

future primitive

positions

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future primitive . a common landscape

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to those who have put up with me talking
about architecture...

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forward

This text is first and foremost about establishing the city as a common future and the barriers that stand in the way of this being achieved. This is to say;

That the contemporary problems of the city exist as a reflection of the tension between the *Earth* and our *World*. The distinction between the two defined by human intervention. The *Earth* is the unified foundation of natural cycles and systems, of waters, winds, air, light, soils, flora and fauna (humans included) and so on. The *World* is the cumulative ensemble of human devices and artefacts that covers the *Earth*, the likes of buildings, roads, bridges, satellites, cables, trains and planes, creating possibilities and openings upon the foundation of the *Earth*, but at profound cost.

::

That in between our collective *condition* and our collective *task* in creating the city exists the possibilities of our future. The city is complex and contradictory, made of possibles and impossibles and of chaos and conflict. Not because it seeks to be so, but because the changing diversity of human activity is too vast to be otherwise. Common not because something agrees, but because it is present.

That the everyday life and its manifestations, empowered by the fluidity of relationships between

people, is the essence of understanding our narrative in space and time. The city, the urban, is representative of the collective and generational identity of those who partake in it, consciously or not, out of social control or out of freewill. It must not be understated the ability of such future possibilities of a city to articulate the desire of a people or disengage them completely.

I do not wish to present an answer nor the desire for a universal ideology of the city, but to simply engage a mindset of common thinking. I hope to articulate this argument without the overuse of puzzling jargon of philosophy, architecture or otherwise. It is perhaps in its dominantly esoteric nature, that this debate often fails to reach or inspire the hearts of everyday lives and in doing so undermines its purpose for collective action and common understanding. That said, in the nature of this concept, as attempting to string complexities with other collectivities, jumping from brief argument to another, it is a little inherent that its chaos is part of the rhetoric. So, according to an re-interpretation, by Bruno Latour, Nietzsche wrote “big problems were like cold baths: you have to get out as fast as you can”¹

1 Latour, B. 1991

“The reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspective and aspects in which the common world presents itself”¹

∨

¹ Arendt, H. 1958

*“But, if the city is the world which man created,
it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live.
Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature
of his task, in making the city man has remade himself.”*²

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in between

There is a place that for the last 60 years has seen no human presence. A no-man's land, a non-place. Following the end of the Korean War in 1953 a demilitarised zone roughly 250km long and 6km wide cut the Korean peninsular roughly in half along the 38th parallel. A division established as a buffer in an armistice between a shared rejection of either legitimate nation-state and the death of common values amongst a people. But in the decades since, where in the world outside this space political overtures attempting a peaceful resolution play on and on, within the borders between north and south time has played its own slow song. The regrowth of an undisturbed landscape has given new life to forgotten nature. From the ruins of a war torn region, of broken concrete and twisted steel, flora and fauna once thought extinct has re-emerged and flourished in the absence of human presence. In many ways it is a representation of a tension not just between political ideologies and the

institutions whom enact them, but a tension that exists between the world in which we live and the earth that we inhabit. For in as much as this divide symbolises the vacuums of geopolitical tensions that continue to persist throughout our world, this territory shows a condition in which we see ourselves detached from each other in the reflection of our natural environment. The story of this landscape captures a speculative dialogue between the geo-historical period in which we find ourselves¹, the *Anthropocene*, and the confrontation of a *Post-Anthropocene*. For if the Anthropocene is defined by the human species having become the greatest threat to all life on earth² then it posits, in some small logic, the threat of our own existence. We need then to engage in a different type of thinking, a different type of practice.

“Life typically becomes the object of reflection when it is seen to be under threat. In particular we humans have a tendency to engage in thinking about life when we are made to confront the prospect of death.”³

On one hand Joanna Zylińska *Minimal Ethics for Anthropocene* highlights the ultimately self-orientated nature of a species evolutionary existentialism, the engagement of which is an almost always sobering practice. On the other it constitutes a confrontation of death as means for critical thinking and the opportunity for establishment of ethics to be undertaken as a collective, as a “we”. This is a seemingly human-centric stance to the universal

1 At the time of writing, the formal designation and existence of our current geol-historical age as an *Anthropocene* is still in part of a large multi-disciplinary research study.

2 Zalasiewicz, J. Waters C. N. 2014

3 Zylińska, J. 2014



1. Demilitarized Zone, Cheorwon, South Korea. Photograph: Jongwoo Park. 2013



2. Scene from documentary film *Anthropocene: The Human Epoch*.
Edward Burtynsky, Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier. 2018

problem of planetary existence, something that we are a very small yet clearly impactful part of. However, in the anthropocentric context, such as which we find ourselves, the vitality of the planet places an emphasis on human responsibility. That is a responsibility to an exercise, albeit a rather dire one, in ethical practice.

beyond limits

Why an ethical practice? The scope of our current debate is limited by our ability to express and convey the contemporary agenda. The impact of a rising global population and instability of our natural biomes are not just characterized by their magnitude, but in their complete shift in scale. Depletion, exhaustion, mutation and decay⁴ now articulate the vocabulary of our ecological challenges. Indeed these aren't entirely new forms of change that have arisen, in many cases they have been recognised decades before they made there way into the common debate. The human impact on the planetary climate, for example, was first calculated back in 1824⁵. But in all cases what has limited the ability to face such challenges, whether through the sociological or technological sphere, is the right tools to express our reality and to then make change. As we undergo intensifying forms of social and environmental change there grows the necessity for new understanding and re-evaluation of agencies and definitions. This is not a question of technological capacity, but the capacity of people.

⁴ Cohen, T; Colebrook, C. 2014

⁵ Fourier, J. 1824

It is perhaps easier explained like this: If the earth is our petri dish of ecological experimentation, what happens when we reach the edge of that petri dish? The inevitabilities of our civilisation are not an exceptional case of nature, they do lie in biological limits⁶ shared amongst all species. The immediacy of this limit, for example, can be found in the notion of the planet as being already completely urbanised.⁷ But these limits are not just defined by the physical dimensions of our ecology. We have exercised time and again through technological cleverness and imagination the ability to expand the physical limit beyond what was previously thought possible. Extending our realm ever wider and ever higher and our means ever faster and ever stronger. The size of our Petri dish however does not change.

*“Indeed, our cleverness, our inventiveness
and our activities are now the drivers of every
global problem we face”⁸.*

Although the focus of Zylinska is on the anthropological question of human existence and its capacity to persist, it does so in light of the increasingly limited spatial practice of human settlements and the forms of segregation, inequality and environmental harm that it engenders. What these physical biological limits do not consider are the ethical limits which press at the values of our society, often cast aside as the inevitabilities of some form of progression. The belief that we are in any way different in this regard is perhaps

6 Mann, C. C. 2019

7 I will bring this notion to the forefront later on through French philosopher Henri Lefebvre’s *Planetary Urbanisation* and *The Global City* from Dutch-American sociologist Saskia Sassen.

8 Emmot, S. 2013

one of the major undermining factors of our ethical and moral value towards non-human biology and to some degree the basis for our own social indifference whether racial, cultural or otherwise. The Jewish Question in the face of rising nationalism and new nation-states in 19-20th century Europe⁹ or in the treatment of indigenous peoples from colonial expansion of Europe that still persists today¹⁰ shed light on this possibility of human nature. We can withstand natural disaster, extend the length of the human age or create vaccines to stop the spread of deadly viruses, but the question to ask is what is the value of that progress without human empathy? To what extent are we willing to sacrifice a human agenda for a political one?

To speculate briefly here and introduce a most common counter argument: the final frontier to unbound expansion and the unbridled belief in limitless science, if you will. There is always the hopes laid in becoming an interplanetary species in both public and private sectors¹¹. It has been one of the major focal points of popular science since the likes of Izaac Asimov inspired the imaginations of many with his science-fiction space epics¹², my own included. It is hard not to be drawn into the dazzling imagery of vast galactic empires, extraordinary hyper-technocratic civilisation and colourful extraterrestrial ecosystems. What this argument insinuates is that through technological advancement, the colonisation of other planets will provide a vast reservoir

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11 USD\$70.8 billion in 2018 (Euroconsult. 2019), USD\$84.6 billion per year by 2024. Expenditure for global government space-exploration programs. (Seminari, S. 2019)

12 See *Foundation* series. Asimov, I. 1942-1993

of space solving the pressures of our growing population and the socio-political issues that stem from it. That it might inform the perceptual expansion of a species though sheer interplanetary scale is perhaps a speculation for another time. Disregarding the technological plausibility or resource capacity, there might be some truth to this argument. It might alleviate the pressures of a growing population and the advancement in research will most likely contribute to major breakthroughs across science. But could not making this great leap only further exacerbate the ethical problems or our society to new scales? Would it only highlight a practice of political and cultural dismissal of inequality and segregation in the continued commodification of new territorial space? To what extent are we willing to sacrifice a human agenda for a technological one and every time shed a little of our humanity? Though it is a very pure form of speculation, it is important not to discount science-fiction as a practical form of epistemology when discussing the human perspective. In fact it was this very kind of visionary projections of Asimov that also led French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre to understand the importance of possible urban projections. The acknowledgment of Asimov in the late 1960's by Lefebvre¹³ in *La Droit Ville (The Right to the City)* highlights a shared prospective of the future.

