

# AMDERMA

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HUMANS HAD BUILT A WORLD INSIDE THE WORLD, WHICH REFLECTED IT IN PRETTY MUCH THE SAME WAY AS A DROP OF WATER REFLECTED THE LANDSCAPE. AND YET ... AND YET ... INSIDE THIS LITTLE WORLD THEY HAD TAKEN PAINS TO PUT ALL THE THINGS YOU MIGHT THINK THEY WOULD WANT TO ESCAPE FROM — HATRED, FEAR, TYRANNY, AND SO FORTH. DEATH WAS INTRIGUED. THEY THOUGHT THEY WANTED TO BE TAKEN OUT OF THEMSELVES, AND EVERY ART HUMANS DREAMT UP TOOK THEM FURTHERIN. HE WAS FASCINATED. — TERRY PRATCHETT, WYRD SISTERS

WE ARE DREAMING ABOUT THE LANDS. THE LANDS SOMEONE SAW A LONG TIME AGO. WE ARE MISSING THE PEOPLE WHO ARE NO LONGER WITH US. PEOPLE WHO DID NOT EVEN EXIST. WE WANT TO FIND A TRUE HOME BUT CAN'T GET OUT FROM A DUSTY ROOM OF OTHER'S DESIRES, FALSE MEMORIES AND UNNECESSARY THINGS.

IN THIS ESSAY I EXPLORE ENCAPSULATION, A PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL PHENOMENA WHICH IS THE PERMANENT STATE OF THE MODERN SOCIETY. SINCE THE MEANING OF ENCAPSULATION VARIES I WOULD LIKE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING SPECIFY THE CONTEXT OF IT. INTRODUCED BY FAITH POPCORN IN THE EARLY 80'S THE TERM "COCOONING" BECAME COMMON TO NAME THE ACT OF INSULATING ONESELF FROM THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT. COMPARED TO THE FAMILIAR COCOON FREQUENTLY ASSOCIATED WITH HOME FOCUSED BEHAVIOR AND COMFORT, CAPSULE IS A MORE ENCOMPASSING WORD TO DESCRIBE A SPACE (REAL, VIRTUAL OR MENTAL) CREATED IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN IN CLOSURE, SAFETY AND CONTROL. GENERALLY SPEAKING CAPSULE IS A UNIVERSAL FORM OF ANY LIFE BEING FROM BACTERIA TO MAMMALS AS WELL AS AN INDEX OF ITS ORGANIZATION. THE MORE DEVELOPED THE SPECIES THE MORE PROTECTIVE LAYERS THEY HAVE.

OUR CIVILIZATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN CAPSULAR. FOR HUMANS THE NEED IN ARTIFICIAL ENVIRONMENTS THE VERY CORE, THE ENVIRONMENT ENCLOSED IN ITS EXTENSIONS. THIS CAN BE CLOTHES AS THE FIRST PHYSICAL LAYER, BUILDINGS AND VEHICLES AS THE SECOND, CITIES AND COUNTRIES WITH ITS BORDERS AND POLITICS, VIRTUAL CAPSULES SUCH AS MASS MEDIA, SOFTWARE, SOCIAL WEB BUT ALSO EMOTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL CAPSULES WHICH ARE PLACED IN ANOTHER CAPSULE OF LANGUAGE.

CAPSULE IS A MATRIX OF MAN. WHETHER IT IS NATURAL OR SIMULATED IT HAS SIMILAR FEATURES. LIKE A WOMB: IT IS PERMEATED, BREATHING, BREEDING.

THE NEED FOR CAPSULE IS GROUNDED IN FEAR. ALTHOUGH ANIMALS ARE BORN WITH THE NUMBER OF INNATE FEARS THE STUDY SHOWS THAT MOST FEAR IS LEARNED. IN A SET OF EXPERIMENTS CONDUCTED BY NOVARTIS INSTITUTES FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH IN BASEL THE TEAM TRAINED RATS TO ASSOCIATE A 30-SECOND TONE WITH A SHOCK TO THE FOOT AT THE END OF THE TONE. UPON HEARING THE SAME TONE THE NEXT DAY, RATS SPENT NEARLY 70 PERCENT OF THE TIME OF THE TONE FROZEN, A TYPICAL FEAR RESPONSE. <sup>1</sup>

UNLIKE THE RATS PEOPLE SURVIVED NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY WERE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE DANGEROUS SITUATIONS BUT ALSO QUICKLY REACT ON THEM. AS ONE OF THE MOST FEARFUL CREATURES HUMANS CREATED A NUMBER OF DEFENSE MECHANISMS EITHER TO ISOLATE THEMSELVES FROM THE UNPREDICTABLE REALITY OF THE WORLD, OR IF NECESSARY TO PREDICT AND CONTROL IT. MOST OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENTS WOULD NOT BE CONCEIVABLE WITHOUT BEING PRIMARILY NURTURED IN A CAPSULE. AND YET ... IF THE CAPSULAR LIVING IS SUCH A UNIVERSAL FORMULA OF EVOLUTION AND PROGRESS WHY ARE WE CONSTANTLY LOOKING TO ESCAPE FROM IT?

# LOST HOME

IN HIS BOOK "THE CAPSULAR CIVILIZATION. ON THE CITY IN THE AGE OF FEAR" LIEVEN DE CAUTER INVESTIGATES THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND ARCHITECTURE DRAWING THE PARALLELS WITH DETENTION CAMPS, RAISING SURVEILLANCE, EXCLUSIONARY POLITICS AND IMMIGRATION CONTROL. HE DECLARES THAT THE MODERN CITY IS LOSING ITS ORIGINAL QUALITIES AND HISTORY BECAUSE IT CONSISTS OF THE MASS-PRODUCED CAPSULES. IN HIS VIEW THE CITY IS A CAMP, TRANSIT ZONE LIKE FOR REFUGEE, A SUBSTANCE FOR TRANSCENDENTAL CAPITALISM BECAUSE IT IS BASED ON THE ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL THROUGH UNEQUAL TRADE BETWEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY.

CAPITALISM IS CONSIDERED TO BE NATURAL, UNAVOIDABLE AND INFINITE, HOWEVER IT IS A HISTORICAL SYSTEM, WHICH ORIGINATED IN THE 16TH CENTURY KNOWN AS EARLY CAPITALISM ACCORDING TO KARL MARX. WITHOUT GIVING A CRITIQUE ON THE SYSTEM WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY AN "AIR" FOR OUR ECONOMY, LEIVEN DE CAUTER DESCRIBES THE IMPACT OF CAPITALISM ON ACCELERATION OF CAPSULARIZATION IN THE MODERN SOCIETY. THE INCREASING MOBILITY PUTS THE MAN UNDER THE CONSTANT ATTACK OF OVERLOAD OF STIMULI AND INFORMATION WHICH INDUCE A SORT OF DEFENSE MECHANISM. THEREFORE, THE HIGHER INFORMATIONAL AND PHYSICAL SPEED, THE GREATER THE HUMAN NEED FOR CAPSULES.

