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Utopia and Measure

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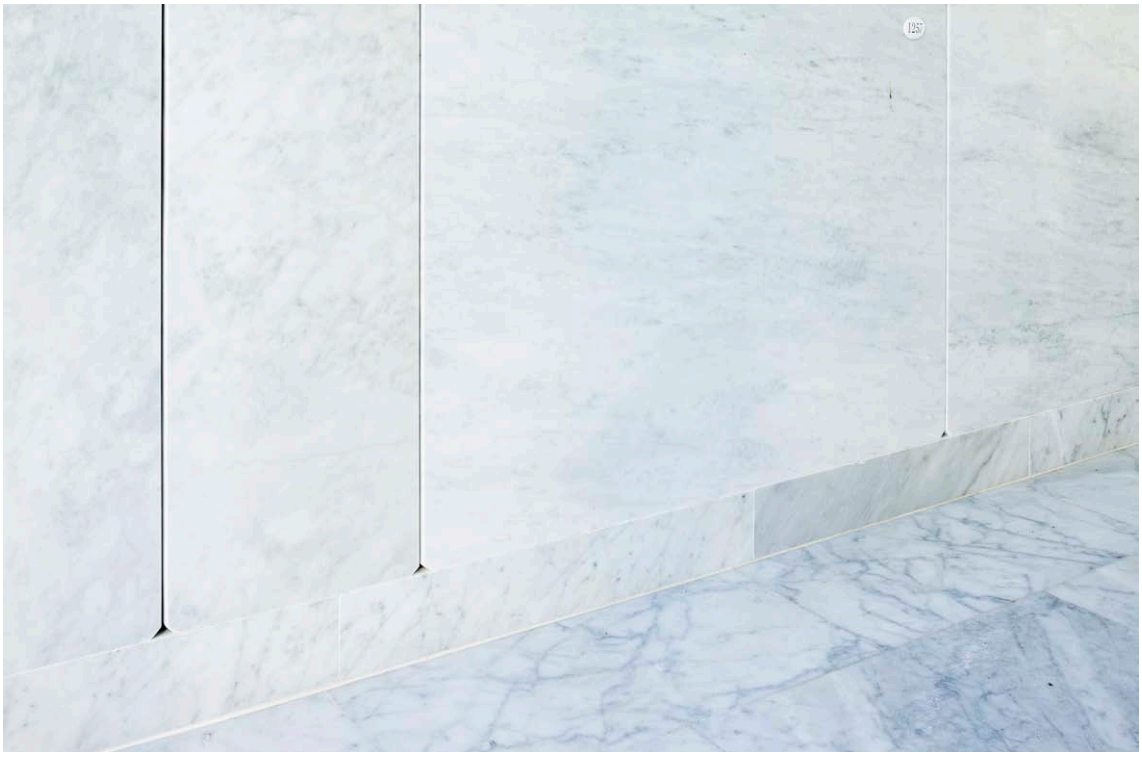

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a cura di / dossier coordonné par / edited by
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Lorenzo Casali

Editorial

EDITORIAL

Utopia may be thoroughly an issue of measure. More specifically, utopia puts measures to test. It is upon this "testing moment of measures in the name of utopia" that we invited contributions for this issue of *lo Squaderno*.

On the one hand, we measure the things we value, and all utopian discourse starts from the affirmation of a certain value or a constellation of such values. On the other hand, the causal relationship is complicated by the fact that measures naturalise the commensurations between things measured.

Techniques of measuring, far from being a passive reading of the world, transform things and suggest, or impose, an order onto the world. If new methods and units of measuring are intimately connected with world-making and modes of existence, what are the endgames implied here? Or, put differently, What are the utopian problems to which techniques of measuring respond?

Utopia has often presented itself as the pure aim of measurement. But, what if utopia is in fact the spirit of a perpetual interrogation that voices an endless dissatisfaction with the measures in place? If so, utopia would be a stance that undoes assumptions more than implementing measures. And yet, what would be a utopia without measure?

On a theoretical level, we may ask why we measure in the first place. Is the ever-increasing array of measuring techniques leading us to the problem of meaning that we find ourselves unable to formulate consciously, a round-about way of approaching unconscious utopian desires? Or, alternatively, has measuring become the end in-and-of itself? Here, a discussion ensues about whether that which is not, or cannot be measured (yet) can be harnessed through the act of measuring, or whether the measuring itself will destroy the very qualities it seeks to capture.

In this issue, Sophia Banou begins approaching the problem by looking at the utopia of maps in Louis Marin's *utopics*, based in a discussion of Borges. Banou extends a critical reading of the representational techniques of maps, tracing these techniques up to contemporary digitally produced urban representations. While digital technologies are usually hailed as intrinsically dynamic and plural, the author suggests that they may in fact be much more static than expected, as happens with many other quantitative techniques which may be strong in "accuracy" (i.e., in "geography"), but poor in "impression" (i.e., in "chorography").

Moving to the domain of literature, Jean-Clet Martin discusses utopia in an apparently more classical sense. Martin seeks to convey the potential of becoming-child that the great works of fiction enables. By bringing the reader into the suspended and eternal atmospheres of such works, Martin unearths the intimate link between utopia and childhood. Utopia is here revealed not so much as a challenge to measures, but somehow as a temporary (yet, eternal, and liberating) oblivion of them.

The dimension of temporality is quite central in Caterina Nirta's piece as well. For Nirta, time can be regarded as the actual "value of utopia". Analysing the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Thomas More's foundational work, Nirta subtly questions the irreflexive association between utopia and hope, as well as the perceived dominance of a notion of utopia mostly associated with space. But Nirta, argue, "space has largely failed as the terrain of utopia". Over the last half century, utopia seems to have failed to go "beyond the misery of a new way of living organised around capital, labour, profit and the de-personification of space".

This argument matches well with the subsequent piece by Karl Palmås, who reports from a little known story in modern industrial history.

In 1974, the Swedish Volvo Car Company set up a new plant in the city of Kalmar, focused upon the concept of "humanized production". Instead of the classic assembly line, "workers operated in teams, collaborating through the full assembly of the car, with a considerably widened scope for self-management". This could be said to amount to a capitalist-utopian experiment. Although the project has not become dominant, and has in fact been abandoned, Palmås calls attention to the current proliferation of adjectives such as "smart" and "living" attached to working environments. Could this suggest a strange transformation in utopian forms and measures under contemporary capitalism?

Rodrigo Delso seems to suggest so, defining as "real timetopias" the temporal horizon of the current economy, where the "real time" ideology has turned into a kind of "infra-ordinary sovereignty". As anticipated by Virilio, speed has turned into an essential component of power. We appear to be taken by surprise by our own measures, as technology has radically altered the scale of association afforded by our urban and digital environments. We again face a triumph of "precision" to the detriment of meaningful purpose: "what do we measure for?" asks provocatively Delso.

On a more philosophical plan, however, building on the classical philosophy of Hegel and Husserl, Alessandro Castelli argues that utopia could never exist without measure. In fact, he warns us to distinguish between utopia and what he calls "daydreaming". Our age is dominated by daydreaming but utterly lacks utopia, Castelli suggests. He concludes that "in dreams, as it is known, there can be no right measure" and that unbrindled dreaming has largely replaced utopia, giving way to dangerous arbitrariness.

In his analysis of the "utopian mystique of neoliberalism", Fredrik Torisson stresses that, under the dominant economic model, the notion of potential has turned into "a central aspect of competitiveness and investment". Bringing into consideration architectural examples from Koolhaas to Foster + Partners, and following the theoretical lead of Paolo Virno, Torisson focuses on how capitalist valorisation is deeply imbued with the temporality of potentiality, understood as a "capacity of infinite development". In this sense, the whole process is based on a mystique that appears to be deeply ingrained into how capitalism currently works.

The final piece by Andrea Mubi Brighenti is laid out on a different terrain. Examining the case of Fernand Deligny's experience with autistic children (spanning from 1969 to 1986), the author here proposes a way to interpret the stance embodied by the radical alternative French educator. While it seems easy to attach some kind of utopian potential to Deligny's experience, much more difficult is to pin it down, especially insofar as the latter looks like a "utopia without plans". Almost the opposite of a daydreaming and a capitalist mystique, Deligny's "attempt", as well as the action by the autistic children themselves, put us in contact with something that is of the order of a "vital necessity", resistant to calculation and yet fundamentally connected to a measure of the Earth.

The articles collected in this issue are far from exhausting the manyfold relations between measures, utopia, space and society. By presenting an asystematic range of cases, we hope however to have evoked some of the directions in which one such exploration could evolve.

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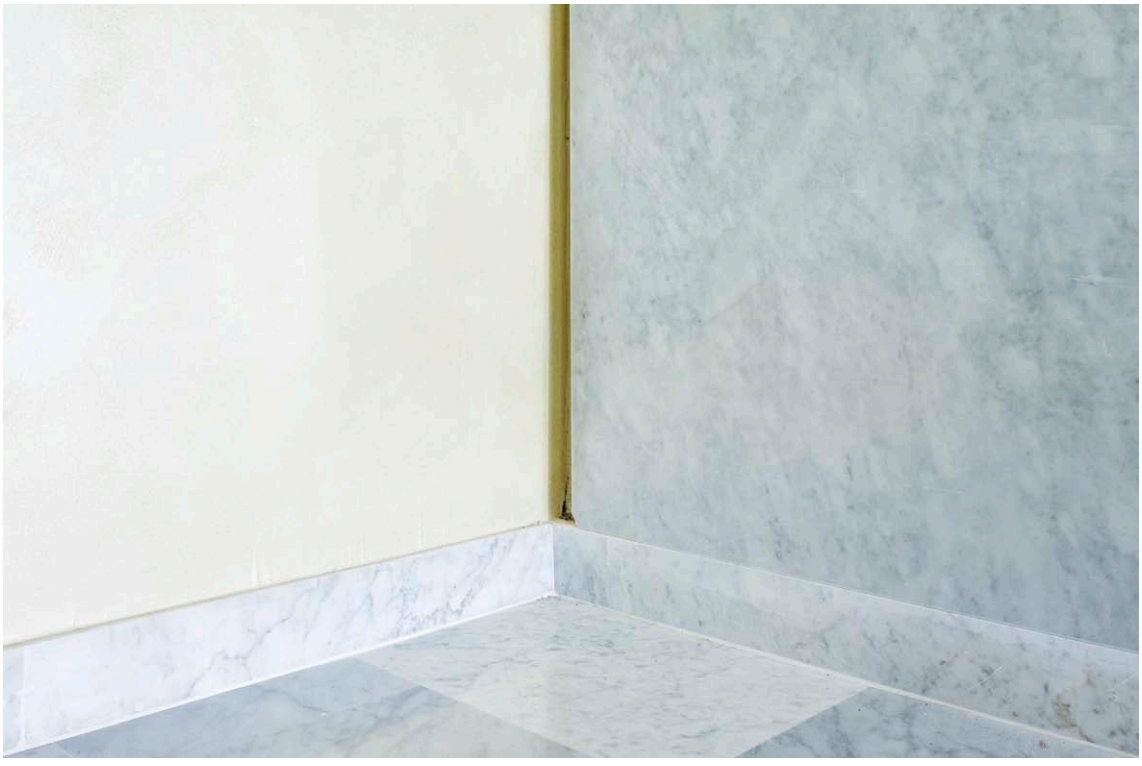

Picture Perfect
Maps and other measures of the contemporary city

Sophia Banou

> *The map beyond measure is so perfectly measured that is no longer an analogon of the country, its equivalent but is rather, its 'double'.*
>
> *Louis Marin,* The Utopia of the Map

Jorge Luis Borges' short story 'On Exactitude in Science' (1946) has been referred to innumerous times: it features a map that is repeatedly revisited and scaled up, until it becomes contiguous with its referent object (the territory) and effaces it. In this extreme cartographic project, the desire for a representational perfection leads to a description by duplication, which renders the map a useless ruin, and eventually condemns it to oblivion. Here, I am interested in particular in two readers of Borges: Jean Baudrillard's (1994) exploration of a new order of simulation, and Louis Marin's (1984) discussion of the utopian nature of representation – or, more explicitly, of mapping.

Pivotal in Borges is arguably more the desire for exactitude than the cartographic object itself. As Baudrillard (1994) has highlighted, the magnitude of the map not strange to the pursuit of hyper-reality that contemporary technologies promise, and which contemporary habits of consumption demand and anticipate. The 1:1 reproduction of this map, presented in Borges' parable as a futile paradox, is now ubiquitous in everyday life and architectural practice alike. The extreme visibility of an entire planet under constant surveillance by institutions as available as Google and as sophisticated as NASA, as well as the unprecedented accessibility of data capture, manipulation and dissemination tools made possible by the coupling of the internet and mobile technologies, increasingly tip the scale between the real and its constructed double in favour of the latter. The concept of post-truth exceeds the interest of mass-mediated politics and manifests itself in the production and the experience of the urban and its architecture. The appeal of the technologically advanced presents itself to both designers and city dwellers as a token of the future, but carries in fact an agency of value production for social and architectural space. This agency is visible in the ways urban space is perceived, experienced, and re-produced through mappings and images that approach technology in distinct ways.

