TOWNS AFFECTED BY INTERNET AND GAMING CULTURE AS NEW PARADIGMS FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to give a better understanding of urban space in the internet era of 21st century. The abstract urban space produced by the online community is in strict contrast to the traditional production of space through physical public life and interrelation in poly-centric cities. We will try to expose the qualities of this abstract space and how in new developing towns, it is being organised and produced in such a measure to erode completely the historic remains of previous urban life. '*It has both the virtue and the disadvantages of appearing obvious.*'[1]

Riyadh[2], is presented here as a prototype of such a city, It has been chosen particularly because here, the society and its institutions as we know them, are rapidly disappearing and the phenomenon of "coming together through virtual networks" is unprecedented[3]. The urban space produced lacks the traditional connotations of 'genius loci[4] (place)'[5] or 'presence' and is creating an 'abstract space[6]' erasing the history (time and space) which was perceived as 'local character' or 'differences[7]'.

This, more or less, is happening worldwide, wherever communities are moving out of the traditional social space, into a virtual cyber space, with no discernible meaning or reality of tradition. Our main purpose therefore, is to understand these complexities of 'space' produced as a consequence of our changing social and political relations.

Two years ago, I arrived in Riyadh for the first time. This was the gateway to one of the richest countries in the world. The airport is domed with arabesque decorative stone and a big pool between some trees and long queues of immigrants hoping to get their share of the enormous prosperity the country is enjoying.[8] I found the following description on the website before arrival:

'Since that day, the small town of Riyadh has undergone many changes and grown into a cosmopolitan city. As the needs of the city increased, the Riyadh Development Authority utilized a computerized urban intelligence system for mapping, planning and anticipating its growing demography. Currently Riyadh compromises more than 1782 km^2 which is about the same as the land size of the state of Delaware, U.S.A., or three times the size of Singapore. Its population continues to increase at a steady rate with a current (2008) population of about 5,900,000.'[9]

On the way from the airport you could see people from almost all over the world but rarely any Saudis. The taxi driver told me that they are too clever to come out when it's so hot. But that's not the only reason. It is that they do not need to get out. They are socialising on the Web[10].

I reached my place after an hour (35km approximately) of driving[11] through solid traffic as I had arrived on the National day. It was a happy festival day with youngsters dancing and celebrating on the roads.

SOCIETY-INDIVIDUAL

The historic cities were about the 'bringing together' of individuals, the urban space of new towns is about 'empowering' the individual. It gets more acute in cities with a majority of bureaucrats and an urban space mainly dedicated to shopping malls. *"In the words of an inhabitant 'nothing is allowed; nothing is forbidden.' Everything (flats, public amenities) is separated, assigned in isolated fashion to unconnected 'sites' and 'tracts'.*[12]*"* People therefore get comfortable in a virtual space[13], where it is

easier to socialise. The individual seems to have lost the society but has gained unsurpassed power through the virtual world to get in touch with everybody across the globe.

"We are in a universe where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning ...those who are underexposed to the media are virtually asocial or dissocialized...information devours its own contents; it devours communication and the social for two reasons:

1. *Instead of causing communication, it exhausts itself in the act of staging the communication.*
2. *Behind this exacerbated staging of communication, the mass media, with its pressure of information, carries out an irresistible de-structuration of the social.*

...this is only the macroscopic extension of the implosion of meaning at the microscopic level of the sign."[14]

The disintegration of society[15] promotes a culture of narcissism[16] which is further confirmation of the segregation of traditional society and promotion of the individual. The illusion of narcissism[17] is hiding the extensive conformism of the society which is basic to consumption. '*The constant attempt to achieve something impossible is not through the enjoyment of singularity but through the refraction of collective features'.*[18] Thus the lonely individual searches the 'public space' online.

This lack of social or public life, the segregation of the society into male and female, working and the unemployed, product and reproduction are all symptoms of a postmodern society[19] without the illusory or real protective layers of history and tradition. The society in the new towns does not have all the safety and protective layers of centuries of social life[20] and institutions to protect and assist it in coping with the illusions of modern life.[21]

In a town like Riyadh one in two people have access to broadband internet[22]. They meet, have sex, fall in love and exchange opinions online. They learn online. They use internet for entertainment[23] and shopping. Most importantly, they socialize online, where men and women are freely allowed to go places. For them, the online community is more real than the fragmented physical city and they're doing what is natural. The 'online' is meeting the unmet needs of Riyadh[24]. It removes the impetus to seek face-to-face contact. Therefore, these towns continue without physical social space but with ever growing cyber space.

URBAN SPACE[25]

'*The city was once a powerful organic unity; for some time, however, that unity was becoming undone, was fragmenting*[26]'. While the making of a 'place for events' was the main goal of historic cities[27], towns like Riyadh are the definitive non-event[28]place. '*The non-event is not where nothing happens. On the contrary it is the domain of perpetual change, of relentless actualization of an incessant succession in real time of general equivalence, indifference and banality...'*[29] Buildings and the natural topography are demolished on a daily basis[30].

The scarcity of public life and maybe the town plan designed by a computer has resulted in a 'suburban sprawl'. It is the triumph of 'imaginary space'[31] of Castoriadis, the 'spectacle space'[32] as defined by Guy Debord, or the 'abstract space' as projected by Henri Lefebvre, '*a sophisticated reflection of the dominance of illusion*[33] *in post-industrial capitalism'.* Maybe that is the reason why no particular area could be defined as the town centre.[34] A society with no social focus does not need a social centre[35]. The only space still resisting this trend is the local mosque but even here the numerous mosques together do not resolve in creating the main Friday mosque or community centre. Without a centre the structure of the urban context falls apart[36] and seems as if the city has emerged out of a computer game.[37]

These cities are more a representation of a utopia than real ones. Many buildings are unoccupied and the only areas you encounter some activity is at the mosque for the short period of prayer time or in the plethora of shopping malls. The architecture is out of scale aiming at an *illusion of transparency and the*

naturalistic simplicity of realistic illusion[38] with motorways cutting the urban context, separating people[39] rather than bringing them together.

