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STUDIA UBB. PHILOSOPHIA, LV, 3, 2010

DOSSIER:

Phenomenology of Digital Technologies

INTRODUCTION

The present issue of Studia Philosophia is dedicated to the phenomenology of digital technologies. Penetrating and transforming everyday practices and spaces, today's digital technologies are defining our present epistemological paradigm, creating new models of understanding different aspects of reality. Communication technologies and portable media devices are today increasingly ubiquitous and personalized. The changes they produced compel us to reconsider the conditioning of our modern lives while their potential requires further exploration.

By capturing and transforming the analog signal in digital form, we are today capable to deal with information of all kinds brought to a common denominator. Digitalization allows us not only to treat and to carry different types of data with the same efficiency, but also to mix them in previously unimaginable ways. After a period when the attention was focused on the structures of digital, today we are facing a much more general concern related to the possibilities offered by the interposition between analogue and digital data. With digitalization we assist to a phenomenon of automation which penetrates all aspects of our lives. Their alliance with the spectrum of nano- and bio-technologies is about to induce major changes in the way we deal with matter and the way we identify it.

If mathematization defined modernity, we also notice today a re-evaluation of phenomenological aspects. What kind of models are we using today in perceiving and understanding our environment? In which ways these models are to be found in the technological development? Can the phenomenological approach and description bring light to the study of digital structures? What are the means phenomenology provides for the study of digital technologies and their implications? What is the potential and where are the limits of the phenomenological method in the field? Are there new models that impose themselves in the analysis of our highly technological world?

Trying to answer these questions, the contributors to this special issue approach the phenomenon of digital technologies from different perspectives.

By questioning the ontological aspects of digital technologies**, Michael Eldred** discusses notions like digital beings and cyberspace. Focusing on Aristotle's ontology of number, space and time, as well as on Descartes' blue-print, in his *Regulae*, he claims that the digital cast of being comes from a long history of philosophical and mathematical thinking in which the Western will of productive power over action has attained its consummation.

In "Digital Technology as Matrix for Constructivism and *Verdinglichung"*, **Hans Diebner** provides an insightful discussion on the increasing role of digital technology and its constructivist approach based on stored data and information. He argues that this constructivist perspective contribute to the superposition of the signifiers and significata and, as result, stored data or information gains an ontological status comparable to mass and energy. It is the ontological status of the subject which is in the end questioned. Following the Heideggerian path, the author's hypothesis is that digital technologies would end by producing their own *pharmakon*.

Several contributions deal with questions related to the performative aspects in a digital context.

In "Phenomenological Issues in Virtual Reality: Technical Gestures Directed like Virtual Pieces of Performing Art", **Francis Rousseaux** provides an original and entertaining discussion of the role of digitized technical gestures, question of interest to the whole field of Human-Computer Interaction. By recalling the analogue models of gesture's notation and by questioning the 'cooperation' man – machine, the text try to sketch the philosophical and ethical questions raised by such operations. The central issue is that of the human place in the interactive schema, as well as the meaning to be given to such a system.

From an artistic practice standpoint, **Susan Kozel** offers a detailed discussion of a series of phenomenologically informed methods relevant to the design and creative use of mobile digital devices, called the *Intuitive Improvisation* method. The approach is part of a larger philosophical and artistic project in Social Choreographies which try to contribute to the field of social aesthetics by providing a perspective uniquely influenced by dance and phenomenology. A special focus on the *IntuiTweet* project in dance and networked social media allows the author to contextualize philosophical reflections upon relational aesthetics, method and intuition.

Dealing with one of the key issues on Virtual Reality, namely of how to induce the feeling of reality in the experiencing subject, **Alexander Heinzel** and **Tincuta Heinzel**'s text compares it with the phenomenon of phantom sensations. The hypothesis of "The Phenomenology of Virtual Reality (VR) and Phantom Sensations" is that the phenomenological difference between Virtual Reality and phantom sensation originates in the fact that phantom sensations represent a case of unmediated Virtual Reality and can be traced back to the epistemic abilities and limitations of the brain itself.

Joshua Harle examines the use of Augmented Reality technology as a site of both a playful and creative form, and an analytical ordering form of experimentation in space. In his text, « Tactical and Strategic Experimentation in Space » the author recalls Michel de Certeau's notions of strategic (“voyeur” point of view) and tactical (“walker / flaneur” point of view) practice of space and points out the difficulty to approach Augmented Reality as a tool for creating new concepts by limiting the understanding of space to the analytical (strategic approach) form of space.

The televisual explicitation in the digital era is compared by **Alexandru Matei** to that of Ceausescu's in a phenomenological analysis of two ages of television, one defined by ‘abundance’ of a free capitalist democracy, the other defined by ‘scarcity’ inside a totalitarian political regime. The text underlines the ambiguous relationship television maintains with reality and tries to answer questions related to the production of television's content, as well as those related to their reception and deconstruction. Taking as example one episode of the well-known series *Dr. House*, today's television is seen as fiction-maker able to raise ethical questions related to the two kind of political regimes mentioned above: dictatorship and capitalist democracy.

Tincuta HEINZEL

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THE QUESTION CONCERNING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY*

MICHAEL ELDRED**

ABSTRACT. We live today surrounded by countless digital gadgets and navigate through cyberspace as if it were the most natural thing in the world. This study lays out what digital beings *are* and what cyberspace *is*, thus disclosing the basic ontological structure of the digital world. The digital cast of being comes from a long history of philosophical and mathematical thinking in which the Western will to productive power over movement has attained its consummation. A focus is put on Aristotle's ontology of number, space and time in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, as well as on Descartes' blue-print, in his *Regulae*, for the mathematical cast of being in the modern age.

Keywords: phenomenology, metaphysics, mathematics, Cartesianism, cybernetics, cyberspace, Heidegger, Aristotle.

1. Approaching the question concerning digital technology[1]

The title of this study recalls one of Heidegger's most famous pieces, 'Die Frage nach der Technik' ('The Question Concerning Technology'[2]). Hence this study could be regarded as a specification of Heidegger's question to a particular kind of technology and will therefore leave the determination of the essence of technology as the Gestell (set-up) in the background in favour of specifying the peculiar nature of specifically digital technology.

The method is phenomenological, which means it is a path of thinking on which the ontological structure of digital technology is brought to light by focusing on simple, uncontroversial, abstract determinations of digital technology that lie phenomenally open to view. Such a phenomenological ontology is therefore not a model that has to be tested against the empirical world. Rather, abstract elements of the empirical world are incorporated already in moving along the path that is to disclose what digital technology *is*.[3]

** *Philosophical author, Cologne, email: me@arte-fact.org*

[1] This article is based on Eldred 2009/2011, a study that originally arose out of an e-mail discussion in 1999 with Rafael Capurro to whom I am indebted. Cf. Rafael Capurro's analogous article from 2001. I wish to thank the editors and referees of *Studia Philosophia* for their critical comments.

[2] M. Heidegger V&A 1954.

[3] Cf. Heidegger SZ 1979 § 7; Hegel W3 Vorrede; Glaser 1979.

2. Digital beings

2.1. What is a digital being? Placeless and positionless, but calculable

What is a digital being? A provisional answer will first be given which grasps the initial manifestation of a digital being in everyday understanding. Accordingly, a digital being is nothing other than binary code, i.e. an ordered, finite sequence of binary digits or bits, i.e. a finite string of zeroes and ones. A digital being as a whole can therefore be regarded simply as a finite rational number. How these numbers are arrived at is at first not apparent, but only that, guided by a scientific-technological λόγος, they have been 'lifted' from physical beings, including practical things, with the aim of enabling a certain function. Since the numbers are not only placeless, but also positionless, digital beings themselves are also placeless. What does this lack of position and place mean?

In Aristotle's thinking,[4] number is something distilled out of, drawn off, abstracted from physical beings. The distilling or abstracting consists for Aristotle in a being becoming placeless; i.e. it is separated off from its surroundings (χορίζειν), in order to become a number in the abstraction. Whereas physical beings (φύσει ὄν, beings that come to a stand in presence of themselves) are characterized by *continuity*, the numbers, which originarily arise by counting, i.e. an iterative procedure of moving to the succeeding number, are *separated* from each other, *discrete*. The geometrical figure of a physical being is likewise abstracted from it, but the figure's points, although placeless, still have position, and the figure, like the physical being itself, is continuous. Continuity consists in the way the points (στίγμαι) of a figure or the parts of the underlying physical being, which all have a position and are thus posited, hold and hang together. The points hang together by touching each other at their extremities (ἔσχατα). They even share their extremities. The points are all identical but are differentiated through their differing positions. On the other hand, the numbers are without place and also without position but are differentiated within themselves. They bear the difference within themselves, whereas the points can only distinguish themselves one from the other through a difference in position. For instance, 3 is to be distinguished from 5, but two points on a line are identical (αὐτό). The distilling of numbers out of physical beings opens up the possibility of calculating with numbers; they are open to λογισμός, but at the price (or the advantage) of becoming placeless and positionless. Such a lack of place and position characterizes also the digital beings which we deal with today. For them as finite, rational, binary numbers, matter in its continuity and its fixedness of place becomes indifferent.

What is ontologically most complex in the way it hangs together, i.e. the continuous geometric figures and physical beings, is most simple for sensuous perception, but is very unwieldy for calculation. And conversely: what is ontologically more simple, i.e. the arithmetic entities in their ordered, countable succession, is not as easily accessible to sensuous perception but can be calculated (λογισμός) without any difficulty. This means that the arithmetic entities and their interrelations can be more easily brought to presence by the λόγος (or the λογισμός in this case) than geometric entities which, in turn, are closer to sensuous experience, i.e. not so abstract.

[4] Aristotle *Phys*. II,2; *Met*. XI,3 1061a28f; *De Caelo* III 1 299a15ff; *Met*. XIII,3; *Met*. XII,8 1073b6ff.

With the arithmetization of geometry in the modern age, the mathematico-logical manipulation of beings attains a hitherto unprecedented power. From this brief aside on the ontology of physical beings and mathematical entities, and the Cartesian casting of a mathematical access to beings as a whole, it can be concluded for the time being that digital beings are placeless, positionless and calculable.[5]

The sequence of binary numbers constituting a digital being must also be 'written down' somewhere, i.e. inscribed in a material medium which can be paper, but usually is an electromagnetic medium of some kind into which a binary difference can be impressed, like a printed book. A book, such as an engineering textbook, can be read to appropriate the meaning of the λόγοι it contains. Abstracting from its content, a printed book can also be viewed simply as an ordered, countable, finite sequence of letters and other orthographic characters, where all these characters can be represented in numbers and thus ultimately also in binary code. Hence, any book can be digitized, and the underlying ontological ground for this is the intimate relationship between λόγος and ἀριθμός, both of which are discrete, articulated, rational, placeless and positionless (Eldred 2009 § 2.3).

2.2. The digital interpretation of world-movement and its outsourcing through executable, cybernetic machine-code

To clarify the essence of digital beings a step further, they have to be viewed from the perspective of digital technology. The binary code of a digital being is writing, the inscription of a λόγος into a medium. This logos is that of a techno-logical know-how appropriating the disclosedness of beings as such.[6] Technology is essentially a knowledge providing insight into physical beings of all kinds with a view to their manipulation. Productive technology is a knowledge of *how* an envisaged product (a change or movement of any envisaged kind, which may be regarded simply as an effect or a result) can be brought forth.

Here a distinction must be drawn between digital beings which are in some way or other read by humans, and digital beings which are employed to automatically control some process or other. Productive know-how can be written down. Written-down knowledge was first of all read by humans who appropriated and applied the knowledge for their own purposes, e.g. in artisanal production. With digital technology, however, knowledge is not only written down in a script legible to humans, but in a digitized script which can be read by a digital processor as a sequence of machine commands bringing forth envisaged results in a certain, determinate context. Script thus becomes a digital program, literally, a pre-script, which controls a machine of some kind and is 'productive' in the sense of bringing forth an effect which is always some sort of movement or change (μεταβολή). Script as binary code, i.e. a finite, discrete sequence of bits, is 'read' sequentially by the machine's digital processor as an algorithm, i.e. each digital character or each string of digital characters taken together (i.e. syllables in

[5] For more details see § 3.2 below and Eldred 2009 § 2.1 et seqq.
[6] Cf. Heidegger GA19:276, 274, 391.

the Greek sense of συλλαβεῖν, aor. inf. act. 'taken together') serves to control the machine's movements by means of commands that the machine's 'chip' has been designed, through its circuits, to 'understand' and 'interpret'. The hardware and software mesh together like a 'symbol' in the Greek sense.

An elementary example of such control is when a binary-coded, digital text is 'read' by a digital device such as a mobile telephone or PC monitor, etc. in order to represent the text on a screen through an ordered sequence of pixels. The pre-script in this case is not merely the digitized text itself, but the word-processing program and the control characters embedded in the text which together enable the text to be shown on a screen by means of control instructions. The program pre-script used to control a machine is always a 'logically' fixed knowledge insofar as the λόγος appropriates beings in their truth with a view to some practical end (in this example, an electromagnetic state of matter interpreted as an ordered sequence of pixels and legible to the eye as text).

The essential and immensely powerful characteristic of digital technology is that human know-how can be *outsourced* by the pre-script of a program into a machine where it then automatically brings about effects at any place whatsoever. The know-how is a theoretical pre-conception of a certain matter or state of affairs which, as a digital program, enables certain predefined procedures to be automated. In principle, *all* human tools are the outsourcing of a know-how. A tool as simple and banal as a potato peeler, for instance, is the outsourced know-how of how to peel a potato effectively embodied in a practical thing designed for the specific purpose. The potato peeler is not simply a tool for an operative execution of human know-how but rather *as such*, in its very fashioning and making, already *embodies*, *materializes* partially a restricted kind of practical culinary know-how.

Outsourced know-how, however, comes into its own when it is automated, e.g. when the know-how of how to produce a table is outsourced via a digital program into a automatic, numerically controlled lathe. Contemporary debates over artificial intelligence and expert systems turn upon the extent to which, and which kinds of, practical human understanding can be digitally, logically encoded and thus outsourced. Digital technology opens up hitherto inconceivable possibilities for outsourcing (segments of) practical world-understanding in such a way that movements of all kinds (e.g. the motion of a door, executing a calculation or a signal that a pre-set temperature has been reached) can be automatically brought about. Computer programs inscribe a partial practical understanding of world, say, into the hard disk of a network server, and make the interpretation of this understanding processable and calculable by a microprocessor, thus producing functional effects (such as the 'production' of a search result by a digital search 'engine'). The digital capture and taking-apart of the totality of beings thus goes qualitatively beyond mechanical technology, which is still oriented toward physical (loco)motion, into the dimension of the automated control of systems of movement and change of all kinds, including the human body.

Since the onset of modernity, in which beings were cast as *res extensa* for the first time (cf. below § 3.2), the theoretical access to beings in their being has been enabled through measurability. The theoretical appropriation of beings is then a disclosing of beings by quantitative measurement, both practical (e.g. empirical data collection)

and theoretical (e.g. postulating algebraic variables for all kinds of physical dimensions). The way a given matter behaves is then graspable and knowable theoretically through quantitative relations (equations), and this knowledge can then be programmed into computing machines of all kinds which further calculate what is measured on beings in accordance with a scientific theory. For instance, digital photography is enabled firstly by casting colour itself ontologically as a purely quantitative multi-dimension (i.e. a triple of positive integers plus other numerical parameters to form a colour vector in a chromatic vector-space). The further calculation then serves either a deeper knowledge of the matter (e.g. digital chromatic rendering) and/or the (automated) control of a process already set in motion in which the measured or further calculated data are fed back into the process as a control variable (e.g. to produce a colour print on paper).

With executable digital character sequences, knowledge is converted into a functional form that allows it to bring forth effects and to control processes automatically. The logos in the form of digital code is thus fed back into beings in order to manipulate them in a kind of self-poiesis. Digital beings legible for humans comprise not only text-like files, but all code sequences such as images, sounds, moving images which, when they are re-presented by the appropriate hardware, have effects on the senses and can be taken in by sensuous perception and understood *as* a meaningful whole. Machine code, on the other hand, controls processes in pre-conceived and pre-calculated ways. To do this, the process itself must have been already understood and taken apart in a mathematically calculable way which itself builds on various natural and technological sciences such as physics and electrical engineering. The programmer transforms this understanding into machine-readable, sequential, algorithmic, digital code (for every programming language must be ultimately translated into digital machine code in the narrow sense consisting exclusively of binary bits to be processed stepwise by the digital processor as executable commands) which then brings forth calculable control effects in a definite, foreseen context. Thus outsourced, cybernetic-technical knowledge becomes automated and tendentially makes itself independent vis-à-vis humans for, although each program can still be read and understood individually, the possible implementations of automatic control are well-nigh unlimited and thus lead to intricate, intermeshed, non-transparent control complexes that may even feed back automatically into each other in feedback loops — including in unforeseen ways.

Control processes that are no longer co-ordinated with the particular context foreseen automatically bring forth nonsensical or even harmful effects. An understanding programmed into digital code can thus turn into a severe misunderstanding with serious consequences. If each digital program can be conceived as the implementation of a partial understanding of the world, then the possibility of arbitrary replication of binary code in electromagnetic media means that the digitized cybernetic knowledge transformed into software is available and can be called up anywhere, including in wholly unintended contexts.

The *interpretation* of the world through executable machine code takes place *factually* and *mechanically* (i.e. without understanding) in the interpretative processing of what is given by the world (data) and this interpretation is already latent in the pre-script of the program itself that just ‘mechanically’ processes the data. Viewed

thus, a computer program pre-script is not only a productive technical know-how producing functional effects, but, more deeply and prior to that, a *pre-interpretation* of (a restricted segment) of the world written down by human beings which is ready to receive data at any time in order to calculatively interpret the world, on the basis of the data fed in, in a certain preconceived direction and to control the movement of some system or other on the basis of this interpretation. Human being, for which the world opens up in understanding, can today outsource to a computer its interpretation of the ontically understood world in segments into binarily programmed, functionally effective pre-interpretations of the world, where the understanding of world itself already has to be compatible with a digital decomposition (e.g. time has to be conceived quantitatively as a continuum of timeless now-points that can be counted, and thus digitized, to any desired degree of approximation; see below § 3.3). The executable digital code as a finite, discrete, rational binary number is itself an unambiguous 'logical' interpretation of a segment of the practical world, so cybernetics presupposes unambiguous, rationally computable, logical world-interpretations. Such a world-understanding as a whole is oriented toward setting up and controlling the various kinds of *movements* of beings in their totality and thus springs from an insatiable *will to power over movement*.

2.3. The forgetting encouraged by digital code, and automated cybernetic control in the robotic age

Whereas the logos that is spoken and read by humans calls the beings spoken/read of to presence for human understanding, binary cybernetic machine code executes control processes unseen in the background. Only the effects of cybernetic processes are brought forth into presence, bypassing understanding. The technical knowledge hidden behind these cybernetic processes can be 'forgotten' since the processes themselves proceed automatically. Only the programmer, technician or engineer needs to know how these cybernetic processes technically produce their effects. Understanding itself has passed over from human being into electronic digital devices. Such forgetting of technical knowledge in the broadest sense can be observed today everywhere, e.g. people are no longer able to carry out even simple arithmetic operations in their 'heads', but have to reach for a digital pocket calculator to do so.

In a computer program, technical knowledge itself translating a partial understanding and interpretation of some aspect of the world is made into something lying present at hand and to hand, and it is a being which is good for something (mode of being as being-(good)-for...; cf. SZ § 15). Whereas the 'logical' or logos-like call-up of beings takes place through language calling beings to presence by addressing them, with digitally decomposed beings this presencing is different, for here, binary code is called up through the electromagnetic medium, in order to be processed further, i.e. either read by a human, or to unfold automatically its programmed effects in a cybernetic loop. Physical beings are brought to presence in knowledge through the numbers and language 'lifted' from them in a manipulative way different from their presencing of themselves unmediatedly for aisthaetic perception in a situation.

The knowing re-presentation of physical beings in executable digital code depends on both the geometric abstraction from physical beings and the discrete arithmetic abstraction that is able to algorithmically approximate physical continuity to any desired degree of accuracy (cf. below § 3.1).

When the knowing, disclosing appropriation of beings through *arithmological knowledge* is inscribed in a computer program, physical beings too then become cybernetically manipulable by automated machines controlled by binary machine code. As cybernetic programming, arithmological knowledge intervenes 'in writing' in the world of things. Arithmological knowledge not only enables a technically productive manipulation of things, but arithmological script as cybernetic program code transforms this arithmological knowledge *automatically* into effects. Such automated cybernetic systems represent a hybrid between φύσις in the sense of beings which bear the governing source of their own movement within themselves, on the one hand, and a technique under the control of a human hand in which the governing source of movement lies in another being (the producer, the programmer), on the other, for these automated systems have something φύσις-like in their nature, where φύσις is understood as self-poiesis.

Tellingly, Aristotle conceived φύσις precisely as self-poiesis, so the cybernetic, auto-poietic systems confronting us today are the consummation of his ontological dream which is now revealing its ambivalence as a sometimes nightmarish dream. An auto-poietic being in the Aristotelean sense is one that has the principle (ἀρχή, starting-point, source) of its movement and change within itself. We may as well call these auto-poietic systems and things *robots* and note that we have long since been living in the *robotic age*, the epoch unwittingly long since fore-cast by arithmological ontology. In automated cybernetic systems, the governing source of movement no longer resides in a living, breathing human operator, but has been outsourced, through knowledge, into material beings insofar making it seem that these systems themselves had souls and were in this sense alive, animated (anima = soul). Such outsourcing introduces a split between the knowing designer (electrical engineers, programmers, etc.) of the cybernetic system, and the users, who need know nothing about how the system works, but only its operating instructions, thus deepening the gulf between technically skilled labour and unskilled labour. Unskilled workers have not even forgotten something they once understood in principle or in technical detail, but inhabit the cybernetic world as if in a fog in which things are discernible only in fuzzy outline.

The phenomenon of digital automation also reflects back, through the inevitably *totalizing tendency* of the digital cast of being, onto the self-conception of human being itself: a science of neurophysiology arises which preconceives even human thinking itself *as* an intricate, auto-poietic computational program, embedded in the brain, which reacts to sensory impulse-data given by the outside world. The scientific dream is to bring human being itself within the grasp of finitely rational calculability. This is a kind of forgetting of an entirely different order: truth is understood then only as effective knowledge, and human thinking is (unwittingly) preconceived ontologically as the effectivity of its functionality, i.e. through the interconnections between cause and effect, stimulus and response, data input from the environment and brain-calculated

reaction. The thinking human brain is then considered to be simply extremely good in calculating given inputs through ingenious feedback loops, but in principle (i.e. ontologically) as the same as a digital computing machine. In this kind of effective scientific thinking, the ontological difference between ontic knowing and ontological insight into the 'scaffolding' of being itself has been consigned to oblivion.

3. Arithmological access to being and time

To understand where digital beings come from requires looking at how the ground was prepared for the arithmological access to being by especially Aristotelean metaphysics in its ontology of number, movement and time. In the modern age, this metaphysics was recast by Descartes to enable a tighter mathematical grip on physical being, which went hand in hand with momentous developments in mathematics. In the following sections we will work our way back to Aristotle.

3.1. Bridging the gulf between the discrete and the continuous

From the logical side, the side of the λόγος, there is no difficulty in representing any statement in numbers, and, in particular, in numbers to the base 2, i.e. binary code, since both number (ἀριθμός) and λόγος are discrete. But how was it possible to gain a mathematical hold on real, physical beings? For this, the geometric (based on points, lines, planes and solids) and the arithmetic (based on counting starting with the unit) had to be brought together. As Jacob Klein's thorough study shows,[7] this process of historical transformation passes through the key figures Diophantos, Vieta, Simon Stevin, Wallis and Descartes. The difficulty obstructing this convergence resides in the circumstance that the Greeks thought the ἀριθμός as countable, starting with the unit or μονάς. As unit, it is indivisible, discrete, so the best Greek mathematics could do was to form ratios of natural, counting numbers, that is, positive fractions, broken integers or so-called rational numbers, which are likewise countable and discrete. From the geometric side, however, the Greeks were aware that somehow there were some numbers missing from the countable integers and fractions, namely, those numbers 'in between' the fractions that could not be brought into the form of a fraction, i.e. a ratio of two whole numbers. They were therefore called irrational numbers or surds or incommensurable because they could in no way be measured by the unit for counting, the μονάς, by way of creating a ratio (λόγος). The simplest irrational number arises already in considering the diagonal of the unit square, whose length is the square root of two. These irrational numbers are the magnitudes arising from geometric figures which, in turn, are obtained by abstracting the contour outlines of continuous, physical entities. Geometric figures clearly (i.e. for the visual imagination) hold themselves together; they are continuous. How are all the points on the fundamental geometric figures of a line or a plane to be captured numerically if number is conceived

[7] Klein 1968.

as fundamentally countable? This countability, in turn, derives ontologically from the implicit Greek preconception of being as presence-at-hand: a definite number arises from actually counting the things lying present at hand. For Greek thinking, that which lies present at hand is the ὑποκείμενον, and such ὑποκείμενα in a multitude are countable. In his *Physics*, Aristotle thinks the phenomenon of continuity ontologically progressing from discrete beings which touch, to those lined up in succession, that hang together and, finally, hang tightly together in continuity.

The counting unit is indivisible, whereas the unit line is infinitely divisible. Not all the possible magnitudes contained in the unit line can be captured by countable, i.e. rational numbers. The rational numbers have to be complemented by the irrational numbers to attain the entirety of a continuous line with all the possible magnitudes it contains. Although rational numbers can be made to approximate each other as closely as one likes, between any two rational numbers whatever there is an irrational number, i.e. a magnitude that cannot be expressed 'rationally' as a ratio of two integers. Any attempt to express an irrational number as a rational number in a decimal, binary, hexadecimal or any other number system results in an infinite, irregular string of digits. How are the countable, rational numbers to be completed to get the real numbers? Real number is an appropriate term because only by means of these real numbers can *all* the magnitudes of sensually perceptible, real, physical bodies be assigned a number. The task is how physical *res extensa* can be captured mathematically by number, and not merely by geometry. Only number opens the possibility of calculation, whereas geometry has to rely on intuitive proofs for which the geometrical objects have to be imagined sensuously in an immediate intuition. To be continuous, and thus to capture *all* physical magnitudes of any kind, number has to become real, uncountable. Uncountability implies that, since the rational numbers are countable, between any two rational proportions of integers, no matter how minimal the difference between them, there are always non-rational numbers, i.e. rational numbers can come infinitely close to one another without ever gaining continuity; there is always a gap and in this sense they do not hang tightly together like the geometric line. Richard Dedekind's small but crucial step in the second half of the 19th century was to fill in the gaps between the rational numbers with cuts by conceiving the real numbers as the limits of infinite, but countable sequences of rational numbers.

3.2. Cartesian rules for an algebra of magnitudes in general as foundation for the modern mathematical sciences

So the problem becomes, how can there be a mathematical calculus of uncountable, real numbers, and what is the ontological (pre-)conception or (pre-)casting of number on which such a calculus could be soundly based? That is the problem of the ontological recasting of mathematics as algebra in the modern age. Number has to become continuous magnitude pure and simple, which is uncountable, but nevertheless calculable. Magnitude is the quantity pertaining to any extension whatsoever of a real, sensuously perceptible being from which sensuous, and therefore quantifiable

data, can be received. Such extension need not be only spatial extension such as the three Euclidean dimensions of length, width and depth, but can be any one of the countless dimensions whatsoever of a perceptible *res* such as colour or "weight" (gravitas, XIV.16). Thus, Descartes writes in the twelfth of his *Regulae*,[8] "For example, you may suppose whatever you like about colour, but you will not deny that it is extended and consequently has figure" (XII.6). A figure is geometric, and a geometric figure of whatever kind has magnitudes. The Cartesian ontological casting of beings as *res extensa* is essential for their reduction to figure and thus, since figure is grasped as a simple manifold of magnitudes, to mathematically calculable magnitude.

Descartes goes on to show in Rule XII.6 that the dimension of colour (of any kind of physical beings), for instance, can be represented simply by different figures which amount to different symbols representing the various colours. And he notes, "The same can be said of all things since it is certain that the infinite multitude of figures suffices to express all the differences of sensible things" (XII.6). When the intellect is examining something "that can refer to bodies, this idea must be formed in the imagination as distinctly as possible; to bring this about comfortably, the thing itself which represents this idea must be exhibited to the external senses" (XII.11). But if the intellect is to think through and deduce (deducat, XII.11) from a plurality, "everything not requiring attention at present is to be thrown out of the ideas of the things" (XII.11). Therefore, "then the things themselves are not to be laid before the external senses, but rather certain abbreviating figures" (XII.11). These "abbreviating figures" are then elaborated in Rule XVI as "the briefest of signs" (brevissimas notas) which enable the intellect to think through things without being distracted by concrete details. All the dimensions of beings thus become insofar representable in a manifold of quantities represented by symbols.

No matter whether the aid of the imagination is required to represent a state of affairs to the intellect, or whether this can be done through concise symbols, if the state of affairs is not simple and immediately apparent to intuition, it can only be clarified, as Descartes prescribes in Rule XIV, by comparing it with a known state of affairs. Such comparison consists in establishing that "what is sought is in this or that respect similar or identical or equal with some given" (XIV.2). Equality, however, immediately becomes the standard of comparison between the unknown and the known. Where the comparisons of equals are not "simple and open" (XIV.3), but are concealed in "some sort of relations or proportions" (XIV.3), the task of the human intellect lies in "reducing these proportions in such a way that the equality between what is sought and something known becomes clearly visible" (XIV.3).

The culmination is then to note that the kind of equality required between the sought and the given, the unknown and the known, is an equality of magnitudes: "It is to be noted finally that nothing can be reduced to this equality if it does not admit a more or less and that all this is to be comprehended under the term 'magnitude' so that [...] we understand that from here on we are involved only with magnitudes in

[8] Descartes 1996.

general" (XIV.4). This holds true no matter whether the intellect is assisted by the imagination or is employed purely (intellectu puro utamur, XIV.5). The aim is to find a relation of equality between something unknown and something known, where both these somethings are nothing but "magnitudes in general". The "relations and proportions" that at first conceal the equality between the unknown and the known must be *equations* in "magnitudes in general" that can be reformulated so as to finally bring forth the required equality. But this is a description of the general algebraic procedure, no matter whether an image is used to assist the procedure or not. Magnitudes in general are represented in the equations by "brief signs" or symbols, and the equations themselves can be manipulated by the pure intellect to reformulate them in such a way that the unknown, x, is brought into equality with what is given and known. This amounts to solving a set of equations for the unknown, x.

"From here on" we are dealing only with sets of equations in "magnitudes in general" which are to be solved by algebraic methods. These magnitudes are the knowns and unknowns occurring in equations. They are no longer pinned down as continuous geometric quantities or discrete arithmetic ones but are simply *the data and solutions to sets of equations of such and such a type*. The data given by real beings are all quantitative by virtue of recasting the being of beings solely as extension, so that all the many qualitative dimensions of a being, no matter what it and they may be, are reduced to magnitudes that can be inserted into equations as knowns. What is unknown is then discovered by solving the equations for x. The behaviour of real beings must therefore be described in equations, and certain knowledge is to be gained by solving equations of certain kinds. Mathematics itself can then become the motor driving the quest for knowledge through the investigation of kinds of equations with the aim of being able to solve them algebraically for the unknown, x.

Whether the magnitude in question is geometrically continuous or arithmetically discrete is no longer crucial, because magnitudes in general can be represented by symbols, and these symbols may be defined simply as the solution to a certain kind of equation within a certain kind of mathematical entity defined solely by a set of logically consistent axioms whose validity relies on immediate intuition. The steps beyond the natural numbers to the rational numbers and on to the real numbers need not stop there. The complex numbers, for instance, can be introduced simply as the solution to certain kinds of equation that do not have solutions among the real numbers, but require the square root of minus one, the imaginary number i. And even these complex or imaginary numbers can still be represented to the imagination as planes, which themselves are imagined as extended. The quest for knowledge (starting with, but soon proceeding beyond, classical mechanics in the natural science of physics) is then guided by applying the mathematical intellect to finding solutions to ever more complex systems of equations in abstract, algebraic symbols standing for magnitudes in general. The future historical trajectory of mathematics for the next few centuries as an abstract symbolic discipline is fore-cast by the Cartesian ontological rules, thus laying down the blue-print for the modern age.

If the Greek beginnings of mathematics, in which there is an hiatus between arithmetic and geometry, is papered over in a Cartesian mathematics of magnitudes in general, culminating in abstract algebra, it may be objected that the distinction between digital discreteness and analogue continuity loses its importance and is overcome in the modern age. Accordingly, so the objection goes, analogue computing could, 'in principle', serve just as well as digital computing for the cybernetic cast of the Cartesian modern age. In fact, for certain species of problems concerning especially the dynamics of physical systems that have to be formulated using differential equations, analogue computers have some advantages over digital computers, since the continuous, physical movements of voltages or fluids can be contrived to move *continuously* and *analogously* to a given dynamical system. This is correct. However, the antinomies between discrete number and continuous magnitude in mathematics remain (cf. Feferman 1997, Weyl 1918, Eldred 2011 § 2.8.1) which makes itself felt practically in the convertibility between the two domains. Calculations also have to *read* by human beings or by digital computers, e.g. as inputs and especially as outputs, and such reading in or out demands a conversion of continuous physical magnitudes (such as lengths, voltages, currents or pressures) into definite numbers (with an accuracy specified by a number of discrete decimal/binary places) which, as definite, are necessarily finite, rational, that is, digital. At the interface, the error in the determination of significant figures by reading off analogue computers is considerably greater than for digitally computed measurements. Likewise, although the results of an analogue calculation may be stored more or less stably, say, as a voltage in a capacitor, or as a physical length, this is of no use for the arithmological human or digital interface which demands definite numbers either as a result or for further digital calculation.

The principal deficiency of analogue computers, however, is that they cannot be (logically) programmed, but must be (physically) constructed. A program is a pre-script, that is, it is logical, specifically, *arithmo-logical* (Eldred 2009 § 2.3). A logical understanding of a segment of the world is pro-grammed 'literally', broken down into bits, into a digital machine for it to carry out the pre-scripted algorithmic calculations. With an analogue computer, by contrast, the computer itself has to be built *physically*, i.e. its circuits set up, for a *specific* calculation task. There is no universal analogue computer whereas, by virtue of logical programmability, there *is* a universal digital (Turing) machine which is first fed with the digital program for the task at hand. A logical understanding is programmed and outsourced to a digital machine in which it can be set into motion to calculate and control movements/changes automatically. Digital calculation, and hence digital beings, 'live' off the intimate affinity between the λόγος and the ἀριθμός for human understanding. The human mind must define, delimit, articulate to understand, so that continuous physical magnitudes, as employed in analogue computing, have to maintain a convertibility with digital number. Hence it is incoherent to speak of continuous magnitude being representable as 'numerical code', for coding per se implies digitizable logification. It is therefore also no historical accident that digital computers have won out over analogue computers, and that today *hybrid* analogue-digital computers are employed for certain *specific*

problems, especially where differential equations of motion arise. An analogue computer is incorporated into a universally programmable digital computer to perform a specific task for which an analogue computer (a suite of electronic circuits that behave *physically* in *analogy* to a given dynamic system) is particularly suited.

3.3. The calculative assault on movement and time through infinitesimal calculus

To launch the calculative assault on movement and time, time itself must be conceived as a magnitude that can enter into equations as a variable. This was first achieved through Cartesian analytic geometry. In the classic case of the movement of physical bodies, movement is reduced to movement with respect to place, i.e. to locomotion, within a three-dimensional Euclidean space specified by the co-ordinates (x, y, z). Time is added as a fourth dimension, the variable t, which is represented to the imagination geometrically as a straight line. Even in today's advanced relativity and quantum physics, time remains this one-dimensional, continuous, real variable. A four-dimensional space of space-time arises in which each co-ordinate point is an "event" called the "here-now".[9] Time is thus thought in the interstellar cold of this natural-scientific ontology as a continuum of *now-points* or *instants*, i.e. as presence; both future time and past time are only now-points numerically greater than or less than a given now-point, respectively. Time, which must be uniform and regular to be amenable to mathematical calculation, is measured empirically by gathering the *countable* (rational) data now-points of some very regularly periodic physical process, such as the rotation of the Earth, which gives rise to ephemeris time (just as Aristotle's *Physics* laid down: "Not only do we measure movement through time, but also time through movement because they mutually determine each other." (*Phys*. Δ 12;220b15)). Equations of motion in (x, y, z, t) arise according to physical laws of motion whose solution can be sought, depending on which variables are known givens and which unknown.

When the mathematically formulable Newtonian laws of classical physics are modified to take into account that there is no absolute time variable, t, but rather that there are differences in time between two inertial frames of reference which are determined mathematically by the Lorentz transformations involving the speed of light, c, the movement of bodies (particles) in such a (Minkowski) space-time is still formulable in four-dimensional equations in which the resemblance to the classical Newtonian laws of motion is still clearly recognizable.[10] Calculation with both classical Newtonian and relativistic equations of motion requires the use of *infinitesimal* calculus because the velocity of a body is the derivative, and its acceleration is the second-order derivative of a space 3-vector with respect to time, t. Rates of change of continuous mathematical variables of whatever kind necessitate a calculus with infinitesimal magnitudes to gain a calculative hold on the phenomenon of spatial movement through real, continuous space-time variables.

[9] Cf. Perkowitz 2008.
[10] Cf. Gibbons 2008.

Space-time — no matter whether Newtonian-Galilean, Minkowski-relativistic or Riemann-relativistic (incorporating gravitational mass points) — is the mathematical setting for the motions of physical bodies which may be celestial bodies, including stars, planets, galaxies, black holes, supernovae, pulsars, etc., bodies moving on Earth such as cannon balls, ballistic missiles, ships, etc., or those peculiar invisible particles of quantum physics whose motions are supposedly governed by complex differential (Schrödinger) equations. As Descartes' *Rules* already prescribed, however, extension is not restricted to spatial dimensions, but covers anything admitting of "more or less", including time, colour, weight, stress, pressure, reproductive potency (biology), emotional tension (psychology), propensity to consume, marginal productivity (economics), ad infinitum. It depends solely on scientific ingenuity whether any phenomenon of movement at all can be reduced to the change of a magnitude. Such quantification demands a mathematics to calculate such change through the appropriate equations. It makes no difference whether the magnitudes are exact or inexact, or the equations involved can be solved uniquely, approximately or only within certain ranges of probability. Mathematical statistics as a calculus of probability distributions is the way, in the modern mathematical age, of making those phenomena that do not move with necessity, but only with regularity, calculable nevertheless.

Because of the universal applicability of quantitative mathematical methods to all regions of phenomena, it was crucial for mathematics to put the infinitesimal calculus on a firm foundation. This was begun by Augustin Cauchy in the nineteenth century and finally accomplished by Karl Weierstrass with the rigorous, epsilon-delta definition of limit, which obviated having to introduce infinitesimals as mathematical magnitudes smaller than any real number. Any number on the real continuum can then be defined as the limit of a countable, infinite sequence of rational numbers (cf. Eldred 2010). Continuity and differentiation (and its inverse operation: integration) could then be rigorously formulated within the real numbers, perhaps with the aid of the imaginary number i, and the historically momentous nineteenth century program of the *arithmetization of geometry*, or the convergence of the discrete and the continuous, consummated.

All mathematico-scientific treatment of movement of whatever kind requires at least a quantifiable concept of time, which may be conceived, or rather: imagined, as a simple, continuous, 'linear' variable of now-points. No matter whether an absolute or relativistic time is assumed, this time is regarded as scientifically 'objective', as opposed to the so-called 'subjective' time of psychological, cultural, historical, poetic, etc. experience. But objective time is the conception of time employed by a certain kind of thinking in order to make movement (change) of all kinds calculable and predictable. The movement of what is to come from the future is to be scientifically controlled from the present moment. That is, the concept of objective time is such only for a subject, viz. human being, underlying this kind of *calculative will to power over movement and time*. The ontological casting of the phenomenon of time quantitatively as amenable to mathematical calculation is a determinate epoch-making conception of time that determines, i.e. truncates, also the possibilities of the human experience of time and hence also of the human experience of movement.

3.4. Time and movement in Aristotle

If in the modern age, the phenomenon of movement has been reduced to a differential ratio dm/dt, where m is the magnitude lifted off any phenomenon at all, and t is the continuous variable measuring the uniform passage of the time variable conceived as a continuum of now-instants, for ancient Greek philosophy, all the terms in this conception, i.e. movement, magnitude, continuum, time, were still questionable phenomena with which it grappled.[11] This may allow us to come to a more adequate understanding of movement and time, of their paradoxicality that defies an all too self-confident, arrogantly narrow-minded, 'logical' rationality. Aristotle's *Physics* represents the culmination and consummation of the Greek attempts to think through the ontology of physical beings, whose being is characterized by their being κινούμενα or "movables" (*Phys*. A 2;185a13).[12]

On pronouncing that "it must not remain hidden what movement is" (*Phys*. Γ 1;200b13), Aristotle proceeds to introduce the ontological concepts that will allow him to overcome the shortcomings of his predecessors. Although we are entirely familiar with the phenomenon of movement, Aristotle claims that it remains hidden to us. This is the classic situation for philosophical thinking: it starts with what is most familiar, and thus in some sense known, in order then to show that we have always already skipped over the simplest of questions and appeased the understanding with only apparently adequate notions that take the phenomenon in question for granted.

In the following I will provide a condensed re-run of Aristotle's stepwise unfolding of an ontological concept of movement.

Movement concerns all beings in the world, not just beings in some kind of 'nature'. In the Greek understanding of being, that which is present *is*, and what is present most of all is the εἶδος, look or sight that a being presents of itself. The εἶδος is ἕν, one, i.e. a well-defined, single look or Gestalt that can also be addressed by the λόγος through the manifold of simple categories that define (ὁρίζειν), predicate the being in how it is present in its predicament. Movement is the phenomenon of change (μεταβολή), and that with respect to four categories: a being can change with respect to what it is (τόδε τι, οὐσία), how it is (ποιόν), how much it is (ποσόν), and where it is (που, κατὰ τόπον) associated with the phenomena of becoming/decay, mutation, waxing/waning and locomotion, respectively.

The peculiarity of the phenomenon of movement is that it cannot be pinned down to the present. Anything in movement has a *twofold* (διχῶς) presence: first of all it shows itself in the look of its εἶδος, but secondly, it also has a lack (στέρησις)

[11] With his thesis that "being, qua being [sic], is [...] pure multiplicity" (Badiou 2007 p. xiii) and that therefore axiomatic, set-theoretical mathematics could serve as the ontological foundation of a critical social theory, Alain Badiou is faced with the futile task of showing how such a basis could generate an ontology of movement.

[12] Cf. on this entire section Heidegger GA18 § 26. Bewegung als ἐντελέχεια τοῦ δυνάμει ὄντος (*Phys*. Γ 1) et seq. Cf. also Heidegger 'Zeit und Sein' in SD:1-25.

that points to something absent which it could also *be*, i.e. which could also be brought into presence. For instance, a piece of timber presents itself in its εἶδος as timber and also as lacking what it could also be, say, a table. In what it *is*, it is also in a certain way, i.e. potentially or 'absently', what it is *not*, a μὴ ὄν. What, how, how much, where something could be through the appropriate movement is its δύναμις, i.e. its potential, potency or power to be something else, which is more than a mere formal or so-called 'logical' possibility. The thing itself has an *inherent* tendency to become other than it is; it is not yet finished. Aristotle conceives the lack in the twofold presence of a being in movement through the pair of concepts, δύναμις and ἐντελέχεια. A being with a potential, a δυνάμει ὄν, has the power to become something else, but as it is in its presence, it is still ἀτελής, unfinished. It could only *have* itself in its finished presence in achieving ἐντελέχεια, i.e. through its having-itself-in-its-end. Thus does Aristotle come to his first definition of the being of movement. It is the presence of the potential being *as such*, stretching itself toward its finished presence, and thus a peculiar *twofold* presence of both presence and absence in which the potential being is *on its way* to becoming other than it is, in a finished state in which the movement will have come into its end. In movement, the δύναμις is still exercising its power of change. "The finished presence of the potential being insofar as it is such is movement." (*Phys*. Γ 1;201a10f). In movement, the being's power to be what it *can* be is *at work*, i.e. it is ἐνέργεια. Therefore, Aristotle can say that movement is the ἐνέργεια of a δύναμις in its ἐντελέχεια. Movement itself is a phenomenon that cannot be defined by a single category; as having a twofold presence it must be addressed by a *double* concept, i.e. by a pair of ontological concepts, δύναμις and ἐντελέχεια as lack (στέρησις), whose unified twofold presence is a third phenomenon, namely, the at-work-ness (ἐνέργεια) of the potential *under way* or *in transition* to finished presence.

Now, if the being does not have the source of its movement within itself, which would make it an ensouled (ἔμψυχον), living being, it suffers itself to be moved by something else. A being with the potential to be moved has a δύναμις παθητική, whereas a being that is potentially a mover has a δύναμις ποιητική. A piece of timber has the *passive* potential, or power, to suffer itself to be transmuted, say, into a table, and the know-how of carpentry has the *active* power to move or transmute the timber into a table. Despite this twofold, passive-and-active, aspect of movement, the movement at work, its ἐνέργεια, is still just one movement, and not two.

Moreover, movement is a continuous (συνεχές, *Phys*. Γ 1;200b19) phenomenon which means that it is connected (ἐχόμενον) and also that it holds itself together within itself (συνέχειν). The continuum is that which can be divided limitlessly (ἄπειρον διαιρετόν, 200b21), i.e. for which there is no discrete limit where the division has to stop.

With his famous triad of concepts, Aristotle has all the elements in his hand to think through also the ontology of the phenomenon of *time*, albeit he goes a completely

different path in his chapters on time in *Phys*. Δ Chaps. 10-14.[13] There he notes that "it is obvious that time is not without movement and metabolism/change" (Δ 11 219a1). The gateway to the phenomenon of time is thus through movement: Something present has the potential, the power to be something else, which it can become through the appropriate movement which itself comes to presence when the potential achieves its finished presence *as* a potential, namely, in being at work as movement itself toward its end. *What was (past) a potential power at rest is now (presence) a power at work toward (future) a realization of the potential in a perfect presence*. The three ontological elements of movement thus map onto the three dimensions or 'ecstasies' of time itself which, two-and-a-half millennia later, and foreshadowed by Husserl's phenomenology, will be explicated as the temporality of Dasein in *Sein und Zeit*, whereas the Aristotelean conception of quantifiable time, now designated as the "vulgar conception of time" (vulgäres Zeitverständnis, SZ:428 § 82a), will be shown to be derivative of a more primordial conception of the phenomenon of time (SZ Division 2, Chap. 6). When a power is at work, all three elements of movement are present, albeit that two of them, namely, the power as potential and the power realized in a finished presence, are present *as* absence, i.e. as *no longer* and *not yet*.

Aristotle's ontology of time is thought on the basis of the *paradigm of production*, a *particular* kind of movement. A piece of timber, for instance, has the potential to be a table. This potential becomes present *as such* when the timber is worked upon by the carpenter on its way to attaining a perfected presence in a finished table. The piece of timber is thus *stretched* in time between what it *was* potentially and what it *will be* finally, and only in this transition as a simultaneity of presence and absence is it in movement. Being itself is thought in Greek ontology as a pro-duction, a Her-Stellung, namely, as a coming from an origin, a whence (ἀρχή, γένος, τὶ ἦν) into the perfected presence of its sight (ἰδέα, εἶδος) most succinctly summed up in Aristotle's famous formula for the beingness (οὐσία) of a being: τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι.

Aristotle eschews the possibility residing in the triad of concepts he has fashioned to grasp the ontology of movement, and famously determines time instead *quantitatively* as the number (ἀριθμός, 219b2) or measure (μέτρον, 221a1) of movement: "This namely is time, the number of movement with respect to earlier and later. Time is therefore not movement but movement insofar as it has a number." (219b1ff). And "time is the measure of movement" (221a1). The now (τὸ νῦν) divides the earlier from the later like a point (στιγμή, 219b18) divides a line (γραμμή) into two parts (220a21). The succession of nows counted off as 'now', and 'now', and 'now' is the progress of time coming to presence and simultaneously disappearing from presence. Aristotle raises the aporia

[13] Traditional commentators on Aristotle have not made the connection, or rather misconnection, between the ontological concepts Aristotle develops in order to grasp the phenomenon of movement and his investigation of time. Not even Heidegger, in his thorough-going interpretations of the *Physics* on movement and time in GA18 and GA24 § 19 a) β) Auslegung des Aristotelischen Zeitbegriffs GA24:336ff), makes the link between the triad of concepts fashioned to capture movement and the triad of temporal dimensions into which time stretches.

that only the now is, so that time consists predominantly of that which is not, namely, the no-longer and the not-yet. As a quantity lifted off the phenomenon of movement, "we measure" (μετροῦμεν, 220b15) time; it is a number, a measure, a magnitude (μέγεθος, 220b27), and, like movement itself, it is continuous. Insofar as it is simply a number, time is unmoving, i.e. outside time, so it is crucial that time itself be conceived as the counting movement of nows that always here-and-gone, i.e. both present and absent.

As a *continuous* magnitude, there is no smallest time, because any continuous magnitude can be divided further, but as a number (ἀριθμός, 219b2), there is a smallest one, which Aristotle takes to be two (220a28) because that is the first number one comes to in the movement of counting, starting with the one (μονάς). Time is counted by saying 'now' at least twice in succession, thus *discretely* marking an earlier and later. An antinomy in counted time between continuity and discreteness is therefore latent already in Aristotelean time.

But why should time be quantitative at all?[14] Time is something lifted off movement itself in its transitional character and, as such, is an abstraction. The only difference between successive counted 'nows' is earlier and later. Hegel determines quantity aptly as the abstraction from all quality,[15] and the counting process of successive 'nows' is indeed an abstraction from all quality of movement apart from its transitional, never-to-be-pinned-down character 'between', underway, or as *both* presence and absence. A kind of ordinal counting as a steady drumbeat of successive nows can therefore be phenomenally justified, and the successive nows can be added up to attain a succession of (ordinal) counting numbers going on indefinitely, which is the counting of time that can be made mechanical and arbitrarily refined in a clock (beyond the rough counting of days, months, years, which are all regular movements of celestial bodies). The difference between any two counted now-moments can be measured, and since they are read off movement, which is continuous, the measured magnitude of time itself is also conceived as *continuous*, even though it is counted and insofar *discrete*.

The Cartesian casting of time as a real, continuous variable therefore has an antinomy embedded in its heart that shows up in mathematics as the antinomy between the irrational, uncountable continuum and the rational, countable discrete[16] and in quantum physics as Heisenberg indeterminacy which physics vainly tries to solve with a one-dimensional mathematical concept of time[17] or even by banishing time altogether in a kind of neo-Parmenidean move.[18] Why the passage of time should be *uniform* at all is taken up elsewhere in the context of the question concerning capitalism.[19] We conclude this section by noting that the arithmological ontology of time has its origin already with Aristotle, and not with Descartes, who radicalizes it as the basis for the modern mathematical sciences.