THE AUTHOR SEES THE AIRPORT AS A PARADIGM FOR CAPSULAR LIVING WHERE IN-TRANSIT CONDITION IS BECOMING UNIVERSAL. IT RECALLS THE STATEMENT OF ANOTHER DUTCH THEORIST AND ARCHITECT REM KOOLHAAS: "A CITY IS A PLANE INHABITED IN THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY BY PEOPLE AND PROCESSES". HE CONCLUDES HIS ESSAY THE GENERIC CITY WITH THE WORDS THAT HAVE ALREADY BECOME FAMOUS : " RELIEF... IT'S OVER. THAT IS THE STORY OF THE CITY. THE CITY IS NO LONGER. WE CAN LEAVE THE THEATRE NOW...".<sup>2</sup> ALTHOUGH REM KOOLHAAS IS CALLED AN URBANIST, WHILE READING HIS S,M,L,XL PUBLICATION, ONE CAN CLEARLY SENSE THE PROTEST AGAINST THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONTEMPORARY CITY. KOOLHAAS DEPICTS A FUTURE WHERE ARCHITECTURE, CITIES AND STREETS ARE IN THE PAST. THE POLITICS OF SPACE (TERRITORY, DEFENSE, URBANISM) IS BEING REPLACED BY THE POLITICS OF TIME (TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATION, NETWORK, SPEED). THE IDENTITY IS EITHER BECOMING FIXED AS A CHARACTER FROM A SUPERHERO MOVIE OR DISAPPEARS IN THE DIGITAL. INFORMATIONAL GHOSTS TAKE THE STAGE.

"THE COCOON-LIKE INTERIOR AND THE ATRIUM ARE CAPSULES IN A POLITICS OF TIME THAT RULES A WORLD WITH A MINIMUM OF A BODILY SPACE," WRITES PAUL VIRILIO.

INDEED THE URBAN SPRAWL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGES IN THE PHYSICAL CONDITION AND IN THE FORM AND SPATIAL STRUCTURE OF CITIES. POPULATION GROWTH, GLOBAL AND URBAN IN PARTICULAR, CONTRIBUTE TO LOSS OF OPEN SPACES REPLACED BY STANDARDIZED DEVELOPMENT THREATENING THE ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

THE EXPONENTIAL MIGRATION TO METROPOLISES INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR MORE AFFORDABLE AND HENCE GENERIC ARCHITECTURE. MANY CITIES HAVE THE MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LOW-RENT AREAS THAT ARE NEAR TO FINANCIAL DISTRICTS OFFERING JOBS AS WELL AS LOW-PRICE SHOPS, BARS, AND RESTAURANTS, WHOSE ETHNIC AND WORKING CLASS CULTURES PROVIDE A FEELING OF AUTHENTICITY.<sup>3</sup>

ANY URBAN PLANNING PUSHES THE STRATEGIES AIMING TO MAKE CITY CENTERS MORE EXPENSIVE MOVING POORER RESIDENTS OFF TO THE PERIPHERY. THESE FACTORS LEAD TO THE QUESTION: IF THE SAME IDEA IS APPLIED IN MANY CITIES IN THE WORLD, DOES THIS NOT RESULT IN VISIBLE HOMOGENIZATION?

IN EVERY ERA, NOMADS, TRADERS AND TRAVELERS HAVE CARRIED NEW IDEAS AND MATERIALS ACROSS THE GLOBE, MAKING FUSIONS WITH LOCAL CULTURES. MUDEJAR STYLE IN SPAIN, MAIOLICA CERAMICS IN ITALY AND BYZANTINE SILK APPEARED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC ARTS. ACCORDING TO JOHN RUSKIN, THE DOGE'S PALACE IN VENICE CONTAINS "THREE ELEMENTS IN EXACTLY EQUAL PROPORTIONS — THE ROMAN, THE LOMBARD, AND THE ARAB. IT IS THE CENTRAL BUILDING OF THE WORLD ...THE HISTORY OF GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE IS THE HISTORY OF THE REFINEMENT AND SPIRITUALISATION OF NORTHERN WORK UNDER ITS INFLUENCE".<sup>4</sup>

FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE THE CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN MODERNITY AND TRADITION SEEM NO MORE THAN JUST A PROCESS OF CULTURAL FERMENTATION. THE SELECTION OF CERTAIN HISTORICAL HERITAGE WHILE BLENDING THE REST INTO HYBRID, THE UNIVERSAL CULTURE. HOWEVER THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WHICH CAN BE BETTER UNDERSTOOD ON THE INSTANCE OF ARCHITECTURE.

I PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THIS HUMAN ACTIVITY BECAUSE BEING DEPENDENT ON MONEY AND POWER ARCHITECTURE IS DRIVEN BY RATIONAL AESTHETICS AND IN MY VIEW MOST ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE STATE OF THE MODERN CULTURE. IF WE CONSIDER CULTURE BEING A SET OF VALUES ACQUIRED OVER TIME WE WILL IMMEDIATELY SEE THE BREAK WITH THE PAST AS ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR AGE.

NOWADAYS NOTHING IS CONCEIVABLE WITHOUT THE INPUT OF MANAGEMENT, MARKETING, BRANDING, LOGISTICS AND SO FORTH. STANDARDIZATION IS MOST VISIBLE IN THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECTS IN THE CITY CENTERS. HIGH-RISE OFFICE TOWERS ARE THE SYMBOLS OF ECONOMIC MODERNIZATION AND CORPORATE STATUS, THEY PROVIDE THE VIEWER WITH ALIENATED FACADES AND HAVE NO STORY TO TELL BUT SLOGANS. IN A WORLD OF EVER-REDUCING SPACE, SKYSCRAPERS SEEMS TO BE A SOLUTION HOWEVER A LOT OF THEM STAY PARTIALLY EMPTY FOR DECADES. THE TALLEST HIGH-RISE, BURJ KHALIFA (828M) IN DUBAI, HAS 29 PERCENT OF UNUSED SPACE, ACCORDING TO THE COUNCIL ON TALL BUILDINGS AND URBAN HABITAT (CTBUH). THE BURJ AL ARAB IS EVEN WORSE WITH 39 PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE BUILDING UNOCCUPIED. THE SHARD IN LONDON WASTES 20 PER CENT OF ITS SPACE.<sup>5</sup>

CTBUH HAS CALLED THIS TREND "VANITY HEIGHT", EMPHASIZING THE BIG DISTANCE BETWEEN A SKYSCRAPER'S HIGHEST OCCUPIABLE FLOOR AND ITS ACTUAL TOP. FIGHTING FOR A TITLE OF "SUPERTALL" MOST OF THESE TOWERS ACQUIRE EXTREMELY LONG SPIRES WHICH OTHERWISE WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY UNNECESSARY. ANOTHER POINTED CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY 2020, JEDDAH TOWER IN SAUDI ARABIA WILL BE OVER 1000 METERS BUT ITS HIGHEST FLOOR IS 630 METERS ABOVE THE GROUND.