The smart phone seems to have replaced the town centre[40] and the urban space reflects this sort of public life. The shopping mall, the local mosque, private homes and picnic areas outside towns are the only arena of a physical meeting place left.

There are four particular urban areas in Riyadh worth mentioning. These areas were the result of particular circumstances which should be discussed in order to understand how urban space is developing here.

Al Moraba is a green square in the south of Riyadh about 60 acres where the old palace[41] and the new National museum are. This rare green urban space is a place where people tend to come together and is one of the rare public spaces in Riyadh except the shopping malls. It is also connected to an old market which provides further public amenity.

DQ is the diplomatic quarter where all the embassies are seated but it has now a large community of residents enjoying a different quality of life from the rest of Riyadh not only for the amount of urban amenities but frequent social events within the historic palaces restored or modern buildings and the green open air environment.

KAFD is about 400 acres, designed with 100 high-rise buildings with mixed use, high density, public transport (mono-rail), a green wadi dedicated to pedestrians and lots of entertainment and social places, to be. It somehow matches the recommendations of Unitary Urbanism[42] or recent urban design recommendations[43]. While an impeccable master plan including some of the best architects in the world, it seems more as a transplanted space dedicated to future immigrant bureaucrats of the finance to make further 'spectacle' of Riyadh. A lively urban space is the result of a lively social life and not vice versa. Being an ideal space (a Western utopia in East) but cut off from the rest of the city, only highlights the missing life here.[44]

Riyadh is also interrupted with empty plots and an abandoned airport in the middle of the city. These plots are not an integration of nature into the city and neither a meditative space dedicated to the absence or 'nothingness'[45]. It is only an urban left over waiting for the speculative market to develop it into another illusion of modernity. The total fragmentation of the urban texture reflects somehow the property ownership and market forces.

Figure. 1. A beautiful public place in Riyadh completed in 2013 with the refurbishment and conservation of the old library building (Detournement):

SPACE AND TIME

As Doreen Massey has indicated 'space' is the product of interrelations, multiplicity and under continuous construction.[46] In the new towns however, 'space' construction seems in crisis mainly due to the communities moving into a virtual space and therefore not participating or producing the social physical space anymore. The result is a space where even 'time' has vanished[47].

Everybody is running out of time[48] a general condition of 'modern everyday life'[49]. *'Free time, perhaps filled entirely with ludic activity, is first of all, the freedom to waste one's time, and possibly even to kill it, to expand it as pure loss.'*[50] The ironic fact is that people nowadays use leisure to reproduce energy for further shopping and consumption. They are realigned by shop windows beating out the rhythm of the social process of value. *'The shop window and advertising, the foci of our urban consumer practice, is the site par excellence of the "consensus operation"…'*[51] The result is a continual adaptability test for everyone, a test of managed projection and integration which is highlighted in the rite of passage at the mall or participating at other similar festivals[52].

There are common characteristics of traditional/ historical space whether in East or West[53] such as 'presence'[54] (whether negative or positive) although in East[55] 'absence'[56] plays an important role in the urban context. In new towns however, we are faced neither with 'presence' nor 'absence' but 'abstract' space which could be summarised as below:

1. Anonymous to the surrounding nature or context; as if emerged out of a film or a computer game with an architecture out of scale to each other and with forms beyond judgement. Forms that get out of control and pretend or stage things that have no meaning or sense, except that of a 'spectacle or game'. *'Sign becomes the "thing".'*[57]
2. Their social context is almost invisible and participation in social life is reduced to prayer times at the local mosque. As if there is no need any more for physical space to socialise.
3. Lack of any apparent relationship in urban context and structure[58], between centre and periphery (lack of a town centre[59]) turning roads into the main connecting network for vehicular access which ironically divides the urban context and inhabitants.
4. The city seems to expand geographically beyond a sustainable size, low density with large empty plots which exalt further fragmentation[60].

DIFFERENCES –v- HOMOGENISATION

Each city is unique due to its local and economic characteristics[61]. Space produced due to these differences[62] mixed with collective memory defines 'place'. Flexibility and changing of the 'place' is constant as people and their inter-relations change.[63] These differences might seem fragmented but if looked at in depth it is possible to find a commonality even between the local differences.[64] A constant flow seems to connect the changes even through time such as the appropriation of past and redundant space defined 'detournement' (conversion) by Lefebvre. So if modernity did not cause the fragmentation of differences[65] then when and how was this constant flow broken?

The break seems to have happened when people moved out of the physical space into the virtual in the type of interrelation (from physical to virtual relations) rather than geographical or temporal.

Following which the globalisation forces[66] were strengthened to erase the 'differences' of 'place/space' by homogenising it[67] and purging the 'quality' as we know out of 'place' and life. Only in this way 'space' could be commercialised as well as the individuals participating in it. The consumption of the individual is the most apparent force of conforming to the industrial models that one feels in modern urban life. *'…what grounds it as a system is precisely the fact that it eliminates the specific content, the (necessarily different) specificity of each human being, and substitutes the differential form, which can be industrialised and commercialised as a distinguishing sign…'* [68] The internet is reiterating the

fragmentation of society into individuals and the fascination of the individual with gadgets[69] and advertisement as part of this social erasure necessary for realignment.[70] The gadget becomes an extension of the body, a sensory membrane that connects him to others online.[71] This is the era of supermen[72] who use their power only to continue the 'society of spectacle'[73] and to erase the memory of humanity's weaknesses. A super-human behind which there is a world of vacuity and lost meanings where the only value that is left seems to be the obsession of vacuous power or playing the power game. While a game is only a satire of reality, urban development takes the game as a real value. The rules of the game cannot be changed or discussed unless you want to play a different game.[74] We therefore are faced with the illusion of change and flexibility[75] while the game is absolutely fixed and repeats itself indefinitely. It is like living the film 'Matrix' through urban conditions that reflect and satisfy the needs of a virtual community only.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we would like to point out:

1. Production of abstract space has accelerated and is now considered as the main urban space produced.
2. This production of space seems to have stopped the continuous flow of space production and erased all traditional urban life.
3.

