do with crossing, passing through, but also with an ordeal, an endeavour. The experience of the *flâneur*, of which I have spoken on other occasions, is perhaps one of the most suitable for aesthetically *engaging* with the city, and this is likely how it began to be seen as worthy of contemplation or aesthetic appreciation. I will not develop the history of *flânerie* here, but I will mention eighteenth-century

"relates objective factors and constellations of the environment with [one's] bodily feeling in that environment" (Böhme, 2017, p. 1). It can thus be understood as an in-between entity, a "quasi-thing" (Griffero) between subject and object that expresses the affective quality or "feeling" that "tinctures" the environment or situation in which the perceiver is immersed. For a general presentation of the notion, see Böhme, 2017, pp. 1-24 and Griffero, 2018; for more on atmospheres in urban settings, see Böhme, 2017, pp. 125-134.

26 In *Poetry as Experience*, Lacoue-Labarthe quotes the French writer Roger Munier: "First there is etymology. *Experience* comes from the Latin *experiri*, to test, try, prove. The radical is *periri*, which one also finds in *periculum*, peril danger. The Indo-European root is *per*, to which are attached the ideas of *crossing* and, secondarily, of *trial, test*. In Greek, numerous derivations evoke a crossing or passage: *peiró*, to cross; *pera*, beyond; *peraô*, to pass through ..." (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1999, p. 128, n. 15).

contributions such as Joseph Addison's "rambles" and "speculations", which he reported in his famous journal *The Spectator*,[27] Louis-Sébastien Mercier and the extensive volumes of his *Tableau de Paris*, and even Restif de la Bretonne, who ran through the city of Paris during the dangerous nights of the French Revolution in order to write *Les nuits de Paris ou le Spectateur Nocturne*. These are obvious examples of aesthetic contemplation of the city around the same period in which the philosophical discipline of aesthetics was born.[28]

Sitting comfortably among these writers is Georges Perec and his attempts to describe different corners of Paris, sometimes walking, sometimes while sitting in cafes and watching the buses pass, but who could have equally chosen to ride these buses, using their windows as moving screens, or to experience the city from the balconies of Haussmanian Paris – a city that Agnès Varda captured in her short films and in the psycho-geographical derivations of her *Cléo from 5 to 7*. A city can thus be aesthetically experienced dynamically (walking, driving or riding a Vespa, as Nanni Moretti did in one of his most popular films, set in Rome, *Caro diario*) or from a stationary point (like Álvaro de Campos peering through the window of his bedroom and spotting a little girl in front of the tobacconist's, eating chocolates on the other side of "a street continually crossed by people / A street inaccessible to any thoughts").[29]

27 For other examples of London walkers and the psycho-geographical literary accounts of their urban experience, see Löffler, 2017.

28 For a brief introduction and a literary anthology of Parisian *flânerie* in the nineteenth century, see Paquot and Rossi, 2016.

29 My translation of a short excerpt from Álvaro de Campos's (one of Fernando Pessoa's heteronyms) poem "Tabacaria" (The Tobacconist), a metaphysical modernist urban dirge in which the poet reflects on the anonymity of city life while contemplating a busy street in Lisbon. Available at the online archive http://arquivopessoa.net/textos/163.

6.

BACK TO PLACE SAINT-SULPICE

The pigeons are on the plaza. They all fly off at the same time.
Four children. A dog. A little ray of sun. The 96. It is two o'clock.
(Perec, 2010, p. 47)

These are the last words of Perec's description, an arbitrary conclusion to an experience that could have continued endlessly. City life never stops. In fact, the author would repeat this sort of experience on other occasions and in different locations in Paris. In 1978, for instance, he would go to a "car studio" belonging to Radio France (a van used as a mobile studio) to record a six-hour monologue in which he described, in the exact same way, whatever (*infra-ordinary* events) he saw, heard, felt at the Carrefour Mabillon (a famous Parisian intersection) near Saint-Germain-des-Près, in what became the radio show *Tentative de description de choses vues au Carrefour Mabillon le 19 mai 1978*.

The city is not just a complex set of visible surfaces, nor is it simply a composite of tactile volumes. It is a dynamic and multi-sensorial environment made up of states of affairs, relationships between objects, structures, agents and events (events that result from the interaction of all previous elements); it is a continuous variation of processes, movements and flows. Aesthetically experiencing *the* city *or in the* city can involve a bundle of multiple, diverse and fragmentary experiences, some more significant or more intense than others, loaded with sensory information and perceptual interactions, but also impressions and affective dispositions that result from these interactions, combined with the modes of attention and sensitivity of the subject of the experience. What matters when experiencing the city aesthetically, in all its multiplicity, its composition and its rhythms, is being sensorially attentive, cognitively awake and emotionally involved with the environmental reality and with the life – whether human, animal, vegetal or mineral – that occurs within it.

