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5 Passages

From Artificial Animal to Planetary Man

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This chapter reflects upon the modes through which Western socio-philosophical discourse has critically explored Nature and the City. The essay examines the writings of a number of authors, ranging from Walter Benjamin to Bruno Latour, i.e. European critical thinkers of modernity from the 1920s' critical turn to present debates. Two crises of modern capitalism, the 1920–1930s and the 2007–ongoing crises, are the alpha and omega of this critical discourse. During this period, globalization processes have increased dramatically and a planetary urbanization of the world has emerged. In the course of the 20th century much has changed in the relation between Nature and the City, as their modes of representation dramatically shifted. Nature has been fully subsumed and incorporated into the Artificial, whose main representation is the City in its metropolitan and, today, postmetropolitan forms.

More precisely, the aim of this chapter is to show how images of the City as 'artifact,' which surfaced in the 1960s–1970s—in parallel to the postmodern turn and the rapid planetary urbanization of the world, have been progressively detached from their original reference to Nature. This detachment is fully expressed in texts such as French sociologist Guy Debord's *Society of Spectacle* (1967) and French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (1979). The origins of this representational detachment can be traced (back) to German philosopher Walter Benjamin's work on *Passages* (*Passagenwerk* in German) and therefore are profoundly rooted in a critical reflection on early modernity.¹ *Passages* is Benjamin's most important intellectual output written during his exile in Paris in the 1930s—before his death at the French-Spanish border in 1940. Never completed, the *Passagenwerk* was rediscovered and translated later and has widely influenced (from Adorno to Arendt) the philosophical and aesthetic discourses in the second half of 20th century. I will also suggest in the conclusion to this reflection that the City's detachment from Nature is likely to be predated to the very origin of Western political modernity, i.e. to Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), the foundational treatise in the Western world on State sovereignty.² Since then the State has subsumed the force of Nature (as well as that of Religion, and of any other power on the Earth) into its 'artificial' power.

If Walter Benjamin's Parisian *Passages* were the 19th-century privileged architectural model of the modern urbanite, consumer and *flâneur*, the Planetary Man of contemporary globalization is still waiting for a new *Passage* to take him towards planetary urbanization. No single architecture can fully express or articulate such a planetary condition: 'postmetropolis' remains for now the most convincing, if not precise definition of the new Urban Epoch. It is an Epoch of loneliness, of a structurally

'liquid' social modernity highlighting at the same time the fast changes occurring on uneven planetary scales. Walter Benjamin (1921) wrote that: ³

This passage of 'planetary man' (Planeten Mensch) through the house of despair is, in the absolute loneliness of his path, the ethos Nietzsche describes. This man is the Übermensch, the first who knowingly begins to realize the capitalist religion.⁴

Planetary Man is the protagonist of our contemporary 'liquid' society. The German philosopher Ernst Junger later added (in 1951) that only '*Der Waldgang*' remained to the free individual in contemporary society. The 'retreat in the forest,' anti-urban as it is, is the only exit choice we have in the Epoch of planetary anxiety and fear. For the image of the wounded Planet, which has been multiplied by ecological thought since the 1960s/1970s, is now deeply embedded in our contemporary view of the future.

Modernity

In the archives forming the background of his unfinished book, *Paris—Capital of the 19th Century*, Walter Benjamin collected material on "Nature and the City," a project documented by Giorgio Agamben in his monumental study on Benjamin (2012).⁵ The chthonic nature of the city, its underground base and its submarine image are among the favored themes to appear in the fragments collected by the German thinker of modernity. In Benjamin, the ruins are signs of the dialectic between the technological growth of the metropolis and the destruction made possible by technological advance itself. This was a departure from the view of Georg Simmel, one of Benjamin's masters whose images of the ruins are a product of man destined to become a product of Nature, a cosmic tragedy. Cities (from London to Lisbon to Tokyo in the past centuries) are always in danger of destruction by water, fire and other natural catastrophic events as well as by social and technological changes, exemplified by the urban transmutation of Hausmannian Paris. "The city of Paris has entered the 20th century in the form that Haussmann has given to it," Benjamin wrote. Haussmann achieved subversion of the Paris' urban image through such simple tools as spades, hoes and picks. "What destruction—Benjamin observed—such limited tools have produced! And how since then, in the epoch of great cities, the instruments for razing them have improved! How they evoke images of the future!"⁶ The urban future is, according to Benjamin, made of ruins (*Trümmern* in German) and destruction, just as those that the tempest of Progress constantly produces (discussed in the last writings of Benjamin, the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*). Planetary urbanization in that respect can be understood as simply transposing such destruction onto a global scale.