*“Administrative jungles, computerized
elaborations...the city’s endless corridors burrowed
under the continental shelves and the oceans were
turned into huge underground aqua-cultural
cisterns”¹⁴*

¹³ Merrifield, A. 2013

¹⁴ Asimov, I. 1955



3. From the photographic series *Architecture of Density*, Michael Wolf. 2009.



4. Burning of elephant tusks against the illicit ivory trade and endangerment of the species in Kenya. Scene from documentary film *Anthropocene: The Human Epoch*. Edward Burtynsky, Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier. 2018

A planet consumed by “the totality of capitalist urbanisation”¹⁵. Based on the growing environmental crisis, overpopulation and oil dependence that was propelled off post-war neo-liberalism in the US, the tensions between social justice and technological modernisation in a global economy drew stark parallels to the dystopic representations of Asimov. To open our perspective of our social, economic and political state Lefebvre asserts is to rethink the prospect of our future¹⁶. It must not be underestimated the potents of asking questions, finding alternative perspectives or thinking differently.

we speak of change

“So let us agree: the idea of the right to the city does not arise primarily out of various intellectual fascinations and fads...it primarily rises up from the streets, out from the neighbourhoods, as a cry for help and sustenance by oppressed peoples in desperate times.”¹⁷

Where does this position us then in moving forward with this practice? Perspectives or prospects on collective agency are not so easily changed, less so disseminated into common knowledge. These are common problems because regardless of the cause, the scale of the effects these changes constitute are global and irreparable. Not at least in any immediate way. But how to convey a problem as common if it is not commonly

15 Lefebvre, H. 2003

16 Lefebvre, H. 2003

17 Harvey, D. 2019

accepted?

A major focus of this text to come is the use of definitions that no longer characterizes the forms of everyday life that exist in our cities today. I will argue that the complex dynamics of the city as an ecology demands a definitions, such as *Diversity* for example, much more capable of capturing the fluidity of everyday life from a plethora of perspectives. A common reality beyond ethnicity, religion or politics. This also means though one must accept that the fluidity of this common reality also constitutes perspectives of difference and disagreement. This is perhaps more than anything why it is an ethical practice, because we must sympathise with the need to change our understanding of each other and thus the reality of who we are now. To overcome difference as a division. An ethical practice is one undertaken not by governments or corporations, but by people. Individuals in light of a global collective. This is no far-fetched cause. There is a growing consensus and collective action for the broader agenda of human and environmental rights. It has led to growing activism at many scales from grass-roots community to city wide movements where the promotion of human justice and sustainability has taken to the forefront of their cause. So much so that in many political institutions these efforts have established socially empowering policies and charters¹⁸, successfully making there way into common vernacular.

Presenting the grounds for a shift in mindset comes at a time when for most a disenchantment of

18 See UNESCO, 2006; UN-HABITAT, 2010; World Charter for the Right to the City, 2006; International Alliance of Inhabitants, 2005; The European Charter for Human Rights in the City, 2000; The Montreal Charter of Rights and Responsibilities, 2006; the City Statute, 2006 (Brazil), Right to the City Alliance, 2007 (USA) and many more.

what modern life promised has come with a great deal of anger and pessimism. Whether from the streets, squares or campuses a common voice is straining to be heard. We can recognise a need for change informed by a collective mindset, the reconsideration of our cities in light of this tension. This might just come out the developments of collective activity that is beginning to shape the economic and technological tools and the ideas that circulate our social and political attitudes. We have new tools to pursue this agenda. The co-creation of capital presents to us a new way to evaluate the meaning of space and the commodity which we have attributed to it. To say the space itself is less important than the ability of the space to create meaningful connections to each other and to the city through a perception of time. Not the outright rejection of capitalist models, but the re-appropriation of capital those models towards models that encourage collective behaviour - something disruptive and decentralized. There has been a revolution in the possibilities that we have to create our cities, physically and psychologically. Seeing this tension in light of the new tools we possess and the urgently changing state of mind we speak not just of change, but to change our way of changing. When French architect Le Corbusier pushed the a new agenda for architecture and city planning it was embodied by a moral crisis in the face of a greater changing state of mind. A modern state of mind that in his *Vers une Architecture (Towards a New Architecture)* sought to question the established orders of architecture in their conventions of social organisation. It is interesting to look at this period in time in particular from Le Corbusier as in retrospect it allows us to set aside what we can now recognise as a certain naivety of the modern movements

and present the fever in which this time produced such profoundly seminal ideas for change. Indeed it was not only Le Corbusier whom held such dismay and rejection of the architectural *status quo*. The intellectual climate of that time was active with provocations across movements from Purism, Futurism, Cubism, Surrealism participating (notably through periodicals like *L'Après le Cubisme*, *L'esprit nouveau*, *La Peinture Moderne*, *Der Sturm*, *de Stijl* etc) across a range of fields. Architecture, painting, sculpture, music, politics, economics, psychology whom embraced the sentiment of *l'esprit nouveau* (the new spirit).¹⁹ Perhaps for Le Corbusier and the members of these movements in the reflection of a post-war society, the stifling stylistic culture like the *mondaine* Parisian avant-garde which surrounded them, estranged from the common class, was the fuel for a critical stance on contemporary architecture and its consequence on daily life. For Le Corbusier the argument of human spirit was at its core:

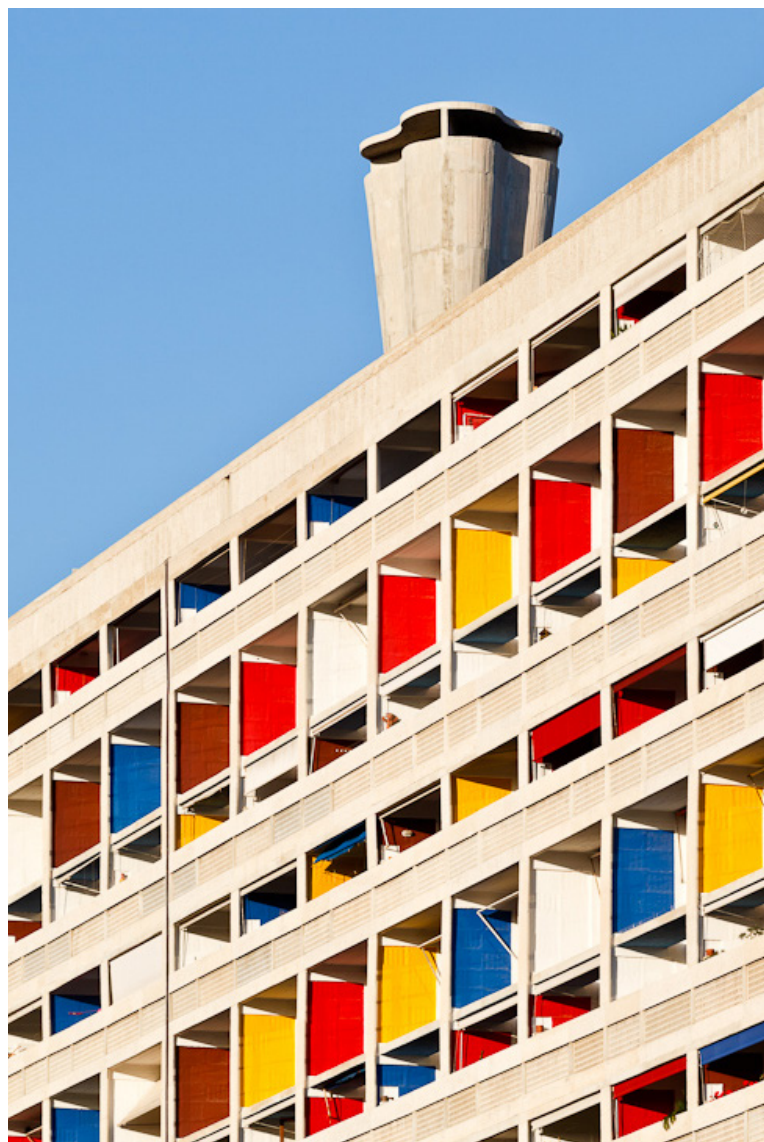
‘A question of morality. Lack of truth is intolerable, we perish in untruth... Man’s stock of tools marks out the stages of civilisation... the result of successive improvements, the effort of all generations is embodied in them.

We have gained a new perspective and a new social life, but we have not yet adapted the house thereto.”²⁰

The social instability of the Great Depression in 1920’s France had vastly complicated the integration of millions of veterans into the post-war economy. A

¹⁹ Banham, R. 1960

²⁰ Le Corbusier. 1986



5. *L'Unité d'Habitation* housing block in Marseille. Le Corbusier. 1952
Photograph: Gareth Gardener



6. *Circuit Boards in Atlanta*. From the photographic series *Intolerable Beauty*; Chris Jordan.
2005

lack of adequate housing and labour resonated in cries of dissatisfaction from the people of this time indicative of a crisis. It failed to speak to the modern state of mind which was being propelled by birth of Fordism; an era of increased mechanization and divisions in labour en masse²¹. It needed the embrace of the technical revolutions which throughout this period had fundamentally changed the discourse of the everyday routine, from greater objects of the family structure and rituals of social interaction to more trivial domestic objects²².