However, within these technologically advanced but diverse means of measuring the reality of the city, an age-old geographic dichotomy persists: which one is the most important, impression or accuracy? In Borges' Empire, the desire for perfection determines the priority of scale. The cultural geographer Ola Söderström (2011: 116) highlights that scale is an epistemological, rather than ontological, category: a graphic tool for categorizing information about the world, in ways that reduce

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and obscure important dimensions of the urban condition, such as the transient, the kinetic or the relational. This division between local and global is already grafted in the very origins of geography and consequently cartography. In Ptolemy's *Geography* (ca. 150 AD), geography is described as the representation of the surface of the entire Earth, the *intera œcoumene*, while chorography entails "the representation of small parts of this world" (Borys 2014: xv). The distinction clearly suggests a matter of scale, which extends to matters of semblance and perspective, or viewpoint. The depiction of the Œcoumene demands the panoptic view of the plan, and of the map as an *analogon* of the earth. The familiar local calls for a more direct form of representation and a relatable mode of subjectivity that simulates the experience of an actual viewer. The mistranslation of the Greek definition of chorography into Renaissance Latin as *imitatio picturae* (*mimesis diagraphès*; instead of the correct 'imitation *by means of writing*': *mimesis dià graphès*) reinforced the qualitative interpretation of chorography, which was commonly considered as secondary to the mathematical validity of geography (Nuti 1999: 90).

Marin approaches utopics as a signifying spatial practice, where meaning is produced through the text at the interplay of a multiplicity of spaces

The Earth

In contemporary geography, planning and architecture, a positivist approach is still prevalent. The fascination with the digital promise of a paradigm shift offers itself as the best advocate of such tendency. Söderström (2011: 115), for instance, criticizes non-digital images of the city as favouring the "material, the immobile and the permanent" due to their "technological limitations". The architect and critic David Gissen (2008) has similarly described the "geographic turns of architecture", recounting the digitally-driven neo-positivist approaches that have emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century. Gissen refers to the architectural projects by firms such as MVRDV and UN Studio, among others, which involve extensive digital data collection and data-driven form-generation and visualization.

For Gissen (ibid. 67), the primary link between architecture and geography does not lie in notions of quantification or representation, but in territory as their common ground. In this context, geography is not just about the *writing* (in Greek, *γραφείν*) or the measure of the earth (*yaía*), but rather about the writing *upon the earth*. Gissen suggests that architecture's contemporary geographic project is about tying concepts to the Earth, producing difference and fostering political subjectivity. However, this subjectivity is grounded in data, and the earth is considered as a given, stable ground; architecture and its representational project then emerge as a kind of problem-solving through the manipulation of information. This takes place through processes, not so much of mapping as much as of *imaging*. The representation is still instrumental, but constitutes merely the image of the territory. Nothing is utopian about this conception, nothing is impossible or ideal in these representations: in fact, everything claims to be already so accurately real that projection is irrelevant at best. If, as Söderstörm suggests, "traditional", non-digitally generated representations are incapable of representing the real complexity of the city, digital data-driven images can equally entail stillness. Instead of spatializing information, these simulative representations stabilize and thus displace the transitive character of both the city and its image. This removal of temporality entails the removal of spatiality, essayed through the denial of representation by simulation.

The map

Keeping in mind Baudrillard's conception of simulacra, I would like to review the concept of

"traditional representation" by revisiting Borges' short story through Louis Marin's reading. To begin, it is important to remark that so-called traditional representations are not so much "non-digital" as they are *not-definitively digital*. In other words, these are representations where digital tools do not determine the mode of producing meaning and validating integrity. Marin (1984: 233-34) proposes that the map in Borges' story is a representational object that is at once *same* and *other*: the utopia of the map therefore emerges in the gap, in the mismatch between sign and meaning. This process of misrecognition involves an act of forgetting, an oblivion of the difference produced out of the act of representation that emphasizes the agency of the map.

Marin approaches *utopics* as a signifying spatial practice, where meaning is produced through the text at the interplay of a multiplicity of spaces. Although multiple, these spaces convey a unified narrative of representation. They are incongruous spaces, perpetually re-performed and negated, evading the fixing of a determinate meaning (Hill 1982). Rather than a re-presentation, the utopian text is the negation of both reality and mimesis. In other words, Marin's *utopics* brings into play the diverse concepts of spatiality that are derived by what Fredric Jameson (1977: 16) describes as a "duality of registers": an internal discontinuity that emerges from the clash of the figural (physical/imaginary) and the textual (symbolic). This idea connects space with text through a combined process of poiesis and projection, produced not only upon writing but also upon reading the text, the map and the figure. Marin pays particular attention to maps as instantiations of such a dual register, which creates the conditions for the production of meaning through a heterogeneous yet unified spatiality.

The two sides of the distance therefore operate reciprocally. The map is meaningful only as a doubling of the Empire, which in turn is defined by the recognition of the difference of the map, what Marin calls its *neutralization*. This transaction between the origin and the enunciation of representation tends to the nought, the no-place of representation. On the one hand, there is the zero degree of representation as simulation, that is, as having no figure of its own; on the other hand, there is the zero degree of its recognition as self-contained figure, which is produced through the alienation from the origin and the intention of representation.[1]

A phenomenal denial of craftsmanship, neutralization or "zero-degree writing" is therefore a kind of articulation that seeks to produce a pure experience of the content by removing the subjectivity of the author and of language. As Marin observes, this leads to the double negation of the representation: in fact, the removal of subjectivity eventually equates to the acceptance of its ubiquity. In Borges, the exactitude of cartography as objective science is supposed to remove subjectivity; but this only reveals the utopian negation of its expediency denouncing mapping as *hybris* – of surpassing legitimate measure.

The city

In the essay 'The City in its Map and Portrait', Marin (2001) underlines the utopian nature of the cartographic image through the device of the city portrait. Most commonly associated with the 'perspective plan' and the bird's eye view, the city portrait is a chorographic rather than geographic document (Nuti 1999: 98). As noted above, chorography lies on the verge between measurement and observation. Although there is no evidence that such depictions were based on measured surveys, they mark the move from a symbolic depiction of the city as ideal to the function of the map as a record concerned with the specificity of the city's geographical and man-made characteristics (Ballon and Friedman 2007: 690).[2] The city portrait thus combined overall resemblance with the type of abstraction that brought urban representation closer to the quantitative intentions of geography.

1 The zero-degree refers to a "colorless" writing that attempts to convey a neutrality of representation (Barthes 1977).
2 Jacobo de Barbari's *Veduta di Venezia a volo d'uccello* (1500) is considered the earliest example of this kind (Schulz 1978).

According to Marin (2001: 204), the portrait offers a selective representation of traits, founded on the truth-value of individuality: the city is portrayed as an individual and the map is both a presentation of its 'pro-trait' but also a 'pro-ject' – at once a recollection and an intention. The expression of this twofold nature combines description and narrative through iconic and symbolic functions. This is expressed in the experience of the map as a visually received object. Description refers to an external synoptic gaze, while narration regards "a moving gaze, working through space and itineraries" (ibid. 205-8). Both the city and its projection are experienced from within the drawing through a sequence of interrelated gazes. This movement between what is present and what is represented is partly voluntary (an instrumental abstraction) and partly an omission, resulting from the "filtering" of the original. This filtering follows ideological, political and representational lines – what Marin calls "the markers of the cartographic enunciation" – and conditions what is made present within the representation itself.

Contemporary digitally produced urban representations can be categorized in two kinds that echo the geographic/chorographic dilemma. On one hand, reincarnations of the cartographic plan are augmented by an info-graphic richness of data visualization made possible by GIS; on the other hand, as an extension of the misunderstood chorography, we can perhaps consider another mode of technological desire: the direct observation of places becomes ubiquitous through the unprecedented availability of 'social' witnesses fully equipped with the ability to capture and share local content. We are thus faced here with two sides of the city and its portrait, the institutional(-ized) mathematical side, and the popular(-ized) pictorial side. Paradoxically, both sides seem to converge into the iconic function of the image/model. Both increasingly attain a position of resemblance as calculation performs a full circle: digitised maps return to modelled bird's eye views (Google Maps being the most accessible example). Data manipulation succumbs to formalism and cities themselves pose as iconic profiles, rather than experiences. If, from the Enlightment onwards, the image of the city has moved from portrait to plan, now, in the age of informational exactitude, it returns back to profile. There is no more reading of the map, there is no longer enunciation (Marin 2001: 204) but simply spectatorship of the land as model. The calculative and the instantaneous demonstrate their exactitude through, respectively, mathematical accuracy and immediacy; however, they are at once images of the city, the earth, the building, and products of desires that define their scopic and epistemological approaches. They differ from the map, the portrait, and their utopics because they overlook and conceal this doubling, and thus remain, in their in singularity, *still*.

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L'Utopie

Jean-Clet Martin

L'utopie souffre d'un manque irrémédiable de réalité. Un événement, aussi fugace soit-il, même à en déplorer l'absurdité, advient, pour le moins, sur la scène de l'Histoire. Mais l'utopie, quant à elle, n'arrivera jamais à s'accomplir sous l'hospice d'un lieu capable de la recevoir. Ce qui est utopique sera d'emblée atypique, sans topographie pour l'accueillir en un endroit qu'on pourrait montrer du doigt. Ainsi de la carte de l'île au trésor imaginée par Stevenson ou, mieux encore, de la Syldavie dans l'œuvre de Hergé. On aura beau déplier une mappemonde, en balayer les géodésiques, jamais aucune longitude ni latitude n'en indiqueraient suffisamment le petit point noir.

Edgar Poe, en un autre sens, nous montre un personnage qui partira à la recherche d'un scarabée d'or, croyant posséder une carte dont finalement il faudra reconnaître qu'il s'agit d'une espèce de volute d'encre, une tache de Rorschach, aux contours interprétés plus que vérifiés : une méprise déraisonnable seule redevable à la conviction, à l'espérance de la fortune qui ne viendra guère. Cela ressemble à l'hallucination d'une forme dans un marbre ou encore dans le marc de café. A cet égard, l'utopie prend un tour décevant, résonne comme une pathologie, celle d'un fantasme, d'une idée fixe dont le danger consisterait, par amertume, à l'imposer au réel sans doute malgré lui. Il y a ainsi comme un forçage enveloppé en toute utopie, un désir de réalisation dont pourraient se rendre victimes ceux qui s'y engagent à la manière dont Kant avait dénoncé la dialectique sans frein nourrissant une « illusion transcendantale ».

N'ayant pas lieu, ne trouvant aucune place dans ce monde, les objets de l'utopie apparaissent trop souvent comme des chimères déplacées, tournées vers un autre monde, celui du rêve, de l'imaginaire, politiquement dangereux et qu'on opposera au sens confortable du réel acquis à nos attentes. Deux métriques bien différentes, deux mesures dont la géométrie ne sera pas la même. Aussi, depuis le début du XXème siècle, on assiste à l'extinction des utopies normatives, visant une société bien trop parfaite pour rester humaine. Wells tout comme Huxley forment des évocations cauchemardesques d'univers totalitaires où liberté individuelle et propagandes sociales s'opposent violemment. Ce genre désabusé, depuis le *Procès* de Kafka au moins, se donne, en effet, pour objectif la mise en question de la perfection, la critique d'une société uniformisée, sans omettre de condamner parfois les dérives scientifiques (*L'île du docteur moreau, Ravage, Soleil vert etc.)*

Ce mouvement « contre-utopique », aboutissant au constat de *la mort des idéologies*, dénoncera l'image du philosophe qui, en se tournant vers une cité idéale, aurait la tête dans les étoiles. Au point que, très tôt déjà, depuis *Les Nuées* d'Aristophane, les servantes et même les domestiques trouvaient à s'en moquer. Nous sommes tous, devant la force d'un tel sarcasme, rendus à la raison, sommés pour ainsi dire de déposer tout idéal, pris dans la résolution de l'action rentable, la plus profitable et la moins ambitieuse. Le regard moderne se tourne ainsi vers le réalisme du quotidien sans prendre le

Jean-Clet Martin, agrégé de philosophie, docteur en philosophie, titulaire d'une habilitation à diriger des recherches, a été directeur de programme au Collège international de philosophie de Paris (de 1998 à 2004). Il mantient le site *Strass de la philosophie*.

http://strassdelaphilosophie.blogspot.com/

temps d'affûter son esprit au contact de choses essentielles. Comment *réenchanter* alors la platitude du monde dans lequel plus rien ne porte au rêve ? Comment redonner à une Madeleine, ou à un pavé mal équarri, son mordant (Proust) ? Que faire des objets inconsommables de l'art constitutifs des natures mortes de la peinture du XVIIème siècle, si précises pourtant . . . Un citron pelé, par exemple, y sera représenté avec une netteté telle qu'on ne saurait quoi en faire, enfermé dans le silence d'une toile noire, sans vie, qui nous effraie de figer ainsi le temps autour de ce fruit en train de pourrir. Curieuse manie donc que celle de nous présenter des volailles et des viandes, des fruits et des fleurs posés là pour rien, dans la nuit du tableau et l'étroitesse de son cadre irréel. . .