Our starting point is therefore Paris in 1859, the first year of Haussmann's public works, which can be considered as emblematic of the joint processes of urban change, urban renewal and urban destruction. Imitating Haussmann on an ever larger scale was to become the dream of every urban *growth machine*; criticism of Haussmann's vision would become the leitmotiv of any critical approach to urban modernity, including that of the planetary urbanization theorized by critical theorists such as the French philosopher Henry Lefebvre and the American sociologist Neil Brenner.⁷

In the very same years (1848–1870) that saw Haussmann at work, we can say that the entire history of modernity can be detected. The European revolution-counter-revolution dialectic is incised deep in the streets of Paris. What comes first, and what

follows this crucial Epoch is encapsulated in the image of *Paris, Capital of the 19th Century*. Benjamin was fully aware of this, and meticulously collected evidence of Paris' urban change, its preparation and its consequences. The apparatus for destruction is central in Charles Baudelaire's poetic work, which Benjamin saw as the lyrical acme in the epoch of mature capitalism: "the devaluation of the human world caused by the market economy deeply interacts in its historical experience."⁸ And also "Baudelaire's lyrics are located at the point where the nature of things is overwhelmed and transfigured by the nature of man."⁹

Along the axis designating the structural-technical form of the city, we can "locate" the following questions in Benjamin's inquiry: in which period does the expression "a sea of houses" make its first appearance? when did Haussmann's demolitions begin? And the following points: a reflection on the traffic of carriages on the Pont Neuf; on the appearance of the first mailboxes in Paris; on the arrival of the electric telegraph, on the development of administrative control; and the advent of house numbering.

Since the mid-19th century, the modern metropolis has become the "field" where all sorts of experiments in urban population control are conducted by means of technical instruments and flow regulation. Here the art of government made its first appearance: during the 18th century in the pre-revolutionary *ancien regime* institutions, in the 19th century in the new forms of urban modernity. But Paris is also the city whose streets are occupied by practices in which tradition and urbanity interpenetrate. Along the axis which designates the subjectivity of the urban spirit, we can therefore "locate" the following points in Benjamin's inquiry: the *inhabited interior*; the *passages*; the *crowd, mass, flâneurs*; the *attitude (of intellectuals, bohemians)*; an attention to *psychoanalysis, and the phantasmagory of merchandise*.

In a text by Baudelaire discussing the work of Charles Meyron, a painter and a contemporary of his in Paris, the interconnectedness of antiquity and modernity is clearly underlined. "Rarely have we seen represented with such poetical richness the natural solemnity of a capital city" writes Baudelaire in *Ecrits sur l'art*: stratified stones and industrial obelisks, monumental restoration works are mixed together in cobwebs fashion. Antiquity and modernity are interconnected in the new city. This vision of modernity is the dialectical basis of the *Passages*, which are considered by Benjamin to be both architecture and symbol, representing the dream of the urban collectivity.

The protagonist here is a particular kind of urbanite, the *flâneur* in the endless flows of urban population. Edgar Allan Poe's "*The Man of the Crowd*" is the explicit model:¹⁰ but in Poe no *flanerie* is admitted; rather, the protagonist is forever within the flow. Yet Benjamin ironically notes: "The habitus of the flâneur who botanizes on the asphalt."¹¹ Again, the dialectic here is between man, nature and commodity. Nature is never seen as a value in Baudelaire: it is seen as something saddening, hard and cruel.¹² The cruelty of nature may be the reason why he refused communion with any terrestrial nature. It is the city which attracts the poet: its labyrinth, its mosaic of ruins, its sky.¹³ For Benjamin, however, the Parisian *Passages* are also the artificial spaces where the emerging market economy and the display of its fashions and commodities surface. Places which—as later will be true of the giant shopping malls, airports, *non-lieux*—we pass through without any personal, historical or identitarian commitment or promise. In this sense the 19th-century Parisian *Passages* are the prototype of the urban destruction of any natural environment caused by the inherent capitalist logic, which was to be later thematized by ecological thought in the following century.