The modern state of mind was a warning and to be treated as exercise in recognising the practices of a time. An acceptance of the issues and challenges of that time in history which produced that contemporary state and to establish a position for moving forward. The tools that were created revolutionised the way in which people worked and lived and if they did not adapt or accept the role of these tools, then they would reduce their capacity to function and become stagnant. It was a very total view of human habitation one that placed *“building.. at the root of social unrest”*²³. It presented a vision of technological integration into the domestic routine based on direct association of these objects. The economic, aesthetic and geometric virtues of mechanization spoke to a purist desire to, in a platonic sense, establish a natural law of standardised objects. This taunted the production of definitive objects of everyday life driven by function and economy. But for all it’s poetics he spoke very frankly about everyday life. This was perhaps the reason it captured the

21 Tonkiss, F. 2006

22 Banham, R. 1960

23 Le Corbusier. 1986

minds of aspiring generations of architects and planners. A rhetoric carried out in the simplicity of its ethos. A purity in some form of finality. This can be noted in the rhetorical zeal in which he concludes *Vers Une Architecture*.

*“Society is filled with a violent desire
for something which it may obtain of may not.
Everything lies in that: every thing depends on
the effort made and the attention paid to these
alarming symptoms.*

*Architecture or Revolution.
Revolution can be avoided.”*²⁴

Le Corbusier and the question of modernity sets for us a few platforms of enquiry moving forward. For one, engaging the moral question through ethical practice constantly engages the symptoms of a crisis and acts upon it. Although we might heavily critique the outcome of his objectives and of modernism in a globalized practice, it is not to say they were necessarily wrong for their time. It brings forward the nature of a moral compass that changes with time. If we were to define a spirit of the time today it might be an expression of multiple spirits, so this umbrella-like term is of little help. But in thinking about the rubric for change today, we could say it should be one of a common morality. For another enquiry: The ‘rebirth of man’ into this modern state of mind was to draw out the human from its natural environment, from ‘non-humanity’, and seat it in a different plane. Purification did not seek mediation or translation from previous ideas²⁵, but to set apart human

²⁴ Le Corbusier. 1986

²⁵ Latour, B. 1991

culture from natural culture. Having departed from natural culture, or in the case of Le Corbusier, assuming natural law in human objectivity, the subsequent creations of modernity sit in a purely aesthetic realm.

At the core of this text is the encapsulation of this tension in the contradiction that modernism created and the inherent paradox of the post-modernist condition that questions our state of being modern. I bring back into the dialogue the initial problem this tension between Earth and World, now with the added knowledge of how this tension exists in many forms. Living in a world of such growing technological and urban complexity we risk losing touch with the ability of people to understand their environment and become disengaged from it. If the urban is collective representation of those who live and partake in its processes then this is problematic. This is not a critique of modernism nor of capitalism for that matter, it is the presentation of how we can look at the city in a highly urbanised condition and present a position for people, architects and urban planners to engage with a context of a greater global city in light of a common perspective. The grounds for a common landscape stresses more than anything the necessity of facing this frontier through an entirely collective reality. Our active and collective participation in creating our future. In thinking about our future what possibilities are we really affording ourselves? How can the city become a common future for all?

“The origin of architecture is not the primitive hut, but the marking of ground, to establish a cosmic order around the surrounding chaos of nature.”¹

¹ Gregotti, V. 1983

*“Now we have made a new nature - this
technological urbanized region which is the new chaos
- but as architects and urbanists we still have the same
task.”*²

2 Frampton, K. 1999

future primitive

I would like now to introduce the concept of *Future Primitive*. By each terms definition is is a paradox. However it is in this paradox that this concept finds existence. It is perhaps best to understand Future Primitive in its most primary sense, that is a story about people in the city. The way we live and spend our time, how we work and fulfil our desires, the relationships we foster between our friends and families, lovers and strangers, the environments in which we grow and the places we go. It is more to this that makes it a collection of narratives that through the everyday life of the city, give a perspective of who we are as a people now, who we were and hint at who we might become. It is in this collective that what is *common* between people constructs itself. *Future*: a task of progressive construction through constant collective self-reflection. *Primitive*: a natural condition, of origin, of reflection and the future prospective of our place in nature. So although this term is inherently paradoxical

it is in this constant back and forth that it is enlivened. A continuous process of collective memory and reflection.

This research is presented as the mindset through which the conditions of the Future Primitive become engaged and formalised. To do so, to engage this mindset, a set of lenses helps give shape to the fundamental objective of future primitive, but also highlights the complex nature of its problem.

Firstly...

“The reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself”¹

and Secondly...

“man’s most consistent and on the whole, his most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart’s desire.

But, if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city man has remade himself.”

²

In *The Human Condition* Hannah Arendt presents the essential condition for which the city establishes the public realm, that is as Arendt termed “*The space of public*

¹ Arendt, H. 1958

² Park, R. 1967



7. Architecture students gather in the *Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, University of São Paulo (FAU-USP)*, Brazil. João Batista Vilanova Artigas. 1968.
Photograph: Raul Garcez



8. A portion of central panel of the triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* by Early Netherlandish painter Hieronymus Bosch. 1490-1510

appearance”³. But what is public and whom that “public” constitutes is reflected in those that are present to share that perspective. Such was the nature of the Greek *polis*, observed in the representation of a public defined primarily by a political class and formalised through an urban and architectural form, namely the city-state and the *agora*⁴. Greek Polis the democratic public went only as far as men, not women nor their slaves. Throughout history space which function as public space was only as public as whom constituted the “public”, and that was determined by who had the right to be part of the “public”. Arendt observes an ontological state in which the public exists, a perspective realised under the guise of a hierarchical order. Public space according to Arendt is as such a necessary tool in the maintenance of social control, but what constitutes the common on the other hand can be broadened to the establishment of multiple publics and the scope of socio-cultural practices they characterizes them.

With this in mind the problematic raised by Robert E. Park, an American urban sociologist, is that the city as a human project is not just the observational ground for a philosophical idealisation, but the active conditions for human representation. Social control in this sense does not necessarily constitute the will of a collective⁵, it does however curb the ability for collective action. The task is presented as the cumulative effort which recognises the individual action in the city regardless of the consciousness of that action. The reference to the

3 Arendt, H. 1958

4 Crawford, M. 2016

5 *On Social Control and Collective Behaviour* being the name of Parks book from which this quote originates.

collective as singular insinuates a position on the city as the task of a common undertaking. Park establishes the city as a narrative of people and their freewill. Although between Arendt and park exists a dialectical difference in their placement of the actor in the city and their agency both contain a similar parallel theme. The presence of the common, the public realm or the city is not just a condition of space but also a condition of time. The constant dialogue between the past and ideas of the future to form the reality of now is both manifest and is manifested through the multiplicity of our perception. This is because:

“What has gone before is important precisely because it is the locus of collective memory, of political identity, and of powerful symbolic meanings at the same time as it constitutes possibilities as well as barriers in the building environment for creative social change.”⁶

David Harvey presents a third-order between the lenses of Arendt and Park together presenting the relationship of space and time in the articulation of the urban perspective. Between the perspective of the common as the human urban reality and the city as a spatial representation of our Task, time acts as the generator for which these mechanisms for what is possible in the city are driven. The urban and the architectural then becomes the reference plane in which the human actor is placed in the tension between the natural and the man-made. It is understandable to find critical

6 Harvey, D. 2019

scepticism towards an approach to the city based on the metaphysical encapsulation of being in the city through space and time. However, the practical manifestations of its problem is becoming an inherent feature of our contemporary urban society. The reference plane of this dialogue for our future becomes increasingly unclear and clouded amongst the ubiquity and generic nature of universal design and the destruction of our urban heritage. The favouring of spatial agency in the city over time⁷ has for the reasons discussed by Harvey warped the common perspective for the future of the city and the understanding of city beyond aesthetic concepts. In today's cities, urbanisation has created a fragmented, unresponsive and socially divisive landscape for the people who live in them.

political citizenship

If the narrative of our urban landscape is established as a representation of the common task and condition through time then it is also representative of the political agency of people in the city. Their will or ability to push and bend the ontological status quo, to appropriate and re-claim or struggle to thrive and to make their habitat appear as a representation of them-self. Between institutional ontology and the representation of the common, how do we re-approach this reference plane for city? An approach that speaks to the diversity of the urban human canvas? As mentioned before there is a growing and urgent consensus for the concern of human and environmental rights. This agenda places

7 Brenner, N. 2014 discussing *Das Kapital* by Marx, K. 1967

the city at the locus for solving a multiplicity of global problems from the environment (Stockholm, 1972), population (Bucharest, 1974), food (Rome, 1974) to the world economic order (Nairobi, 1976, UNCTAD)⁸ where many of the charters and collective efforts that have been put forward and enacted upon are built upon the concept of the *Right to the City*.