[14] In his detailed interpretation of Aristotle's ontology of time in GA24, Heidegger himself does not question the quantitative nature of Aristotelean time.
[15] Cf. Hegel W8 § 99.
[16] Cf. Weyl 1918; Feferman 1997; Eldred 2010.
[17] Cf. Wheeler 1986 and Eldred 2009 Appendix.
[18] Barbour 1999 and his 'The Nature of Time'.
[19] Cf. Eldred 2009 § 6.4.; Eldred 1984 App. § § 35ff; Eldred 2000 Ch. 7; Eldred 2008 Ch. 9 vi).

4. Spatiality of cyberspace

4.1. Loss of place in the electromagnetic network

Digital technology lifts a logical-digital structure from physical beings where there is no longer any topos, i.e. specific place (i.e. apart from the electromagnetic medium in general), where the digital being would 'naturally' belong and toward which it would 'naturally' 'gravitate' and upon which it were dependent for coming to presence at all. Like the logos of communication through which human beings can share an understanding and interpretation of an aspect of the world in its disclosure, and which can be degraded into mere hearsay in being prattled on (especially in the modern media), so too is the passing-on of digital code as something available to hand devoid of any understanding of the originary appropriation of beings in their calculable truth achieved by the digital technological logos. The knowledge embedded in digital computing machines is totally inconspicuous; the user appropriates only the desired, useful functions and effects of such machine-embodied know-how without any insight even into its technological truth. Digital beings still require a material, namely, an electromagnetic medium, which is situated somewhere, but, since this medium is homogenous, this place is arbitrary and stands at the disposition of Dasein (human being) which, as the modern subject, orients its world as it sees fit.[20]

Cyberspace itself has its own peculiar spatiality; it is not merely 'virtual' but has its own orientation and dimensionality,[21] and in this cybernetic space, the digital beings can be arranged, moved and reproduced arbitrarily at will. Cybernetic (from κυβερνᾶν, 'to govern') space is called thus because it enables total control through digital know-how. Insofar as they are viewed merely as ordered sequences of binary code, digital beings are nothing other than a finite rational number stored in the electromagnetic medium which can be called up arbitrarily at will, including by that automated will preprogrammed into computer programs. Because the electromagnetic medium is homogenous, and digital beings are nothing other than an impression or imprint in this medium, any topologically continuous network of such electromagnetic medium, such as the internet, potentially facilitates total control through total traceability, for each and every digital being leaves its *calculable* 'footprint' in the electromagnetic medium.

Such arbitrariness of place stems ontologically from the circumstance that logos and number are both attained by being 'lifted' from physical beings. The placelessness of the logos[22] thus assumes a new meaning: not only is arithmological knowledge attained by an abstraction that 'lifts' measurements from continuous, physical beings, but this knowledge now assumes the garb of binary code in an arbitrarily reproducible, technically ubiquitous form. Binary code as a pure form impressed in an electromagnetic, ubiquitously present medium is entirely compatible with all kinds of *formalistic thinking* that abstracts from the *particular situation*. These include especially the formalistic

[20] Or, even more, digital beings are placed at the disposition of the set-up and drawn into the circling of the endless movement in quest of gain (cf. Eldred 2000 Ch. 7, Eldred 2008 Ch. 9 vi), Eldred 2009 § 5.4).
[21] Cf. Heidegger SZ § 24 'Räumlichkeit des Daseins und der Raum' and Eldred 2009 § 4.2.
[22] Cf. Eldred 2009 § 2.3.

bureaucratic and legal thinking that the state employs to impose its rule 'neutrally' and inexorably over its subject populace. Knowledge is then not only universal in the sense of a universal comprehensibility and applicability but also materially universal in the form of universally accessible binary code that can be embedded arbitrarily as executable code in the homogenous electromagnetic medium of the appropriate digital devices for the control of movements of all kinds.

A medium is something through which other beings can move. The technically produced electromagnetic network technically enables the arbitrary movement of digital beings through the medium of the network. Every place in the network can be specified by co-ordinates. Since the electromagnetic medium is homogenous (every place is thus equivalent to any other place), each place in the network can be specified by purely numerical, Cartesian co-ordinates. These co-ordinate places are therefore not places in the Aristotelean sense to which a digital being inherently belongs and to which it owes its presence, nor even geometric positions, but rather, paradoxically, merely positionless, placeless, numeric n-tuples enabling calculation.

4.2. Abstraction from bodily experience in cyberspace through reduction of place to numeric co-ordinates

If digital technology 'advanced' so far as to be able to decompose the body itself into electromagnetic waves (and not merely take measurements on the body by 'lifting' numbers from it) and to reconstitute the body at will (through a conversion of energy back into matter), then, to this extent, there would no longer be any *bodily* experience of space at all, but there would still be an experience of space in the sense of *Dasein* or existing-in-the-world. Then, the finger movements of clicking on the pointing device, which serves to orient and near in the electromagnetic medium, would also be done away with. The history of the technical overcoming of distances is simultaneously a history of the smoothing out and elimination of the bodily experience of space. Even with the transition from the horse to the automobile, the bodily experience of space through nearing regressed, for there is a difference between riding on a horse and gliding through a region sitting comfortably in a motorized limousine. Within the internet, spatial orientation is provided by URLs (= DNS = a number) and signposts (with numerical links). Nearing is done by clicking a pointing device. The pointing device points to what is to be neared. Insofar, cyberspace is a very simple space, but nevertheless a space to which both the essential existentials of orientation and nearing (*Sein und Zeit* § 24) have to be attributed.

Cyberspace itself is within the physical world, so that, viewed from the outside it is composed of routers, servers, cables, satellites, transmitters, etc. that remain entirely invisible to anyone navigating inside cyberspace. Only engineers need bother themselves with setting-up and maintaining cyberspace as a physical-technical apparatus; within cyberspace, beings are all finite sets of bits, which may be very large, impressed in the medium. The physical world outside cyberspace is real, continuous and therefore irrational in both the mathematical and a deeper ontological sense. Cyberspace, by contrast,

is populated entirely by finite, rational, binary numbers enabling total calculability and constituting a cybernetic world parallel to the physical world. All digital beings have to find space in cyberspace by being impressed in the electromagnetic medium, which is itself finite, capable of receiving only a finite number of digital beings. Data from the outside world of all imaginable kinds flood into cyberspace and have to find space within it. Hence there is an unquenchable thirst for storage space in cyberspace (from kilo- to mega- to giga- to tera- to petabytes and beyond), a continual shortage of numbers as names and addresses for digital beings, and ever higher demands on software and hardware to compute data speedily to control movements both within and without cyberspace itself which represent never-ending challenges to digital engineering. Such movement may be, for instance, the movement of public opinion influenced by the circulation of news, or it may be the technical movement of traffic data through the network to a central control unit. All these data must find space within totally rational, calculable and controllable cyberspace in order to control movements of all kinds, even if it be simply sending a short message from one person to another.

In Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, the place where equipment belongs is given through the totality of applicability-in-use (Bewandtnis), which is the understood interconnection in which the various useful things stand in relation to each other. Equipment must be in its proper place for it to *be* to-hand and so that it *can* be put to use. Each piece of equipment thus belongs somewhere in its place. This is quite different from the way in which Aristotle thinks the belongingness to place of physical beings. We also do not cease to be in the mode of taking-care-of (daily life) when we near things in a different way in digital, electronic cyberspace. When, say, we call up a digital being which then flickers on the screen and can seem to us to be very near or very far, this seeming is not merely virtual or 'subjective', but rather: "*Only in such 'seeming' [...] is the world in each particular situation properly to-hand.*" (SZ:106, italics in the original) This means that digital beings and the electromagnetic media can be interpreted as conforming with being-in-the-world and not merely from the standpoint of the arithmological cast of being. This implies *inter alia* that cyberspace enables a mode of Dasein's being together with other Dasein. Insofar it is erroneous to speak of a merely virtual being-together in the network, for being-together means fundamentally a sharing of the truth of being by Dasein and other Dasein and not merely a bodily adjacency at one place in space. Communication by no means requires a bodily togetherness of human beings, nor even a simultaneity of presence, whether bodily or otherwise. Communication can take place across centuries and epochs through legible signs in various media.

4.3. Spatiality of human being in global cyberspace

What is fundamental to spatially existing in the global cyberspace is Dasein's (human being's) potential to be *there* with far-off beings *as* such. Only because Dasein *is* always already *there*, is it able also to near the beings situated *there* in various ways by physically going there or by acquiring or bringing the beings situated there to itself. Human being means existing in three-dimensional time. For the most part

I am not *here* where my body is located staring at what is visibily perceivable *now* in my surroundings, but elsewhere, calling beings to presence from the past, the future and the present simply by calling them to mind. In taking care of my daily business I am mostly ahead of myself, calling to presence what is to be done next. Reading news about a far-off city is another way of nearing, or acquiring a disclosure of the world, through the appropriation performed by the logos. Dasein's bodily nearing by reaching out for, grasping, going to, etc. is only one mode of nearing. The appropriation of beings through the logos, i.e. by speaking of things, is another. Calling to mind is yet another. Dasein participates in the openness of being in which beings show themselves as such. This shared openness of being is both spatial and temporal. Being-in-the-world means being-temporospatially-in-the-world, and this temporospatiality of Dasein constitutes the condition of possibility for Dasein's being able to near any being as such. Nearing (Ent-fernung SZ) is a fundamental, namely, the spatial way in which Dasein comports itself toward beings *as such*. Nearing via the logos takes place, for instance, through letters and newspapers. Here, the words written on paper are the *medium* in which the nearing takes place. The logos frees itself from the beings about which it speaks and makes itself independent vis-à-vis the physically given, bodily experienceable beings. Words enable a different mode of being-with-beings from bodily presence alongside them. Simply calling to mind (Vergegenwärtigung) is how human being for the most part negotiates movement through time-space.

What can be designated as a technicization of nearing is the point where technology comes into its own with regard to spatiality. Technology always rests upon a mode of disclosing beings and therefore also on an understanding of being which is mostly implicit, taken for granted and thus forgotten *as such*. It is always a knowledge enabling a know-how, and can and must be implemented in technical devices. In particular, the various media such as paper, the printed word, etc. are enabled by technical knowledge such as printing technology. The digital electromagnetic medium is the consummation of all technical media insofar as it not only appropriates beings in arbitrary far-off places through the digitized logos, in 'lifting' the logos from beings, but also appropriates them through numerical measurements that enables further calculation for cybernetic ends. The beings situated *there* are given a digital, finitely rational representation through calculation, whether it be in words, sound, images, video, electromagnetic spectra, etc. which can then be sent at will to any place through cyberspace. Thus, digital, electromagnetic nearing arises which of course presupposes the knowledge of digital technology as well as the mathematical casting of the totality of beings. I.e., situated prior to technical knowledge is the (invariably implicit) ontological preconception of the arithmological decomposition and appropriation of beings which has come down to us from Aristotle via Descartes and has been forgotten, as if the 'objective truth' of the world were for it to shape up in its arithmological cast.

There are thus two steps: first of all, the digital, calculative appropriation of beings through which they attain a purely numerical representation in digital code, and secondly, the global digital medium through which the digital beings can pass through as their own di-mension. Because digital nearing takes place through cyberspace without

bodily experience of space, this kind of spatial experience is somewhat ghostly. Dasein spirits bodilessly through the electromagnetic medium without having to leave its place bodily. This signifies in a certain way a collapse of all places into one place which insofar destroys the possibility of farness. That has always been the case with technology; it destroys an old world by opening up a new one. The special feature of digital cyberspace is that it is a *mathematical* space which can also be represented numerically, thus opening hitherto unheard-of possibilities of calculation and cybernetic control. Since numbers are not only placeless but also without position, the movement of Dasein in cyberspace is reduced to a game of numbers, even though the user interface presents itself to Dasein in a sensuous form, say, with user-friendly graphic elements, etc. The interface with Dasein must adapt itself to the sensuous, bodily givens of Dasein, which is, however, only an illusion. Behind the interface there is merely a binary representation of the beings shown along with the network which is physically spread over the entire globe without the geographical scattering being sensuously experienceable *as such*, and without the user having to understand anything at all about digital code. Nevertheless, Dasein knows that it is nearing beings from all over the world (or even outer space) and thus appropriating them.

The two steps named are supplemented by a third which goes far beyond the first two. This third step, as already explicated, is the further cybernetic calculation of the beings appropriated in digital form in computing machines of all kinds, such as PCs, movement sensors, robots, implanted microprocessor chips. I.e. it is not a matter of presenting the appropriated being merely as linguistic or image information (which, of course, also presupposes a certain amount of further processing of the digitally captured beings), but, furthermore, the measurement data obtained are processed further in a digital program (which always represents a certain, fixed pre-understanding of the data) in such a way that control functions are triggered over the movements inside and outside a cybernetic system. For instance, numerical data on traffic flow on various roads are automatically gathered through electronic sensors by telematics services, and calculated and processed to control traffic lights. This example shows how the spatiality of the digital-cybernetic network intermeshes with and feeds back into the spatiality of bodily being-in-the-world. *The will to power over movement and time thus extends spatially as cyberspace to cover the globe*.

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DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AS MATRIX FOR CONSTRUCTIVISM AND *VERDINGLICHUNG*

HANS H. DIEBNER*

ABSTRACT. The pervasion of digital technology fosters also the pervasion of radical constructivistic thinking associated with systems theory and cybernetics. It is argued that this gradually changes the way objectivity in science is comprehended even in fields where constructivism does not yet play a major role. Stored data or information gains an ontological status comparable to mass and energy. The signifiers and significata thus are identified. Media art, thereby, is a driving force. It is shown by means of striking examples that the objectivisation of the subject leads to a kind of dialectic endless loop that in turn results in an absurd counteraction against the "system" of which the subject is a reified part. It is furthermore argued that this triggers society by and large into a "cosplay-society" infiltrated by paranoia and conspiratorial thinking. Human beings no longer encounter with themselves. Throughout the article, I refer to Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology that I regard as relevant as perhaps never before. However, it is not so much the application of Heidegger's philosophy to a contemporary field but rather the other way round. Suddenly, Heidegger's extremely complex philosophy can be understood much better in the light of digital technology. I think that a hermeneutic circle can be triggered where the analysis of digital technology and Heidegger studies cross-fertilise. At least in this sense, the anti-toxic character of digital technology as a very strong *pharmakon* enfolds its agency.

Keywords: cybernetics, cybernetic art, constructivism, Heidegger, reification, systems theory, Verdinglichung, operational hermeneutics

Introduction

"We come to know what it means to think when we ourselves are thinking."[1] This is the often quoted very first sentence of Martin Heidegger's lecture "What is called thinking?" hold in 1951-52 in Freiburg. If I am asked for a spontaneous judgement what removes us farthest from thinking I would answer: digital technology (DT).

* *Institute for New Media, Frankfurt/Main, email: diebner@inm.de*

[1] Martin Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1914-1970, Band 8, Was heißt Denken?, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2002, p. 5. Original quote: "In das, was Denken heißt, gelangen wir, wenn wir selber denken."

On the spot, another famous quote crosses my mind: “But where there is danger, the rescuer grows up also”[2]. Heidegger used this Hölderlin quote quite frequently, three times just in the cited short text. It is fair to say that this aphorism for Heidegger has at least a twofold meaning. In addition to the expressed proposition, which itself may have several interpretations, it is the poet himself, or more general poetry and the arts from which rescue can be expected, following Heidegger. His (to a certain extent mystical) philosophy is a resumption of Hölderlin's poetry. This is shown above all by Heidegger's notion of the Fourfold (Geviert), namely sky and earth, mortals and immortals, directly inherited from Hölderlin. Being is the gathering (in referring to the medieval notion of “thing” as gathering) of the Fourfold. This means, in particular, that human Being is, on the one hand, spiritual (mind and/or consciousness metaphorically depicted as “sky”), and, on the other hand, “routed in the soil” or indigenous, i.e., “down-to-earth.” Temporality is the enfolding of the mortal and the immortal.

To identify Heidegger's concept of Dasein (the human Being) with consciousness as has occasionally been done is definitely wrong[3]. Also, the related concept of “being-in-the-world” is all too often shortened by different and itself quite nebulous usages of the notion of “embodiment”, for example, in cognitive sciences. Occasionally, Heidegger also used the term “system” to refer to the “standing together”, the “gathering” or the “manifold”. Yet again, this led to a well-intended but misconstructed adoption into general systems theory/cybernetics. The metaphysical synthesis, which definitely can be related to systems, is a philosophy from which has to be twisted out, according to Heidegger. The list of misleading adoptions could be arbitrarily continued although I am far from claiming that I know how Heidegger has to be genuinely read. It is my encounter as system theoretician with DT that not only casts doubt on its promises but also leads to a critical reflection of the *Verdinglichung* (reification)[4] that emanates from cybernetics. It is the (felt) imminent danger of and the deconstruction of the visionary intentions behind DT that suggests in a rather striking way that Heidegger anticipated the essence of technology in general. In other words, it is the awkward feeling induced through DT that evermore allows to value Heidegger's work.

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[2] Martin Heidegger, Die Technik und die Kehre, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart, 2002, pp. 28, 35, 41. Original quote: “Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst / Das Rettende auch.”

[3] As discussed, e.g. by Rafael Capurro, “Bewusstsein oder Dasein?”, online under http://www.capurro.de/bew.htm, accessed on 15 Aug 2010, first published in 1994.

[4] The notion of *Verdinglichung* has its roots in Georg Lukacs' Neo-Marxist work and is a key notion of critical theory (Frankfurt School). Also Heidegger used this notion. History, current applications and the relation to Heidegger's work is discussed in: Axel Honneth, Verdinglichung, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2005. Also confer the English version: Reification - A New Look At An Old Idea, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008. I prefer to use the German expression since reification is sometimes used with an opposed meaning in artificial intelligence, namely as a map from symbolic representations to objects. The original meaning, however, is lapse of Being (Daseinsverfehlung) as discussed in the paper at hand.

The essence of technology is more than before revealed through DT: A hermeneutic circle is entered that hopefully allows to better understand both Heidegger and the essence of technology.

Of course, in the given context also for Heidegger the usual interpretation of technology as toxin that contains its own remedy – a *pharmakon*, following Plato's dialogues – is connoted by Hölderlin's quote (the rescuer). As for the DT I am not sure whether any of the propositions and connotations hold. It may sound paradoxical but it is the overbalanced toxic status of DT that contributes to an understanding of the essence of technology. Facing the real or felt danger that emanates from DT, Heidegger's work finds a delayed consolation, which can be seen from increasing reference to his work in the context of DT. It is exactly in this context, Heidegger's critical considerations enfold their full relevance. At the same time, it is DT, artificial intelligence in particular, that evermore removes us from facticity (human being or Dasein) and it are, above all, artists who consider the "posthuman condition" as a brainwave. The toxic concentration seems to surpass the remedial. The Utopian idea "Mission Eternity" that the Fourfold can be dissolved – immortality through dissolution into information and dissemination into the Internet – by the net-artist collective Etoy most likely lets Heidegger turn over in his grave[5]. Without going into detail, the rough idea behind "Mission Eternity" is to "scan" as much physiological and biological data (EEG, ECG, genetic code, and so forth) as available from human beings to allow for an "immortality" through the dissemination of this data into the www. There are, of course, two aspects of posthumanity: the information technological and the biological, respectively. However, it has been the claim of cybernetics that this distinction between biological and non-biological is irrelevant under a certain perspective – the control paradigm. Seen from a computational or cybernetic perspective, the design of bio-based living is not so much different from silicon-based robots. There is the ever increasing field of hybrid technologies that integrates both areas anyway. In the following, the computational pandemia is in the focus.

Before getting started with a process of reasoning I briefly want to comment on the notion "digital". I want to make sure that I do not in the least regard discretisation of continuous dynamics as such or the binary number system in which digital IT is rooted to have a substantial contribution to the phenomenology conducted in the following. DT turned out to be an extremely efficient way to implement both the mathematical theory of communication and cybernetics. In the initial years of these theories also analogue techniques were applied. Alongside the high performance computation it is the inconceivable amount of "information" storage that unfolds its effects. This "information" is ultimately stored in form of electro-magnetic potentials and, for the phenomenological implications discussed here, the exact structure of these potentials – digital or analogue – is of minor interest.

[5] Etoy, Mission Eternity. A net art project, online under http://missioneternity.org/, accessed on 15 Aug 2010.

I put information in the above sentences in quotation marks since I do not want to launch an unproductive discussion about the meaning of information at this early point of my treatise. In terms of phenomenology it is important to notice that the zeros and ones are arranged and used as *grammata*, as external signs, or in other words, as a reifying materialisation. The world wide web is a kind of "natural habitat" of these *grammata*. And the www would not have been possible without DT, that's for sure. However, besides the Internet, there exist several cybernetic sub-niches owing their existence to a large extent to the digital technological basis. It is the triumph of informatics and cybernetics and the related implications made possible by DT that I want to scrutinise in the following.

The Logical Structure of the Universe

The late biologist and information theoretician Tom Stonier proposed a physical theory in 1990 that starts with an extended equivalence axiom[6]: $E=mc^2=I\mu$. In other words, he believed that not only energy, E, and mass, m, are equivalent (according to Einstein's relativity theory), but also information, I. The evolution of the Universe, therefore, is accompanied by a change from an initially pure energetic state (big bang) to pure information, via a transient mixture of energy, mass and information. Stonier's ideas have been guided by Teilhard de Chardin's point Omega attractor model, which he associated with pure information and at least indirectly with knowledge or even truth. Stonier's concept did not find a large professional audience. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that his theory reflects the currently dominating world view of constructivism at least of the industrial world quite well. Constructivism as used in the paper at hand refers to the epistemic practice, which is seen as the fundamental method of systems theory: "The method of systems sciences is best denoted as constructivism."[7]. Constructivism as an epistemic stance first appeared in the context of Herbert Mead's social psychology and quickly became the basic attitude behind systems theory and is often even used as its synonym. It should not be confused with the artistic movement of Constructivism, which found a notable awareness in Russia during the 1910s and 1020s, closely related to the eminent artist Kasimir Malewitsch.

To start with an illustrative and rather paradox example I want to refer to the Steinbuch Centre for Computing (SCC) at the Research Center in Karlsruhe[8]. Physically, this Institute mainly consists of an inconceivable large array of data

[6] Tom Stonier, Information and the Internal Structure of the Universe. An Exploration into Information Physics, Springer, Berlin, 1990.

[7] Frank Händle and Stefan Jensen, "Einleitung der Herausgeber", in Frank Händle and Stefan Jensen (Eds.), Systemtheorie und Systemtechnik, Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, München, 1974, 7-61. Original quote: "Das Verfahren der Systemwissenschaften bezeichnet man daher am besten als Konstruktivismus."

[8] Steinbuch Centre for Computing, website, under http://www.scc.kit.edu/, accessed on 9 Aug 2010.

storage devices. The SCC is one out of ten nodes of a world wide grid that collects almost all data from physical large-scale experiments. The amount of data transmitted to and from the Karlsruhe node is measured in umpteen Petabytes per day. Hundreds of mathematicians and engineers do a pretty hard job every day just to backup the data, prevent data loss, and take care that the information is accessible when needed. The sore point is that the amount of data grows at terabyte rates per day without being hardly ever used again, accept from transferring them from one hard drive or other storage to another. The data stem from large-scale astrophysical or particle acceleration experiments. The information is stored trusting that analytical methods are derived to evaluate them but they do not yet exist. A further umpteen times the existing amount of data is expected when the LHC experiment at CERN will be launched. This leads to a noteworthy narration that one cannot refrain from comparing with the Theatre of the Absurd. The LHC experiment is intended to explain the early physical processes immediately after the big bang, i.e., to explain the origin of mass. Following Stonier's equivalence principle, I dare to make the caustic remark that the Universe is indeed transferred into information (or however named) but *aletheia* is even more veiled as before.

Taking measures of an epistemic thing and store them in order to explain at least an aspect of the thing is, of course, nothing new. In principle, we have a generalisation of the usage of an optical lens in order to make an indexical assignment. The stored information is so to speak a kind of a generalised indexical image comparable to a photograph. Whether the photograph or the measures of a more general indexical assignment is taken and/or stored with the aid of DT is at the first instance not so important. However, it becomes important with respect to verifying or falsifying hypotheses.

As already mentioned, it is the incomprehensibly fast access to an astronomical amount of data that characterises DT. In addition, complexity and amount of theoretical models to be verified or falsified through the data ever increase. Evaluation algorithms can be applied in such a speed, that it is likely to find any statistically significant fit but perhaps without scientific relevance. But what is or will be scientific significance and relevance in the near future under the influence of DT?

In each statistical text book there is an urgent demand to clearly formulate reasonable hypotheses to be tested in advance and a likewise urgent warning of using additional models to test only to derive a significance in the end. It is statistically not very surprising and just a matter of probability, that one sooner or later will find a model that fits if only enough models are tested. It has been, of course, practised all the time, particularly in medicine and pharmaceutics, to test as long as a statistical significance turns out in order to bring a worthless pill on the market, for example. It is an open question of what this exactly means in terms of scientific “truth” on a larger scale as it is now possible through DT. Even in fields where constructivism is still a foreign word, e.g. in particle physics, this radical turning away from “reality” finds a gradual access. Note, that I did not even speak about the major applications

of simulation technologies so far. I dare to predict that a Bayesian epistemology that uses subjective probabilities will gain importance even in fields not expected so far. I will below come back to this epistemological approach that found an enormous dissemination especially in the fields of information/data mining in form of text, structure or pattern recognition.

Bayesian Inference Principle as Paragon for User Modelling

A mathematical description of decision making processes is based on the "Bayesian inference principle" which is outlined below. The principle was named after the British clergyman, Reverend Thomas Bayes, who introduced the notion of conditioned probabilities[9]. The crucial point of this principle is that it is based upon the use of subjective probabilities, i.e., degrees of belief. The Bayesian inference principle belongs to the class of "bootstrapping methods" and can be linked to hermeneutics, as is argued quite frequently[10]. Such methods are nowadays constitutive elements of information technologies. These are used in many fields of knowledge organisation, as well as in all fields that are involved in the optimisation of operational directives.

We here content ourselves with the introduction of a binary decision which suffices to point out to the essentials. A binary decision of whether a hypothesis is true or not according to a given observation has two characteristic parameters: sensitivity and specificity. Assume given a set of 100 “test observations” with 50 of them supporting the hypothesis (true) and the other 50 contradicting the hypothesis (false) with absolute certainty. However, which one are true and false, respectively, is kept secret in the beginning in order to test the quality of our judgement. This is called a golden standard. The first efficiency parameter of our decision, sensitivity, refers to the frequency of correctly detected true observations, i.e., the proportion of observations that we judge as supportive for the hypothesis out of those observations that are indeed true. Analogously, specificity is the frequency of correctly detected false observations. Ideally, both parameters should have values of 100%, but such a perfect decision making does not exist in practice. This complicates the situation substantially, since in order to determine the characteristic parameters of any diagnostic process, one should have a golden standard of absolute accuracy. For example, we can ask an expert in whom we trust to prepare a set of test observations that finds consent in being almost perfect (100% sensitivity and 100% specificity). This setting is necessary to grasp the mathematically under-determined implicit system.

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[9] Thomas Bayes, „An essay towards solving a problem in the doctrine of chances“, in Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London 53, 1763, 370-418.

[10] J.C. Mallery, R. Hurwitz, G. Duffy, Hermeneutics, „From Textual Explication to Computer Understanding?“, in Stuart C. Shapiro (Ed.), The Encyclopedia of Artificial Intelligence, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1987.

Table 1:

Decision	Composition of Observations		Prediction Value
	Spam email	Non-spam email	
Positive (delete email)	A=40 (correct decision)	B=5 (false decision)	PVp=A/(A+B)=89%
Negative (read/keep email)	C=10 (false decision)	D=45 (correct decision)	PVn=D/(D+C)=18%
Sum	50	50	
Decision characteristic	Sensitivity=A/(A+C)=80%	Specificity=D/(D+B)=90%	

Table 2:

Decision	Composition of Observations		Prediction Value
	Spam email	Non-spam email	
Positive (delete email)	A=8 (correct decision)	B=9 (false decision)	PVp=A/(A+B)=47%
Negative (read/keep email)	C=2 (false decision)	D=81 (correct decision)	PVn=D/(D+C)=97%
Sum	10	90	
Decision Characteristic	Sensitivity=A/(A+C)=80%	Specificity=D/(D+B)=90%	

An example is depicted in Table 1. We assume given a set of 100 emails with a fraction of 50% spam. Let us further assume that our decisions become correctly positive for 40 out of the 50 true observations. That is, we correctly delete 40 out of 50 spam emails but we keep and read 10 spams risking to download a virus or a Trojan. The probability to detect a present hypothesis correctly – the sensitivity of the decision – therefore has a magnitude of 80%. Let us finally assume that 45 out of 50 false observations are correctly detected as negative, which leads to a specificity of 90%. That is, we delete 5 correct emails erroneously.

In practice, we encounter observations and have to decide without having an expert at hand who can validate the correctness of our decision. What follows, then, if we opt for the hypothesis to be true?

As we have seen, based on the specially composed set of observations with 50% (definitely) true observations (of having a spam email), the decision becomes positive for 45 emails, i.e, in 45% of the total set of observations. Five of those cases are false positives and 40 are really spam. If one randomly picks an email out of the positive sub-set, one can derive a 89% probability (cf. the RHS column of Table 1) of having caught a truly malign email. This is the "positive prediction value" that can be estimated only when prevalence is known. If we assume that the entire set of emails is composed of 50% spam, we find us in a situation comparable to the case depicted in Table 1. Such an *a priori* assumption can stem from long-term surveys, from records collected earlier or experience.

Table 2 shows an assessment result of the same decision procedure as before, but with a differently composed set of test-observations. The proportion of spam emails is now 10%. The two characteristic test parameters thereby have the same values as

before, which is plausible since they should not depend on the composition of the observations. If our *a priori* guess for a specific prevalence is 10%, then this corresponds to the records of Table 2, from which a positive prediction value of 47% can be obtained. From these examples, one sees how sensitively a decision for further activities depends on the *a priori* assumption. In other words, one should have a conception of the whole in order to be able to interpret the individual observation, which is in turn integrated into the understanding of the whole in the long-term.

If one proceeds on the assumption of a given *a priori* probability for a certain hypothesis to be true, then performs a measurement or observation and calculates an *a posteriori* probability according to the above scheme, then the latter probability can be used as prior knowledge with respect to a further decision making in order to derive an updated *a posteriori* probability. To stick with the above example, we can pass the positively detected emails to another person asking him or her to decide whether it is really spam or not. A more realistic example is given by a spam filter that does the first decision for us marking the detected junk email as potential spam. Our decision then rests on the characteristic parameters of the filter and, of course, on the prevalence of received emails.

The scheme discussed above, based on Tables 1 and 2, is called the Bayesian inference principle. It obeys the following schematically depicted formula:

$$o_{a\ posteriori} = LH(Test) * o_{a\ priori}\ .$$

The Bayesian inference principle can be used in an iterative way, as mentioned earlier. The entities o (odds) are the degrees of belief in hypotheses expressed as chances. The factor LH is the "likelihood quotient." It results from the observation, derived from an experiment or a test, and is determined by experimental conditions which are expressed as characteristic parameters, such as sensitivity and specificity. In complex cases of mutually conditioning determinants, this seemingly trivial formula can become quite complicated through the accumulation of nested conditioned probabilities. At least in principle, the validity of a certain hypothesis can be expressed as nested conditioned probabilities that account for the validity of concomitant hypotheses (i.e., context). Usually, one starts the procedure with an initial value for $o_{a\ priori}$, given according to the available pre-information. The application of the Bayesian inference principle is possible even in cases with no prior information. Without prior information, one would use the "principle of sufficient reason" in the same way physicists often use it: They start with equi-distributed probabilities for hypotheses when nothing is known about their validity in advance. It goes without saying that the more data from the prehistory of experiments, observations, and corresponding decisions are integrated, the more robust is the result. This, however, is virtually impossible without the the aid of digital data bases along with appropriate software tools. In other words, a so called expert system (learning and context sensitive decision making software) is needed.

The iterative Bayesian principle is a special instance of a "bootstrapping method." For example, T. Winograd and F. Flores[11], as well as J.C. Mallery, R. Hurwitz and G. Duffy[12], point to the relationship between these methods and the hermeneutic circle. It should be emphasised once more, however, that Gadamer above all regarded a methodological application of hermeneutics as insufficient. In other words, hermeneutics cannot simply be reduced to a method. In fact, a strict application of the Bayesian principle or a similar bootstrapping method leads to a typical epistemological self-referentiality, which will be elaborated upon below. Furthermore, it is questionable whether all relevant determining factors can ever be apprehended with the use of such a method. Even the experimental factor LH, which should in principle be independent from any pre-history, depends upon our pre-knowledge through the definition of the golden standard. Likewise, what is accepted as the golden standard is itself subject to transformations. In addition, the interpretations of symptoms and related characteristics are subject to cultural differences and changes. The knowledge related to the whole and the newly acquired knowledge from individual cases mutually influence each other in a manner that is similar to the hermeneutic circle. Despite the fact that an updating decision making process is described in a good approximation by the Bayesian inference principle, it remains questionable whether the latter is a proper model for the hermeneutic circle. The difference lies in the retrospective nature of the Bayesian procedure versus the processual nature of the hermeneutic circle.

A brief remark on the Bayesian concept from a 35-year old textbook on Statistics in Experimental Physics is quite illuminating[13]:

> The Bayesian takes the odds to mean the degree of belief in a hypothesis, and he attempts to express this degree of belief numerically. He takes Bayes' theorem to be valid also for hypotheses. [...] The anti-Bayesian criticism is that all physicists will have different degrees of belief, and so the conclusion will be subjective. The Bayesian defence is that o_{pre} really should be written $o_{pre}(h)$, where h is the set of all hypotheses and all previous knowledge, and that if all physicists would pool their previous knowledge, they should be able to agree on a distribution o_{pre}.

With this interesting variant on the Bayesian argument, the authors anticipated one of the main principles behind algorithms that are now in usage, for better or for worse. It is assumed that the usage of Bayesian inference leads to the best integration of knowledge. The so called evidence-based medicine lent the name for what is now generalised to evidence-based knowledge management. The dangerous aspect hereby is that this principle serves as a categorical imperative. It is claimed by the

[11] Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores, Understanding Computers and Cognition. A New Foundation for Design, Addison-Wesley, NY, 1987.

[12] J.C. Mallery et al., op. cit.

[13] W.T. Eadie, D. Dryard, F.E. James, M. Roos, and B. Sadoulet, Statistical Methods in Experimental Physics, North Holland, Netherlands, 1971, p. 13.

proponents to be unethical not to use the inference principle. One can now easily imagine that it is the Internet in particular that allows for a rather easy pooling of previous knowledge in an unimagined way for the above-quoted authors.

Verdinglichung Through DT

Artificial intelligent methods that are based on the Bayesian inference principle have recently become omnipresent[14]. Day by day, a Bayesian learning algorithm filters spam from our mailbox, and likewise, the MS Office Assistant sometimes irritates us when it tries to anticipate our next action. In the case of e-mails, a Bayesian probability is calculated for each incoming mail in order to quantify the evidence suggesting that these mails might be junk. The text structure of the new incoming mail is compared with previously analysed and stored structures, or with a list of keywords that have been categorised through previous decisions. In training periods, users are asked to mark incoming mails as spam or "ham" (desirable mails in the insiders' jargon). In this way, individual preferences adaptively alter the algorithm.

Data mining, knowledge organisation, and any form of surveillance are almost inconceivable without the Bayesian inference principle. The February 2000 issue of the new media magazine "Wired" reported on the surveillance and data mining software package "Autonomy", and featured its author Michael Lynch[15]. The title page of this contribution contains the Bayesian formula along with a roughly pixelated portrait of Reverend Bayes that resembles an over-compressed jpeg – an allusion to pattern recognition in digital information space. The article does not report the fact that applications of Autonomy in video surveillance systems (such as in London's underground) have been heavily criticised elsewhere[16]. Instead, Silberman quotes Lynch only in the context of data mining as applied to data bases or the Internet, where he speaks of "heavenly" conditions[17]:

> With Bayesian 'reasoning engines' embedded in software to drive the recognition process, computers can begin to approach the everyday capabilities of the human mind for sifting through chaos and finding meaning. 'Bayes gave us a key to a secret garden,' says Lynch. 'A lot of people have opened up the gate, looked at the first row of roses, said, 'That's nice,' and shut the gate. They don't realize there's a whole new country stretching out behind those roses. With the new, superpowerful computers, we can explore that country.'

[14] R.A. Cozzio-Büeler, The design of neural networks using *a priori* knowledge. Doctoral Thesis. ETH Zürich, Diss. ETH No. 10991, 1995.

[15] S. Silberman, „The Quest for Meaning. The world's smartest search engine took 250 years to build. Autonomy is here“, in Wired 8 Feb/2000, 173.

[16] N. Boeing, „Big Brother in Olympia“, in Die Zeit Online, 2004, under http://www.zeit.de/2004/29/T-Olympia, accessed on 15 Aug 2010.

[17] S. Silberman, op. cit.

Why is the Bayesian inference principle so successful and renown? In the cognitive sciences, researchers sometimes speak of a "statistical homunculus" when referring to the idea that the decision-making process in the human brain is identical, or at least bears close resemblance to the iterative Bayesian algorithm[18]. The philosophers Boven and Hartmann recently introduced the concept of "Bayesian epistemology", confirming that it is indeed an important and prevalent approach[19]. It also shows that the method approximates cognitive processes well, particularly when pertaining to decision making, and even to a certain extent, knowledge acquisition[20]. From a positivistic perspective, one may argue that the overwhelming success of the Bayesian method serves as evidence for the "homunculus". Computationalists say that there is a Bayesian decision making algorithm implemented in our brain. It is, in my opinion, evident albeit NP-complete and thus impossible to prove uniquely that the Bayesian modelling of a decision making process is universal in that all such processes can be well approximated in that way. This proposition is suggested through the tournament of decision making algorithms organised by Robert Axelrod[21]. Therefore, I regard the Bayesian inference principle as a paragon so that the conclusions are conferrable to modifications and many other decision making variants.

In a sense, cybernetics and artificial intelligence have changed engineers' attitudes. Subjectivity has for a long time be a “no-go area”. Modelling experts (through agent-based simulations, bots, pattern recognition, and the like) and the adaptation to the individual needs of users (context-sensitive data mining algorithms) likewise transformed devaluating attitudes toward subjective probabilities. In this way, subjective entities suddenly became "objective measures" in user-modelling. In this respect, I point to a close resemblance with Schleiermacher's argumentation. Schleiermacher regards interpretation as an act that is performed by interpreters for the purpose of re-enacting and therefore "re-cognising" the author's cognition, and thus finally "re-thinking" the author's thoughts. Schleiermacher might perhaps have been happy to use such a powerful context-sensitive method like the Bayesian inference principle in order to estimate authors' intentions[22]. It is indeed claimed by viral marketing experts, who use user modelling in the Internet of the aforementioned type, that they anticipate the users desires in such a perfect way that they even understand their strategies as being particularly veritable. The Internet is the land of milk and honey for externalised signifiers or *grammata* (nowadays called mems) of decision processes. The weird thing hereby is that the role of ethics is reversed. It is, in their understanding, unethical not to offer the possibilities of the truthful “wishing machine.”

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[18] G. Gigerenzer, Adaptive Thinking, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000.

[19] L. Boven and S. Hartmann, Bayesian Epistemology, Clarandon Press, Oxford, 2003.

[20] Wei Ji Ma, Jeffrey M. Beck, Peter E. Latham and Alexandre Pouget, “Bayesian inference with probabilistic population codes”, in Nature Neuroscience doi:10.1038/nn1, 2006.

[21] Robert Axelrod, Die Evolution der Kooperation, Scientia Nova Oldenbourg, München, 2000.

[22] Confer A.A. Nayed, Interpretation as the Engagement of Operational Artifacts: Operational Hermeneutics, Doctoral Thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Guelph, 1994.

DT, particularly the Internet, is no longer thinkable without data-mining algorithms of the Bayesian type. This additionally supplies evidence for the observed vanishing of the subject. The subject vanishes into a logocentric world of constructed objects. The result is a "dialectic endless loop." Lucky those who believe to indulge in individuality and wallow in a cosplay society were that what is the played role is relativised[23]. The human being nowhere encounters himself or herself any longer but s/he is left in the delusion that s/he does. The behaviour of bloggers along with the booming conspiracy and paranoid theories is just the tip of the iceberg. Those who smell the rat enter a dialectic endless loop. I will come back to this issue in the next section.

Picture a physician taking an x-ray image of a patient in order to get indications for a certain suspected disease. S/he interprets the x-ray image and adapts the further treatment accordingly. With respect to his or her findings, one can assign a certain sensitivity and specificity to the doctor. This leads to a paradoxical situation, wherein the physician tries to act in accordance with the biometricians' recommendations, and to scrutinise the outcome on the basis of prediction values estimated with the aid of the Bayesian formula. I speculate that, even in "objective" tests, i.e., those tests that rely on the results of measurement devices, the doctor sees him- or herself as somehow "entangled" with the device. Thus, even in such cases, the doctor may regard the biometricians' recommendations as ridiculous to a certain extent. Things are fairly different when, on the one hand, they are described from an external position or, on the other, when one is physically involved. This paradox is amplified in the face of evidence-based ethics, as M. Goldenberg points out[24].

The system-theoretical analysis of society leads to similar paradoxes, and usually ends in an infinite number of hierarchical levels of observations. In our daily activities we are usually not amenable to such a paradox. We resolve the deadlock of (metaphysical) self-referentiality because we are endowed with a non-propositionally composed "performative" logic. We are unable to account for the ideal of the Enlightenment and to act in a prejudice-free manner all the time, but rather act historically and processually.

The optimisation of decision making processes through IT, which is based on maximal pre-knowledge, leads to a *Verdinglichung* (reification) of "metaphysical dimension", an expression used by O. Jahraus in a similar context[25]. Strict historicism

[23] Cosplay is but one example of current rather bizarre youth movements combined with an extreme costuming. Cosplay kids, e.g., costume themselves as living manga figures. The difference between role play and real live vanishes. Another example is the Emo movement (emotional hard core) which belongs, in my opinion, to the class of prostitution of sentience as discussed by Honneth (op.cit.) as an example of *Verdinglichung*.

[24] M.J. Goldenberg, „Evidence-based ethics? On evidence-based practice and the 'empirical turn' from normative bioethics", in BMC Medical Ethics 6, 2005, 11, doi:10.1186/1472-6939-6-11.

[25] O. Jahraus, Martin Heidegger – Eine Einführung, Reclam, Ditzingen, 2004.

either leads to self-referentiality or to *Verdinglichung* when it is externalised through artificial intelligent systems. What in fact is optimised in the latter case is the best of what has been memorised, which is, in essence, a pure "prejudice affirmation."

In medical informatics, particularly when focusing on image processing, the pattern recognising algorithms used for the calculation of optimal decisions are regarded as a means by which to objectify related diagnoses. As an example, at the Center for Medical Diagnostic Systems and Visualisation (MeVis)[26] in Bremen, one of the largest and most successful German laboratories in this area, recommendations for the amount of a tumorous tissue that has to be removed in a liver resection are computed algorithmically. The raw computer tomography image only shows the core of the tumour. However, the peripheral area often has either an associated cirrhosis or a moderate tumour that cannot be seen directly on the image, but that should also be removed in order to prevent postoperative pain. This fact is well known by surgeons. But according to Heinz-Otto Peitgen, the director of MeVis, surgeons tend to remove too little of the morbid liver tissue. The software developed by MeVis has been featured by the German TV broadcast 3SAT. Essentials about it are also documented online. Regarding liver operations, one reads[27]:

> Whether only the tumor has to be removed from the liver or whether the whole organ should be divided: for the first time, MeVis provides the opportunity for the surgeon to see the individual liver of a patient before the operation. A complicated operation becomes safer because MeVis shows physicians what they normally cannot see. Nevertheless, the software cannot substitute the doctor.

H.-O. Peitgen presented the essentials of this software in a symposium at the Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe with the following words: "The visible result should not even be shown to doctors because they always tend to remove too little tissue, which increases the risk of postoperative problems. Our software is more objective"[28].

With regards to spam detection in our mailboxes, filters usually calculate Bayesian spam probabilities and either mark the mails as spam if the probabilities are above a certain threshold, or simply delete them. In the former case, one can usually unmark the mails in order to adapt the system to one's preferences. Conversely, one can also declare non-detected mails as spam. The goal of this adaptability is to increase the algorithm's sensitivity and specificity. If the vocabulary and the linguistic forms

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[26] MeVis University of Bremen, website under http://www.mevis.de/, accessed on 16 Aug 2010.

[27] 3Sat, Geteilte Leber ist halbes Leid, Zur Sendung vom 23.07.2003, Online under http://www.3sat.de/neues/sendungen/spezial/48813/, accessed on 16 Aug 2010.

[28] H.-O. Peitgen, „Bedeutungswandel der Bilder in der Medizin – Bilder zwischen Deutung und Wissen“, in B. Könches and P. Weibel (Eds), unSICHTBARes – Algorithmen als Schnittstelle zwischen Kunst und Wissenschaft, Benteli, Bern: 2005, 98-121. Paper presented in the Symposium at the Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, 30 Oct 2004. His written formulations in the cited article are more moderate.

of incoming mails remain nearly invariant, then more and more correct spam detections occur. Users then tend to automatise the deletion of junk mails, since any further training seems to be unnecessary. The filter also works with somewhat less precision without any training, because the software is initialised with settings that are estimated from average user behaviour. This corresponds to a kind of golden standard. Senders of spam mail show great creativity in developing language modes that can avoid spamfilter detection. This provides further evidence that the Dasein surpasses the invariance produced by algorithms.

Human beings do not constitute an ergodic system. Most of the so-called context-sensitive IT-procedures, however, start at least implicitly with assumption of ergodicity. Complicated adaptive methods based on "Bayesian learning" anticipate the wishes of users of digital data space from their previous behaviours. The ergodicity assumption – for example, the assumption that n-times successively throwing a single die shows the same probabilistic behaviour as an ensemble of n dice thrown at once – lead to the well-known successful model used, for example, by the online book seller Amazon: "Customers who bought this book also bought ... " This motivation works even without expensive adaptive algorithms, because, amazingly enough, in many cases human behaviour proves to be ergodic in good approximation.

Within the given context, *Verdinglichung* can be linked to the externalisation of the decision making process, particularly in cases that definitely do not involve moral lapses, but rather attempt to increase objectivity or seek the democratisation of knowledge handling, as is claimed by evidence-based knowledge management. A typical example is an image database of radiological shots. Pictures entered into the database are subject to a standardising procedure and are categorised according to structural resemblances and related findings and decisions[29]. Pattern recognising algorithms compare newly submitted images with those from the archive, search for structurally resembling recordings, and supply recommendations for the further line of action that joins the majority of past decisions. The doctor is requested to scrutinise the recommendation and come to a conclusion corresponding to the individual case at hand. Such a critical attitude may be hard to maintain under the given dictum "Doctors who decided this ... also decided that ... ". Even worse, if the stark requests of some biometricians are satisfied, then visual feedback will be circumvented more and more in the future, and x-ray examinations will be automatised. A long-term collection of radiological images, along with their corresponding decisions, may have a similar impact as a subjectively "well-adapted" spam filter, which eventually may be entrusted to allow for fully automatised decision making. Beyond that, it may be convenient to abdicate responsibility and refer to the "objective" decision made by

[29] M.O. Göld, H. Schubert, M. Leisten, B. Plodowski, B. Fischer, D. Keysers, T.M. Lehmann, and B.B Wein, „Automatische Kategorisierung von medizinischem Bildmaterial in einen multi-axialen mono-hierarchischen Code“, in T. Wittenberg, P. Hastreiter, U. Hoppe, H. Handels, A. Horsch, and H.P. Meinzer (Eds), Bildverarbeitung für die Medizin, Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 2003, 388–392.

a software agent. In effect, this situation would be equivalent to introducing a golden standard that is 100% sensitive and 100% specific. This is not objectionable from a moral point of view. To follow Heidegger, humans are withdrawn from *Sorge* in this context, i.e., from being existentially involved in the decision-making process[30].

Digital Technology and the Arts

Art, more or less, has always been self-referential. In essence, the same is true for net culture and likewise for systems theory and cybernetics, which is why the discourse on net culture is of particular interest for a physicist who deals with systems theory.

Cybernetic thinking more and more dominates society including cultural activities. As a consequence of this cybernation of society and particularly the arts, it starts to become a serious general social problem. This occurrence is, for better or for worse, accompanied by the convergence of art and life or, more general, an ontological indifference of „art and x“ (x as placeholder for science, economics, life, technology, and so forth). I am inclined to diagnose a social dysfunction with paranoid and conspiratorial characteristics as a result. The basically well-intentioned holistic systemic thinking, namely that everything interacts with everything, is recently brought to excess. I see net art as an indicator for this undesirable development because net art is the most extreme version of pulling the previously non-propositional arts into the hegemony of propositional logic and the radicalisation of Hegel's idealism called radical constructivism. Art historians feel compelled to no longer refer to art at all with respect to media art and net art. Media art, particularly net art, manifests itself as a media theoretical subject. Artists turned into activists, hacktivists, and the like. This seems to be much more appealing for media theoreticians than art historians. Aesthetic considerations, is to be feared, falls by the wayside.

Traditional art history lags behind with adequate methods to include new-media-based art in the art history's canon. It is much more media theory that deals with media-based art. Unfortunately, media theory lags behind with aesthetic understanding. It can clearly been seen that works showing systemic characteristics are preferred at the expense of aesthetic qualities.

For constructing an hypothesis I draw on patterns that I think can be recognised when the characteristics of “the usual suspects“ of net art are analysed. Many of the overvalued systemic-based net artists take Marshall McLuhan's dictum “the medium is the message” overly literal. In the following I want to show that it goes even deeper. The artists, the spectators, and most likely a large fraction of society, are themselves

[30] *Sorge* (literally care or worry) is usually left untranslated in English texts. Heidegger also used the Latin expression *curare*. *Sorge* expresses the Dasein's (human being's) empathic dealing with their worlds.

turned into media. Again, a reification takes place. The subject becomes an object within the constructed reality. A total deprivation of being. Astonishingly, this seems to be hip and compelling.

In the year 2003, Lutz Dammbeck who is artist-scientist and hence, like nearly everyone, a theoretician too, - with his documentary "Das Netz" (The Net), began to discuss the role of artists within the cybernetic world conception on a meta level. In a recent article entitled "Re-Reeducation or: Art and Conditioning" he speaks alternately of a "digital dictatorship" respectively a "systemic dictatorship."[31] He repeats the position that the avant-garde contributed to its own absorption into the system through its categorical system criticism. Dammbeck conceives the assimilation of art into the system in such a comprising way that having read his article one has to wonder whether there was any art after World War Two that was not engrossed in the system or found its legitimation exclusively from the system.

Dammbeck fears a global brainwashing, and Pavlovian conditioning in which artists only have to play the "criticising class clown" (kritischer Klassenkaspar). He says that it can be clearly seen

> that the idea of an 'outside' from which the 'inside' can be changed is naive in the face of patterns and structures designed by cybernetics and system theory, because each point at the periphery is at the same time the centre and an 'outside' no longer exists. And we also know: The mere thought on a possible change produces an energy that can be used by the system in the same way as every attack or perturbation as an energy intake for further perfectioning. (...) Therefore, it would be meaningless to take action against it, since each critique not only preserves the system's life but even strengthens it. Metaphorically speaking: Those who touch the machine are already part of it and its codes.