AS MANAGING URBAN AREAS HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY, PERHAPS THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE TO COMBINE THESE LONELY SYRINGES INTO ONE FABRIC, THE VERTICAL CITY. EVEN THOUGH IT SOUNDS LIKE A SCI-FI SCRIPT, THE NUMBER OF PROPOSALS BY LEADING ARCHITECTS INCLUDING THE SUPPORTING PROJECTS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN REALIZED (SUCH AS CABLE FREE ELEVATORS THAT CAN GO TO LIMITLESS HEIGHTS AND SELF DRIVING VEHICLES)<sup>6</sup> MAKE THE CONCEPT MUCH MORE REALISTIC. THE ISSUE THAT CONCERNS ME THE MOST IS HOW PROLONGED INDOOR LIVING WILL AFFECT THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE RESIDENTS.

THE LATEST RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THE CITY DWELLERS ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO PSYCHOSIS THAN THOSE WHO LIVE IN SMALL TOWNS OR IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE DETACHMENT FROM NATURE, PHYSICAL STRESSORS, HIGHER RATES OF CRIME AS WELL AS THE PARADOXICAL URBAN MIXTURE WHERE SOCIAL DENSITY AND SOCIAL ISOLATION CO-EXIST - THESE FACTORS ALSO STIMULATE THE CAPSULAR WAY OF LIVING.<sup>7</sup> THE NATIONAL HUMAN ACTIVITY PATTERN SURVEY REVEALS THAT AN AVERAGE AMERICAN SPENDS 87 PERCENT OF HIS TIME INDOORS AND AN ADDITIONAL 6 PER CENT IN AN ENCLOSED VEHICLE.<sup>8</sup>

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR NATIONALITY IS, AT SOME POINT WE ALL GET TIRED OF STATISTICS AND MATCHING INDICATORS, SO HERE WE TAKE A BREAK...

DEPARTMENT STORES, GAMBLING HALLS AND THEME PARKS ARE OTHER "DELUSIVE" PRODUCTS OF CAPITALISM. SO FAMILIAR, THE SURREAL FEELING WHEN ENTER THE SHOPPING MALL. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO GRAVITY AND TIME HAS STOPPED. THESE PLACES ARE TOTALLY SIMULATED, DESIGNED AND CONTROLLED AND OFFER NO UNPLANNED SPONTANEITY. DISNEYFICATION - THE ECOLOGY OF FANTASY UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTED TO CULTURAL HOMOGENIZATION. WHILE MUSEUMS TRY TO ATTRACT PEOPLE WITH INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS, CINEMA-ROOMS, CAFES AND GIFT SHOPS, AMUSEMENT PARKS TEND TO INCLUDE MORE HIGH CULTURE OR HISTORICAL CONTENT.

GRUTAS PARK, ALSO KNOWN AS "STALIN'S WORLD", IN THE WETLANDS OF DZUKIJA NATIONAL PARK IN LITHUANIA, FOCUSES RATHER ON EDUCATION THAN ON AMUSEMENT. ITS EXPOSITION OF SOVIET-ERA MONUMENTS STRETCHED OVER TWO MILES OFFERS A WALKWAY RESEMBLING AN AUTHENTIC SIBERIAN GULAG PRISON. SUOI TIEN CALLED "CULTURAL"- A VIETNAMESE THEME PARK (LOCATED NEXT TO A RUBBISH DUMP) DEVOTED TO BUDDHISM, THE COUNTRY'S HISTORY AND LEGENDS, REPRESENTS LARGE PROJECTS EVOKING THE PATRIOT, NATIONAL PRIDE OF THE DRAGON AND THE FAIRY. VISITORS CAN CHOSE TO GO CARTING, RIDE ATTRACTIONS, CELEBRATE OVER 50 FESTIVALS, RUB A BELLY OF A BUDDHA STATUE, PARTICIPATE IN A SPIRITUAL SESSION OR FEED 1500 CROCODILES.

JAPANESE HUIS TEN BOSCH IS PROBABLY THE PLACE WHERE ABSURDITY REACHES ITS PEAK. THIS DUTCH-THEMED AMUSEMENT PARK IN SASEBO MODELS HOLLAND'S TYPICAL CITY PLANNING FROM THE PERIOD OF THE JAPANESE-DUTCH TRADING RELATIONS IN THE GOLDEN AGE ONWARD, POPULATED BY MANGA CHARACTERS, 3 METERS HIGH INFLATABLE CATS, DINOSAURS, ROBOTS AND HOLOGRAMS. IN ONE DAY VISITORS CAN BOAT AMSTERDAM CANALS IN A VENICE GONDOLA, OVERLOOK THE CITY FROM A HELICOPTER, GO FOR A VIRTUAL FISHING TRIP, HAVE A PICNIC IN JURASSIC PARK, SHOP IN A SCHIPHOL DUTY-FREE ZONE OR COOL DOWN IN THE ICE-BAR, GET A COCKTAIL FROM A ROBOT BARMAN OR TASTE FRENCH "HIGH" CUISINE, TO ADMIRE IMARI PORCELAIN IN A MUSEUM OR GET ON BOARD OF THE FAMOUS DE LIEFDE AND, IF ONE DAY IS NOT ENOUGH, STAY FOR A NIGHT IN A COTTAGE HOUSE IN THE FORESTS BY THE LAKE.

ALTHOUGH DISNEYLAND ITSELF IS A HONEST PLACE IN THE SENSE THAT IT DOESN'T PRETEND TO BE ANYTHING ELSE, THE IDEA OF PUTTING ENTERTAINMENT VALUES FIRST SPREADS FAR BEYOND THE THEME PARK.