Postmodernity

In postmodernity, the roles of Nature and the City dramatically change as the notion of ‘paysage,’ the landscape ceases to exist. Landscape is now, as articulated in British geographer David Harvey’s critical account of *The Condition of Postmodernity* or in American novelist Don De Lillo’s *Cosmopolis*, a built-up environment.¹⁴ The dialectic turns into an opposition between Economy (*oikos nomos*) and Ecology (*oikos logos*). Both economy and ecology derive their meaning from *oikos*, the domestic symbol of human permanence on the Earth. The strength of the symbol is again documented in the influential Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung’s *Red Book* written between 1914 and 1930:¹⁵ the house as a symbol of stability in the Mandala circle, one of the oldest religious symbols analyzed by Jung (significantly, it seems, in 1937 Benjamin was thinking of Jung and Klages as his possible next research work, unfortunately never carried out).¹⁶ Ludwig Klages’ text entitled “Man and the Earth” (*Mensch und Erde*, 1913)¹⁷ is clearly ahead of its time: it anticipates our contemporary ecological view and is now considered a preview of ecological thinking. For according to Klages, Humanity is destroying Nature through its progress. Furthermore, as critical thinking on the planetary urbanization of the world suggests, the contemporary neoliberal city is the ideal place for such annihilation of Nature. The capitalist imperative is dominant today: the city finances the city through the urban rent in permanent, endless urban expansion. Masses, or multitudes are no longer the protagonists here. Only the artificial man produced through technological progress can be the protagonist. Benjamin called him Planetary Man (Planeten Mensch). And this man is a believer in a new religion, capitalism.

At this point, the inside–outside dialectic, which is typical of modernity comes to an end: in the passage from modern to postmodern and from imperialism to Empire there is progressively less distinction between inside and outside (according to Hardt and Negri).¹⁸ This is particularly true as far as the dialectic of sovereignty between the civil order and the natural order comes to an end. As American critic Fredric Jameson puts it:

In modernism (. . .) some residual zones of “nature” or “being”, of the old, the older, the archaic, still subsist; culture can still do something to that nature and work at transforming the “referent”. Postmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good.¹⁹

There is no ‘outside’ here any longer. In the transition from modern to postmodern thinking there is progressively less distinction between inside and outside due to capitalism’s full appropriation of the world space. Under planetary urbanization, urban theory remains without an outside—as Neil Brenner points out: the complete transformation of the Globe into an urban realm has been virtually concluded.²⁰ In the coming era of virtuality the City becomes the realm of the Artificial, both in terms of physical planning and in terms of architecture. In urban planning, technological tools are employed to produce simulations of the city. First of all comes the map and its rendering techniques: as French philosopher Jean Baudrillard puts it,²¹ reality is the product of miniaturized units, of matrices, databases and models of command—in this way reality can be reproduced an infinite number of times. Importantly we should always distinguish between *Realität* and *Wirklichkeit*: the former term defines the

fiction we build to find stability in the world, the latter defines the chaotic flux of the world, without beginning and without end.

In the field of urban architecture, the ‘artificial’ takes the form of the ‘foam-city’ described by German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk in *Shaume, Spheren III*.²² Again, a natural, biological concept, foam, is employed here to define the contemporary human condition: the cellular housing unit gives rise to repeated massive foam, in which ‘free’ individuals, flexibly adapting to the flow of capital accumulation, develop their intimacy. But it is a lost intimacy, as the liberation of individuals living alone with the aid of individualizing techniques of habitat and mass-media is fully based on market relations. The modes of representation of human environments are still based on Nature, but only as manipulated artificial products of a post-urban or even post-human Epoch fully dominated by technology and market logics.