Is it the end of citizenship through lack of social[76] and avoidance of politics[77] or as governments put it through prevention and security?[78]

'To be present within a space is only to participate as part of a group conforming to the advertised values of the group and not necessarily participating in getting or soliciting of values. We are ourselves signs within a codified urban life. Everything is abstract and each is a thing of myths and signs: peace or violence.'[79]

The space produced by social and political absence or by social life being transferred online is reduced to 'abstract space'[80]. Therefore, **functionally**[81] it is not working as is evident from the numerous unoccupied buildings and scarcity of amenities; **structurally** is fragmented, lacking a centre and relation to the periphery, out of scale and damaging to the environment; **formally**[82] it is meaningless and uncontrolled creating only the illusion of simplicity and transparency.[83]

While 'abstract space' in traditional cities, is added to the previous layers of space, in the new developing towns it seems to constitute the only space: **total abstraction**. By 'total' we mean the type of space that has overwhelmingly covered all other types of space therefore grinding to halt the continuous flow of '**space production**', which is alarming and unknown.[84] This particular condition requires therefore further research[85] and clarification considering that 'abstract space' is not as homogenous as it seems.[86] The research should therefore include the internal contradictions within the abstract space, that might reveal a road map[87] to restart the flow of a different space considering the new ways people are coming together.[88] Obviously this 'total abstraction' would not possibly change unless our social interactions evolve.[89]

Endnotes

[1] (D. **Massey** 2006)

[2] (Internet 2008) In the midst of rolling golden sands an oasis emerged with gardens of date palms. Riyadh, a name derived from the Arabic plural form of rowdah (gardens) was not always the capital, as previously the 500 year old walled city of Ad-Diriyah was the seat of the Al Saud tribe. In 1818, the old city was partially destroyed by the Turks which resulted in the government seat to moving to Riyadh. The Kingdom was brought together on the 15th Shawal 1319 in the Hejira calendar, when Abdulaziz Al Saud took over the Musmak fortress.

[3] (Al-**Dosari** 2013) Recent study conducted by PeerReach.com says that Saudi Arabia tops the chart with Twitter penetration per country, that is 32% of Saudis online population is active monthly users of the microblogging site. The Kingdom is followed by Indonesia and Spain both with less than 20% penetration.

[4] (**Norberg**-Shultz 1991)

[5] (**Dardel** 1952)

[6] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 23: 'The fact is that around 1910 a certain space was shattered. It was the space of common sense, of knowledge (savoir), of social practice, of political power, a space hitherto enshrined in everyday discourse, just as in abstract thought, as the environment of and channel for communications; the space too, of classical perspective and geometry, developed from Renaissance onwards on the basis of the Greek tradition and embodied forth in western art and philosophy, as in the form of the city and town. Such were the shocks and onslaught suffered by this space that today it retains but a feeble pedagogical reality, and then only with great difficulty, within a conservative educational system.'

[7] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 353: search of quality in space rather than quantity.

[8] Most of them end up disappointed. (**Mohammed** 2013) Indian drivers denied wages, beg for food.

[9] (Internet 2008) Riyadh is located where several wadis or riverbeds join together on a sedimentary plateau about 600 meters above sea level. Although the climate is very dry with little rainfall, there is a good supply of underground water which makes it one of the natural fertile areas within the Kingdom. The city of Riyadh is strategically located, not only centred between continents, but also on the Arabian Peninsula itself, providing traders and nomads a central post in their travels

[10] (**Fakkar** 2013) Users say these devices are carried easily, affordable and contain a variety of applications disconnecting them from their surroundings.

[11] (**Hariri** 31.12.2013) Saudi has deadliest roads, 19 die daily.

[12] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 97: Our space has strange effects, for one thing, it unleashes desire. It presents desire with a 'transparence' which encourages it to surge forth in an attempt to lay claim to an apparently clear field. Of course this forcing comes to naught, for desire encounters no object, nothing desirable, and no work results from its action. Searching in vain for plentitude, desire must make do with words, with the rhetoric of desire. Disillusion leaves space empty – an emptiness that words convey. Spaces are devastated and devastating.

[13] **Individuals** constitute the society but until they do not participate in it actively and through this participation create the relations, institutions and layers of social space the society would be only an accumulation of individuals. Here the society is, therefore disappearing.

[14] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 99: 1) either information produces meaning but doesn't succeed in compensating for the brutal loss of signification in every domain. 2) Or information has nothing to do with signification…a kind of code perhaps like the genetic code: it is what it is, it functions as it does; meaning is something else coming afterwards…there would simply be no significant relation between the inflation of information and the deflation of meaning. 3) Or rather the contrary: there is a rigorous and necessary correlation between the two, to the extent that information is directly destructive of meaning and signification, or neutralizes it.

[15] (**Miliband** 2013) Our divisions, the "narcissism of small differnces", undermined our effectiveness. Too many ideologies did not withsatnd confrontation with reality…By the end tempered by experience, utopia was powered by technology, not ideology: the laptop, not the Little Red Book.

[16] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 87.

[17] (**Pasolini** 1970)

[18] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 95: The following advert line is indicative of this magical synthesis. 'To have found your personality, to be able to assert it, is to discover the pleasure of being truly yourself.' The narcissism of the individual in consumer society is not an enjoyment of singularity it is a refraction of collective features. However it is always presented as narcissistic investment of oneself through smallest marginal differences. The individual is everywhere invited primarily to enjoy himself to indulge himself. The understanding is that by pleasing oneself that one is likely to please others…woman is sold to women…while doing what she believes is preening herself, scenting herself, clothing herself in a word creating herself she is in fact consuming herself…

[19] (**Lefebvre**, Writings on Cities 2000) Page 156: ...the de-structuration of the city manifests the depth of phenomena, of social and cultural disintegration. Considered as whole, this society finds itself *incomplete*.