THE MALL OF AMERICA IN BLOOMINGTON UNITES NICKELODEON UNIVERSE THEME PARK, AQUARIUM, ADVENTURE GOLF, CINEMA, COMEDY HOUSE AND WEDDING CHAPEL (OVER 7500 COUPLES HAVE BEEN MARRIED THERE) UNDER ONE ROOF. APPARENTLY MODERN CULTURE CAN ONLY EXIST IN A SAFE SPACE OF A CAPSULAR ARCHITECTURE, ARTIFICIAL AMBIANCE HAVING MINIMUM COMMUNICATION WITH THE OUTSIDE. PERHAPS MODERNITY, CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES BROUGHT TOGETHER WILL SOON BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT THE OLD DREAM OF A DOMED CITY. IMAGINE THE CLIMATE-CONTROLLED MEGALOPOLIS WHERE PEOPLE LIVE LIKE THE PLANTS IN A GLASS HOUSE. FROM THE 90'S THE MALL OF AMERICA, WE ARE SLOWLY DRIVING TO 2020 THE MALL OF THE WORLD, IF REALIZED, THE WORLD'S FIRST DOMED INTEGRATED PEDESTRIAN CITY. THE AREA OF OVER 7 THOUSAND SQUARE METERS WILL HOUSE HUNDREDS OF BUILDINGS, 20 THOUSAND HOTEL ROOMS, THE LARGEST INDOOR THEME PARK, OWN TRANSIT SYSTEM, CULTURAL AND WELLNESS DISTRICTS, SUCH A CONSUMER PARADISE. IN A DOME-ENCASED COMMUNITY, EVERYONE IS EITHER A TOURIST, A SHOPPER OR A PATIENT. THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE HOTELS, SHOPPING OR MEDICAL CENTERS BECOMES SO COMPLETE THAT IT CAN EASILY REPLACE ALL OTHER BUILDINGS. THIS SO-CALLED "ALL INCLUSIVE CONDITION OF POSSIBILITIES" IS BECOMING PREDOMINANT IN SOCIETY BUT IS THIS ACTUALLY THE POSSIBILITIES OR JUST THE OPTIONS?

IN HIS ESSAY REM KOOLHAAS CLAIMS THAT HISTORY, DESPITE ITS ABSENCE, TRANSFORMS INTO THE BIG INDUSTRY IN THE MODERN, GENERIC CITIES AND TOURISM EXPANDS IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE DECONSTRUCTION OF THE PAST. HE SEES THE DECONSTRUCTION AS THE FALSE NOSTALGIA. IN HIS VIEW IN A CITY WITHOUT QUALITIES AND HISTORY PEOPLE SEEM DOOMED TO REGRESS TO A DISNEYFIED, SIMULATED VERSION OF A COLLECTIVE MEMORY.<sup>9</sup> NO REAL INDIVIDUAL MEMORY EXISTS, ONLY MEMORIES OF MEMORIES, A SORT OF DEJA VU, A GENERIC MEMORY. THUS IN THE ABSENCE OF TRADITION AND HERITAGE CULTURE STARTS TO FUNCTION JUST ON AN IMAGINARY LEVEL.

THIS REMINDS ME OF THE TRUMAN SHOW AS IF PEOPLE WERE PLACED IN AN ARTIFICIAL ENVIRONMENT THEY DON'T BELONG TO. WITHIN THIS SPACE THEY HAVE EVERYTHING THEY MIGHT NEED: PLEASURES, SAFETY AND COMFORT, HOWEVER IF ONE DECIDES TO DISCOVER THE OUTSIDE WORLD HE IS LIKELY STRUGGLING TO FIND AN EXIT. HE IS GETTING NO OTHER CHOICE AS TO CONFORM THE ESTABLISHED RESISTANT SOCIAL SYSTEM WHILE BEING UNABLE TO ENTIRELY IDENTIFY WITH IT. THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT WE CREATED THIS TRAP OURSELVES AND IF IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE TO ESCAPE FROM THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE, IT IS MUCH HARDER TO ESCAPE FROM A MENTAL CAPSULE FORMED OVER FIVE CENTURIES.

CAPITALISM PUTS HISTORY IN A CULTURAL COMPETITION WHERE CREATIVITY AND CONSUMPTION ARE GRADUALLY MERGING INTO EACH OTHER. THE SYMBOLIC IMAGE OF FINANCIAL TRADING, ART AUCTIONS, FASHION SHOWS, EMERGING TECHNOLOGY FAIRS, HIPSTER BARS AND CLUBS PROMOTE NOT ONLY INDIVIDUAL CREATIVITY BUT ALSO THE CITIES ENGAGING IN A SIMILAR COMPETITION FOR BOTH WEALTHY AND TRENDY CONSUMERS, ART BUYERS AND BACKPACKER TOURISTS.<sup>10</sup>

EVEN THE SMALL VILLAGES AND TOWNS DON'T WANT TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THIS GLOBAL RUN. IF THEY CAN'T HOUSE THE COMPETITIVE FINANCIAL MARKET THEY WILL FIGHT FOR A SPOT ON THE GLOBAL CULTURAL ARENA BY BOOSTING LOCAL INDUSTRIES, ORGANIZING FILM FESTIVALS, ANNUAL CARNIVALS AND PARADES. PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS GROUPS PRODUCE IDEAS AND STRATEGIES THAT CONDEMN CITIES TO CREATE EVER MORE PLACES THAT AIM TO BE DISTINCTIVE, BUT IN THE END LOOK JUST THE SAME.

ISN'T IT A DREAM OF "THE LAND OF PLENTY" WHICH MAKES THE WORLD SO ALIENATED IN ITS COMFORT THAT IT BECOMES ALMOST INHABITABLE?

IN THE CONTEXT OF PHILOSOPHY, MODERNITY IS FREQUENTLY CONSIDERED AS A CONDITION THAT IS DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED TO DWELLING. THE REMARKABLE EXISTENTIALIST OF THE 20TH CENTURY, MARTIN HEIDEGGER IN HIS "BUILDING, DWELLING, THINKING" EXPLAINS THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE OLD ENGLISH AND HIGH GERMAN WORD FOR BUILDING. HE SAYS 'BUAN' MEANS TO DWELL. MOREOVER, BUAN IS RELATED TO "I AM".<sup>11</sup> THUS IT REFERS NOT ONLY TO BUILDING AND DWELLING BUT ALSO TO BEING. THE MAIN FEATURE OF DWELLING IN HEIDEGGER'S VIEW IS TO PRESERVE AND CARE FOR, TO ALLOW THINGS TO EXIST IN THEIR ESSENCE WHICH CONTRADICTS THE CONCEPT OF MODERNITY.