This concept of the Right to the City has in particular been at the forefront of that approach. The visionary ideas calling for a profound change in the human-urban relationship provides much of the conceptual and practical framework for policy makers, urbanists and community activists engaging in this challenge. For French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, whose body of work is cited to be the source of this concept⁹, the democratization of the city is means of challenging neo-liberal models of governance. Furthermore and what this text focuses on, Lefebvre charted the right to the city as a path to a far more radical possibility of an urban society. The movement beyond state-regulated and neo-liberal capitalist frameworks like that which engendered the utopic ideas of modern urban development was and is a major¹⁰ proponent for what he described as a “revolutionary” conception of citizenship. A citizens ability to exercise democratic choice of and about their urban environment is necessary to an equitable city. It was neatly described by Mark Purcell in his study of Lefebvre’s writings as *urban politics for inhabitants*¹¹.

8 Katsikis, N. 2013

9 See *Le Droit à la ville*

10 Lefebvre, H. 2003

11 Purcell, Mark. 2002

But why do we consider this so revolutionary? For one: placing the citizen at the centre of the urban narrative and allowing room for self-management or as Lefebvre and other academics termed *autogestion*, a *bottom-up* approach which allowed for autonomy over the city, was contradictory to the decades of orthodox urban planning approaches that had driven the development of many modernizing cities¹². To look briefly at a few examples: the *Garden City Movement* initiated by Ebenezer Howard in 1888 aimed to relieve the conditions of a dense and crammed London through a model of decentralizing. By planning satellite cities to form a green belt surrounding London the agglomeration of people to London would be absorbed by the attraction to a calm and quiet countryside lifestyle. Schools and housing would organize in planned zones around commercial and cultural places separated by green from industry to form the ideal balance of work and life. For Howard the “*wellbeing of the individual and of society*”¹³ was a matter of calculation, of accuracy and absoluteness. Managed to a maximum population of thirty-two thousand people per garden city organized in a neat concentric circle. Nothing could be left out and all had to be considered, speculation or major change were not an option. In the case of Le Corbusiers *Ville Radiuse*, The economic segregation, poor health and sanitation conditions and overcrowding of 19th century Paris was a result of the utopian urban planning principals set in place by Georges-Eugène Haussmann for the renovation of Paris. The plan inhabited 3 million people into a gridded urban complex integrated with layers of highway and

12 Jacobs, J. 1992

13 Howard, E. 1902

transportation infrastructure and covered in expansive green space. Cruciform office towers which sat over parks criss crossed with tiered pedestrian malls and stepped terraced that connected theatres and restaurants to the surrounding lower residential housing blocks. For Le Corbusier the plan to right the wrongs of Haussman's Paris plan was the creation of a social Utopia through urban planning as mention before. The city would be presented to the people for "*maximum individual liberty*"¹⁴ with enough room, parks, activities and work for all. One need not worry about their city, it was already planned out for them. Though it can be sympathized the intention of such plans to solve issues contemporary to that time whether in response to economic depression, social segregation or by advancing civil liberties - as seen from the perspective of the planner -, the total nature in which these plans were created are indicative of a habit to over-plan narratives of daily life for people through the city. The city, as discussed through Arendt earlier, can be a tool of social control. As the journalist and social activist Jane Jacobs put:

*"As in all Utopias, the right to have plans
of any significant belonged only to the planners"*¹⁵

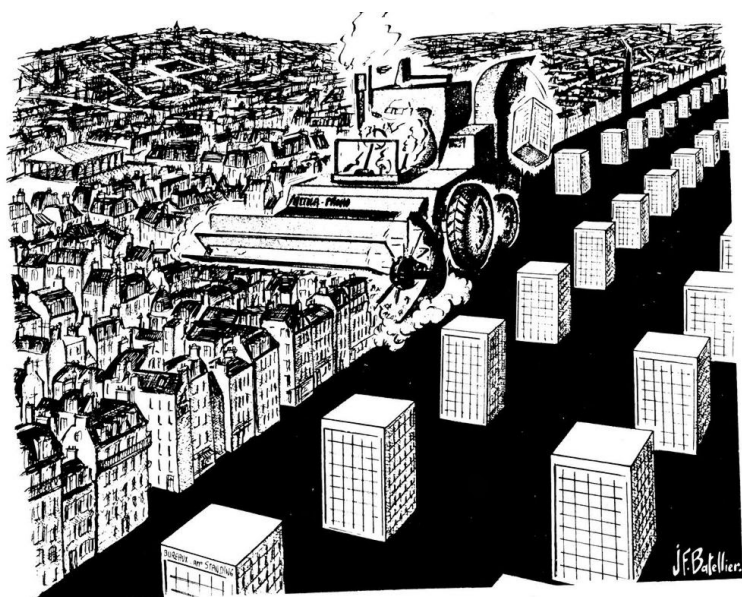
Designing from the user, the citizen, sat in conflict to this idea. Jacobs who has put forward many influential texts in regards to the issue of urban blight was notably critical highlighted the short-sightedness or intellectual arrogance that purvey urban planning policy in America, especially when it came to urban renewal

¹⁴ Jacobs, J. 1992

¹⁵ Jacobs, J. 1992



9. Preliminary plan of Canberra the federal capital of Australia.
Walter Burley Griffin.1914.



10. The modernist destruction of the historic urban fabric of Paris.
A Cartoon in the *Sans Retour, ni consigne*.
J.F. Batellier. 1981.

and urban rejuvenation. Indeed though these concepts of urban planning, were not directly realised they established schemes that formed the bedrock of modern urban planning centuries after their inception. Instead to Jacobs the city presented a much more granular complexity than could be possibly established by any totalizing urban visions and should be looked at as a problem of organized chaos. For Jacobs the most important evidence for processes in the formation of urban planning and schemes was not data driven out of averaging statistics such as demography, welfare structures, commercial profitability or economic growth, but rather clues which appear in the process of everyday life. Interactions and events, natural occurrences of specific place and time often nameless and without label. It can be posited then that if the habits of orthodox modern planning like that of *The Garden City* or *Ville Radieuse* represented an institutional habit to depart from the natural processes which make up the everyday urban narrative then the inverse, one which sees bottom up movements of political citizenship can establish the common ground for a potentially more equitable city.

36

*“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”*¹⁶

Between Jacobs and Lefebvre the practical democratization of the city could be achieved through highlighting and engendering these occurrences through urban planning in collaboration with the local public. It comes as part of a broader socio-economic and

16 Jacobs, J. 1992

technological movement towards decentralization - not of the city, but of state power - and localized agents dealing with energy, communication and mobility,¹⁷ placing emphasis on the individual to form a more active civil contract of *autogestion*. The question that remains from the beginning of the chapter is why this proponent of political citizenship is so important for re-approaching our urban reference? If we look back at the lenses of Arendt and Park which establish the city as a representation of the common human condition and outcome of our collective human task then political citizenship highlights the importance of allowing the city to remain porous and open to the diverse dynamics of common and collective activities.

Though this might not seem a particularly pragmatic approach to organizing a city, to urban planning or the architecture of public space, the most honest and simple answer to the question how does one organize the city? is “*we do not know*”¹⁸ and that is not a bad thing. As growing interest in particular politically charged movements tend to have, the right to the city has undergone a considerable measure of conceptual bloating¹⁹ which in some senses dilutes the interpretations and practical applications of the right to the city. This becomes considerably problematic as a concept of human reality the common idea of the urban is inherently tied to the ideological ‘accessibility’ to citizens. Its activation is as much a product of it’s conceptual clarity as the framework of policies, charters or treaties that enact it.

17 Rifkin, J. 2013

18 Harvey, D. 2019

19 Purcell, M. 2013

So it needs to be put simply. The most importance of political citizenship, it should be interpreted, is not its ability to find answers or establish rules, but to create possibilities.

possibilities

So, we look at the existing city as a form of episteme.²⁰ In doing so we understand or appreciate the city for the variety of processes which have crystallized as moments into the city regardless of the “legitimacy” - grass-roots, government and or otherwise - of that process. Cities by nature will produce forms of complexity and contradiction, manifestations of very specific nature regardless town-planning regulations. Given the chance or out of struggle, people in most cases will appropriate their environment to better suit there needs.²¹ In contradiction to the totalizing urban vision of standardized universal planning and design principles, specificity does not necessarily disconcert the unity or totality of urban form and configurations nor does it reduce the cities ability to establish strong and efficient relationships. That is because the everyday processes that produce such manifestation of specificity are the result of the constant struggle for daily needs, regardless of the scale of activity or the territory in which they take place.

“Everyday space is the connective tissue that binds daily lives together; amorphous and so persuasive that it is difficult even to perceive.”²²

20 Brenner, N

21 Harvey, D. 2019

22 Crawford, M. 2016

It is this dynamic, engendered by the political citizenship of a cities inhabitants yet so seemingly trivial and banal, that establishes urban vitality.²³ When looking at possibilities which are bore out from people going by there daily ritual, these clues and manifestations they give evidence to this collective dynamic of the city and broaden the horizon of the common idea. *Made in Tokyo*, described by its authors as a guidebook to ‘*dame architecture*’ (no-good architecture)²⁴ in the city of Tokyo, presents a study of such banal creations that is often associated with the chaotic character of the city of Tokyo. In their research; the intense agglomeration over time of building and infrastructure into a hyper-dense environment produced spatial intersections of everyday needs that was unique and specific to the processes of people in that particular place and context. A spaghetti restaurant with a baseball field above - a *spaghetti baseball house* - or a taxi depo beneath a golf range - a *golf taxi building* - are just as relevant expressions of the cities dynamic and the people who live in them then civic malls and or city parks. This presents the complex relationships, flows and layers that are created by such specificity in urban environment such as Tokyo as fundamental to the functioning of the city. Moments in the city under which the condition of intense diversity in activities and the task of articulating a hyper-densified urban fabric. The triviality of their existence is testament to that. The possibilities that arise from the densification of human activity and the concern or awareness they place in taking part in the political right for their city or

23 Mumford, L

24 Kaijama, M; Kuroda, J; Tsukmatoto, Y. 2016

simply their right to live and practice daily rituals is a necessary foundation for the establishment of a common city.