Bridges

This vision is close to that of the Nietzschean ‘last men’ presented in the Prologue of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*:

We have invented happiness, say the last men and they blink. They have left the regions where it was hard to live, for one needs warmth. One still loves one’s neighbor and rubs against him . . . One still works, for work is a form of entertainment. One no longer becomes poor or rich; both require too much exertion. Who still wants to rule? Who obey? Both require too much exertion.²³

To overcome this final meta-historical outcome we need a renewed dialectical approach, which can be proposed only by considering new models of circularity bridging human actors and Nature. This bridge is only possible if we follow philosophical-anthropological lessons such as the one proposed by French philosopher Simone Weil’s supernatural knowledge (*‘connaissance surnaturelle’*): the city is not ‘the social,’ it is the air that we breathe, our roots and traditions.²⁴ In cities like Troy or Venice (two of Weil’s models) such supernatural knowledge is clearly expressed. In a tragedy Simone Weil wrote in the last years of her life, *Venise sauvée* (Venice saved) the heroic protagonist who saves Venice from the foreign conspiracy is a noble witness of such spirit of the city (nature, past, tradition).²⁵ The same spirit still remains impressed in the inhabitants leaving their city of Troy (defined ‘sacred’): migrants like Aeneas are the prototype of the European tradition of ‘rootedness’ (hence we Europeans closing our borders to foreigners today have forgotten our very same origin).

In the field of the built-up environment, we can follow in the same vein German architect Bruno Taut’s glass-architecture as a symbol of supernatural knowledge: it is the idea of a town which will survive modernization and urban sprawl, the dispersed community of “*The Dissolution of Cities*” (1920).²⁶ Taut bridges the divide between Nature and the City through an environment that couples the natural landscape of the Swiss Alps with man-made building technology. It does not matter that Taut designed glass utopian domes to be superimposed on the Alps: his theoretical contribution goes beyond architecture itself. In his Utopia for the Third Millennium, as *The Dissolution of Cities* seems to us, work cooperatives, agricultural and dispersed production centers will arise. No centralization is admitted; rather, massive decentralization is advocated. A region of ‘glass’ gardeners, ecological homes with water reservoirs and

mobile solar radiators. The more distant men are from each other in space, the more they develop hospitality. A community of individualities develops circular forms of society, in which crowns, flowers, stars are forms of Taut's imagined community—a transpassing, transparent society, embodied by the glass-architecture. It is an astonishing foretaste of our possible coming future: the end of gated territories and borders, free spaces against closed spaces. We should subvert our architecture to enhance the level of our civilization, as Paul Sheerbart (one of Taut's masters) asserts in his *Glas Architektur* (1914):²⁷ “and this will be possible only by eliminating the closures of the spaces in which we live.” We are here beyond the old *Nomos of the Earth* (the text of international law written by German philosopher Carl Schmitt in 1950):²⁸ the ring, the fence as forms of the political and juridical community will be surpassed in the framework of people's peaceful coexistence on the Planet.

Planetary Urbanization

One century later, the openness of spaces and new urban constellations have taken a different direction than that foreseen by Taut and Sheerbart. Gated communities are growing in the United States, and in China as well.²⁹ Global migration from the country to the city and from poor to rich countries across the Planet is increasing. The geography of globalization and planetary urbanization have radically changed the world. However, the globalization process is more controversial than expected. It has also been interpreted as the final outcome of a ‘lost geography,’ formed during the last century of the ‘American Empire.’³⁰

To the extent that the geography of the American Century remains obscure, the origins, outlines, possibilities, and limits of what today is called globalization will also remain obscure. There is no way to understand where the global shifts of the last twenty years came from or where they will lead without understanding how, throughout the twentieth century, U.S. corporate, political, and military power mapped an emerging empire.³¹

Ideas of a spaceless and unlimited ‘Empire’ have also been elaborated as a passage from imperialism to a new universal order that accepts no boundaries or limits, driven by a ubiquitous, multi-layered capitalist system towards a global multitude of individuals across the world.³² However the globalization process seems to be more dispersed and multipolar than both Smith's ‘American Empire’ and Hardt and Negri's ‘Empire’ are able to represent. The urban realm is of the utmost importance if we are to understand this new acentric morphology. Geographers like Edward Soja and Miguel Kanai presented our urban world in these terms:

Over the past 30 years, the world has been experiencing an unusually expansive and reconfigured form of urbanization that has been defined as a distinctively global urban age—one in which we can speak of both the urbanization of the entire globe and the globalization of urbanism as a way of life (. . .). We see this extended form of contemporary urbanization not just as an adjunct to the globalization process, but also as its primary driving force, stimulating innovation, creativity and economic growth while at the same time intensifying social and

economic inequalities and conflict filled political polarization. But as the world urbanizes, cities are being globalized.³³