J'aurais voulu simplement tempérer ce constat en supposant que la spirale que trace la peau du citron pelé nous donne à éprouver le vertige de la durée bien mieux que les aiguilles d'une montre de prestige. De même, la recherche du *scarabée d'or* auquel Poe nous invite à participer est évidemment plus importante que sa découverte finale. Pis, le trouver nous conduirait à achever un périple, un voyage parfois initiatique, comme si le chemin importait plus que l'aboutissement. Il y a en toute utopie un comportement nomade, une manière d'entrer en suspens suivant un itinéraire que le pèlerin jugera plus instructif, plus riche d'expériences que ne le ferait la bénédiction de son aboutissement. C'est au milieu de la route, dans l'intervalle, que commence le véritable déplacement, au moment où le monde que je connais s'est évaporé mais que celui que je vise n'est pas encore en vue. La frontière est le lieu d'un franchissement qui peut durer sans limite, un peu comme si un terrain vague s'ouvre entre deux pays, deux armées, un *désert des tartares* comme dirait Buzzati et où l'on s'installerait de manière définitive, n'étant répertorié nulle part, n'appartenant ni à l'un ni à l'autre, hors territoire, *u/topique* par le même geste : un *horla* en quelque sorte, une entité non-répertoriée, dont le dehors serait finalement le seul endroit où trouver refuge.

Le relais est incontestablement plus suggestif en aventures que l'achèvement d'un parcours, de sorte que c'est cette absence de fin qui nous captive encore dans le récit de Shéhérazade, totalement dé/mesuré. *Mille et une nuits*, cela signifie que le compte ne peut s'achever sur aucun chiffre rond, qu'on se heurtera toujours à un nombre de plus, atopique, surnuméraire, qui relance un tour. La nuit de trop, au-delà de mille, est en fait le moteur de l'utopie. Il nous faudra bien reconnaître alors que, dans le même ordre d'idée, l'*Odyssée* d'Ulysse est une expérimentation intervallaire qui compte davantage plus que le point de départ ou le retour, décevant, en Ithaque. L'essentiel n'est pas le cercle. L'événement qui entraîne Ulysse se passe entre, dans le non-lieu d'un monde étrange, étranger, *un pays où l'on n'arrive finalement jamais* (André Dhôtel) et qui par cette impossibilité d'aboutir rendra le voyage extraordinaire.

Et quand bien même tout devrait se terminer bien, on n'en sera plus tout à fait le même pour autant. Seul le chien d'Ulysse, en effet, reconnaîtra à son odeur celui qui fut son maître, tant il avait changé, éprouvé le charme d'un voyage en spirale. L'utopie signifie que jamais le point d'aboutissement ne rimera avec les conditions initiales. S'y glissent un décalage, un supplément qui donneront à Ulysse le sentiment d'être un autre. Et c'est bien encore ce qui se produit à la lecture de *l'Ile au trésor* ou de *Robinson Crusoé*. Difficile d'imaginer que rien n'ait changé *entre temps*. L'avant et l'après se tournent ostensiblement le dos. On y éprouvera la richesse d'un lieu qui n'existe sans doute nulle part, mais qui donnera à notre existence une échappée, une carte pour la guider mieux que celle d'un planisphère. L'utopie est un « Atlas imaginaire » qu'on porte avec soi et dont les repères façonnent nos souvenirs, nous rappellent notre enfance aussi sûrement qu'un album de photographie.

Je me reconnais moins peut-être dans les images fidèles d'un photomaton que par des souvenirs de lecture, dans l'ambiance des *Trois mousquetaires* ou celle du *Capitaine Fracasse*, confiée à l'odeur d'un papier jauni par le temps. Les îles enchantées n'ont sans doute pas plus d'existence physique que *Moby Dick*, cette baleine blanche poursuivie par le capitaine Achab, mais, du bateau qui la prend en

chasse, nous nous rappelons le moindre détail. Ses voiles restent d'une précision cinglante qui peuple notre monde mieux, assurément, que le ferry que nous empruntons pour nous rendre en Angleterre. Au point qu'il m'arrive de supposer que le ballon de Jules Verne parcourt cinq semaines beaucoup plus denses en intensité frénétique qu'une décennie scolaire, avec le tour de la terre qui ne se mesure pas de la même manière vers l'Est que vers l'Ouest. Un jour de plus s'impose comme une figure surnuméraire qui clos le texte de Verne. L'utopie nous paraît réaliser ainsi la création d'univers certes fictifs mais dont les mondes n'en comportent pas moins autant de clarté, d'évidence, que l'épuisement imposé par la rentabilité des suractivités quotidiennes.

Les objets de l'utopie apparaissent trop souvent comme des chimères déplacées, tournées vers un autre monde, celui du rêve, de l'imaginaire qu'on opposera au sens confortable du réel acquis à nos attentes. Deux métriques bien différentes, deux mesures dont la géométrie ne sera pas la même

Dans la grisaille de la modernité et le cycle redondant des biens de consommation, l'utopie désigne un non-lieu, une luciole de vacuité, un intermède laissant la place à un passage, à une contre-allée ou une promenade en mesure de nous conduire hors du temps, vers l'image de ce qui, en nous, est resté indemne : un idéal, une idée sociale, une foi en un monde plus clair qu'on ne peut pas simplement opposer au principe de réalité. L'imaginaire que l'utopie abrite n'est pas irréel et par conséquent négligeable en valeur ! Contre Kant, on pourrait dire qu'il porte en lui une promesse de réalité, la graine d'un monde capable de pousser entre les pavés pour les faire éclater. Nous avons en ce sens beaucoup à apprendre de ces expérimentations littéraires qui auront bercé notre enfance. Elles baliseront, d'un trait clair et précis, le chemin et les orientations de nos vies adultes, promptes à renouer avec les recherches les plus gratuites, forcément improductives du point de vue du marché de la finance et des places fortes de nos activités boursières.

Utopia

Utopia suffers from an irremediable lack of reality. At least, an event – no matter how fleeting, no matter how absurd – happens on the stage of history. But, for its part, Utopia will never succeed in being fulfilled in a place capable of receiving it. What is utopian will be atypical from the outset, without a topography that can accommodate it in a place to be pointed out. Such is the condition of the map of the treasure island imagined by Stevenson or – better still – of Syldavia in the work of Hergé: no matter how much one searches a world map, or scans geodesics: no longitude and no latitude can indicate the little black dot we are looking for.

In a different way, Edgar Poe stages a character who leaves in search of a golden beetle, believing he possesses a map, which is eventually revealed as a sort of ink curl, a Rorschach stain, whose outline is more an interpretation than a fact: an unreasonable mistake that can only depend on the belief, on the hope in a stroke of luck which will hardly occur. In fact, the 'map' looks like the hallucination of a shape seen in a marble block, or in coffee grounds. In this respect, utopia takes a disappointing turn, it resonates like a pathology, the pathology of a fantasy or fixed idea whose danger comes from having being forced upon the real, out of bitterness, and regardless of the real itself. In all utopia a certain forcing of things seems to be implied, a desire of reality that might strike back onto those

who engage in it, in the same way that Kant denounced in the unbridled dialectic that nourishes a "transcendental illusion".

Because they do not take place and find no place in this world, all too often the objects of utopia appear as displaced chimeras, turned towards another world, that of dreams, of the imaginary, a politically dangerous world opposed to a more comfortable sense of reality in accordance with our expectations. We thus have two different metrics, two measures whose geometry cannot be the same. Since the beginning of the 20th century normative utopias, aimed at a society far too perfect to remain human, are waning. Wells and Huxley offer nightmarish evocations of totalitarian universes in which individual freedom and social propaganda stand in violent opposition to each other. Since at least Kafka's *Trial*, this disillusioned genre has the objective to question the very notion perfection and to criticise the standardised society, without refraining, at times, from condemning scientific excesses (*Doctor Moreau's Island*, *Ravage*, *Green Sun* etc.)

This "counter-utopian" movement, leading to the *death of ideologies*, denounces the philosopher who, turned towards the Ideal City, lives with his head amongst the stars. Since Aristophanes' *The clouds*, maidservants had their enjoyment in mocking him. Sarcasm restores us to reason: we are, so to speak, invited to lay down all ideals and resort to the most profitable and the least ambitious course of action. The modern gaze turns to the realism of everyday life, without wasting time with the most essential things.

How could we then try to *re-enchant* the platitude of a world where nothing anymore leads to dreaming? How could we give back to a Madeleine, or to a badly-squared pavement, its bite (Proust)? And what could we do with those objects present in 17th-century still-life paintings – which are so untouchable and yet so precise… A peeled lemon, for example, is depicted with such a clarity one cannot help but watch it locked in the silence of a black, lifeless canvas: staring at the time around this rotting fruit frightens us. It was arguably a curious mania that led to offer us poultry and meat, fruits and flowers, placed pointlessly in the night of the painting and in the narrowness of its unreal frame…

I would have liked to nuance this statement by suggesting that the spiral of a peeled lemon skin explains the vertigo of duration much better than the pointers of a prestigious watch. Likewise, the search for the golden beetle that Poe invites us to undergo is obviously more important that its ultimate discovery. In fact, its finding will lead us to the end of a journey, perhaps an initiatory one, as if the journey be more important than the outcome. In all utopias there is nomadic behaviour, a suspense route that the pilgrim finds more instructive and richer in experience than the blessing of its outcome.

It is in the middle of the road that the real journey begins, in the interval, when the previously known world has evaporated and the future one is not yet in sight. The border is the place of a crossing that may last endlessly, as a terrain vague that opens between two countries, between two armies, belonging to neither sides and listed nowhere, a *Tartar Steppe* – as Buzzati would have it – where one may definitively settle, out of the territory, *u-topian*: like some kind of *horla*, an unregistered entity whose outside will be the only place to find refuge in.

The stages of a journey are unquestionably more suggestive that its completion, in the same way as the absence of an end is what still captivates us in the story of Sheherazade, completely out-of-measure. *One Thousand and One Nights* means that the story does not stop at any round number, that there will always be one more number, an atopic, supernumerary number that adds a new round. The one-night-too-many, the one beyond one thousand is, in fact, the engine of utopia. In the same vein, Ulysses' *Odyssey* is an in-between experiment that since from the start matters more than either the departure or the (disappointing) return to Ithaca. The event that drives Ulysses takes place in-between, the non-place of a strange world, a foreign country *where we never eventually arrive* (André Dhôtel) – which, by the very impossibility to arrive, will make the trip extraordinary.

And even though everything should end at some point, we will not be quite the same any longer. Only Ulysses' dog, in fact, will recognise his former master by his odour, so much he had changed under the spell of a spiralling journey. Utopia means that the end point will never rhyme with the initial conditions. A gap opens up, a supplement that gives Ulysses the feeling of being an other. This is also what happens when you read *Treasure Island* or *Robinson Crusoe*. Hard to imagine that nothing has changed *in the meantime*. The before and the after ostentatiously turn the back to each other. We experience the richness of a place that undoubtedly exists nowhere, and yet will provide our existence with an escape route, a map that will guide us better than a planisphere. Utopia is an "imaginary Atlas" one carries with oneself, whose landmarks shape our memories reminding our childhood as accurately as a photo album.

Perhaps, I recognise myself less in the faithful images of a photobooth than in memories of reading, in the atmosphere of the T*hree Musketeers* or *Captain Fracasse*, entrusted to the smell of paper yellowed by time. The enchanted islands surely have no more existence than *Moby Dick*, the white whale pursued by Captain Ahab, yet we remember the slightest details of the boat that chases it. Its imaginary sails are so scathingly precise that to us they are more real than the ferry boat to England – to the point that I sometimes suspect that five weeks on Jules Verne's balloon are much denser in frenetic intensity than ten years at school, also considering that East-ward and West-ward spins are not measured in the same way. One day in excess imposes itself as a supernumerary figure concluding Verne's story. Thus, to us utopia appears as allowing for the creation of fictitious universes, whose worlds have no less clarity than the exhaustion brought about by the hyperactive search for profitability in the everyday.

In the dullness of modernity, and in the redundant cycle of consumer goods, utopia designates a non-place, a firefly of vacuity, an interlude leaving room for a passage, a sidepath or a walkway that drive us out of time, towards the image of what, in us, remained unscathed: an ideal, a social idea, a faith in a clearer world that we cannot simply oppose to the reality principle.

The imaginary that utopia shelters is not unreal and negligible in value! Against Kant, we could say that it carries with it a promise of reality, the seed of a world capable of growing through the cracks of the pavement and make it explode. We have a lot to learn from these literary experiments that rocked our childhood. With a clear and precise trait they traced the path and direction of our adult life, nourishing it with the freest pursuits, necessarily unproductive from the point of view of the financial markets and the strongholds of our stock-exchange occupations.

On Time
As The Value Of Utopia

Caterina Nirta

In 2016 Somerset House in London launched *2016 A YEAR OF IMAGINATION AND POSSIBILITY*, a four-season bill dedicated to utopian thinking and to the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Thomas More's influential text. Exhibitions, talks, installations, workshops across a range of disciplines, all aimed to engage with the idea of possibility, hope, futurity and shared-experience under the spell of *anything is possible*. Across this impressive array of forums, two things were striking: the first, the widely accepted notion that utopia is in many ways almost totally adherent with the idea of hope. The second, the distinct predominance of utopia as space versus utopia as time. In what follows I will explain how space has largely failed as the terrain of utopia. I suggest that with the new urbanisation of the late 60s and 70s and the rapid expansion of cities, utopia was deprived of its spatiality to be reframed into a temporality where only the present – and not the future, nor its destination – can provide fertile context for its *potentia*.