[20] **The** space resulted in Jeddah, on the West coast of Saudi Arabia, being a historical city is completely different to Riyadh.

[21] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 168: This rhetoric of thaumaturgy and solicitude which stamps the consumer society, affluent society with a particular emotional tone has precise social functions:

1)   The emotional re-education of individuals isolated within bureaucratic society by the technical and social division of labour and by the parallel technical and social division – itself equally total and bureaucratic – of consumption practices.

2)   A political strategy of formal integration which covers – and covers up for – the failings of the political institutions: just as universal suffrage, referendums and parliamentary institutions are designed to establish a social consensus through formal participation, so advertising, fashion, human and public relations can be interpreted as a kind of perpetual referendum in which citizen consumers are entreated at every moment to pronounce in favour of a certain code of values and implicitly to sanction it…

3)   Political control by solicitation and solicitude is accompanied by a more intimate control over motivations themselves. This is where the term solicit assumes its double meaning, and it is in this sense that all solicitude is basically terroristic.

[22] **According** to Internet World Stats

[23] (**Hitchens** 22.09.2013) If the devil had his own bible, it would probably take the form of a computer game.

[24] (**Fayyaz** 2013) A survey recently conducted by Arab News revealed that most people preferred to use the internet, watch TV, hang out with friends or play games on their smart devices: The average aran child reads only 6 minutes a year in comparison to Western children who average around 12000 minutes a year. An adult in the arab world reads on average a quarter of a page a year compared to an American adult who reads around 11 books or a British adult who reads about 7.

[25] (**Lefebvre**, Writings on Cities 2000) Page 185: This theory of social space encompasses on the one hand the critical analysis of urban reality and on the other that of everyday life.

[26] (**Lefebvre**, Interview with Henri Lefebvre on Situationists 1983)

[27] (**Bohl** 2002) A public realm is an outdoor space in the heart of the community with a variety of uses.

[28] (**Baudrillard**, Forget Foucault; A history of the present n.d.) Page 114: This world order is aiming at a definitive non-event. It is in some ways the end of history, not through the fulfilment of democracy, as Fukuyama would have it, but through preventive terror, a counter-terror that precludes every possible event. A terror that power ends up exerting upon itself, under the sign of security. It is a trace of cold war and of equilibrium of terror? But this time it is deterrence without cold war, a terror without equilibrium. Or rather it is a universal cold war crammed into the smallest cracks of social and political life…

[29] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 115: Information is the most effective mechanism for the derealisation of history. Just as political economy is a gigantic mechanism for the fabrication of value – the fabrication of sign of wealth, but not of wealth itself – thus the entire system of information is an immense machine made to produce events as signs, as values exchangeable on the universal market of ideologies, of spectacle, catastrophes, etc. in short, for the production of non-events…we enter into a realm where event no longer really happen, thanks to their production and diffusion in real time – but rather lose themselves in the void of information.

[30] (**Lefebvre**, Writings on Cities 2000) Page 84: The models elaborated can only be put into practice by eradicating from social existence the very ruins of what was the city.

[31] (**Castoriadis**, The Imaginary: Creation in the social historical domain 1984)

[32] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) As for Debord's "spectacle," it is an ideological force -- another "concrete abstraction" -- that is taken quite seriously by Lefebvre. He writes:

People look, and take sight, take seeing, for life itself. We build on the basis of papers and plans. We buy on the basis of images. Sight and seeing, which in the Western tradition once epitomized intelligibility, have turned into a trap: the means whereby, in social space, diversity may be simulated and a travesty of enlightenment and intelligibility ensconced under the sign of transparency…A society that moulds its entire surroundings has necessarily evolved its own technique for working on the material basis of this set of tasks. That material basis is the society's actual territory. Urbanism is the mode of appropriation of the natural and human environment by capitalism, which, true to its logical development toward absolute domination, can (and now must) refashion the totality of space into its own peculiar decor. ("The Organization of Territory," The Society of the Spectacle.)

[33] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) P. 145: It is very important from the outset to stress the destructive (because reductive) effects of the predominance of the readable and visible, of the absolute priority accorded to the visual realm, which in turn implicit the priority of reading and writing. An emphasis on visual space has accompanied the search for an impression of weightlessness in architecture…Once the effect of weightiness or massiveness upon which architects once depended has been abandoned, it becomes possible to break up and reassemble volumes arbitrarily according to the dictates of an architectural neo-plasticism.

[34] (**Foucault**, Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the human science n.d.) The "centre" is that element of a structure which appears given or fixed, thereby anchoring the rest of the structure and allowing it to play. In the history of metaphysics specifically, this function is fulfilled by different terms (which Derrida says are always associated with presence): "essence, existence, substance, subject, transcendentalism, consciousness, or conscience, God, man, and so forth." This central term ironically escapes structuralism, the key feature of structuralism according to which all meaning is defined relationally, through other terms in the structure. From this perspective, the centre is the most alien or estranged element in a structure: it comes from somewhere outside and remains absolute until a new centre is substituted in a seemingly arbitrary fashion.

[35] (**Bohl** 2002) The vast majority of suburban development in the 60s, 70s and 1980s continued to take the form of placeless communities. The last few generations of Americans have rarely had the experience of coming together

on a tree-lined street to shop, to walk after dinner, or to talk with friends, because typical suburbia reduced the street to a single purpose, pedestrian-intimidating traffic arteria.

[36] (**Blake** 1974) Page 162: And protesting its total dedication to the city as the one and only seat and source and mainspring of civilization, it rendered the city unmanageable and, in effect, scattered its inhabitants to the winds.

[37] (**Hitchens** 22.09.2013) If the devil had his own bible, it would probably take the form of a computer game.

[38] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) page 31

[39] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 97

[40] (**Lefebvre**, Writings on Cities 2000) Page 145 definition of integration and pariciption.

[41] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) A perfect example of conversion or detournement as defined by Lefebvre.