How can we react to such extensive, complete and uneven urbanization of the world? In terms evoking Walter Benjamin's theses, Neil Brenner prompts us to realize that:

a new understanding of planetary urbanization may prove useful to ongoing struggles against neo-Haussmannization, planetary enclosure, market fundamentalism and global ecological plunder.³⁴

It is interesting to find in urban critical theorists such as Haussmann-like descriptions of the current urbanization of the Earth. The Globe and the Earth are now opposed: on one side we find the last product of human creation (the Globe), on the other side the last version of Nature (the Earth). However, the City as opposed to Nature is now detached from its original urban form and assigned to a generalized formation of urbanization. In the collective volume edited by Brenner under the Lefebvrian title of *Implosions/ Explosions*, a text by the Swiss sociologist Christian Schmid is devoted to the disintegration of the hinterland and the end of wilderness in the Swiss context. On this case it is also worth taking a look at Roger Diener, Jacques Herzog, Marcel Meili, Pierre de Meuron and Christian Schmid's *Switzerland-An Urban Portrait*,³⁵ where the complete urbanization of the Swiss territory is contrasted to the traditional view of Switzerland as a realm of Nature. Metropolitan regions and networks of cities dominate: according to Schmid "50 years ago the countryside still represented a continuous backdrop against which the urban centers stood out; now, by contrast, the last remains of rural areas are like a patchwork of solitary islands" and "Alpine resorts are urban regions in the mountains."³⁶

A possible way to react to such extensive urbanization of the Planet is proposed by the architects, urban planners and progressive urban coalitions engaged in "doing nature" as a product of urban land reuse. The "discursive way of doing nature," as in the case of River Elbe in Hamburg or other case studies on green cities and eco-cities in Germany, Denmark and elsewhere, is presented as a new approach which allows for constructing nature as a result of "contested natures."³⁷ Authors adopting this perspective suggest identifying the social and cultural contexts within which environmental concepts are formed. Nature here is 'invented' by environmentalism, it is 'produced' as countryside, it is 'reconfigured' within contemporary policy and politics, and it is governed as in the case of great environmental risks.³⁸

This is a paradoxical reversal of Haussmann's perspective: instead of destruction, urban renewal here is advocated as the re-creation of nature. Many fragmentary initiatives, from the ecological reuse of already used urban land to urban reconstruction of agricultural spaces, go in the very same direction. It is hard to say if this is a possible reversal of more robust trends towards the unlimited urbanization of the Planet foreseen and theorized by Lefebvre in the 1970s, or if it is possibly a limited, 'niche' answer to the currently diffused social demands of *governing the commons* such as land, water, nature in a less disruptive way.³⁹

The British geographer Peter Taylor's argument runs in the same direction on a vaster scale. In the conclusion of his latest book, *Extraordinary Cities*,⁴⁰ he demonstrates that endogenous and exogenous limits to our world system are calling for a

new answer to the 21st century as a crisis century. A renewed version of the ‘garden city of tomorrow’ and the New Town movements of the 20th century are advocated. According to Taylor (influenced by Jane Jacobs’ legacy), modern green networks of cities are among the possible answers. Modularity and alternative import replacement are part of the recipe. Green city networks would be the next urban frontier of 21st century, Taylor concludes optimistically:

We do not know what this is to be but we can say that guardians will be indispensable to thinking about reaching a sustainable future. Guardians may work through multiple new states, or through just one global state, or through a new form of global governance not yet foreseeable.⁴¹

In his recent research work on Modernity, on the other hand, the German critical thinker Peter Wagner has taken a more skeptical approach on political-philosophical grounds.⁴² Well aware of Benjamin’s critical vision of historical progress and elaborating on Claus Offe’s critical studies, Wagner addresses the question as to which concept of political progress is still sustainable today. His conclusion is skeptical. Given the disappointment with past progressive efforts and the highly problematic current global conditions—threats of war, energy scarcity and climate deterioration—the most we can realistically aim at is avoiding regression, rather than any progressive political improvement or enhancement. It is the same argument as that developed by Carl Schmitt in his masterpiece, *The Nomos of the Earth* (1950).⁴³ Past so-called ‘conservative’ thinkers as well as contemporary ‘radical’ thinkers seem to converge in the same perspective. Their pessimistic conclusion runs:

The new global space (no longer “spatial” at all) fundamentally has many heads and is marked by an endemic conflict among impersonal powers that no longer express any value.⁴⁴

The Italian philosopher Massimo Cacciari (2014) has also returned to Leon Battista Alberti’s Renaissance symbols. In his preface to *The Winged Eye. Migration of a Symbol*⁴⁵ he underlines that Alberti’s winged eye can see all human vicissitudes, the constant tension between fortune and virtue, the irremediable vices of human nature. But ultimately the winged eye has to recognize that *physis* (Nature) likes to hide, and the Intellect’s path is too deep to be fully represented. *Physis* (Nature) is in fact an uncontrollable, incalculable mechanism.⁴⁶ The etymology of *Physis*, from the ancient Greek verb *phyo*, means ‘to generate,’ to grow.’ The wholly artificial production of today’s human knowledge is made of a different substance than Nature. *Homo faber* has finally canceled Nature. But *Physis* will continue to represent an alternative mode of representation of the world. When human civilization will come to an end, Nature will continue to generate, to grow. The artifact, considered as any object produced by human craft, be it a tool, weapon or ornament, will be reclaimed by Nature.

The New Architecture of Passages

Contemporary architecture still has to find its own ‘City of Passages,’ yet some leading architects such as Rem Koolhaas have suggested airports and other mobility infrastructures could be our cities of passages. We are simply inhabiting spaces of transition. The city of flows designed by Koolhaas is at the moment only an analytical

tool in the thinking of contemporary sociologists such as Manuel Castells and Bruno Latour.⁴⁷ In his influential urban theory, the former has defined the “space of flows” as an artifact able to progressively substitute itself to the old “space of places.” The latter in particular has developed a theory of Actor/Network (ANT), as well as a theory of Inquiry into Modes of Existence (AIME)⁴⁸ which challenges Modernity and calls for a new anthropology. ‘*Reset modernity!*’ is Latour’s latest manifesto. Latour (2016) criticizes the assimilation of Globe and Earth as a product of European thinking based on the notion of Empire in political studies. Underlying this vision of globalization is the reduction of entities, including Nature and natural objects, to localization. Localizing in a map means that “we accept to begin from localization in time and space, this land, this site, this moment, this city, this individual agent, but we never trace our way back to the formidable instrument that enables the attribution of coordinates.” Localization is a form of representation, in the double significance of ‘localizing’ and ‘ordering.’ This instrument, able to offer localization to any chunk of space-time, is again qualified as a product of European thinking. It is connected to the concept of sovereignty, which can be traced back to the Roman Empire and to a principle of localization seen as the definition of boundaries. Relation, scale, causality and agency are the keywords of the Latourian critical theory of sovereignty. Relations of an object, subject and so on with other entities (individuals, States, economies) are defined by the principle of localization only once object, subject and so have been defined as individual entities. Of course this means that entities are given their characteristics prior to considering their ‘relations,’ when in fact these relations are essential to entities’ qualities. This process is an ‘artifact,’ a phantom that no amount of relation can resuscitate afterwards. *Homo oeconomicus* is the outstanding case of the artificial creation of a subject which occurs without taking into account the set of relations within which he is surrounded and the influences of the environment in which he is embedded. This is true in social theory, but also in biology or geopolitics, etc.

The other ‘artifact’ created by the principle of localization is the idea of scale (geographical, political), understood as the localizing of an object or subject along a continuum from local to global. This is somewhat artificial, as if, looking at the ‘small’ (e.g. a certain site), we were driven by a logic of localization, prompt to say that the local site is to be situated in a ‘large’ scale. The principle of localization refers here to a representation of scale as ‘given,’ but on the contrary we need to reorient our analysis to the processes of scaling and rescaling.

The third ‘artifact’ created by the localization principle is causality, which is the attempt to connect atomized, isolated entities through cause-effect chains transforming engineering principles of reality into metaphysics. And, finally, we have the ‘artifact’ of agency. The isolated entity cannot have any agency unless connected to other parts, but in accordance with the general laws of nature. Here the physical sciences have—according to Latour—adopted a model designed by the political sciences of sovereignty. It is the Hobbesian theory of the State, in which a single entity without any autonomous agency (the individual as parcel of an amorphous multitude) is subjected to a larger entity, the State.