"The only indispensable material factor in the generation of power is the living together of people. Only where [people] live so close together that the potentials for action are always present will power remain with them and the foundation of cities."²⁵

When we think of the city in this way then the complexity of our urban environment, the vast transportation networks that move billions of people every day, satellite infrastructures that push incredible amounts of data every millisecond to the way to the layers of activity embedded in the city over generations of people and cultural practice are elements that grow the breadth of common ideas and collective memory. Both physically and or virtually they build the foundational space by which the possibilities for the future of the city are predicted. A plateau upon which the city can grow. Where does this sit in the broader argument that is being put forward in this text? What is the relation to placement of the human in this tension? If this holds true then in establishing a form that can give framework to the common city it is important to present the existing city, the city of fragmentation, segregation, national statehood and neo-liberal capitalism as what is. If the concept of Future Primitive gives precedents to the past to build the plateau of future possibilities then even the present, however many issue can be drawn out from it, has as

25 Arendt, H. 1958

much importance for the prospects of the city. Its place in history signifying the human epoch on this planet (the anthropocene) and the departure from the natural world does not discount its nature or relevance. After all the fact that it is happening makes it possible and thus by its definition natural.²⁶

“If the urban is total, it is not total in the way a thing can be, as consent that has been amassed, but in the way that thought is, which continues its activity of concentration, which assembles elements continuously and discovers what is has assembled through a new and different form of concentration.”²⁷

When the ability for the urban to produce space for the possibility of specificity is reduced, whether through urban segregation, stratification or fragmentation, then the reference plane for the city wither’s away leaving us in a what has been described by as a state of schizophrenia born out of a society immersed in capitalist culture. It can be seen as a falsification of the natural process to form relations and unities (everyday activities) and instead creates multiplications²⁸ (universal design and standardization). This paradox is a fundamental hurdle for the establishment of an equitable city one that has the breadth to find common understanding of all the cities inhabitants.

The following chapters move through a series of theoretical discourses from predominantly francophone

²⁶ Harrari, Y. N. 2011

²⁷ Lefebvre, H. 2003

²⁸ Deleuze, G. 1972

and anglo American thinkers in an effort to place a human perspective in the changing urban epoch. It aims to present the series of conditions which altered the human task of the city, presenting the departure from nature and highlighting the paradoxical construct in which that was able to be established. Finally how, from territorialization and spatial defenition by scale to the functional aesthetic which restricts forms of permanence, that construct is proliferated in todays urban city centres.

“The roar of the traffic, the passage of undifferentiated faces, this way and that way, drugs me into dreams; rubs the features from faces. People might walk through me. And what is this moment of time, this particular day in which I have found myself caught? The growl of traffic might be any uproar - forest trees or the roar of wild beasts. Time has whizzed back an inch or two on its reel;

our short progress has been cancelled.”¹

1 Woolf, V, 1931

what is and what follows

“A city!”

Writes Le Corbusier,

“It is the grip of man on nature”¹

The *Primitive* of Future Primitive encourages a reflection of self in the surrounding chaos. The precedent to past and present in establishing the possibilities of the future is key to its continuous process. In doing so it makes the promise of critical thinking without the establishment of absolutes, seeking rather natural relations in space and time. The period of enlightenment for example can be seen as a fundamentally good process to the human task, so too the values of modernism that were driven off a humanist pre-tense and social benefit, but as this is not a critique, it will refrain from commenting on whether

1 Le Corbusier. 1986

something is fundamentally good or fundamentally bad. It is for this chapter besides the point. Rather it aims to retrospectively present the conditions and processes of thinking that it established to show a different perspective on the project of enlightenment in light of the contemporary moment in time.

The condition of modernity, the social, cultural and political characteristics of that condition, was born out of a process of modernization that for a moment in its process established a departure of the human condition from its natural condition. That condition was heavily developed off the back of scientific and artistic pursuits of Enlightenment thinkers during the 17th, 18th and 19th century. The goal of this enlightenment task was at its core the emancipation of the human from the irrationalities of human nature². The accumulation of shared knowledge between these thinkers established the basis of rational forms of organisation through the logical *Transcendence of Nature*. The Laws of Nature allowed modernity to critique, through material causality the engrained prejudices and mystifications of society that had been used by religious orders of the past to grasp power.³ Natural science established a clear demarcation of natural mechanisms from human passions. The earth around them was finally making sense, translatable to a world of laws. It gave way to a revolution in the emergence of sciences, each free to gather knowledge without the bounds of the irrationalities of myth and superstition. The modern process sought further rationalization and logical answer to establish laws which could stand as

² Harvey, D. 1989

³ Latour, B. 1993



11. Comparative elevation of St Peter's, Rome, and sections of the Pantheon, Rome, the Radcliffe Library, Oxford, and the Rotunda, Bank of England. Sir John Soane and Soane office. 1814



12. Study after Velázquez's portrait of Pope Innocent X. Francis Bacon. 1953.

guards against the return of older regimes. Progress to the enlightenment thinkers was a matter of disengaging from history and the cultural practices of tradition⁴ that has so bound it. Ultimately this led to the de-legitimization of local knowledge, practice and culture. The liberation of the human through social organization, as brought the social sciences, and the desacrilization of knowledge and education made way for a wealth of societal change driven by the growing agenda of the human intelligence and universal liberty. The movement did not stop there however. Bruno Latour, a French philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist, recognized in his work *We Have Never been Modern*, the certainties established off of the human sciences and knowledge of society also created the basis off which to critically rationalize the natural sciences.

“by using the natural sciences to debunk the false pretensions of power and using the certainties of the human sciences to uncover the false pretensions of the natural sciences, and of scientism. Total knowledge was finally within reach.”⁵

This is an evasive contradiction yet one none the less. Within this contradiction, as Latour describes, lies one of the more important points of modern thinking. It gave objective rational truths to subjective ideological doctrines. A new spirituality was formed. An individual spirituality which made it possible for the modern individual to criticize without religion and god, natural law and society relative to their human experience. Moral

4 Harvey, D. 1989

5 Latour, B. 1993

progress was a matter of where you stood and indeed it reinforced the notion of Individualization. Could the parallel be drawn between the quest for the universal transcendence of nature through science and universal oppression in the name of human progress? The domination over all sciences was after all a domination of all things and it is perhaps in the construction of this critical logic that this process was able to produce the separation of humans and society from nature and the basis for its objectification. What it created was a *purposive-instrumental rationality*⁶ that helped reinforce and institutionalize a rationalized bureaucratic process. Economics, politics and law were able to flourish in social and cultural life under the name of human liberation and the pursuit of individual happiness. As far as the Human Task is concerned this is quite a useful tool and such was the *Machine Spirit* which so emblazoned the efficiency of that period, but if the horrors of two world wars which proceeded this period are anything to go by, it was also an incredibly dangerous one.

*“The critical power of the moderns lies in this double language: they can mobilize Nature at the heart of social relationships, even as they leave Nature infinitely remote from human beings; they are free to make and unmake their society, even as they render its laws ineluctable, necessary and absolute”*⁷

*“It enabled men... to find in them justifications for their most ingrained prejudices.”*⁸

6 Bernstein, R. 1985

7 Latour, B. 1993

8 Banham, R. 1960

Latour establishes that this complex of modern thinking that came from the enlightenment movements helped to formulate the divide between *society*, the *human*, *us* from *nature*, the *non human*, *them*. A condition, or rather a *Machine* which was able to seemingly seek scientific truth yet also subjugate and oppress. “*Between us and them is no more real than east and west*”⁹, the distinction of nature and society simply establish easily understood reference points for a myriad of intermediary things. It formalized borders and states of being, setting up distinctions and classifications denoting not just nature from society, but also society from society and nature from nature without formally recognizing its being. It was already enough. The liberation of the human through rationalisation and social organisation in the modern condition provided just the right kind of ammunition for a system of capitalist urbanisation to proliferate universal design globally.

territory

The traditional values of modernity that were driven on a humanist pretence and social benefit have been flooded and drowned in the expansions of globalised urbanisation. The commodification of space through territory and the production of scale in urban relationship played vital roles in this dynamic of neo-liberal capitalism and modernism. The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and French philosopher and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari explain this through the relationship of *Desire* to that of

9 Latour, B. 1993

modern capitalism and production¹⁰. In particular their conception of the *Body without Organs* which appeared in their seminal collaboration on the book *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. This theoretical discourse highlights the paradox in relationship of *Desire* and modern capitalism and how its effect on space and time through territory and scale, established the form of social oppression in everyday life, especially in the territory of the individual.