The failure in the 70's and 80's of the *utopian project* still rooted in the egalitarian dream of a fair and functional society – as theorised originally by Thomas More in *Utopia* (1516) or Tommaso Campanella in *The City of the Sun* (1602) – coincides with the gradual dissipation of the big ideologies of the last Century. While radical post-war utopian movements had imagined socially and politically engaged spaces that would engender the new progressive society, their vision of a dynamic and flexible architecture was gradually assimilated by ideas of the city as a major factor in human development, and as the expression of that malaise caused by profit, mechanisation, and newly-formed fast-paced relations and constraints. The neurosis of the consumeristic city together with new forms of labour and accepted forms of productivity and functionality compromised the intellectual, political and social stances design had hoped to interpret and express, which ultimately led to the crash of the utopian dream.

Mainstream architecture was criticised by radical utopian theorists and designers for ignoring the social, ecological and political challenges of the time through the production of dystopian fit-all models that uniformed the environment and reduced architecture to mere function.[1] Famously, Manfredo Tafuri, predominant figure of the Italian architectural avant-guard, pointed out the systematic extortion of utopia from multidimensional conceptualisations of space in favour of new visions of rampant pragmatism. The drama – he said – is that architecture sees itself "obliged to return to pure . . . form without utopia; in the best cases, to sublime uselessness. To the deceptive attempts to give architecture an ideological dress, I shall always prefer the sincerity of those who have the courage

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1 Collectives such as the Archigram based in London or the Archizoom or the Superstudio, based in Florence were major participants in the radical movements of the late 1960s and 1970s. Their influence was instrumental in the shift from architecture as a static block to architecture as an instrument for cultural critique and as social and political practice.

to speak of that silent and outdated 'purity'; even if this, too, still harbors an ideological inspiration, pathetic in its anachronism".[2] Paradoxically, the growth of urban landscapes left the city deprived of its spatial dimension until, as Italo Calvino wrote, space itself became invisible. Significantly, the rapid dissolution of space led to the disappearance of the subject from the structure of the metropolis and marked a crucial shift in the depotentialisation of that material utopianism intended to act against the *status quo*. Now, the city as a space-less environment characterised by anonymous, standard design struggles to act as mediator between utopia and development. This gradual disintegration of space is best expressed by Adolfo Natalini when he said that

With the new urbanisation of the late 60s and 70s and the rapid expansion of cities, utopia was deprived of its spatiality to be reframed into a temporality where only the present – and not the future, nor its destination – can provide fertile context for its potentia

> if design is merely an inducement to consume, then we must reject design; if architecture is merely the codifying of bourgeois model of ownership and society, then we must reject architecture; if architecture and town planning is merely the formalization of present unjust social divisions, then we must reject town planning and its cities . . . until all design activities are aimed towards meeting primary needs. Until then, design must disappear. We can live without architecture . . .[3]

The annihilation of space derived from the failure of architecture to interpret and accompany those social movements determines an impossibility of utopia as the productive exercise of "venturing beyond":[4] beyond the misery of a new way of living organised around capital, labour, profit and the de-personification of space. Unfit for the task, "utopia . . . [had] to negate itself as such, break its own crystallised forms, and throw itself entirely into the construction of the future".[5] No longer conceptualised in terms of spatiality and deprived of its *topos*, utopia becomes a temporality, namely a temporality projected into a future that is bright and better than the present. It is a promise made in a space-less *now* and projected into a no-place *then*.

The wishful anticipation given by a *not-yet* space – that gap between the present as the future – as theorised by Bloch – that can capture the hopeful impulses of today, vanishes precisely in the distance between a limited and limiting *now* and a luminous *then*, a hopeful no-place of possibility (still impossible). What lies in the middle is a spatial distance that depotentialises the impulse of utopia and creates a hierarchical order between what one dreams of and what the physical world can actually accommodate and transform into reality, between hope and attainability. In this idea of utopia is a rejection of materialism, of the present spatio-temporal, in favour of a far-reaching ideal of progress which struggles to measure up with the tangibility of the *now*. That *not-yet* impossibility between *now* and *then*, and the overreliance on an ideal of futurity that has no bearings on the present, I argue, reduce utopia to what Tafuri deemed "sublime uselessness",[6] a mere exercise of form that may or may not fulfil the promise of the abstract future it sets out for. Instead, what I propose is the re-appropriation of the temporality of the present as the only domain of utopia. This reformulation not only removes the gap between present and future, realistic and idealistic, thus clearing that essential impossibility left unresolved by space, but it also redirects the propulsive force of utopia back into the *now* of the present, thus eliminating the transcendence and abstract mediation with a hopeful *not-yet*. Utopia, then, is no longer a possibility (possibility concerns space) but it is rather a

2 Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development*, trans. Barbara Luiga La Penta (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976) p.ix.

3 Adolfo Natalini, 'Superstudio 1971' in *Life Without Objects*, Ed. by Lang and Menking (Milan: Skira, 2003) p.167.

4 Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press 1986) p.4.

5 Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia* op. cit.: p. 50.

6 Manfredo Tafuri. *Architecture and Utopia* op. cit.: p. ix.

virtuality, and thus a reality.

Ancient understandings of time were characterised by an idea of eternity and the world-immanent presence of God. A "number of movements in respect to before and after",[7] time was conceived as a hierarchical structure aimed to support the preservation of God's world. Similarly, life was seen as a relatively brief moment between past and future, exclusively devoted to the preparation for an eternal afterlife. During the Enlightenment, with the secularisation of society, new developments in sciences, education and politics, the world was no longer a fixed, obscure entity, as progress slowly started to question and reformulate the domain of human agency. Time becomes a process, a shared medium through which one measures and understands the collective experience of progress.[8] It was no longer time-less time; rather, it turned into a series of distinct moments connected together by a dynamic system of cause-effect wherein the past was seen to determine the present, and the presents provided direction for the future. Past, present and future were three separate expressions of the same human-centric movement of *being*. Here, time, as a form of collective historisation, was functional to *being* as a process, and past, present and future were nothing other than the three temporalities of life, three different moments of *being* in time.

In contrast to this anthropocentric vision, the temporality of utopia is not a domain of human being and cannot be understood by the phenomenological mind. Rather, following Bergson, it nurtures a horizon where life is a series of never-ending rhythms and every state of *being* – from sad, happy, sleepy to tired and warm – is framed by temporalities. To exist in these moments of sadness, happiness, sleepiness, tiredness and warmth means to endure "qualitative multi-plicity, with no likeness to number; an organic evolution which is yet not an increasing quantity; a pure heterogeneity within which there are no distinct qualities."[9] What is important here is that these modes are networks that move asymmetrically rather than chronologically and their existence is always determined by the immediacy of the present activated by the act of remembering.

What happened in the past is *enacted* in the present – it exists now as it is remembered. Thus, past and present are not two different moments, but two realities that exist in the same moment, the *now*. The act of remembering *now,* in the present, lifts the past of the tension of being past and allows the present to take charge of that past and make it present, relevant now. The present exists in *actuality* because "it acts",[10] while the past exists in *virtuality* because "it has ceased to act. . . but it has not ceased to be",[11] hence "it should not be said that it 'was'",[12] but that it still is. Utopia happens exactly in the duration of memory that connects the future to the past and which is constantly embodied in the present.

The concept of *virtuality* is drawn from Henri Bergson. He suggests that what is possible is not a pre-condition for what is real, rather, the possible and the real are expressed in the same temporality: if it is possible, then it is already real, it is a reality waiting to be actualised. This passage unravels the impossibility that space could not resolve, namely that *not-yet* limbo that de-potentialises utopia. In time, no longer is utopia something that will be (but is not yet), but it is already something *real* waiting to act-ualise. With Deleuze, this relation is taken to the extreme as he replaces possibility with virtuality, the condition of what is already real (not the condition of the possible). This dissolves any tension between possibility and reality and, most importantly, gives virtuality the *potentia* to be

7 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (Harvard University Press 1989), 1050b, 10.

8 Armin Nassehi, "No time for Utopia", *Society and Time*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1994.

9 Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F.L. Pogson (M.A. London: George Allen and Unwin (1910), pp. 222-240.

10 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (Zone Books 2002), p. 55.

11 *Ibid*.

12 *Ibid*.

in itself. This means that we are no longer facing a negotiation between what is possible and what is attainable: utopia is not determined by contingency nor does it respond to the negotiations between an unsatisfying past, a present and a hopeful future. Utopia *is* insofar as its *being* is now. Its value is drawn from the force of the present, measured through the duration of its virtuality.

If what is virtual is the condition for what is the real, "the virtual is real in so far as it is virtual," virtuality is the only moment where real experience – life – takes place, "the site of the condition of possibility of the virtual". Unlike the possible (which is possible but not real), the virtual is real, just not yet actualised. Virtuality is then the temporal ontological expression of the asymmetrical relations of a utopia which is real, vital, and finds its upmost *potentia* in being here and now.

Since the virtual operates in multiplicity – *being* can only be multiple and self-differentiated – its understanding of the real is exclusively plural and dynamic. It is in this mode of multiplicity and self-differentiation that utopia – being real – generates and disseminates new languages and concepts in a process of life overwriting life.[13] Its futurity is not merely expressed through its being virtual (real), but also by its being in constant elaboration of new connections with life (*le Tout*). This process of being virtual (being real and being now) occupies the spatial impossibility of the *not-yet* and removes the conflictual passage between a before and an after, making utopia, no longer a possibility, but a *virtuality*.

The benefit of thinking of utopia as duration, and therefore as a temporality, lies in the elaboration of the difference of which it capable: duration is that which undoes as well as what makes "to the extent that duration entails an open future, it involves the fracturing and opening up of the past and the present to what is virtual in them, to what in them differs from the actual, to what in them can bring forth the new".[14] If vitalism, as the radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s envisioned, is the measure of utopia, its vitality is drawn from the material realisation of the mediation between freedom and *being,* "being that has problems and resolves them at each instant".[15] It is then inevitable that utopia can only be *of* time and, in the constant exercise of claiming its whole (*le Tout*), it becomes primarily a function *of* and *for* the future.

13 Elizabeth Grosz, "Bergson Deleuze and the Becoming of Unbecoming" in *Parallax*, 2005, Vol. 11, No. 2.

14 Elizabeth Grosz, "Bergson Deleuze . . .", p.4.

15 Gilles Deleuze and Bryn Loban "Lecture Course on Chapter Three of Bergson's "Creative Evolution" in *SubStance* Vol. 36, No. 3, Issue 114: *Henri Bergson's "Creative Evolution" 100 Years Later* (2007), pp. 72-90, Transcription of 21/3/1960.

Volvo moments

Karl Palmås

1. Gillick's experimental factory

A minimalist office space, a computer monitor resting atop a white desk. The screen of the monitor displays a 3D CAD model of a factory. As viewers, we learn that this is the sausage factory that forms the set of *Tout va bien*, Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin's 1972 examination of the stakes and stakeholders of a worker struggle. In a recorded phone message, a rambling, barely audible voice outlines the underlying premises of a film in the making:

> . . . maybe it's that Volvo moment, 17th of June 1974, for example? Where the view from the factory is of the trees, and we're thinking hard about the way to work together as a team and working on a way to know that the future is going to work out just fine, and find that everything is a trajectory. That's one choice, OK? Trying to catch that moment, the idea of catching the 17th of June 1974. Or repression, on the other hand – the idea of creating the conditions for the experimental, but no experiment. That's another possibility.

In this scene from Liam Gillick's short film *Everything good goes* (2008), "that Volvo moment" points back towards a specific point in recent history – that of the establishing of a new post-Fordist utopia, in the form of a Scandinavian car manufacturing facility. This moment looms large in Gillick's overall project, which can be construed as a genealogical interrogation of the contemporary art (Gillick, 2016: xiii), in a time of post-utopianism (Gillick, 2006: 278). The concept of "the Volvo moment" references the actual Volvo Car Company's endeavors to build so-called "humanized production" plants, first in the city of Kalmar, then in the city of Uddevalla. In those two plants, the Fordist assembly line was abandoned, and instead, workers operated in teams, collaborating through the full assembly of the car, with a considerably widened scope for self-management. For present-day production engineers and organizational scholars, this experiment is construed as a closed chapter in manufacturing history. Twenty years after its highly publicized founding moment, the Kalmar plant was shut down in 1994. Since then, the utopian experiment is considered a failure. From the nineties onwards, production engineers have instead searched for inspiration from Japanese "lean production", in part due to the publication of *The Machine That Changed the World* (Womack, Jones & Roos, 1990).

Gillick, however, lingers on this Volvo moment, letting it inform his art practice, partly through the "constantly reworked 'potential text'" (Lüttiken, 2009) titled *Construcción de Uno*. In it, he sketches a situation in which the workers at an unnamed Scandinavian car manufacturer are made redundant. These workers return to the humanized factory the following day, with the ambition of collaboratively come up with ways to rationalize all forms of human exchange. In a later text, Gillick (2016: 107) notes the irony of the actual Volvo case: "What happened at Volvo was that people ended up creating more and more free time, and during that free time they talked about ways to work faster".