[42] (**Lefebvre**, Interview with Henri Lefebvre on Situationists 1983) First of all, UU is not a doctrine of urbanism but a critique of urbanism. By the same token, our participation in experimental art is a critique of art, and sociological research ought to be a critique of sociology. No isolated discipline whatsoever can be tolerated in itself; we are moving toward a global creation of existence.
UU is distinct from problems of housing and yet is bound to engulf them; it is all the more distinct from current commercial exchange. At present, UU envisages a terrain of experience for the social space of the cities of the future. It is not a reaction to functionalism, but rather a move past it; UU is a matter of reaching -- beyond the immediately useful -- an enthralling functional environment. Functionalism, which still has avant-garde pretensions because it continues to encounter outdated resistance, has already triumphed to a large extent. Its positive contributions -- the adaption to practical functions, technical innovation, comfort, the banishment of superimposed ornament -- are today banalities. Yet, although its field of application is (when all is said and done) a narrow one, this has not led functionalism to adopt a relative theoretical modesty. In order to justify philosophically the extension of its principles of renovation to the entire organization of social life, functionalism has fused, seemingly without a thought, with the most static conservative doctrines (and, simultaneously, has itself congealed into an inert doctrine). One must construct uninhabitable ambiances; construct the streets of real life, the scenery of daydreams.

[43] (Bohl 2002)

[44] **The Wadi**, which is the definition of a valley, in KAFD suddenly, finishes at the boundary of the site. It leads to nowhere but into a concrete high wall or staircase.

[45] (**Alemi**, Shadows of light 2013) While western culture is based on the 'presence' eastern one has absence too. Absence as a metaphysical representation of presence. In the East there are spaces dedicated to nothing. This 'nothingness' is not emptiness, although it might be empty.

[46] (D. **Massey** 2006) 1) Space as the product of interrelations, as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny. 2) We understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity. 3) We recognise space always under construction..it is never finished.

[47] (Lefebvre, Production of space 1991) Page 95: With the advent of modernity time has vanished from social space. It is recorded solely on measuring-instruments, on clocks, that are isolated and functionally specialized as this time itself. Lived time loses its form and its social interest with the exception, that is, of time spent working. Economic space subordinates time to itself.

[48] It seems to be on the stage of the film '**Time Keeper**'.

[49] (**Lefebvre**, La vie quotidienne dans le monde moderne n.d.)
Quotidiennete, modernite, deux faces de la meme realite, la notre. L'une triviale, generatrice d'ennui – l'autre scintillante, agitee, penetree de technique et de culture. La seconde couvre la premiere et entretient. Le sens de ce clignotement estrange et familier? C'est l'absurde et le malaise. S'agirait-il d'une structure definitive, d'une brisure irremediable? Telle est la question. Or la dissolution, en raison de cet etat des choses sociales, de ce qu'on nomme officiellement 'la culture', et la faiblesse des institumettent de montrer d'autres possibilites: une revolution culturelle s'annonce, non pas separable des transformations economiques et politiques, mais distincte.

[50] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 152: Time is an a priori, transcendent dimension which pre-exists its contents. It is there waiting for you. If it is alienated and subjugated in work then you don't have time. When you are away from work or unconstrained you have time. As an absolute inalienable dimension like air or water in leisure it once again becomes everyone's private property...Free time is in fact time earned…rest, relaxation, escape and distraction are perhaps needs: but they do not in themselves define the specific exigency of leisure, which is the consumption of time. *(this is why it is insufficient to say that leisure is alienated because it is merely the time necessary to reproduce labour power. The alienation of leisure is more profound: it does not relate to the direct subordination to working time, but is linked to the very impossibility of wasting one's time.)*

[51] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 166: Tracking along the shop-windows, with their calculated riot of colour, which is always the same, a frustration of the hesitant waltz of shopping in which goods are exalted before being exchanged. Objects and products are offered there in a glorious mise-en-scene a sacralising ostentation. This symbolic giving, aped by the objects themselves on their stage-set, this symbolic silent exchange between the offered object and the gaze, is clearly an invitation to real, economic exchange inside the shop. But not necessarily and at any event the communication which is established at the level of the shop window is not so much between individuals and objects as a generalised communication between all individuals not via the contemplation of the same objects but via the reading and recognition in the same objects but via the reading and recognition in the same objects of the same system of signs and the same hierarchical code of values…that communication and exchange of values through which an entire society is homogenized by incessant daily

acculturation to the silent and spectacular logic of fashion. That specific space which is the shop window – neither inside nor outside, neither private nor wholly public, and which is already the street while maintaining, behind the transparency of its glass, the distance, the opaque status of the commodity – is also the site of a specific social relation.

[52] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 166: 'As Durkheim writes in 'The elementary forms of religious life' the collective reinforces its cohesion, in feasts and spectacles.'

[53] (**Alemi**, Shadows of light 2013) Common characters of urban space in East and West:

1.   Stability and permanence
2.   'Defining of a place', as a clear representation of each space and its social function
3.   A close and strong relationship between these functions/spaces or between the centres of urban life and its periphery
4.   The city wall or a boundary as a representation of concentration of activity or social density versus the countryside. *'The inevitable urbanization of society would not separate growth from development; it would successfully transcend the opposition between town and country instead of degrading both by turning them into an undifferentiated mass.'* (Lefebvre, Production of space 1991)
5.   Speed and movement of situations or the pressing nature of possibilities
6.   Quality of life as a result of social multitude and high density
7.   Collective memory or feeling part of the Polis and therefore participating in the politics of the society while creating/living a social life
8.   Local differences and variety

[54] (**Lefebvre**, La critique de quotidienne e Modernite n.d.)

[55] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 154: 'We do not separate the ordering of space from its form, its genesis from its actuality, the abstract from concrete, or nature from society. There is no house in Japan without a garden, no matter how tiny, as a place for contemplation and for contact with nature; a handful of pebbles is nature for us – not just a detached symbol of it. We do not think right away of the distances that separate objects from one another.'