Industrialisation radically shifted spatial organisation and accessibility through its leaps in technological infrastructures. The face of our human project developed into an incredibly different kind task proliferated through a very different set of tools. Whether through the physical or digital infrastructures the access and commodification of space to larger territorial contexts facilitated the further fragmentation of the planet through national territorial frameworks. Marx termed this as the “*annihilation of space through time*”¹¹ and it exists a vital dynamic of capitalist urbanisation throwing space into a transient state. This is not to confuse the favouring of spatial agency over time, in fact what it highlights is the reduction of time from its qualities into a metric that inform the object of spatial organisation or simply the productive capacity. In providing new territory for larger global agglomeration to cities through the operationalisation of distant territories by these infrastructures.

“Capital is indeed the body without

¹⁰ Deleuze, G; Guattari, F. 1983

¹¹ Marx, K. 1867

*organs of the capitalist, or rather of the capitalist being. ...It produces surplus value, just as the body without organs reproduces itself, puts forth shoots, and branches out to the farthest corners of the universe*¹²

Deleuze and Guattari use of the analogy *Body without Organs* is representative of the gestating of something to a form which it has yet to take. They exemplify it as an egg that has not hatched yet has all the patterns, speckles and lines upon it indicating to the form of which it may take. A *Body without Organs* is representative of the state of something which desires to become something so long as there is something, or someone, to implement that task. In no difference to the establishment of sciences and laws of nature to form and establish boundaries is a form of domination.

*“In the subject who desires, desire can be made to desire its own repression”*¹³

It may well be asked why one would subjugate themselves to the desire of self-oppression. Using the territoriality of the familial, Deleuze and Guattari address this contradictory problem of political philosophy by arguing that the mechanism of the nuclear family is the most powerful agent of physiological oppression for the submission of classes. The nuclear family like the modern individual establishes its own familial subjectivity from the bounded territoriality of its own desire. Territorialization, and the commodity it represents, through the intuitive nature of modern capitalist culture

12 Deleuze, G; Guattari, F. 1972

13 Deleuze, G; Guattari, F. 1972

to label and demarcate is as Deleuze and Guattari described a desire of the modern capitalist ‘machine’ to further shape to its need. Whether in the territoriality of family, nation, state or especially the individual it is a machine of desire and thus it places no significance on well-being of those who implement its task. Through the modernist mindset, a *purpose-instrumental rationalism* of bureaucracy as recognised by Latour, establishing a territory by the abstract demarcation of its borders. The territory asserted an absolute truth marked into the space of the earth each time creating its own state, or body, and thus able to be pulled into the *machine*, the capitalist *Body without Organs*. Historically what this process resulted in was the huge displacement and dispossession of local populations creating large influxes of labor driven migration into, as Marx recognised, the very cities which capitalised upon such agglomerations¹⁴.

This characterization of territorialization in modern capitalism does not just sit within the scale of larger regional urban and global territories. As an abstract demarcation of space it produced smaller scales of territories from the city to the district to the spaces of city blocks and the individual cadastral boundaries of buildings that define what is interior and exterior. The issue of scale lies in the overlaying of its infrastructures and the individual sovereignty of its territory or as Deleuze and Guattari call the *territoriality of the individual*. Like the modern human, the *territoriality of the individual* (or state or body) asserted its own individualization, established objective rational truths against its own subjective

14 Brenner, N. 2014



13. *Flooded Modernism*, Asmund Havsteen Mikkelsen. 2018.
A 1:1 replica of Le Corbusier's *Ville Savoye* sunk into a Danish fjord as a provocative statement of original modernist values flooded by new technology.



14. Escaping the desires of modern life. Scene from the film *Pierrot le Fou*.
Jean Luc Godard. 1965

ideological doctrines. On the national scale, this is institutionalized by a country with a national government, on the city scale perhaps a Mayor or city council and in the neighbourhood playground, whomever can reach the highest swinging set. What makes this an issue is the relevance that these territories, or rather their authority, chooses to places on the other scale. Indeed bureaucratic hierarchy means that the power of relevance is given to the larger scale body. Desire of the *Body without Organs*, to the state or to the machine is not a subject of affection.¹⁵ Scale is as such a function of territorialization to establish orders of territory.

scale

The turning point for this issue comes, rather ironically, from the very processes of modern capitalist globalization. In the growth of infrastructural networks from local to global scales it has established entirely new domains of space, interactive and relational. Suddenly the machine of desire sets to take on forms as it struggles to comprehend between being either local or global when has established the universal constants of such global networks. The rational of the modern was that there *“really were such things as people, ideas, situations that were local and organizations, laws, rules that were global.”*¹⁶ But just as between ‘Nature’ and ‘Society’ or ‘Earth’ and ‘World’ simply constitute a reference point for organisation, so to do the words ‘Local’ and ‘Global’ present reference points for seeing a boundaries to what is in fact a fluid and continuous network.

15 Deleuze, G; Guattari, F. 1972

16 Latour, B. 1993

Urban studies have been traditionally centred around a bias towards city centres as the core locus for characteristics of urbanization that is not an idea of the centre, but rather the product of a process of urbanization or agglomeration. This establishes the territory of the city at an urban scale. However, this formed a methodological separation between the city agglomeration. The “*outside*” and the “*non-city*”¹⁷ formed a boundary that was inconsistent with the dynamics of the urban that became clearer as globalization took on a global form. Lefebvre’s aspiration to reconsider established models of city bound urban studies, “*the city is everywhere and in everything*”, urges instead to look at a planetary model without an outside.¹⁸ When the model of urbanization appears as a single object or body then the desire to establish the existence of new territories becomes irrelevant.

*“Against the Oedipal and oedipalized territorialities (Family, Church, School, Nation, Party), and especially the territoriality of the individual, Anti-Oedipus seeks to discover the “deterritorialized” flows of desire.”*¹⁹

Deterritorialization or *reterritorialization* that being the opposing action of territorialization, decoding and de-bounding, destroying borders and establishing flows, becomes particularly important methodological reproach for the considerations of the urban. The concentrations and agglomerations of labour and capital has evolved into a far more elaborate socio-political construct through

17 Angelo, H; Wachsmuth, D. 2015

18 Lefebvre, H. 2003

19 Deleuze, G; Guattari, F. 1972

growing transterritorialism and cosmopolitanisation²⁰ where such innovations play an intensifying role in reconstituting the relational space of the urban fabric. The structural formation of this body desires to determine the inner workings of its own body. It is not a different machine, the *Body without Organs* still desires to become.

*“Desire is part of the
infrastructure”²¹*

At the intersection of networks and territory we find the domains of everyday human experience crossing the bounds of territorial definitions whether it be that of the state, the nation, the family or otherwise. A composite landscape²² in which a process of urban is continuously superimposing upon its older self forming its own history. Global and world cities here represent a larger network of geographical entities, total not in the way they amass intensive concentrations of activity, into territories at different scales, but in the continuity of processes and scalar assembly of relationships that occur in this space²³ to construct localized forms of globalization. In this sense global urbanization is not the production of distinct temporal territorialities, but rather represents a dimension of mutually autonomous yet hyper-relative continuities and discontinuities of an “evolving totality”²⁴ that is indefinable and fluid. So we observe a resurgent activity in the urban which enables the spread of people, agents and of knowledge to permeate through the boundaries which previously had enclosed it, forming new social,

20 Tasan-Kok, T; et al., 2013

21 Deleuze, G; Guattari, F. 1972

22 Harvey, D. 1996

23 Sassen, S. 2005

24 Brenner, N. 2014

cultural and economic fluidity (Decentralized and shared economies, the breakdown of the nuclear family, the rise of co-operative living and learning space, virtual working environment to name a few). In doing so it brings into focus a myriad of new socio-political fronts upon which to establish new agenda's of political activity. To give and example, in a political study on the modernist account of environmental damage through the philosophical discourse of Deleuze, author Mark Halsey highlights the growing consensus for environmental injustice that has been brought into light through the model of planetary urbanization:

Along with the founding of a state - an organ which captures bodies - come those things which problematise the intended alignment or ordering of events. For example, in addition to isolating high quality timbers, the marketing out of logging zones also brings into focus the plight of endangered species, the remains of Indigenous culture, the problems with high intensity burning, and so forth. The 'enemy', therefore, is not the state. Rather the enemy is the belief in the permanency of legitimacy of that which the state erects.²⁵

Between Deleuze and Guattari, Latour and Lefebvre we see a paradoxical state between the what is and has been and what can follow. What has ensued is the burgeoning *Zeitgeist* of an industrialised machine perhaps long past its discontinuity. The ability for the state, national government institutions of bureaucracy to keep up with the intensifying rate of urbanisation is

²⁵ Halsey, M. 2006

impossible. As it clutches on it reduces its social, cultural, political and also economic relevance for many local and global forms of activity. It cannot keep up with the every day life of its citizens. Capitalism gestates and nature grips it.