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From this, he abstracts the notion of the "experimental factory" as shorthand for the present mode of (artistic) production. In the experimental factory, the present state of status quo is managed through *repression* – a logic in which inventiveness is nominally celebrated, while actual invention is curtailed. The experimental factory is a place where there are conditions for the experimental, but no actual experiments.

Although Volvo's original "humanized production" facilities have been dismantled, the "diagram" of what Gillick calls the experimental factory seems to loom large over current programs for shaping the built environment in the wealthy global North. Indeed, the current "laboratory urbanist" tendency (Eriksson & Palmås, 2016), in which every nook and cranny of the built environment has become a "smart" "living lab", seems to be characterized by the fact that radical social experiments seem to not to take place. What's more, these emerging laboratorified landscapes not only seem to be dogged by Gillickian repression – again, the idea of creating conditions for the experimental, but no actual experiments – but also the by what he terms *suspension*. In this mode of managing the status quo, the present is constantly projected into the future; an act that perpetually displaces and suspends the critical moment of change. Suspension implies being in a state of "just-around-the-cornerness", which is simultaneously "an infinite suspension of critical moments" (Gillick, 2009).

2. Volvo's Kalmar plant

But what about the original Volvo Kalmar plant, the one that serves as a node in Gillick's genealogy – what caused it to shut down? Contrary to what one may expect, this closure was not due to under-performance, or to a disregard for the standard metrics for evaluating performance. As evidenced by Volvo's (1974) own promotional material for the plant, it was set up precisely in order to demonstrate that humanized production could match the profitability, productivity and quality levels of traditional line assembly. In a sense, there was a promise made: Numbers would have clear and direct consequences. If the numbers are on your side, you win the argument. Measurement trumps human power battles. This was not merely a naïve hope – there were previous examples of the automotive industry being shaken up by the power of numerical abstraction. The most famous example is probably Robert McNamara's restoration of the failing Ford Motor Company, using the numerical methods of management that he had previously used in the US Army Air Force "Stat Control Command". (Byrne, 1993)

Hardly surprisingly, in the debate that surrounded the 1994 closure of the plant, workers, unions, and academic production specialists all emphasized that the Kalmar facility had in fact met these performance criteria. Instead, the corporate management cited consolidation and economies of scale as the motivation for its decision to shut down the experiment and move production to the line assembly plant in Gothenburg. Here, the internal politics of the corporation played a crucial role: The new Volvo management did not believe in the project to re-invent work, or in the proposition that Volvo should break new ground in this field. Moreover, the management of the Gothenburg-based corporation tended to favor the plant situated next to the headquarters. External politics also played its part. During the period of the early Seventies on to the early Nineties, the wider politico-economic framework of the Swedish welfare model had been restructured. The state support for worker-friendly innovations in production had waned. (Palmås, 2005)

Still, something else was going on in this process. As pointed out by Gillick (2016: 107), even though the reversion back to line assembly was "not more efficient in pure capitalist terms", it at least "reclarified" the relations of production. So, in other words, this is one of the instances in which the social scientist can safely re-state the role of class struggle in the making of history. Or, for that matter, an instance in which to ask oneself the first question of politics: "Who whom?" – that is, "Who does what to whom?" (Geuss, 2008) Metrics, numbers, abstraction proved less influential than the brash struggle for control over the means of production. This argument can be extended when reviewing

the top management's motivation to engage in humanizing production. The then-CEO, Pehr G. Gyllenhammar, was stating his case in relation to the social unrest of the late Sixties and early Seventies, and a perceived loss of interest in car manufacturing from the new generation of potential workers. As such, it can be seen as a concession to radicalized potential workers – or, as some would have it, as a means to fashion himself as a statesman, whose final aim was the takeover of the political mainstream. Tellingly, the project to humanize production was abandoned by Gyllenhammar's successor and nemesis, after he had been forced out of the company.

There are clear parallels here with the current debate on the Malm's (2016) fossil capital thesis – Is the shift towards the use of fossil fuels to be explained as process of economizing and calculation, or is it to be explained as an outcome of the vicissitudes of class struggle? In the case of the Volvo Kalmar plant, it seems evident that it was a project whose failure did not stem from a failure to measure performance. It failed *despite* it being subsumed by the regime of measurement. Indeed, this whole episode in the history of industrial relations can be read as one in which the actual Kalmar plant – not only Gillick's version, outlined in *Construcción de Uno* – ended up becoming an experimental factory. The promise that measurement would have direct effects, that numbers trump human power-games, turned out to be a false one. In hindsight, there was nothing at stake in this experiment.

> *"That Volvo moment" points back towards a specific point in recent history – that of the establishing of a new post-Fordist utopia, in the form of a Scandinavian car manufacturing facility*

3. Tout va bien?

Some twenty five years after the demise of the Kalmar plant, we remain in a post-utopian state of suspension, this time projecting our hopes into the future of humanized automation. Lured by the just-around-the-cornerness of a Fully Automated Luxury Communism (Bastani, 2019) that promises abundance and wealth, we must ask: Will measurement be on our side this time around? If so, will it trump struggles for power?

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The photographs accompanying this issue are from the series My own ruins *by Lorenzo Casali. They were taken in December 2015 during an art residency in Cosenza at BoCs Art Museum. Here are some excerpt from an interview with the artist:*

"This photo series has as its subject a site that is not openly revealed. What we see is just a geometric building, structures without any special qualities, except for a certain ostentatiousness. Brand new, and already ruins. Only in the audio soundtrack of the installation one can hear the outlying environment, which is deliberately shut out of the picture. A vague and uncanny resemblance, however, exists between images and sound.

"If the photo framework has deliberately erase the nature of the place, what remains visible is a kind of everyplace whose function is not clear, almost enigmatic as in metaphysical painting. Is this a vernacular hotel, a service station, or a shopping mall?

What lays before the viewer is, in fact, the new expansion of the municipal graveyard of Cosenza, which was at the tim still under construction. The way in which this building type is designed and built mirrors the historical moment, if provides a mirror of society at a given time. The city of the dead speaks tons about the city of the living. Forms, materials, ornamental plants and colour capture at best the current imagination of death, or at

least the imagination of death held by this municipal administration.

"In the new columbarium, for instance, I was struck by the new age music that was broadcasted and mixed with the soundtrack of some cheap weepy movies. Maybe, the intention was to provide comfort and reassurance, but the outcome decidedly out-of-place and creepy. In my own soundtrack, I mixed this music with the noises from the building site, and joined them with a pipe organ improvisation by a Russian composer performed in the city Dome.

"Two lambda prints of 50 x 70 cm represent a luxuriant palm tree under a zenithal light. The plant, however, are under attack by a parasite and are actually dying. The force of gravity emergence as the most powerful agent, so that falling and bringing to the ground resonates through my whole project."

https://vimeo.com/casaliroubini

https://lightcone.org/fr/cineaste-3286-lorenzo-casali

http://www.fondazionefotografia.org/artista/lorenzo-casali/

Real Timetopias

Rodrigo Delso

In one nanosecond of the Earth, all seasons, all animals, all lighting conditions, all social activities, all dramas, all sports or all hours happen at once. Trillions of things coexist in different spaces but at the same time and none usually cares. Here and now dominate the discourse around the human habitat despite the relational potentiality that heterogeneous synchronization thinking can bring to the field of urbanity. Architects and urban agents are particularly keen to overlook this multiplicity of simultaneous contexts as "the situation", and continue to compartmentalize the spaces where we (they) live. This fiction of isolation guides the production of slow and fragmentary material environments for humans but free and limitless for objects. Despite the spatiality of both humans and objects, infrastructures such as trains, cars or airports are being surpassed by less corporeal devices such as screens, tablets or smart-phones. Today's spatial and temporal relations set up a heterogeneous physical reality that is amazingly difficult to qualify. How to measure the diversity of temporal possibilities that allows us to engage in sexual interactions during Christmas dinner through Tindr, or intimacy moments during class through digital photo-albums? Despite the techno-positivism of the digital age, this situation is only possible thanks to one of the most powerful measures that exists nowadays: Real Time.

Today, we are connected in Real-Time. Our smartphones, apps, computers, news or communications work in Real-Time. Efficiency depends on the precision of a highly divisible entity that can be bought, sold and distributed. Based on a network of dozens of nuclear clocks spread around the world, Real-Time is the fiction that can be measured with more accuracy by humans; almost, an utopian desire to measure the instant, the fleeting present. Its logic has imposed itself over the rest of temporalities, determining an infra-ordinary sovereignty where we no longer know how government or violence look like, how injustice functions and is delivered, how control can be imposed, how daily life is controlled, or how the built environment will react to it. What we know for sure is that something is changing, continuously mutating, and that our cities are becoming obsolete but in a way radically different from the previous linear paradigm: in Real-Time what connects us now is a synchronized, instantaneous and mutant temporality.

To demonstrate this, let us look at any corner or crossing within a random metropolis such as London. Since it has nearly three million cars – 9% of UK's total – it stands to reason that in this junction there could be one that will probably have a Wi-Fi connection such as mugiBox with a 46m radius hotspot that allows it to exchange information with other cars V2V (vehicle-to-vehicle) or infrastructures (V2I, vehicle to infrastructure) in order to communicate between them and road signals, traffic signals or public transport schedules, raising questions about areas of influence, matrix data environments, or Actor-Network theory. Furthermore, this car could soon become self-driven

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(General Motors Super Cruise program) and incorporate Augmented Reality dashboards (BMW windshield display) intermingling real space with real time data dissolving the clear-cut borderline between both worlds – temporal and spatial. This car could also incorporate body panels that collect energy by regenerative braking and the capture of solar energy (Seaweed by Toyota) in addition to charging possibilities offered by wireless energy supply already tried on Smart Highways (artist Daan Roosegaarde) turning the ground not only into a surface for moving, but into a reactive and data connective entity that reduces the ecological impact of illumination using fluorescent paint and thermodynamic tint signalling when the road is either frozen or burning at the same time as it sends all the information to the traffic system (Drive-less City by BIG Studio). Moving vehicles is only one example of how spatial relations – such as distance between two points – in infrastructure flow are giving way to temporal links where information is shared, synchronized, visualized or processed. This context is only possible through its connection in real-time and allows the flow of information to be coordinated faster than the human consciousness, under its threshold of detectability. Perhaps, this is why it is not usually thought as the material in which the "global" world has been possible.

As London's population is above 15 million, we would be able to find nearby someone using his contactless card (Near Field Communication technology) to make a payment to a bank in Singapore in order to acquire a new smartphone – with YOUM flexible display and Nature User Interfaces – that will already incorporate an encrypted chat service such as Telegram Messenger to talk to her childhood friend setting out doubts on the condition of neighbourhood and residents of a particular area. It would be easy to find someone seated on a bench connected through the lamppost hotspot to her laptop writing an essay while, at the same time, sending out pre-programmed emails (Workflows), tracking her movement activity (MouseTrack) or mechanically recording his online conversations (Keyhole Tracking) bringing up issues of conscious behaviour, simultaneity of activities or automation and control. We would not have any trouble locating people using apps such as Urban Sunshine (shadow geo-location), Open Signal (radar, 3G, 4G and free Wi-Fi connection maps), Urban Cyclr (best bicycle route), London Air (updated air pollution map) or Moves (automatically tracks your everyday life) that lay out problems within navigation and synchronization, mobility and clickability or stability and temporality. Surely, in this crossing, there will be people logging into social networks like Snapchat (a temporal photo chat), Skype (videoconferences and data sharing), Grindr (sexual geo-localized social networks), Cloak (friends and non-friends geo-locator) or Cloze (organizer of social contacts importance) outlining matters of localism and globalism, online and offline or daylight and twenty four hours cities.

Where does domesticity end? Or, what is the limit of public space?

If we inspect closely the crossing we will end up finding a pigeon armed with a GPS tracker (RFID chips) or someone dressed on a heart-rate reactive textile (Intimacy dress 2.0) walking a Labrador dog equipped with an identification device (24PetWatch chip) that tries to contextualize their patterns of behaviour instead of what they are but, at the same, time revealing conflicts of intimacy, remote control, domination or robotic control. All this profusion of sensors and data exchange operated by citizens characterize the pseudo-utopian era called the Internet of Things – where literally everything would have an identification device that shares information – and its innate tendency to wrap all the conditions explained above with another kind of actors at play in every crossing. There are objects that we cannot see at plain sight, but we know that we live in a 24-hour constant vigilance world where drones, satellites and surveillance cameras are endlessly staring at us, equipped with infrared, thermal, x-ray and night vision watching our every spatial move. We are also aware that there are other agencies such as the NSA (United States), the ISS World, the GCHQ (United Kingdom) or the Milipol (France) that also track our every temporal move, scanning all the time stamps of contents that exchange information making appear interrogations about power and

control, surveillance and security or data and legal evidence. However, there are less visible actors participating in determining what we can and cannot do in our city, such as the manufacturers of both the devices and the software (Android or Apple), the cookies left on every online visit, or the science that makes possible this linkage (NIST, BIPM or the DoD) posing clashes of programming versus being programmed, coding versus being coded, authority versus anonymity and, ultimately, freedom and control. If we shut down the atomic clocks spread around the world, Real-Time will fall apart and, therefore, any connected device will not be able to share information anymore: cities will collapse, financial markets will stop, and the production of construction materials will be frozen.