In other words, after the cybernetic conception of nature, a systemic role was assigned to everything. I do not regard it as impossible that we deal with a kind of brainwashing paranoia. What is noteworthy in this context is the video installation entitled Psych|OS belonging to the distinguished actionist collective ubermorgen.com. The entirely confusing recordings were made by one of the members of the actionist group, Hans Bernhard, during his stay in a psychiatric hospital due to a serious psychosis. One should know that ubermorgen.com count to most effective system critics. The quarrel with "the net" is a kind of a self-therapy for Hans Bernhard. The following quotation of Bernhard may be dismissed as artistic provocation or plainly and simply as psychotic[32]:

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[31] Lutz Dammbeck, “Re-Reeducation oder: Kunst und Konditionierung”, in Telepolis Online 15.10.2007, under http://www.heise.de/tp/r4/artikel/26/26380/1.html, accessed on 16 Aug 2010.

[32] Ubermorgen.com, “Psych|OS and Psych|OS Generator (2005/2006)”, Video and net art project, Synopsis under http://www.res-qualia.net/view_projecte.php?id=441, accessed on 26 May.2010.

> Hans Bernhard's neuronal networks are connected to the global network, and his mental illness – the bipolar affective disorder that in March 2002 sent him to a mental hospital – is the network's illness. The video called Psych|OS (2005) sums up that experience, in which those two levels – digital and real, bio & tech, nervous system and operative system – merge. This nervous system, infected by the hi-tech, needs a treatment, and the hi-tech society prescribes its remedies, bio-chemical 'agents' which control the internal information flow. [...] The Psych|OS Generator (2006) is the literal application of this kind of control: a piece of software that asks the user about the symptoms of her disease and provides her with a remedy, in the form of a 'forged original' medical prescription.

It is my hypothesis that the true cause of such a „systemic disease" lies in a lapse of being (Seinsverfehlung), in other words, it is a „dialectic endless loop" as a result of an extreme (system theoretical) form of (Hegelian) idealism often called radical constructivism, which finds a perfect matrix in the digital environment.

The above quoted example is a rather arbitrary one and definitely not intended to denounce particular net activists. It is no secret that a large fraction of contemporary web art is based on fake. A constructed war against a constructed social reality leading to new suspicion. The „system" acts and is antagonised at the same time in a game of cat and mouse. At a first glance, the net activists seem to fight a kind of gang war. Net art sites have been hacked by other hacktivists and the hacking itself declared as art. And this is not even the highest level in media hacking. The absurdity seems to have no limit. Hans Bernhard's "bipolar affective disorder" is instrumentalised as part of the next level in media hacking.

The observation that „conspiracy" has recently become a buzz word proves that it is more than just an irrelevant artistic side scene. The Internet seems to be a preferred or a natural habitat for constructivists. It is my persuasion, to cut it short, that cyberspace is a phenomenon where the metaphor by and large becomes the essence. There has been a general tendency all along to show the blurring of essence and metaphor in scientific methodology and even more in technology, particularly in all technological media. Cyberspace seems to be most effective in this respect, though. Once the pretended "world on a wire" or "matrix" becomes conviction it enters a self-referential and obviously dominant phase. In the following I want to supply arguments and evidence. However, part of my considerations remain hypothetical and some conclusions are speculative.

The fact that substantially working net-art pioneers like Station Rose[33] have been ignored is most likely not a simple coincidence but rather an outcome of the „Tom-and-Jerry-society". The ignorance is also closely related to the "death of art history", as has recently been augured[34]. It is true that traditional art history doesn't

[33] Station Rose, 1st Decade, edition selene, Wien, 1998.

[34] CHArt (Computers and the art history conference 2010), Synopsis under http://www.arts-humanities.net/cfp/technology_death_art_history_chart_computers_history_art_2010_conference, accessed on 6 June 2010. My defense of art history should not be understood as an exclusion of aesthetics and art theory but rather as a methodological contrast to media theory.

have proper methods to deal with media art. However, the crisis is deeper than the mere fact that art history lags miles behind with their methods. Art history is gradually replaced by media theory. And it is indeed not only art history that is about to be replaced, it is even art itself that becomes media theory as Hans Ulrich Reck concludes[35]. Notwithstanding these massive crisis, it is my conviction that art history will not only survive but that it will also develop appropriate means to include media art into their discourse.

Being-in-the-world and Endo-aesthetics

Coming back to the cybernation of art. As a disciple of the eminent chaos researcher Otto E. Rössler, the eponym of the Rössler attractor, i.e. one of the icons of chaos research, I am actually supposed to be familiar with the renunciation from scientific objectivity. For Rössler is also the initiator of an observer dependent physics called endophysics. Endophysics has hitherto been largely apprehended as futile or even rubbish in the scientific community. Not so in the art community. At least since the 1992's „endo and nano“ ars electronica, where Rössler's endophysics went public, interactive media art has been characterised as endo aesthetics, i.e., a kind of applied endophysics.[36] It must be said, however, that the system theoretical and cybernetic way of thinking has been adopted in the art's world long before endophysics. Anyway, in spite of my background in systems theory and endophysics, my “thrownness” in 1999 as physicist into the “art world” at the centre for art and media (ZKM) in Karlsruhe caused an irritation. The perhaps particularly faithful interpretation of systems theory in the art world caused me to distance myself from systems theory to a considerable extent. It has ever since been an emotionally charged question to me of whether art and science can and should be bridged. My answer is almost axiomatic: It shouldn't!

It is assumed that the reader is aware of a large fraction of contemporary artist's affinity for system theoretical concepts. As a reminder, it may suffice here to refer to the ground breaking events like „9 evenings - Theatre & Engineering“ (sound performances by Billy Klüver's „Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.)“), „cybernetic serendipity“ (1968, an exhibition by Jasia Reichardt on what she calls „cybernetic art“), „software“ (1969/70, an exhibition by Jack Burnham on what he calls „systems art“). The influence of cybernetics and systems theory onto art, however, exceeded the threshold of awareness much earlier during the 1950s, particularly in literature and music. The Beat Generation and their extensive contacts to cyberneticists and (system-)psychologists (like Timothy Leary) eventually opened into cyberpunk and other cybernetic-influenced genres. Currently, there is a noticeable revival of the

[35] Hans Ulrich Reck, Kunst als Medientheorie, Fink-Verlag, München, 2003.

[36] Claudia Giannetti, Ästhetik des Digitalen - Ein intermediärer Beitrag zu Wissenschaft, Medien- und Kunstsystemen, Springer Verlag, Wien, 2004.

„Beat“ (cut-up, mash-up, emergence of meaning in random permutations of found footage, and so forth). Novels that address social design and conspiracy boom. John Brockman coined the notion of “third culture” to summarise the converging cultures into a cultural phenomenon, which is, for better or for worse, an amplification of post modernism and, therefore, certainly deserves this new notion. I am inclined to characterise “third culture” which is a child of DT as ideologisation of a previously well intentioned “systems thinking”.

Some notes on the history of systems theory are advisable, although I try to cut the long story short. An important key figure certainly was the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey. By the end of the 19th century he suggested to differentiate the epistemic process into “understanding” and “explanation”. He attributed the latter to (natural) sciences with its methods. Understanding, in contrast, he attributed to what he and the German academic community henceforth called “Geisteswissenschaft”, which is probably not fully apprehended by the English expression “humanities”. Understanding, in his conception, is achieved through an hermeneutic process. The hermeneutic circle is not a method in a strict sense. In a nutshell, the hermeneutic circle stands for the process of understanding the part through a prior understanding of the whole and a subsequent improvement of the understanding of the whole and so forth. The physical involvement of the human being thereby plays a prominent role. It is remarkable that, in this context, Dilthey frequently used the notion of “system” to refer to the holistic character of hermeneutics. Furthermore, he assumed primacy of “Geisteswissenschaft” for each scientific endeavours are intellectual endeavours. Early systems theoretical writings adopted Dilthey's conception to a large extent. A “system” is not an “existential” but rather a universal “constructed category”. Early systems theoreticians, therefore, regarded systems theory as philosophical engineering.

Another important figure of Continental philosophy certainly is Martin Heidegger. He also build on Dilthey's work. Heidegger's fundamental ontology is often summarised in the famous phrase “being-in-the-world”. In his early work, he often referred to Dilthey and hermeneutics as a crucial holistic praxis for “thinking” (understanding being). The process of understanding cannot be (completely) reduced to a pure propositional logic. Rather, it contains performative elements. Heidegger's writings are usually regarded as extremely complex and difficult to understand. Nevertheless, Heidegger's concept of “being-in-the-world” has ever since been cited as a crucial conception behind systems theory, too. Doubtlessly, there is a remarkable difference between Rössler's endophysics and Heidegger's fundamental ontology. Yet, with a large grain of salt, “being-in-the-world” constitutes a kind of endophysics *avant la lettre*. At least, it is understood in this way in the systems theoretical community. At this point, it is difficult to figure out why Heidegger, as a matter of fact, regarded systems theory and cybernetics downright as the worst enemy of “thinking”. Remarkably, already in 1962 he wrote[37]:

[37] Martin Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976. Band 14. Zur Sache des Denkens, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2007.

> No prophecy is necessary to recognise that the sciences now establishing themselves will soon be determined and steered by the new fundamental science which is called cybernetics. This science corresponds to the determination of man as an acting social being. For it is the theory of the steering of the possible planning and arrangement of human labour. Cybernetics transforms language into an exchange of news. The arts become regulated-regulating instruments of information.

It takes a great deal of intense studies into fundamental ontology to understand this essential discrepancy. In short: the performative aspect of understanding is pulled toward the logical side by systems theory, particularly DT. In other words, even systems theory cannot avoid the general tendency of natural sciences to be positivistic.

I try to explain the problem by a view remarks on second order cybernetics. Cybernetics treats objects as systems. And, as has been mentioned above, "system" is a universal constructed category. Everything can be described as system. The scientific disciplines are systems, too. Or take, for example, the "art system". Cybernetics is a subsystem that belongs to the system constituted by scientific disciplines. Therefore, cybernetics belongs to the subject area of cybernetics, which leads to second order cybernetics. Now not only the universal but also supra-theoretical character of systems theory can clearly be seen. Cybernetics is the (pretended) union of physics and metaphysics (ontology). It is above all the second order cybernetics, i.e., the endophysical character that fostered the quick assimilation into the art "system."

Heidegger's fundamental ontology is based on the ontic-ontological difference. In his understanding physics and cybernetics and all the other scientific disciplines are ontic but not ontological. According to Heidegger, the question of being, or more correct, the question of the meaning of being, cannot be answered using scientific methods. Art, in Heidegger's conception, is a practice that at least can help condense understanding. His conception of art is ontological. Moreover, his conception of ontology is performative (has artistic aspects).[38] Therefore, the incorporation of ontology into cybernetics' subject area means to make ontology ontic. Indeed, there exist attempts to even describe the "art system" within the synergetic[39] framework[40].

A further totally misleading notion in the DT-context is "interactivity." Timothy Leary criticised the buzz word "multi-media-interactive" in an illuminating fax to Station Rose as of March 1991[41]. He noticed that the verb "to interact" is misleadingly used where "to react" appears to be the correct term: "Humans and machines 'react'. Only two or more humans can 'inter-act'. The point is that machines

[38] Rüdiger H. Rimpler, Prozessualität und Performativität in Heideggers "Beiträgen zur Philosophie" - Zur Zeitigung von Sinn im Gedanken an die Wesung, Ergon Verlag, Würzburg, 2008.

[39] Synergetics is a modern variant of systems theory.

[40] Wolfgang Tschacher and Martin Tröndle, "Die Funktionslogik des Kunstsystems - Vorbild für betriebliche Organisation?", in Timo Meynhardt and Ewald J. Brunner (Eds.), Selbstorganisation managen. Beiträge zur Synergetik der Organisation, Waxmann, Münster, 2005, 135-152.

[41] Station Rose, op. cit., p. 63.

cannot perform as 'actors'." Although the majority of contemporary net activists claim that they do interactive work, they actually perform re-active and they make users to re-act. This is in line with my own analysis[42] where I supplied evidence for reification (*Verdinglichung*) for a significant amount of works that are based on the misguided usage of "interactivity".

As a conclusion I want to ask again the question of why substantial works are ignored in favour of re-activistic reified work? The sick explanation by Hans Bernhard as quoted above gives the clue. The digital universe constitutes a φάρμακον (pharmakon). Already Plato and roughly 2 millenniums later Heidegger clearly pointed out that each cultural technique and technology in general constitutes a toxin that contains its own remedy. Scripture compensates a bad memory but at the same time even impairs memory due to neglected practice. It is often claimed that only technology can supply a remedy for the damage done through technology. Previously well-intended systems thinking, as it unfortunately fells out, sees each occurrence as potentially suspect that has to be answered by an offensive that in turn increases suspect and so forth. It is now essential that cyberspace will again populated with artists – not re-activists. Art history should urgently care about contemporary media art because otherwise the trend toward a "systemic disease" of the "art system" might become unstoppable.

This seems to be a good point to take up the opening quotation. As a self-critical scientist who is interested in ontological problems a union with the arts seemed to be the thing to do in order to make science think, even if Heidegger claims that science does not think. However, art as science or science as art or both at the same time, i.e. art=science: These are only different ways of confusing the proper with the improper (or the essence with the metaphor or the authenticity with the construction). Contrary to the rules, it was Goethe who obviously managed to harmonise art and science in his work. The last line of his famous poem "Ginkgo Biloba" reads: "Do my songs not make you feel - That I am both one and twain?" The historian of science Walter Saltzer writes in his essay[43] on Goethe after quoting Goethe's poem "Ginkgo Biloba" out of the West-Eastern Divan, i.e., Goethe's book of the reconciliation of cultures:

> The divided, but symmetrically unified Ginkgo leaf - a splendid symbol for the artist and scientist Goethe. Art and science in one! Does that go together, after all? Or perhaps it doesn't in the end? Should the last line, therefore, not better read, 'that I am divided and only half'.

[42] Hans H. Diebner, "Where Art and Science Meet (or Where They Work at Cross-purposes)", in Uwe Seifert, Jin Hyun Kim and Anthony Moore (Eds.), Paradoxes of Interactivity: Perspectives for Media Theory, Human-Computer Interaction, and Artistic Investigations, Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2008, 142-159.

[43] Walter Saltzer, "Goethe - Naturwissenschaft, Kunst und Welterleben komplementär", in Alfred Schmidt and Klaus J Grün (Eds.), Durchgeistete Natur: Ihre Präsenz in Goethes Dichtung, Wissenschaft und Philosophie, Peter Lang Verlag, Frankfurt, 1999.

And with reference to the historical precedence Lucretius, he further writes:

> The ideal of the [Freudian] theory would then be the suicide due to inner conflict, demonstrated through the pretended vita of the nature-inspired poet and passionate advocate of the atomic world view at the same time, Titus Lucretius Carus. Of course, Lucretius' suicide is a trendy invention only, and even the most intimate expert does not know anything about a suicidal end of Goethe.

Does there exist a bridge between art and science? Not so when taking the ontological stance. Heidegger says, "... there exists no bridge, only the jump." Provided that the built-in corrective in science via art is sincere what is the recipe for bearing up against the inner conflict? Heidegger says: “The affection [...] is affecting irrespective whether the Science is feeling this affection or not. If they throw it in the wind or if they get upset by this.”[44] An awkward side effect of the art&science trend is the conspicuous dilution of both art and science. Instead of a sincere discourse almost only blatant hypes survive, which is in line with current viral marketing strategies. Contents are pushed totally into the background. What counts is how the system is best controlled and utilised. The affair between art and science reached a tipping point. The certain indefinable something that emerged from the ontological indifference between art and science is often called “third culture”. Note, that all this would not have been possible without DT as incubator. However, a tipping point would not be a tipping point, if there would not exist an opposite side, a “biotope” of performativity, non-propositional logics, and a touch of mysticism.

It is my observation that the emerged dilemma between art and science has a clear trend towards an aporia. For the time being it is much more a problem of art and less of science but this will probably change soon. I am well aware that art has several times pronounced dead. Yet, the aporia has a new quality, it seems. It was the avant-garde movement in art that contributed to its own ruin. Definitely not as a moral fault. The preceding excursion into my own experience was thought as evidence for the reverse.

Now is the time for art history (including, of course, philosophy of aesthetics and art theory) to account for this important aspect of contemporary art and not to leave the field completely to the systemic infection. As an allusion to a well-known hacktivist group with systemic fitness and adaptiveness I should like to speak of an overturn of the steamer after a (digital) hijack. It is, by the way, the same group that abuses the message of Timothy Leary to mock an “eternal mission”[45]. Of course, it is an extremely interesting social phenomenon worth being analysed. However, not on the expense of aesthetics and performativity.

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[44] Martin Heidegger, Gesamtausgabe I. Abteilung: Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910-1976. Band 11. Identität und Differenz, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, p. 36.

[45] Etoy, op. cit.; Guther Reisinger, “Etoy – Digital Hijack”, in Medienkunstnetz, online media art database under http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/werke/the-digital-hijack/, accessed on 17 Aug 2010.

Verdinglichung, Lapse of Being, and Ethics

The challenge of ethics is to adapt normative guidelines in conflict situations and suspected errors. In this context, *Verdinglichung* excludes errors in that responsibility is shifted to an "infallible" algorithm. Existing norms are thus maintained. Therefore, the discussion of *Verdinglichung* through the use of DT is located somewhere between ethics and critical theory. The usage of anticipating machines ("wishing machines") is not immoral *per se*. However, even in the area of information engineering, the "Midas touch problem" is frequently discussed. This name comes from King Midas in Greek mythology who asked the Gods to turn everything he touched into gold. The Gods' fulfilment of his desire led to life-threatening starvation. To relate this back to *Verdinglichung*, in our own research we developed a content-based image retrieval interface called EyeVisionBot that uses an eye-tracking device[46]. In the beginning of the image search using EyeVisionBot, a collection of about 20 images randomly retrieved from the database are shown to the user. With the aid of the eye-tracking device, the attention paid by a user to each image is measured through the gazing times that the images receive. The records of gazing times are used to anticipate the searched-for category with the help of adaptive algorithms. The collection of images is then progressively replaced. The search progresses by supplying more and more images that come out of the desired category. In a certain sense, the artificial intelligent systems is able to anticipate the user's decisions and takes over the decision making process. In developing this interface, I faced the problem of an antinomy contained within the concept. An efficient and perfect adaptation to the most desired category keeps away from any future correction. The remaining category can never be disapproved, but only be confirmed through gazing at the images out of this desired category since no other category is left. Whether or not this is welcomed by the users depends on their attitudes.

In my research, I expected a context-sensitive image search, which would include the adaptation of the categories themselves. I thought about a possible application in evidence-based knowledge management. However, I soon recognised that it was impossible to include self-modifying features in the algorithms required to formulate new hypotheses. In order to get a rough feeling for the cognitive processes related to the emergence of novelty (i.e., creativity), we started to provoke users of the interface by only providing categories that were unlikely to be desired. Such a shift in perspective – a kind of perversion of the original idea – has the potential to call attention to the otherwise ongoing *Verdinglichung*. Moreover, this counter-adaptive behaviour may stimulate interesting new ideas. Mixtures of adaptive behaviour that rests upon best evidence derived from the tracking data and irritations through counter-adaptive applications are also possible. How much irritation through

[46] Hans H. Diebner, Performative Science And Beyond - Involving the Process in Research, Springer, Wien, 2006, pp. 134-141.

random or counter-adaptive processes stimulate new ideas depends on individual conditions. Our studies suggest that the necessarily retrospective characteristics of the algorithms prevent them from self-modification, which would, however, be a necessary condition for creativity. There is a clear gap between Dasein's process and retrospective methods of sciences and engineering. This gap is related to what Heidegger called the ontic-ontological difference. In other words, reification-free information engineering should better be an operational hermeneutic enterprise[47], i.e., a mixture of deriving operational directives from past behaviour, and remaining at the same time open for the process.

The Bayesian inference principle is an almost perfect method when applied to recorded data. There is no doubt that it manages pre-knowledge perfectly. There is an important but widely overlooked difference, however, between pre-knowledge and pre-understanding in Heidegger's terms. Pre-understanding is ahead of any anticipating method that relies on pre-knowledge only. Many philosophers do not clearly differentiate between these two concepts and systems theoreticians even less. The more perfect the pre-knowledge-based system is, the more we tend to be pleased by the result and stop to reflect on it: this is where *Verdinglichung* sets in.

In a successful case, the externalisation of cognitive processes leads to a reduction of humans to a "nodding-through society". What I criticise here is the tendency for DT to circumvent “real” interactivity (related to Heidegger's notion of *Sorge*) in order to allegedly objectify the decision making process. The withdrawal of *Sorge* is accompanied by *Verdinglichung*. The perfidious point is that we are left in the feeling of individuality (subjectivity). The balance between the usage of "methods" (operational directives) and the "non-methodical" hermeneutic process of being physically involved is what I call operational hermeneutics. Operational hermeneutics ensures the preservation of responsible human interaction.

Heidegger has often been criticised to be incomprehensible and to a large extent even mystical. Adorno once blamed him for his “jargon of authenticity”. Heidegger's quest for overcoming metaphysics led him to use a very particular language in order to – paradoxically – step out of the dispositive language. He charged Plato and Aristotle for having prepared the turning away from proper ontology or the authentic question concerning Being. According to Heidegger, Plato much the same as Aristotle both did not think the essence of Being because they identified it with how it appears – *eidos* or *idea*. In order to go beyond Plato's and Aristotle's wrongly understood essence of being, Heidegger used many neologisms in order to approach the thing as thing, that is, the ownmostness or authenticity of Being. Even more irritating, in his lectures

[47] Hans H. Diebner, “Operational Hermeneutics and Communication”, in Hans H. Diebner and Lehan Ramsay (Eds.), Hierarchies of Communication. Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany, 2003, 30-57; Frederico Fonseca and James Martin, “Toward an Alternative Notion of Information Systems Ontologies: Information Engineering as a Hermeneutic Enterprise”, in Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology 56(1), 2003, 46-57.

he often used the very same sentence twice with an almost unhearable different intonation. In his talk "the law of identity" he explained the metaphysical usage of "A is A" as a huge improvement of "A=A". A view minutes later in his talk he says, that an authentic reading of the law of identity reads "A Is A" with a very slight emphasis on "Is" compared to the previous intonation. He then asks: "What do we hear?"

I want to strongly encourage the reader to quarrel themselves with Heidegger's authenticity. The reason why I mention this tiny difference in intonation is to use it as a narrative way to point to the proximity of systems theory to Heidegger and its maximum opposition at the same time. Metaphorically speaking, its distance is 360-ε degrees on a circle. That is, it is nearby. However, in using Heidegger's vocabulary, there is a gap – even an abyss – in-between, therefore it is maximally distant. A is A stands for a systemic thinking thought as improvement of a relational thinking (A=A). It stands for the appearance of something as a whole. However, the whole is mediated through signifiers only, expressed by "A is A". It is the supra-theoretical aspiration of cybernetics and the hubris of DT that makes Heidegger's philosophy so relevant to the current situation. Systems theory adopted the metaphysical thinking that difference and, therefore, indirectly identity is the origin of being, which is criticised by Heidegger. With reference to Parmenides, it is the other way round, it is being that belongs to an identity. It is perhaps now the proper time to try to understand fundamental ontology in all its bearings because DT suggests that it is worth trying.

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PHENOMENOLOGICAL ISSUES IN VIRTUAL REALITY: TECHNICAL GESTURES DIRECTED LIKE VIRTUAL PIECES OF PERFORMING ART

FRANCIS ROUSSEAUX*

ABSTRACT. The paper addresses the question of Informed Virtual Environments from the point of view of some philosophical and ethical key-issues. By browsing some eclectic experiences like dancing, serving Asturian cider, trying to escape Dante's Hell or manufacturing a tyre, important questions are raised, and some answers are sketched about some possible ways of designing our future environments: but gestures have then to be considered as cultural objects too, being not reducible to their physical traces.

Index Terms: Informed Virtual Environments, virtual reality, choreographic dance, Hell modelling, gesture annotation, digital inscription of movement.

Introduction

Dance is traditionally interested in showing choreography of interactive bodies in movement to a certain public (see Alexander, Barker, Bartenieff & Lewis, Feldenkrais or Maletic). But if we enlarge that definition toward other purposes like manufacturing a complex object, many operations in manufacturing could be in some way considered as dancing interactive choreographies, involving operators and machines.

The question is now to put forward a notation/annotation framework that could efficiently handle the human-machine co-operation, until providing a satisfying Informed Virtual Environment[1] for training, learning, and developing creativity from both sides.

Many worldwide scientific contributions are currently proposing such exploratory environments (see Aubry & al., Luciani & al. or Olive & al.), but there is also a need for some philosophical and ethical exchange about what appears as an essential issue for the future of Virtual Reality[2].

* *URCA/CReSTIC, email: francis.rousseaux@univ-reims.fr*

1 The so-called Informed Virtual Environments approach is different from immersion in virtual worlds because it targets to model interactions rather than the world itself (objects, characters, simulation models). The aim is to enable users to live an experience that thus includes experiment, simulation, collaboration and creation in the virtual world.

2 According to our colleague Stéphane Donikian, Virtual reality can be defined as a set of hardware/software techniques designed to allow one or more users to interact as naturally as possible with digital data received via sensorial channels. The applications of virtual reality technologies are numerous and promising.

Work as a dance

When an operator manufactures a tyre (Fig. 1) using a sophisticated, noisy, huge and costly machine, he/she interprets a true choreography where the constraints are the space between tools and him/herself, the very minutely controlled time of manufacturing, and the accuracy of technical gestures. The rhythm is given by manufacturing steps and sequences that succeed in any step without falling off, while organising a few breathing moments corresponding to the movements to be carried out for a sufficiently flexible and efficient execution. The person is thus led to express him/herself within this sphere, both technical and resonant, defined by the objects to be handled. His/her gesture must free him/her from any long-term discomfort: the ergonomics of his workstation is designed like a theatre stage where actors are allowed to go to and from.

Figure 1: Training simulator for tyre manufacturing

The tutor, who demonstrates the adequate gesture in order to initiate its repetition by the operator, can transmit this gesture. However, this dance is sometimes obscured by its fineness and many variants, and necessitates an inscription: texts, schemas, films, and simulators. But only experience allows us to reach a steady understanding, and a memorisation by the body in the flesh of what will be a singularity, owned by everybody in these free spaces, in the middle of the constraints of this (sometimes infernal[3]) choreography, due to both repetition and very noisy environment.

[3] You can think about the tradition of Taylorism, which with great effort had tried to capture the dance of work. For instance the work of Frank B. Gilbreth (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Bunker_Gilbreth,_Sr. from where the following largely is): Gilbreth discovered his vocation when, as a young building contractor, he sought ways to make bricklaying (his first trade) faster and easier. This grew into a collaboration with Lillian Moller Gilbreth, that studied the work habits of manufacturing and clerical employees in all sorts of industries to find ways to increase output and make their jobs easier. He and Lillian founded a management-consulting firm, Gilbreth, Inc., focusing on such endeavours. According to Claude George, Gilbreth reduced all motions of the hand into some combination of 17 basic motions. These included grasp, transport loaded, and hold. Gilbreth used a motion picture camera that was calibrated in fractions of minutes to time the smallest of motions in workers.

The inscriptions made through Laban, Benesh and Sutton notations are so many symbols like notes on the score: deciphering them is an exercise difficult in itself. These notations are tracks of the movement, translating a mysterious dynamics, the irregular velocity, the points in space where one must try hard to reach, the weight of the raised arm or the immobility of certain parts of the body. Traces well rooted in graphics can, in turn, allow you to record fleeting and fluttering, dynamic and transient moments, because the links between rigorously described points remain secretly free of interpretation.

The issue is therefore to record the gesture, through graphical means in the past and digital ones today. Of course, making the most of choreographers' notebooks becomes an exploration of sequences combining gestures, rhythms and varied velocities. How should one transcribe and re-read this gesture? How should one construct an understandable framework of the movement through organised tracks?

At Hell's Gate, coffee is served cold

When we put forward this metaphor of the technical gesture as dance, the question of the level of freedom left to the operator between digitalised *meeting* points appears striking, deploying a potentially *infernal* field of action. It is difficult here not to think of Dante's *Hell*, together with its subtle critique due to Gombrowicz.

First, let us read again the famous Florentine[4].

Through me the way is to the city dolent;
Through me the way is to eternal dole;
Through me the way among the people lost.
Justice incited my sublime Creator;
Created me divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last,
All hope abandon, ye who enter in!

For Dante, the damned can only moan with the agonies of remorse. At the occasion of the rare visits of a mortal, as in the case of Dante accompanied by Virgil, he can only witness of the perpetual drama felt in his flesh. In a mysterious way, hope seems to have definitively abandoned him, following Dante's inscription on Hell's gate.

Now, let us listen to Gombrowicz. In his opinion, the Devil's realm is too *serious* in Dante's Hell to embody the metaphysical Evil, necessary for modernising the medieval theodicy. This demon *is too (deterministically) perfect,* and the cycle of eternal suffering followed by compulsive sorrow, although in conformity with our experience of the imperative nature of pain, leaves him without any transcendental role.

[4] Dante A., *La Divina Commedia: Inferno,* Mondadori, 2005, Canto III.

A hidden intuition urges Gombrowicz to suggest the complexification of Dante's infernal structure: as such, it is likely to appear too flat, simple, boring (repetitive and iterative) to guarantee the "*pensée unique*" of the damned.

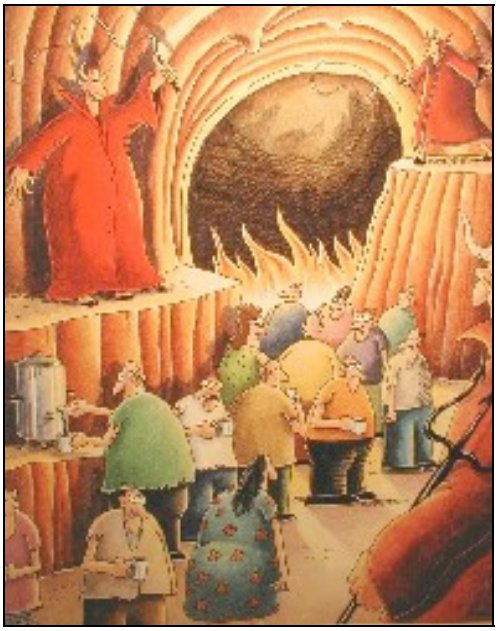

Figure 2: Gary Larson's famous drawing

In Hell as seen by Gombrowicz, the fault must rule in the Abyss, and hierarchical order must to leave place to a disconcerting recursion. And if by chance, some coffee had to be served … it would be cold (cf. Gary Larson's famous drawing in Fig. 2, with the caption: "Oh, man! The coffee's cold! They thought of everything!").

So, Gombrowicz[5] comes to think that the best way of preventing the unexpected return of hope in the very bosom of Hell is still to disturb perpetually the conditions where radical seclusion is made possible, by opening traps. The torturer soon learns how to add vice into the torture he inflicts, by giving it through unforeseeable modes of cruelty.

Through me the way is to the deepest City,
eternity which carries on its Fall;
through me the way is to eternal Evil
a self-infected, rotten and debased thing,
through me the way among the people lost,
an everlasting race …

[5] Gombrowicz W., "Sur Dante", in *Contre les poètes,* 3, 1988, Kultura, pp. 141:167

This thesis seems to be only able to redefine the formal modalities of Hell, without unveiling its essence. But it prepares the theoretical possibility of an immanence within the transcendence: something is acting from within the structure, there is an acting nothingness, like an immanent grace in Marxist theory, or an historicism claiming that there is a radical exteriority in history, and not only the same which improves itself (progress) or a nihilism beyond history's end. There can be a form of mutant human subjectivity, between changes of degree and changes of nature.

What are the conditions making possible this subjectivity created through mutation? How could one think about it? This is a typical Gombrowicz' meditation when he transforms memory as a storage of recollection acts into the question of a changing relationship with respect to such acts[5].

> *To share things with the past, is to elaborate, painfully and restlessly, to recall it continuously to come back into existence. But, as we* read *this past thanks to tracks it left for us, and since these depend on hazard, even on the matter — more or less crumbly, and so reliant on various accidents occurred in time — which bring these tracks until us, then this past can be only chaotic, accidental, fragmentary […]. The past is therefore a scenario made of snatches, here is its nature. Nevertheless, this urges us to new reflexion, this desire we have at our disposal, against any adversity, a complete and living past, full of characters, quite concrete, and this need must be well rooted into us.*

Digital technologies allow us to continue the transformation inaugurated by Gombrowicz, and to frustrate the pretension of the analogous technique to achieve a complete description. Nothing was never said on what happens between two digitalised samples, between two compulsory passing points of the gesture.

Dancer-operator *vs.* machine choreographies

In fact, human gesture representation in the virtual world can bring a glimmer of hope in this descent to Hell: the training simulator for technical gesture allows us to understand not only the perfect machine's mechanical functioning, but also man-machine interactions. This interactive visualisation, such as a video game, alleviates the operator's cognitive effort by giving him very clear signals concerning the states of opening, breathing and freedom. Precise constraints to which he has to submit become supports and markers, and a more flexible and truthful gesture can be imagined.

Such a change gives birth to a new point of view: dancing becomes alive and singular, it is nurtured on each body, each material transformation, each rapid or heavy step, each humble but beautiful operation, each concentrated or worried glances, each beginner's anxiety, or each nonchalance of those bestowed with a knowing body. Of the deep evening weariness, of the morning coolness, and of the machine's noisy and powerful response.

As in a monstrously unbalanced hand to hand struggle, the dancer-operator fights with his/her hands, torso, feet, faced to the enormous automaton, faced with the monster's steel jaws, and has to rely on his/her knowledge of space, his/her own

body's perception in the machine's empty interiority, his/her intimate knowledge of the choreography he interprets together with the machine.

Which trace of this choreography could we inscribe into the digital world? The main traces habitually used for this choreography of the operative mode are descriptions through schemas, films, synthetic image animations based on the man-machine chart.

The choreographer's notation could be translated into this framework of the technical gesture and would include only the memorisation of invariants and essential parts of the human gesture and machine's movement, while offering the possibility of living afterwards this gesture by perceiving it from inside. This notation could both serve as a trace, and support a new situation: that of the game between the man who learns to dance and the system that operates the records.

The gesture annotating capitalised in a knowledge base, and their lecture following different points of view, without the constraints of repetition or ordered reading, could bring a scent of paradise by giving us a new degree of freedom: the *perfect gesture* is *no longer* seen as an inaccessible and confuse model, but as a clear and readable framework, where the dancer–operator can improvise.

The dancer of Gijón

One thinks without fail to Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*, but also to the sportsman repeating a complex dynamic chaining, or yet to the pianist studying a virtuoso passage. It immediately appears that the categorisation of our activities relays traditionally on their exogenous destination and productivity: but it could also relay on the endogenous aptitudes experienced by operators.

Undoubtedly, that is the reason for which one distinguishes habitually between dancing and other body activities, the former claiming to let see the bodies animated for themselves, in a choreography offered to the reception and interpretation without any other aim: the choreographic movement is not referenced to respect to an external target, but is given as such, folded in an immanent meaning.

It is obvious that the distinction is coarse and largely artificial: because choreography always evokes finalised gestures, and dancers repeating choreography address the public spectacle as a target. And, finally, because finalised gestures can be seen and appreciated by them, as if they were danced.

Not so long ago, we astonished an Asturian waiter serving cider by suggesting that he should become an air-traffic controller: we must admit that our waiter was truly extraordinary, with a stupefying dexterity and organisation (Fig. 3). Of course, servers are always remarkable in the *sidrerías* of Gijón[6]. But that one, already quite visible

[6] The *sidra* is poured as *un culín o culete* from a height into a wide glass, with the arm holding the bottle extended upwards and the one holding the glass extended downwards; this technique is called to *estancar* and is done to get air bubble into the drink. Then the customer is given the fine-brimmed glass containing a very small quantity of a cider as coarse as possible, but in fact unforgettable. The *sidra* is drunk *d'un tragu* and the glass is passed to a neighbour.

because of being tall and slender[7], was deploying so efficient an organisation that our glance was captured. He had disposed several large pedestal tables at the strategic places of the restaurant's room, on which he had grouped together the *sidra asturiana* bottles for the neighbouring tables, and moved very fast among them while serving *culín* after *culín,* without any doubt on the bottle's owner. Once you know that cider bottles are smaller in the Asturias than in the remainder of Spain and that the average consumption is generally high (often three bottles per person/meal), one can but calculate the number of empty bottles on the pedestal tables after a friendly meal; moreover, the traditional bill is established on the basis of the dead bottles left on the battle field.

Figure 3: Typical gesture of an Asturian waiter serving cider

Why should one only foresee a brilliant career in catering for this waiter, betting that a chief will not be long in remarking him in view of a promotion? The aptitudes manifested by our waiter could be compared with those of air-traffic controllers, i.e. the capability to quickly discern objects on which an identical technical procedure is applied.

Here is the kernel of the question. The operator's gestures are idealised/stylised/ categorised in order to build up models, afterwards an avatar complying with these models is shown, hoping that the operator will identify himself with the moving avatar. If the device appears to be satisfactory, the reason is that the operator, identifying himself with every force of the moving avatar, believes incidentally that the idealisation/stylisation/categorisation of his gestures/actions is the appropriate one, and therefore he is a good worker in the social sense of the term.

As is often the case, a major part of the interesting questions is masked during a fast interpretation, the experience functions, but due to other, unexpected reasons.

[7] In the Asturian *sidrerías* (Northern Spain), customers are rather short and fat, irresistibly attracted by the marvellous mountains of *tapas* offered by the owner and exposed just under their nose: *tapas de tortilla, de jamón, de pesca* or *de marisco.*

Gesture annotation as gesture recording/archiving

This capacity of the Gijón dancer to get his bearings in space and time is very interesting, in particular when we try to inscribe digitally this gesture in a virtual world.

Like a photography modifying the reasons of painting, the digital trace produced in virtual reality modifies the recording modes. Two questions come to mind:

- how could we write the gesture avoiding the complete storage of what an avatar can do in the simulator?
- how could we re-read it by choosing well-identified parts?

In both cases, it is necessary to view the digital inscription of the gesture as a gesture annotating allowing us to memorise, classify and explore a track in order to re-run a dance, at wish and interactively.

This work on the annotating is still incipient because it requires to understand, on the one side, the flesh, the body warmth, the movement of the living being, the dancer's breathing, and on the other the coldness of the digital system, the accuracy in time and space of the 4D modelling (time being the 4th dimension), the classification of the different forms of gestures, the inscription and the digital description.

This description makes us think of a well-drawn image of a house, which calls easily to our desire to dwell in, as Bachelard[8] said:

> *Our chimera, which urges us to live in some places, is sometimes caused, here again, by the grace of a simple drawing. But in this case, the grace of a curve is not a simple Bergson's movement with well-placed inflexions. It is not only a deploying time. It is also a dwelling space constituted harmoniously. Here we at a minimum de refuge, in the ultra-simplified schema of a rest daydreaming. Only the dreamer who incurves himself to contemplate these loops knows the joy of the drawn rest.*

This drawn rest is in our case that of a security brought by a clear representation of the gesture when the operator-dancer understands rapidly and efficiently his role.

Hope can be a motor only if a space of accomplished promises exists, the insertion in space and time is solid, and movement can be based on stone-like ground. The matter is not to recognise oneself in the moving avatar, but to base oneself on a proper gesture language in order to reach these breathing points authorised in the rigidity of the representation.

In comparison, Hell is truly the deceived hope, the imprecision, the lack of visibility on possible future, the absence of leading marks in space and time, that is the Hell of uncertainty.

Only a mixture of desire and renunciation can give birth again to a gesture language relying on ancient and fertile traces, as expresses Georges Didi Huberman[9]:

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[8] Bachelard G., *La poétique de l'espace,* Quadrige, PUF, 1957.

[9] Didi-Huberman G., *Gestes d'air et de pierre, corps, parole, souffle, image,* Les éditions de minuit, 2005.

Air and stone meet each other in the image because, in many pregnant images, one finds a mixture of superlative grace and immense sorrow, performed gestures and suspended gestures, desire and renunciation, near-consolation and inconsolable loss.

Discussion

By considering technical gestures as embodied physical movements, we surely approach some very useful low-level descriptions of it. But we cannot get the *abstract truth of gesture* by attempting to reduce it to some, even fine, combination of those low-level descriptors.

By considering high-level descriptors of technical gestures like virtual pieces of performing art to be directed, they become far easier to anchor, but difficult to combine intimately with machines or systems.

Trying to match those two description levels, by maintaining some philosophical and ethical scientific discussion, is probably a powerful perspective for turning our Informed Virtual Environments into creative workshops. But such a research project cannot be settled without admitting that technical gestures can never be simply repeated: they singularise themselves, they change/mutate by being directed again, they adapt to become more and more concrete/accurate/efficient, as discovered by Eugen Fink, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault and Gilbert Simondon.

This has considerable impact on future indexing/archiving/annotating strategies of technical gestures, considered as virtual pieces of performance art.

I would like to thank Indira Thouvenin (UTC/HEUDIASYC, Indira.Thouvenin@utc.fr), with whom I often exchanged during the development of these ideas and without which this texte would probably not reached this present form.

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INTUITIVE IMPROVISATION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD FOR DANCE EXPERIMENTATION WITH MOBILE DIGITAL MEDIA

SUSAN KOZEL[*]

ABSTRACT. This paper is located at the juncture of philosophical and artistic research, offering the second in a series of phenomenologically informed methods relevant to the design and creative use of mobile digital devices called the *Intuitive Improvisation* method. It is also part of a larger philosophical and artistic project in Social Choreographies which contributes to the ever developing field of social aesthetics by providing a perspective uniquely coloured by dance and phenomenology. Philosophical reflections upon relational aesthetics (Rancière, Bourriaud), method and intuition (Deleuze, Bergson) are contextualized by discussing the *IntuiTweet* project in dance and networked social media.

Key words: phenomenology, social media, dance, improvisation, twitter, relational aesthetics

Introduction

This paper is not long. In some respects it is like a tweet[1]: short, evocative and raw. Space is left open for the ideas to be exchanged and relayed. With both philosophical and practical aims, this paper provides the second in a series of phenomenologically grounded methods relevant to the design and implementation of mobile digital devices: the *Intuitive Improvisation* method. As such, this method is a sister to the *Embodied Imagination* method[2] but its context is the larger philosophical and artistic project in Social Choreographies which contributes to the ever developing field of social aesthetics by offering a perspectives from dance and phenomenology.[3] The notions of choreography, performance and performativity are proliferating across disciplines, requiring much exchange, extrapolation and refinement. This proliferation and need for refinement is true also of ideas shaped and exchanged by the myriad

[*] *Professor of New Media, MEDEA Collaborative Media Initiative, Malmö University, Malmö Sweden, http://www.meshperformance.org, http://medea.mah.se, susan.kozel@mah.se*

1 A tweet is a short text message sent through the social networking application Twitter http://www.twitter.com.

2 The Embodied Imagination method integrates design and theatre methods, see Hansen and Kozel (2007).

3 For contextual writing on Social Choreographies see Kozel (2010)

of social networking tools in existence; this short paper, as well as the *IntuiTweet* project that inspired it, are based on the conviction that conceptual and corporeal depth are not necessarily sacrificed once digital networking tools are introduced into creative and intellectual domains. The project and its phenomenological method are rich terrain from which to consider recent writings in relational aesthetics (Nicolas Bourriaud, Jacques Rancière) and philosophical reflections on method and intuition (Gilles Deleuze, Henri Bergson).

The IntuiTweet Project

The *IntuiTweet* project confronts the problem of disembodiment and superficiality in social networking by exploring the convergence between movement improvisation and various forms of social media including Twitter, TwitPic, YouTube, facebook, SMS (short message service) and group wikis. *IntuiTweet* is situated at the convergence between the practices of design and dance and is embedded in a broader initiative which aims to explore intuition as it emerges in the dance studio and may be applicable to design methodologies. This initiative is called "Intuition in Creative Processes" and is a Helsinki based collaboration between dance researchers associated with the Theatre Academy and designers from the Media Lab of the University of Arts and Design.[4] *IntuiTweet* was co-developed by Mia Keinänen, Leena Rouhiainen and Susan Kozel as a research strand within this large project with the specific aim of accessing movement intuition in daily life through mobile networked media devices, and then extrapolating this into choreography. The *Intuitive Improvisation* method is integral to the *IntuiTweet* research and is still in the process of being refined. Phenomenologically speaking this project addresses the spaces between bodies and digital media, between one body and another, in the fibrous and tensile space of kinaesthetic effervescence where mobile media reside. Like the *Embodied Imagination* method, it is an attempt to open phenomenological thinking to a wider audience with the goal of fostering concrete creative outcomes.

One premise of this project is that, prior to their use and frequently re-purposing by artists, digital media are designed. Media does not enter our world fully formed; it has to be brought into being: as such, there is here a deliberate attempt to speak from a point of convergence between artistic creation and design innovation. This is not to conflate the fields of art and design but to speak from a point of shared territory, the delicate domain of experimentation where the methods and process of art and design are more fluid despite often having different vocabularies. Dancers will be familiar with the studio practices of improvising, devising and rehearsing (note that these are verbs with direct connection to the body), while designers are more comfortable with the synchronous activities of experimentation, construction and iteration (note that these are nouns referring to objects or processes). Dancers and

[4] Leena Rouhiainen, Mia Keinänen and Susan Kozel are the researchers with the Theatre Academy of Helsinki and the designers from the Media Lab of the University of Arts and Design are Asta Raami and Samu Mielonen. This project is supported by the Academy of Finland.

artists freely use the term creation, while designers may be more at home with the term innovation. One of the reasons why phenomenology is an increasingly compelling alternative to existing methods for production is because it does not inhabit one side of the dichotomy between art and design; hence it appeals to a newer generation of designers and artists, those less interested in preserving unhelpful dualities who look to other disciplines for inspiration. The methods of *Embodied Imagination* and *Intuitive Improvisation* are drawn from the philosophical methodology of phenomenology, in particular readings of the late writings of Maurice Merleau-Ponty; they stem from a recognition that the multi-layered world of design is increasingly concerned with dynamic, embodied or experiential methods at the same time as artistic research is expanding rapidly with important methodological crossover from other disciplines. This context accounts for the tone of this paper, and the intention to be of relevance to philosophers, dancers and designers.

Twitter, and social networking in general, have been acknowledged to be barometers of the social zeitgeist, but Twitter in particular has been dismissed as superficial, banal and disembodied[5]. It has been embraced as a marketing tool and is praised for being a powerful search engine for contemporary cultural knowledge. A major assertion regarding Twitter is that its richness exists in its Do-It-Yourself (DIY) culture reflected by the unexpected ways it is used by its community and the third party applications built and circulated. The *IntuiTweet* project's unexpected use of Twitter began from a motivation that echoes designer theorists Nelson and Stolterman's framing of 'desiderata' as a desired outcome, and their recognition that change can be initiated by either moving away from a situation or moving toward a new one.[6] Through practical research, *IntuiTweet* has the goal of demonstrating that any new technological phenomena can be used in a myriad of ways and that Twitter is not essentially a superficial social phenomenon. An additional goal was to open the way for unprecedented embodied usage of social networking platforms. Consistent with much creative work initiated by performers and artists in the area of emerging digital technologies, the research asked whether it is possible to emphasize physicality and depth, movement and intuition, in a cultural phenomenon that is quick to be classified as non-corporeal. Very little is required for dance improvisers to initiate movement exploration. The starting point might be a word, an image, an object or a fragment of music. Spatiality, temporality and narrative are implicit (or one might say 'tacit') to the improvisations, and these movement instructions can be conveyed in 140 characters or less. (All tweets reproduced in this paper were collaboratively produced by Keinänen, Rouhiainen and Kozel.)

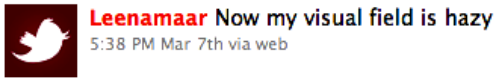

Figure 1. ***Single Tweet Portraying Body State***

[5] For two journalistic, and quite humourous, accounts of the debates surrounding Twitter see Palof (2009) and Sorken (2009)

[6] Nelson and Stolterman (2003)

The desiderata of this research is to combine expressive dance practices with social networking platforms to convey and even strengthen a sense of corporeality and to access the more ephemeral or tacit phenomenon of intuition.[7] Related to this desired outcome, the research is motivated to contribute a practical component to philosophical discourse and an embodied strand to design practices by establishing a method that can be useful for prototyping new applications and devices. Further, the method will be adapted to produce participatory choreography for performances that involves dancers and members of the public.[8]

Thus far, four periods of structured improvisation have been undertaken. The first (May 2009) involved the three dancer-researchers located in three countries (Russia, Norway, USA) and lasted for two weeks. The second (October 2009) opened the process to include an additional two participants (Denmark, USA) and lasted one week. The third and fourth (February and March 2010) returned to the original three researchers, but the fourth was unique for occurring while the participants were physically co-located in Helsinki. Each improvisation used Twitter, usually with the mobile phone interface but occasionally using the web interface or SMS when mobile access was limited. The third and fourth improvisations also integrated TwitPic and YouTube for visual material, affirming that a fragment of movement intuition could be captured not just with words but with images. Most of the improvisation occurred in public places (streets, public transit, workplaces) or in private homes as the researchers went about their daily lives. Some access to dance studios was available but the performance component was very much that of everyday life.[9]

Intuition as Method

The *Intuitive Improvisation* method falls into the category of kinaesthetic or affective design,[10] and is closely related to the *Embodied Imagination* method which integrates theatre practices with design methods. Intuition is notoriously difficult to pin down and has been approached in many ways, including the nuanced interpretation Jacques Derrida offers of phenomenological intuition in his book on Jean Luc Nancy. Derrida's characterization of the plenitude of intuition as immediate and direct is coincident with the intuition accessed through the *Intuitive Improvisation* method; particularly his challenge of whether intuition, the Husserlian phenomenological principle of principles, is associated irrevocably with the ego at the expense of "animals and organs other than the fingers".[11] A dancers approach to intuition is decidedly

[7] For writing on intuition emerging from the Intuition in Creative Processes Project see S. Mielonen et al. (2009).

[8] The performances will be developed in 2011.

[9] Michel de Certeau (2002) famously wrote on the practices of everyday life and his book was received with interest by many designers. The Embodied Imagination method was initiated in a studio setting but then embraced 72 hours of participants' daily lives.

[10] For kinaesthetic and affective approaches to design see Schiphorst (2006), Moen (2005) Dunne & Raby (2001).