“The political, ethical, social and philosophical problems of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the trip of individualisation which dislike to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individualist which has been imposed on us for several centuries”¹

1 Foucault, M. 1982

“The planet is much too narrow and limited for the globe of globalisation; at the same time, it is too big, infinitely too large, too active, too complex, to remain within the narrow and limited borders of any locality whatsoever. We are all overwhelmed twice over: by what is too big, and by what is too small.”²

only time will tell

The fragmented city is dead. At every epoch a new ethical practice is developed off the foundations of another establishing progressive developments. But when the practices of a past epoch continue to pervade themselves into the contemporary narrative, when the ethical practice of past time refuses to discontinue for the continuity of a new ethical practice and the development of collective memory then we find ourselves in a cycle of self-contradiction. The condition it creates formulates something hybrid, repetitive, standardized and universally proliferated.

In its dominion over nature modern life was so caught up in establishing the narratives of individual life that it was naive to the complexity of everyday activity. The celebration of the Individual and the rationalization of nature and society attempted to find order amongst the chaos of a city, but the city was far too complex,

far too diverse. The intense diversification of the city due to agglomerations to global centres highlighted the changing face society and culture in dense formations. In response to the changing socio-cultural and economic spaces of the city the Post-modern thinkers aimed to depart from the grapples of absoluteness of modernist rationalism. However it remained with the structure and hierarchy of territoriality that the enlightenment and modernist thinkers established. So although it recognised new practices and the changing face of diversity in the city the post-modernist could not, or simply did not, break from the tradition of individualization and instead perpetuated that narrative.

“There is, perhaps, a degree of consensus that the typical post-modernist artefact is playful, self-ironising and even schizoid; and that it reacts to the austere autonomy of high modernism by impudently embracing the language of commerce and the commodity. Its stance towards cultural tradition is one of irreverent pastiche and contrived depthlessness undermines all metaphysical solemnities, sometimes by a brutal aesthetics of squalor and shock”¹

This is a contradiction, not even an evasive one. The fundamental change is an inherently aesthetic one that celebrates the subjectivity of individualization. When this proliferated across a global system of capitalism then this expression of individualization very quickly turns into the standardized expression of ‘individualization’ of function, as it is function being the purpose of its

¹ Eagleton, T. 1987

territoriality that becomes its most distinct feature in the city. This as Jane Jacobs critiques is problematic for the city and is itself a form of ubiquity.

“Homogeneity or close similarity of use, in real life, poses very puzzling aesthetic problems...Scenes of thorough going sameness lack these natural announcements of direction and movement of are scantily furnished with them, and so they’re deeply confusing. This is a kind of chaos”²

If the *Future* of Future Primitive is a task of progressive construction through constant collective self-reflection, then self-contradiction can present a puzzling barrier to its ability to find continuum in the urban timeline. The paradox that is presented appears between through the functional aesthetics of modernism that is perpetuated into post-modernism. It helps establish the relevance of time in the common city and how it articulates diversity in density.

aesthetics

“the most startling fact about postmodernism: its total acceptance of the ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and the chaotic”³

The differences of post-modernism to modernism can be a hard to define and pinpoint in exact ways. This is not to say that they are exactly the same thing, its sensibility to changing dynamics of social and

² Jacobs, J. 1992

³ Harvey, D. 1996

cultural thought show its reaction to modern thought, however instead of transcending the conditions of modernism it rather proliferates them. If the nature of modernist thought is encapsulated by the dual use and critique of objective rational truths to subjective ideological doctrines and vice-versa then post-modernism simply took one half of that coin, the subjective, and ran a little wild with it. A good and clear illustration of this is the literary work of Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. His book *Delirious New York* presents the city of New York as the result of the modern urban phenomena. Man's desire to construct the 'nature' around him dominating it to his will. Without reference to the real natural space that it took the place of, it assumes the fabrication of human desire organized within the rational and efficient construction of New York's orthogonal grid. Without reference to the real natural time, it assumes its own historic reverence.

"A mythical point where the world is completely fabricated by man, so that it absolutely coincides with his desires. The Metropolis is an addictive machine, from which there is no escape, unless it offers that, too. Through this pervasiveness, its existence has become like the Nature it has replaced: taken for granted, almost invisible, certainly indescribable."⁴

Described as a "retroactive manifesto" Koolhaas sought to establish an urban reference for the city of New York by assuming the role of mythologist. By giving the city its fictional conclusion it provided an ideological basis, "Manhattanism", the individual ambition for the endless possibilities that characterized

4 Koolhaas, R. 1994



15. *City of Captive Globe Project, New York*. Axonometric Drawing.
Rem Koolhaas and Madelon Vriesendorp. 1972



16. A cubic watermelon. Unknown author

it's urban condition. Koolhaas projects this conception in the illustration *City for Captive Globe* (figure 11). In the illustration each individual plot represents the individual expression of an individualization a “*Science or Mania*”⁵ manifest into the grid of the city. In the centre sits the *Globe*, the world represent, breaking from the order of the grid and assuming its hierarchy. The urban condition of the city represented in the *City for Captive Globe* is that of the ideological incubation of the world. Manhattan, the individualization of each plot feeding into the desires of the world encompassing machine of modernism.

In this however, Koolhaas saw opportunity in the Manhattan skyline. The sheer *Bigness* that the blocks assumed in scale could provide for an entirely new typology of urban configuration.

*“As Koolhaas sees it, such large-scale architecture transcends mere building; it becomes a city in its own right, detached from its urban surroundings.”*⁶

Instead of the “*Ideological skyline...[and its] spectacle of ethical joy, moral fever or intellectual masturbation*” buildings could serve its own civic purpose through the colloidal mixing of different functional parts into one structure and connected through the piercing of a connective core. It birthed the modern hybrid building and its many typological offshoots.

“A single structure on a single urban block could become the life nucleus and sole

5 Koolhaas, R. 1994

6 Harteveld M. 2006

*support of the people within...through human
application of the machine ethic, the city within a
city...introspective and non-expressive*²⁷

Here in lies the profound issue with the post-modernists apparent departure from the modernist rationalization of space. Post-modernism sought to the re-organisation of space to produce new configurations of density in the city and thus create to diversities. By giving the building its own individualization at the scale of the city it presupposed some form of self-sufficiency, but this was contradictory to the point of diversification it tried to create. This logic of organization, regardless of it scale, presents the limits of the modernist and post-modernist expression of the individualization. Its inherent irrelevance to its context contradicts its own purpose of a city within a city disregards the finer activities of the city that engender its diversity. Global to local city networks establish the arguments for decentralisation for positive social capital. The opening of the city to the larger continuous network is the same as opening of the local building to the network of the city. What is perpetuated as the celebration of diversity in new forms of urban density is simply the aesthetic overriding of the same system which seeks establish further territorially. The urban expression of individual *bigness*, the city within the city, is a bounded territory just as the individual subjective is based from the perspective of its singular being. A civic cosmos that does not extend beyond the hermetic border of its facade. The facade as the boundary interior/exterior mediation and definition of the big mega-structure loses its essence in a contradiction of its presence as a bearer of density. The

7 Fenton, J. 2011

remedy to its own existence is through establishment of interior void, the internal expression, however even this self contradicts its very attempts at being distinct from the city. So, it is more a representation of the totalizing vision of the utopian cities of high modernism within the bounds of the block than it is to the global city. What it instead created is a kind of *Plastic Diversity*.

This *Plastic Diversity*, this contradictory point of difference and diversity in urban planning was addressed by Jane Jacobs addressed as the formation of a kind “city-ness”. It is embodied in the analogy of the cubic watermelon (figure 16): the natural form of its shell contorted to contain the maximum efficiency of packing and thus produce the optimal configuration for its fruitiness inside. Buildings and the people inside them however, are not watermelons. Developments in high density areas required the marketing of glossy images of metropolitan living and the diversity of cosmopolitan life that comes from the congestion of difference it could provide. However, difference and diversity, whether of people or of function are not simply by-products of densification. It is as Jacobs proposes in the “*contentious zone of contact through which it is possible to chart the uncertain expanse of contemporary cosmopolitanism.*” To put simply: absolute truth in the form of functionality difference cannot establish diversity, nor can it cater to the diversity or activities that take place in the city. It is rather impossible. The public space predisposed with the specific spatial function of being public will most likely fail in one way or another. that isn’t to say all will. Indeed there are many examples of many such public spaces which have provided for the inhabitants a wonderful place of common ground, but

many if not most as Jacobs would assert do not⁸.

“Our difficulty is no longer how to contain people densely in metropolitan areas... Our difficulty today is rather how to contain people in metropolitan areas and avoid the ravages of apathetic and helpless neighbourhoods.”⁹

A tradition of over-planning pervades the possibility for time to produce diversity. The diversity of our public space is a product sold in the celebration of a singular form of density. It is impossible then for an institution, bureau or authority to foresee the possibilities that can occur and then through some colloidal mixing of functions hope to cater to these functions. No matter how much space and time is compressed for the efficiency of the capitalist machine it does not allow it to forecast its exact outcomes, only standardized results or stagnated neighbourhoods. Why? If you for example take the two exact same pots, plant seeds of exact same seed in the same measurement of soil, place it in the same spot and water it precisely the same amount at the same time, you will inevitable get different outcomes. You may bind its branches, preen its leaves and tie its stalk, but over time it will grow and struggle to reach the light of the sun or it will die.