MODERN CULTURE IS NURTURED IN A RATIONALISTIC ATTITUDE BASED ON THE MEANS OF USEFULNESS AND EFFICIENCY FROM WHICH CAUTIOUSNESS AND CHERISHING ARE FAR REMOVED.

IN ANOTHER ESSAY "POETICALLY MEN DWELLS" HEIDEGGER TRIES TO RESOLVE THE QUESTION OF DWELLING AT PRESENT BY ASSUMING THAT HUMANS HAVE NOT YET LEARNED TO DWELL. HE MAKES AN ANALOGY BETWEEN AUTHENTIC DWELLING AND POETRY. POETRY IS CHARACTERIZED AS TAKING MEASURE. THE DWELLER THEREFORE TAKES MEASURE OF THE "BETWEEN THAT BRINGS TOGETHER HEAVEN AND EARTH, DIVINITIES AND MORTALS" AS FOR MAN MEASURING HIMSELF AGAINST THE ENDLESS



SKY. HE ENDS HIS ESSAY ON THE SIMILAR NOTE AS HE STARTS: "DO WE DWELL POETICALLY? PRESUMABLY WE DWELL ALTOGETHER UNPOETICALLY". HE BLAMES MANKIND IN BEING CURSED WITH CALCULATING MEASURE INSTEAD OF TAKING IT. THIS CREATES A HOLLOW SPACE OF HYPER INDIVIDUALISTIC SOCIETY WHERE THE TRADITIONAL SECTOR OF INNER SECURITY, THAT GUARANTEES CONNECTEDNESS, FADES INTO DISTANCE.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT AND BUREAUCRATIC ORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL LIFE FREES PEOPLE FROM THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED ON THEM BY THEIR RACE, FAMILY, BACKGROUND OR COMMUNITY OFFERING A BUNCH OF OPTIONS AND MATERIAL IMPROVEMENT, <sup>12</sup> HOWEVER THERE IS A PRICE TO PAY. THE RENUNCIATION OF TRADITIONAL FRAMEWORK IN THEIR LIVES INEVITABLY LEADS TO LOSS OF CERTAINTIES AND OF MEANING. MODERN PEOPLE BECOME ROOTLESS, THEY NO LONGER HAVE ANY CULTURE.

INDEED, CAPITALISM, GLOBALIZATION AND HOMOGENIZATION ARE THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ENCAPSULATION OF THE SOCIETY, BUT TO SAY THAT THEY ARE ITS ROOTS IS LIKE BLAMING THE OUTCAST OF PROMISCUITY. IN MY VIEW THE REAL PLIGHT OF CAPSULARIZATION LIES IN HUMAN'S INABILITY TO FIND THE TRUE HOME AND GRADUAL WEIGHT LOSS (THE SECOND IS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE NEXT CHAPTER).

BY "HOME" I MEAN NOT THE SPACE YOU WERE BORN IN, NOT THE SPACE YOU MOVED IN, NOT THE SPACE YOU DREAMED OF OR THE SPACE YOU'VE BEEN SAVING THE MONEY FOR, ... BUT THE PLACE WHICH HAS ITS HISTORY AND PRESERVED THE TRADITIONS. THE PLACE, WHICH IS NOT A CONTAINER WITH A SET OF VALUES BUT A CONDITION THAT STIMULATES INDIVIDUAL CONSCIOUSNESS, THE PLACE WHICH PRODUCES NOT JUST A SENSE OF BELONGING, BUT MINDFULNESS. THIS PLACE DOES NOT NEED STYLE OR ANY AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTIC BECAUSE IT IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING.

WHEN I WAS A KID I WAS LIVING IN A HOUSE IN A RESIDENTIAL AREA OF MOSCOW. THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF SUCH BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED ACCORDING TO A STANDARD PLANNING: A SIXTEEN - FLOOR GRAY CONCRETE TOWER ON THE TERTIARY STREET FACING A CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND. HOWEVER THIS REALITY WAS ONLY FOR HALF OF THE INHABITANTS OF THIS HOUSE. ON THE OTHER SIDE OUR WINDOWS OVERLOOKED THE FIELD AND THE STABLES. SEPARATED BY A HIGH FENCE, THIS PEACEFUL ISLAND CAN NOT BE SEEN DOWN ON THE GROUND OR FROM A STREET SIDE. I STILL REMEMBER THE AMBIGUOUS FEELING INHERENT IN THIS PLACE.

FOR ME THE HOME EXISTED IN TWO TIME-SPACE MILIEUS SIMULTANEOUSLY. WHILE BEING OUT, IT SEEMED TO ME LIKE A TINY WARM SPACE LOCKED IN ITSELF BUT ONCE I STEPPED INSIDE I COULD FIND MYSELF RIGHT ON THAT FIELD WATCHING GRAZING HORSES, DRESSAGE OR CONTEST COMPETITIONS, WAVING TO THE SKIERS PASSING BY OR GREETING FRIENDS WALKING TO THE ICE HILL. ALTHOUGH THIS PLACE WAS FAR AWAY TO BE CALLED TRUE HOME, IT DEFINITELY HAD THE QUALITIES WHICH HELP TO MAINTAIN THE BALANCE BETWEEN PROTECTION FUNCTION, MAN'S INNER EXPERIENCE AND OUTER BEING, BETWEEN SELF AND THE WORLD.

ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AUTHORS OF HIS TIME, HERMANN HESSE CONSTRUCTS A NOTION OF "HOME" ON THE BASIS OF A REFLECTION ON THE NOMADIC NATURE OF EXISTENCE IN THE METROPOLIS. IN HIS VIEW THE HOMELAND (IMPORTANT FOR GERMAN CULTURE THE CONCEPT OF HEIMAT) CAN ONLY BELONG TO THE PAST WITH ITS IMAGE CHERISHED IN MEMORY. MODERN MAN IS CALLED TO AN ADVENTUROUS EXISTENCE OF JOURNEYING AND MIGRATIONS.<sup>13</sup>

UNDOUBTEDLY THIS JOURNEY HAS A GOAL BUT THIS GOAL DOES NOT HAVE THE FULLNESS AND RICHNESS OF HEIMAT. NEVERTHELESS THE JOURNEY IS GUIDED BY LONGING FOR HOME, A "SHELTER WITHIN MYSELF WHERE MY EGO ALONE RESIDES". THIS CREATES A PARADOX WHERE THE DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO FIND THE TRUE HOME IS BASED RATHER ON REJECTION OF THE REST OF THE WORLD EVEN INCREASING THE GAP BETWEEN INNER AND OUTER EXPERIENCES. DWELLING THEREFORE CAN BE SEEN NOT AS AN INTEGRATION WITH THE WORLD AND PHYSICAL REALITY BUT A SEPARATION FROM IT.