[56] (**Alemi**, Shadows of light 2013) Differences of Urban space in East and West:

1.   The streets/roads (or the negative space) in the West connects the urban texture while in the East it is the positive space of buildings which creates the urban texture with the courtyards as negative space which is read as separated from each other.
2.   While western culture is based on the 'presence' eastern one has absence too. Absence as a metaphysical representation of presence. In the East there are spaces dedicated to nothing. This 'nothingness' is not emptiness, although it might be empty. *'Space is never empty: it always embodies a meaning. The perception of gaps itself brings the whole body into play. Every group of places and objects has a centre, and this is therefore true of the house, the city or the whole world. The centre may be perceived from every side, and reached from every angle of approach; thus to occupy any vantage point is to perceive and discover everything that occurs. The centre so conceived can never become neutral or empty. It cannot be the 'locus of an absence', because it is occupied by divinity, wisdom and power which by manifesting them show any impression of void to be illusory. The accentuation of and infusion of metaphysical value into centres does not imply a corresponding devaluation of what surrounds those centres. Nature and divinity in the first place, then social life and relationships, and finally individual and private life – all these aspects of human reality have their assigned places, all implicatively linked in a concrete fashion.'* (Henri Lefebvre, Production of space; page 155)
3.   The relation between spaces in east is defined by a clear territory for public, private and semi-public spaces. These penetrate at every level of the city life from a public piazza to a room in a house. *(Henri Lefebvre, Production of space; page 155:* '*Public, semi-public and private spaces which are repeated at global intermediate or private level. Such a discourse does not signify the city: it is the urban discourse itself…It is a living discourse – unlike your lethal use of signs. You say you can decode your system. Well we do better than that: we create ours'.)*

[57] (**Baudrillard**, Forget Foucault; A history of the present n.d.) Page 92: Forms that are beyond judgement have a much greater power of fascination, but they are for that same reason terribly dangerous for any order whatsoever. They can no longer be controlled. At any given moment a category or a form stops representing itself, it no longer enters the stage of representation, it no longer functions according to its end.
Page 93: Literalizing the metaphor, she abolishes the symbolic order. The sign becomes the thing. The subject is caught in the trap of his own desire.

[58] (**Saussure** 1908-09) Saussure is considered one of the fathers of structuralism when he explained that terms get their meaning in reciprocal determination with other terms inside language: Saussure explicitly suggested that linguistics was only a branch of a more general semiology, of a science of signs in general, being human codes only one among others.

[59] (**Bohl** 2002) Maturing suburbans and "edge city" landscapes typically lack a centre, a place that establishes an identity for the community and offers residents and visitors an opportunity to come together and to meet and mingle face-to-face.

[60] (**Bohl** 2002) Suburban sprawl has been characterised as development that is relatively low density, spread over large areas, and segregated into single-use zones of single-family homes, apartment complexes, office parks, shopping malls and commercial strips.

[61] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) A number of differentiating traits are thus permitted to emerge which are not completely bound to a specific location or situation, to a geographically determinate space. The so-called

economic process tends to generate diversity -- a fact which supports the hypothesis that homogenization today is a function of political rather than economic factors as such; abstract space is a tool of power.

[62] (D. **Massey** 2006) Local communities had their localities, cultures had their regions and, of course, nations had their nation-states.

[63] (D. **Massey** 2006) Giddens (1990)p.63: argues that 'Distinctive cultural spaces were maintained…through connections rather than disjunctions…"locality" is simply a contingent component of that "space of flows" rather than its antithesis.'

[64] (**Eyles** and **Butz** 1997) Indeed the primary purpose of that research was to establish ideal types, to categorize and classify, to remove from context in order to reinsert into life worlds. There is some evidence that most of these types are also applicable to Shimshal; broadly similar sentiments connect residents of the two communities (Towcester and Shimshal) to their places.

[65] (**Fraser** 2013) cultural globalisation…is constantly creating new kinds of difference and heterogenity, and in ways that will never be uniform or consistent.

[66] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) P.77: capitalism has created homogenization, hierarchy, and social fragmentation. For example, the spread of capitalization globally has engendered similarities than differences. While differences of local culture, history, and natural landscape are suppressed, spaces of modernity are divided into grids of private property, market and labour.

[67] (**Lefebvre**, Interview with Henri Lefebvre on Situationists 1983) It is abstract space (the space of bureaucratic politics) that produces, imposes and reinforces social homogeneity.

[68] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 87: Just as that consisted in a collective realignment, through the mass media, to the lowest common culture, so personalization consists in a daily realignment to the smallest marginal difference: seeking out the little qualitative differences by which style and status are indicated. Traditional sociology identifies a need of the individual to differentiate the self as one more element in the repertoire of individual needs, which it sees as alternating with the opposite need to conform. The two coexist happily at the psycho-sociological descriptive level, in the most total illogic and absence of theory – a state of affairs dubbed dialectic of equality and distinction or dialectic of conformism and originality, etc… The real differences which characterized persons made them contradictory beings. Differences of personalizing type no longer set individuals one against another; these differences are all arrayed hierarchically on an indefinite scale and coverage in models, on the basis of which they are subtly produced and reproduced. As a result to differentiate oneself is precisely to affiliate to a model, to label oneself by reference to an abstract model, to a combinatorial pattern of fashion, and therefore to relinquish any real difference, any singularity, since these can only arise in concrete, conflicting relations with others and the world.

[69] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 111: The machine was the emblem of industrial society. The gadget is the emblem of post-industrial society. No rigorous definition of the gadget exists. If however we agree to define the object of consumption by the relative disappearance of its objective function and a corresponding increase in its sign function, and if we accept that the object of consumption is characterised be a kind of functional uselessness (what is consumed is precisely something other than the useful) then the gadget is indeed the truth of the object in consumer society…

[70] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 87: Advertising as a whole has no meaning. It merely conveys significations. Its significations (and the behaviours they call forth) are never personal: they are all differential; they are all marginal and combinatorial. In other words, they are of the order of the industrial production of differences – and this might, I believe, serve as the most cogent definition of the system of consumption.