It is surely significant that Thomas Hobbes calls the State an artificial animal (*artificiale animal* in Latin). The beginning of “Leviathan” is worth quoting:⁴⁹

Nature (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some

principal part within; why may we not say, that all automata (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch) have an artificial life? (. . .) For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE (in Latin CIVITAS) which is but an artificial man.⁵⁰

The ‘artifact’ created by the art of man imitating Nature, State sovereignty, is ultimately destined to destroy Nature. Artificial reason and will, which are according to Hobbes a product of human creation similar to God’s creation, are destined to turn the Globe into an inhabitable dreamland of metaphysics, as Latour puts it. Or into the house of despair, as Benjamin would have concluded.

Humanity has produced ‘artifacts’ (etymologically: the making of arts) as valued objects of art destined to last in time, according to the Greek philosophy of art as *techné* (τέχνη). But today’s technological progress, the myth of our Epoch, is our necessity and at the same time our destiny. Technology has taken the lead but the direction taken by technological progress is obscure. Any other power, religious or political or ethical, is today subsumed and incorporated into the technical power. The most important legacy of the Western culture, Plato’s dialogues, assert that the Sky and the Earth, the Gods and the humans are united by common (*koinòn*), friendship, temperance and justice. This is why, Plato asserts in *Gorgias* (508 A), we call the entire universe a *kosmos* (order). We have simply forgotten, in the Epoch of Planetary Man, these ‘cosmic’ modes of representation. Getting global we have lost the order. But our world needs an order to avoid chaos. The increasing urban extension and global technical interconnectedness of today’s world are simply epiphenomena of the forms assumed by such mode of representation that we call globalization. The new architecture of passages needs not only to facilitate and speed the transit of people moving around the world, but also to erect new bridges, political and cultural, across the diverse populations of the world.

Conclusions

The very nature of globalization, its linking of the diverse populations of the Globe, cannot be reached unless we introduce other categories of thinking in tension with current technological progress: namely, lawfulness and institutional solidarity. Law, solidarity and technological progress are the polar stars of a world system to be designed and created anew. In order to do so, we can recapitulate the trajectory we have followed since here. The passages, the Arcades project of Benjamin has been presented in the first part of the chapter and then projected from modernity to postmodernity. In this projection Nature and the City turn to an opposition between Ecology and Economy, both derived by the Greek word *oikos*. This term was the symbol of our stability on the earth. In Greek culture, two Gods, Hestia (the domestic Goddess) and Hermes (the God of communication and mobility), were the custodian and guardians of *oikos*: fixity and motion were interconnected and allied. Today Earth, Globe and Land are detached and opposed. Earth is the domain of nature and the ecology; Globe is the political vision of sovereignty under globalization; Land is the amorphous ground for economic exploitation and planetary urbanization. The Latourian Modes of Existence (including law, politics, religion, fiction, attachment, organization) are the epistemological ground for a new alliance and show that the idea of globalization (i.e. Western modernization spread over the whole Planet) has come up against

unexpected opposition from the Planet itself. This ‘alternative’ mode of representing globalization is of the utmost importance today. It means that Nature (*Physis*) and the City (the human cohabitation on the Earth) need new common ground to be found: a new search, or discovery, different than the Modern project which now—in times of global disorder and clash—comes to an end. A new approach to ‘cosmic’ modes of representation able to reunite again the double meaning of *kosmos*, globe and order, would be needed.