[11] Jacques Derrida (2000), pp. 190-193. Further discussion of this line of philosophical enquiry will occur in another paper.

corporeal, dealing with touch and expression across the full body, and the mode of intuition that the *IntuiTweet* project fostered has closer resonances with Bergson than Husserl, or at least Deleuze's reading of Bergson. For Bergson, intuition is a method not just a concept, but is a method already presupposing duration.[12] "This method sets out, firstly, to determine the conditions of problems, that is to say, to expose false problems or wrongly posed questions, and to discover the variables under which a given problem must be stated as such".[13] Intuition can be seen as a complex linear operation "consisting in a cutting up according to articulations and an intersecting according to convergences, which leads to the proper posing of a problem".[14] If the geometric abstractions are softened, this method can simply be seen as a reposing of problems, a redrawing of convergences, and out of this the discovery of a new dynamic (or "apprehension of real time"[15]). Applied to the question of Twitter and social media, the problem becomes not one of whether we have sufficient functionality or bandwidth for our mobile devices, but the problem is that they do not reflect fully the broad range of our corporeality and our embodied interconnected lives. The "real time" to be apprehended is more subtle than the rapid, constant communication which is supposed to be the norm for mobile communication. A further example of intuition as a cutting up and reconverging: the *Intuitive Improvisation* method revealed that the problem is not that our social media are superficial, but that the modes of touch and sensory connection dominating their common use are underdeveloped. Once again, shifts in duration result, in that corporeal connections are not always "on," the way an electronic device is either on or off, but they ebb, flow and stretch. And proximity, the sharing of physical space and temporality, need not be determined by geography.

Practically speaking, how does one perform this method? There are primary and secondary instructions.

Primary Instructions

The step by step procedure for implementing this method is as follows:

a) take a moment to listen to your body and notice a movement intuition or sensation
b) code it into a Tweet of 140 characters or less
c) send it to other participants via Twitter
d) when a Tweet is received, improvise it immediately or with a time lag (hours or days)
e) notice how it has morphed in your own body over time and through space
f) re-code it into a fresh Tweet and re-send it to be received and improvised once more

[12] Gilles Deleuze (1991), p. 13.
[13] Ibid, p. 115.
[14] Ibid, p. 116.
[15] Ibid, p. 14.

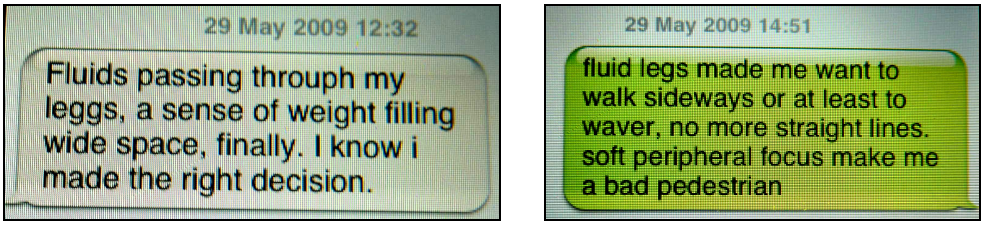

Figure 2. ***A tweet exchange on iPhone***

Secondary Instructions

If you choose, you may use the camera on your mobile phone to generate a VideoTweet, either an image or a video that imbues a kinaesthetic quality.
This can be sent via MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) or posted to TwitPic or YouTube.
View images/videos posted by others and improvise the kinaesthetic quality received, re-image and re-post this movement.

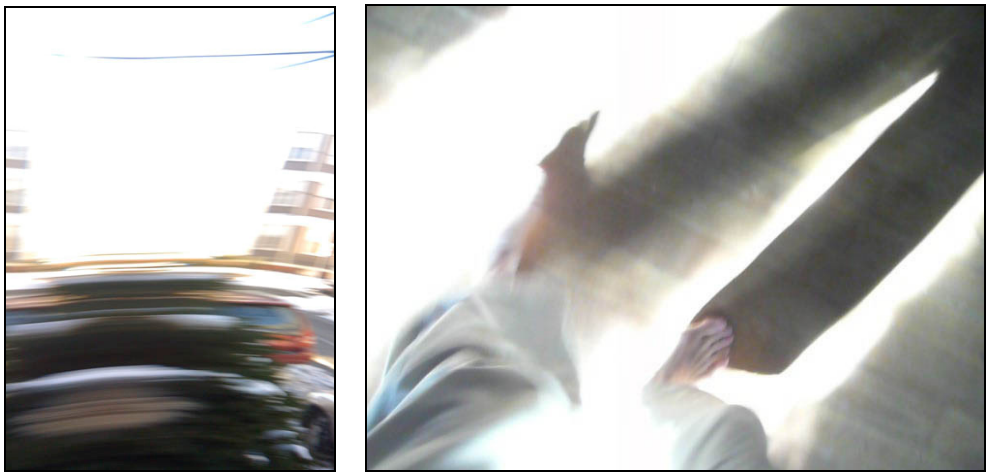

Figure 3. ***VisualTweet (left), still from VideoTweet (right)***

As indicated above, the broad methodological orientation supporting *Intuitive Improvisation* is phenomenology according to which a person's perceptual apparatus constructs meaning while and through living in the world, at the same time as intersubjective relations determine the experience of a body.[16] If we accept that the self is a lived body

[16] It is primarily Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible* that informs the phenomenological approach to the method. Merleau-Ponty (1995). This paper does not refer explicitly to the elements of Merleau-Ponty grounding the methods, for such an discussion see chapter one of Kozel (2007)

ambiguously caught between subject and object[17] it is easy to integrate our mobile devices (our objects) into the equation. When we add the ontological assumption that 'I am because you exist,' in other words the suggestion that one's self is de-centered, our mediated social relations gain added meaning and are not so easily dismissed as trivial. The philosophical basis for this method gains momentum from the worlds of design and the social sciences writ large. Design methodologies that take into account the life experience of potential owners of hypothetical products are relevant to the participatory dimension of *Intuitive Improvisation*, while more overtly kinaesthetic or affective approaches to design that make us entirely reconsider our approaches to technological devices in our lives and to one another are also consistent. Further, from the 1980s a 'spatial turn' in the social sciences demonstrated that social relations are spatially organized and that spaces are comprised of various materials, objects, and environments that are intermittently in motion, perpetually changing configuration and rearticulating meaning.[18] With relevance to the materiality of social networking, we learn that "the social is materially heterogeneous: talk, bodies, texts, machines, architectures, all of these and many more are implicated in and perform the social".[19]

Relational Aesthetics

The *IntuiTweet* project problematizes and extends some principles of Relational Aesthetics, drawing this approach to contemporary art from the 1990s into dialogue with current participatory performance and design practices. Asserting that art is a state of encounter, and that intersubjectivity is not just the context but is the work itself, the relational approach to aesthetics is strongly relevant to expressive social practices using mobile media. A direct implication of this is that we do not design interactive systems for *use* in social settings; instead the intersubjectivity *is* the system. Nicolas Bourriaud offers a formulation of the activities of artist: "by creating and staging devices of existence, including working methods and ways of being, instead of concrete objects which hitherto bounded the realm of art, they use time as a material".[20] This can be extended and deepened by examining social networking and mobile media because these "devices of existence" are not just our conventions or habits, they are at the same the objects we use to enact our daily lives. We can conclude that our objects, our daily habits and our working methods are all the creative output of our design processes.

This argument is taken further by Rancière who emphasizes the role for human sensory perception in a dynamic construction of aesthetics: aesthetics is a "redistribution of the relations between the forms of sensory experience".[21] This has tremendous significance for the design and proliferation of devices that create and exchange sensory media while fostering new relations between people. It plants them

[17] Rosalyn Diprose (2002) has written beautifully on the intercorporeal dimensions of Merleau-Ponty.
[18] Doreen Massey (1994), Nigel Thrift (2004).
[19] John Urry (2008), p. 42.
[20] Nicolas Bourriaud (2002), p. 103.
[21] Jacques Rancière (2009), p. 14.

squarely within a domain that is simultaneously aesthetic, political and sensory. As such, embodiment, creativity and sociality are placed on the same level, overcoming an unhelpful divide between art and design, between objects and subjects.

Relational Aesthetics permits a role for the ephemeral within projects such as *IntuiTweet*. The real content of this project cannot be documented directly because it occurs in the body of each participant and is stimulated by exchanges with others. We can only obliquely access these affective and kinaesthetic states through language or images. The outputs act as pointers to the fleeting and ever-changing qualities of being.

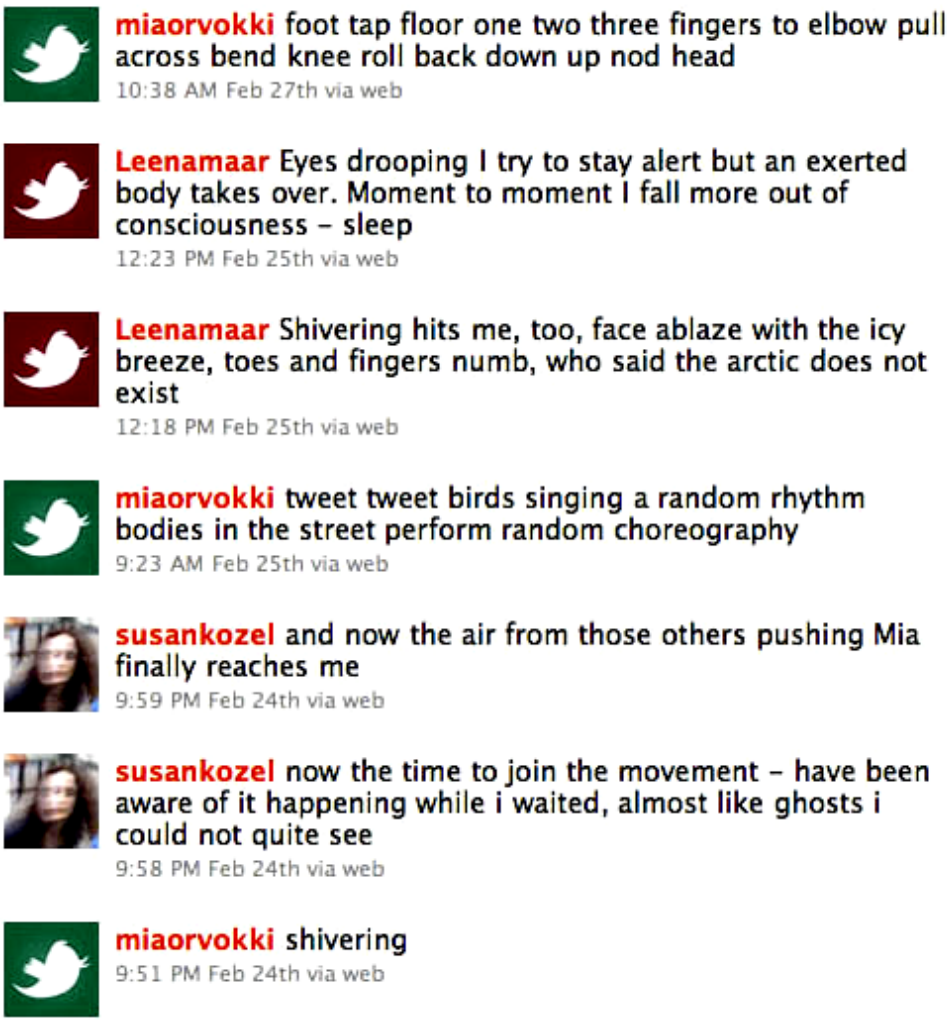

Figure 4. ***Sample script from improvisation***

Conclusion

It is useful to conclude by revisiting the findings thus far and indicate the direction of this as yet very emergent research project. The research for *IntuiTweet* has resulted in an effective method for integrating corporeal experience into social networking using the artistic practice of dance improvisation and building upon the principles of phenomenological method.

The method has yielded content which will be integrated into future improvisations and performances. The series of *TweetScripts* can act as a basis for choreography or given to other dancers to shape a participatory performance. The actual form of the performance to emerge from *IntuiTweet* is yet to be defined but will embrace the aesthetics of relationality and will certainly have a participatory component. The structured improvisations over the past year have also produced an archive of visual and textual material that will be integrated into the design of the future performance. It is not often that artistic methods can contribute directly to aesthetic discourse, but *Intuitive Improvisation* is able to inform a critique of approaches to Relational Aesthetics and enhance other approaches to relationality that are dealing more deeply with participation and imagination. This introduces a bridge between philosophical accounts of contemporary art and social networking practices, providing well needed depth to an under-theorized domain. Finally, it is worth closing with a significant divergence between Bergson's intuition as method and the *Intuitive Improvisation* method: Deleuze emphasises Bergson's assertion that intuition as a philosophical method operates with precision as a fully developed method in philosophy, stressing that "intuition is neither a feeling, an inspiration, nor a disorderly sympathy."[22] The research for this project thus far would suggest that an intuitive method can, indeed, contain powerful moments of disorderly sympathy yet at the same time be precise. A phenomenological unraveling of this paradox shall be undertaken in further research.

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[22] Deleuze (1991), p. 13.

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THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF VIRTUAL REALITY AND PHANTOM SENSATIONS

ALEXANDER HEINZEL[*], TINCUTA HEINZEL[**]

Abstract. One of the major issues in the current research on virtual reality (VR) is how to induce the feeling of reality in the experiencing subject. In this sense the phenomenon of phantom sensations (i.e. the persisting experience of a limb after its amputation) appears to be a paradigmatic case of VR. However, in contrast to the artificially induced VR experience, phantom sensations are linked to the strong feeling of their reality. Therefore, we characterise the subjective experience of phantom sensations by superpresence, as opposed to the artificially induced VR experience characterised by telepresence. Our hypothesis is that this phenomenological difference originates in the fact that phantom sensations represent a case of unmediated VR. This unmediated VR experience is essentially different from any technologically induced VR because it can be traced back to the epistemic abilities and limitations of the brain itself.

Key words: Virtual Reality (VR), phantom sensation, telepresence, superpresence, vividness, interactivity.

Introduction

One of the most addressed questions in the research on virtual reality (VR) is how to influence the participant's perception in order to induce a feeling of reality with regard to the artificially created environment. In addition to any technological developments, a deeper understanding of the phenomenological factors that contribute to such a feeling is of major importance. From a phenomenological point of view, phantom sensations (i.e. the persisting experience of a limb after its amputation) may be considered a paradigmatic case of VR. Although their genesis is quite different from

[*] *Dr. med. Dr. phil. Alexander Heinzel, Department of Nuclear Medicine of the University of Düsseldorf at the Research Centre Jülich, 52426 Jülich, Germany. Tel.: +49-2461-616321; fax: +49-2461-618044. Email: a.heinzel@fz-juelich.de*

[**] *Lab3 - Academy of Media Arts, Cologne, Germany, http://interface.khm.de*

the way contemporary technical systems create VR, the phenomenological properties seem to be similar. Here we aim to analyse in detail the phenomenological properties of phantom sensations thereby making use of clinical case studies. Consequently, these properties will be compared to the phenomenological experiences in VR in order to reveal their similarities and differences. Based on these results we will discuss possible factors in the genesis of the phenomenological feeling of reality in phantom sensations and VR.

Phenomenological characteristics of virtual reality

The popular understanding of VR is that of a simulated three-dimensional world via digital means (Paul 2001). In his book *Artificial Reality II*[1], Krueger defines VR as a technological system implemented with goggles and gloves that

> "*perceives a participant's action in terms of the body's relationship to a graphic world and generates responses that maintain the illusion that his actions are taking place within that world*". (Krueger, 1991, p. 268).

VR comprises two different aspects: the technological aspect concerning the means to create a VR and the phenomenological aspect concerning the subjective experience of the participant. A lot of research has been done to improve the technical capacities to create VR (see Lanier, 1989; Krueger, 1991 and Sherman and Craig, 2002). The goal of these technical concerns is to succeed in creating a perfect simulation of a complete, multisensory body in action in an artificial environment. It often implies stereoscopic vision, sound perception, proprioceptive or haptic senses. The difficulty to achieve such a full simulation is often seen as a consequence of the technological primitivism of the VR medium. Yet, the phenomenological characteristics of the VR experience have to be considered as a basis for future technological developments (Loomis, 1993). Our focus in this article is to describe and analyse some of the features considered important in the context of a VR experience.

Presence and telepresence

Compared to other previous mediums, like cinema, VR can be defined as a subjective experience[2], which addresses one individual at a time. Unlike other mediums, which addressed essentially only one or two senses, seeing, hearing or

[1] Krueger defines Virtual Reality as a specific form of Artificial Reality (AR) using goggles and gloves. Artificial Really is another term used to describe digital simulated environments. In the present text we will use Virtual Reality.

[2] We refer here to the VR system implemented with goggles, gloves, position trackers and sensors. However, considering the latest evolution in cinema production (e.g. 3D projections), new approaches to create collective experiences are conceivable.

both, VR aims to involve other senses like touch, kinaesthesia, taste or smell[3]. The intended VR experience is that of a full, synthetic sensation. If in normal conditions, in a natural environment, this unified and synthetic sensation is taken for granted, in the case of VR technology the difficulty is to create sensations in a simulated, constructed environment. In other words, the challenge is to create a spatially located, extended experience, where the participant is completely involved.

When speaking of the nature of the VR experience one of the key concepts is that of *presence*. On a general basis, presence defines the subjective experience of the environment resulting from the feeling of being in that environment. The goal of a VR environment is to successfully achieve a kind of "disembodiment" of the participant from the real world in order to "re-embody" him/her in a virtual one. However, virtual reality remains a process of embodiment - meaning an experience realized via an artefact (Ihde 2007).

In trying to differentiate between a natural, unmediated perception of an environment and the perception made possible by means of VR, Steuer (1992) introduced the term of *telepresence*, where telepresence underlines the fact that virtual reality is perceived in an artificial way via mediation. Thus, telepresence defines the feeling of a mediated presence. Since the process of mediation will necessarily influence the perceived realities, there is a fundamental difference between telepresence and presence.

In contrast, Minsky (1980) used the term *telepresence* to refer to a tele-operation system used to manipulate remote physical objects. In other words, telepresence describes the possibility of–manoeuvring objects placed in distant physical locations through remote-controlled devices (for example, an intervention at distance in a nuclear site).

Adapting Minsky's (1980) notion of a teleoperative system, the VR environment focuses on the subjective experience of presence in a mediated environment. Telepresence in VR is thus understood as the *feeling* of being within a virtual environment without having changed one's physical location. The information in this case is not transmitted from a sender to a receiver or from one real environment to another, rather mediating environments are created in order to be experienced (see Sheridan, 1992). In this way, a person in a VR system is both a sender and a receiver. The success of a VR device is seen in its capacity to transmit the state of the physical body to the "data body" (its digital counterpart or "avatar") and vice versa, so fast as to be unnoticeable. (Krämer, 2008)

Some authors understand telepresence as *immersion.* Speaking of immersion, Petruschat (2008) defined it as an ideal of any VR system:

[3] If the first VR installations merely focused only on visual and audible perception, today's experimentations are looking to diversify (multi-sensorial faculties) and synchronize the senses involved in such experiences. The monitoring and the control of such systems are also part of the debate (Krueger, 1991; Lanier, 1992; Sherman and Craig, 2003). Searching to create environments as close to reality as possible, renderings of stereoscopic vision, proprioceptive or haptic sensations are much discussed (Krueger, 1991).

> "*the more natural a virtual environment seems to the user, the more familiar it appears to him, the more unquestionably and thus more intuitively would be to succeed in acting and making decisions in that environment*".

Immersion is a process, "*where the point is to make us forget that we don't get wet when we dive in*". In other words, immersion is a process that calls what Sherman and Craig (2003) name "suspension of disbelief". For them, immersion is a state of deep engagement, the sensation of being in a virtual environment, sensation which could be purely mental or could be achieved through physical means. Defined in this way, immersion is nothing else but a specific quality of telepresence which describes a very small psychological distance between the real environment and the VR environment.

For Nechvatal (2000) immersion is an enveloping, physical, rather then cognitive state of mind. It implies a unified space, a homogeneous world without external distraction, different, for example, from one's absorption in a book or a movie. An immersive state in VR strikes from omni-directional points of view, where the points of view are understood as multi-sensorial forms.

The same point of view it is also held by Coelho, Tichon, Hine, Wallis and Riva (2006). Comparing VR to other systems and means of communication (books, television, etc.) they believe that VR enhances the feeling of telepresence in ways never achieved before, by multiplying the effects of immersion and interaction. From their point of view, a VR environment it is no more a function in an operational task, but has become part of the task itself.

Characteristics of Virtual Reality

VR is an experience created via a medium, thus the characteristics of the medium will influence its perception. Steuer (1992) identified several factors that can influence the induced sense of telepresence: the combination of sensory stimuli employed in the environment, the ways in which the participants are able to interact with the environment, and the unique characteristics of the individual experiencing the environment. From this point of view, we can say that telepresence is both a fonction of the technology involved and of the participant.

The combination of the sensory stimuli and the degree of participation of the subject determines the *vividness* and *interactivity* of the environment (Steuer, 1992). Both can offer a qualitative feedback. *Vividness,* represents the ability of a technological system to produce a sensorially rich mediated environment, while *interactivity*, represents the degree in which users of a medium can influence the form or content of the mediated environment. Other authors (Coelho, Tichon, Hine, Wallis and Riva, 2006) consider these factors as characteristics of the form and content of the media and of its control system.

Among the factors that influence the vividness of the experience, Steuer (1992) mentions the *sensory breadth*, which refers to the number of sensory dimensions simultaneously present (multisensory dimension) and the *sensory depth,* which refers

to the resolution within each of these perceptual channels (density dimension). The breadth function is the ability of a VR device to communicate information across multiple senses, while the depth function depends directly upon the amount of data encoded and the bandwidth of the transmission channel.

Together with vividness, *interactivity* is another dimension contributing to the quality of perception in a VR environment. Interactivity is an important concept in communication theory defining, most of the time, the type of relationship established between a sender and a receiver. In VR, interactivity defines the extent to which users can participate in modelling the form and content of a VR environment in real time. As Krämer (2008) puts it, the paradigm of the VR medium is not the specific relation between an Ego and an Alter, but the degree of relation to be establish between the ego and the symbolic elements proposed by the authors of the VR system.

Steuer (1992) notes three factors that contribute to a high degree of interactivity: *speed,* referring to the rate at which the input is assimilated into the mediated environment; *range,* referring to the number of possibilities for action at any given time, and *mapping,* referring to the ability of a system to map its controls to changes in the mediated environment in a natural and predictable manner. The range of interactivity is determined by the number of attributes of the mediated environment that can be manipulated, as well as by the amount of variation possible within each attributes.

Since the most frequent applications of VR are those of training[4] and manufacturing simulations[5], the interest of such installations concentrates on the amount of sensory dimensions and their density. The aim of these functional approaches of VR is the conception of a large number of possible situations which could be encounter in real conditions.

Likewise, we must not forget, as Grau (1999) pointed it out, that VR is not a recent phenomenon. The search for illusion using the most advanced technologic means available addressing the senses can be traced back to Antiquity. The concept of transposing the viewers into an illusionary visual space was enlarged and expended in the current VR-age to a multidimensional and syncretic vision. The sense of immersion can also be the result of a strong impression made via a new medium on the perceiver. Still, if VR cannot deliver a proper sensation of reality, it could mean that its use can help us become more deeply grounded in our own nature. The way in which some artists had used VR technology is a proof in this sense (Duguet, 1996; Hansen, 2004, Fleischmann, Strauss, 2008).

Jeffrey Shaw, for example, showed a particular interest for the possibilities offered by digital environments. His installation "The Legible City" (1988), is a three dimensional digital image whose virtual size was approximately six square

[4] One of the first applications of VR was that of flight simulation. Recently there is also a lot of interest in the development of technological modules for surgical and medical training.

[5] The manufacturing area of application includes simulating aerodynamic performances, like that of a car frame, or ergonomic studies.

kilometers. As the artist describes the work:

> "*In The Legible City the visitor is able to ride a stationary bicycle through a simulated representation of a city that is constituted by computer-generated three-dimensional letters that form words and sentences along the sides of the streets. Using the ground plans of actual cities - Manhattan, Amsterdam and Karlsruhe - the existing architecture of these cities is completely replaced by textual formations written and compiled by Dirk Groeneveld. Travelling through these cities of words is consequently a journey of reading; choosing the path one takes is a choice of texts as well as their spontaneous juxtapositions and conjunctions of meaning."*[6].

Diana Gromala's installation "Dancing with the Virtual Dervish: Virtual Bodies" (1996), is build with the help of digitalized images of the artist's body which were manipulated and animated to represent in a symbolic manner a continuous movement of decline and renewal (Rush, 1999). Using goggles and gloves, the participant can immerse in the artist's virtual body and can interact with it. He can also touch and change texts he encounters in the virtual world and he can dive into different organs of the virtual body, discovering a strange three-dimensional world.

Summing up, we can say that VR is an environment of experience based on the feeling of telepresence. Telepresence is the term that defines the specific feeling of being present in a virtual environment, that of a mediated presence and it is a function of both the technological system and the perceiver. Since the locus of the VR environment is the perceiver itself, the variability of the VR environment depends on the individual differences of those involved in the experience (physical, psychological or cultural). In the same time the qualities of the medium influence the perception of the VR environment. Therefore, a full, synthetic VR experience depends on the degree of convergence between the feeling of *telepresence* and the range of possibilities allowed by the virtual world.

Phantom sensations

Phantom sensations are a phenomenon that intrigued physicians, psychologists and philosophers for a long time (see Northoff, 2004; Reilly & Sirigu, 2008 for an overview).

A phantom sensation is usually defined as the feeling that an amputated limb is still attached to the body (Melzack, 1992b; Jensen, Krebs, Nielsen, & Rasmussen, 1983; Jensen, Krebs, Nielsen, & Rasmussen, 1984). However, the existence of phantom sensations does not necessarily presuppose the loss of a body part. Phantom sensations may also occur in the context of diseases of the central nervous system such as spinal

[6] See "The Legible City", Manhattan version (1989), Amsterdam version (1990), Karlsruhe version (1991). Computergraphic installation, Jeffrey Shaw in collaboration with Dirk Groeneveld. Collection of ZKM-Medienmuseum, Karlsruhe, Germany. For more details see the artist's website: http://www.jeffrey-shaw.net/html_main/frameset-writings.php. Accessed on 23 of September 2010.

paralysis (Ribbers, Mulder, & Rijken, 1989; BORS, 1951). Therefore, in this article phantom sensations shall be defined as the persisting awareness of non-existing or deafferented body-parts. Phantom pain will be considered as a special case of unpleasant and hurting phantom sensations. The exact incidence of phantom sensations remains unclear. Clinical studies reported conflicting numbers ranging form a few cases to almost all patients. These differences are probably related to the various aetiologies that cause amputation or other forms of deafferentiation (Casale, Alaa, Mallick, & Ring, 2009).

Several neurobiological models have been proposed to explain the occurrence of phantom sensations (Melzack, 1990; Melzack, 1992a; Giummarra, Gibson, Georgiou-Karistianis, & Bradshaw, 2007; Ramachandran & Rogers-Ramachandran, 2008; Ramachandran & Hirstein, 1998). In contrast, in this article we focus on the phenomenology of phantom sensations. Thus, the subjective experience of the patients (i.e. what it is like to have phantom sensations) shall be analysed in detail. To that end we identified three main properties of phantom sensations: the privacy, the reality, and the variability of phantom sensations.

The privacy of phantom sensations

First of all phantom sensations are private in a very basic way, because the patient is the only one who gets direct information about them. There seems to be nothing particular about this, since proprioceptive perception (i.e. the perception of the status of the body) is private in the same way: no one else is able to perceive my body in the way I perceive it. But there is still an important difference to phantom sensations. While information about the position or tension of my muscles is also accessible to other persons (for example, they may see the contraction of my muscles or the posture of my articulations, moreover, one may measure muscle tension or other physiological parameters with medical apparatuses) in the case of phantom sensations this is not possible because there is no limb that may be perceived by an external observer.

In order to clarify this difference Cronholm (1951) distinguishes between the perception of the body from within and the perception of the body from without. The perception from within is subjective in character and is therefore inaccessible to any objective observation. On the contrary, the perception from without is objective in character and therefore in principle accessible to any observer provided he is in possession of the appropriated means to do so. What Cronholm (1951) called the perception from within is in more general terms referred to as the first-person-perspective, whereas the perception from without is often referred to as third-person-perspective (Nagel, 1974; Northoff & Heinzel, 2006). Observations from the third-person-perspective are generally considered as objective and reproducible by different independent observers, such as in experimental settings in the domain of science

resulting in the collection of quantitative data. By contrast, the first-person-perspective is related to the experiential quality of subjective experience. Phantom sensations may be viewed as a first-person experience of a lost body part whereas no perception of the lost member from without (i.e. no third-person-perspective) exists. That means that phantom sensations are only experienced from a subjective perspective, so they have a pure subjective character. The subjective experience of phantom sensations shows a great inter-individual variance. However, some general features common to a majority of patients can be described. The most salient experience seems to be related to paresthesias, which are described by patients as "tingling like pins-and-needles" (Katz, 1993). Moreover the patients experience other qualities of sensations such as movement, temperature, posture, length and volume of the phantom. For non-painful phantom sensations Jensen et al. (1984) observed changes over time especially with regard to kinaesthetic sensation. The phenomena changed from a mainly proximal and distal distribution to a mainly distal localized sensation. Moreover, some patients noticed a shortening of the phantom limb. Phantom sensations may become most distressing if they are linked with phantom pain. Phantom pain may be experienced as a painful intensification of paresthesias, bouts of paroxysmal shooting pains that travel up and down the limb, or the phantom limb may be in an unnatural posture giving rise to cramps and pain (Katz, 1993). Often the patients suffer from a combination of different pain sensations (Jensen & Rasmussen, 1989).

Phantom sensations are not limited to the musculoskeletal system. Bors (1951) reported phantom sensations related to rectum, bladder and penis. For example, seven patients with rectum phantom sensations experienced a continuous distention although it was empty. One patient described the feeling of continuous defecation, another patient experienced sphincter movements.

Thus, patients with phantom sensations may experience a great variety of different non-painful and painful sensations that are all related to a part of the body that does not exist and therefore they remain entirely private to the experiencing person. This special kind of privacy extends to the sphere of communication. The unique character of phantom sensations makes it difficult, if not impossible, to communicate them. It is a general problem related to communicating feelings and emotions because they are related to the subjectivity of the experiencing person and linked to the first-person-perspective (Heinzel & Northoff, 2009). The way to understand the feelings of other people is therefore linked to our ability to take their point of view and try to experience the world from their perspective. It has to be noted that this kind of empathy is limited by our own experiences. If we experienced something similar in the past it seems easy to understand the feelings of other people. However, phantom sensations seem to be quite different from the range of normal experiences. How to explain to someone the feeling that a limb still exists, that is has a certain shape, and that it may be in varying positions although one cannot feel it, touch it etc. Therefore, it may be argued that ultimately only patients experiencing phantom sensations themselves may understand what it is like to have phantom sensations.

The reality of phantom sensations

Maybe the most extraordinary property of phantom sensations is their reality to the patients. The above described experiences of phantom sensations are often characterised by highly vivid sensory perceptions combined with a precise awareness of the location of the phantom limb. These experiences induce in several patients a strong feeling of reality of their phantom limbs. These feelings are so strong that a patient may try to step off a bed onto a phantom foot or lift a cup with a phantom hand (Melzack, 1992b). Moreover, the patients might be painfully reminded of the presence of the phantom limbs if they are combined with phantom pain. Melzack (1992b) therefore described phantom sensations of a limb as even *more* substantial than an actual limb.

The way Melzack stresses the reality of phantom sensations shows, that they must be more than neutral information about form, length or position of the phantom limb involved. This experience of reality is naturally not the same for all the patients. Nevertheless it is an important property of phantom sensations. The following case of phantom sensations of a finger, described by Sacks (1985), may illustrate it more concretely. The patient is a sailor who accidently cut off his right index finger. Even forty years after his accident he was still complaining about intensive phantom sensations of an extended finger. Especially, when he performed movements of his right hand towards his face he could not help being afraid to injure his eye with his phantom index finger. The patient knew perfectly well that this was impossible, but he described the feeling as irresistible.

The patient shows that the phantom sensations are experienced as being much more real than any normal sensation perceived by the sense organs. Although the sailor is able to understand that it is impossible to be hurt by a phantom finger, every time when he approaches his hand to his face, he fears to poke himself in the eye. The situation stands in stark contrast to conventional illusions. An optical illusion for example deceives only as long as one believes in the correctness of the perception. When one recognises the illusion as an illusion, it will no longer be taken for real. In contrast the phantom sensations are not experienced as neutral information or as a judgement, which may be true or false. The experience itself seems so immediately real, that the patient does not consider such questions. Instead of doubting the reality of their phantom sensations, they doubt the contradicting facts. An extreme example of this shows an excerpt from the case study of Halligan et al. (1993) of a patient with a supernumerary phantom limb:

> *"A 65 years old patient describes after a haematoma within the right basal ganglia a supernumerary phantom limb. As one can see in the interview, he gives up fundamental principles of mathematics and of daily life, to be able to hold his belief in the reality of his phantom. (P: patient, E: examiner)*

E: How many arms do people usually have?
P: Two.
E: And if someone lost an arm, they would have?
P: Just the one.
E: How many arms do you have?
P: Three.
E: How did that happen?
P: I had one amputated.
E: If you have two arms and one was amputated, how many arms would you have?
P: Two ... or three. I know it's a nonsense."

In this interview two convictions of the patient can be distinguished, which are jointed by a specific perspective. In the perspective of the third person (i.e. questioning about people in general), which is the objective perspective, the patient is able to follow the questions of the interviewer in a logically stringent way. As soon as the perspective changes, it seems to be impossible for him to relate the admitted facts to himself. That means that the patient is unable to apply the knowledge to experiences related to his own person and his own body. This is because his subjective experiences of a supernumerary phantom limb are contradicting his objective knowledge. Thus, these experiences are a kind of knowledge or information linked with his specific subjective perspective. Nagel (1974) called such knowledge: „facts of experience - facts about what it is like for the experiencing organism". Such experiences seem to have a much stronger impact on patients' self-consciousness than any objective facts about the absence or presence of a limb. The described conviction shown by the patients concerning the reality of their phantom limbs, seem to be pre-reflexive, so that objective logical reasoning cannot question them.

The variability of phantom sensations

There are many different factors, which may influence phantom sensations. Generally they can be divided into physical and psychological factors. Clinical studies on patients with phantom sensations showed that various physical stimuli may influence phantom sensations (Carlen, Wall, Nadvorna, & Steinbach, 1978). These physical stimuli comprise manipulations of the stump such as reoperation or more subtle manipulations such as touching, beating, scratching or the wearing of prostheses. Even changes in weather may influence phantom sensations, as demonstrated by Riddoch (1941). He described the case of a patient who gained reputation as a local weather prophet.

"...before a spell of frost his toes felt crushed as if by a tight shoe. He also experienced a sensation of coldness in the outer edge of his foot, such as might occur if the boot were split. When the frost became well established, these sensations disappeared but, in a long frost, they might persist for several days. They temporarily diminished or disappeared if he toasted his leg in front of the fire. Again, before rain he had the

sensation as if his foot and toes were incompletely immersed in water which was being gently whirled round. Windy weather evoked the same sensations as frost, except that his phantom toes then felt separated from one another. He also claimed to be able to foretell any change in the weather by a tendency for his toes to curl down."

The influences of psychological factors on phantom sensations are equally manifold. Riddoch (1941) described a patient, who lost his phantom sensation while concentrating deeply on other things. Thus, he was unaware of his phantom sensation when his mind was fully occupied. Schilder (1950) showed that hypnosis may influence phantom sensations and Sherman et al. (1979) found similar results by studying the effects of relaxation on phantom sensations. Moreover, emotional factors may influence phantom sensations. Henderson and Smyth (1948) presented the following examples: "A sudden fright, for example, from a loud noise, is sometimes associated with a momentary sensation of the phantom." – "Emotions such as anger or excitement make the patient forget the phantom." The vividness of such phantom experiences induced or amplified by emotional factors is demonstrated by two other patients. The first patient reports his feelings while talking about an accident of his wife: "... goose bumps and cold shivering down the phantom [leg]. It went through me. Everything emotional will get you that." The other patient points out: "It's like everything I feel goes there - the good and the bad." (Katz, 1993).

Interestingly, phantom sensations may also be influenced by VR. Based on this observation new approaches to treat phantom pain were developed. A first attempt consisted in a mirror box that projected the normal hand of the patient on the phantom limb. Patients suffering from cramps in the phantom limb were able to relax their phantom by relaxing the reflected normal hand (Ramachandran, Rogers-Ramachandran, & Cobb, 1995; Ramachandran & Rogers-Ramachandran, 1996). Cole et al. (2009) presented a more technically sophisticated variation of this method. They recorded motion data directly from a patient's stump and then transformed it into goal directed virtual action enacted by an avatar in a VR environment. Thus, it appears that the best way to treat phantom pain is not to negate or dismiss its reality of the phantom limb, but to accept this reality and to help the patient to use it for his benefit.

Summing up, phantom sensations may change their experiential qualities if they are subjected to different kinds of physical and psychological influences. These influences may be considered as internal if they are originated in one's own body or they may be considered external if their cause lies outside one's body.

Phantom sensations and virtual reality

The analysis demonstrated that the phenomenological features of phantom sensations share some of the properties of VR. They are both subjective experiences and they are both related to a non-physical content. The feeling they provoke can be subject to variability according to diverse factors: in the case of VR - the individual

differences of those experiencing the VR environment, as well as the medium's content and form; in the case of phantom sensations - physical and psychological influences.

However, in contrast to technologically induced VR there is a fundamental difference in phantom sensations. Whereas VR in general is characterised in terms of telepresence, phantom sensations may be characterised by presence or even by *superpresence*. The phenomenological analysis underlined the extraordinary feeling of reality that usually accompanies phantom sensations. The patients don't question their experiences as it is the case with VR. The presence of a phantom sensation is of such intuitively strong evidence that no doubt seems to appear. In some cases, it seems even impossible to allow questioning (as demonstrated in the case of the patient with the supernumerary phantom arm). Thus, the feeling of reality goes far beyond simple illusions and may therefore be characterised as superpresence.

How can this superpresence be explained? The fundamental difference in phenomenological experience between VR and phantom sensations can be traced back to the mechanism of their origination. VR is mediated by digital devices. These devices cause - via the process of mediation - a distance between the experiencing subject and the experienced environment. By contrast, phantom sensations are not mediated by any artificial devices. Phantom sensations are a creation of the brain itself. Therefore, the patients appear to experience not distance, but presence or even superpresence. It may be argued that a certain critical distance with regard to phantom sensations will develop because information from other senses (e.g. not seeing the phantom) and reliable information about a realised amputation contradicts the phantom sensation. Interestingly, it seems that phantom sensations are not influenced by logical thinking or sensory information. Although, there are many reports about how phantom sensations change their experiential qualities due to emotionally salient experiences, no such changes are reported due to logical reasoning. In this sense, phantom sensations are similar to emotions and feelings.

The knowledge of the scientific explanation that phantom sensations are created by the brain does not change the way they are experienced including their feeling of reality. This discrepancy leads back to a fundamental property of the brain or to what has been described as "autoepistemic limitation" (Northoff, 2004). The brain receives neuronal input from the external world as well as from the body via sense organs. However, the brain does not get any information about its own state. Therefore, the brain itself, although being the centre for the information processing, remains hidden from itself. Consequently, in contrast to other organs, the brain is not part of the so-called phenomenological body schema (Melzack, 1989; Melzack, 1992b). This body schema is a representation of one's own body as perceived in first-person-perspective. Thus, the brain is not part of our phenomenological perception of the world. We feel to have arms, legs, a face, and so on, but we do not feel that we have a brain. In this sense we may speak of a headache or aching legs, but there is no possible "brainache".

Thus, the brain is able to recognise almost everything except itself[7]. It is completely unable to recognise itself as the origin of its feelings and therefore, also unable to recognise itself as the origin of phantom sensations. The epistemological limitation of the brain appears insurmountable. Therefore, phantom sensations may be considered as the perfect VR. The way the brain creates this VR is so closely linked to the way the brain represents the external world and one's own body that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other.

Conclusions

It has been demonstrated that phantom sensations share some features of artificially induced virtual realities. However, in contrast to artificially induced virtual realities, phantom sensations are linked to the strong feeling of their reality. Therefore, we have suggested characterising the subjective experience of phantom sensations by superpresence, as opposed to the technologically induced virtual realities characterised by telepresence. We have also suggested that this phenomenological difference is related to the fact that phantom sensations represent a case of unmediated virtual reality. This unmediated VR is essentially different from any technologically induced VR because it originates from the epistemic limitations of the brain itself. It remains an open question if future technologic developments will permit direct interaction with the neural processing of the brain. Such technologies may have the potential to create virtual realities with phenomenological properties comparable to those of phantom limbs. If such experiences are desirable is a different question with complex ethical implications. It has to be noted that one of the central lessons learned from phantom pain is that it is extremely difficult to eliminate.

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[7] This formulation is not meant to imply mind-brain identity theories. It relies on the weaker assumption that in man, the brain is considered a necessary condition for perception and cognition.

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TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC EXPERIMENTATION IN SPACE

JOSHUA HARLE*

ABSTRACT. This paper examines the use of Augmented Reality technology as a site of both a playful and creative form, and an analytical, ordering form of experimentation in space. It frames these contrasting modes of experimentation with an analysis of de Certeau's *tactical* and *strategic* power as they relate to spatial practices.[1]

The open nature of social media technology vastly extends de Certeau's understanding of spatial practices as "phatic" (essentially communicative). However, a *strategic* reading sees the documentation and digitization of elements of the world as a form of autographic surveillance, realizing the *enframing* action that Heidegger identified as fundamental to technology.[2]

Key words: Augmented Reality, Mediated Reality, Phenomenology, technology, ubiquitous computing, Space, Global Positioning Systems, Spatiality, enframing, surveillance, poetics, virtual, spatial practices, the everyday

Introduction

This research forms part of the wider investigation of the Real-Time Porosity Lab, directed by Professor Richard Goodwin of the College of Fine Arts, and Russell Lowe of the Faculty of the Built Environment, University of New South Wales. The lab investigates the ambiguous boundary between public and private spaces of the urban environment, and how these spatial politics are constituted through actual usage.

The paper extends the Real-Time Porosity Lab's acknowledgment that pedestrian practices form an important part of the description of an urban space, adopting Michel de Certeau's concept of "space as practiced place" to give a richer account of spatial practice in socially constituting space.

* *School of Design COFA / Faculty of the Built Environment UNSW. Email: josh.harle@gmail.com*

1 De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1988)

2 Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977)

Location-aware technology such as Augmented Reality (AR) introduces a new field of spatial practice that is becoming progressively more intertwined with everyday life. As a complementary technology to the vast body of social media applications, AR allows the documentation and sharing of socio-geographic information with unprecedented ease. For example, using YouTube or Flickr, a resistant spatial practice such as urban skating can be documented and used to present a contradiction to the mandated use of the space.[3] The open nature of social media technology vastly extends de Certeau's understanding of spatial practices as phatic; socially communicative.

This research investigates this new channel of spatial communication, and how its use as a spatial practice both documents and creates new territory. It will explore a close reading of Michel de Certeau's model of *strategic* and *tactical* spatial practice, identifying that the *strategic* and *tactical* engagement with space each involve a particular form of experimentality; one scientific and the other characterized as playful and creative. Furthermore, the emerging use of Augmented Reality – a technology that superimposes computer-generated information over a view of the world – will form a study for these forms of experimentation. Finally, this article looks towards Deleuze and Guattari's model of the *concept* to inform the *tactical* form experimentation in AR.

Augmented reality

Augmented Reality (AR) is an emerging field of technology that provides computer-mediated views of the world, allowing generated content to be superimposed over real-life, real-time video. In contrast to Virtual Reality, which attempts to create an entirely simulated reality, AR is a component technology of what Lev Manovich describes as "Augmented Space"[4], and Anne Galloway calls a "Mixed-Reality environment"[5], which offers an augmentation of the real world.

AR is closely aligned to Ubiquitous Computing; Manovich describes it as the "overlaying of dynamic and context-specific information over the visual field of a user"[6], and places it alongside both Ubiquitous Computing and Wireless Location Services in the field of Augmented Space, while Galloway sees Ubiquitous Computing as the overarching paradigm, under which mixed-reality environments fall. In Galloway's more open definition, AR "attempts to overlay physical objects with virtual objects in real-time and allows people to experience the virtual as if it were real".[7]

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3 Brandt, W. (2009). Crime is Awesome: Skateboarding and the Law. First International Crime, Media & Popular Culture Studies Conference.

4 Manovich, L. (2006). "The poetics of augmented space: learning from Prada." Visual Communication 5(2): 4.

5 Galloway, A. (2004). "Intimations of everyday life: Ubiquitous computing and the city." Cultural Studies 18(2): 390.

6 Manovich, L. (2006). "The poetics of augmented space: learning from Prada." Visual Communication 5(2): 3.

7 Galloway, A. (2004). "Intimations of everyday life: Ubiquitous computing and the city." Cultural Studies 18(2): 390.

AR sits within a set of computer-mediated social and spatial practices that are steadily becoming an invisible part of everyday life. Since mid-way through 2009, with the introduction of a phone with both GPS and digital compass features, Apple has sold more than fifty-four million (54,000,000) mobile phones equipped to run AR applications.[8] Wireless Location and Context-Specific services (such as Google Maps) are now taken for granted as a tool for navigating unknown streets.

The boundaries between social media, AR, and complementary services and tools are difficult to discern. For example Twitter, a micro-blogging service that as of April 2010 was publishing fifty-five million messages a day "and climbing"[9], has recently added the ability to geographically tag each message. The consequence is that these messages can now be pulled into AR and visualized *in situ,* and Twitter has become a supporting technology.

A popular application of AR technology runs on the Apple iPhone and displays a constellation of Points-Of-Interest (POI) over the view from the phone's camera. As the user moves around, the view is updated using the phone's GPS and digital compass, so that the points appear to hover in real space at their associated locations. (*Fig. 1*)

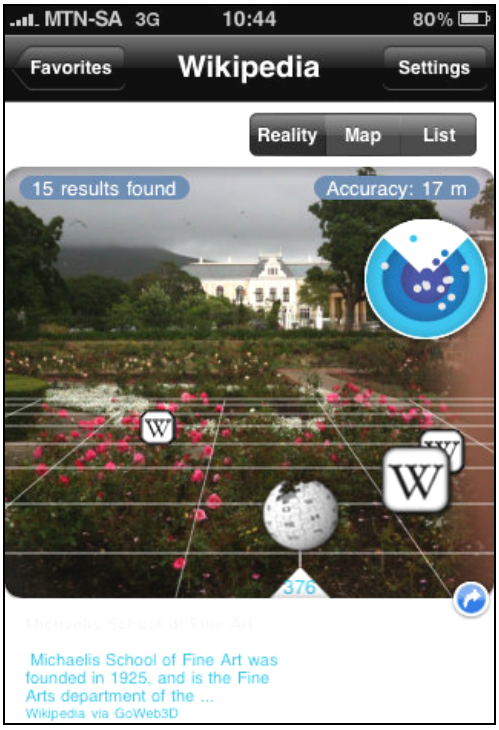

Fig. 1 – A typical view within an AR application. Video from the phone's camera is overlaid with points of interest. These points have associated information which can be viewed through user interaction.

[8] Both the iPhone 3GS and the iPhone 4 provide GPS, digital compass, and ample processing power.
[9] Twitter Blog: Tweet Preservation. (2010) [cited 2010 22nd April];
Available from: http://blog.twitter.com/2010/04/tweet-preservation.html.

Commonly, AR applications allow the creation and sharing of users' own POIs. This can include meta-information about the point such as ratings, reviews, and keywords. Content such as images and video can also be "tagged" with the latitude and longitude of the location at which it was captured, and visualized using AR applications.

The AR application "Nike True City" maps out interesting spots of the city provided by worthy counter-cultural celebrities, and allows users to add and share their own locations. As you walk through the streets you can hold your phone up and see an overlaid cloud of points which hovers around you. The tag-line of the App is "Making the hidden visible".

Similarly, the social AR game FourSquare allows users to "check-in" at pre-defined locations in the world, leave reviews, and share their location with their friends. These check-ins can optionally be posted on their Twitter or Facebook accounts. FourSquare currently has 2.6 million active users.

De Certeau - Approaches to space

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau recognizes a dominant model of place put forward by those in positions of power, but describe a parallel everyday engagement with space that resists it. He emphasizes the inadequacy and restrictiveness of abstract representations of place as administered by authority (land owners, city planners, architects), and exposes the everyday lived experience of space which is enacted beyond it. This definition of place de Certeau identifies as similar to Merleau-Ponty's "geometrical" space of "homogeneous and isotropic spatiality", in contrast to an "anthropological", phenomenological space.[10] According to this definition, space is socially constituted; streets can be sinister or inviting not based on a label on a map, but on others' practice of the space, i.e. "space is practiced place".[11]

The abstract conception of place is held by those with established, demarcated territory, who attempt to control, survey, and order it. He calls this action *strategic*. De Certeau's emphasis on surveillance follows Foucault's analysis of the *panopticon* as a metaphor for state power. He states:

> [Strategy] postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets of threats ([...] enemies, […] objects of research, etc.) can be managed. [T]he eye can transform foreign forces into objects that can be observed and measured, and thus control and "include" them within its scope of vision.[12]

De Certeau's definition of the domination and ordering of *strategic* territory finds similar articulation in Henri Lefebvre's *conceived* space/*representations of* space as Chris Chester explains: "For Lefebvre, conceived space is always the

[10] Certeau, M. d. (2002). The practice of everyday life. , University of California Press. 117.
[11] Ibid., 292.
[12] Ibid., 36.

dominant and dominating form of space. The complex models created by architects and planner have direct application in imposing relationships of surveillance and domination."[13]

The Tactical

In contrast to the *strategic* is the *tactical*; the everyday poaching of space as we move through the city, working subtly and intuitively against the logic of the *strategic* model, resisting the mandated official line without necessarily countering it.

De Certeau compares the *strategic "*place*"* to a language (and its rules and syntax), and the *tactical* spatial practice to an enunciation of that language – i.e. *tactics* and *strategies* are not opposites. While the *strategic*, "proper" sense of place attempts to dominate our understanding of space, the space is actualized through its *tactical* use, for example in the walker's decision to respect conventions, or interdictions such as "Keep out" signs. The *strategic* representation loses its responsiveness and insight as it becomes distanced from the actual context of experiences. The *strategic* attempt to survey the "bigger picture" invariably creates this distance by cleaving out anything outside of its "scope".

One area beyond its scope is the mythic/affective relationship to space. Mechanistic analysis of people in ordered places are unable to account for or capture the "Psychogeographical" - the emotionally invested, sensual engagement with the city that is so well evoked in Film Noir, and emphasized through techniques such as the *derivé*.[14] The personal idiosyncrasies of a walker's path from A to B form a sort of spatial poetry; utilizing a standard vocabulary, but in an way that is evocative beyond its representable meaning:

> [Tacticians] trace "indeterminate trajectories" that are apparently meaningless, since they do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move. They are sentences that remain unpredictable within the space ordered by the organizing techniques of systems. Although they use as their material the vocabularies of established languages (those of television, newspaper, the supermarket or city planning), although they remain within the framework of prescribed syntaxes (the temporal modes of schedules, paradigmatic organizations of places, etc.), these "traverses" remain heterogenous to the systems they infiltrate and in which they sketch out the guileful ruses of different interests and desires.[15]

An illustration of how "lived reality" is lost-in-translation into abstract representations (maps, statistics, concepts such as the City) would be to imagine poems summed up literally: "A man walks alone around the hills, then sees some

[13] Chester, C. (2009). Converging mediations of space in computer games and spatial navigation systems. The Sixth Australasian Conference on Interactive Entertainment (IE2009). Sydney, Australia.