WE HAVE GONE SO FAR FROM UNITY AND HARMONY, FROM A SENSE OF ONENESS WITH A PLACE, THAT THERE IS NO ROOM LEFT FOR NOSTALGIA, THE HOME IS LOST FOREVER...

AND YET, WHERE ARE WE GOING TO ON THAT "CITY-PLANE", ALL OF US, TRAVELERS, WANDERERS AND HERMITS? WHAT LANDS DO WE SEEK IN THE WORLD OF INFERTILE SOILS ON WHICH ONLY ONE PLANT SURVIVED - MODERNITY.

ALTHOUGH NOWADAYS UTOPIA IS REJECTED, FREQUENTLY CALLED A TOTALITARIAN BELIEF IN TECHNOPTOPIA, I THINK IT IS QUITE INTERESTING TO TRACK HOW THE MEANING OF UTOPIA WAS CHANGING OVER TIME. STARTING FROM CHRISTIAN ARCHETYPES (WHEN THE NAME WAS NOT YET INVENTED): HEAVEN AND HELL, MILLENNIUM AND APOCALYPSE TO THOMAS MORE'S MASTERPIECE AND WILLIAM MORRIS'S "NEWS FROM NOWHERE", UTOPIA WAS CONSIDERED AS A FIXED SYSTEM PROJECTED ONTO DISTANT PLACES, HIDDEN ISLANDS.

WITH THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION UTOPIA FOR THE FIRST TIME ACQUIRES A DUAL CHARACTER. ON THE ONE HAND SPECIFIED BEING ENTREPRENEURIAL CLASS IT BEGINS TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH TIME QUALITIES, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS. ON THE OTHER HAND IT FACES THE OPPOSITION FROM ROMANTICISM, HONORING NATURE AND TRADITIONALISM OF RURAL LIFE.<sup>14</sup> IN "AND DID THOSE FEET IN ANCIENT TIME" WILLIAM BLAKE CALLS INDUSTRIAL MACHINES AND FACTORIES "DARK SATANIC MILLS", WHILE USING THE METAPHOR OF JERUSALEM AS FOR HEAVEN, A PLACE OF UNIVERSAL LOVE AND PEACE.

TWO CENTURIES LATER THE IDEA TRANSFORMS INTO A COMPLETELY RADICAL THOUGHT. KARL MARX WAS PREDICTING FUTURE IN ITS REJECTION. IN HIS VIEW THE TRUE CHANGE DEFEATS THE CATEGORIES WE CURRENTLY HAVE TO HAND. IF WE CAN SPEAK OF THE FUTURE AT ALL, IT FOLLOWS THAT WE ARE STILL TIED TO SOME EXTENT TO THE PRESENT.<sup>15</sup>

THE MARXIST PHILOSOPHER WALTER BENJAMIN REMINDS US THAT THE ANCIENT JEWS WERE FORBIDDEN TO MAKE ICONS OF WHAT WAS TO COME, AS WELL AS THEY WERE FORBIDDEN TO MAKE GRAVEN IMAGES OF YAHWEH. THE TWO PROHIBITIONS ARE CLOSELY RELATED SINCE FOR THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES YAHWEH IS THE GOD OF THE FUTURE, WHOSE KINGDOM OF JUSTICE AND FRIENDSHIP IS STILL TO COME. BESIDES, THE ONLY IMAGE OF GOD FOR JUDAISM IS HUMAN FLESH AND BLOOD. FOR BENJAMIN, SEEKING TO PORTRAY THE FUTURE WAS A SORT OF FETISHISM.<sup>16</sup>

IN THIS PERIOD UTOPIA ACHIEVABLE IN PRESENT IS AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A PERFECT COMMUNITY AND BECOMES THE POWERFUL TOOL FOR SOCIALISTS, COMMUNISTS, ANARCHISTS, HIPPIES AND SO FORTH.

AFTERWARDS, THE HISTORICAL LESSONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN ADDITION TO THE INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT HAVE MADE UTOPIA A SYNONYM OF NEGATIVE THINKING, BRINGING IT RATHER CLOSER TO DYSTOPIA. GREGORY CLAEYS DESCRIBES DYSTOPIA IN HIS "SEARCHING FOR UTOPIA: THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA" AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPT IN THE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN PERIODS, AS A POLITICAL REALITY MANIFESTED IN THE TOTALITARIANISM OF HITLER AND STALIN, AND AS A LITERARY FORM, ORIGINATING AS A "REACTION TO POPULAR REVOLUTIONISM" AND COMING TO "SATIRIZE . . . THE EXTREMES OF UTOPIAN AMBITION". NOTABLY HE FINISHES THE BOOK WITH A DYSTOPIAN VISION PREDICTING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE POLAR ICE CAPS AND GLOBAL WARMING WHICH WILL DRIVE THE LARGE POPULATIONS OF PEOPLE FROM ANYWHERE NEAR THE EQUATOR. CLAEYS ARGUES THAT DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE CAN HELP US TO AVOID THE WORST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS: "THE NEW, IT WARNS US, IS NOT ALWAYS THE BETTER.

'PROGRESS' IS NOT AUTOMATIC, AND MAY BE DANGEROUS. WHAT BENEFITS THE FEW MAY HARM THE MANY. MACHINES MAY DEVOUR US. SO MAY CORPORATIONS OR REVOLUTIONARIES."<sup>17</sup>

ALTHOUGH THIS MAY SOUND LIKE TECHNOPHOBIA, PERHAPS, THE GLOBAL POLITICS NOWADAYS REQUIRE BOTH UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN THINKING TO IMAGINE AN ALTERNATIVE TO A NEOLIBERAL FUTURE.

UNFORTUNATELY NOWADAYS THE UTOPIAN IMPULSE IS ALMOST INVISIBLE. ONE CAN EVEN SAY THAT UTOPIAN THINKING IS NOT ACHIEVABLE IN THE WORLD WHERE APOCALYPSES ARE MUCH MORE EASIER TO IMAGINE THAN THE END OF CAPITALISM<sup>18</sup> - AND WILL BE PARTLY RIGHT. OBVIOUSLY MOST HISTORICAL FORMS OF UTOPIA ARE OUTDATED: THE UTOPIA OF DESIRE MAKE LITTLE SENSE IN A SOCIETY OVERRUN BY CHEAP ENTERTAINMENT, UBIQUITOUS CONSUMERISM AND NARCISSISTIC BEHAVIOR. THE UTOPIA OF JUSTICE HAVE BEEN LARGELY CRITICIZED AS ALWAYS TURNING INTO DICTATORSHIP. AFTER THE GULAG ARCHIPELAGO, THE KHMER ROUGE'S KILLING FIELDS AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, THESE UTOPIA SEEM TO BE COMPLETELY DEAD. FINALLY THE UTOPIA OF TECHNOLOGY ARE FRIGHTENING MORE THAN EVER BEFORE. AFTER HIROSHIMA AND CHERNOBYL WE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE DESTRUCTIVE POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES TOO, THE INCREASING COMPUTER AND NETWORK SURVEILLANCE AND CYBER SPYING DRAW A MELANCHOLIC PICTURE OF A TOTAL CONTROL SOCIETY.