Notes

- 1 Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagenwerk*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982).
- 2 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviatano* (or. ed.: *Leviathan*, 1651) (Milan: Bompiani, 2001).
- 3 Walter Benjamin, *Capitalism as Religion*, [Fragment 74]1, Translated in English by Chad Kautzer from the *Gesammelte Schriften* (1985), (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1921).
- 4 Benjamin, *Capitalism as Religion*, 260.
- 5 Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, (or. title: *Das Paris des Second Empire bei Baudelaire*), in Giorgio Agamben, Barbara Chitussi and C.-C. Haerle (eds.), *Charles Baudelaire* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2012).
- 6 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, 700.
- 7 Henri Lefebvre, *La révolution urbaine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970); Neil Brenner (ed.), *Implosions/Explosions* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2014).
- 8 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, 58 (author's translation).
- 9 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, 59 (author's translation).
- 10 Edga Alan Poe, *The Man of the Crowd*, in *Tales and Sketches: To Which Is Added the Raven: A Poem* (London: George, Routledge & Co, 1852), Poe's text is quoted in Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, 666.
- 11 Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*, 655 (author's translation).
- 12 “J'ai même toujours pensé qu'il y avait dans la nature florissante et rajeunie, quelque chose d'affligeant, de dur, de cruel-un je ne sais quoi qui frise l'impudence » (quoted in Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire. Un poeta lirico nell'età del capitalismo avanzato*. 153).
- 13 “Le grands ciels qui font rêver d'éternité” Baudelaire writes in a poem entitled *Paysage* (*Le Fleurs du Mal*, LXXXVI).
- 14 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991); Don De Lillo, *Cosmopolis* (New York: Scribner, 2003).
- 15 Carl Gustav Jung, *The Red Book. Liber Novus* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010).
- 16 Richard Wolin's *Labyrinths: Explorations in the Critical History of Ideas* provides the best summary of Benjamin's proposed essay on Jung and Klages. Benjamin's concept of the “collective unconscious”—one of the methodological keys to the Arcades Project—was explicitly derived from Jung. Benjamin later came to view a theoretical self-clarification vis-a-vis Jung as an imperative task. He alludes to this project in a 1937 letter to Scholem: “I wish to secure certain methodological fundaments of ‘Paris Arcades’ via a confrontation with the theories of Jung—especially those of the archaic image and the collective unconscious.” His proposed study of the differences separating his utilization of these concepts from that of Jung and Klages was rebuffed by the Institute for Social Research. This is possibly due to the refusal of mitical thinking of Klages and Jung by Adorno and others marxist intellectuals of the Institute. [Wolin, *Labyrinth*. 70. <http://books.google.com/books?id=FdkQrXnPpUQC>]
- 17 Ludwig Klages, *Mensch und Erde* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2013).
- 18 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 187.
- 19 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991).
- 20 Brenner, *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*.

- 21 Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: Sage, 1998).
- 22 Peter Sloterdijk, *Shaume, Spheren III*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2005).
- 23 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Walter Kaufman translation (or. 1883–5), 3–5 www.theperspectivesofnietzsche.com/nietzsche/nuber.html
- 24 Simone Weil, *Cahiers, II* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1972).
- 25 The point is clearly expressed in the pages of Cahier VII, and also in other unfinished texts like *Venise sauvée*.
- 26 Bruno Taut, *La dissoluzione della città* (Faenza: Faenza Editrice, 1976) (or. title: *The Dissolution of Cities*, 1920).
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- 28 Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974, or. 1950).
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- 30 Neil Smith, *American Empire* (Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2003).
- 31 Smith, *American Empire*, 4.
- 32 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*.
- 33 Edward W. Soja and Miguel Kanai, “The Urbanization of the World”, in Neil Brenner (ed.), *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, 142.
- 34 Neil Brenner, “Urban Theory Without an Outside”, in Neil Brenner (ed.), *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*, 28.
- 35 Roger Diener, Jacques Herzog, Marcel Meili., Pierre de Meuron, and Christian Schmid, *Switzerland-An Urban Portrait* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006).
- 36 Christian Schmid, “The Urbanization of Switzerland,” in N. Brenner (ed.), *Implosions/Explosions*, 268–275.
- 37 Phil Macnaghten and John Urry, *Contested Natures* (London: Sage, 1998).
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- 40 Peter J. Taylor, *Extraordinary Cities* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013).
- 41 Taylor, *Extraordinary Cities*, 378.
- 42 Peter Wagner, *Modernity. Understanding the Present* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).
- 43 See the already quoted text of Schmitt.
- 44 Massimo Cacciari, *Europe and Empire: On the Political Forms of Globalization* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 156.
- 45 Massimo Cacciari, “Preface” to Alberto Giorgio Cassani, *L’Occhio Alato. Migrazioni di un simbolo* (Torino: Arago, 2014).
- 46 Jacques Derrida, *Athens, Still Remains* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).
- 47 Bruno Latour, “Onus Orbis Terrarum. About a Possible Shift in the Definition of Sovereignty,” in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 44 (2016), Special issue on Failure and denial in World Politics.
- 48 Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry Into Modes of Existence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
- 49 Hobbes, *Leviatano*.
- 50 Hobbes, *Leviatano*, 1.

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