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Maria Filomena Molder is Full Professor of Aesthetics at the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. She received her PhD in 1992 on *Goethe's Morphological Thought* (IN-CM, 1995) and edited *Paisagens dos Confins. Fernando Gil* (2009), *Morphology: Questions on Method and Language* (2013) and *Rue Descartes* nº 68, "Philosopher au Portugal Aujourd'hui" (2010). She has published several books on the relationship between art, poetry and philosophy, some of which have won the Pen-Club Essay Prize (*Semear na Neve. Estudos sobre Walter Benjamin*, 2000; *O Químico e o Alquimista. Benjamin Leitor de Baudelaire*, 2012; *Dia Alegre, Dia Pensante, Dias Fatais*, 2018) and the AICA Prize (*Rebuçados Venezianos*, 2017). She has also written for art catalogues, mainly in the contemporary Portuguese context, and on philosophy, art and literature in international revues, including *Análise*, *Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, *Sub-Rosa*, *La Part de l'Oeil*, *Rue Descartes*, *Gratuita*, *Europe*, *Cadernos Nietzsche*, *Lettre International*, *Electra* and *Diaphanes*.

BARTHOLOMEW RYAN

Bartholomew Ryan is a researcher, musician, and coordinator of the CultureLab at Nova Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA), School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. His academic and creative works orbit around the central motif of 'transformation', which takes into account the masks, ecologies and (multiple) identities that define the modern human condition. He has published various books and essays on philosophy and literature, the most recent book being *Fernando Pessoa and Philosophy: Countless Lives Inhabit Us* (co-editor, 2021). He was a lecturer at Bard College Berlin for four years and has taught at universities in Brazil, Oxford, Aarhus, Dublin, Lisbon and Bishkek. He also heads the international band *The Loafing Heroes* and other solo and collaborative music projects.

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MAURIZIO GRIBAUDI

A historian and geographer, Maurizio Gribaudi is a professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris and member of the Laboratoire de démographie et d'histoire sociale. He has developed several important studies on the formation of social groups in urban areas. After working on demographic and migratory movements between the countryside and the city (in Northern Italy and the Paris region), he has more recently focused his research on the physical and social transformations of Paris and the French territory from the modern era to the present day.

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NÉLIO CONCEIÇÃO

Nélio Conceição is a research fellow at the Nova Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA), School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. He obtained his PhD in philosophy (aesthetics) from the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa in 2013, with a thesis on the relation between philosophy and photography. He was a visiting scholar at PUC - São Paulo (2015) and ZfL-Berlin (2016). His research focuses on aesthetics and theory of art, and he has been working on the philosophical and artistic ramifications of Walter Benjamin's work, urban aesthetics and the concept of play, topics that are at the core of his latest publications. He is currently co-coordinating the FCT-funded project "Fragmentation and Reconfiguration: Experiencing the City between Art and Philosophy" and recently co-edited, with Claudio Rozzoni, the volume *Aesthetics and Values: Contemporary Perspectives* (Mimesis International, 2021).

JOÃO OLIVEIRA DUARTE

João Oliveira Duarte obtained a degree in philosophy from the Faculty of Letters, University of Lisbon, and a master's degree in aesthetics from the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, where he is currently pursuing a PhD in art history. An FCT scholarship recipient and member of IHA and CLEPUL, he has published several essays in specialized magazines, both national and international. He has also contributed as a literary critic to several publications, including *Electra*, *Colóquio-Letras* and *Jornal i.*

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ALEXANDRA DIAS FORTES

Alexandra Dias Fortes (PhD, philosophy – aesthetics, 2016) is an integrated member of the Nova Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA), School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, working within the FCT-funded projects "Fragmentation and Reconfiguration: Experiencing the City between Art and Philosophy" (post-doc fellow) and "Epistemology of Religious Belief: Wittgenstein, Grammar and the Contemporary World" (team member). Dias Fortes has presented her work at esteemed international conferences dedicated to Wittgenstein, including the Nordic Wittgenstein Society Conference (Odense, Denmark, 2012), "The Too Early Wittgenstein?" conference (London, UK, 2013), and the International Wittgenstein Symposia (Kirchberg am Wechsel, Austria, 2012 through to 2019). Since 2018, the scope of her research has expanded to include philosophy of the city and urban aesthetics.