[14] This "lived" engagement with the city was explored by the politio-art group Situationists International. Psychogeography consisted of a collection of techniques - such as the derivé, or "drift" – to challenge the assumed dominance of a functional model of the city.

[15] Certeau, M. d. (2002). The practice of everyday life. , University of California Press. 35.

flowers". The context of any event – crucial to understanding it in its specificity – is reduced away in a *strategic* view. De Certeau states:

> Indeed, this "representation" is insufficient, [because] time and movement are reduced to [something] read in a single movement. However useful this "flattening out" may be, it transforms the temporal articulation of places into a spatial sequence of points. […] It is thus a mark in place of acts, a relic in place of performances: it is only their remainder, the sign of their erasure. Such a projection postulates that it is possible to take the one (the mark) for the other (operations articulated on occasions).[16]

These two modes of spatial engagement can be understood as involving two very different forms of experimentation; the one a Scientific experimentation to isolate and analyse, and the other an exploratory, playful experimentation with the concepts we understand the world by. These forms of experimentation will be now be explored.

Scientific Experimentation

In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger identifies the essence of both technology and modern science as *enframing*; a drive to create standing-reserves, ready to be used.[17] For example, through technology a hydroelectric dam creates a standing-reserve of electricity from the river, and science creates a standing-reserve of ordered knowledge from the uncertain world.

For de Certeau the territory of Science, with its "reconnaissance missions […] exploring the frontier regions and linking the light to the darkness", is thoroughly *strategic:* "Science is strategic in bringing under the territory of analysis".[18]

The *strategic* is by definition spatially bounded in territory, and deals with the now: models that are supposed to capture how things are in the present and create a history and archive made up of discrete parts, "read in a single movement". These *enframed* elements of the world isolate variables from their context, time, etc; the results of attempting to gather "objective" data that can build a *strategic* knowledge system.

Scientific experimentation produces propositions, such as the City, which "like a proper name, thus provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties".[19]

Play

In contrast, the *tactical* occurs continuously as a selective appropriation and intermingling of various conceptual models and emotional landscapes. I would characterize this as play, in the sense that it operates outside of a productive outcome;

[16] Certeau, M. d. (2002). The practice of everyday life. , University of California Press. 35.
[17] Heidegger, M. (1977). The question concerning technology, and other essays. New York, Harper & Row. 182.
[18] Certeau, M. d. (2002). The practice of everyday life. , University of California Press. 35.
[19] Certeau, M. d. (2002). The practice of everyday life. , University of California Press. 94.

is exploratory and experimental; and is implicitly motivated - it is caught up in one's emotional-investment with the world; the "different interests and desires" that de Certeau speaks of.

The constant deterritorializing and reterritorializing of Play (conceptual as a pulling into one's own context, and literally in the sense that the territory and its proper meaning is not one's own) is a creative process that fits Deleuze and Guatarri's idea of *becoming,* which in contrast to a static model, is a dynamic conception of processes in continual transition.

> What history grasps in an event is the way it's actualized in particular circumstances; the event's becoming is beyond the scope of history. [...] Becoming isn't part of history; history amounts only to the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to 'become,' that is, to create something new.[20]

For example Graffiti, seemingly a set of conflicting territorial zoning, is transitory poaching of contended spaces (a constant renegotiation); the artwork evocative of an emotional element of the spaces' socio-psycho constitution.

Likewise, urban skating introduced an incarnation of surfing: experimenting and exploring by recombining models of action and location with elements of imaginative metaphor and evoking a model of the city as concrete waves.[21]

The use of Augmented Reality

The aim of my research is to encourage a critical, *tactical* renegotiation of spatial politics using Augmented Reality. AR tools on location-aware, networked devices seem like the ideal way to disseminate alternative usages of space. After all, they offer an ability to create interventions without risk or threat of force:

> Augmented reality superimposes virtual properties on an object, which in effect does not change the actual object, but rather how we perceive or experience it. [...]The important difference [here] lies in the proprietary rights to the information […] in an augmented reality system the perceiver is in control of the information.[22]

This draws out a weakness with Manovich's framing of the phenomenological question of Augmented Space, seen as a familiar conceptual issue of negotiating data-layering in a privileged realm of the architect. AR is coming quietly into everyday life as a successful aspect of Ubiquitous Computing. It is the peer-to-peer nature of this communication that seems to challenge monolithic structures of knowledge and suggests a meaning-giving system based on democratic participation. AR gives the ability to visualize at a location the previously invisible spatial counter-narratives. As Galloway suggests:

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[20] Deleuze, G. (1995). *Negotiations*, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 170-171.
[21] Borden, I. (2001). *Skateboarding, space and the city: architecture and the body*, Berg Publishers.
[22] Galloway, A. (2004). "Intimations of everyday life: Ubiquitous computing and the city." *Cultural Studies* 18(2): 390.

> Where ubiquitous technologies might fail is if they prevent or inhibit the ability of a person to experience the city on his own terms; if they start from a premise of what the city *is rather* than allowing it to emerge through the movements of its people. The ability for users to comment on a map, to delete meaningless places, add meaningful places, and to share those comments and places with others, may provide means of putting practices of spatialization and temporalization in the hands of users – allowing them to manipulate, or shape, their city – instead of limiting the potential of everyday life and controlling the flow through abstracted technological objects and models of information.[23]

However, experiencing space mediated through abstracted representations (such as an on-phone map) places the traveler in a *strategic* viewpoint, appealing to their "scopic and gnostic drive". Focus on reductive visual cues pulls us away from perceived space, into the conceived space of abstract representation.[24]

At the same time, *enframing* occurs in the use of technology in creating a territory of abstracted and ordered representations of spatial practice. AR and the wider field of social media can be seen as creating a standing-reserve out of the social and spatial elements of our lives; pulling sensual aspects of the city experience into a mere sign of its reduction.

Thus not only the mode of engaging with AR – top down maps, webs of captured and solidified events – is *strategic*, but the drive to document in this way, pulling out any mystery and narrative into pure data. The standing-reserve of the *strategic* system is as de Certeau describes: "analytically distributed over a space whose essence (even inside the computer) is to be a readable artefact, an object open from end to end to the survey of an immobile eye."[25] The very danger Galloway is aware of seems to be captured in her suggested remedy; to "'write against', totalizing concepts of the city"[26].

The *Nike True City* application demonstrates *enframing* through colonizing and branding your personal city, pulling the emotional backdrops to your life into a readable, searchable list of hot-spots. Individuals documenting their city become complicit in an extension of surveillance, expanding the ordering of information into what would have been *tactical* and previously hidden. Manovich acknowledges this element of surveillance in Augmented Space:

> It [...] makes sense to conceptually connect the surveillance/monitoring of physical *space* and its dwellers, and the augmentation of this space with additional data, because technologicaly [sic] these two applications are in a symbiotic relationship. […] Thus, *augmented space is also monitored* space.[27]

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[23] Ibid., 403

[24] Pallasmaa, J. (2008). The eyes of the skin : architecture and the senses. Chichester Hoboken, NJ, Wiley-Academy; John Wiley & Sons.

[25] Certeau, M. d. (2002). *The practice of everyday life*, University of California Press. 199.

[26] Galloway, A. (2004). "Intimations of everyday life: Ubiquitous computing and the city." *Cultural Studies* 18(2): 394.

[27] Their emphasis. Manovich, L. (2006). "The poetics of augmented space." *Visual Communication* 5(2): 8.

Rob Coley and Dean Lockwood describe the new paradigm of "cloud commons" as the building of a monolithic, shared knowledge system "essentially defined by remote storage of and access to all information, away from our own computers or access devices, as part of a huge archival system."[28] They identify YouTube, Flickr, and Spotify as early examples of cloud computing, to which I would add Facebook and nascent AR services. Both social media and AR applications operate (at least in part) within this paradigm to build an archive of social connections (uploading and tagging geo-tagged images, documenting friends and relations)[29] and abstracted keywords and ratings; readable information about places. Cloud commons extends the internalization of surveillance posited by Foucault via the *panopticon*,[30] into an internalization of the *panopticon* itself through the persona of the experimental scientist.

However the danger to a *tactical* spatial practice is not in the surveillance itself, but in the desire to build-up a *strategic*, totalizing archive of space rather than engage in playful exploration. Smartphone-based map tools and AR applications utilize the familiar listing, searching and ordering mechanisms for navigating through a representation of space that allow us to "direct and optimize"[31] our experiences, like the productive processes they were originally created to support.

Galloway's examination of *Amble Time* demonstrates this well. *Amble Time* is an AR project by Media Lab Europe's Everyday Learning research group which "adds an element of time to a PDA-based tourist map". When given a time-frame, *Amble Time* creates a bubble on the map displaying where is reachable at your average walking speed, in that time. "[A]s your position changes and time ticks by, the bubble slowly shrinks and morphs until eventually it highlights the shortest path to your destination."[32] Already infamous for reducing a city to a set of discrete "must-see" locations, this extended tourist map adds a mechanism to optimize our time and effort. It's hard to imagine anything further from a spatial practice of *derivé* than this.

The hugely popular AR game FourSquare realizes Galloway's fear that a commercialized version of *Amble Time* could "be used to indirectly domesticate consumers by leading them to commodified experiences"[33]. The nodes of interaction within geometrical space that FourSquare users operate within – everywhere else in the world being a void defined by distance from these nodes – are shops, restaurants, cafes, and venues. Tie-ins occur to give those who check-in regularly at particular venues discounts on those venues' products.

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[28] Coley, R. and D. Lockwood (2010). Cloud Games: Reinventing Invention-Power. *International conference: The Experimental Society*. Lancaster University, UK.

[29] Galloway warns of social media allowing "ephemeral or transitory activities may be captured, stored and redistributed in perpetuity". Galloway, A. (2004). "Intimations of everyday life: Ubiquitous computing and the city." *Cultural Studies* 18(2): 389.

[30] Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline & Punish*, Random House of Canada.

[31] David, E. (2008). *Archive Fever,* Arthur No. 30.

[32] Galloway, A. (2004). "Intimations of everyday life: Ubiquitous computing and the city." *Cultural Studies* 18(2): 392.

[33] Ibid.

Final thoughts

Competing *strategies* do not radically challenge conceptions of space, as they compete in a field of calculated worth. Instead, for every conflicting answer the question becomes more rigidly, implicitly accepted, as in the case of "Do you still beat your wife?" or "Would you give up freedom for security?". What is implicitly accepted is an erasure of the psychological landscape of the city, and the lived experience within it, in favor of an overarching *strategic* logic. Similarly, the documentation of *tactical* spatial practices as part of a cloud-commons archival process is *strategic*.

In *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari critique communication, saying that it always comes too early or too late to the *concept*.[34] This challenge to the privileging of communication, deals with now-readable spatial practices, suggesting it is only productive to deterritorialize and reterritorialize, i.e. create new concepts rather than communicate the old.

> [T]he most shameful moment came when computer science, marketing, design, and advertising, all the disciplines of communication, seize hold of the word *concept* itself and said: "This is our concern, we are the creative ones, we are the *ideas men!* We are the friends of the concept, we put it in our computers!" […] [But] as fragmentary totalities, concepts are not even the pieces of a puzzle, for their irregular contours do not correspond to each other. There is no reason why concepts should cohere. [...T]hey all resonate rather than cohere or correspond with each other.[35]

Approaching AR as a tool for creating new *concepts* requires a design that does not order on abstracted metadata, but allows the affective resonance of ideas to be discovered. Practitioners of AR systems must resist the urge to utilize the surveying and inventory-creating aspect of the technology, if they want to allow for the possibility of the *becoming-space*. The interactions should be like a palimpsest; breaking down the model of objective observer and working with the evocative and non-literal.

The use of playful experimentation as a tool for creating new concepts – reimagining and remapping the City – was a practice of the Situationist International (SI). SI were strongly focused on challenging a dominant narrative by encouraging "play, freedom and critical thinking"[36]. In particular, they sought to counter what they called the "capitalist degradation of the life of people" – something that can be equated to the *enframing* of space into places for specific productive activities such as shopping, eating, or even drinking – by creating an alternative through Psychogeography:

> A whole toy box full of playful, inventive [tactics] for exploring cities...just about anything that takes pedestrians off their predictable paths and jolts them into a new awareness of the urban landscape.[37]

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[34] Deleuze, G. and F. Guattari (1994). *What is philosophy?* New York, Columbia University Press.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Simon Sadler (1998). *The Situationist City*. The MIT Press.
[37] Merlin Coverley (2006). *Psychogeography*. Pocket Essentials.

Guy Debord's Psychogeographical maps presented the city via the use of s*ynecdoche* and *asyndeton,* [38] described by de Certeau as "the figures of these movements [that] characterise both a 'symbolic order of the unconscious' and 'certain typical processes of subjectivity manifested in discourse"[39]. (*Fig. 2*) While AR systems using GPS necessarily operate on the model of geometrical "homogeneous and isotropic spatiality" of de Certeau's "place", Gemma San Cornelio identifies a move in locative media to similarly break Euclidean geometry, sharing Psychogeography's approach through "art practices located in 'mapping' […] that would outweigh the physical representation of the territory to express, criticize, or encourage different aspects of urban life."[40]

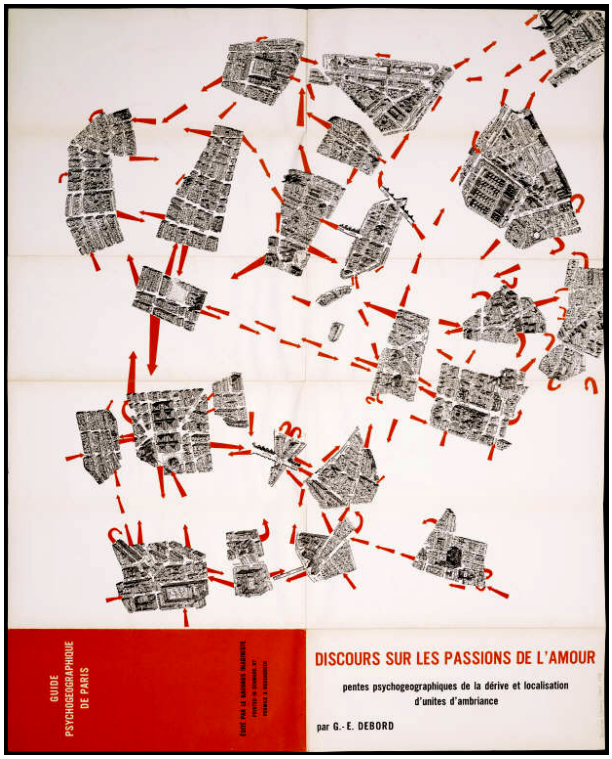

Fig. 2 – An example of a Psychogeographic "map". Debord, G., (1957) *Guide psychogeographique de Paris: Discours sur les passions de l'amour,* The Imaginist Bauhaus, Denmark; reproduced in color in Roberto Ohrt, (1990). *Phantom Avantgarde: Eine Geschicte der Situationistischen Internationale und der Modernen Kunst,* Galerie Van de Loo/Nautilus, Hamburg.

[38] Synecdoche: using a word in a sense which is part of another meaning of the same word. Asyndeton: the suppression of linking words such as conjunctions and adverbs.
[39] Certeau, M. d. (2002). *The practice of everyday life*, University of California Press.
[40] Cornelio, S. (2008). "Nodo" Locative media y práctica artística: exploraciones sobre el terreno"."*Artnodes*(8). *Google translation.*

These *tactics* must operate within the everyday itself. Coley and Lockwood describe a resistance to cloud commons: “our inventive [tactics] should be based around fabulation: the falsification of truths and the disruption of conventional narratives”. Playing with poetic representation along the lines of this falsification can be seen within social media as a natural element of *tactical* spatial practice; for example when someone is tagged in a photo to show a desire for their presence or to playfully associate them with an activity or object. I would suggest that, maintaining de Certeau's optimistic positing of creative consumption, the *tactical* practices occurring in social media will find their way into a quotidian use of Augmented Reality.

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DEUX TYPES D'EXPLICITATION TELEVISUELLE : LA TELEVISION A L'ERE DE CEAUSESCU ET LA TELEVISION A L'ERE DIGITALE[*]

ALEXANDRU MATEI[**]

ABSTRACT. ***Two Types of Televisual „Explicitation": the Television During the Ceauşescu's Presidency and in the Digital Era.*** We deals in this paper with a phenomenological approach – whose central concept is "explicitation", as defined by Peter Sloterdijk – of two ages of television. According to this classification, there are two different political regimes: the television of "scarcity" inside a totalitarian political regime, illustrated by the Romanian National Television during Ceausescu's presidency, on the one hand, and the television of "abundance" of nowadays, in a free capitalist democracy. The latter is seen first as a technological means of making and spreading images and secondly, via one episode of the well-known series *Dr. House*, as fiction-maker able to put into question the value of precisely the two kind of political regimes mentioned above: dictatorship and capitalist democracy.

Keywords: History of television, explicitation, Romanian Television, Peter Sloterdijk, Dr. House

Notre étude n'est pas une enquête, mais plutôt une proposition d'approche et de découpage thématique. Nous partons du partage de l'histoire de la télévision en trois âges, de pénurie, de croissance et d'abondance, dont nous allons éliminer le second que nous considérons plutôt une solution de continuité entre le premier et le troisième. Ce partage sera illustré par deux âges de la télévision. L'âge précaire s'illustre par la télévision roumaine (nationale) en tant que créatrice de communautés de sensibilité à l'époque totalitaire – ce qui nous amènera à présupposer l'exercice d'une politique de la télévision, surtout dans le rapport qu'elle s'ingénie à établir entre le spectateur et les images diffusées comme pour créer un canon visuel qui rend compte

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[**] *Faculté de Lettres de l'Université Spiru Haret de Bucarest, str. Ion Ghica, nr. 13, sector 3, Bucureşti, cod postal: 030045. Email: amatei25@yahoo.com*

de la totalité de la réalité roumaine. L'âge de l'abondance télévisuelle, que nous illustrerons par un épisode de la série américaine **Dr. House**, épisode mettant lui-même en abyme le rapport totalitarisme versus démocratie, se caractérise par la rupture entre le diffuseur d'images et l'idée d'autorité, et puis par l'accès illimité à l'image dont les significations peuvent désormais être la fruit d'interventions individuelles, à des moments et à une fréquence que seul l'individu contrôle.

L'approche que nous proposons de ces âges de la télévision est phénoménologique en ce que le concept qui sous-tend leur rapport est celui de l'explicitation, tel qu'il est proposé par Peter Sloterdijk. Ainsi, si la télévision se propose à ses débuts d'expliciter ce qu'on considère communément « la réalité » sociale pour y mettre de l'ordre, la télévision roumaine sous Ceausescu mène cette tendance à son absolu esthétique : au fur et à mesure que la longueur des programmes s'étrécit, la télévision devient l'œil qui mue la réalité quotidienne en une scène grandeur nature dont le décor se compose de toutes les « fondations », réalisations – architecturales en premier lieu, car il s'agit de formes adressées à la vue – dont l'auteur moral est Ceausescu. Ce qui s'y trouve explicité, c'est désormais la Roumanie comme création de Ceausescu ; et plus cette création touche à sa fin, moins besoin il y a à la télé-viser au moyen des techniques cinématiques. Le cas de la télévision roumaine sous Ceausescu est la situation extrême où la télévision comme diffuseur de flux d'images se voit contrainte à devenir un diffuseur d'images statiques, puisque, si œuvre il y a, ce ne peut être qu'un ensemble, grandiose, d'objets : un achèvement. La fin de l'explicitation ne peut être qu'une photographie qui aura tout pris. Le fonctionnement télévisuel de ce type, nous l'appellerons « télé-mimésis ».

D'autre part, ce que la télévision « abondante » explicite, de nos jours, ce n'est plus tant la « réalité », mais les virtualités d'agent, de « réalisateur » de chaque utilisateur (en tant que tel, qu'être qui peut employer tout du réel pour en faire un monde personnel). La télévision devient, à son âge d'abondance, un simple fournisseur d'objets qui demandent à être manipulés, recréés, signifiés ou simplement agencés pour rendre autrement la réalité, selon les vœux de l'utilisateur. Ce type de fonctionnement sera la « télé-production », puisque c'est à l'aide d'une machine que l'utilisateur produit : des images, des séquences d'images (du réel narrativisé en fin de compte) et il se re-produit en tant que structure de compétences techniques et poétiques.

1. Phénoménologie politique de la télévision : comment comprendre la notion de télévision

Il est sûr que les évolutions de la télévision à l'époque de la globalisation (capitaliste) offrent à l'analyste des médias du pain sur la planche, car il se retrouve souvent perplexe, et peu conforté par des acquis théoriques de plus en plus épars, devant un champ de phénomènes de plus en plus subtils en matière de signification à en extraire. La « télécratie », pour reprendre le terme forgé par Bernard Stiegler

dans un livre récent[1], brouille les pistes de l'analyste s'efforçant d'ordonner la matière dont il s'empare et de répondre à des questions primesautières (du moins révélées après coup comme telles) mais d'autant plus difficiles : comment la télévision représente-t-elle la réalité, comment la télévision produit-elle de la réalité, comment les images qu'elle retransmet contribuent-elles à modifier la perception que nous avons de la réalité – à supposer bien qu'une telle perception soit immédiate, ce qui peut n'être qu'un piège de plus – et, finalement, comment la technique arrive-t-elle à emballer le réel pour qu'il nous soit offert tel qu'on le reçoit au jour le jour ?

Toutes ces questions se rejoignent pour parler en quelque sorte de « réalité », et cela suffirait certes pour remplir des centaines de pages de « théorie du réel ». Nous allons par conséquent nous borner à dire que ce que nous visons par « réalité » dans les questions que nous venons de poser, c'est le monde tel que nous en comprenons la pratique au jour le jour. Cela dit, il nous est néanmoins de plus en plus malaisé de séparer la « réalité » de la « représentations de réalité » (c'est ce que Jean Baudrillard a tout de suite compris dès les années 1960), dans la mesure où ceux qui régissent ces représentations le font en toute conscience d'un regard critique de plus en plus aiguisé de la part des téléspectateurs occidentaux : plus la culture critique devient une tradition, et c'est ce qui se produit depuis longtemps dans les cultures occidentales, plus le téléspectateur s'emploie à démanteler la magie qu'il est convié à simplement consommer. Nous pourrions appeler de nos vœux le renforcement de la concurrence entre ceux qui produisent de la réalité et ceux qui en observent les produits avant tout pour en déjouer les mécanismes de production. C'est d'ailleurs cette concurrence qui nous autorise à faire l'éloge de la télévision en tant que catalyseur d'esprit critique, tout en décourageant, par ailleurs, l'espoir de jamais aboutir à une réponse nette aux questions qui portent sur le comment du rapport réalité-télévision[2].

Resserrant le découpage de nos questionnements, nous viseront désormais le campement politique de la concurrence susmentionnée. C'est dire que nous laisserons pour compte, et à dessein, la production de réalité affective dans les sociétés individualistes et atomisées de nos jours, lorsque pour toute politique de la télévision on pourrait parler du processus capital d'audimat – capital matériel, pour nous déplacer à l'époque où le rôle de la télévision était confiné avant tout à la propagande d'Etat. Ainsi y a-t-il « télévision » et « télévision », selon la manière dont, à chaque époque et en fonction de la région socioculturelle où l'on se place, le signifiant « télévision » s'actualise en différents signifiés. Nous essaierons dans cette étude de proposer une esquisse de typologie de la télévision du point de vue du paradigme

[1] Bernard Stiegler, *La Télécratie contre la démocratie*, Paris, Flammarion, 2006 et 2008 ; c'est un manifeste politique, jouant sur les collusions entre la télévision et le pouvoir politique français.

[2] Pour prendre contact avec les débats sur « télévision et réalité » surtout à l'époque contemporaine, nous renvoyons au dossier homonyme du premier numéro de la nouvelle revue Télévision, CNRS éditions, numéro 1, 2010 et surtout à l'article théorique de François Jost, « Que signifie parler de "réalité" ? », p. 15-30.

politique où elle s'insère, en nous appuyant sur les étapes du développement télévisuel au cours de la brève histoire de ce média.

Il est difficile de supposer l'existence d'une entité homogène « télévision », indifféremment du régime politique qui l'intègre, telle qu'elle est considérée par exemple dans une étude séminale dans le domaine des médias télévisuel, *Television. Technology and cultural form*[3], où la distinction qui est faite entre les différents fonctionnements sociaux de la télévision se réduit à affirmer l'existence d'un « direct state regulation of broadcasting »[4] d'un côté, et de la régulation des programmes par le marché, alors que du point de vue politique l'auteur se borne à écrire : « in communist societies state control of broadcasting was rationalised as the guarantee and instrument of popular power. »[5] D'autres études, françaises, relevant cette fois-ci d'une pratique plutôt sociologique et se bornent à remarquer que « des pays comme la Roumanie et la Bulgarie portent encore, en effet, les marques profondes des régimes communistes qui ont exercé une forte emprise sur une société civile atomisée après guerre »[6], alors que pour Hervé Michel, qui publie un livre sur la télévision chez PUF dans la collection « Politique d'aujourd'hui », la télévision dans les pays de l'Europe de l'Est se réduit aux cas de figures de l'URSS et de la Chine[7].

On conviendra donc que, lorsqu'on dit « télévision », on dit du coup un régime technologique de représentation du réel, déclinée ou bien sous le signe de la transcendance du réel « imité » ou bien sous celui immanent de l'image « construite » à évaluer en elle-même, et une forme sociale, de communautarisme – politique, sociale et esthétique – , c'est-à-dire un moyen de constituer des communautés selon les désirs et intérêts de ceux qui possèdent le contrôle de la technologie télévisuelle et de ses effets.

C'est à cette seconde définition de la « télévision » que notre étude s'attachera. Ce second volet de la notion de « télévision » est celui que Raymond Williams appelle « culturel ». Britannique, visiteur des Etats-Unis, à Stanford University au début des années 1970, il est l'un des pionniers des « cultural studies » à l'époque où se répandait une idée anthropologique et ethnologique de « culture ». L'ouverture qu'il inaugure dans les études sur la télévision par la conception culturaliste de la télévision qu'il propose dans son livre ne peut compenser l'absence d'une perspective politique sur cette institution dans nombre de pays où les partis communistes au pouvoir décidaient à la place des citoyens du bien à promouvoir et du mal social à purger. Plus le centre de pouvoir était fort et son emprise portait sur des pans sociaux plus vastes, plus les idées de bien et de mal qu'il autorisait étaient puissantes, proches de l'absolu. Ce que la société a gagné après la chute du mur de Berlin en termes de liberté, elle a perdu en termes de cohésion et magnitude.

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3 Raymond Williams, *Television. Technology and cultural form*, London, New York, Routledge, 1974.
4 Op. cit., p. 28.
5 Op. cit., p. 28-29.
6 Jean Cluzel, *La Télévision*, Paris, Flammarion, 1996, p. 55.
7 Hervé Michel, *La Télévision en France et dans le monde*, Paris, PUF, 1989.

Il est évident que régime technologique et forme sociale sont strictement noués à l'intérieur de l'institution télévisuelle et que, ensemble ils pourraient être parfaitement approchés dans une politique de la télévision, à l'instar de la *Politique de la littérature*[8]. Mais ce n'est pas la seule voie à emprunter. Dans une perspective différente, ou bien plutôt dans un autre registre d'approche qui n'exclut pas la politique de la télévision, mais en déplace l'accent vers la constitution d'une sensibilité sociale commune, la télévision comme élément de culture réclame également une phénoménologie : une approche plus générale que celle politique, et plus appropriée à notre avis pour une première analyse des écarts entre l'institution télévisuelle dans une démocratie capitaliste et dans une dictature communiste.

2. Les trois âges de la télévision. L'âge de croissance comme solution de continuité

C'est à l'intérieur du partage entre télé-mimésis et télé-production – et, certes, en permanent dialogue avec la sociologie du monde occidental de l'après-guerre – qu'on peut parler des « âges » de la télévision, et nous allons nous reporter pour ce faire à l'étude de John Ellis, *Seing Things*[9], qui dénombre trois âges de la télévision : le premier commence au lendemain de la Seconde guerre mondiale (en Europe et à l'exception du BBC, qui émet depuis 1936) et prend fin à la fin des années 1970 : ce sera la « phase of scarcity » ou bien « la télévision de pénurie » selon Rémy Le Champion et Benoît Danard[10], caractérisée par un choix limité de chaînes et par le monopole du service public (bien que, aux Etats-Unis, ce premier âge fût dès le début dépassé par une forte intervention du marché dans le domaine de la télévision[11]). De toute évidence, cette phase impose une institution centraliste qui participe du paradigme moderne du monde occidental[12]. La seconde phase, c'est celle de la croissance, là où la télévision commerciale fait son apparition et s'empare rapidement du paysage vidéo-médiatique européen, et où la télévision hertzienne se voit doublée de la télévision par câble et par satellite. C'est évidemment une phase de transition, qui annonce l'état actuel de la télévision et qui clôt l'époque de la télévision luministe, éducative, avant tout par le devenir transnational de la télévision[13]. En fin de compte, ce sera la phase actuelle, « d'abondance », où, du point de vue technique, la

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[8] Jacques Rancière, *Politique de la littérature*, Paris, Galilée, 2007.

[9] Citée par Milly Buonanno, *The Age of television*, Chicago, Intellect Books, 2007, p. 20-21.

[10] Rémy Le Champion, Benoît Danard, *Télévision de pénurie, télévision d'abondance*, Paris, La Documentation Franaises, 2000.

[11] Pour une perspective humouristique entre les deux types de télévision, voir la comédie française *Le Gendarme à New York*, film de Jean Girault réalisé en 1965.

[12] Les missions d'une « télévision démocratique » sont : « informer, éduquer, distraire », alors que, selon le mot de François Mauriac en 1959, « la télévision reflète le monde tel qu'il est. » Nous empruntons cette citation-ci et cette devise-là à l'article de Evelyne Cohen, « Jacques Krier, entre documentaires, reportages et fiction », in *Télévision*, no cité, p. 54.

[13] En Roumanie, cette étape voit se rétrécir les programmes de la télévision nationale et se développer la télévision comme institution underground et familiale via le satellite et la rage des magnétoscopes.

digitalisation du signal permet une rapide croissance de la variété de chaînes et un développement intense du traitement des images, ce qui améliore également la qualité de l'image et l'interactivité technique entre le diffuseur et le récepteur. Cette phase appartient expressément, de par l'abondance qu'elle porte pour nom, à l'ère de la société de consommation, individualiste et centrée sur l'épanouissement du moi par l'entremise de l'octroi d'un bouquet de choix (choix de traitement de la réalité en premier lieu en ce qui nous concerne) inimaginable avant les années 1980 en Europe.

Des trois phases décrites ci-dessus, la seconde pose le plus de problèmes à l'historien : puisque la phase de pénurie correspond en effet à une institutionnalisation centraliste d'une technologie de diffusion d'images unique, encore chère et pas très accessible, et la phase d'abondance commence après 1990, lorsque l'Europe est en train de (ré-)unification et que les frontières politiques, idéologiques disparaissent en faveur d'une intensification de la circulation médiatique et des capitaux. Quant à la phase intermédiaire, c'est justement elle qui fait parfois défaut : la télévision est partout signe d'ouverture sociale, et la société roumaine de Ceausescu se réfléchit volens nolens dans un cloisonnement sans égal en Europe du programme officiel de télévision, conjoint à l'orientation illicite vers d'autres chaînes, étrangères. La situation tout à fait particulière de la phase de croissance de la télévision en Roumanie appellerait certainement une étude à part, qui rende compte des premiers pas vers une hypersensibilité cosmopolite au sein d'une société fermée puisque amenée à *subir* la culture nationale, comme un poids dont elle se voit chargée sur ordres, en situation d'aliénation, et non plus à *jouir* d'une culture nationale comme expression libre de soi. C'est pourquoi, en ce qui nous concerne, nous allons mettre en lice la première et la dernière phase de la courte histoire de la télévision, qui recoupent deux phases historiques homogènes et assez univoques pour les chercheurs d'au-delà ou d'en deçà du célèbre rideau de fer.

Il faudrait voir maintenant comment la méthode phénoménologique pourrait nous aider à mieux cerner ce que « télévision » veut dire, et plus précisément, comment les deux types de télévision, de pénurie et d'abondance, pourraient être thématisés au sein d'une approche phénoménologique. A suivre Heidegger,

> Avec pour question directrice celle du sens de l'être, la recherche se trouve aux prises avec la question fondamentale de toute la philosophie. La maniere de traiter cette question est la maniere *phénoménologique*. Par la ce traite ne s'attache ni a un « point de vue », ni a une « tendance », car la phénoménologie n'est ni l'un ni l'autre et ne saurait jamais l'être tant qu'elle s'entend elle-même. L'expression « phénoménologique » signifie en premier lieu une *conception méthodologique*.[14]

Le syntagme « phénoménologie de l'espace », par exemple, ne signifie donc pas considérer l'espace *dans la perspective phénoménologique*, selon une logique épistémique qui relève des sciences exactes, tout comme la phénoménologie de la technologie digitale ne commande pas l'explicitation des performances techniques

[14] Martin Heidegger, *Être et temps*, ed. François Vezin, Paris, Gallimard, 1986, pp. 53-54. L'auteur souligne.

de la digitalisation. Ce qui se trouve mis en question par les exigences de la méthode phénoménologique, c'est la primauté du sujet sur l'objet ou bien celle de la primauté de l'objet sur le sujet : dans chacune de ces deux cas de figure, on aurait ou bien un sujet qui est aliéné par la technologie, ou bien une technologie qui, telle une raison rusée, détermine le comportement du sujet, à son insu. Or, Martin Heidegger arrive à démontrer que le phénomène n'est pas ce qui apparaît tout simplement, mais ce qui *est amené*, par l'intermédiaire des apparitions, à se « montrer-par-soi-même »[15]. Le *est amené* présuppose un accord. Ce qui apparaît aux sens est, autrement dit, ce qui annonce le phénomène qui, pour se montrer, se fraie un chemin vers la perception à travers l'apparition. L'adoption du concept « phénoménologique de phénomène » (Heidegger) nous amène a reconsidérer le phénomène de la télévision à titre d' « annonciateur » de quelque chose qui apparaît « sur le fond d'un se-montrer » *déc-ouvert*, déblayé par un certain regard qui relève d'une certaine intentionnalité. Bref, il faut qu'un accord se noue entre la perception et l'apparition en sorte que le phénomène surgisse. Cet accord ne relève pas d'une quelconque sociabilité – quoiqu'il nous ayons du mal à éliminer le social lorsqu'on parle de télévision –, mais d'une empathie primesautière et radicale qui libère la manifestation du phénomène.

Au fond, il nous faut seulement appliquer la méthode phénoménologique à un phénomène aussi complexe que ponctuel que celui de la télévision, et, arrivés à ce point, nous avons choisi d'opérer un découpage historique, d'une part, et de reconduire la méthode phénoménologique appliquée selon un vocabulaire plus approprié à l'ère de la globalisation qui nous est contemporaine.

3. Deux types de télévision – deux types d'explicitation moderne

Les étapes de l'histoire de la télévision que nous avons énoncées recoupent en partie celles de la télévision roumaine, sauf un intervalle, pendant les années 1980, et surtout après 1983, lorsque la télévision se fait de plus en plus le réverbère des « fondations »[16] réalisées et inaugurées par le régime de Nicolae Ceausescu, au point que le territoire entier du pays devienne une immense « œuvre » que la télévision s'ingénie à donner à voir. La grandeur de cette réalité entièrement fondée est telle que toute autre forme de réalité est ou bien moindre (réalité psychologique ou quotidienne) ou bien étrangère (réalité non-roumaine). On pourrait formuler ce paroxysme mimétique ainsi : la « réalité » de la Roumanie en tant qu'œuvre « fondée » par Ceausescu est tellement parfaite qu'elle ne peut plus être représentée que par certaines prises d'images (panoramiques) dont le monopole appartient à la télévision roumaine.

[15] Idem, p. 58

[16] Nous traduisons ainsi le mot „ctitorie", mot slave qui dérive de „ctitor", celui qui fait construire une église, qui paie pour sa construction qui peut également, par sa carrure morale, justifier son initiative et son statut de fondateur.

Nous avons donc choisi d'opposer le premier âge de la télévision, dans sa version roumaine des années 1980 et l'âge actuel, celui de la télévision concurrentielle, digitalisée (pour autant que la digitalisation de la télévision la redéfinisse, ce dont les analystes doutent, et à raison[17]), dans la perspective du critère phénoménologique de la modernité que Peter Sloterdijk appelle « l'explicitation » :

> Le concept fondamental véritable et réel de la modernité n'est pas la révolution, mais l'explicitation. L'explicitation est pour notre temps le véritable nom du devenir – auquel on peut adjoindre les modes traditionnels du devenir par dérive, par imitation, par catastrophe et recombinaison créative. (…) L'époque que nous vivons ne renverse pas les choses, les situations, les thèmes : elle les déroule. Elle les déploie, elle les tire vers l'avant, elles les aplatit, les place sous la contrainte de la manifestation, elle les ré-épelle par l'analyse et les intègre dans des routines synthétiques. (…) Elle transpose le monstrueux dans le quotidien. Elle invente des procédés pour rendre l'inoui réel ; elle crée les touches qui permettent aux utilisateurs un accès facile à ce qui était jusqu'ici impossible. Elle dit aux siens : l'impuissance n'existe pas. C'est à juste titre qu'on la qualifie d'époque technique. [18]

Les deux âges de la télévision que nous passerons au crible de nos réflexions rendent compte de deux types d'explicitations, et notre analyse se met elle-aussi sous le sceau de l'explicitation, pour autant que la méthode phénoménologique n'est elle-même qu'une explicitation ontologique de ce qui – « l'être » – est resté caché, enfermé durant l'histoire de la pensée européenne métaphysique.

La modernité en tant qu'explicitation n'en est pas une : il y a d'une part une modernité totalitaire, idée métaphysique critiquée par exemple par Emmanuel Lévinas dans *Totalité et infini* (1961) et une modernité réticulaire (ou bien « rhizomatique », avec le mot de Gilles Deleuze dans *Mille plateaux*), d'un monde fragmenté et nostalgique de l'unité censée perdue. Le passage d'une modernité à l'autre s'illustre par le passage d'une explicitation agglutinante, des images qui rendent compte de la transformation de la réalité donnée en œuvre d'art (transformation dont l'implicite est, comme pour tout œuvre d'art, la préexistence de l'œuvre au sein des matériaux d'où elle sort), pour le bonheur des spectateurs se constituant illico en fratrie sensible dotée d'une forte identité différentielle par rapport à d'autres communautés (mais dépourvue d'identités individuelles de ses membres) vers une auto-explicitation, celle du processus de construction technologique du réel lui-même, sans aucun égard à un quelconque résultat final à destination de la constitution d'une communauté sensible.

[17] Voir Milly Buonanno, *op. cit.*, "The Digital Revolution", p. 59-70, qui rabat l'enthousiasme des années 1990 concernant la « révolution digitale » sur le constat ou bien de certains échecs des projets de refonte technologique du « regarder la télévision » ou bien de la simultanéité entre différentes technologies de transmission : « since one of the much-vaunted advantages of digital technology is its genuine capacity to generate an abundance of channels, the cases of Germany and the United States – the two biggest television markets in the western world – show us clearly that the same objective of a multi-channel environment can be achieved, and has been achieved, by other technologies. », p. 66.

[18] Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphères III, Ecumes*, Paris, Maren Sell, 2005, p. 77.

En d'autres mots : si l'explicitation dont rend compte la télévision (de pénurie) du régime de Ceausescu renvoie à la construction d'une réalité mise en spectacle, jusqu'à ce que la réalité des images retransmises soit rendu impossible autrement qu'en la synthèse visuelle que la télévision nationale produit, l'explicitation du digital vise la technique elle-même et l'accessibilité sans rivages de cette technique par un sujet – l'utilisateur – qui peut désormais retravailler ou consommer des images à son gré et sans égard à la nature des images.

L'évolution de la télévision roumaine vers la disparition des programmes dans les années 1980 pourrait s'expliquer par la suppression de son rôle de mimésis une fois que l'œuvre d'art qu'est la réalité construite s'achève. Ce processus fait pièce avec l'évolution de la télévision vers la pérennisation et l'ubiquité, alors que la seconde explicitation vise à donner à tout objet la valeur, interchangeable, du fragment de la pâte à modeler qu'est le réel en général. L'œuvre d'art avait besoin d'un génie et du sacrifice des autres : la Roumanie passée à la télévision, Ceausescu et les Roumains. Du moment où toute explicitation n'est qu'une auto-explicitation, que chacun peut devenir artiste pour autant qu'il trouve quelque chose du nouveau à « expliciter » (*a fortiori* le corps, les pulsions, l'inconscient), il est fondamental que l'accent sois mis non sur le devenir-forme de la réalité (dans une ontologie forte) mais sur ce que le sujet peut faire pour trans-former la réalité de n'importe quelle façon.

Le but de la télévision aujourd'hui (il s'agit du but de la « technocratie » en général), n'est plus d'offrir une image du monde humanisé, mais de se présenter elle-même comme moyen technique de subvenir au désir d'agir sur le réel de tout le monde. Ainsi, un brouillage notionnel pourrait empêcher une analyse proprement télévisuelle de nos jours : toutes les émissions peuvent être revues et parfois vues à la même heure que celle qui figure dans le programme. Le seul obstacle quant au contrôle individuel de la consommation télévisuelle demeure l'existence de cette émission : on ne peut voir une émission annoncée avant qu'elle n'ait été filmée et diffusée pour la première fois, et la télévision ne fait qu'inaugurer une émission qui passe, après, dans une réserve d'images d'accès facile, souvent libre, par internet. Le monopole de la télévision n'est plus qu'un monopole d'urgence : c'est la télévision qui transmet pour la première fois un match de foot, en direct, pour que toute de suite après ces images rentrent dans une archive que d'aucuns peuvent consulter. L'image visuelle cinétique vient à recevoir les mêmes statuts que le texte : celui de référence pour les interprétations, mais aussi celui d'embrayeur pour l'exercice libre de la volonté d'agir sur le réel. En tant qu'utilisateur, je peux à tout moment exercer mes pouvoirs d'agir (expliciter mes compétences techniques) sur une machine qui reproduit, emmagasine ou diffuse des images qui sont parfois des prétextes pour l'enclenchement d'une certaine fonction technique nouvelle (voir le cas de l'Ipod, avec sa fonction « regarder des phtotos » qui, une fois activées, fait défiler les photos en imitant le geste humain de tourner la page). Il y a là une double explicitation qui voit le jour : du moi comme agent technique, et de la machine comme source d'un nombre toujours multiplié de « fonctions ». L'idée de « télévision » dans ce nouvel ordre des valeurs du « pouvoir » se trouble : il faudrait distinguer désormais entre les images de télévision

en accès multiples et libre, et l'institution de la télévision qui ne garde que le monopole de la primeur de l'image. L'avènement de la modernité comme ère de l'explicitation rend la télévision désuète pour autant que son fonctionnement présuppose trop de passivité (de la part du spectateur) et trop d'autorité (de la part du diffuseur). Dans le contexte de la richesse technologique des médias contemporains, la télévision tend à devenir une institution du passé, car rendant compte d'un individu dépourvu de la motivation d'agir, et mû surtout par la disposition de sentir et de juger suivant une offre que le spectateur peut diversifier, mais sur laquelle il ne peut, comme dans le cas d'Internet, agir.

Dans le premier cas, ce qui s'explicite est ce qu'on donne à voir, un concentré de territoire et un concentré de population articulés en symbole du tout : par exemple, dans les images du finale des spectacles « Cantarea Romaniei », nom dont on affuble depuis 1978 la plus répandue manifestation de culturelle prolétaire diffusée à la télévision le dimanche. Dans le second cas, la représentativité de l'image ne compte plus autant que la possibilité de l'utilisateur d'intervenir dans la façon dont les images sont reçues et dans le choix des programmes, et cela indifféremment du moment où l'on se trouve (le soir, la nuit, le jour). Au présent, les images ne comptent presque plus dans ce qu'elles représentent, mais dans l'aptitude, qu'elles possèdent par leur contenu mais aussi par leur accessibilité (depuis internet par exemple) pour l'utilisateur.

Il y a un rapport particulier qui s'établit entre le désir du téléspectateur et les objets de son désir : du temps de la télévision des années 1980, la télévision essayait d'éduquer et d'orienter ce désir vers une pratique visuelle apparentée à l'admiration d'une œuvre d'art devenue réalité ; depuis les années 2000, par la télévision câblée et accessible aussi par internet, le désir du téléspectateur peut être satisfait à la minute, ce n'est plus ce désir qui doive se soumettre à un quelconque ordre chronologique ou consigne politique, c'est le réel (l'image en l'occurrence) qui s'y plie. A ce point, l'image offre moins de satisfaction que n'en produit son immédiate accessibilité, sa mue en jouet ou, si l'on s'en tient à l'otologie de Heidegger : il y a, entre ce que la télévision déploie du temps des années 1980 en Roumanie, et ce qu'elle explicite aujourd'hui, toute la différence entre le charisme d'un objet animé, fait être (quoique sous menaces de violence) et le *Zuhanden*, l'objet à-portée-de-la-main, offert à la manipulation de celui qui, tout en y prenant plaisir, emprunte cette voie de subjectivation guerrière qui, plus le sujet se fortifie, plus le monde s'appauvrit autour de lui.

4. La télévision comme forme culturelle dans une société libre : Dr. House et la télévision comme pensée des deux modernités

Où est donc la vérité de la télévision ? Dans sa diffusion depuis un centre de pouvoir qui infuse du sens tout alentour, créant une communauté ronde, repartie comme devant un panorama qui représente la nouvelle réalité, construite, héroïque, d'un monde parfait, ou bien dans son épaisseur qui fait écran devant le dehors et permet à tout un chacun de recomposer à l'infini sa télévision à lui, d'en partager des

séquences et d'en hypostasier, dans le « flow » télévisuel, des « floes »[19] passagers, les seuls entités qu'on puisse encore représenter en les isolant de la dynamique du type « ça m'avance à quoi » ? Qu'est-ce qu'il faut préférer : une institution qui met en spectacle une réalité « transcendante » dont la représentation télévisuelle garde le prestige de la transcendance et à travers laquelle la télévision tient ensemble une communauté forte, ou bien une institution qui dévoile et explicite des techniques de travailler et produire des images, qui attise le désir individuel de possession, excite le désir et l'assouvit en prenant le visage d'un bailleur de liberté ?

La question peut justement être pensée, avant d'y choisir une réponse. Pensée à partir d'un exemple. On est en 2009, à l'ère de la télévision d'abondance, aux Etats-Unis. Depuis cinq ans, c'est-à-dire cinq « saisons », une série américaine domine le marché : *House* (*House M. D.*), « la série la plus regardée dans le monde en 2008. Elle a également reçu de nombreuses récompenses de télévision, dont les prestigieux Golden Globes et Emmy Awards. »[20]

La télévision américaine, la première du monde à fonctionner sur une régulation marchande, est aussi le plus gros et le meilleur fournisseur de télé-fictions – et, par là, la plus grosse productrice de réalités parallèles dont les images peuvent aujourd'hui être manipulées au profit de tous ceux qui attendent de la télévision non pas une représentation véritable de la réalité mais l'accès par la technique et par la fiction à la production individuel du réel[21] .

Nous ne discuterons pas ici l'avantage, à relever parmi tant d'autres inconvénients, à faire fonctionner une télévision à programmes créateurs de demande versus à programmes du type service public. Miser sur la fiction télévisuelle prosélyte, outre les compétences techniques qu'une telle décision détermine et convoque, et qui contribuent ensemble à l'évolution des performances techniques de la télévision, a l'avantage énorme de drainer le désir et d'exciter le jugement, sur le modèle, longuement développer par Peter Sloterdijk dans un chapitre du second volet de sa monumentale trilogie *Sphères*, de l'Eglise catholique au Moyen âge. Dans le brillant chapitre « Comment, par le média pur, le centre de la sphère agit à distance », Peter Sloterdijk donne une définition médiologique de l'empire : « l'empire est sa cohésion sémiosphérique », car « l'essence de la télécommunication impériale et ecclésiale ne peut être comprise qu'à partir de son mode de déversement et ou de rayonnement »[22]. Certes, il s'agit de nos jours d'un rayonnement dont le soleil reste caché, car le médium

[19] Le terme est forgé, en contrepartie à celui « flow » appartenant à Raymond Williams, par John Hartley, *Tele-ology*. *Studies in television*, London, Routledge, 1992. « "Flow" is used by Raymond Williams and network schedulers to conceptualize time, especially the flow of time within the medium. Floe, on the other hand, is a mixed metaphor of space, including the geopolitics of TV as an international industry (…) », p. 12.

[20] Nous citons depuis wikipedia (français) qui reprend en grandes lignes l'article mieux fourni de wikipedia (en anglais).

[21] La version de l'explicitation qui cadre le mieux avec la théorie heideggerienne du Ge-Stell, c'est-à-dire l'oubli de l'être de la technique au profit de ses étants.

[22] Peter Slotrerdijk, *Sphères II, Globes*, Paris, Libella et Maren Sell, 2010, p. 625.

ne contient plus les signes de l'être absolu transcendant, seulement les germes du désir que possède chacun de nous, du désir qui s'empare de chacun de nous ; la vie qui scintille de derrière chaque « banquise » (« floe ») d'images qu'on peut traiter *a priori* comme unité discrète dans ce qu'on appelle la chronique TV[23] n'est pas aujourd'hui le signe irrécusable de la présence pleine, divine, de Dieu catholique du temps de l'empire ecclésial, mais le « ça » reconnaissable, à travers les catalyseurs du désir que sont les images « sensationnelles », comme appartenant à chacun de nous. C'est dans un tel charisme que nagent tous les messages idéologiques télévisuels dont les auteurs font de leur mieux pour qu'ils passent : plus l'attention est captée par les images, plus ces messages ont des chances de graver nos cerveaux.