INDEED ALL CLASSICAL UTOPIAS WERE EITHER TOO GRANDIOSE, TOO RATIONALISTIC OR TOO INHUMANE, YET THE HOPE IS STILL ALIVE. IN MY VIEW THE MODERN SOCIETY HAS AN URGENT CALL FOR UTOPIA. UNDOUBTEDLY THE IDEA HAS ALWAYS BEEN, IS AND WILL BE UNREALISTIC, HOWEVER THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT IT HAS NO APPLICATION TO REALITY. WHAT MAKES UTOPIA DIFFERENT TODAY IS IT'S CONSTRUCTIBILITY.

IT NO LONGER LIES IN PURSUING THE IDEAL WORLDS BUT IN PROGRESSION ITSELF, NOT PERFECTION. WE NEED THE ABILITY TO LOOK BEYOND THE PRESENT (EVEN IF NOT TO THE FUTURE) AND STRIVE FOR IMPROVEMENT, NO MATTER HOW COMFORTABLE WE FEEL IN OUR SHELLS.

NOWADAYS WE CAN NOT AFFORD OURSELVES TO REMAIN SATISFIED AND PASSIVE. THE RAPID CLIMATE CHANGE AND ANOTHER BILLION OF PEOPLE BY 2030 WILL CERTAINLY ACCUMULATE THE SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF INHABITING THE PLANET. IF WE DON'T COME UP WITH A SOLUTION, THEN WE RISK LOOSING NOT ONLY OUR HOME SUBSTITUTES BUT THE BODIES ITSELF.

# LOOSING BODIES

WHILE THE DEBATES ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF GLOBALIZATION ON CULTURAL IDENTITY ALWAYS REFER TO DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES, XENOPHOBIA AND DEMOGRAPHIC FEAR ONLY REINFORCE ENCAPSULATION.

THE RISE OF BIOPOLITICS AND DIGITAL CONTROL ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF IT. BANK ACCOUNT AND CLIENT NUMBER, BIOMETRIC PASSPORT, CHIP, DIGITAL FINGERPRINT AND IRIS SCAN ARE THE TRUE IDENTITIES OF THE MODERN MAN (NOT COUNTING SOCIAL ACCOUNTS OF COURSE).

MANY AUTHORS, FROM MICHEL FOUCAULT AND GIORGIO AGAMBEN TO ANTONIO NEGRI AND MICHAEL HARDT, HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT BIOPOLITICS AS THE REALM IN WHICH POLITICAL WILL AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL POWER TO SHAPE THINGS ARE MANIFESTED TODAY.

IN HIS BOOK "HOMO SACER: SOVEREIGN POWER AND BARE LIFE" AGAMBEN DESCRIBES THE MODERNITY AS A CONTRADICTION BETWEEN BIOLOGICAL EXISTENCE (ZOE) AND THE POLITICAL LIFE OF SPEECH AND ACTION (BIOS), BETWEEN MERE LIFE AND A GOOD LIFE. HE BORROWS THE TERM OF HOMO SACER FROM THE ROMAN LAW DRAWING HIS PROTAGONIST, THE PERSON WHO "CAN BE KILLED BUT NOT SACRIFICED". ACCORDING TO AGAMBEN, THE SACREDNESS OF HOMO SACER INDICATES THE ABANDONED STATUS OF A MODERN MAN IN RELATION TO THE LAW. THE SACRED MAN IS TAKEN OUTSIDE AS THE EXCEPTION AND THUS ABANDONED. IN HIS VIEW THE FACT THAT THE STATE OF EXCEPTION HAS BECOME THE NORM OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICS MEANS THAT IT IS NOT ONLY SOME SUBJECTS ARE ABANDONED BY THE LAW; RATHER HE SAYS THAT IN OUR AGE "WE ARE ALL VIRTUALLY HOMINES SACRI".

IN THE SAME WORK GIORGIO AGAMBEN INTRODUCES THE NOTION OF A BARE LIFE QUESTIONING HOW THE LIFE IS POLITICIZED NOWADAYS. BEING NEITHER BIOS NOR ZOE HE DEFINES BARE LIFE AS THE LIFE EXPOSED TO DEATH. THE AUTHOR MAKES AN ANALOGY WITH CONCENTRATION CAMP WHERE EXCLUSION IS A NORMAL SITUATION AND THE LIVING BODY IS BECOMING THE RULE AND CRITERION OF ITS OWN APPLICATION.

INDEED IN THE AGE OF FEAR AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES, EVERYTHING BECOMES A COMMODITY: HUMAN THOUGHTS, WATER, LAND, HUMAN ORGANS, GENES... THE LIFE IS NO LONGER UNDERSTOOD AS A NATURAL EVENT, BUT RATHER AN ARTIFICIALLY PRODUCED TIME FRAME. PERHAPS THE NEW ERA HAS FOUND ITS OWN ANSWER TO THE ETERNAL QUESTION "WHO WE ARE". ENERGY AND INTELLECTUAL RESOURCES, BIOMATERIAL.

THE REJECTION OF MORAL PRINCIPALS SEEMS TO BE LOGIC: AS WE CAN'T STOP

POPULATION GROWTH MAYBE WE CAN CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OF "UNWANTED BODIES" TO "OPPORTUNITIES". WE USED TO THINK OF ENERGY AS THE PRODUCT OF NATURAL FORCES WHICH IS COMING FROM THE OUTSIDE AND EXISTS IN A VARIETY OF FORMS - MECHANICAL, CHEMICAL, HEAT, ELECTRICAL, LIGHT, AND NUCLEAR KNOWN TO DATE, HOWEVER THE HUMAN BODY IS A GREAT SOURCE OF ENERGY ITSELF WHERE AT LEAST FOUR OF THESE FORMS ARE PRESENT. OUR BODIES POSSESS STORES OF CHEMICAL ENERGY THAT CAN BE USED TO PRODUCE ELECTRICAL ENERGY FOR CREATION OF ELECTRICAL NERVE IMPULSES, TO PRODUCE HEAT TO HELP KEEP OUR BODY TEMPERATURE AT 37°C EVEN ON COLD DAYS, AND TO PRODUCE MECHANICAL WORK THROUGH MUSCLE SHORTENING SO THAT WE CAN MOVE. IT WON'T COME AS A SURPRISE IF ONE DAY THE HUMAN RESOURCES WILL BECOME THE BIOLOGICAL TERM.