Real-Time is the fiction that can be measured with more accuracy by humans; almost, an utopian desire to measure the instant, the fleeting present

At bottom, the situations described are part of what happens in every point of every Western contemporary city. These are some of the conditions of what defines an urban environment, but none of them speaks about architecture or urban formations. Real-time environments coexist with spatial ones forming a cobweb of add-ons, implementations or possibilities but also risks, threats and apparatuses of control. Real-Time measurement has trespassed the *geometry of power*, through an immense investment on governance and technology, towards a *heterochronia of power* where the question moves from what kind of mobility do we have, to interrogate whether we have any control over it or not. This instant timing as the measure that allows connectivity has visualized situations where the Internet has become an indispensable tool for realizing a range of human rights (United Nations' Special Rapporteur) while, at the same time, is used by private corporations, banks and public governments throughout the world to impose control over its populations.

What is its connection to utopia – or, perhaps, dystopia?

After the utopian optimism of the start of the World Wide Web, contributed by the heritage of the cyberpunk that emphasized the possibility of *not repeating* the offline world in the new online one, we have landed in a real-timed ecosystem of highly sophisticated technologies(atomic), powers (headless), logics (synchronized) and relations (instantaneous). All of them based in a single measurement method. Even, the supremacy of the metre (m) has fallen, and is measured in seconds: one metre is the length of the path travelled by light in a vacuum in 1/299,792,458 second. The study of Real-Time, as the material by global connectivity is made of, becomes crucial in a time where humans inhabit medieval spaces while flowing through the mass of big data in a world that can measure 0.0000000000000001 seconds with a precision that will not lose even 1 second in 300 million years while, at the same time, cannot reduce by one single Euro the breach between the rich and the poor.

So, what do we measure for?

Today, while I am working on the last sentences of this text, an email pops-up in my Xiaomi: The Norman Foundation invites you to a workshop that will focus *on new urban technologies and how these could open up an exciting range of opportunities in which the infrastructure of movement and the architecture of buildings can physically merge together.* I just hope that the positive effect of these 'technologies' will be measured by the amount of empty time that they bring to us and not by the quantity of nanoseconds that they would fill.

L'utopia è misura

Alessandro Castelli

I.

In *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, Lyman Tower Sargent scrive:

> Ci sono utopie socialiste, capitaliste, monarchiche, democratiche, anarchiche, ecologiste, femministe, patriarcali, egualitarie, gerarchiche, razziste, di sinistra, di destra . . . L'utopismo, molti sostengono, è essenziale per il miglioramento della condizione umana, ma se usato in modo errato diventa pericoloso. L'utopia ha una natura intrinsecamente contraddittoria.

Sono solo poche righe, apparentemente cristalline; eppure, possiamo già rilevarne la problematicità. Sargent sostiene che la natura dell'utopia sia intrinsecamente contraddittoria, dal momento che, avendo individui e società diverse visioni del mondo, ideologie e desideri diversi, un mondo ideale e utopico sarebbe fatto soltanto sulla misura sui desideri di alcuni, o di uno solo, di questi individui. La vera utopia – immaginata come in grado di soddisfare da una parte tutti i desideri, e dall'altra i desideri di tutti – sarebbe dunque impossibile. Di più: in fondo, Sargent suggerisce che anche un individuo singolo, posto di fronte a un'utopia, si troverebbe a scegliere tra più desideri, alcuni dei quali "incompossibili", ovvero incompatibili con la soddisfazione di altri desideri.

Ora, è chiaro che finché ci si mantiene all'interno del perimetro di un assetto proposto come ideale ma non realizzabile, Sargent ha ragione nel sostenere che la natura dell'utopia sia intrinsecamente contradditoria; ma nel momento in cui tale assetto diventa una forza critica e un modello, per dire così "asintotico", è possibile contemporaneamente affermare che tale modello perde la sua contraddittorietà, nell'essere un modello dove appunto tutti i desideri *possono* essere contemporaneamente soddisfatti, tranne quelli contraddittori con i desideri fra loro compatibili.

In altre parole, il modello ideale, che per sua stessa natura aspira a essere totalità (in quanto parte dell'idea), ha la caratteristica di essere universale, e sempre per sua stessa natura espunge da sé tutte le caratteristiche incompatibili con sé stessa, e quindi contraddittorie. Se il modello ideale dovesse vedersi costretto a scegliere tra due desideri altrettanto validi, allora non sarebbe – mi si passi l'espressione un po' paradossale – abbastanza ideale e quindi varrebbe, nella sua asintoticità, a stimolo a cercare oltre.

Viceversa, se il significato, come si diceva, è quello di un semplice ideale non realizzabile, è possibile affermare che il termine utopia qui perda la sua specificità e possa essere sostituito con un'espressione un po' più blanda, vale a dire, la situazione ideale – il sogno a occhi aperti – non in senso universale, ma contingente: ovvero ideale per Tom e Dick, ma non per Harry. E un ideale non universale è davvero una contraddizione in termini.

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II.

Dal canto suo, la misura, con tutta la tradizione filosofica che è co-strutturale a questa parola – dall'idea in diretto contatto con l'uno e la diade della tradizione platonica, alla giusta misura della μετριότης aristotelica come moderazione e giusto mezzo, riconducibile inoltre al valore universale stoico della *virtus* di Orazio e alla misura come sintesi tra i poli opposti di quantità e qualità nella *Logica* di Hegel – è effettivamente l'altra faccia dell'utopia: se si avesse di tutte le cose la giusta misura, ci ritroveremmo in quell'assetto ideale succitato. Ma allora, ci si potrebbe chiedere: utopia e misura, in che rapporti sono fra di loro? Esiste, e qual è, la dialettica che le unisce?

La contezza dell'inadeguatezza delle misure correnti ha come sorgente l'utopia; l'utopia ha la sua sorgente nel fatto che le misure correnti sono inadeguate

Implicitamente ho già risposto, ma vorrei esporre il ragionamento in modo più chiaro. Direi che non esiste misura senza il desiderio utopico – utopico nel secondo senso indicato sopra – di avere la misura perfetta, ovvero la sintesi fra qualità e quantità; e non esiste utopia senza il tentativo di definire la giusta misura, per quanto ovviamente tutto questo non implichi un rapporto di opposizione, necessario a mettere in moto la dialettica in una sintesi superiore. In altre parole: la contezza dell'inadeguatezza delle misure correnti ha come sorgente l'utopia; l'utopia ha la sua sorgente nel fatto che le misure correnti sono inadeguate, o, meglio, che esiste un rapporto, ancora una volta, ideale, tra la qualità e la quantità.

In fondo, a ben pensarci non siamo lontani dal ragionamento hegeliano reperibile nella *Scienza della Logica*, volto a tenere insieme il conoscere il vero, il bene e l'essere. Come noto, dal momento che il conoscere conosce il reale – la misura contingente e insufficiente, nel nostro caso – ma sa anche che c'è una misura perfetta – il Bene – allora il reale e l'ideale – *tertium non datum* – si uniscono in totalità, ovvero l'essere – l'utopia, nel nostro caso. E dal momento che la totalità è il tutto, essa include anche il conoscere stesso. Quindi, ne consegue che il Bene diventa anche il processo di conoscere il reale allo scopo di cambiarlo per il meglio – il meglio rispetto allo *status quo*.

Ma tornando al rapporto misura/utopia, in tal senso l'utopia in effetti tende a richiedere un'infinità della misurazione, andando ad annullare le misure preesistenti non adeguate. Però, se tutto questo è valido, se utopia e misura sono così strettamente interconnesse, allora l'unica risposta alla domanda "cosa sarebbe un'utopia senza misura?" è che la qualità di tale assetto andrebbe a ricadere nelle utopie intese come sogni a occhi aperti di questa o quella persona. Dove, peraltro, la dialettica tra misura e utopia pare essere più quella che lega uno strumento – la misura, o la mancanza della stessa – a un fine – l'utopia.

Tuttavia, se è vero che le molteplici tecniche di misurazione sono l'epifenomeno, nel senso indicato prima, di un desiderio inconscio di un assetto ideale, va detto che il rischio che la misurazione diventati fine a se stessa è, più che un rischio, una precisa realtà. Del resto, per dare un esempio fra i tanti che si potrebbero fare nella tradizione filosofica novecentesca, come interpretare altrimenti la denuncia del fatto che la misurazione quantitativa – la scienza – ha perso il contatto con la necessità di misurare i bisogni razionali dell'uomo – ovvero il mondo della vita di Husserl, nel suo strutturale idealismo?

III.

Viviamo in un'epoca profondamente scettica, intrinsecamente frammentata e incapace di utopia – anche a causa degli strascichi di utopie del secolo scorso dialetticamente e drammaticamente

rovesciatesi in orrorifiche distopie. La frammentazione dell'esistente e, in altre parole, il rifiuto di considerare l'esistente come totalità – sia questa totalità idealistica o materialistica – secondo molti serve appunto a proteggere l'esistente da progetti di palingenesi sociali soggetti a pericolose derive.

Ma qui si entra in effetti in una sorta di campo minato: sorge il dubbio, anche di fronte alla distopia altrettanto orrorifica del presente e del passato recente, che il Novecento abbia visto all'opera, più che utopie, *sogni a occhi aperti*... E nei sogni, si sa, non esiste la giusta misura. Allo stesso tempo, e nello stesso modo, un sogno di molti non è quello di imporre un potere che si sa sbagliato, provando maggior piacere nell'imporlo *proprio perché* sbagliato?

Utopia is measure

I.

In *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, Lyman Tower Sargent writes:

> there are socialist, capitalist, monarchical, democratic, anarchist, ecological, feminist, patriarchal, egalitarian, hierarchical, racist, left-wing, right-wing [...] Utopianism, some argue, is essential for the improvement of the human condition. But if used wrongly, it becomes dangerous. Utopia has an inherent contradictory nature here.

Upon scrutiny, these few, apparently crystalline, lines reveal their problematic nature. Sargent argues that the nature of utopia is inherently contradictory, insofar as individuals and societies have different visions of the world, different ideologies and desires, so that an ideal and utopian world would be tailored only to the desires of some, or one, of these individuals or societies. The real utopia – imagined as something capable of satisfying all desires on the one hand, and the desires of all on the other – would thus be impossible. Moreover, Sargent basically suggests that even a single individual, if he was able to build his own utopia, would find himself in the uneasy position of choosing between several desires, some of which "incompossible", that is incompatible with the satisfaction of other desires of his.

Now, it is clear that until we remain within the framework of an allegedly ideal-but-not-feasible set-up, Sargent is right when he states that the nature of utopia is intrinsically contradictory. But, when this structure becomes a critical force and an "asymptotic" model, it is possible to affirm at the same time that this model loses its contradiction, since it becomes a model in which all desires can be simultaneously satisfied, except those that contradict compatible desires.

In other words, the ideal model, which by its very nature aspires to be totality (as part of the idea), will have the characteristic of being universal, and always by its very nature will erase every characteristics which are incompatible with itself, and therefore contradictory. Were the ideal model to be forced to choose between two equally valid desires, then it would not be – if I am allowed to use a somewhat paradoxical expression – ideal enough, and therefore it would turn, in its asymptotic nature, into a mere incentive to look further beyond it.

On the other hand, if the meaning of utopia is, as we said, that of a simple unrealizable ideal, it is possible to affirm that the term utopia loses its specificity and can be replaced with a slightly blander expression, such as for instance *daydream* – not in a universal, but in a contingent sense: what is

ideal for Tom and Dick, for instance, but not for Harry. And a non-universal ideal is really a contradiction in terms.

II.

For its part, the measure, with all the philosophical tradition that is co-structural to this word – from the idea in direct contact with the one and the dyad of the Platonic tradition, to the right measure of the Aristotelian μετριότης as moderation and golden middle, also attributable to the universal stoic value of the *virtus* of Horace and to the measure as a synthesis between the opposite poles of quantity and quality in Hegel's *Logic* – is actually the other face of utopia: if we had the right measure of all things, there we would find ourselves in that aforementioned ideal arrangement. But then, one might ask: In which relationships are utopia and measure? Is there a dialectic that unites them? And, if the answer is yes, what it would be?

Implicitly, I have already answered these quesitons, but I would like to unpack my argument a little more clearly. I would say that there is no measure without the utopian desire – utopian in the second sense indicated above – that one can have the perfect measure, that is the synthesis between quality and quantity; and that there is no utopia without the attempt to define the right measure, although obviously this does not imply a relationship of opposition, necessary to lead the dialectical movement towards a higher synthesis. In other words: the awareness of the inadequacy of the current measures will have utopia as its source; utopia will have its source in the fact that current measures are inadequate, or rather, that there is a relationship, once again ideal, between quality and quantity.