Et puis, doctor House n'est pas sans rappeler Jésus. Le public acquis au moyen d'une fiction médicale telle que *Dr. House* met au premier plan la figure d'un thaumaturge et ses rapports avec ses comparses et avec l'humain en général – à l'instar, *mutatis mutandis*, de Jésus-Christ promu modèle absolu de sauveur et de penseur (mieux dire : de sauveur par le corps et par l'esprit) dans le monde occidental à la fin du Moyen Age[24]. Nous allons nous attacher à un seul épisode, troisième de la sixième saison (diffusé en première le 5 octobre 2009[25]), qui met en abyme justement la dictature et surtout l'image médiatique de la dictature. L'épisode s'appelle d'ailleurs *Le Tyran*, et le protagoniste (patient de Gregory House) est un dictateur d'un pays fictif de l'Afrique noire, Dibala. Le bruit court que Dibala a pour projet d'exterminer une population locale, les Sitibi, pour se venger ainsi des dégâts que ses leaders avaient commis lors d'une guérilla. Naît alors le doute dans le cœur de l'équipe de House, qui aura pour conséquence la mort du patient dont le responsable s'avère Chase, qui avait échangé les résultats d'un test sanguin avec celui d'une femme de 70 ans déjà décédée. Mais la justice n'a pour autant pas été faite, car le film fournit des informations supplémentaires qui, soulignées par le body-language du personnage, amène le spectateur à se poser les questions suivantes :

- Est-ce que l'image de Dibala dans la presse occidentale est-elle correcte, en partant du principe de la vérité des informations offertes par les médias dans un pays libre tel les Etats-Unis ? Dibala conteste l'objectivité de la presse américaine, et le film s'en fait le porte-parole.
- Est-ce que son tempérament fougueux qu'affiche Dibala est-il seulement la preuve d'un criminel fort de sa cécité meurtrière, ou peut-être est-ce là que réside une puissance que l'homme occidental a perdue ? Dans la première

[23] Voir Raymond Williams, op. cit., p. 74-76. Le théoricien trouve que « to most analysts of television, preoccupied by declared or directed content, this (visual mobility) is, if seen at all, no more than a by-product of some other experience. Yet I see it as one of the primary processes of the technology itself, and one thet may come to have increasing importance.»

[24] Lorsque Thomas a Kempis par exemple écrit *Immitatio Christi*, paru en 1418. Par ailleurs, Peter Sloterdijk écrit qu'une « vaste mode religieuse favorisant l'éveil du plaisir de la passion dans la bourgeoisie urbaine » apparaît dès le XIIIe siècle (Peter Sloterdijk, *Le Palais de cristal*, Paris, Maren Sell, 2006, p. 91).

[25] Pour d'autres informations concernant cet épisode, voir http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tyrant_%28House%29.

partie de l'épisode, le dictateur se rappelle comment les prêtres catholiques étaient gentils avec la population noire, du temps de sa jeunesse, dans son pays, mais que, lorsque ses deux sœurs sont mortes de consomption, il aurait voulu avoir à ses côtés plus de docteurs que de prêtres. Ce souvenir rappelle l'hypocrisie de l'humanitarisme occidental envers le tiers monde.

- Est-ce que, dans un pays inconnu, où tout le monde fait n'importe quoi pour s'emparer du pouvoir, où la guerre physique se double d'une guerre des informations et chacun agit sur la base de simples bruits et de ses passions inassouvies, où des gens armés perpètrent des violences au nom de chefs qui parfois ne savent même pas ce que mijotent leurs subalternes – est-ce que dans un tel pays la présence d'une main forte capable de mettre de l'ordre (« I'm trying to impose order, I'm trying to prevent a genocide »[26]), à prix fort, certes, n'est-elle pas préférable à un humanitarisme mou qui ne fera qu'alimenter les violences ? Dans un dialogue tendu avec Chase, le dictateur explique qu'il « combat une guérilla », qu'il essaie d'éviter un désastre humanitaire, tel qu'il s'était déjà produit vingt ans auparavant, que son propre fils cadet, étudiant aux Etats-Unis, ne parle plus avec lui après avoir entendu tout ce que « vos journaux » écrivent de Dibala. Il reconnaît que ses hommes ont commis des abus en son nom, qu'il s'est fait fourvoyer, mais qu'il saura désormais mieux agir.
- Et, en fin de compte, est-ce qu'un médecin, appelé et lié par serment à guérir ses patients, peut-il transgresser les lois qui régissent à sa profession au nom d'un devoir envers l'humanité et selon des données qu'il est incapable de vérifier ?

Ce serait difficile de concevoir un autre moyen de soulever ces questions chez un nombre tellement élevé de téléspectateurs à travers le monde (la série est diffusée dans 44 pays) en l'absence d'une dramatisation bien réalisée, d'un héros inouï comme Dr. House et de moyens techniques qui permettent la rediffusion de ce programme dans d'innombrables foyers. Ce serait inconcevable qu'un tel épisode puisse être diffusé par une station nationale dans un territoire soumis à la dictature, et à plus forte raison par la télévision roumaine du temps de la dictature de Ceausescu. L'explicitation télévisuelle manifestée par la TVR durant les années 1980 visaient, dans un ethos aussi volontariste que celui transmis par le discours du dictateur Dibala, la représentation de la réalité comme œuvre de vérité (qu'il s'agisse de justice, d'utilité, de souveraineté) par la vision d'un chef dont les actes rendent compte de valeurs fortes, absolues, qui ne s'effilochent pas si elles viendraient à buter contre la valeur d'une vie individuelle. Par ailleurs, le rayonnement (que la télévision retransmet) de cet éthos volontariste arrive à infléchir, dans le film en question, les valeurs mineures mais sûres des gens qui, tel Chase qui outrepasse son serment médical pour sauver une collectivité (obéissant aux supplications d'un de ses membres tâchant de le persuader que Dibala ne doit pas rester en vie), sont

[26] Voir la minute 21 sur http://house.tv66.org/600/603.html, aujourd'hui, 18 septembre 2010.

amenés à ressentir la force perdue d'une ontologie sociale forte. Pour simplifier, cet épisode fait la critique (postmoderne[27]) du postmoderne faible au nom d'une modernité sanguinaire mais (éventuellement) plus efficace dans les conditions d'un chaos social et d'un paroxysme de sensibilités qui caractérisent les sociétés primaires – et qui guettent d'ailleurs à tout moment nos sociétés régulées.

Cette modernité, telle qu'elle est thématisée dans le film dans la figure du dictateur africain et manifestée par la télévision roumaine sur-politisée et cérémonielle des années 1980 (au point qu'on pouvait se demander pourquoi ces cérémonies avaient-elles besoin de toute la technologie cinématique, alors que les images retransmises étaient censées être figées) a toujours eu l'avantage de mettre en branle les cerveaux et d'instiller de la passion dans leur jugement, jusqu'à ce qu'ils arrivent à ce que Peter Sloterdijk appelle « désinhibition » dans un chapitre du *Palais de cristal* : « passer de la théorie à la pratique constitue par conséquent l'essence de la subjectivité »[28]. En effet, et le jeune docteur Chase n'y résiste pas : il agit aux stimuli forts que sont des gens venus l'avertir que, si Dibala arrive à se remettre d'aplomb, il tuera sans doute son peuple. Il contribue à tuer Dibala pour sauver une collectivité, devenant ainsi le prototype du héros moderne, qui s'autorise à tuer un individu pour en sauver vraisemblablement plusieurs.

On a, de l'autre part, une explicitation, toujours moderne, qui ne se mêle pas directement de politique, et qui vise à rendre accessible les moyens et les effets de la technique à autant de gens que possible, mais qui ne cesse pas pour autant de leur tendre le piège empoisonné de l'indistinction entre la performance technique, de l'ordre de l'étant (et, conséquemment, du désir) et la suggestion, qui se fait d'ailleurs assez rare, d'une performance de l'ordre intellectuel et moral, comme ce film nous l'a démontré. Autrement dit et tout en demeurant rivés au critère de l'explicitation qui rend possible la pensée de la modernité, est-ce que la télévision actuelle, qui ne cesse d'offrir des choix, qui « personnalise » sans trêve les effets de sa technologie et qui, par là, offre l'illusion de l'omnipotence de l'individu confiné à son espace intime (espace qu'il peut ainsi transgresser par les moyens techniques sans rien modifier « en réalité »), est-ce qu'elle explicite encore un chemin de retour à soi, un espace où la pensée reste encore possible – et les questions de psyché avec – ou bien elle ne fait que choisir, telle une doctrine ésotérique, les quelques élus qui sauront voir par-delà la profusion technique personnalisée un coin où la pensée demeure encore possible ?

Nous croyons que la télévision aura dû arriver au stade actuel, où il nous est permis de revoir un épisode de House en libre accès sur Internet et de le prendre par conséquent comme objet d'analyse tout de suite vérifiable par tout lecteur, mais

[27] Postmoderne au sens de Jean-François Lyotard (*La Condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir*, Paris, Minuit, 1979), pour qui la postmodernité est l'âge de la critique de toute grande narration idéologique, par rapport à une modernité imbue de sa certitude de soi et des buts qu'elle a à accomplir.

[28] Peter Sloterdijk, *Le Palais de cristal,* op. cit., p. 88.

que la modernité hard, quoique mise en abyme et donc pour ainsi dire désaffectée, peut surgir à l'improviste, un révolver à la main et un sourire innocent au coin de la bouche, le sourire de celui qui nous l'offre pour tuer sans crier gare le mal incarné dans notre prochain.

La télévision d'abondance secrète son propre vaccin. Il ne faut qu'enlever la croûte de désir qu'elle fait toujours saigner pour le déceler.

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STUDIA UBB. PHILOSOPHIA, LV, 3, 2010

SANS LATERALITE. LA DECONTEXTUALISATION DE L'ARCHITECTURE ET L'EXTRAVERSION D'UN REGARD NOUVEAU-COLONIAL

Courte note en marge de la XII-ième édition de la Biénale d'Architecture de Vénice, 2010

SABIN BORŞ[*]

Par même sa sur-visibilité, par même son ex(-)position, *en* (nécessaire et médiatique) *vue*, l'architecture, du moins celle présentée dans sa forme "biénalisée" dans le cadre de la XII-ième Biénale d'Architecture de Vénice, semble ne plus avoir laisée l'espace de/pour la rencontre qu'entre les vides des parenthèses qu'elle relève, *entre* les façades emblématiques et "de façade" qui constituent les paravents d'une ville (contemporaine) qui disparaît petit à petit, perdue dans le nouveau formalisme et esthétisme du colonialisme architectural, qui "exotise" maintenant sa propre expérience/expérimentation. Par la suite, la vraie rencontre (des hommes, mais pas seulement, pas nécessairement, pas seulement *dans* l'architecture[1]), opposée à la socialisation rigoureusement imposée, opposée à la rencontre "forcée" dans la socialité du quotidien, n'a (plus?) de place "dans" l'architecture, mais à demeure *à côté* d'elle, de travers, en arrière ou en latérale, en étant justement ce qui est mis entre les parenthèses ou leur échappe, ce qui échappe à l'ambiguïté essentielle qui encadre les images déterminés et (apparemment) complètes. La prétention polarisante de l'architecture dévoile maintenant, en pleine "anti-crise", par son obscène tentative de capitaliser à la suite de la "crise", son caractère intégumentaire, la façon par laquelle elle couvre, mets de la croûte et de la membrane sur/entre les organes/organismes économiquement-globaux et politiquement-mondiaux qui ont créé les cadres de sa propre condition actuelle et de sa propre actualité.

[*] SABIN BORŞ (né 1981), Master en philosophie, avec un mémoire sur le rapport entre écriture, typographie et politique, dans le contexte des nouveaux médias. Études de philosophie à Cluj (Université «Babeş-Bolyai»), spécialiste en phénoménologie et philosophie contemporaine. Rédacteur associé et rédacteur sur Internet de la revue *Arhitext*, il prépare actuellement une collection d'études et livres personnelles (*Subtractions*, *The Zeroth of January*), un livre-objet pensé sous la forme d'un commentaire inédit de Jacques Derrida, avec Bogdan Ghiu, et une collection d'événements AV/média organisés sous le nom de Xpose Art Collective, partie d'un projet connecté/déconnecté intitulé *Skelectric. Digital Architectures*. sabin.bors@gmail.com / www.sabinbors.com

[1] Je rapelle, ainsi, que le titre de la Biénale d'Architecture de Vénice de cette année, un titre retentissant, muet et incongruent avec ses propres prétentions thématiques, a été *People Meet in Architecture*, un slogan vouée parait-il à attester, une fois de plus, le déclin thématique et formel de l'architecture présentée dans le cadre des deux dernières biénales d'architecture.

Sans discuter ici, *proprement*, les projets présentés dans le cadre de la biénale, sans même discuter, implicitement, la légitimité de leur choix dans la tonalité d'ensemble de la biénale, il est très important – je crois – qu'on accentue la façon dont les projets, dans leur ensemble, et le thème de la biénale, reprennent sur un autre plan, le processus d'une esthétisation canonique, le processus de colonisation (*à travers* l')esthétique, des nouveaux espaces géopolitiques, étant ainsi à même à répandre difusement les principes d'une nouvelle *cinétique esthétique* occidentale.

Réduits au contingent, à la contingence, les projets présentés dans le cadre de la biénale – ou, de moins, leur majeure partie – semblent recourir à des variations sur une "ruse ontologique"[2] (Sloterdijk), cette fois répétable, technologiquement-manipulable, en supposant eux-mêmes des proportionalités ou des "justesses" esthétiques, thématiquement-formelles et expérientielles dans la totalité même des relations qu'elles décrivent, qu'elles tracent et traversent, qu'elles *intercaptent*. D'ailleurs, toute l'architecture présente dans le cadre de la biénale semble avoir tombé dans un scénario "éonique" semblable à celui décrit par Sloterdijk en ce qui concerne les *exécutions* historiques qui ont mené à la prise de conscience de la crise des fondements sur lesquels l'humanité a consacré ses entreprises. Ici, comme dans le scénario de *l'extraversion* décrit par Sloterdijk[3], l'architecture, comme *exécution* historique, semble avoir mis en scène une "extraversion des acteurs face à leur scène", en revenant à "ce qui a été jusqu'ici utilisé comme simple fondement", en effet son fondement principal. En s'auto-thématisant, en auto-thématisant pour soi sa principale vocation, celle de rassembler les hommes *autour* d'elle, l'architecture semble (seulement) à faire des pas pour se voir de l'extérieur avec/par les yeux des autres, des ceux qui sont (seulement) en apparence impliqués, dont le regard lui serve à légitimer son propre impasse. La rencontre *dans* l'architecture représente, ainsi, souligner, accentuer, exacerber la "catastrophe du fondement", la mise en question de sa propre fonction, seulement pour comparaître, faux et neutre, auto-désaffecté, dans une 'location" (pas un espace!) de rencontre où il ne lui sont disponibles à l'homme que des sémiotiques partielles, des régimes sur-inflationistes des *scénarios* architecturaux, des territoires désaffectés/ désaffectantes de la réalité, des pulsations esthétisantes des "passages" imaginales (rarement imaginaires), qui découplent la forme de l'architecture et l'architecture de *l'appel* intrinsèque de quelque forme de la "rencontre". Souvent, l'architecture semble avoir perdu (ici) la mesure d'un *lien* réel des environnements, en instituant des (techno-)effets superposés de réel progressif / réalisation progressive de l'architecture.

Peut-être c'est justement le message qui échappe à la thème de la biénale, celui que l'architecture ne devrait pas être une "scène quelconque, utilisée pour la mise en scène de 'notre' pièce, dans laquelle nous jouons comme sujets des grandes promesses et mandats"[4], et c'est ici le masque, le *false flag* que l'architecture

[2] Voir Peter Sloterdijk – *Eurotaoism. Contribuții la o critică a cineticii politice [La Mobilisation infinie: vers une critique de la cinétique politique]*, trad. Alexandru Suter, coll. „Panoptikon", Idea, Cluj-Napoca, 2004, p. 125.

[3] Id. – *ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

[4] Id. – *ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

dresse[5]. Exposés à l'architecture, *aux* architectures, aux in-constructions de l'architecture contemporaine, la "rencontre" des hommes *dans* l'architecture doit en effet rendre compte justement de cela – de l'abandon de l'architecture, de sa livraison à ses propres ruines, à sa propre fragmentation, à ses propres découpages (formelles, mais surtout conceptuellement-thématiques), du fait que, dans sa qualité de "ruine exemplaire" (Derrida), l'architecture se trouve (déjà) *au seuil* de son propre spectre, de sa propre disparition, au-delà des ruines *fondamentales* qui la minent incessamment pour pouvoir la dresser. Trop insuffisantes ont été, sont les projets qui s'opposent aux "ontologies en devenir" que beaucoup de projets présentés dans le cadre de la biénale les ont thématisés, autrement dit, aux projections insatiables sur l'avenir, aux potentiations accélérées que la nouvelle paradigme (occidentale) esthétisante la jète en jeu, l'engrène dans le mécanisme cinétique du nouveau esthét*isme* occidental. En rassemblant *à* soi, en réunissant *dans* son cercle, l'architecture semble occulter, dans les formes ci-présentées, sa propre *latéralité*, elle (se) décontextualise, elle (se) rompt du contexte pour se créer, maintenant plus que jamais, la "précession des simulacres" (Baudrillard), matériellement produits, imaginalement manipulés, politiquement mandatés pour annuler justement la dimension (vécue) de l'authentique rencontre de ceux qui se rencontrent *dans la latéralité* de l'architecture. Partie d'un engrenage général plus étendu, la biénale semble avoir thématisé ses propres dispositifs formellement-esthétisantes, semble les avoir mis au service d'un complexe formel de disparition, justement par la retraite matérielle *de* la visibilité, justement par la mise en transparence des ses modalités d'ex(-)position – pas autant une synthétisation, qu'une resynthétisation, une trans(-)figuration, une subjectivation de ses propres *expressions*, extensions *intensives*, *tensionées* d'une esthétisation radicalisée de l'objet architectural et, également, de l'objet de l'architecture.

Après les politiques du construit, on assiste aujourd'hui à l'esthétisation transpolitique de l'in-construit affectif, marqué par la dés-architecturisation des espaces *de rencontre* de "l'individu collectif" (Bataille), par l'annulation des limites (communes) où le suspense individuel "rencontre" la communauté en suspense, toujours et nécessairement livrée à un exil (*dans* l')extérieur. Par (une perspective) latérale, il ne lui reste ainsi à l'espace qu'à devenir le diagnostique de ses propres re-présentations, qu'à attenter aux déchirement des micro-utopies visant la réalisation d'une socialité nouveau-coloniale, celle qui va former la corps "armé" des politiques et des économies mondialement-globales, industriellement-culturalisées. Au contraire du regard nouveau-colonial, au contraire du regard esthétisantment-politique qui marque la vision occidentale sur les espaces et les géographies imaginaires, il est peut-être besoin, plus que jamais, d'un

[5] Dans le numéro 05(207)/2010 de la revue *Arhitext* (pp. 72-75) je parlais des soi-disant *false flags*, institutionalisation (militarisée) d'un jeu de/à masques que l'architecture pratique, qui ne sont autre chose que les pseudo-opérations pour masquer des organismes-appareils, des vraies constructions *en face* desquelles nous sommes exposés ou nous nous laissons exposés, de la ville en train de disparaître, de l'in-securité internationalisé qui gouverne, architecturellement, (dans) *l'impérialisme* de la démocratie. Voir, aussi, Sabin Borş – *Arbitraje ale spaţiilor şi ruine ale arhitecturii [Arbitrages des espaces et ruines de l'architecture]*, dans no. 8-9(210-211)/2010 de la revue *Arhitext*, pp. 54-58.

regard *du latéral*, d'une vue à (de) la distance, porté dans un espace de rupture, un espace de la différence. Après la production, l'architecture semble aujourd'hui se délaisser à la post-production affective – le corps *précis* de la société utilitaire, celui qui nous a transformé dans les détenus d'un modèle libidinal de précarité, marqué en permanence par les orgies de la production (de constructes, de lieus, d'architectures, etc.), se rend transparent et "affectif", se rend virtuel seulement dans la mesure où il peut devenir, "transsubstantielment", le corps *imprécis* d'un modèle (occidentalment-esthétisant) d'affectivité, ré-fléchi sur toutes les géographies, sur toutes les géopolitiques par lesquelles les périphéries deviennent, restent, sont occidentalisées.

Infra - architecturellement, le regard *du latéral* reste le témoignage de l'incertitude concernant l'avenir, en exposant/denonçant la cellule d'un vivant qui a été forcé (médiatiquement-informatiquement, économiquement-culturellement, politiquement-industriellement) à sortir en dehors pour *faire*, pour réaliser la société. Dans la mesure où les projets qui tracent les voies générales de la nouvelle politique de la Biénale de Vénice "séparent les eaux" seulement pour laisser l'océan planétaire déborder ses concepts ineffables de son propre croisement, ce qui reste à penser, du moins comme une note marginale à l'inflation événementielle qu'une telle occasion suscite, est la manière dans laquelle nous pouvons encore (pourrions-nous?) réaliser vraiment, peut-être sans accomplir, la fusion communautaire qui reconstitue les séparations essentielles d'une communauté qui est mise à côté de la communauté, pour la communauté, en dehors de la communauté, la manière dans laquelle on pourrait encore construire, par déconstruction, de l'intérieur de ses ruines, une communauté *opposée* à "la communauté".

STUDIA UBB. PHILOSOPHIA, LV, 3, 2010

BEING-WITH JEAN-LUC NANCY AND MOVING IMAGES FROM INDIA AT DEUTSCHE GUGGENHEIM

SILVIA FĂGĂRĂŞAN*

Being Singular Plural. Moving Images from India
June 26–October 10, 2010
A show curated by Sandhini Poddar, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin

Two texts by French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy and works of film and digital video art by six artists living and working in India articulated the exhibition at Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin, from June 26 to October 10, 2010. Vibrantly entitled *Being Singular Plural. Moving Images from India,* the show allowed mapping the territory for several dialogues intensely present in the contemporary artistic practices: between theoretical works adapted to frame and nurture curatorial gestures, with emphasis on the seduction that the former seem to systematically exercise upon the latter; between digital video and film practices as evolving within the visual arts scene and the documentary productions developed in the field of cinema; between the poetics of the former – film and digital video art meant as vectors of social activism or criticism – and the phenomenological themes inscribed in the latter – documentary film historically conceived as intervention within the *real*.

Even if Sandhini Poddar, Assistant Curator of Asian Art at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum preferred to entitle the show after the eponymous essay by Jean-Luc Nancy[1], it is however the other text, *The Evidence of Films*[2] that heavily informs the exhibition concept. As for *Being Singular Plural*, it is worth briefly mentioning the philosopher's stance on the triptych. Nancy's reflections on what he points out as necessary transition from the Heideggerian

* *Silvia Făgărăşan studied history, art history and theory in Bucharest, Cluj and Berlin. She currently works as freelance film archive researcher and contributes to contemporary art catalogues and magazines. Email: silvia.fagarasan@googlemail.com*

1 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* [orig. *Être singulier pluriel*, Éditions Galilée, 1996], transl. by Robert D. Richardson, Anne E. O'Byrne, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 2000.

2 *Idem*, *The Evidence of Film. Abbas Kiarostami*, transl. by Christine Irizarry, Verena Andermatt Conley, Yves Gevaert Publisher, Brussels, 2001.

ontology of Being to an ontology of ”being-with” cannot be simply translated into ”the individual is always understood within a social framework” as the exhibition leaflet recommends[3]. Nancy is openly critical of symbolization processes that employ the individual subject and the society as distinct interacting units, which he conceives as a venerable tradition that benefited in the history of philosophy or social sciences of complex treatments, most famously and productively against Freudian and Marxist backgrounds and their respective legacies[4]. He rather prefers to elevate the ”with” to a level that turns futile the much employed social critique agenda of many artists or theorists that might still favor concepts such as ”spectacle”, ”alienation” or ”the Other”. In his argument for the non-comma-separated ”Being Singular Plural”, he stresses the equally simple and elaborate vision of Being as something lacking meaning, because ”Being itself, the phenomenon of Being, is meaning that is, in turn, its own circulation”, consequently ” Being cannot *be* anything but being-with-one-another, circulating in the *with* and as the *with* of this singularly plural coexistence”[5].

The heavy borrowing from the theoretical institutions of deconstruction, postmodernism or poststructuralism, to name just a few, that curators working with socially-inquiring art often operate, is easily detectable in the Deutsche Guggenheim exhibition as well. Such practice occurs usually when film, video and digital media are favoured, privileged in this stance as well. It unveils perhaps a survival of the *ekphrasis* that dominated for a long time the companionship between literary production and the history of art. A painting of a sculpture was meant to offer its viewer details that the gazing at the sculpture itself might not have provided. Similarly, numerous literary texts describe both objects and ways of seeing that shed a vivid light on the visual example. An art describing eloquently another art. In present times, *ekphrasis* lost its dominating position, but it is arguable that it has not vanished entirely.

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[3] *Being Singular Plural. Moving Images from India*, Deutsche Guggenheim, June 26 - October 10, 2010, exhibition leaflet, p. 5.

[4] ”Thus, the disenchantment or disarray of our fin de siècle cannot content itself with mourning the passing of socialist visions, any more than it can comfort itself by replacing them with a naive collection of new ’communitarian’ themes. This disenchantment does something else; it designates our major anxiety, the one that makes ’us’ what ’we’ are today; we exist as the anxiety of ’social Being’ as such, where ’sociality’ and ’society’ are concepts plainly inadequate to its essence. This is why ’social Being’ becomes, in a way that is at first infinitely poor and problematic, ’being-in common’,’being-many’, ’being-with-one-another’ exposing the ’with’ as the category that still has no status or use, but from which we receive everything that makes us think and everything that gives ’us’ to thinking.”, Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, p. 42-43.

[5] *Op.cit.,* p. 2-3.

Surely, in the present case, the philosopher did not write the essays in order to explain the digital video art, and the works themselves have not been produced to describe the textual body. But there is at least an effect of such device that cannot be missed in an exhibition that prominently displays as its title the very name of a famous essay. Moreover, if an effect of *ekphrasis* is forcefully assigned to the *Being Singular Plural* text, it works however differently in the case of *The Evidence of Film*, the essay Nancy wrote as reflection on the films of Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami. The philosopher's attention on e.g. the *look*, the *real*, the *image*, the *respect*, the *evidence*, the *carrying away*, his observations and statements may all very well disclose the works gathered in the Deutsche Guggenheim exhibition.

The artists forming since 2004 the Desire Machine Collective duo, Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya, displayed two pieces, namely the digital color video (transferred from 16 mm film) entitled *Residue* (2009-10) and a reformatted nine-channel site-specific sound piece, *Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted* (2008-10), an interactive work for the museum's façade on Unter den Linden. *Residue*'s presentation reads the following on the artists' website: "This film has been shot in a redundant Thermal power plant in the outskirts of the city of Guwahati. Desire Machine Collective's interest is in constructed signs that can never be replicated or remembered and in the relationship between matter and memory. There is also an endless circularity and an unbearable silence — the pause that punctuates the experiences"[6].

As the quotation suggests, Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya seem well-equipped with the critical vocabulary and imagination informed by canonized texts of Derrida, Deleuze or Virilio. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that they chose their duo name by extracting concepts from Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, echoing its productive machine subconscious. In general, digital art is richly informed by decontextualized concepts traceable in the late 20th century- early 21st century contemporary philosophy, and the works of the two Indian artists make no exception in this sense. The intensive migration of notions and idioms from famous theoretical works – especially with the flourishing in the American academia of the "French Theory" department - into the field of art criticism and artists' writings, has vastly characterized the socially critical or the art-in-context tendencies in contemporary art. This ultimately permeates the non-Western spaces and the Indian artists gathered in the show – except for USA-born Shumona Goel and Pakistan-born Kabir Mohanty - mirror such process. The implication reveals consequently a certain

[6] http://www.desiremachinecollective.net/WORKS/VIDEO/Residue.htm Last accessed 28.11.2010.

fragility in the exhibitional argument: it becomes increasingly difficult to defend the integrity of the counternarratives when the underlying premise claims in fact a common origin with their own targets of criticism.

Specifically in the case of the *Being Singular Plural* exhibition, much has been stated (in the accompanying catalogue and the press releases) on its clear departure from standardized visions of contemporary Indian art. The argument relies on the old distinction between traditional media like painting, sculpture or photography, seen as easy victims in the hands of the omni-terrible art market, on one hand, and the equally problematic tradition of Bollywood, on the other hand. It seems there is a preference to value positively the moving image, the video/film or installation art, but refuse the saliently good attributes to the older media. The situation can be explained however through an analysis of the production, since much of the older media is still very much attached to ornamental, decorative, ”exotic” features that bear no critical resemblance. Additionally, the topic of ”meaning” to be found in the front-run of the hermeneutics of the moving image has generated a solid theoretical body of work that carefully perpetuates such legitimacy.

The moving image has benefited of an expanded interest summarized in the *video/film is meaningful* adagio; meaning is equaled with an effect of presence, even when the narrative deals with a past event, reinforced by the motion within the medium itself and its snapshot-after-snapshot condition. Metz, Bazin, Deleuze or Ricoeur, they all devoted extensive thought on the materiality of the film which, by contrast to photography, is seen capable to drastically convey effects of presence. As Malin Wahlberg puts it: ”film theory has been haunted by phenomenological themes”[7]. In his *Evidence of Film*, Nancy resumes this argument of presence and links it to the immense power of the film (especially the experimental one) to perpetually generate questions: the questioning that sets in motion the viewer’s mind is joined by the action of a mobilized gaze, more precisely[8]. The gaze reacts paradoxically at the

[7] Malin Wahlberg, *Documentary Time. Film and Phenomenology*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2008, p. 145.

[8] ”In a closer, deeper way the film’s timely insistence on the *present* of its subject matter impressed itself: a singular force, neither engaged with the past as such – not even the recent past – nor timeless, confidently impressed the gaze. It is an obstinate film on a unique topic (that cannot be summarized), and it is also endless (without a resolution in the end), and insists, above all, on leaving things unclosed, so that the film continues beyond the film (...) and all along there is a stream of questions – all at ounce monotonous and polymorphous, repetitive and shifting (...)”, Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Evidence of Film*, p. 10.

”Cinema becomes the *motion* of what is real, much more than its representation. It will have taken long for the illusion of reality that held the ambiguous prestige and glamour of films – as if they had done nothing but carry to the extreme the old mimetic drive of the Western world – to disappear, at least in tendency, from an awareness of cinema (or from its self-awareness) and for a mobilized way of looking to take its place”, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

absence of any blatant plot or cinematic tricks by engaging dynamically with the slightly blurred quality of the film image. It connects its materiality to the possibility that the medium activates questions. This marks the ethical injunction within the film medium, an injunction that is traced in the area of the digital video art as well (it is not surprising then that transfers between film and digital happen frequently, because no qualitative loss of ethical or critical input is registered - what was assigned originally to film impregnates the digital realm as well).

Shumona Goel and Shai Heredia's 16 mm black-and-white film with sound *I am micro* (2009–) is a work-in-progress, part of the independent Indian filmmaking scene and the Berlin exhibition displayed the first part of the project. The film is shot in an abandoned optics factory and on the set of an independent film production and it is difficult to detect what differentiates such piece from documentary filmmaking, except for its display in a museum, in the proximity of other digital video art installations. The strongest work in the exhibition comes nevertheless from artist Amar Kanwar in his 19-channel video installation *The Torn First Pages* (2004–08). It is assembled in memory of Ko Than Htay, the bookshop owner who was imprisoned for tearing out the first page of all the books and journals containing ideological slogans of the military regime in Burma. By contrast to the other works, Kanwar's exposes obvious images of death, struggle and resistance that call upon themselves many questions related to issues like memory, dislocation, the private/public interaction under an oppressive regime. His installation resorts to examinations of iconic images, such as the photograph of a high-school student shot by Burmese soldiers during the 1988 student protests. This photograph is successively blurred, distorted and put into motion, playing on the ambiguities of the *evidence*: once as proof, as material, as information container that was lost from the collective awareness shortly after its original release to the public and more, evidence as the process of bringing into attention the operations specific for the digital realm. Further distortion and dissection of the image occurs in the case of General Than Shwe's picture, the supreme head of the Burmese military dictatorship, captured while throwing rose petals at the cremation memorial site of Gandhi in Delhi. Experimenting with digital video image is present in the work of Kabir Mohanty as well, *Song for an ancient land* (2003-), whose own physicality is systematically denounced by its author through curving or inverting of both new and old archival footage.

Whether the human figure, either as victim or perpetrator, features in these film and digital video art works, it becomes of less importance in comparison to what these media put forcefully into play: the tensioned

exchange between the gaze of the viewer and the presence of the materiality whose catalyst resides in what Nancy attributes to the Being: ” Being is not something; it is that something goes on. It is that it continues, neither above nor below the moments, events, singularities and individuals that are discontinuous, but in a manner that is stranger yet: in discontinuity itself, and without fusing it into a *continuum*. It continues to discontinue, it discontinues continuously. Like the images of the film”[9]. The moving image, no matter how distorted and dissected, without being ordinary in itself, manages to convey a sense of ordinariness. This is claimed as winning case argument by digital video art advocates for its ambition to critically engage social issues. Ordinariness captured successfully in film and video art, as opposed to the failure of the Bollywoodian image, caged in its own tradition of glamorous sentimentality and visual excess. *Being Singular Plural* turns out eventually as an opportunity to carry further the hierarchical divide between older or newer media, to reinforce the processual nature of the latter and to reassure contemporary video art practice of its fusion with contemporary philosophy.

[9] *Op.cit.,* p. 60.

STUDIA UBB. PHILOSOPHIA, LV, 3, 2010

Book Reviews

Chan-fai Cheung: *Kairos. Phenomenology and Photography*

Review by KNUT SKJÆRVEN*

Kairos: Now is the right time!

Yes, it was a rare case of a decisive moment. The right time and the right place.

How else would you explain the two email messages, with the same content, that landed in my mailbox at the beginning of June this year? On the same day. As if wanting to make their point with some importance.

The mails arrived from Zeta Books and obviously the publisher tried to get my attention for a new book that had just been published. The name of the book was Kairos. Phenomenology and Photography. The author was Chan-fai Cheung, Professor and Chairman, Department of Philosophy, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

How could the publisher know that I was in the process of studying the texts and pictures of French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson? Was it not Cartier-Bresson who invented "decisive moments" in photography? Was he not the brilliant executor of "kairos photography"?

Here was a new book with the title Kairos knocking on my door.

The title is taken from Greek. The Greeks have two concepts for time, "kronos" and "kairos". "Kronos" is the linear passing of time from a past, to a present, towards a future. "Kairos", on the other hand, deals with decisive moments in time. Cheung sais: "Kairos … means the right time, opportune and seasoned time."[1]

The two emails certainly got my attention. I downloaded the ebook version the same day. I guessed that it was probably quicker to get my hands on a hard copy of the book from the author than from the publisher, so I approached Chan-fai Cheung that very evening. A week

* **KNUT SKJÆRVEN** lives in Copenhagen, Denmark (*knutskjaerven@gmail.com*). He was educated within philosophy, aesthetics, phenomenology, film and the visual arts at University of Bergen, Norway, and Copenhagen Universtity, Denmark. Apart from his business career within advertising, sales and business communication, he has worked as a free-lance writer and photographer for many years. He has written numerous articles and two books on related themes. One book is on phenomenology and film. Knut Skjærven, has initiated, and runs a number of blogs, where he combines phenomenological insights with practical photography: *Barebones Communication (http://barebonescommunication.com), Wordpress 2007*; *Berlin Black and White (http://berlinblackandwhite.com), Wordpress 2010*; *Photos of the Danes (http://photosofthedanes.wordpress.com), Wordpress 2010*; *Phenomenology and Photography (http://phenomenologyandphotography.com), Wordpress 2010*.

[1] Chan-fai Cheung: *Kairos. Phenomenology and Photography*, Edwin Cheng Foundation Asian Centre for Phenomenology, Hong Kong, 2009, Preface.

later I had my hard copy. (You will need a hard copy of Kairos, since the virtual version does not give justice to the many photographs that are included in the book).

Emails were sent from China to Europe and back over the next days. Chan-fai Cheung asked me if I would like to review the book for a philosophical journal in Romania. Sure, I said, and later I almost regretted. After I started reading I realized that the written essays were not exactly Sunday entertainment. Particularly not for a right-brained, wonnabe photographer like myself. Chan-fai Cheung seeks, in Kairos, to contribute to the ontology of the photographic image. No more, no less.

And that is a very ambitious task.

It has been many years since someone inspired by the phenomenological movement, tried that. There is, first and foremost, Roland Barthes with his now famous Camera Lucida[2], but that book was written 30 years ago. Barthes' methodical inspiration is phenomenology.

Other contributions are: Vilém Flusser with his Towards a Philosophy of Photography[3], and Hubert Damish with his Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image[4]. The last one being the most explicit on phenomenology, but it is what it says: notes. It was written in 1963.

You may marginally count texts of Andre Bazin[5] and Siegfried Kracauer[6].

And there are masters like Susan Sontag[7] and John Berger[8], who have made lasting contributions to the understanding of photography, but neither of them is explicitly related to phenomenology.

The literature on phenomenology and photography is not impressive.

What triggered me with Cheung's book was that Kairos experimented with a combination of written essays and photographed essays. The many photographs (183 in all) come without any kind of "user guide", which could be demanding in a world of fast perceptions. Many people seem to have lost the abilities to "deep read" photographs. (If they ever had such an ability.)

Today, many tend merely to look at photographs and regard them as commodities that aren't meant for a second glance. Cheung's photographs deserves more than that, particularly in the context of Kairos, where the images are published for a reason. Having the photographs presented without any reason d'etre and only loosely linked to the texts, is a daring move.

The written essays are: Hans Rainer Zepp: The Reality of a Photograph.; Kwok-ying Lau: Interplay between the Visible and the Imaginary; Chan-fai Cheung: Phenomenology and Photography; Doors and Windows; Funerary Sculptures and 30.000 Feet From Above.

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2 Roland Barthes: *Camera Lucida*, Vintage Books 2000, London.

3 Vilém Flusser: *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, Reaktion Book 2007, London.

4 Hubert Damisch*: Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image*, in *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg, Leete's Island Books 1980, New Haven.

5 André Bazin: *The Ontology of the Photographic Image*, in *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg, Leete's Island Books 1980, New Haven.

6 Sigfried Kracauer: *Photography*, in *Classic Essays on Photography*, edited by Alan Trachtenberg, Leete's Island Books 1980, New Haven.

7 Susan Sontag: *On Photography*, Penguin Books 1977, London.

8 John Berger; *Ways of Seeing*, BBC and Penguin Books 2008, London.

I consider Cheung's essay Phenomenology and Photography to be the core essay in the book. There the author indicates the intentions for his overall project.

The other essays elaborate on, and opens up the theme from different angles: Hans Rainer Sepp in his in depth analysis of one of Cheung's photographs; Kwok-ying Lau investigating an approach to phenomenology and photography in a series of notes. And there are Cheung's own additional essays, Doors and Windows, Funerary Sculptures and his short introduction to 30.000 Feet From Above.

Not to forget the many visual statements in the photographic sections. The pictures operate as indirect, individual statements on phenomenology and photography.

The essays make a nice portfolio of themes that takes you around in the varied world of phenomenology. Not all of them with the same importance. I find, for instance, that the last essay: 30.000 Feet From Above, is included more for the sake of the colourful pictures than for its contribution to phenomenology. In terms of photography Cheung simply can't hold back. That spirit shines through the whole project.

I enjoy such a straightforward, enthusiastic dedication.

In most chapters photos and texts are held together by a common theme. This is the case, for instance, in the sections on funerary shooting, and on doors and windows.

In the core essay the photographs come in a great variety of themes and styles. From slices-of-life, to architecture, to close-up flower shooting, and much more. You sense Chan-fai Cheung's great, great interest for visual statements, and the high demands he makes on the readers/viewers to have the texts and the photographs come together as coherent messages.

Apart from my general admiration for a project combining phenomenology and photography, Kairos present many challenges. Particularly when it comes to closing in on important "ontological questions". This is not the time or the place for a lengthy discussion of these matters, but let me mention some of them briefly.

In the preface the term "kairos" is set apart from from "kronos", as it should be. Cheung continues: "… if photography is seriously considered as art, then the clicking of the shutter by the conscientious photographer for a particular phenomenon through his photographic seeing is what Cartier-Bresson called "the decisive moment", i.e. kairos. All creative photographic works are products of kairos."[9]

Such a definition is hardly what Cartier-Bresson had in mind when he described "decisive moments" in his famous essay from 1952.[10]

"Decisive moments" refer to specific genres of photography e.g street shooting, people shooting and photo reportage. In addition, "decisive moments" need to be strikingly decisive to qualify as kairos'. Complying with rules of classical visual composition, and visual clarity, are other key parameters stressed by Cartier-Bresson.

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[9] Chan-fai Cheung: *Kairos. Phenomenology and Photography*, Edwin Cheng Foundation Asian Centre for Phenomenology 2009, Hong Kong, Preface.

[10] Henri Cartier-Bresson: *The Decisive Moment*, in *The Minds Eye*, Aperture 1999, London, pp. 20-43.

I miss a chapter explaining how and why Cheung's definition of "kairos" fit, or does not fit, to Cartier-Bresson's description of "decisive moments".

Another thing: Cheung borrows key terms from phenomenology. Two of these terms are "reduction", and "bracket". The author sets these terms to work in a very specific way: reduction, in Kairos, is the framing of a photograph. Bracket is a further reduction meant to eliminate unnecessary elements surrounding the subject or object being photographed. The second reduction, the bracket, is handled with means like aperture setting, shutter speed, ISO, choice of lens, position of photographer, et cetera.

My question is: when adapting such key terms from phenomenology to a technical, photographic use, what are the terms that will substitute the "old" uses of these terms? There is a world of difference between a phenomenological bracketing of the natural attitude to turning wheels and handles on a camera.

My worry is that the adaptation of terms like "reduction" and "bracket" to the technical world of photography, could, in fact, obscure the whole project. Basic phenomenology is, in a way, lost.

Furthermore: Does the photographer leave the natural attitude when he looks through the viewfinder of a camera? Cheung says:" Photographic seeing is seeing through a view-finder of a camera. Hence is it in essence a restricted seeing and not seeing in the natural attitude."[11]

I don't agree that looking through a viewfinder of a camera implies that you abandon the natural attitude. Many things in our world, in fact most things, are based on a restricted seeing (like for instance driving a car), but that does not make such seeing phenomenological.

As much as I enjoy Kairos, I am in serious doubt about the uses of some of the central terms and definitions. Challenges, like those indicated above, needs be overcome for reasons of clarity.

The important thing is that Kairos has emerged at a crucial point in time. We take more and more pictures due to the digital revolutions, and to the low prices on adequate equipment. Today everyone is a photographer. Look at the amount of photography that goes into social media like Facebook. Look at the growth of flickr. Look at the amount a pictures being sent via cell phones.

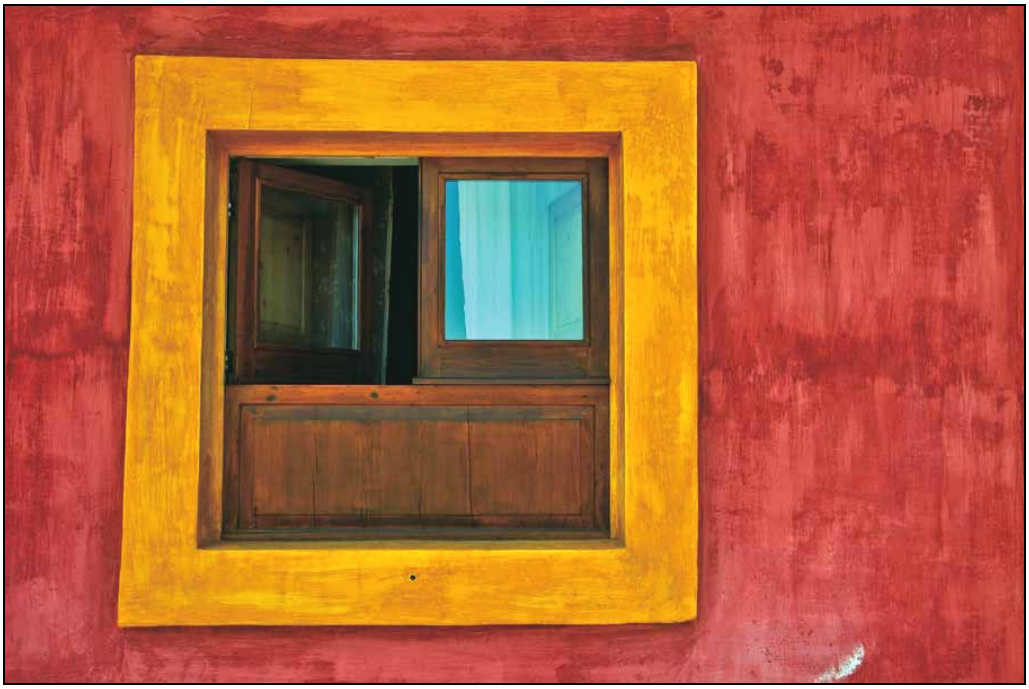
Yet, there still is little understanding of what photography is, and what photographs do. Are we all brilliant executors of kairos all of the time? Hardly.

The impact of the increased amounts of visual communication that surrounds us, has so far, not been seriously investigated by phenomenologist. Phenomenology needs to take a stand and contribute to this area with insight, research and communication. The description, and understanding of photography play a very important part in this. The task is huge, and it is badly needed. It is there to be taken.

Maybe now is the right time? Kairos could be a book to trigger the new interest we need to take in photography.

[11] Chan-fai Cheung: *Kairos. Phenomenology and Photography*, Edwin Cheng Foundation Asian Centre for Phenomenology 2009, Hong Kong, p. 009.

Sicily 2005



If I should pick one single photograph from the book that I particularly enjoy, it must be the one shot in Sicily in 2005. This image is one of the most beautiful in the book. At one time it holds great brilliance, and greats secrets. Presence and absence. An invitation to enter. An invitation to do phenomenology.

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Book Reviews

Deception: *Essays from the Outis Project on Deception* / Society for Phenomenology and Media

Paul Majkut, Editor; Alberto J. L. Carrillo Canán, Co-Editor

Reviewed by GEMMA SAN CORNELIO*

Amongst the many things that academic life implies, it is always pleasing to read a book with the only purpose of enjoying it and make some notes for a revision. This is the case of the book I am examining on the occasion of this special issue on phenomenology of digital technologies: *Essays from the Outis Project on Deception* edited by the Society for Phenomenology and Media. First of all, I would like to situate myself as a media scholar and researcher in new media, digital art and aesthetics. That makes me especially sensitive to some specific fields of phenomenology, such us Phenomenology of Perception or phenomenological aesthetics, and phenomenological approaches to media in general. Thus, within the widest range of topics included in this volume, and the interesting insights provided by the phenomenological approach, I will focus my article in some concrete chapters that deal with the media in general, and particularly with digital media.

I wanted to make that statement clear in order to stress the fact that despite the many remarkable papers dealing with the notion of deception in numerous and original perspectives, for the purpose of this issue on Phenomenology and digital technologies I will analyze the following six chapters: *"The Arrival of a Train" and a New Aesthetic Principle* by Tobias Borup; *Deception and Reality Shows* by Melanie Bourdaa; *The Soul Factor: Deception in Intimations of Life in Computer-Generated Characters* by Kathryn S. Egan; *Disappointment and Virtuality: From Cyberspace to the Human Body: Imagination or Deception?* by Catherine Pascal and *Self-explanation of Deception in Temporal, Spatial Experience* by Piotr Winskowski.

I will start from the beginning. *'The Arrival of a Train' and a New Aesthetic Principle* analyses one of the first films in the history of cinema – just after 'La sortie des usines *Lumière* à Lyon'[1] by the Lumière Brothers, as well. Consequently, 'The Arrival of a Train' is one of the most studied films in the field of theory of cinema by authors such as Andre Bazin or Noel Burch, dealing particularly with the notions of reality, representation, and movement. Additionally, the film is very well-known due to the anecdote of the audience being scared of the train

* *Associate Professor, Information and communication sciences department, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, 22@ (Rambla Poblenou, 156), Barcelona 08022. Email: gsan_cornelio@uoc.edu*

[1] 'Employees Leaving the *Lumière* Factory' (English title of the film)

and running away from the theater. In fact, Borup centers his analysis in this particular context of film 'reception', drawing on Griffith's notion of moving image as the "showing of a view" and Tarkowsky's understanding of the origins of cinema as an "aesthetic principle", thus proposing a phenomenological aesthetic approach to the study of the audience reaction. The main point in the article is that the fear of the audience is connected, rather to the excessive amount of realism of the image – as it is normally understood –, to the notion of point of view. The point of view in this film was unfamiliar and unexpected for the audience, providing in turn, the deception. His statement is similar to that of Tom Gunning (1995), who posits that the reactions were not of fear but of disbelief; they knew the train could not be there at that particular moment in that particular place (what they knew was not what they saw). The relevance of the notion of point of view raised by Borup is very significant in order to analyze current films such as Avatar, that on the one hand, include advanced 3D techniques aiming to immersion and consequently trying to overcome the notion of the static point of view, but on the other hand, this technical advance is not enough to overcome the Renascence's unique point of view (just adding some layers in the front). This chapter has shown us that turning our view to the classics is always useful to understand the current aesthetics and conditions of visioning films.

Malanie Borudaa deals with a case study of the French version of the popular TV show 'Stars Academy' in *Deception and reality shows*. The main point of the chapter is that deception in reality shows emerge when the audiences are aware that their participation in the show production is limited, in other words, reality shows are proposing a sort of 'fake' participation, based on the illusion of interactivity in sending messages to vote for the participants. Her conclusions are grounded on empirical analysis of some strategies of the TV producers that consist of addressing the votes to their 'favorite' candidates; in Borudaa's words: "the producers can enlighten one candidate's behavior more than another one. This is where deception lies."[2] So they put the candidates in specific situations to make them more attractive or unattractive to the audience. Despite the fact that Borudaa afterwards introduces the debate on the notions of fiction, reality and interaction in a not very successful way, some interesting ideas are raised favoring the understanding of the insights of these kinds of TV shows and how the producers negotiate the limits of reality and performance in the participants' behaviors. This negotiation is constantly being rethought and made clear in other examples, such as a recent case in the Spanish Big Brother show where two of the participants were thrown out of the contest by the organization because they were thought not to be acting naturally but performing in a much exaggerated way.

In *The Soul Factor: Deception in Intimations of Life in Computer-Generated Character*, Katrhyn Egan discusses if some CGI characters can have 'soul', as some creators propose. Drawing on the traditional definition of the notion of soul by Aristotle, she focuses on the notion of 'empathy' proposed by Edith Stein as 'the giveness of foreign objects (Husserl's transcendent objects) and their experience to a psycho-physical 'I' that is body and soul together'[3]. She

[2] Borudaa, M. (2010) 'Deception and reality shows', in Majkut, P. *Deception: Essays from the Outis Project on Deception / Society for Phenomenology and Media.* Zeta Books: Bucharest, p. 67

[3] Egan, K. (2010) 'The Soul Factor: Deception in Intimations of Life in Computer-Generated Character', in Majkut, P. *Deception: Essays from the Outis Project on Deception / Society for Phenomenology and Media*, Zeta Books: Bucharest, p. 114.

proceed to a phenomenological analysis of the double-sided character Gollum-Smigol in the 'Lord of the rings', through his morphological features and movements addressed to reflect the anguish and tortured feelings of a 'Doppelganger'. Her principal argument is that she experiments a lack of empathy with the character when she feels precisely that he hasn't soul, and consequently deception takes place. For Egan, feeling compassion for the character seems not to be enough to empathize with it, so there's deception. The author concludes that deception in her case was probably due to her personal expectations in the soul component of the character although in my opinion the compassion she says to feel might be sufficient to achieve the character identification.