[71] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 140: Metonym as beyond body…

[72] (**Lefebvre**, Vers Le Cybernanthrope 1980) page: Dans la realite quotidienne que les homes retrouveront peut-etre ce que Nietzsche appelait 'le sens de la terre'. Le cybernanthrope deplore la faiblesse humaine et ses faiblesses. Il connait ses imperfections. L'humain, la qualite humaine, il les desavoue. Il disqualifie l'humainaisme, en pensee et en acti*on. Les illusions de la subjectivite, il les pourchasse: la creation, le Bonheur, la passion, aussi vides que l'oubli.*Il aspire a fontionner, c'est a dire a n'etre que function. Derriere les illusions de la subjectivite, qu'y a-t-il? La nevrose. Le robot, lui, ne possede pas d'inconscient; il n'a pas besoin du psychanalyste. Precision. Le cybernanthrope, ce n'est pas l'automate. C'est l'homme qui recoit une promotion: il se comprend grace a l'automate. Il vit en symbiose avec la machine. En elle il a trouve son double reel. Pour s'y retrouver, il a desavoue les double illusions de la subjectivite et de l'objectivite, de la conscience et des ouvres. La dominante subjective se definissait pour elle meme et devant elle meme par la spontaneite, ou par l'imaginaire, ou par la fantaisie et la poesie et la tentative (ou la tentation) de l'impossible. Devant le sujet, la 'chose' perdait ses apparences; ou bien ouvre de la nature dote d'une qualite ou bien ouvre de l'homme dote d'un proje et d'un pouvoir, elle revelait une activite cachee. Il se passé des choses. Il arrive des evenements. Il survient des phenomenes. Le temps apporte de l'imprevu, de la surprise: de l'information. Une repetition pure, une redondance complet, ne sauraient durer longtemps. Or ce temps n'apporte de la variete que pour un dispositive qui definit la redondance d'un cote et de l'autre la surprise relative a cette redondance. Le cybernanthrope qui a bien compris les illusions de la spontaneite possede ses valeurs. Il se definit par la stabilite. Il n'a pas du tout l'allure d'un automate, au sens premiere d'un mecanisme. Il n'est pas rigide mais au contraire souple, d'une souplesse controlee. Il va decontracte.

[73] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Space is illusory and the secret of the illusion lies in the transparency itself. The three aspects of abstract space, the spectacular-visual, the geometric, and the phallic, combine in such a way that "the visual realm is confused with the geometrical one, and the optical transparency (or legibility) of the visual is mistaken for logico-mathematical intelligibility.

[74] (**Baudrillard**, Forget Foucault; A history of the present n.d.) Page 91: A rule can be perfectly arbitrary in its enunciation, but it is much more unbreakable than the 'law' which can be transgressed. You can do anything with the law. With rule, on the other hand, either you play or you don't…the rule of the game-the seductive sequence-is played in an extremely ceremonial fashion. Situations can be replayed indefinitely, the rule does not change. But it is secret, never known, never spoken. If it were known, things would become visible and reversible again.

[75] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 88: This is an absurd formula: monopoly and difference are logically incompatible. If they can be combined, it is precisely because the differences are not differences and instead of marking a person out as someone singular, the mark rather his conformity with a code, his integration into a sliding scale of values. There is in personalisation something similar to that naturalisation effect we constantly meet in the environment – the effect which consists in restoring nature as sign after it has been eliminated in reality…The general process can be defined historically: it is industrial monopoly concentration which, abolishing the real differences between human beings, homogenizing persons and products, simultaneously ushers in the reign of differentiation. Things are much the same here as with religious or social movements: it is upon the ebbing of their original impulse that churches or institutions are built. Here too it is upon the loss of differences that the cult of difference is founded.

Thus a deep logical collusion links the macro-corporation and the micro-consumer, the monopoly structure of production and the individualistic structure of consumption, since the consumed difference in which the individual revels is also one of the key sectors of generalised production…

[76] (**Bragg** and **Hare** 12-25 April 2013) It's because people now feel themselves publicly helpless, don't they? People feel they no longer exert either any individual or collective power over public life. The nature of public life has changed, hasn't it?

[77] (**Castoriadis**, Figures of thinkable 2007) Polis page 107- 113

By politics I mean a collective activity endowed with self-reflection and lucidity, aiming at the global institution of society.

Considered this way, politics is a moment and an expression of the project of autonomy; it does not passively and blindly accept what is already there, what has been instituted, but calls it into question. Human history is creation. It is, first and foremost, wholesale self-creation, the separation of humanity from sheer animality, which is at once never complete but abysmal. Self-alteration of society: If they were made of rational ideas, they would last forever. But institutions are actually made of sanctioned social meanings and corollary procedures for giving meaning. These meanings are at heart imaginary – not rational, not functional, not reflections of reality. They are social imaginary significations. We can elucidate this creation in its general character, or in its concrete contents, after it has happened. But we can neither 'explain' nor 'predict' it, because it is not determined; it rather is determinant.

[78] (**Baudrillard**, The consumer society, myths & structures n.d.) Page 114: *'Today political power is no longer animated by some positive will, it is no longer anything but the negative power of deterrence, of public health, of prophylactic, immunizing, security forces. (Minority report by Steven Spielberg)'* In one way or another the population themselves are a terrorist threat to power. And it is power itself that, through repression, involuntarily seals this complicity. The equivalence in repression shows that we are all virtually the hostages of power…and if global demonstrations against the war have offered the illusion of a possible counter-power, they have certainly revealed the political insignificance of that international community confronted with American realpolitik. Henceforth, we are concerned with the exercise of power in its pure state, without bothering about sovereignty or representation, the integral reality of a negative power. As long as it draws its sovereignty from representation, as long as political reason exists, power can find its equilibrium – in any case it can be challenged and contested. But the erasure of that sovereignty leaves power unchecked, without counterpart, wild (with savagery no longer natural, but technical). And by a strange twist of fate it recovers something from primitive societies, which, according to Levi Strauss lacked history because they knew nothing about power. What if our present global society, basking in the shadow of this integral power, was again becoming a society without history?