After all, if we think about it, we are not far away from the Hegelian argument presented in *The Science of Logic*, aimed at keeping together the knowledge of Truth, Good, and Being. As known, since knowing knows the real – the contingent and insufficient measure, in our case – but also knows that there is a perfect measure – the Good – then the real and the ideal – for *tertium non datum* – are united in totality, or being – utopia, in our case. And since the totality is the whole, it also includes the knowledge of itself. Therefore, it follows that the Good also becomes the process of knowing the real in order to change it for the better – with respect to the *status quo*.

But, going back to the measure/utopia ratio, in this sense utopia basically tends to require infinity of measurement, inasmuch it is going to cancel all preexisting measures – measures that have been worn out to the point of the inadequacy. However, if all this is valid, if in other words utopia and measurement are so closely interconnected, then the only answer to the question "What would be an utopia without measure?", can only be that the quality of this arrangement would fall into the first kind of utopias, namely, daydreams belonging to this or that particular person. Moreover, in that case, between measure and utopia we would find a similar means-ends connection as between an instrument – measure, or the lack thereof – and a goal – utopia.

Yet, albeit it is true that the many measurement techniques are epiphenomena, in the sense indicated above of an unconscious desire for an ideal arrangement, it must be said that the risk that the measurement becomes an end in itself is more than a risk: it is a precise reality. Moreover, to give an example among the many that could be done from the 20th-century philosophical tradition: How to interpret otherwise the accusation that, in its structural idealism, quantitative measurement – science – has lost contact with the need to measure the rational needs of man – that is Husserl's *lifeworld*?

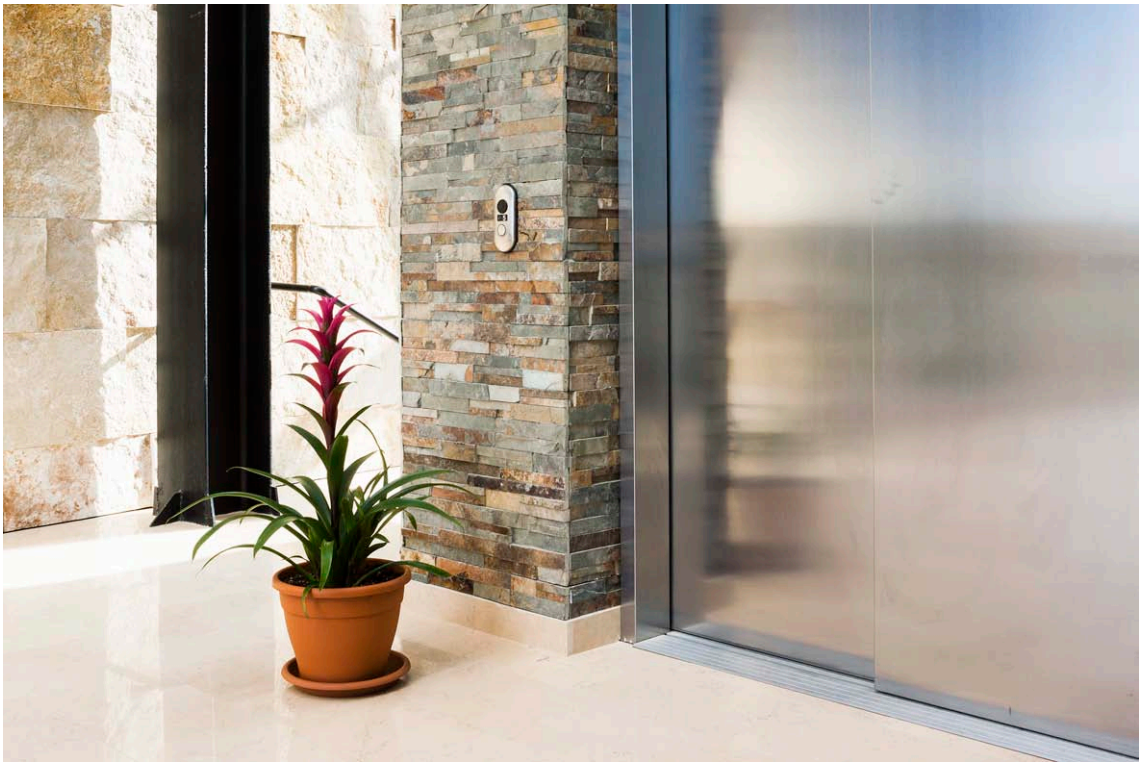
III.

We are all currently living a deeply sceptical age, intrinsically fragmented and incapable of utopia – also because of the aftermath of the last century, when utopia were dialectically, and dramatically, reversed into horrific dystopias. The fragmentation of the existing and, in other words, the refusal to consider the existing as a totality – be this totality idealistic or materialistic – according to many serves precisely to

protect such existing from social palingenesis projects, all regarded as inevitably subjected to dangerous drifts.

Here we actually enter into a kind of minefield: the doubt arises, since we must face the equally horrifying dystopia of the present and of the recent past, that the 20th century saw at work, more than utopias, daydreams ... and in dreams, as it is known, there can be no right measure.

At the same time, and in the same way, might we not say that a dream of many is to impose a power that is known to be wrong, and that they feel more pleasure in imposing it *precisely because* it is wrong?



The Utopian Mystique of Neoliberalism

Fredrik Torisson

Is there a neoliberalist utopian city? If there is, what does it look like? The following will develop a rather narrow aspect of what are admittedly broad questions: namely the relationship between the utopian *potential*, which might arguably considered a central tenet in what could broadly be seen as neoliberal architecture, or even capitalism itself in relation to labor power. Paolo Virno describes this: "Capitalists buy the *capacity* to produce as such" (Virno 2004, 81-82). Potentiality is, in Virno's works, connected primarily with bio-politics, and the management of life.

In this short text, I set out to discuss its mirror or simulacrum of potentiality as a spatial expression in architecture and urban design. I will outline potentiality in utopian neoliberal architecture as based on the notion of infinite potential (of the city) for difference, change and improvement. We, colloquially, see potential in a space, we see what it could become, and what the neighborhood could evolve into. Potential, in this context, is a *perceived* quality of space, the measure of imagined possibility. Yet, also this type of potentiality is, as Virno stresses in relation to the subject, also not actual, but virtual, potential is not present, but is traded as if it were. The same goes for the potentiality of spaces: these are perceived as to have potential, and thereby acquire value, not for what they are, but for what we may project onto them.

Through considering all aspects of life in terms of market-logic, the competitiveness central to neoliberal life and society becomes tied to managing capital (human or other) and the prospect of return on investment. This is where potential becomes a central aspect of competitiveness and investment. The potential is consequently, in a very blunt way, connected with possible future returns on investment, and becomes a principal factor in both the self-development of the subject (increasing one's competitiveness means increasing one's potential) and the production of physical environment. Potential is, simply put, both means and end in one, it is both what one wants to have and what one needs to have in order to get it. This dual nature of the potential is precisely what interests us here, and what can, arguably, be considered to constitute a utopian neoliberal tenet.

The Architecture of Infinite Potential

If we return to the architect Rem Koolhaas' canonic *Delirious New York* (1994), and the urban environment he outlines here, we can begin to understand the principles of potential in an urban environment. Framing Koolhaas like this is not without its own problems. Firstly, Koolhaas considers himself to be anti-utopian in the same way that e.g. Friedrich Hayek considers himself an anti-utopian, in terms of opposing the state utopias of the 20th century socialist state, however if we take a broader approach to the utopian (to which I will return), the utopia in question is simply a different kind of utopia. Secondly, Koolhaas' utopia of *Manhattanism* does not lie in the future, but in the past, in a

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time when the first neoliberal thoughts were being formulated. Can we then put the moniker of neoliberal on such a city? Here, I would argue that it is Koolhaas' rather powerful invocation of early 20th century Manhattan that is neoliberal and utopian rather than the exemplars. It should also be noted that Koolhaas ends the book with a series of projects that relay the spirit of Manhattanism to the contemporary city.

The image of Manhattanism is that of infinite potential squared: the grid can theoretically extend in perpetuity, circumscribing a potentially infinite number of islands, which can be understood as autonomous worlds:

Atmosphere and measurements are here combined, measure and value overlap in the attempted reproduction of what makes these districts innovative, or generators of the actualization of potential

> The Grid – or any other subdivision of the metropolitan territory into maximum increments of control – describes an archipelago of "Cities within Cities." The more each "island" celebrates different values, the more the unity of the archipelago as system is reinforced. Because "change" is contained on the component "islands," such a system will never have to be revised. (Koolhaas 1978, p. 296)

The grid, here, becomes a network of infinite potential, each "island" a world of its own. The islands keep changing, whilst the system itself remains the same. This is then multiplied upwards, again in hypothetical infinity. Koolhaas famously uses an illustration from *Life* as the "skyscraper theorem", where a steel structure reaches up into the clouds with an unknown number of platforms, each of which contains a pristine site, or a world in itself: islands stacked vertically. The different floors do not necessarily have any relation to one another, and thus a potentially infinitely tall skyscraper could harbor a potentially infinite number of worlds enabled by the invention of the elevator. This principle is by Koolhaas referred to as "schism":

> There is to be no seepage of symbolism between floors. In fact, the schizoid arrangement of thematic planes implies an architectural strategy for planning the interior of the Skyscraper, which has become autonomous through the lobotomy: the Vertical Schism, a systematic exploitation of the deliberate disconnection between stories. (Koolhaas 1978, p. 105)

Infinite potential is, in other words, squared – an infinite grid of islands multiplied by an infinite number of worlds stacked on top of one another. The city of Manhattanism is thus a field of infinite potential multiplied upwards. Visualizing the thought is almost vertigo-inducing. There are two components to this utopian image, the system and the islands. The utopia here is in the system itself, which is stable, whereas the different incarnations on each island (in the horizontal or vertical plane) is part of this system but not the utopian image in itself. This infinity of potentiality could be considered central to the notion of a neoliberal utopia, consisting primarily of the system which generates infinite potential. It is hardly controversial to consider this infinity of potentiality utopian, we can see the same principle at play in the artwork *Utopia Station* by Molly Nesbitt, Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Rirkrit Tiravanija from the Venice Biennale of 2003. *Utopia Station* was presented as a generator of utopian potential, a grid of islands, each with its own utopian potentiality.[1]

Perfect Imperfection

To develop this line of thought, I will briefly discuss one example: the Dubai Design District, or D3, and more specifically, the project's second phase, the design for which the architectural firm Foster + Partners released to much fanfare and quite a lot of ridicule in 2015. The D3 is an attempt to establish a certain form of metropolitan cultural district on the outskirts of Dubai, built from scratch in what is quite literally the desert. Kate Willis, writing in *The Independent*, called it: "An attempt to manufacture

1 http://projects.e-flux.com/utopia/about.html [accessed 09.11.2018]

cool by erecting some flatpack graffitied warehouses in the middle of the desert."[2] What is particularly curious are the pre-patinated surfaces of the D3, complete with street art and a rough edge that lend D3 a rough edge, an air of unfinishedness. This pre-patination could potentially be discussed in terms of precisely potentiality.

While it remains unclear what, precisely, a "design district" denotes, the districts with which the D3 compares itself (and its potential competitiveness) are Shoreditch in London and the Meatpacking District in New York City. Both of these, of course, have a long history as industrialized areas in decline whose cheap rents attracted artists and others over time, ultimately becoming so desirable and prohibitively expensive that few artists could afford to settle in the area. According to the architects of D3, their design "mimics the street patterns"[3] from the above mentioned areas. In a sense, here, the street patterns correspond to the grid of Koolhaas' description of Manhattan: an optimal system to be filled with autonomous islands.

A video accompanying the project released by Foster + Partners clearly communicates the grid's potentially perpetual expansion into the desert infinity.[4] This is the potential of the system, the diagram of the design district, with its measures and morphology from areas of great potential. This can be connected with a second factor that is linked to the islands themselves. The potentiality of the network as a whole requires time; instead, Foster + Partners appear to be trying to build in the idea of potential in the pre-patinated surfaces of the islands within the system. This could be called a perfect imperfection, which could be construed as a way of expressing the same potentiality in the individual instant. Perhaps the potential for infinite variation, hybridization and programmatic instability are not there, but the potential could be considered illustrated in the alluded readiness to become something else.

On one level, this is clearly about producing a specific atmosphere. The D3 does not only mimic street patterns, but also seeks to reproduce aspects of the atmosphere in Shoreditch or the Meatpacking District. Atmosphere and measurements are here combined, measure and value overlap in the attempted reproduction of what makes these districts innovative, or generators of the actualization of potential. What I want to put my finger on is: what is so tantalizing about this atmosphere that it inspires the architect to pre-patinate an entire urban district? Embedding this in a new-build is what has stoked ire in the case of D3 on the internet. However, we could also understand this precisely as an instant of one island's expression of the diagrammatic structure as a whole, as an image of the mutability of the islands within the diagram.

The Utopian Elevation of Potential

Potential here becomes a different kind of commodity, the capacity of infinite development, the canvas onto which dreams can be projected becomes a commodity of its own as such a canvas. If we permit ourselves to analyze this potential, this could be construed as a rather curious stasis, not in the colloquial sense, but in the extended sense, of a "charged and generative pause" or "'charged' space of location and orientation that creatively enables new and energetic production to follow" (Rivière 2016, p. 91) – which mediates precisely between the potential as the means and the end in itself. This stasis could in this sense be understood in terms of the frozen image of a neoliberal utopian diagram, alluding to but never actualizing the infinite potential. The neoliberal utopian image is then the image of this stasis extended in time.