Catherine Pascal in *Disappointment and Virtuality: From Cyberspace to the Human Body: Imagination or Deception?* deals with the relation of human bodies in cyberspace in terms of imagination and deception. She writes about the different social environments on the Internet and the relationships that people engage in spaces such as meetic.com, Second Life or Facebook. She highlights in the chapter how Internet users negotiate their virtual identity in respect to their 'real' and original identity. This identity is sometimes shown as playful, including fantastic or imaginative elements although not necessarily contrary to the personality of the user. The chapter puts in relation the imagination – in the psychological realm – and the emotional and physical aspects brought about through some empirical qualitative research and an interdisciplinary theoretical framework mixing Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, postmodern approaches from Lipovetsky and rhetorical insights by Roland Barthes.

Finally, Piotr Winskowski in *Self-explanation of Deception in Temporal, Spatial Experience*, analyses brilliantly five examples of experiences in architecture related to deception in emotional and evocative ways. He posits that these examples are based on the different dynamics of perception in contrast to traditional deception in space caused by the architecture itself, so he focuses in some strategies of representation, such as 'trompe l'oeil'. Winskowski argues that deception occurs when the audience feels mislead when they perceive something that is not actually as it seems, so in a sense deception is quite close to surprise. Some of the interesting strategies pointed by Winskowski are false perspectives and illusions, or introducing the time as an element of distortion, in a sense that you can not solve the image paradox seen, until some time later in your mental activity, in the form of an explanation. Winskowski considers that recent architecture has succumbed to a sort of fashionable and neo-expressionism and decorationism that has become tiring[4]. He proposes in response to add complexity in architecture through the use of the previous strategies appealing to users interpretations of space.

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Book Reviews

Art, Space and Memory in the Digital Era

Editor: Tincuta Heinzel, Paideia, Bucharest, 2010, 151 pp.

Review by STEPHANIE BRANDT*

A new contribution on art and culture in 21st Century digital era has been released earlier this year in Romania based on presentations made during the Conference "Areas of Conflu[x]ence: Art, Technology and Space in the Digital Era".

This diverse collection of mostly theoretical essays from international artists and academics, which is giving an up-to-date view about the affects of 20th Century technological revolution and how it changed the ways we represent, utilize and perceive our environments is assembled into a compact and accessible book by its editor Tincuta Heinzel. The publication brings together critical contributions by artists, philosophers, writers and composers who are reflecting the ways in which digital technology is affecting image and sound in our 21st Century.

As a form of critical speculation, this book offers a wide range of thought-provoking texts opening up as many questions as possible answers to the ways in which digital technology is affecting image and sound. The academic studies in the book are divided into categories like "framework investigations," which includes contributions from Spanish new media researcher Gemma San Cornelius and philosopher Pau Alsina, architect and philosopher Augustin Ioan, and cultural scientist Heike Helfert and "experience-based work," which features an interview with video art pioneer Woody Vasulka and Anne-Marie Duguet's original *anarchive* DVD project. Future projections are also covered, looking at the surveillance of virtual and physical public spaces, the influences of virtual reality technology on architecture and design, and the interaction between our perception of such virtual worlds and the forms of artistic representations.

A book that includes descriptive, analytical and sometimes polemic texts, which are contemplating the role of art and aesthetics in 21st Century society, the forms they take and speculations about their future developments.

* *Dipl.Ing. MArch ARB AKNRW - SPACEPILOTS London/Cologne - www.spacepilots.net*

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VARIA

ESPACE PUBLIC : DISSENSUS ET HETEROLOGIES URBAINES

CIPRIAN MIHALI[*]

> « La perte de l'esprit du capitalisme et la misère spirituelle où elle conduit ne peuvent engendrer que le développement d'une société profondément *irrationnelle* au sens où en a disparu la raison comme *motif d'espérer*, comme règne des fins. Le désenchantement *absolu*, comme *disparition de tout horizon d'attente*, et où toute croyance, religieuse, politique *ou libidinale*, c'est-à-dire aussi filiale et sociale, et constituant en cela le tissu des solidarités sans lesquelles aucune société n'est possible… frappe en particulier ceux qui pense *ne plus rien avoir à attendre* du développement des sociétés hyper-industrielles – et qui sont *de plus en plus nombreux* » (Bernard Stiegler, *Mécréance et discrédit*, p. 18).

ABSTRACT. ***Public Space: Dissent and Urban Heterologies*.** Postcommunist Romanian society is about to come to a close, against the backdrop and the pretext of an international crisis, a long period of transition marked by permanent mobilization to achieve a certain number of economic, legal, military and security objectives, considered to represent the same number of formal stages to reach "the Western European" level of democracy in society. However, once this period comes to an end, it slips into what the French philosopher Jacques Rancière called "logic of police" in the organization of the urban space, which evacuates, through a series of administrative, economic or media strategies, the specific process of the public space. This process presupposes a whole ensemble of practices guided by the presupposition of equality and difference among the speaking beings, animated by the preoccupation for a constant overseeing of this equality. We shall describe such a process in terms of some of its characteristics – which we shall call "infrapolitical" – referring to some possible conditions of the politics, at the junction between rational and sensible or, individual and collective: trust, promise, hope, solidarity, values and beliefs. Their mobilization into the social body and among its individuals allows not only the invention of a new political subjectivity but also the creation of new public spaces in their sensible dimensions, as an opening towards new urban places, capable of receiving and nurturing a plurality of actions, of gestures and of discourses that are precisely creative because of the differences between them.

Keywords: public space, postcommunism, dissent, creativity, sensibility, urbanity.

[*] *Département de Philosophie, Université « Babeş-Bolyai » Cluj-Napoca (Roumanie).*
E-mail : ciprianmihali@yahoo.fr

Ce texte est le prolongement d'une série de réflexions menées à plusieurs voix lors des rencontres scientifiques qui ont eu lieu à Cluj à partir du janvier 2010. Nous avons été plusieurs à proposer (à nous proposer tout d'abord) d'entamer une réflexion pluridisciplinaire sur les transformations de la société postcommuniste, une réflexion articulée autour de quelques concepts censés permettre une meilleure compréhension du présent, en rapport avec le passé récent et avec l'avenir, tous les deux encore si mal négociés en théorie et en pratique sociales. Des concepts comme espérance et promesse, confiance et solidarité ont été lus et interprétés par des philosophes, juristes, sociologues ou spécialistes en science politique, afin d'interpréter la reconfiguration des rapports sociaux de force, l'institutionnalisation du pouvoir ou les avatars de la justice à la sortie des régimes totalitaires et à l'entrée dans le monde dit démocratique.

La crise qui affecte actuellement nos sociétés, la crise structurale de l'économie, de la politique et de la société roumaine est une occasion pour mieux déceler ou évaluer les transformations de ces deux dernières décennies. Une crise structurale, bien entendu, avec le passage sauvage à l'économie de marché avec une privatisation chaotique et un dérèglement du rapport entre public et privé, avec une crise accrue de la représentation politique, mais aussi la crise plus profonde, et avec peut-être une histoire plus compliquée, des relations sociales, interhumaines – tout cela nous a déterminé à poser des questions par rapport aux stratégies intellectuelles, scientifiques ou philosophiques, qui accompagnent ces phénomènes. On a pu ainsi constater, en ordre temporel, le déficit de médiation entre l'héritage du passé, les priorités du présent et les défis du futur, alors que dans l'ordre de l'espace, nous assistons depuis vingt ans au bouleversement des relations publiques et privées, à la transgression des territoires publics par le privés et inversement, mais également à la despatialisation ou à la respatialisation de certains comportements individuels et collectif.

Dans leurs interventions publiques récentes, et suite à des analyses de terrain ou à des recherches empiriques, les sociologues et les autres spécialistes du phénomène social parlent de plus en plus, lorsqu'il s'agit de l'espace public, d'une démission collective des intellectuels – dans le sens de leur incapacité à inventer et entretenir une pensée utopique (entendue ici comme l'impertinence qui produit la rupture par rapport à l'ordre présent) – et de l'absence de politiques publiques sur l'agenda de la classe politique, trop dépendante dans son action en même temps des urgences du présent et du rating électoral. Sur ce fond nous sommes les acteurs et les témoins d'un démantèlement des relations interhumaines, d'une décrédibilisation des valeurs collectives et du collectif, d'une disjonction de plus en plus accentuée entre l'Etat, son pouvoir et ses institutions, d'un côté, et les individus, la société civile ou les communautés locales, de l'autre côté. Les mêmes sociologues qui ont participé à nos rencontres nous parlent – et nous prenons leurs affirmations sans les juger ici – d'une « augmentation de l'énergie négative de la dissolution » qui se consomme dans des gestes violents, des réactions impulsives, non-réfléchies, d'une société affectée par la méfiance envers l'autre, par la diminution du « capital social »

(en tant que capacité des hommes à résoudre des problèmes ensemble), sur un fond de « pessimisme délirant et illusoire », et par une délégitimation systématique non seulement de son système politique, de *la* politique, mais aussi de toute action ou engagement collectifs. Une société fracturée, donc, vivant sous la tyrannie du court terme et des valeurs matérialistes, incapable d'articuler des valeurs post-matérialistes, touchée par l'érosion de l'idée de solidarité, de projet commun, de l'autoévaluation, de la confiance interpersonnelle et institutionnelle[1].

Il nous a semblé que ces évaluations doivent être discutées plus en profondeur et que les concepts qui leur sont attachés peuvent être en même temps mis en rapport avec un thème plus ancien, qui ne cesse de s'offrir comme indicateur du fonctionnement de la société moderne et plus particulièrement de la société postcommuniste. Il s'agit du thème de l'espace public, que je vais décliner ici dans une clé de lecture inspirée par la philosophie de Jacques Rancière et de sa théorie du partage du sensible, telle qu'elle est développée dans plusieurs ouvrages, notamment dans *La mésentente* et *Aux bords du politique*, et qui sera prolongée ensuite avec une incursion dans l'espace urbain des villes postcommunistes.

Le mérite de cette théorie consiste, selon l'intérêt qui est le nôtre ici, dans le fait d'avoir mis en évidence la dimension d'hétérogénéité (ou plutôt de partage) du sensible dans la construction de l'espace public, une dimension moins exploitée par la pensée philosophique contemporaine, en accompagnant ainsi les autres grands discours sur la rationalité, la communication intersubjective ou la pluralité dans l'action qui ont été invoqués comme des éléments constitutifs pour la naissance de la sphère publique moderne.

Nous allons proposer alors l'hypothèse suivante : la société roumaine postcommuniste achève, sur le fond et sous le prétexte de la crise mondiale, une longue période de transition marquée par une mobilisation permanente en vue d'atteindre un certain nombre d'objectifs économiques, législatifs, militaires ou de sécurité considérés comme autant d'étapes formelles pour atteindre un niveau dit « européen » de démocratisation de la société. Mais avec l'achèvement de cette étape, elle est en train de glisser vers ce que Rancière appelle « une forme policière » d'organisation de l'espace urbain, en évacuant par toute une série de stratégies administratives, médiatiques ou économiques le processus de l'égalité comme « ensemble ouvert des pratiques guidées par la supposition de l'égalité de n'importe quel être parlant avec n'importe quel autre être parlant et par le souci de vérifier cette égalité »[2]. Dans nos termes, ce processus peut être décrit selon quelques autres caractéristiques que j'appellerai « infra-politiques » – des conditions de possibilité de la politique – à la charnière du rationnel et du sensible, de l'individuel et du collectif, telle la confiance et

[1] Nous faisons référence ici aux conférences soutenues en avril et mai 2010 par Mme Ruxandra Cesereanu et par MM. Horvath Istvan, Vasile S. Dâncu et Gabriel Bădescu dans le cadre du cycle des conférences « Les politiques de l'espérance : qui et comment reconstruit la société après la crise ? », organisé par l'Institut Francophone Régional d'Etudes Stratégiques – Europe centrale et orientale (www.eco.ifres.info).

[2] Jacques Rancière, *La Mésentente. Politique et philosophie*, Paris, Galilée, 1995, p. 53.

la promesse, l'espérance et la solidarité, valeurs et croyances dont la mobilisation à travers le corps social et parmi les individus permet nos seulement la subjectivation politique (selon l'expression du même Rancière) mais aussi la création d'espaces publics dans leurs dimensions sensibles, comme ouverture ou espacement de lieux physiques en ville capable d'accueillir une pluralités de postures et de discours différents, dissensuels. Expliquons brièvement cette hypothèse, afin de passer ensuite à sa démonstration.

Le philosophe français introduit une distinction, bien connue désormais, entre la logique policière et la logique politique. La première décrit « un ordre des corps qui définit les partages entre les modes de faire, les modes d'être et les modes du dire, qui fait que tels corps sont assignés par leur nom à telle place et à telle tâche ; c'est un ordre du visible et du dicible qui fait que telle activité est visible et telle autre ne l'est pas, que telle parole est entendue comme du discours et telle autre comme du bruit »[3]. La police, en ce sens large et neutre, n'a pas principalement comme tâche de discipliner et de réprimer (quoique nous puissions attester par des exemples quotidiens de son renforcement au nom de l'ordre public ou de la fluidité de la circulation des biens, des personnes, des informations, des capitaux), mais d'imposer une configuration spatiale, sensible, des occupations, des fonctions, des obligations et des droits et, avec elle, une légitimation normative, administrative ou légale de cette configuration. La logique politique, en revanche, introduit comme une sorte de dislocation, en troublant l'ordre spatial des corps, des manières de faire et des discours ; « l'activité politique est celle qui déplace un corps du lieu qui lui était assigné ou change la destination du lieu ; elle fait voir ce qui n'avait pas lieu d'être vu, fait entendre un discours là où seul le bruit avait son lieu, fait entendre comme discours ce qui n'était entendu que comme bruit »[4]. Pour notre propos, le trait significatif de la politique est celui qui concerne le démantèlement des partages sensibles de l'ordre policier, la résistance à la rigidité spatiale et au contrôle du sensible (du visible notamment) et l'exploration permanente de nouveaux horizons d'expérience, grâce auxquels les individus sont capables de se désidentifier, de se soustraire à leurs identités formelles en les stimulant à adopter des positions corporelles et discursives nouvelles dans des espaces non-destinées a priori à de telles positions.

Il n'y pas d'incompatibilité entre les deux logiques ; par contre, elles se nourrissent l'une de l'autre, la politique naît d'une contestation permanente de l'ordre policier, de la mise en question de ses objets et de ses distributions spatiales, corporelles ou fonctionnelles, alors que celui-ci essaie de ramener la politique à sa stabilité et homogénéité. Elles ont même un point de rencontre dans ce que le philosophe appelle le litige ou le dissensus, comme manifestation des rapports de force hétérogènes et toujours provisoirement réglés entre la tendance vers l'Un policier du pouvoir et la revendication du multiple politique, l'affirmation des résistances et

[3] *Ibidem*, p. 52.
[4] *Ibidem*, p. 53.

la créations des pouvoirs alternatifs. Et parce que la politique n'a pas de terrain propre, parce qu'elle se joue en quelque sorte comme braconnage et « squatting » (saisie de l'occasion dans le temps et occupation temporaire d'un lieu), elle crée des cas, elle inscrit « sous la forme du litige la vérification de l'égalité au cœur de l'ordre policier »[5]. En tant que telle, cette distinction nous en rappelle une autre, introduite par Michel de Certeau dans son *Invention du quotidien*, entre stratégie et tactique comme deux types de maîtrise du temps-espace urbain ; si nous remontons dans la filiation conceptuelle, on s'aperçoit que tous les deux recoupent en fait le concept classique déjà de pouvoir-contrepouvoir de Michel Foucault.

Nous pouvons observer à ce point, sans suivre des généalogies qui nous obligeraient à des détours trop longs, que Rancière donne un sens très particulier à la fois à la police et à la politique. Nous n'allons pas discuter pour l'instant du bien-fondé de ce sens (par exemple, pour mettre en question la neutralisation forcée de la police par l'élargissement extrême de son champ et, d'un même geste, la survalorisation de la politique, elle-même étendue à un ensemble très large d'activités humaines). Il nous intéresse dans la mesure précise où leur litige constitutif et leur hétérogénéité foncière permettent de jeter une lumière nouvelle sur ce qui est ou devrait être l'espace public et ses acteurs, individus devenant sujets politiques de par l'arrachement à leur état naturel, à leur distribution « normale ». La politique à la Rancière retrouve à ce point l'idée arendtienne d'une affirmation en pleine visibilité de l'homme (ou de la femme) autre que la condition donnée (biologiquement ou autrement), sous la forme d'une multiplicité de « propositions d'existence »[6]. La vie en commun, la vie publique est la sortie du confort précaire de l'*oïkos* et l'exposition devant les autres et avec les autres en apportant avec soi les questions, les opinions, les visions sur l'état présent et futur du monde. Car ces propositions d'existence ne sont, dans l'espace des villes modernes, que des irruptions d'alternatives existentielles dans des formes conjointement politiques, intersubjectives, esthétiques. « La subjectivation politique redécoupe le champ de l'expérience qui donnait à chacun son identité avec sa part »[7].

Qu'en est-il de ces distinctions dans la société postcommuniste ? La chute des régimes totalitaires semble instituer un consensus autour de la supériorité et de l'efficacité de la démocratie formelle comme système politique et institutions matérialisant la souveraineté populaire sur la démocratie « réelle » et « populaire ». La légitimité de la nouvelle démocratie procéderait non seulement de l'institution de formes politiques de justice, mais aussi d'une redistribution des formes économiques de production et de la richesse. L'intérêt économique de l'enrichissement généralisé suffirait à induire l'idée unanimement embrassée qu'entre la démocratie représentative et l'économie de marché se noue une alliance nécessaire, inévitable et indestructible. Selon le même Rancière, dans ces nouveaux régimes qui renforcent les attitudes consensuelles, « la politique est l'expression d'un certain état du social et c'est le

[5] *Ibidem,* p. 55.
[6] *Ibidem,* p. 60.
[7] *Ibidem,* p. 65.

développement des forces productives qui fait le contenu substantiel de ses formes… Le succès de la démocratie consisterait alors en ce qu'elle trouve, dans nos sociétés, une coïncidence entre sa forme politique et son être sensible »[8]. Cet être sensible de la démocratie est censé se constituer, dans l'espace des villes modernes, en une source de créativité, par la capacité qu'ont des individus ou des groups de gens à inventer des manières d'être ensemble, de faire ou de dire, de créer des formes de vie commune, pour les rituels de la vie quotidienne et pour des propositions de résistance à toute sorte de pouvoirs de normalisation et de répression.

Simplement, et d'une manière apparemment paradoxale, dans les conditions du passage d'un régime politico-économique à l'autre, cette forme politique de la représentation démocratique se vide peu à peu de son contenu sensible (taux d'abstention de plus en plus élevés pendant les élections, indifférence accrue aux questions sociales, à l'exploitation ou à l'exclusion, implication réduite dans des formes ou actions associatives, etc.), conduisant ainsi à ce que certains auteurs appellent la « désaffection démocratique », absence de sentiment politique, déficit de passion pour la chose publique, ou détournement de cette passion vers la mise en scène spectaculaire d'un système médiatique dominant qui propose une pléthore de vedettes éphémères, parmi lesquelles les hommes politiques occupent une place privilégiée.

Arrêtons-nous à cette dimension sensible de la démocratie postcommuniste et de ses espaces publics. Nous avons vu que pour le philosophe français, la politique entendue sous cette dimension consisterait en un processus de dislocation, de récupération des lieux et de la parole pour créer des formes autres d'expérience du commun, pour proposer des postures nouvelles aux individus accédant au statut incertain (ou en tous cas, moins stable) de sujets politiques qui revendiquent des droits ou s'expriment librement sur les affaires publiques. Le dissensus est l'autre nom pour la construction – par ces sujets mêmes – des mondes sensibles différents à l'intérieur du monde donné. Nous pouvons comprendre alors la dimension sensible dans deux sens : d'une part, comme mobilisation des sentiments et des affects pour la création des communautés de parole dans l'espace ouvert de nos villes. D'autre part, comme une co-implication sensitive, un engagement de chacun avec les sens (voir, parler et entendre surtout) dans le partage et la pratique des lieux dits publics.

Symptomatologie du sensible

Comment l'espace public se présente-t-il aujourd'hui dans nos sociétés postcommunistes ?

La chute du régime communiste et la disparition de la propriété prétendument collective – très peu génératrice d'espaces publics autres que les lieux largement ouverts de glorification du régime – a engendré un processus de déstabilisation spatiale et de transformation rapide, chaotique et violente des villes et, en même temps, un

[8] *Ibidem,* p. 138.

bouleversement de la sensibilité individuelle et collective. Le monde communiste semblait figé une fois pour toutes dans son armature et avait réduit au maximum toute participation affective des citoyens à la chose publique. Par ailleurs, cette indifférence peut être interprétée rétrospectivement comme une forme de retrait du monde, voire même comme une forme de résistance à et de refus de la politique telle qu'elle était pratiquée par le régime en place. Le moment 1989 marque alors aussi la sortie violente de l'apathie et l'éclatement d'une sensibilité débordante, non maîtrisée et non éduquée, handicapée en quelque sorte et vulnérable surtout à toute forme de manipulation. Les événements du décembre 1989 restent par ailleurs, en Roumanie et dans le monde entier, un repère unique pour l'implication affective des masses et, sur ce fond de naïveté des sens et des sentiments, de la manipulation collective.

Vingt ans après et du point de vue de sa construction physique, matérielle, l'espace public est la propriété de plus en plus exclusive de l'expertise administrative, urbanistique, et du contrôle policier et des intérêts privés. L'aménagement des centres-villes au nom conjoint de l'impératif touristique et de la fluidisation de la circulation automobile, la destruction des espaces verts pour construire à leur place des buildings d'affaires, le quadrillage total des rues partagées entre parkings à des prix exorbitants et espaces piétons, le décentrement des villes par la périphérisation des activités collectives (sport, commerces, loisirs etc.), la construction des bretelles contournant les villes, tout cela les transforme (tel que je l'avais montré dans un texte de 2008) en immenses dystopies découplées des attaches affectives de ses habitants.

Du point de vue de sa construction discursive, idéelle, il est confisqué d'un côté, par une industrie médiatique du divertissement qui mue l'affaire publique en publicité et la curiosité en marchandise et, de l'autre côté, par un système de promotion d'une caste d'intellectuels publics et experts techniques qui digèrent l'actualité la plus immédiate au nom de l'opinion publique en émettant des jugements de valeur qui interdisent ou rendent superflus la participation et le débat ouverts. En fait, il ne s'agit même pas de deux côtés ou de deux phénomènes distincts, mais de deux faces d'une même stratégie d'accaparation du pouvoir et du profit matériel et symbolique : depuis 1990, on a pu croire que la privatisation est la chose la meilleure au monde. En parallèle avec le processus de confiscation des biens publics par une partie de l'oligarchie politique, économique et des services secrets de l'époque communiste, l'une des batailles les plus acharnées fut menée pour la privatisation sélective et discriminatoire de l'espace public (du droit et du privilège à la parole publique) par une élite discursive auto-imposée, seule habilitée à dire la vérité sur le passé et sur le présent. Ainsi, la sphère publique est saturée, dans la société roumaine d'aujourd'hui, par la monotonie des discours qui justifient ou critiquent – la logique de la démarche est la même – toute action politique (du président, du gouvernement ou du parlement), du pur bruit transmis en boucle, dans un spectacle quotidien excessif, voué à écarter par ce bombardement de pseudo-expertise et d'émotion violente la participation des « incomptés » (selon le mot de Rancière), masses de spectateurs silencieux et anonymes ou sortant dans la lumière de la publicité comme acteurs à leur insu.

Mais au-delà de cette phénoménologie primitive, journalistique, de l'espace public postcommuniste, essayons de dresser un bref tableau qui expose quelques traits de ce devenir policier de cette société. Il s'agit, en fait, de trois types de dislocations spatiales et sensibles, dans le schéma triangulaire proposé par Rancière et qui comprend les manières de l'être, du faire et du dire.

A.

Etre 1 : Surexposition et uniformisation affective

Surexposition

Dans les années 60 déjà, Guy Debord signalait dans son style unique ce glissement total et généralisé de nos société vers le spectaculaire. Il avait compris qu'il ne s'agit pas, avec le spectacle, d'une simple mise en scène ou présentation d'une réalité solide et certaine, mais qu'il est l'essence même, la seule manière d'être/paraître de nos sociétés. Le spectacle parachève (tout en détruisant) cette fonction politique de l'apparence à laquelle pouvait encore rêver Hannah Arendt. Apparaître n'est plus une manière de se rendre (en) public, et par sa différence vertueuse, il n'oblige plus à un geste de courage pour exposer publiquement ses idées et ses opinions ; il est une fin en soi, qui rend indiscernables le réel et sa simulation, le réel et toutes ses médiations techniques et médiatiques[9]. Quels sont les effets le plus immédiats de cette surexposition du réel ? D'abord, tel que nous le voyons tous les jours, sans arrêt à la télévision, dans la presse, sur internet, la politique ne peut se réaliser autrement que comme mise en scène, avec les contraintes et les effets inévitables de cette dramatisation : ce n'est pas l'idée, l'option politique qui compte, mais l'émotion qu'elle transmet, l'enveloppe affective, la crédibilité théâtrale de l'acteur qui donne la réplique. Ensuite, par cela même, l'espace public devient un non-lieu, un faux-lieu sans occupation, sans pratique et sans dimensions possibles (ou avec un nombre infini de dimensions). Le partage sensible si cher à Rancière – avec la multiplication des expériences – n'est ainsi plus réalisable que sous la forme d'une uniformisation des réactions et d'acquiescement émotionnel, et la subjectivation politique se transforme en identification précaire, pauvre en contenu réflexif, avec les uns ou autres des acteurs politiques. « L'identité du réel, de sa reproduction et de sa simulation, c'est le non-lieu pour l'hétérogénéité de l'apparence, c'est le non-lieu pour la constitution politique de sujets non identitaires troublant l'homogénéité du sensible en faisant voir ensemble des mondes séparés, en organisant des mondes de communauté litigieuse »[10].

[9] Ou, avec les mots de Rancière, « tous se voit, rien n'apparaît, puisque tout est déjà là, identique à sa représentation, identique avec la production simulée de sa représentation » (*La mésentente*, *éd.cit.*, p. 144).

[10] *Ibidem,* p. 145.

D'autre part, la surexposition d'une minorité correspond très exactement à la sous-exposition d'une majorité ; cette large majorité de la population a elle aussi le droit à l'exposition médiatique, soit par la participation à des reality-shows de plus en plus nombreux et débiles, soit par leur consultation inutile lors des sondages d'opinion quotidiens (on va revenir sur cet aspect). Dans cette configuration sensible de l'espace public, l'homme moyen (de plus en plus moyen, l'homme sans qualités…) joue comme figurant et pièce de rechange, avec son droit librement acquis à sa gloire éphémère, et ce non pas grâce à sa pensée (encore moins à son discernement), mais grâce, si possible et selon le cas, à sa stupidité, à ses excès, à sa pauvreté, à son malheur personnel exhibés publiquement. « Le monde de la visibilité intégrale aménage un réel où l'apparence n'a pas lieu d'advenir et de produire ses effets de doublement et de division »[11]. L'apparence ne double plus la réalité et ne la disloque pas, mais la conforte dans sa misère purement spectaculaire.

Etre 2 : Le sensible détourné par le sécuritaire et le fluide

L'évolution des sociétés contemporaines depuis 9/11 vers le renforcement des mécanismes sécuritaires a touché aussi les sociétés postcommunistes et leurs espaces publics. L'introduction et le déploiement de plus en plus large de ces mécanismes a été favorisée par le passage brutal d'un monde des certitudes mineures du communisme au monde des incertitudes majeures du postcommunisme. La transition a pu être le nom de ce vacillement généralisé de tous les repères matériels, symboliques, axiologiques ou spatio-temporels. D'autre part, la multiplication des risques en toute sorte, réels ou imaginés par les industries médiatiques ou par des hommes politiques en crise de programmes, a renforcé auprès de la population cette recherche de protection de la vie biologique et de la vie assurée matériellement, ainsi que, du côté des industries du spectacle l'exploitation par tous les moyens des comportements réactifs et des comportements paniques. La culture des dangers imminents a trouvé un sol excellent pour s'épanouir auprès des masses d'individus pour lesquels la méfiance envers l'autre et la suspicion permanente a contribué à intérioriser comme mode de vie l'opportunisme, le succès à court terme et à tout prix, le repli communautaire, familiale, intimiste.

Pour prendre un exemple, l'installation de deux cents caméras dans les rues de Cluj, pour surveiller le trafic routier n'a rencontré aucune opposition au sein des habitants ; plus encore, ils sont nombreux ceux qui saluent de telles initiatives prises par l'administration locale, en y voyant une chance de plus pour la protection de la personne et des biens individuels. De même, le même impératif sécuritaire et de contrôle de plus en plus approfondi permet le déploiement ostentatoire d'une police communautaire supposée veiller à la fluidité du trafic et empêcher tout débordement de la part des voitures ou des piétons. Quand les médias parlent tous les jours d'attaques armées, d'accidents terribles, de crimes ou d'autres violences,

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 145.

ce pouvoir policier peut agir librement pour notre sécurité. Il peut parler alors en toute tranquillité d'un plan annuel de contraventions à réaliser et se vanter même du dépassement de ce plan, comme d'un grand succès économique. Mais soyons un peu lucides : l'efficacité de la répression policière n'est pas à la mesure de son intelligence, ni de la réduction de la criminalité (surtout de la grande criminalité) ; elle se trouve en rapport direct avec la criminalisation d'un nombre toujours plus important de comportements en public, par la canalisation des actions sur des trajectoires préétablies et la pénalisation immédiate et excessive des détours, des transgressions, des oppositions. L'impératif de l'ordre public et de la sécurité s'avère plus important que toute pratique libre de l'espace urbain, sachant combien cette pratique peut – par ses gestes transgressifs mêmes – non seulement rendre la ville attrayante pour ses habitants et ses visiteurs, mais aussi engendrer des styles propres d'être ensemble, d'attitudes civiques et solidaires, de dialogue même entre les citoyens et leurs représentants politiques.

Dans un contexte plus large d'exploitation du sentiment de peur et de vulnérabilité, et avec comme facteur stimulant le déficit hérité de confiance dans l'autre, dans les institutions et dans l'avenir, les pratiques associatives de construction durable d'espaces communs se voient mises en défaut par le bricolage du présent de sa suite immédiate, par l'improvisation comme projet de vie, par la corruption comme management de la relation aux pouvoirs et aux institutions.

2. Faire : civilité et incivilité - la solidarité en crise

Selon Richard Sennett, la définition la plus simple de la ville fait de celle-ci un milieu humain où des inconnus peuvent se rencontrer. Cité et civilité ont la même racine, dans la formation des mœurs urbaines modernes. Le développement de la vie urbaine aux débuts de la modernité, avec l'explosion d'inconnu l'espace des villes, a engendré cet effort pour faire apparaître de l'ordre dans le chaos de l'altérité ; la raison devait gouverner cet espace public, en reléguant les sentiments et l'intimité dans l'obscurité du privé. A son tour, Zygmunt Bauman considère que la civilité est l'une des versions de cet effort qui consiste dans un apprentissage (même un auto-apprentissage) des règles de comportement en public, avec les connus et les inconnus. « La civilité était affaire d'apprentissage en grande partie négatif et non positif : ce qu'on devait cacher, ce dont on ne devait pas parler, ce dont on devait avoir honte. Toute spontanéité trahissait la minceur du vernis civilisé et la gratuité des passions qui bouillent en dessous ; ainsi toute spontanéité était-elle destructrice de l'ordre civil et, pour le bien de celui-ci, devait être exclue, par la honte, de l'existence ; il fallait la proclamer dégradante, embarrassante et s'assurer qu'elle serait bien vécue ainsi »[12].

[12] Zygmunt Bauman, *La vie en miettes. Expérience postmoderne et moralité*, Paris, Hachette Littératures, 2003, p. 324.

Dans l'interprétation de Richard Sennett, « la civilité consiste à traiter les autres comme s'ils étaient des inconnus (*strangers*), à forger avec eux des liens sociaux respectant cette distance première (…) La géographie publique d'une cité est, pour ainsi dire, la civilité institutionnalisée (…) L'incivilité pourrait se définir de manière inverse : c'est le fait de peser sur les autres de tout le poids de sa personnalité. C'est le déclin de la sociabilité produit par un tel comportement. »[13]

Dans les termes de notre propos, la civilité est une manière de construire des mondes communs alternatifs dans le monde donné, de créer des espaces publics là où il y avait des lieux vides ou morts, d'assumer des rôles et des postures non préétablis, enfin, de faire ce qui ne relevait pas forcément des modes d'emploi des espaces et lieux publics. L'incivilité n'est pas seulement l'excès de l'affectif sur le formel ou l'institutionnel ; elle n'est pas, comme chez Sennett, seulement une manifestation du charisme et de la vie personnels des leaders politiques, au détriment de leurs idées, leurs projets ou leurs motivations. Elle est aussi un signe indirect de *la désaffection* et de *la désaffectation* de l'espace public. La première renvoie au déséquilibre affectif individuel et collectif qui se manifeste tantôt par une implication affective excessive, tantôt par l'indifférence devant le même genre de situation ; la désaffection est, selon Bernard Stiegler, la réaction à la sursaturation du système nerveux et à l'hypersollicitation de l'attention. Il suffit de regarder un journal télévisé, choisi au hasard, sur n'importe quelle chaîne généraliste ou spécialisée, avec la succession des catastrophes, et de tout événement présenté de manière violente (montage brutal des images, simulations et reconstitution en plus dramatiques des situations qui n'ont pas été filmées en direct, langage utilisé, intensité accrue et ton saccadé de la voix des présentateurs) pour comprendre que l'apathie (et son pendant, l'hypersensibilité) n'est pas inscrite dans le code génétique d'un peuple, n'est pas non plus un avatar historique ; elle est la réaction spontanée ou construite dans le temps pour se défendre contre ces violations quotidiennes de l'intimité et du psychique[14]. La désaffectation, à son tour, ne fait que prolonger cette réaction par la difficulté de trouver sa place dans l'espace public et de participer à l'invention de l'éthos, comme comportement cohérent et confiant, ouvert au monde, comme disponibilité à l'altérité et à rencontre de l'inconnu et de l'étranger, comme désir de vivre avec les autres, d'être solidaire avec eux.

[13] Richard Sennett, *Les tyrannies de l'intimité*, Paris, Seuil, 1979, p. 202.

[14] « Quand tout devient service, la transidividuation est intégralement court-circuité par le marketing et la publicité. La vie publique est alors détruite : l'individuation psychique et collective y est devenue la désindividuation collective. Il n'y a plus de nous, il n'y a plus qu'un on, et le collectif, qu'il soit familial, politique, professionnel, confessionnel, national, rationnel ou même universel, n'est plus porteur d'aucun horizon : il apparaît totalement vide de contenu, ce que l'on appelle, chez les philosophes, la kénose, ce qui signifie aussi que l'universel n'est plus que le marché et les technologies qu'il répand sur la planète entière – au point que la République, par exemple, ou ce qui prétend la remplacer, ou l'épauler, ou la réinventer, par exemple l'Europe, ne sont ni aimées ni désirées » (Bernard Stiegler, *Mécréance et discrédit. 2. Les sociétés incontrôlables d'individus désaffectés*, Paris, Galilée, 2006, p. 124).

En ce qui concerne la solidarité, valeur essentielle du vivre-en-commun dans l'espace public, nous pouvons l'introduire ici d'une manière un peu plus argumentée, en empruntant deux distinctions faites par Zygmunt Bauman dans l'ouvrage cité plus haut, lorsqu'il parle de l'unité comme forme de l'existence en commun. Ainsi, dans l'ordre de la complexification des relations inter-humaines, nous pouvons distinguer un premier niveau de ces relations, « *être-à-côté* », où les rencontres sont fortuites : à la fois *fragmentaires* – car les individus s'y engagent seulement avec une infime partie de leur personnalité – et *épisodiques* – car elles n'ont ni d'histoire, ni d'avenir, tout se consomme lors de cette rencontre même, sans reste et sans conséquences. Il s'agit là d'une relation de co-présence, où les autres sont simplement donnés, eux-mêmes fragmentaires et incomplets. Un deuxième niveau est celui des relations du type « être-avec », où les rencontres restent le plus souvent fragmentaires et épisodiques ; mais ce qui rendent différentes et plus complexes ces relations est le degré d'attention et, en même temps, de dissimulation, l'utilisation de certaines ressources personnelles (rationnelles et affectives) et le retrait d'autres ressources, qui pourrait empiéter sur la relation aux autres. Bauman parle dans ce cas d'une « mé-rencontre »[15], comme rencontre « défectueuse », discontinue et entre individus discontinus. Enfin, au troisième niveau, nous trouvons la rencontre du type « être-pour », dans laquelle on passe de l'isolation à l'unité, de la multiplicité des individus à leur coexistence et codépendance, à un « alliage dont les précieuses qualités dépendent entièrement de la préservation de l'altérité et de l'identité de ses ingrédients »[16].

Dans l'ordre de la complexification des règles du vivre-ensemble, cette montée vers l'existence pour les autres prend la figure du passage de la *convention* à l'*engagement*. La vie quotidienne est réglée par un certain nombre de conventions qui interdisent tout d'abord l'implication émotionnelle des acteurs de et dans l'espace public, et qui obligent surtout ces acteurs à être attentifs plutôt aux règles qu'aux autres. Le respect des conventions, le respect de la Loi, est la base de l'éthique, entendue ici comme rigueur d'un comportement afin d'éviter le débordement sur les autres et la peur que le désordre pourrait provoquer. En revanche, à un niveau supérieur de co-implication, l'engagement apporte avec soi la moralité et la demande envers l'autre, une demande de connaissance et de reconnaissance, mais également une disponibilité envers l'autre, qui va jusqu'à l'enlèvement des masques pour s'offrir soi-même aux autres dans la nudité de son visage, jusqu'à la responsabilité et à la solidarité.

Une fois ces termes posés, nous devons revenir maintenant à l'interrogation sur les transformations de la société postcommuniste. Il nous importe de savoir dans quelle mesure cette société, avec l'héritage compliqué et si partiellement assumé par le présent, est-elle capable ou non de construire et d'encourager la civilité et surtout de créer les espaces, les rituels et les stratégies qui permettent le passage de la convention à l'engagement, un passage qui transforme en même temps l'espace physique des urbanistes et des architectes en lieux de pratiques quotidiennes,

[15] *Op.cit.,* p. 319.
[16] *Ibidem,* p. 320.

d'affirmation de soi, de mise à l'épreuve devant et avec les autres, de responsabilité et solidarité publiques.

Les études et les analyses sont nombreuses aujourd'hui qui mettent en avant le déficit qui affecte la solidarité dans la société roumaine, comme sensation et valeur publique, engagement à la fois rationnel et affectif envers l'autre. Et il ne s'agit pas justement ici de la solidarité organique (familiale ou paroissiale), telle que nous la trouvons encore à la campagne, dans les communautés traditionnelles, et telle qu'elle fonctionnait à l'époque antérieure comme forme de survie de la petite communauté, mais de la solidarité comme exigence d'un projet politique auquel les gens adhèrent plus ou moins spontanément, plus ou moins profondément, mélange de générosité et d'égoïsme, articulée à d'autres valeurs qui parsèment et cultivent les espaces publics, ainsi que les propositions d'avenir et les projets existentiels collectifs. Entre la survie biologique, l'intérêt mercantile individuel et la concurrence sauvage dans une société néolibéralisée, la solidarité a mauvaise presse auprès de tout programme politique, sauf pour la propagande, étant le plus souvent laissée au compte des associations et fondations caritatives ou aux campagnes télévisuelles de donation pour les victimes de telle ou telle catastrophes. La solidarité s'achète et se justifie d'un SMS de deux euros expédiés au bénéfice des pauvres d'un village calamité ou d'un enfant atteint d'une maladie très grave[17].

3. Dire – la parole confisquée et l'opinion sondée

Deux mots pour conclure sur le troisième pôle proposé par Rancière dans le schéma qui nous permet de distinguer entre la logique policière et la logique politique. C'est le pôle du dire et du dicible. Une prééminence de la logique politique dans l'acte de parler présuppose que des scènes publiques soient (mises) à la disposition de tous pour un accès idéalement égal des interlocuteurs potentiels qui interviennent dans le débat public ou qui revendiquent simplement le droit à la parole. Elle présuppose aussi que ce qui l'autre dit, dans le dissensus et dans la mésentente de notre dialogue est pris pour du discours et non pas pour du bruit. Entre le premier et le deuxième la différence tient à la reconnaissance d'un sens, ou du moins d'une pertinence de ce que l'autre dit. Par exemple, pour le président roumain, présent dans un village moldave parmi les sinistrés des inondations de juin 2010, l'interpellation d'une femme au sujet de la mauvaise politique du gouvernement a été rapidement interrompue et cataloguée comme « bavardage de vielles dames ». Réduction donc de la revendication discursive au bruit et à l'im-pertinence.

[17] Avec la crise actuelle, le pouvoir en place a sorti de ses vieilles armoires l'appel à la solidarité, en demandant à tous de se sacrifier au nom du bien commun et participer à un fond de solidarité pour les plus défavorisés. Le président a été le premier à contribuer avec son salaire d'un mois à ce fond. Beau geste, rien à dire ; simplement, la solidarité, surtout dans cette forme exhibitionniste, ne pourra rien cacher de la spoliation systématique des biens publics par une minorité devenue milliardaire en euros, de la corruption et de l'incompétence qui règnent encore dans toutes les hiérarchies du pouvoir public et de ses institutions.

Deux phénomènes pourraient être retenus ici comme révélateurs de la situation discursive actuelle dans la société roumaine.

Les nouvelles oligarchies de la vérité

Le premier phénomène renvoie à la constitution depuis les années 90 d'une élite d'intellectuels publics, encyclopédiques et sans spécialisation, qui propose des modèles sociaux en vertu de sa culture générale éclectique et qui se propose ainsi comme guide moral d'un public lui-même amateur de cohérence et stabilité injectées dans une société prise dans le mouvement brownien de la transition, désireux à consommer le passé sous forme d'évolutions simples et linéaires, d'imaginer son futur comme accomplissement d'un sens dont les signes serait apercevables dans le présent.

C'est cette élite qui a milité par tous les moyens pour la condamnation officielle du communisme comme régime criminel, en interprétant cinquante ans d'histoire récente comme une période diabolique, artificielle, qui demande d'être dépassée pour revenir ainsi à l'évolution « normale » de la société ; c'est elle qui façonne le passé selon un partage net de la mémoire collective et individuelle ; c'est elle aussi qui propose et impose les grilles dominantes de lecture du présent par des formulations philosophiques et savantes qui cachent à peine leur contenu idéologique. Mais c'est une élite devenant oligarchie de la vérité au moment où elle prend possession non seulement de la parole publique et au nom du public, mais surtout des moyens techniques et matériels pour la faire diffuser et entendre auprès de ce public passif qui se contente de l'approuver ou de la critiquer de manière stérile.

Revenons un instant à la théorie de Rancière. Pour le philosophe français, le dissensus ou le litige porte tout d'abord sur l'objet et les sujets mêmes de la discussion : « Avant toute confrontation d'intérêts et de valeurs, avant toute soumission d'affirmations à des requêtes de validité entre partenaires constitués, il y a le litige sur l'objet du litige, le litige sur l'existence du litige et des parties qui s'y affrontent »[18]. Toute discussion passe d'abord par la reconnaissance de l'autre comme partenaire de discussion et sur la possibilité de la constitution d'une communauté discursive où le dissensus peut être mis en scène et débattu. Mais avec la naissance et la domination d'une telle oligarchie de la vérité, ce qui est mis en cause c'est justement l'existence d'un autre pertinent dans la discussion. Et lorsque ces intellectuels jouent le rôle de passeurs des messages d'un pouvoir politique vers le peuple-public en état de minorité, ils participent d'un même pouvoir, de manière plus ou moins (plutôt moins) symbolique ou esthétique[19]. C'est la logique policière[20] qui préside à ces

[18] *La Mésentente, éd.cit.,* p. 85.

[19] Selon Rancière, il y a une dimension esthétique de la politique de par sa manifestation ou démonstration. *Aisthesis* comme partage du sensible est « ce qui met en communication des régimes séparés d'expression » p. 88). On peut dire, avec lui, que la politique est, d'un côté, esthétique dans son principe et, de l'autre côté, esthétisée à l'âge moderne, une esthétisation qui va jusqu'à ce que nous avons évoqué plus haut sous la figure des leaders politiques charismatiques ou dans la spectacularisation de la vie politique.

[20] Non pas chacun sa parole, mais chacun à sa parole (comme dans l'expression des heures de catéchisme : « chacun à sa place, ne bougez pas les enfants ! »).

faux-débats publics où la vérité et ses possesseurs sont connus d'avance et où les porteurs d'autres opinions sont relégués du côté des mineurs ou des naïfs.

L'opinion sondée

« Le régime de l'opinion sondée et de l'exhibition permanente du réel est aujourd'hui la forme ordinaire de la police dans les société occidentales (p. 54)

Mais il n'y pas que cette élite qui exprime tous les jours ses opinions sur tout et n'importe quoi. Nous le faisons tous dans le cadre de ce simulacre de consultation démocratique qui est le sondage d'opinion. Nous sommes sollicités tous les jours, à la télé, au téléphone, dans les versions internet des journaux, à réagir, à exprimer nos opinions, à voter par oui ou non, pour ou contre, à écrire des sms, à appeler vite, à cliquer sur l'une des options possibles, dans ce large processus pseudo-démocratique qui fabrique et entretient l'illusion de l'utilité des « sans-part » dans la prise des décisions. Cette industrie du sondage connaît deux dimensions : d'une part, la forme débile mais extrêmement profitable des questions avec des réponses préformées qui sont lancées dans beaucoup d'émissions télévisées ou radio. Cette forme – dont il ne faut même plus mentionner la pauvreté contraignante – nourrit chez le lecteur ou chez le spectateur passif et de plus en plus isolé l'illusion d'interactivité, de participation à un processus décisionnel qui ne lui a jamais été, en fait, plus éloigné. Une illusion qui se paie cher et qui rapporte des profits substantiels à toute une industrie qui a vite appris comment transformer l'envie des gens à exprimer leurs opinions en publicité bon marché.

De l'autre part toute forme de sondage mené par les entreprises spécialisées part de la présupposition d'une population réduite à un échantillon quelconque et transformée dans un objet de connaissance, qui aurait perdu, à travers cette démarche, la pluralité qui la constitue en source de revendication politique hétérogène, pour la ramener à la statistique et à l'homogénéité d'une série indéfinie d'équivalences. L'opinion compte (ou est comptée) dans la mesure où elle s'inscrit dans un cadre préétabli, sur une échelle continue et donnée, dont les intervalles et variations sont simplement quantitatives. Si, pour Rancière, la politique comme déstabilisation de l'ordre policier surgit lorsque des opinions dissensuelles sont lancées dans l'espace public par les « sans-compte », c'est-à-dire par ceux qui ne parlent pas au nom de leur identité ou intérêt privés, la science médiatique du sondage opère un décompte des parties de la population afin de la redistribuer dans un espace artificiel, statique et égal à soi-même. D'autre part, la politique telle qu'elle s'exerce aujourd'hui dans les démocraties libérales ou de transition est souvent en dépendance étroite des résultats des sondages réalisés suite à telle action ou initiative ou pour mesurer les attentes de la population. L'administration des affaires publiques et les interventions publiques des hommes et femmes politiques prennent ce simulacre d'opinion pour une manifestation du libre droit à l'expression en se rassurant ainsi quant au bon fonctionnement de la démocratie.

« La 'science de l'opinion' n'est pas en effet seulement la science qui prend l' 'opinion' pour objet. Elle est la science qui se réalise immédiatement comme opinion, la science qui n'a de sens que dans ce procès de spécularisation où une opinion se voir au miroir que la science lui tend de son identité à soi. L'unité sans reste du peuple souverain, de la population empirique et de la population scientifiquement connue, c'est aussi l'identité de l'opinion avec sa vieille ennemie platonicienne, la science »[21].

Qu'en est-il, au bout de ce parcours, de l'espace public dans les villes postcommunistes et de sa dimension sensible ? Nous avons essayé de montrer que cette dimension, plus fragile et plus manipulable que toute autre dimension de l'espace public, est récupérée par les stratégies commerciales et médiatiques qui prennent le sensible comme objet profitable d'une instrumentalisation de plus en plus étendue et approfondie et la politique pour un espace privilégié d'exploitation de cette sensibilité détournée. La solidarité, la responsabilité, la confiance, l'espérance – valeurs et attitudes qui naissent d'une négociation intersubjective des sentiments et des idées – trouvent leur terrain de manifestation dans l'écart qui s'établit entre la police et la politique. Le devenir récent de nos démocraties nous montre, en revanche, que sous les différents prétextes (de la sécurité, de la crise, de l'urgence), ces valeurs et attitudes sont évacuées de l'espace public (lui-même vidé de contenu sensible) et mises au service des politiques de gestion de la société comme entreprise et de l'hétérogénéité sociale (avec ses risques de débordement, d'excès et de désordre) comme champ d'intervention permanente de la police.

La ville est le lieu premier de manifestation de la créativité (politique, culturelle, artistique, philosophique), grâce à sa manière particulière de mobilisation des sens et d'articulation de ceux-ci avec la raison. Mais elle est également l'endroit mobile où cette créativité peut être le plus facilement surveillée, contrôlée, détournée ou simplement anéantie lorsqu'elle semble mettre en danger l'ordre public et la distribution policière des êtres, des actions et des discours.

La ville reste entièrement à réinventer et sans cesse à reconquérir, à déstabiliser, à disloquer, afin d'y créer les espaces de création de la subjectivité individuelle et collective, de l'initiative, de la résistance, de l'espérance et de la solidarité.

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[21] Jacques Rancière*, op.cit.,* p. 147.

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DES ESPACES BLANCS. ANARCHITECTURE SANS MANIFESTE

EMILIAN CIOC*

ABSTRACT. ***Blank Spaces. Anarchitecture without Manifesto*.** Contemporary critical space theories as well as singular architectural experiments acknowledge a quest for renewing the most significant ways in which space design is conceptually elaborated, factually realised and socially perceived. Searching to seize the possibility and the meaning of a creative intervention in space-related practices, the paper aims at revisiting the manner in which modern times determined the relationship between architectural production and politics. The main reason is that this sequence of the argument allows for a more accurate definition of transformations that build up contemporary experience and especially the ways in which common creative practices totally abandon existential and political concerns. We argue that a specific comprehension of anarchitecture in ontological terms could shed a new light on creative architectural gestures. Anarchitecture, as we understand it, interrupts the logic of manifestos, which distinguishes it from oppositional architecture. In supporting the idea that experienced spaces are more that mere reified presences, involved as they are in shaping and determining meaning, our approach is not prescriptive but, quite on the contrary, attempts to empirically construct minimal orientations for thought and practice.