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NUNO FONSECA

Nuno Fonseca (PhD, philosophy, 2012) is an appointed research fellow at the Nova Institute of Philosophy (IFILNOVA), School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa (NOVA FCSH), and coordinator of the *Art, Critique and Aesthetic Experience* group (CultureLab). His research focuses on various topics in aesthetics and the philosophy of art, such as aesthetic values, aesthetic experience,

sound art and music, but his current focus is sound experience in contemporary artistic practices and in the context of urban aesthetics. He has been teaching courses on aesthetics, logic, rhetoric and argumentation and the philosophy of sound at NOVA FCSH. In addition to several national and international publications on aesthetics, he authored the first Portuguese translation and edition of the *Port-Royal Logic* (Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2016). He has also collaborated in theatre and art performances as a sound designer and has co-created radio shows for Portugal's national radio network (RTP/Antena 2).
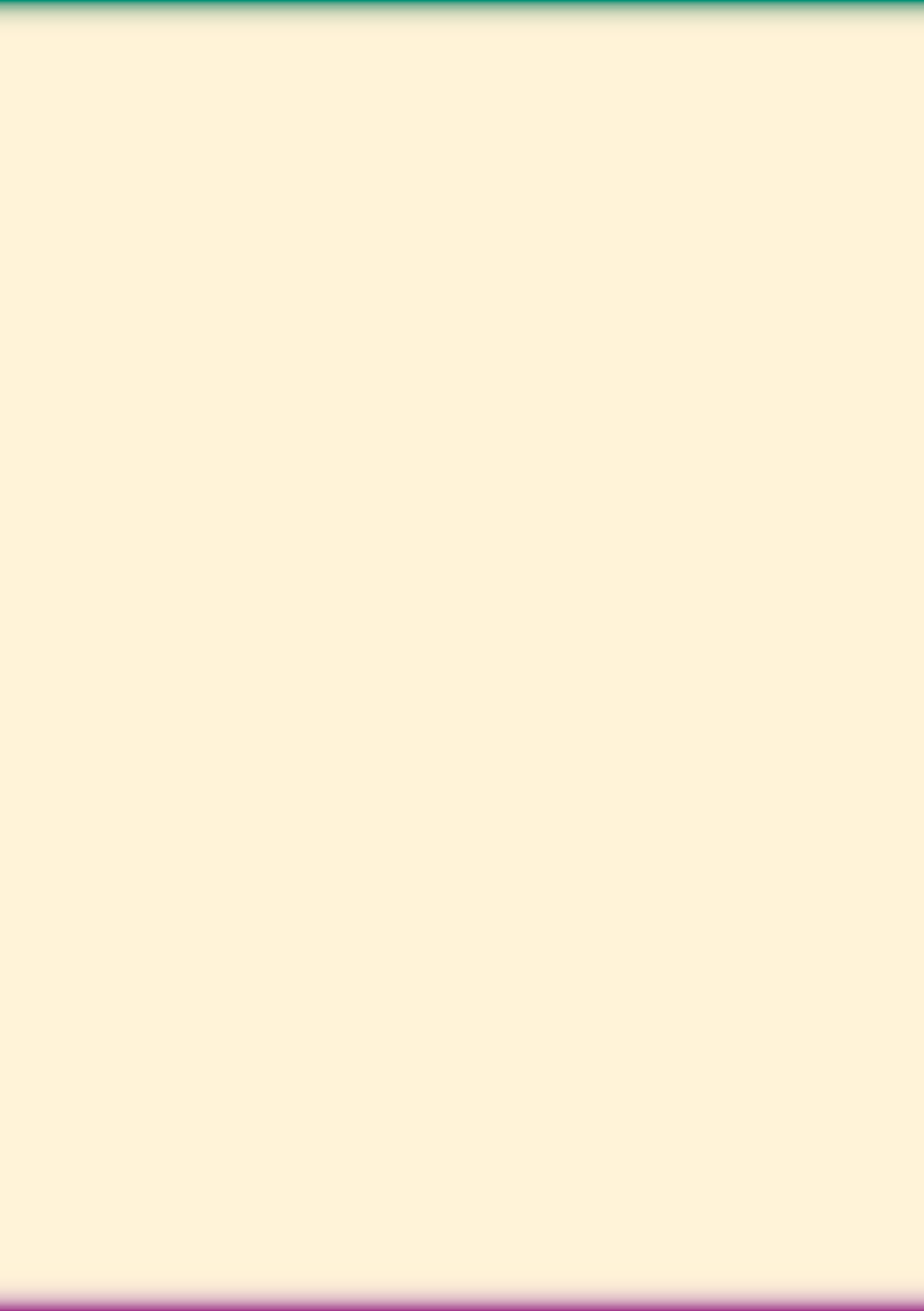
CONCEPTUAL FIGURES OF FRAGMENTATION AND RECONFIGURATION

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