Potentiality is not a commodity in its capacity to be actualized, but a virtual commodity with only a

2 https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/architecture/can-dubais-design-district-hipster-village-attract-the-right-type-of-goatee-wearing-individualist-10277373.html [accessed 02.11.2018]
3 *Ibid*.
4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reqtXAM6HU0 [accessed 05.11.2018]

mystical relationship to its own actualization – the D3 is not intended to change but to capture the process of change in a freeze-frame. It is difficult to imagine the potential becoming actualized since its worn and torn appearance is a built-in feature rather than the result of different forms of use that have developed over time. Virno discusses the "commerce of potential as potential" in relation to labor power (Virno 2004, 83), but quite possibly, we could expand this argument to space as well, and to architecture. The potential is not simply an opportunity for change, it is what it could evolve into, how the space could develop into something more (valuable) than it already is. It expresses an open future, where things are not locked in to what they are, but could be something more. Approaching D3 this way, we will begin to see the outlines of the utopian image of neoliberalism, understood here as the image of potentiality.

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Utopia without plans

On Deligny, autistic children, and living spots

andrea mubi brighenti

For Fernand Deligny, it's important to reject a series of labels that could be *prima facie* applied to him: psychiatrist, educator, political activist. In fact, he regards himself and his 'attempts' as neither a question of treating patients, nor as one of educating youngsters – nor even one of criticising the status quo of psychiatric institutions in view of organising a different type of setting.[1] However, once we discard these qualifications, these recognised disciplines and spheres of activity, it only becomes harder to define what Deligny managed to accomplish. What we know for fact is that, between 1969 and 1986, along with a small group of collaborators, he was in charge of taking care of a number of children with severe autism and other grave psychotic syndromes. Some of the children were given in custody to him by their families, others by various psychiatric hospitals and clinics when they could no longer keep them – for instance, Yves (diagnosed as 'deep dunce'), or Janmari ('deep-encephalopathic subject'), who would live with him for almost 20 years.

What is known as the *Cévennes attempt* led by Deligny consisted in a number of dwelling spots (*aires de séjour*) in the countryside and the mountains of south-central France, where the caregivers lived with the children, often outdoors in a farm-like type of settlement.[2] Autistic children were simply inserted in the flow of everyday activities carried out by the adults, living alongside them while the latter gardened, milked goats, baked, and so on.[3] They were not instructed to do anything; no educational or training programme was envisaged. While Deligny was part of a larger movement in France towards a new model of care known as *en cure libre* – referring to situations where children could receive treatment or education out of psychiatric wards and other juvenile detention centres – in his specific case, *cure libre* did imply 'freedom', but not any therapy or education whatsoever.

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1 Deligny was quite experienced with psychiatric hospitals, having been in charge of the children section of the asylum of Armentières in Hauts-de-France, close to Lille, from 1939 through 1943, as well as being subsequently involved in the so-called *Grande Cordée* (1947-1963), a first support network for disruptive, delinquent and psychotic youth. Later in his life, Deligny spent two years from 1965 to 1967 at La Borde clinic upon invitation by Jean Oury and Félix Guattari. In this respect, see the careful historical reconstruction by Alvarez de Toledo(2001) and Krtolica (2010), where the divergence between Deligny's approach and other renown figures such as Bruno Bettelheim is also examined. Another important reason to use the word 'attempt', is to distinguish it from a methodology or a methodical undertaking: Deligny (2007: 856) in particular writes that, while he took a number of positions in his life, he always remained 'without method' just as he remained outside of established institutions. Incidentally, in retrospect, given all the revelations that disgraced Bettelheim, it is possible to reappraise Deligny's deliberate distancing from care institutions. Such experience is perhaps best mirrored in a short fragment by the later Deligny, which also subtly capture its relation with Asperger syndrome: 'It occurred to me be be waiting outside, and not go into the classroom, while everybody else was inside, and the door was shut' (Deligny 1996).

2 The spots were several kilometers apart from one another and were named L'Ile d'en bas, Graniers, Monoblet, Le Serret, Pomaret, Les Murettes, and La Palais (Deligny 2013).

3 The memories of one of Deligny's collaborators are collected in Lin (2007).

Deligny refused to consider these children as deficient beings: he argued that they can only be regarded as defective insofar as we look at them as individual persons – but precisely, he said, they are impersonal and pre-individual beings. This is a most radical teaching that even some progressive mind might regard as suspect. It is thus all the more important to elucidate his approach, and clarify his relation to the utopian attitude.

Utopia seems to rhyme with plan. Certainly, insofar as it is something *not-just-present* (*ou-*), and in the measure in which it is something deemed as *good* (*eu-*), utopia seems to call for some imaginative effort. One may of course argue that the plan is just one among many possible ways in which we imagine, project, forecast and compare situations. For historical reasons, however, it is the plan form that, in the West, has been most cherished by utopian authors beginning from More onwards. Indeed, the plan seems to allow for multiple, detailed ways in which imagination and measure can be reunited within a large-scale social-spatial and moral-political project. For his part, Deligny (2008) develops his idea of 'the arachnid' – understood as adjective, not as noun – in a different direction. Somehow, his is still a utopian discourse, yet of peculiar nature. Looking closely at spider webs, but also at those shining meshed lines that can be seen at the bottom of old, used pans, Deligny describes what he calls 'the network' as a mode of existence that stands at the polar opposite of 'the project' and 'the plan'. The net, for Deligny, is more of a 'vital necessity' than a deliberate strategy. Furthermore, such a mode of existence is not at all functional or efficient. Deligny recognises this fact, in fact reclaiming this position: what he calls 'networking' is not of the order of wanting (*vouloir*), but rather of the order of acting (*agir*).

Deligny describes what he calls 'the network' as a mode of existence that stands at the polar opposite of 'the project' and 'the plan'. The net, for Deligny, is more of a 'vital necessity' than a deliberate strategy

Such 'acting' is imaged by him as a tracing activity that is not led by any plan, design or imagination. Tracing is not a secret activity, only a 'tacit' one; but the tacit always proves to be the most difficult to pin down. Especially because tracing, like drifting, is object-less. Deligny is after these elusive creatures, he is after the series of meaningless gestures of autists (what psychiatrists call *stereotypies*). He does not know what to do of them; nobody would. These gestures have no object, no content, no message – they are the *tacet* of communication. He recognises so that 'the arachnid' is not in any case an issue of 'communicating' – if ever, it concerns recognising a 'commons without language'. So, Deligny's reasoning reaches a point where one can start to see that the *ou-topos* and the *topos* exchange their respective locations: are the autistic children shut out from language, or is language a planet that eclipses 'the real', that lost continent where the boys live? Is living in the real inevitably a hellish experience, as psychoanalysis claims? As some other radical thinkers, Deligny is interested in what remains on the fringes, in what reappear or survives in the interstices between prominent discourses (expert knowledge, institutional talk, etc.).

But, an inversion of perspectives is likewise not enough – for it would lead straight to the myth of the good savage (from Montaigne to Rousseau and beyond), and Deligny is well aware of such a risk. He does not regard his autistic children as models of redemption, as ethical heroes, or even as innocent creatures. Insofar as Deligny always carefully keeps at distance from the moralistic language of purity and from an idyllic depiction of the simpleton, his questioning seems rather to venture along a narrower and more perilous path that stretches from the ethical to the ontological. In a way, his most utopian gesture might be said to consist in the development of the premises for a new, unheard-of social theory. Deligny's might look like a radical utopia; in fact, it turns out that at the centre of his 'attempt' lies a profound *topia*: the *just-thisness* of autistic children's lives. Sharing his days with them,

Deligny struggles to grasp the emergence of what at some point he designates as 'this freedom that owes nothing to claiming'. This can only begin to appear through the impersonal, the infinitive: not as a new point of view (*point de vue*), but as a point of viewing (*point de voir*). The pre-individual and the impersonal layer of life seem to be entailed in a type of networking that is not even specifically human – or, that unsettles the limits of what we consider human.

Does it make sense to talk about freedom in this context? In a very basic sense, freedom is associated with movement, with 'going wherever one wants'. The movement of autistic children, however, is a drifting movement that stands at the polar opposite of a intended trajectory: it is a roaming around with no plan and accordingly, no head and no tail – they go *without* wanting. Deligny and his collaborators start drawing maps of their movements, capturing the wandering lines (*lignes d'erre*) and the curious *détours* of the children.[4] They discover that these lines of wander have a topology to them: there are stable areas (*cernes* or rings), spaces of gravitation that the children never leave (in the absence of fences or orders of any sort), and that there are 'keys' (*chevêtres*, literally: binding joists), or spots to which they return recurrently and where they indulge aimlessly in their repetitive gestures. What is most striking is how deep their territoriology reaches: far away from the grip of language, of symbolism, and subjectivity, Deligny's children are immediately gripped on the land, on the Earth. Once drawn, their wander lines reveal the presence of 'attractors', perhaps of geodesic type. To his amazement, Deligny finds that one of Janmari's key spots is where a hidden underground water fount is located (he has always been captivated by flowing waters), another one is where in the past a disjunction between to trails used to be, although now completely invisible.

The wandering lines may well be an unwilling yet objective recording of some powers of the Earth unbeknownst to us, but what is really crucial is that such an a-symbolic residuum can only emerge as what we might call a 'persistence', or after-life (a *Nachleben*, as in a different context Aby Warburg called it). Deligny's attempt thus coincides with the provision of a territory where the spontaneous arachnid network can manifest as a full, intensive, earthly, although not-perfectly-human, *topos*. The continental capacity of autism is experienced and explored by Deligny in his numerous texts, his maps and his movies: drawing lines (*tracer*) and filming images (*camérer*)[5] can thus be perhaps captured as *measures* devised by Deligny and his collaborators in order for the *Cévennes attempt* to be able to invent new measures of possible coexistence well beyond the usual domain of sociability.

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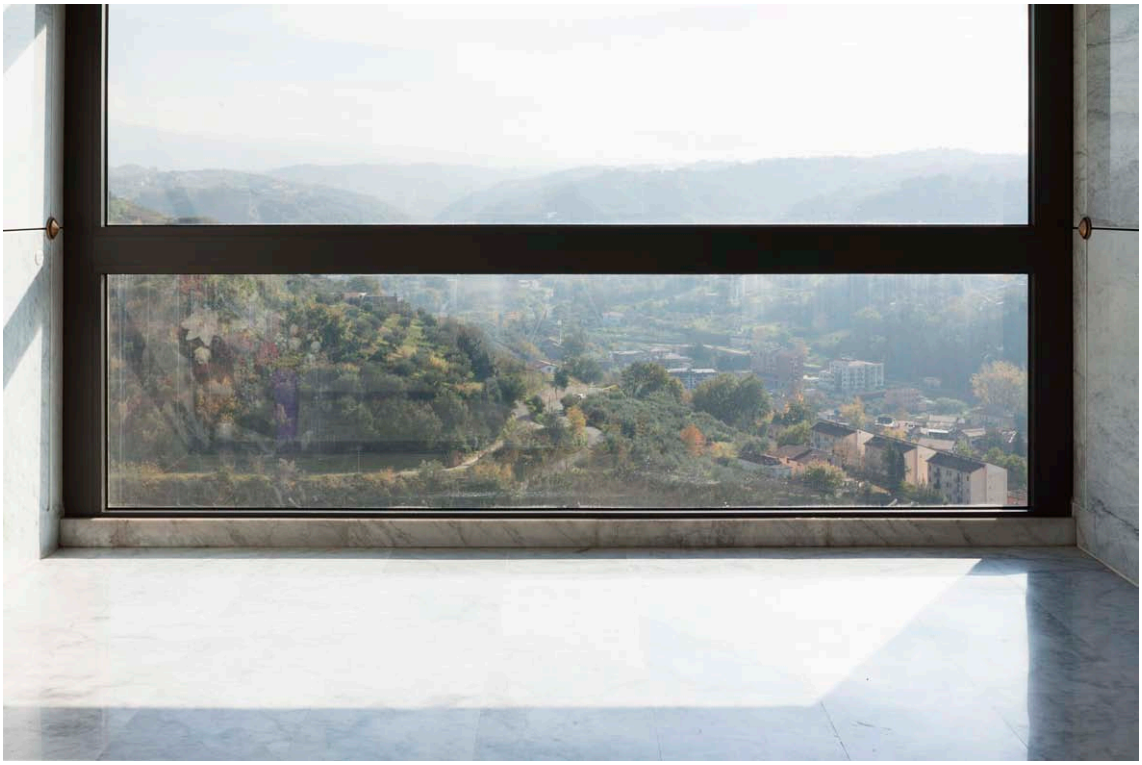
4 Many of these maps are collected in Deligny (2013). Most of them were not drawn by Deligny himself, but by his collaborators.

5 There is for instance a quite interesting correspondence between Deligny and François Truffaut (Bastide 2004).



lo Squaderno 50
Utopia and Measure

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