Keywords: creativity, an-architecture, politics, social engineering,

Il serait sans doute possible de montrer que tout préfixe de dépassement ou de renouveau – l'interminable histoire des *post-* et des *néo-*, l'histoire des manifestes également – inscrit une croyance ou une espérance concernant, à la fois, la fin d'un régime de sens ayant consommé ou trahi ses possibilités structurelles et le commencement, le coup d'envoi d'une constellation de pratiques et de possibles estimés plus adéquats aux exigences existentielles. Ces marques inscrivent également le postulat selon lequel le passage même relève d'une certaine créativité, d'une innovation. Toute marque d'une nouveauté voulue, thématisée, mise en forme, entreprise, fonctionne sur ce mode de la promesse et de l'engagement. En plus d'être un choix esthétique ou doctrinaire, chacun de ces préfixes représentent tout autant de marques d'une espérance éminemment morale et politique concernant la

* *Université Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca. Email : emilian_cioc@yahoo.fr*

reconfiguration de l'existence de l'individu et de la communauté des humains. En jeu serait tout simplement, mais c'est n'est pas du tout simple, la possibilité de regagner la capacité de vivre – c'est-à-dire de construire et d'habiter – ensemble, la possibilité de vivre autrement, d'aménager un régime de signification différent. De toute évidence, cet horizon promissoire avec ses entreprises productives et ses dispositifs créatifs en appelle à une réflexion prudente, suspicieuse à l'égard des fantasmes et des idoles de la langue, des mots, des concepts et des métiers. Ce que nous dirons sur l'anarchitecture – pour donner une première indication –, serait indissociable d'une telle réflexion et dont les exigences nous conduiront à un autre préfixe.

En effet, ce que nous visons plus précisément ici, c'est la manière dont la créativité architecturale participe de l'expérience contemporaine telle que déterminée par la condition urbaine. Pour commencer, nous dirons avec Jean-Christophe Bailly que « l'acte architectural est toujours ouverture de l'espace, action d'accompagnement de l'homme dans l'espace »[1]. Et nous nous efforcerons de scruter les sens multiples de cet accompagnement tels qu'ils se constituent sous l'influence de mutations fondamentales, qu'elles soient architecturales, artistiques, politiques ou sociales. L'invention de nouvelles possibilités d'accompagner l'homme dans l'espace, d'ouvrir l'espace pour accueillir et ménager l'existence, cette invention est sans doute indissociable d'une réflexion soucieuse, d'une certaine création conceptuelle qui implique à son tour une inventivité nominale, une quête de possibilités de dire ce qui arrive à l'existence et à l'espace. Une telle réflexion s'engagerait à dire de quelle manière il est encore possible de construire des lieux d'attestation et d'adhésion à quelque chose comme une exigence de contemporanéité. En ce qui nous concerne, nous essaierons de montrer en quel sens l'anarchitecture pourrait être une telle invention nominale capable d'ouvrir la réflexion sur les actions d'accompagnement de l'homme dans les espaces contemporains. L'un des points importants qu'il convient de préciser sans plus attendre, c'est que cette investigation se refuse toute position prescriptive. Sans doute, toute formulation universelle et catégorique se verrait-elle exposée au risque de la falsification – dans tous les sens. Est-ce donc possible de se rapporter à nos manières de construire et de pratiquer les espaces construits qui ne soit pas naïvement prescriptive et simplement porteuse de bons sentiments ?

Afin de décrire plus en détail ce qui pourrait faire le propre d'une conception et d'une pratique de l'innovation spatiale et existentielle, il nous semble légitime de reprendre, quitte à la détourner, la formulation que Günther Anders trouve opportun de donner à l'impératif moral à l'époque de la deuxième révolution industrielle : « *Ne possède que des choses dont les maximes d'action pourraient également devenir les maximes de ta propre action*. »[2] Certes, l'horizon thématique et conceptuel d'une telle reformulation est dessiné par une interrogation visant la possibilité même pour l'agir de retrouver des maximes à l'époque de la destitution précisément de tels principes impératifs. L'intérêt de cette position de G. Anders vient aussi du fait

[1] Jean-Christophe Bailly, *La ville à l'œuvre*, Paris, Les Éditions de l'Imprimeur, 2001, p. 134.

[2] Günther Anders, *L'obsolescence de l'homme. Sur l'âme à l'époque de la deuxième révolution industrielle*, traduit par Chr. David, Paris, Éditions de l'encyclopédie des nuisances, Éditions IVREA, 2002, p. 331.

qu'elle va à l'encontre d'un certain geste critique et qui veut que la vérité à dire à l'égard du monde industriel et postindustriel réside dans un régime généralisé de réification, entendant par là indifférence, répétition indistincte, désubjectivation et destruction de la créativité. Or, comme le montre si pertinemment Anders, « (…) les "choses" décisives, celles qui sont véritablement constitutives de notre monde actuel et décident de son destin, ne sont absolument pas des "choses" mais des maximes réifiées, des façons d'agir coagulées »[3]. De toute évidence, nous comptons les espaces d'existence parmi ces choses décisives. Dès lors, les lieux que nous créons, les surfaces et les volumes que nous construisons, les espaces que nous parcourons, que nous habitons, les objets composant l'ustensilité propre de ces environnements sont à leur tour de telles maximes spatialement matérialisées, des façons d'agir coagulées. L'habitant tout comme le passant ou encore l'usager seraient donc contraints à reprendre les décisions qui sont déjà coagulées dans les objets dont ils s'entourent et dont ils font usage. Par conséquent, penser les productions architecturales impliquerait un tel protocole de de-chosification permettant de saisir leurs décisions et automatismes, permettant éventuellement d'interrompre de tels programmes qui, s'auto-initialisant, opèrent un transfert de conditionnements. Contestant l'indifférence ou l'insignifiance existentielle et éthique des présences environnementales, un tel protocole les redéfinit comme autant de dispositifs qui entament et parfois suppriment l'autonomie tant réclamée par la modernité éthico-politique. L'espace de liberté se voit ainsi investi par des dispositifs suppresseurs d'autonomie.

Si effectivement ces choses-décisions dont l'insignifiance et l'inertie ne sont qu'apparentes déterminent les dispositions affectives, les choix, les raisonnements et les conduites publiques et privées des passants, des habitants, de visiteurs, des hôtes, nous comprenons pourquoi un appel à la vigilance ne tarde pas de se formuler : « Car *l'essentiel, aujourd'hui, ce n'est pas qui produit, ni comment on produit, ni combien on produit, mais bien plutôt* – autre différence fondamentale entre l'ancienne menace et la nouvelle – *ce qu'on produit*. »[4] Certes, il faudrait rendre à cet énoncé la complexité dont sa formulation initiale semble le déposséder. Ainsi, il serait tout à fait légitime de supposer que « ce qu'on produit » garde la marque de la manière dont cela est produit, la marque de qui le produit et également de la quantité dont cela est produit. En outre, il est au moins plausible que les décisions ne s'effectuent pas selon un schéma linéaire et univoque, mais en fonction des circonstances, des constellations distribuant les choses-décisions. De même, il y a indubitablement des possibilités et de stratégies aussi bien individuelles que collectives de résistance, de détournement ou de désactivation de ces dispositifs. De notre point de vue, l'enjeu ne serait point quelque chose comme une écologie radicale voulant éradiquer l'ustensilité potentiellement décisionnelle mais la production de choses-décisions qui sauvegardent les possibilités subjectives de la présence humaine dans l'espace construit. Autrement dit, les possibilités de subjectivation.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 332.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 21.

Or qu'en est-il des choses que nous possédons à présent ? Qu'en est-il des espaces qu'on produit ? Qu'y aurait-il à dire de la manière dont on le produit et de l'opérateur de leur production ? Et, en fin de compte, quel serait le sens qu'engageraient ces créations d'espaces urbains et non urbains, à supposer qu'un sens soit toujours engagé et qu'il y ait encore un quelconque engagement ? En dépit de toute une série de revendications dont l'efficacité n'est que l'effet intermittent d'une insistante répétition, il conviendrait de ne pas céder au leurre qui se complaît à croire que toute production ayant l'ambition et parfois l'aspect d'une création novatrice garantit en elle-même un renouveau de la présence au monde, une nouvelle manière de la penser et une reconfiguration du rapport à cette présence au monde. Un regard lucide et soucieux de la documentation la plus appliquée tout comme du scrutin herméneutique patient serait à même d'éclaircir la direction dominante qu'emprunte de nos jours la construction d'espaces autres. Ainsi, dans l'introduction à un recueil de textes dont le programme est de sonder les espaces infernalement paradisiaques des temps présents, Mike Davis et Daniel Bertrand Monk écrivent-ils : « Si les galeries marchandes de fer et de verre des années 1850 étaient les forêts enchantées du capitalisme de consommation, nos environnements contemporains axés sur le luxe – centres commerciaux grands comme des villes, banlieues sur îles artificielles, faux "centres-villes commerçants" – font office d'univers alternatifs pour formes de vie humaine privilégiées. »[5] Une telle procédure interrogative dont le potentiel critique est évident laisse entrevoir la prédétermination du sens de la créativité et de la direction que suivent les innovations, c'est-à-dire leur régime d'inscription et de captation. En même temps, cela en dit long sur les ségrégations et, qui plus est, sur la nécessité de la ségrégation pour l'actuel faire-monde. Le paradoxe crucial qui se laisse ainsi saisir réside en ceci que, à l'âge de la mondialisation comme on ne se lasse plus de le répéter, ce type de création et d'innovation rend manifeste un abandon massif quoique très exclusif du monde. En d'autres mots, la création architecturale apparentée à cette hallucination infernale-paradisiaque consiste en une création d'outre-mondes – des espaces arrachés à quelque chose comme une communauté des humains. Or la formation de formes de vie privilégiées peuplant ces environnements synthétiques ne peut se faire que par la formation simultanée de formes de vie humaine sévèrement condamnées. Tout cela pour approximer à quel point la question de savoir quelle différence il s'agirait pour le geste novateur de concevoir, produire ou laisser advenir reste indéterminée. La création et l'inventivité considérées abstraitement gardent un silence indifférent à l'égard de toute espérance concernant la condition existentielle des humains.

Afin de dépasser un tel régime d'abstraction et pour donner un aperçu généalogique de cette détermination actuelle de la créativité il serait sans doute utile de faire un pas en arrière. La formulation plus précise du rapport moderne entre architecture et politique trouve un appui quelque peu inattendu mais non moins précieux dans un énoncé de Canguilhem concernant la possibilité de l'erreur et la faillibilité de l'humain :

[5] Mike Davis et Daniel Bertrand Monk, *Paradis infernaux. Les villes hallucinées du néo-capitalisme*, traduit par E. Dobenesque et L. Manceau, Paris, Les Prairies ordinaires, 2008, p. 12.

> En fait, l'erreur humaine ne fait probablement qu'un avec l'errance. L'homme se trompe parce qu'il ne sait où se mettre. L'homme se trompe quand il ne se place pas à l'endroit adéquat pour recueillir une certaine information qu'il recherche. Mais aussi, c'est à force de se déplacer qu'il recueille de l'information ou en déplaçant, par toutes sortes de techniques – et on pourrait dire que la plupart des techniques scientifiques reviennent à ce processus – les objets les uns par rapport aux autres, et l'ensemble par rapport à lui.[6]

Dans la perspective tracée par cet énoncé qui, soulignons-le encore une fois, fait de la désorientation, de l'ignorance quant à la position adéquate, une détermination essentielle de la connaissance et de son sujet humain, jette un jour captivant sur la technologie politique moderne telle que reflétée dans l'édification des espaces et avant toute autre chose dans les procédures décisionnelles et représentatives qui l'accompagnent. Sans aucunement discuter la pertinence épistémologique du propos, il nous semble tout à fait légitime de compter l'urbanisme parmi ces techniques d'adéquation, si on peut dire, et qui, opérant par déplacements et replacements, cherchent à placer les humains à des endroits jugés adéquats. En adéquation, autrement dit, avec une information ou une forme de connaissance et de pratique recherchée ou déjà disponible. Impliqué qu'il est dans la distribution socialement significative et opérationnelle des présences par la construction de certains types d'espace, l'urbanisme se définirait dès lors comme le calcul qui vise à permettre la situation de l'homme et de la communauté à l'endroit adéquat pour la réception de l'information. Pas n'importe quelle information, mais celle considérée adéquate par la rationalité politique qui est toujours répressive-productive, corrective-coercitive. On peut avancer par conséquent que, dans sa détermination moderne, l'urbanisme suppose non pas seulement la plasticité de l'espace, mais également – surtout ? – la plasticité de l'humain[7]. Et cette plasticité, l'urbanisme la surdétermine comme essentiellement définitoire pour la communauté spatialement réalisée des humains. L'errance-erreur, l'ignorance quant au lieu adéquat, la politique moderne l'assume comme la prémisse de son entreprise. Il faudrait décrire comment elle est construite pièce par pièce, mais cela nous entraînerait bien trop loin. Pour la modernité occidentale, les décisions architecturales et les planifications urbanistiques sont dès lors construction d'espaces d'accélération, de décélération, d'ajustement, de déplacement ou de séjour qui permettent la modélisation de ce matériau sans orientation et destination données d'avance, errant, migrant, et qui est l'existence humaine – singulière et collective tout à la fois. L'importance décisive du déplacement vient y compris du fait qu'il permet en même temps une certaine résistance, ne fût-ce que sous forme d'inertie, inscrivant de la sorte la possibilité de rechercher une autre information, une autre formation, un autre positionnement.

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[6] Georges Canguilhem, *Études d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences*, Paris, Vrin, 2002, p. 364.

[7] Pour un développement original concernant les sens multiples de la plasticité dans sa relation à l'humain, voir Bogdan Ghiu « La vie d'après la survie (DU posthumAIN) » in *Locked in*, catalogue de l'exposition, Casino Luxembourg – Forum d'art contemporain asbl, Luxembourg, 2008, p. 24-29.

C'est aussi la raison pour laquelle les annonces ou les programmes invoquant une architecture de la communauté ne sont pas aussi radicalement novateurs que l'on est tenté de le penser[8]. Quoi qu'il en soit, il semble que la thèse de Michel Foucault selon laquelle l'« histoire des espaces serait en même temps une histoire des pouvoirs »[9] est tout à fait pertinente. Si la rationalité moderne situe les arts de gouverner et les arts de la construction dans une relation d'enchevêtrement, il n'en reste pas moins que la relation est asymétrique, pour autant qu'il y a bien un terme dominant, et qui est le politique. On pourrait dès lors avancer que les projets architecturaux de la modernité sont configurés et signifiés en fonction des techniques et des finalités propres au gouvernement des sociétés. Si donc accroissement de la dimension politique de l'objet d'architecture il y a, il s'avère être l'effet d'un changement de paradigme politique plutôt qu'architectural.

Les mutations survenues dans l'expérience contemporaine ont aussi pour effet l'épuisement de ce mode de concevoir et de produire l'espace urbain. L'une des provenances de cette crise du modèle réside certainement dans dissolution de la possibilité même de concevoir, configurer et régir globalement l'espace habité et parcouru, de subsumer et subordonner les cas particuliers à un général régulateur et normatif. Si la ville est aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire depuis longtemps déjà, multiplicité, plis, dé-plis d'espaces, contiguïté de zones, implication du privé et du public, implication du public dans le privé, complication du singulier et du pluriel, multitude irréductible de perceptions, de pratiques et d'expériences, mais aussi résurgence et reconfiguration des ségrégations, on s'attendrait d'une manière tout à fait légitime à ce que l'urbanisme soit représenté et réalisé comme souci de la multiplicité. Par conséquent, toute la question est de savoir si et alors comment la multiplicité peut être prise en charge, calculée, encouragée, découragée, ménagée et aménagée par des procédures de distribution et d'intervention spatiales. Or, il faut l'avouer, une fois la projection totalisante abandonnée, les techniques urbaines se dissipent dans l'aménagement ou l'arrangement, dans une série impossible de clore de règlementations, de règles, ayant certes une provenance bien humble et une vocation obligatoire incertaine, privées qu'elles sont de la capacité de produire quelque chose comme une adhésion, et devenant par conséquent simple contrainte, violence, corps étranger. Il semble bien souvent qu'il n'est plus possible d'aménager, de ménager et de soustraire à au calcul des intérêts particuliers aucune réserve, aucun espace inoccupé, construit et gardé, sauvegardé pour du commun, comme espace dont le commun a besoin pour exister. Le commun, si on peut dire, n'a plus lieu, n'a plus lieu à être, il se voit restreint, contraint, réduit, traité d'une manière pour le moins embarrassée, inhabile.

[8] Peter Katz, Vincent Joseph Scully, Todd W. Bressi, *The new urbanism: Toward architecture of community*, McGraw-Hill Professional, 1993.

[9] « Il y aurait à écrire toute une histoire des espaces qui serait en même temps une histoire des pouvoirs – depuis les grandes stratégies de la géopolitique jusqu'aux petites tactiques de l'habitat, de l'architecture institutionnelle, de la salle de classe ou de l'organisation hospitalière, en passant par les implantations économico-politiques. Il est surprenant de voir combien le problème des espaces a mis longtemps à apparaître comme problème historico-politique. » Michel Foucault, « L'œil et le pouvoir », *Dits et écrits,* t. III, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, p. 192.

Afin de donner un aperçu des raisons et des conséquences de ces transformations, nous ferons appel à une certaine ligne de la réflexion sociologique contemporaine. Ce qui montrera qu'il s'agit en même temps d'une crise épistémologique. Citons premièrement un propos très clair et synthétique de Christian Topalov :

> Ainsi, au principe de nombreux savoirs sur la ville, on trouve un même projet pratique : réaliser, grâce à une communauté locale reconstruite, l'intégration sociale des populations dans un ordre démocratique. *On attend d'un changement urbain et de la science qui le guide un progrès de l'ordre politique*. Et ce progrès implique la mobilisation consciente d'acteurs sociaux : *le simple jeu du marché est jugé incapable de le produire*. S'il en était autrement, l'objet de la science urbaine s'évanouirait en même temps que celui de la politique publique des villes. C'est ce sens commun qui a prévalu près d'un siècle qui se trouve démantelé, pièce par pièce, aujourd'hui.[10]

Décomposition du projet social et abandon de la référence à l'intérêt général dans la construction des espaces singuliers-pluriels vont ensemble. Ces disparitions tout comme le démantèlement de la projection de sens portent des noms politiques. Si la ville moderne a tendanciellement voulu produire des citoyens, des travailleurs, des hommes nouveaux ou tout simplement des habitants disciplinés et contrôlables, on ne saurait éviter de poser la question de savoir ce que veulent produire nos villes contemporaines, celles que nous fréquentons, parcourons, détestons, critiquons, imaginons toujours différemment de la manière dont on les construit ? La ville postindustrielle, veut-elle toujours produire quelque chose ? Veut-elle toujours quelque chose ?

Dans l'improbabilité d'une référence à ce qu'une certaine modernité a appelé l'intérêt général – irrémédiablement discrédité y compris sinon avant tout par les régimes qui se seront fondés sur une telle référence –, l'urbanisme, les politiques et les sciences de la ville en général se voient désormais réduits à de simples aménagements contingents, contextuels, circonstanciels des intérêts pluriels et conflictuels horizontalement et verticalement, entre eux est aves les normes générales. Laisser toute la place disponible au marché ne veut pas dire qu'il est réellement capable de progrès, de construction sociale ou de sens existentiel. Il n'y a plus de médiation possible entre ces intérêts qui revendiquent chacun sa légitimité et son opportunité. Si une telle situation pouvait être dite anomique, il conviendrait de faire remarquer que l'anomie n'a plus aujourd'hui le sens qu'elle pouvait avoir dans les stratégies urbanistes à la fin du XIX^e^ siècle, ni le sens formulé par une certaine sociologie au XX^e^ siècle ; elle nomme l'impossibilité – qui tend à devenir principe – de construire, de mettre en vigueur des codes concernant l'aménagement des espaces en adéquation avec les déterminations contemporaines de l'existence. Mais, à la différence d'une certaine approche critique, nous soutenons que ce sont précisément ces déterminations qui retirent la possibilité d'une codification et d'une planification quelles qu'elles soient. Dans le meilleur des cas, le post-urbanisme,

[10] Christian Topalov, *Marché, solidarité, équité*, in *La Ville, Le Courrier du CNRS*, n° 81/1994, Paris, CNRS, p. 81.

si on peut donner ce nom impropre à ce qui reste après toutes ces mutations, a encore à se soucier de la multiplicité, de la multitude et de la vulnérabilité de l'existence dépourvue désormais de toute appartenance à une économie de sens autre qu'immanent.

Il arrive néanmoins, et ce n'est peut-être pas un hasard, que la forme dominante, massivement évidente et pourtant inavouée, voire inavouable, sous laquelle finit l'intention de produire des transformations sociales et politiques à travers la construction et l'organisation d'espaces, c'est l'urbanisme spéculatif. Ce qui accompagne et aggrave le démantèlement mentionné au sens mis au jour par des auteurs comme Zygmunt Bauman, par exemple, et qui s'efforcent d'acheminer à la parole l'expérience radicale des « vies perdues »[11], des vies devenues redondantes, sans relevance aucune. Ce qui fait que désormais l'homme, certains hommes, des populations entières non seulement ne savent pas où se mettre mais n'ont plus aucun endroit où se mettre, pour autant qu'ils tombent en dehors de l'intérêt politique de la construction d'espaces. Des formes de vies errantes, autrement dit, mais, et c'est toute la différence, qui auront perdu toute possibilité d'adéquation. Devant quoi il ne s'agit toutefois pas de simplement protester moralement et encore moins d'élaborer des explications qui sont en fait des procédures d'isolement, de dénégation, de rationalisations. Abandonnée à elle-même, abandonnée aux intérêts urbanistiques, immobilier-urbanistiques, justement, elle s'épuise, se bloque, elle est soustraite à ses habitants, elle disparaît comme ville en se supra-architecturalisant. La ville est vulnérable dans la mesure où elle est précisément l'espace de notre vulnérabilité exposée en commun. La ville est dès lors cet espace où il peut nous arriver de devenir nocifs pour nous-mêmes.

Que la ville soit une multiplicité non totalisable, rétractile, résiliente, dissidente à l'égard des projections urbanistes, autrement dit tour à tour et simultanément fonctionnelles, esthétiques, sociales et politiques, c'est une chose qu'une certaine réflexion – indifférente, en fin de compte, aux champs et aux prétentions disciplinaires exclusives – ne cesse point de reformuler. La ville est l'espace même de la contestation des projections totalisantes[12]. Il n'y a pas de meilleure preuve pour infirmer la prétention d'une transparence intégrale à soi de la communauté humaine. La destruction d'une telle hypothèse a effectivement lieu. Le renoncement à la supposition d'une

[11] Zygmunt Bauman, *Vies perdues. La modernité et ses exclus*, traduit par M. Bégot, Paris, Rivage poche, 2009.

[12] Il nous semble opportun de reprendre ici, à titre d'exemple, la manière dont Richard Sennet construit le rapport entre urbanisme et anarchisme ne serait-ce que pour montrer que la condition qu'il pose en vue d'un renouveau de la conception se réalise effectivement. « To make the experience of conflict a maturing one requires the destruction of an assumption regnant since the work of Baron Haussmann in Paris, an assumption that the planning of cities should be directed to bring order and clarity to the city as a whole. Instead of this idea, whose basis is found in mechanical ideas of production, the city must be conceived as a social order of parts without a coherent, controllable whole form. The planning of functional divisions, of processes, of land use in advance of the habitation of the land should be abolished. Rather, the creation of city spaces should be for varied, changeable use. » Richard Sennet, *The Uses of Disorder. Personal Identity and City Life*, W. W. Norton, New York, London, 1970, p. 141.

cohérence supérieure, d'un référent transcendantal, d'une appartenance évidente des « parties » à un tout serait la part de l'anarchitecture. Notre intégrité résiderait peut-être dans notre capacité à assumer la non intégralité qui nous revient et qui nous vient de la finitude, d'une infinie finitude. Dans la mesure où elle serait possible, une nouvelle conception de l'appartenir voudrait également dire que, si nous ne sommes intégralement partis de nulle part, nous n'avons jamais été intégralement quelque part. L'intégralité n'est qu'un fantasme. Et pourtant, la question qui resterait toujours à reprendre et à élaborer est celle de savoir quelles sont les modalités encore praticables d'imaginer, de construire et de fréquenter des espaces urbains, en dehors et à défaut de la référence légitimante à une projection unique et univoque, dans l'indisponibilité des plans idéaux et idéels, des plans de la ville céleste ou – ce qui revient finalement au même – intégralement humaine, résolument immanente, accomplie, cohérente, totale, totalement présente et transparente à soi. D'autant plus qu'on nous dit et que nous nous le disons les uns aux autres que nos villes souffrent et nous font souffrir précisément en raison de l'absence d'un plan cohérent, d'une vision, d'un plan d'urbanisme adéquat.

Adéquation à quoi donc ? L'histoire de cette question quant à l'adéquation est coextensive à l'Occident. Commençant peut-être avec l'architecte-météorologue[13] imaginé par Massimo Cacciari, passant par l'urbaniste-sociologue dessiné par la modernité classique, elle finirait éventuellement avec la figure d'un architecte-psychanalyste. C'est en ce sens que nous lisons le propos de Roland Barthes qui pose qu'une connaissance appropriée des espaces urbains implique une compétence qui prenne en charge l'existence même : « Mais je dois ajouter que celui qui voudrait esquisser une sémiotique de la cité devrait être à la fois sémiologue (spécialiste des signes), géographe, historien, urbaniste, architecte et probablement psychanalyste. »[14] Ce qui est entièrement consistant avec l'hypothèse que nous articulons ici, à savoir que, là où il n'y a plus de miroitement d'un ordre transcendant, où donc l'architecte n'est plus météorologue, mais pas non plus sociologue, pour autant que l'objet même d'un tel savoir productif se sera dissout, la seule référence qui reste est celle à la condition présente de l'existence.

À défaut donc d'une archi-ville qui fonctionne comme un modèle transcendant, comme un plan transcendantal, nécessairement régulateur et universellement normatif pour toute déduction/construction future, la référence à la condition contemporaine de l'existence est probablement la seule qui fonctionne toujours comme une orientation dans la construction des espaces où nous existons – habitons, circulons, arrêtons, cédons ou non le passage, où nous nous rencontrons ou refusons de prendre part à la communauté, où nous décidons, où nous décidons de décider en ce qui nous

[13] "Before becoming an immanent lawmaker of the urban form, the ordering Logos was a symbol of the cosmic dike. Before serving as the calculation overcoming the inextricable *vanitas* of the cases that make up the anarchic city of man, the architect was a meteorologist, mirror of an immutable order according to whose rhythm the polis stood." Massimo Cacciari, *Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philosophy of Modern Architecture*, translation by S. Sartarelli, New Heaven and London, Yale University Press, 1993, p. 206.

[14] Roland Barthes, *L'Aventure sémiologique*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1985, p. 261.

concerne, où nous nous heurtons ou nous nous invitons et où, pour faire bref, nous vivons en commun, où nous essayons de sauver la possibilité d'exister en commun. En quoi donc résiderait le trait singularisant une telle condition de l'existence ? Certes, on n'envisage point d'aborder de front une telle question dont le propre est de se dissoudre dans et de par son énonciation même. Des protocoles et des éclaircissements infiniment minutieux seraient nécessaires pour lui assurer une quelconque consistance. Mais comme une telle entreprise dépasse largement l'économie de notre questionnement ici, résumons-nous à une indication aussi abrupte soit-elle, indication que nous empruntons toujours à Jean-Christophe Bailly : « Et si quelque chose pouvait caractériser notre époque, ce serait sans doute d'abord cela, cette expropriation du propre, cette exposition de tous à des régimes de phrases, de gestes et d'objets venus d'ailleurs. »[15] Il y a certes un refus farouche, une dénégation inlassable de cette expropriation ; il y a incontestablement une architecture massivement et ouvertement attachée à l'appropriation, à l'attestation spatiale de la propriété, une architecture qui ne peut se concevoir en dehors de l'idée de la propriété. Il n'en reste pas moins que la marque de cette époque et de l'existence qu'elle accueille serait le retrait de l'Un, la déposition du suprême. La ville contemporaine serait donc l'espace où la disparition serait devenue visible, perceptible, vécue, où le retrait du modèle normatif et la suspension de la référence à son instance sont constitutifs de notre mode d'être. Ce retrait ouvre des espaces sans sacré, des espaces libres ou libérés pour du singulier, pour de l'hétérogène.

À défaut d'une prescription, qu'elle soit intrinsèque ou extrinsèque, qui commande à l'architecture de servir telle ou telle cause, on attendrait qu'elle soit néanmoins guidée par ce qui reste comme exigence en creux : accueillir, accompagner et abriter la précaire et vulnérable existence humaine et pas seulement, inventer des modalités de se soucier de cette existence, de recueillir une expérience qui se sait exposée à la dévalorisation et à la déposition, sans que ces termes soient ici les véhicules de significations négatives ou apocalyptiques. Force est pourtant de reconnaître qu'il n'en est presque rien. À quelques exceptions près les pratiques réflexives et pragmatiques couramment désignées sous le nom d'architecture se déploient dans ce que d'aucun appellent non sans raison « le stade Dubaï du capitalisme »[16]. C'est aussi cet écart et cette déception qui sont à penser. Car force est de reconnaître que les significations – modernes et contemporaines – de l'urbanité sont le plus souvent ignorées sinon déconsidérées là où il s'agit de prendre des décisions concernant l'aménagement des territoires urbanisés et des pratiques qu'ils sont censés accueillir et déterminer. L'urbanisme s'est d'ailleurs bien souvent fait le champion de cette déconsidération. Une raison de plus pour rappeler que l'accès à de telles significations, à supposer qu'il reste toujours praticable, impliquerait d'autres types de pratiques discursives que celles éminemment et immédiatement techniques.

[15] Jean-Christophe Bailly, *La ville à l'œuvre*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[16] Mike Davis, *Le stade Dubaï du capitalisme*, traduit par H. Jallon et M. Saint-Upéry, Paris, Les Prairies ordinaires, 2007.

Pour toutes ces raisons, la contemporanéité aura peut-être à envisager la possibilité d'un nouvel urbanisme – à supposer que l'on puisse garder le nom – qui renonce à se présenter comme un nouvel humanisme, qui ne se revendique plus d'une adéquation à quelque essence de l'homme, fût-elle reformulée. Une telle orientation viserait dès lors l'ouverture ou l'offre d'espaces où puisse avoir lieu la communauté des singularités, sans imposition de quelque exigence mobilisatrice de la totalité dans une essence unique. De quelle manière l'architecture pourrait-elle contribuer à la construction d'une autre possibilité pour les humains d'être et d'habiter ensemble ? La ville « humaine », soucieuse d'accueillir des formes de vie humaine, n'est pas la ville à l'échelle d'une essence totale de l'humain. La question concrète qui reste à reformuler est celle de savoir comment assurer la possibilité de politiques urbaines et architecturales qui permette à la communauté de vivre en dehors de toute procédure de mobilisation, mais aussi, et de plus en plus, en-deçà de toutes les formes d'abandon. Ces postures, ces gestes renvoient à un aménagement d'espaces qui rende possible l'existence en commun, l'existence plurielle et irréductible à un Type unique qui s'imprimerait sur les singularités qui circulent dans la structure politique.

Aux temps de la destitution des référents suprêmes, extra-mondains ou ultra-immanents, l'art, quel qu'il soit, n'a pas à être un nouveau fournisseur de richesses spirituelles, collectives ou privées. Malgré bon nombre de manifestes ou revendications informelles, il ne saurait être le détenteur de la plénitude qui se serait perdue partout ailleurs. Lorsqu'il correspond vraiment à l'actualité intempestive de la contemporanéité, le geste créatif n'est pas un patch, il ne recouvre pas, ne panse pas et n'enjolive pas non plus. Il ne produit pas d'autres mondes, des mondes plus parfaits, meilleurs, plus vrais ou plus beaux, des mondes exclusivistes. Il ne sauve pas et ne sauvegarde pas ce qui se serait perdu ou ce qui serait resté après une telle perte. En même temps, la création artistique n'a pas à devenir le tribunal de l'authenticité, dernière instance appelée à dire le juste et le vrai. Or, il faut l'avouer, l'art est entré dans une sorte d'intempérance critique, même si, à son tour, il est exposé à la pauvreté de tout un chacun. Ainsi est-il exposé à sa propre destitution. Il est à vrai dire exposition de la destitution, lieu multiple, réitérable où la pauvreté laisse entrevoir et efface son visage. Cette exposition et ce désœuvrement n'ont rien à voir avec la logique de la mort de l'art. Sans privilège aucun, sans autre vocation que la révocation, sans mission et sans appel, sans vérité intégrale et ultime à dévoiler ou à communiquer, l'art participe de ce témoignage à défaut duquel il n'y a pas de modernité : celui de la destitution. Témoignage de révocation, d'expropriation du propre, de qualités propres.

En ce point des plus difficiles qui soient, une relecture d'Adolf Loos pourrait à la limite fournir une certaine indication d'autant plus qu'il jette une lumière tout à fait singulière sur l'époque et sur son existence :

> Voyez, que notre époque ne soit pas en état de produire un nouvel ornement, c'est cela même qui fait sa grandeur. L'ornement, nous l'avons surmonté, nous sommes parvenus au stade du dépouillement. Voyez, les temps sont proches,

> l'accomplissement nous attend. Bientôt, les rues des villes vont resplendir comme de blanches murailles. Comme Sion, la Ville sainte, capitale du ciel. Alors, l'accomplissement sera là.[17]

Le grand mérite d'un tel geste de pensée réside avant toute autre chose en ceci qu'au lieu d'incriminer ou de déplorer la consomption d'une possibilité que l'on a de longue date jugée et pratiquée comme fondamentalement humaine, il propose d'y voir l'attestation d'une libération ou du moins le gage mesuré d'une espérance. Qui plus est, l'accomplissement est dit attendre non pas dans la splendeur et l'opulence mais dans le dépouillement. Du même coup, le dépassement émancipateur se voit délié d'une posture combattante, à tel point qu'il serait licite d'avancer que l'époque n'est pas à vrai dire le sujet de sa propre libération. Et donc que l'accomplissement n'est pas nécessairement une histoire d'appropriation ou de réappropriation. Dans ce dépassement de l'ornement qu'exalte Loos se répète sans doute un certain geste nietzschéen, ne serait-ce qu'en raison de la gaité qui naît avec la conscience de l'affranchissement du monde vrai. Ici, du monde vrai comme ornement. Tout comme du monde comme privilège. Cela ne fait l'ombre d'un doute, dans cette eschatologie blanche il y va d'une brisure ou plutôt d'une ruine des idoles indéfiniment reprise, de la vigilance à ce que l'existence ne cède plus aux consolations, aux leurres, aux prothèses et aux idolâtries ornementales, aux promesses et fantasmes des génies des lieux[18]. De toutes ces manières, l'annonce d'une possibilité autre de construire des espaces d'existence implique l'adhésion pleinement affirmée à quelque chose comme la condition urbaine. Adhésion critique et sans réserve à la contemporanéité, comme l'explique Benjamin[19]. À condition que cette contemporanéité soit définie selon ses traits véritablement fondamentaux. Ces espaces libérés et resplendissants promettant l'accomplissement dans le dépouillement seraient effectivement indissociables d'une âpre discipline de la retenue, de la fidélité, tout comme de l'endurance. Refus des compensations, rejet du surplus jouissif, refus du « bétonnage du vide »[20]. Il ne s'agit certes pas de promettre ou d'espérer une fois de plus la découverte de trésors cachés, d'une inépuisable richesse intérieure, mais d'affirmer et de valoriser la pauvreté en expérience[21] qui est non seulement le lot et l'épreuve de l'humanité contemporaine, c'est-à-dire depuis plus d'un siècle, mais aussi sa grandeur.

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[17] Adolf Loos, *Ornement et crime*, traduit par S. Cornille et Ph. Ivernel, Rivages poche, Petite Bibliothèque, 2003, p. 74.

[18] « De plus, nous devrions être constamment à l'affût de tout ce qui pourrait contrarier ou inverser le stimulant libérateur de la sécularisation. Cela suppose que nous soyons farouchement opposés à un retour romantique des génies de la forêt. » Harvey Cox, *La Cité séculière, essai théologique sur la sécularisation et l'urbanisation*, traduit par S. de Trooz, Tournai/Paris, Casterman, 1968, p. 65.

[19] Walter Benjamin, 367, Walter Benjamin, « Expérience et pauvreté » in *Œuvres*, t. II, traduit par M. de Gandillac, R. Rochlitz et P. Rusch, Paris, Gallimard, 2000, p. 367.

[20] Kostas Axelos, *Le jeu du monde*, Paris, Minuit, 1969, p. 403.

[21] « La pauvreté en expérience : cela ne signifie pas que les hommes aspirent à une expérience nouvelle. Non, ils aspirent à se libérer de toute expérience quelle qu'elle soit, ils aspirent à un environnement dans lequel ils puissent valoir leur pauvreté, extérieure et finalement aussi intérieure, à l'affirmer si clairement et si nettement qu'il en sorte quelque chose de valable. » Walter Benjamin, « Expérience et pauvreté », *op. cit.*, p. 371.

De toute évidence, l'affirmation valorisante du dépouillement ne s'accommode point de l'indifférence à l'égard de la pauvreté économique tout comme elle ne saurait être prise pour une justification de la spoliation et du maintien des humains dans un régime de capture fait d'endettement et de culpabilisation, et en aucun cas de la naturalisation en cours de la précarité. Un tel violent détournement ne pourrait relever que du malentendu ou de la ruse d'une position hégémonique soucieuse exclusivement de sa permanence et donc de l'effacement des lieux possibles de contestation et de résistance. Acheminer à la parole la pauvreté en expérience entendue comme épuisement des récits transmettant des séquences régulatrices et normatives n'enlève point la possibilité d'un discours sur la paupérisation ou la précarité. Tout simplement les deux discours ne sont pas concurrents.

De même, exposer le leurre constitutif des industries supplétives, affirmer la grandeur dans le dépouillement, ne devrait pas nous aveugler à l'égard de cette Restauration ornementale qui est depuis toujours en cours. À tel point que c'est elle qui est la règle confirmée par cette exception qu'est la destruction des ornements. Comme nous l'avons pu dire, la production actuelle d'espaces s'oriente massivement vers cette autocélébration de l'humanité en ayant les moyens dans des projections décoratives. Toute annonce d'un gai savoir s'expose au refus. Et l'expérience de Loos ne fait pas exception : « J'ai trouvé la vérité que voici pour l'offrir au monde : *l'évolution de la culture est synonyme d'une disparition de l'ornement sur les objets d'usage*. Je croyais apporter ainsi à ce monde une joie neuve, et il n'en a pas remercié. »[22]

Même si l'offrande de cette vérité neuve et joyeuse est restée sans gratitude, elle commence à jeter un jour sur la relation entre les pratiques, les intérêts et les procédures de l'architecture et quelque chose comme une créativité anarchitecturale. Telle qu'elle a été le plus souvent décrite, annoncée, revendiquée, mais aussi décriée, l'anarchitecture est envisagée comme une architecture anarchiste. Et cela, parfois dans un risqué effort d'insister sur la dimension ou la responsabilité politique de l'architecture[23]. Or, comme nous pensons avoir montré, l'engagement politique de l'architecture n'est pas une énigme ou une vérité méconnue, oubliée, réservée, en dépit de la tendance actuelle à la dépolitisation. Qui plus est, une telle définition menace la portée même de cette intervention nominale. Car quelque chose comme une contestation ou une destruction anarchiste reste un geste fatalement insuffisant. Et non pas seulement parce qu'il faudrait à tout prix satisfaire à l'exigence positive et positiviste de la production, mais surtout en raison de la dépendance d'une telle position par rapport à ce qu'elle interroge, nie, dénonce et veut renverser. Nous reprenons à cet égard l'explication fort expressive formulée par Derrida : « Car dans un *polemos* sans agressivité, sans cette pulsion destructrice qui trahirait encore un affect réactif à l'intérieur de la hiérarchie, elles s'en prennent au sens même du sens architectural, tel qu'il nous est légué et tel que nous l'habitons encore. »[24]

[22] Adolf Loos, *Ornement et crime*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[23] Cf. Lebbeus Woods, *Anarchitecture is a political act*, Academy Editions, 1992.
[24] Jacques Derrida, « Point de folie – maintenant l'architecture » in *Psyché, invention de l'autre*, Paris, Galilée, 1987, p. 483.

Dans un geste répété, il conviendrait de s'en prendre au sens même du sens anarchitectural. Ce qui revient à dire que le sens auquel nous prenons l'anarchie n'est pas celui de l'opposition destructrice et de la négation réactive mais celui formulé par Reiner Schürmann : « L'anarchie dont il sera question est le nom pour une histoire où cèdent les assises et où l'on s'aperçoit que le principe de cohésion, qu'il soit autoritaire ou rationnel, n'est plus qu'un espace blanc sans pouvoir législateur. »[25] C'est à partir d'ici seulement que l'on pourrait effectivement redéfinir l'anarchitecture comme une architecture qui assume l'expérience du dépouillement fondamental, de la déposition des suprêmes et de l'expropriation du propre. En suivant les conséquences de cette acception ontologique de l'anarchie pour la dynamique sémantique de l'anarchitecture, on comprend pourquoi elle ne saurait être une autre architecture, un autre ensemble de protocoles, de procédures, de conceptions et de pratiques et qui s'opposeraient à celui de l'architecture : elle serait plutôt ce qui traverse, déplace, conteste, réinvente cet ensemble de l'architecture elle-même. C'est la raison pour laquelle, d'ailleurs, l'opposition n'est pas vraiment appropriée pour en rendre compte. Dans la perspective que nous articulons, l'anarchitecture fonctionnerait d'une manière germinative, contaminant la représentation courante des pratiques théorique et pragmatiques liées à la production et à la destination des espaces construits, habités, fréquentés d'une manière ou autre. Au-delà de son opportunité, de sa nécessité même dans le champ de forces différentielles et conflictuelles constituant la politique, l'opposition est constitutivement dépendante d'un certain type de négation qui, pour les raisons précédemment exposées, échoue à rendre compte de la radicalité des mutations qu'accueille la modernité tardive. L'anarchitecture et la créativité qui serait la sienne renverraient donc à une logique autre que celle de l'opposition, de l'inversion.

Pour donner un exemple de cette logique complexe, citons la manière dont Benoît Goetz reformule l'habitation en partant de la dislocation : « L'inhabitation n'est pas l'inversion simple du mythe d'un espace parfaitement habitable et parfaitement convenable. La dislocation, qui est la condition de l'inhabitation, ne signifie nullement la privation totale et radicale de toute possibilité d'habitation. »[26] Notons que signifier ainsi l'in-habitation ne devrait en aucun cas faire oublier le fait véritablement décisif que les temps présents se définissent par là aussi, par la privation totale et radicale de toute possibilité d'habitation[27]. Il est tout aussi vrai que ce n'est pas la dislocation, la démythification de l'habitation qui porte la responsabilité pour cet événement catastrophique. Au contraire, l'anarchitecture serait le nom d'un singulier souci pour l'existence. Pour le dire d'une manière plus précise, l'anarchitecture serait ce qui résiste à la conception de la créativité architecturale exclusivement en termes d'innovation en matière de décoration, d'embellissement, de luxe, de spectacularisation.

[25] Reiner Schürmann, *Le principe d'anarchie. Heidegger et la question de l'agir*, Éditions du Seuil, 1982, p. 16.

[26] Benoît Goetz, *La dislocation : architecture et philosophie*, Paris, les Éditions de la Passion, 2001, p. 182.

[27] Bauman, Zygmunt, *Vies perdues. La modernité et ses exclus*, traduit par M. Bégot, Paris, Rivage poche, 2009.

Comme nous l'avons annoncé dès le début, ces multiples reformulations sont indissociables de la recherche d'une possibilité autre de l'habitation.

> L'architecture nous a appris à habiter autrement, c'est-à-dire qu'elle aura déplacé, espacé, l'habitation elle-même jusqu'à des rives qui sont celles, il est vrai, de l'inhabitation. Mais c'est *entre* "habitation" – rêve et fantasme de la *Domus* toujours déjà perdue – et "inhabitation" – désert, non-lieu, nomadisme, c'est là, *entre*, que nous habitons, toujours sur la brèche, glissants et vacillants.[28]

Une pédagogie architecturale existentielle viendrait, semble-t-il, remplacer une technologie architecturale disciplinaire et socialement formative. Renonçant à la surveillance et à la détermination des comportements – privés, singuliers ou collectifs –, l'architecture paraîtrait disposée à prendre plutôt en charge la configuration d'une tonalité, d'une sensibilité. Et pourtant, il faut faire remarquer sans attendre que, telle que nous l'entendons, l'anarchitecture conteste y compris la portée immédiate de la construction d'espaces pour le sens de l'expérience. Autrement dit, elle nomme un doute concernant le postulat d'un espace parfaitement opérateur, intrinsèquement efficace – d'un point de vue social et politique. Et même existentiel. « Le nouveau milieu ainsi créé ne peut manquer de nous apporter une nouvelle civilisation. »[29] Cette phrase que Daniel Payot écrit en référence à la civilisation de verre annoncée par Paul Scheerbart, a le mérite de formuler explicitement le postulat en question. L'anarchitecture, en revanche, se singulariserait par la prise en compte d'un tel manquement, par l'incertitude quant à la nouveauté et par l'indétermination quant à la manière dont un renouveau ou un changement réel pourrait survenir. Pour boucler la référence au propos déjà cité de Bailly, disons que l'anarchitecture se définirait par un accompagnement qui n'est plus pédagogique. Cet accompagnement autre viserait la situation de l'homme dans un espace d'où le fondement, le propre, le suprême se seront retirés, retrait qui aura emporté toute certitude. Ainsi l'anarchitecture se place-t-elle plutôt du côté des séries hétérogènes, discontinues, non linéaires, sans nécessité et, dès lors, sans l'assurance d'une déduction. Il n'y a pas de relation de nécessité entre l'espace et l'existence. Les effets des espaces sur l'existence sont à vrai dire imprédictibles. Tout en réaffirmant que le rapport éthique et politique à la vie de tout un chacun et à la vie des autres est étroitement lié aux conditions matérielles et spatiales de la vie, l'anarchitecture doute néanmoins de la possibilité de soutenir que du changement de ces conditions matérielles il s'ensuivrait un changement de la condition de l'existence. Entre la configuration de l'espace et la configuration de la présence au monde la relation n'est point immédiate ou nécessaire. L'anarchitecture surnomme provisoirement la décision de l'architecture de renoncer à se prendre pour un constructivisme humaniste. Assumant se faiblesses, elle délaisserait le fantasme du grand architecte, fût-il météorologue ou sociologue. Elle constituerait

[28] Benoît Goetz, *La dislocation*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[29] Daniel Payot, « Préface », in Paul Scheerbart, *L'architecture de verre*, traduit par P. Galissaire, Circé, 1995, p. 29.

dès lors une industrie qui ne rêve plus de la Création. La création anarchitecturale est donc une création industrieuse, expérimentale, à la fois réflexive et résolument matérialiste. L'espace construit ne constituera pas une nouvelle essence de l'homme, une nouvelle figure du Sujet. L'anarchitecture a quelque chose du désœuvrement[30]. Ménageant la vulnérabilité de l'humain, elle aménage des espaces censés accueillir cette précarité ontologique. C'est pour cela que tout ce que l'anarchitecture pourrait avoir en vue, c'est une certaine hospitalité.

Bien évidemment, une construction et une habitation qui se laisseraient hantées par l'an-archie, par le retrait de la fondation et par celui de la finalité, ne seraient point une construction et une habitation désordonnées, chaotiques, suspendues ou interdites. Dans la mesure précise où, ici, retrait ne veut pas tout simplement dire perte, privation, mais plutôt libération, ouverture, exposition[31]. Il faudrait dès lors parler d'une sur-architecture, d'une hyper-architecture au sens que Derrida imprime à ce préfixe là où il s'inscrit en marge du texte platonicien, contaminant ainsi la tradition conceptuelle occidentale qui y puise ses racines : « Mise en abyme du discours sur *khôra*, lieu de la politique, politique des lieux, telle serait donc la *structure d'une surimpression sans fond*. »[32] Avec les ressources de cet énoncé, il serait possible de dire que l'anarchitecture opère la mise en abyme de l'architecture là où elle revendique une relation privilégiée et constitutive avec l'*arkhè*, avec le fond, la fondation, le fondement. Les espaces construits auraient la structure de telles surimpressions sans fond.

L'anarchitecture ainsi définie implique et atteste une autre conception du vacant, du vide, ce qui la rapproche de quelque chose d'aussi paradoxal comme une sur-habitation sans occupation, une fréquentation qui s'abstient de devenir investissement. Mais pour que ces difficiles exigences soient respectées, il faudrait que la construction de l'espace inscrive matériellement dans l'espace construit une sorte de protocole de contre-effectuation de la pulsion appropriative. D'où une réitérée recherche de matériaux qui de par leur matérialité même se dérobent à la signature du propre, à l'empreinte, à la mainmise, à l'appropriation, à la captation exclusive de l'objet de la production dans un régime de propriété. C'était déjà un espoir que Benjamin voyait assuré par le verre et le métal[33]. La créativité des autres gestes architecturaux que nous proposons de nommer anarchitecture refuse de reconnaître que l'investissement et l'installation soient les seules possibilités pour la construction, l'habitation et la fréquentation des espaces. Cela nous permettra de

[30] Jean-Luc Nancy, *La communauté désœuvrée*, Paris, Christian Bourgois, 1986.

[31] « Ne reconduisent-elles pas au désert de l'anarchitecture, à un degré zéro de l'écriture architecturale où celle-ci viendrait se perdre, dorénavant sans finalité, sans aura esthétique, sans fondement, sans principe hiérarchique, sans signification symbolique, une prose enfin de volumes abstraits, neutres, inhumains, inutiles, inhabitables et privés de sens? » Jacques Derrida, *Psyché, invention de l'autre*, *op. cit.*, p. 483.

[32] Jacques Derrida, *Khôra*, Paris, Galilée, 1993, p. 49.

[33] « Ce que les nouveaux architectes ont désormais réalisé avec leur construction de verre et de métal : ils ont créé des espaces dans lesquels il est difficile de laisser des traces. » Walter Benjamin, « Brèves ombres », in *Œuvres*, t. II, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

mettre en question ce réflexe qui consiste à mettre sans attendre quelque chose à la place de ce qui n'y est plus. L'exigence de remplacement fonctionne depuis toujours comme un critère censé permettre de décider de la fiabilité et même de la bonne foi des positions alternatives, critiques, destructrices ou déconstructrices. Ne demande-t-on pas à tout programme de prouver sans attendre sa capacité de mettre quelque chose à la place de ce qui s'en va ? On ne s'abusera point en disant que les errances les plus graves, les plus gigantesques des expériences historiques récentes de l'Occident et désormais de la planète tout entière sont structurellement en rapport avec la pulsion de remplir, d'occuper la place, avec cette compulsion au remplissage, à l'enjolivement et ainsi de combler le vide ressenti, accusé, impossible de supporter, de porter, dans l'horizon de l'expérience possible. Or, ce qu'il faudrait faire, c'est d'inventer d'autres places ou, mieux encore, d'inventer un autre rapport à la place, surtout à la place devenue vacante. C'est ce que l'on peut lire dans Benjamin : « D'abord, un instant du moins, l'espace vide, la place où l'objet se trouvait, où la victime vivait. On trouvera bien quelqu'un qui en aura besoin sans chercher à l'occuper. »[34] Plus que de simplement laisser la place vide, il s'agirait pour l'anarchitecture de la garder vacante, inoccupée, sans emploi, laissant luire des lumières neutres, blanches, sans secrets, sans vestiges, sans rien à découvrir.

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