“It is like trying to know, with certainty, both the movement and position of a subatomic particle, both its wave and particle characteristic - the paradox between process and product, between movement and outcome, between urbanization

⁸ Jacobs, J. 1992

⁹ Jacobs, J. 1992



17. From the photographic series *Empire of Dust*, Amélie Labourdette. 2015.



18. Group of Stairs, *Prima Parte*, Giambattista Piranesi. 1743.
The study of archaeological ruins in Rome from Piranesi rebuilt a world of ancient
space previously forgotten.

*and the urban. However, at the same time, there is, strangely a form of sorts to the urban - even if the form is empty in itself: it is always relative form.*¹⁰

What is missing from the equation is time. Time break down the borders of functional aesthetics and highlights the self-contradicting face of post-modern and modernism in the contemporary moment. Time forms new possibilities from a myriad of activities that can appear in the city through the everyday life of its citizens.

permanence

The question of permanence and the issue it highlights comes from the addition of time to the modern urban problem. If the Future Primitive seeks to the common thread of narratives in time both in the past and present as a continuum and decompress the compression of space-time by territorialization. Then it seeks or rather relies on the permanence of the city and its architecture to give it a plane of reference. Functionalism is state of territorial definition, productive of space at a scale. In the dimension of time it contradicts itself. Ageing as a natural quality of time and process loses its value when objective focus on the product and the rationalisation of its environment has reduced time to a spatial factor. Everything is at once always new or nothing, producing forms of architecture and urban planning that alienate a certain human nature. The relevance of styles were reduced to irrelevant decoration in the establishment of

10 Merrifield, A. 2013

innovation and in material and construction¹¹, however so to has the aesthetic of functionally driven typologies reduce in relevance in the advent of new forms of social organisation to perhaps decorative elements pervading design in some retrospect desire. No function in a particular state can and or will stay relevant for ever. Even the form of the dwelling has changed with the changing social and cultural face of society. Even space which throughout history space which purposed for the function of public space, was as public as whom constituted the “public” at that time, and that was determined by who had the right to be part of the “public” at the time. Of course, this changes. The relevance of functionalism is lost in its naive attempt to define everlasting program.¹² Permanence in this sense is not a matter of functional relevance but the ability of such a space to shed light on the collective condition of the people in the city. Permanence in the city cannot then rely on aesthetic ideology or movement as these too are transient conditions. It needs something else, continuous not just in space but also in time. To build upon the reference of historic heritage yet to also bind the transformative nature of people in the city.

“One of the most important attributes of a vital urban environment is one that has rarely been achieved in past civilizations: the capacity for renewal. Against the fixed shell and the static monument, the new architecture places its faith in the powers of social adaptation and reproduction”¹³

11 Le Corbusier. 1986

12 Rossi, A. 1966

13 Mumord, L. 1938

Lewis Mumford an American historian, sociologist, philosopher of technology and urbanism recognised the importance of this problem in the city. Furthermore he asserts that one of the fundamental sources of urban vitality came not just from the presenting the grounds for diverse ranges of activities, but to also allow it the room to grow, change and flourish. To seek alternative spaces and modes of time. To Mumford disengaging someone from the ability to formulate difference and seek new meaningful relationships with others in their everyday life ultimately reduces urban vitality. Disengaging cities from the ability to formulate difference and seek new meaningful relationships in its everyday life will ultimately reduce urban vitality. That ability was an inherent part of social and cultural nature of cities.

It is neither love for nature nor respect for nature that leads to this schizophrenic attitude. Instead, it is a sentimental desire to toy, rather patronisingly, with some insipid, standardised, suburbanised Shaw of nature - apparently in sheer disbelief that we and our cities, just by virtue of being, are a legitimate part of nature too.”¹⁴

This is no easy task even Ebenezer Howard who's Garden City Movement so epitomizes the modernist fragmentation of the urban recognized that the task of reconstituting heritage will always be of major importance to the project of the city, but that the difficulty of building on an existing site with an existing problem would take a

14 - Jacobs, J. 1992

tremendous effort.¹⁵ But if the Future Primitive seeks to the common thread of narratives in time both in the past and present as a continuum then the urban society as a product of historic continuities and discontinuities, here the end of an industrialization period and in the face of a new human epoch should be continued by the underlying network of its inherent process. Could it be that out of the decline of modern industrial capitalism we might find the structure, a city topography on which to appropriate and build the new spaces of our cities?

*“latter, every age is judged to attain
the fullness of its time, not by being but by
becoming.”¹⁶*

The late abstract expressionist artwork *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)* (figure 19) by artist Jackson Pollock paints a very different perspective. The spontaneous and chaotic splattering and criss-crossing of paint presents much like the underlying complexities of an urban form. The flowing complexities form at each intersection the explosion of yet another network and expression, fractal and nebular, “there is no centre, no beginning, no middle or end”¹⁷ a unity in chaos. The substance to its beauty and underlying form lies in the process that shows time in its layers and the freedom to interpret a structure. Sometimes one need only to stand back and take it all in.

¹⁵ Howard, E. 1902

¹⁶ Harvey, D. 1989

¹⁷ Cernuschi, C; Herczynski, A. 2007



19. *Autumn Rhythm (Number 30)*, Jackson Pollock, 1950

“Ideological and political hegemony in any society depends on an ability to control the material context of personal and, social experience.”¹

¹ Harvey, D. 1992

“The fate of an epoch that has eaten of the tree of knowledge is that it must ... recognize that general views of life and the universe can never be the products of increasing empirical knowledge, and that the highest ideals, which move us most forcefully, are always formed only in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us.”²

something else

We must seek a new ethical practice in the changing urban epoch. As we undergo intensifying forms of social and environmental change there grows the necessity for new understanding and re-evaluation of agencies and definitions. In times of crisis how do we as a common people come together in the city. When pandemics hit and we are forced to retreat to the enclosure of our private spaces what becomes of those things that do not seek to permanence. This is not a question of technological capacity, but the capacity of people to establish a common future in the city

This is to say;

1. That the contemporary problems of the city exist as a reflection of the tension between our world and the Earth.

2. That in between our collective condition and our collective task in creating the city exists the possibilities of our future.
3. That the everyday life and its manifestations, empowered by the fluidity of relationships between people, is the essence of understanding our narrative in space and time.

Having highlighted the state of tension between nature and society or world and earth as perpetuated through the spatial definition of territory and scale that is disconnected from time we can apply the concept of the Future Primitive to step toward the goal of a common city. If the *Future* is a task of progressive construction through constant collective self-reflection then perhaps it is a matter of engaging time and the political will of people in light of the changing urban epoch. If the *Primitive* is a natural condition, of origin, of reflection and the future prospective of our place in nature, then perhaps it is a matter of delegitimizing the bounded model of territory and the systems of scale that allow one to disassociate and decontextualize themselves from their environment. Density and diversity in our cities seen not defined sets of bodies in the infrastructural networks

Globalisation has intensely increased forms of social inequality and segregation through the continued commodification of space. However in doing so has also presented the grounds on which to move forward from a Neo-Liberal capitalist model and towards a new architecture of common space. A rethinking of spatial conditions — from the abstract definitions of national

borders and territories and the orthodox planning of modernism — has been born out of the physical and digital infrastructure which drove the very expansions of capital into inter-territorial spaces. The city-rural industrialized definitions is today a far more granulated, and even non-physical nexus of spatial conditions. The global city, as the setting for this future, presents the opportunity for the re-appropriation of capital value through new definitions of diversity. Shared economies and decentralised technologies are key developments in the changing social, political and economic ecology. These concepts place value on the spaces of localisation in complex networks and the unknown possibilities that find expression in everyday life. Local knowledge and new technology together, bringing both worlds of earth and world back in alignment can produce far more fruitful forms.

*“Perhaps then we would be better
position to fathom how to reframe and reconfigure
infrastructure as a common project to serve
humanity as a whole.”¹*

common landscape

The lenses of Hannah Arendt and Robert E. Park establish the city as the representation of the human condition manifest into temporal formations through the third order of time as added David Harvey. It raises the question, in what way is our presence as a people expressed in the city and simultaneously question in what kind of city do we want to live and be apart of in out

1 Angelil, M.

quest to create an equitable ecology? If our cities are fragmented, then we as the people who dwell within its regions are condemned to the same fate. It is primarily from the streets, that through the inherent social fluidity break to the structure of what is today public space, that for brief moments become the grounds for citizenry action, in protest or in riot, that the common as it is at that moment finds voice. What we are ultimately risking is urban stagnation where the catalyst for the Future Primitive no longer has anything to feed off. It must not be cast aside the importance to give the common the space to activate and the time to flourish.

“An attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them”²

The possibility and freedom to determine our future, our cities and ourselves. To exercise within the public spaces of our cities the right to shape our collective future. We must face the challenges of a changing human ecology in a completely urbanised society as a common society. The diversity of the global city and the articulation of its density break into incredibly more molecular organization than ever before in history. Bureaucracy fails to define the common diversity, only to appear as tick-box labelled “other”, but it will no longer suffice. Between global crisis and local praxis from grand urban frameworks to minute interventions the Future Primitive promotes, at its core, sympathy. We are common because

2 Foucault, M. 1984

our stories differ, our narratives collide and because our possibilities are plentiful, but this is its beauty. Sympathy is the catalyst of the common and the driver of the collective.

The primitive marking of the ground in the surrounding chaos was not to establish a border between us and them, but to form a heart centre from which birthed the collective reality of being.

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