[79] (**Baudrillard**, Utopia deferred 1967-78)

[80] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Space is no longer something concrete and opaque, that is, something to be experienced and lived (as well as perceived and conceived); it is now something abstract and transparent, something to be looked at passively and from a distance, without being lived directly. What is seen is not space, but an image of space. Space becomes "intelligible" to the eye (but only to the eye); space appears to be a text to be read, a message that bears no traces of either state power or human bodies and their non-verbal flows. Certain basic geometrical forms -- the rectangular, the square, the circle, the triangle -- are elevated to the level of the exemplary (microcosms of the universe) and are reproduced everywhere as images of rationality, harmony and order.

[81] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 147: Like any reality, social space is related methodologically and theoretically to 3 general concepts: form, structure, function. In other words any social space may be subjected to formal, structural or functional analysis. Each of these approaches provides a code and a method for deciphering what at first may seem impenetrable.

[82] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 147: The term form may be taken in a number of senses: aesthetic, plastic, abstract (logico-mathematical) and so on. In general sense, it evokes the description of contours and the demarcation of boundaries, external limits, areas and volumes. Spatial analysis accepts this general use of the term, although doing so does not eliminate all problems. A formal description, for example, may aspire to exactitude but still turn out to be shot through with ideological elements, especially when implicit or explicit reductionist goals are involved. The presence of such goals is indeed a defining characteristic of formalism.

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[83] (**Baudrillard**, Utopia deferred 1967-78) Page 33: Mobile, variable, retractable structures inscribe themselves in the formal demands of architects and in the social and economic demands of modernity. But this is only true in an ideal dimension. One must not lose sight of the fact that:
1.   Neither the ephemeral nor the durable are absolute and exclusive values.
2.   It is true that the social deficit that modular or prefabricated construction in disposable or durable materials represents today is colossal… meanwhile one must account for the latent psychological, familial and collective functions of integration that also return in the social budget.
3.   The ephemeral will perhaps one day be the collective solution but for the moment it is the monopoly of a privileged fraction whom its economic and cultural position permits to question the myth of durability…only the privileged classes have the right to the actuality of the models. The others have the right once these models have already changed.
If therefore in logic of forms the ephemeral represents the truth of modernity, if even it represents the future formula for a rational and harmonious society, it still takes an entirely different sense in the present cultural system. In its logical foundation culture continually plays on two distinct terms: the ephemeral and the durable of which neither can be made autonomous. In the socio-cultural class system on the contrary this relation breaks into two distinctive poles of which one the ephemeral becomes autonomous in a culturally superior model returning the other to its obsolescence.
This is not all to disqualify the formal research of the architect but there is a bitter derision in fact that that search for social rationality succeeds precisely in reinforcing the irrational logic and the strategy of the cultural class system.
[84] **Considering** the homogenising effects of internet, gadgets and super-consumption we might be soon facing the same results also in traditional cities and its public life even if to a lesser extent.
[85] (**Lefebvre**, Writings on Cities 2000) Page 153: This theory which one could legitimately call planning, close to the meanings of that old practice of *to inhabit* which would add to these partial facts a general theory of urban time-spaces, and would reveal a new practice emerging from this elaboration, envisaged only as the practical application of a comprehensive theory of the city and the urban which could go beyond current scissions and separations, particularly those existing between philosophy and the sciences of the city, the global and the partial.
[86] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Page 52: From a less pessimistic standpoint, it can be shown that abstract space harbours specific contradictions. Such spatial contradictions derive in part from the old contradictions thrown up by historical time. These have undergone modifications, however: some are aggravated, others blunted. Amongst them, too, completely fresh contradictions have come into being which are liable eventually to precipitate the downfall of abstract space. (Abstract space is not homogenous; it simply has homogeneity as its goal, its orientation, and its 'lens'." Abstract space appears to be transparent and readable-intelligible, but this transparency is deceptive, and everything is [actually] concealed…) The reproduction of the social relations of production within this space inevitably obeys two tendencies: the dissolution of old relations on the one hand and the generation of new relations on the other. Thus, despite—or rather because of—its negativity, abstract space carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space. I shall call that new space 'differential space', because, inasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences.
[87] (**Lefebvre**, Interview with Henri Lefebvre on Situationists 1983) Recommendations of Unitary Urbanism:
Principle one: a balance with nature
Principle two: a balance with tradition
Principle three: appropriate technology
Principle four: conviviality
A place for the individual
A place for friendship
A place for householders
A place for the neighbourhood
A place for communities
A place for the city domain
Principle five: efficiency (Transport)
Principle six: human scale
Principle seven: opportunity matrix
Principle eight: regional integration
Principle nine: balanced movement
Principle ten: institutional integrity
[88] (**Baudrillard**, Utopia deferred 1967-78) Page 61: Utopia has been deferred in idealism through a century and a half of triumphant dialectical historical practice. Today it's starting in its rigorous in-definitiveness to surpass all revolutionary definitions and to refer every model of revolution back to bureaucratic idealism. Utopia has no place in the radical deconstruction of every political space. It offers no privileges to revolutionary politics. There could be neither a model for utopia nor utopian function because utopia denies the inscription of all finality, whether unconscious or in the class struggle…utopia does not write itself into the future. It is always from right now what the order of day is missing. In the topic of the sign, utopia is the gap, the fault the void that passes between the signifier and the signified and subverts every sign. It passes between everything and its model annulling their respective places. It ceaselessly displaces politics and annuls it as such.

[89] (**Lefebvre**, Production of space 1991) Stanley Aronowitz says: If the forms of social life are not changed, the old order will reappear. If the state and the economy attempt to dominate and to assert their primacy over social life, this domination is only the form of appearance of social relations. If the old regime remains in force at the level of the family, personal relations, especially sexuality, and the structure of authority at the workplace, if the routines of repetitive everyday existence are preserved, if life is bereft of pleasure and desire is relegated to the dream work but is denied in the everyday, nothing much has actually changed.

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