THE GREEN MICROGYM IN PORTLAND, OREGON HAS ALREADY CREATED THE MACHINES LIKE STATIONARY BIKES HARVESTING ENERGY DURING THE WORKOUTS. EVERY PEDAL TURN HELPS TO POWER THE BUILDING. THE ROTTERDAM'S ENERGY FLOORS DEVELOPED THE FLOORS WHICH CAPTURE THE ENERGY OF THE PUBLIC AND CONVERT THE KINETIC ENERGY FROM HUMAN MOVEMENT TO ELECTRICITY.<sup>19</sup>

BEYOND BODY-POWERED GYMS AND DANCE CLUBS, THE IDEA IS ALSO USED TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY FOR MORE ORDINARY, USEFUL THINGS. SMART CLOTHES AND GEAR CAN POTENTIALLY HARVEST THE HUMAN ENERGY TO CHARGE BATTERIES AND GADGETS.

SOON NONE OF OUR MOVEMENTS WILL BE WASTED.

ZHONG LIN WANG FROM GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON A POLYMER FILM WHICH MAKES NANOFIBERS WATERPROOF SO THEY CAN BE IMPLANTED IN OUR BODIES. THERE THEY WOULD HARVEST KINETIC ENERGY FROM THE STEADY DILATION AND CONTRACTION OF BLOOD VESSELS, PROVIDING A SOURCE OF ELECTRICITY FOR PACEMAKERS, INSULIN PUMPS AND OTHER MEDICAL DEVICES.<sup>20</sup> THE BIONIC ENERGY MIGHT BECOME AN ALTERNATIVE POWER IN 21ST CENTURY BUT PROBABLY THE FUTURE IS IN THE ABSENCE OF THE BODY AS SUCH. IMAGINE THE HUMANKIND FREED FROM THE LIMITATIONS OF BIOLOGICAL LIFE. NOT A ROBOT, AN ANDROID OR A CYBORG BUT A TRUE TRANSCENDENTAL MIND REPLICATED IN A FORM OF CODE AND RUN BY THE PROCESSOR.

WE CAN GO EVEN FURTHER BY CONNECTING EVERY INDIVIDUAL TO THE GLOBAL CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT WHICH COLLECT AND ANALYZE ALL THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE HUMAN ACTIVITY. THIS IS A DREAM OF ULTIMATE TRANSPARENCY, A SOCIAL FORM IN WHICH THE DESIRES OF THE INDIVIDUAL ARE INSEPARABLE FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY. IN THE TRANSPARENT SOCIETY THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NO LONGER BE NECESSARY, MOREOVER IT IS UNLIKELY THAT IT WOULD EVER HAVE THE CAPACITY TO STORE THE WHOLE DATA EVEN IF IT IS NOT EVEN COPING RIGHT NOW.

THE ALGORITHM WILL BECOME THE ONLY MONARCH FOR PEOPLE ON THE EARTH. WHILE FOR SOME THE IDEAS OF BRAIN PRESERVATION SEEMS LIKE A BRIGHT UTOPIA, FOR OTHERS IT IS A PURE NIGHTMARE. THE MODERN TRANSHUMANIST PROGRAMS VARY FROM THE THERAPEUTIC (GENETICS, IMPLANTS) TO THE FULL DOWNLOADING OF CONSCIOUSNESS,<sup>21</sup> HOWEVER THE CONSTANT REMAINS WHETHER THERE ARE THE SACROSANCT BOUNDARIES THAT SHOULD BE RESPECTED AS TECHNOLOGY

INCREASINGLY ENTERS AND AFFECTS OUR LIVES. IS THERE THE LINE THAT ONCE  
CROSSED, LEADS TO THE DEATH OF THE HUMAN?

ON THE ONE HAND THE DEATH IN SUCH A CONTEXT CAN BE CONSIDERED NOT AS AN  
OCCURRENCE BUT RATHER AS LONG-TERM PROCESS THAT HAS STARTED A WHILE AGO.  
TRANSFORMATION OF ONE SPECIES INTO ANOTHER, AS TECHNO-SAPIENS WAS  
BORN HOMO SAPIENS MUST DIE.

ON THE OTHER HAND IN ORDER TO BE REBORN IN THE NEW VIRTUAL BODIES HOMO  
SAPIENS PROBABLY HAVE TO EXPERIENCE THE "REAL" INFORMATION-THEORETIC DEATH  
WHICH IS MOMENTARY AND IRREVERSIBLE. ALTHOUGH THE TERM IS MOSTLY USED IN  
CRYONICS, I THINK THE CONCEPT OF IT CAN HELP TO EXPLAIN THE ETHICAL  
CONTROVERSY OF DIGITAL IMMORTALITY.

INFORMATION-THEORETIC DEATH IS A CONDITION WHEN NONE OF FUTURE  
TECHNOLOGIES ARE CAPABLE OF RECREATING THE ORIGINAL STATE OF THE BRAIN  
THAT ENCODES HUMAN MEMORIES, PERSONALITY, HOPES, DREAMS ETC.

ACCORDING TO RALPH MERKLE THE MIND CAN BE DEFINED BY A PARTICULAR  
INSTANCE OF A BRAIN (OR AN ARTIFICIAL BRAIN, IF AND WHEN SUCH A THING  
BECOMES POSSIBLE). THE BRAIN ON ITS TURN IS A PHYSICAL OBJECT GOVERNED BY  
PHYSICAL LAW WHICH CAN BE SPECIFIED BY A SUFFICIENTLY ACCURATE DESCRIPTION,  
THAT IS, BY A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF BITS.<sup>22</sup> THESE FACTS MAKES HIM TO CONCLUDE  
THAT THE HUMAN MIND CAN BE FULLY DESCRIBED BY AN APPROPRIATE DIGITAL  
DESCRIPTION, MUCH AS ANY PIECE OF MUSIC CAN BE DESCRIBED BY AN MP3 FILE AND  
ANY IMAGE CAN BE DESCRIBED BY A JPG FILE.

BUT IS NOT THE DIGITAL FILE IS JUST THE COPY OF THE ORIGINAL? AND HOW A HUMAN  
PROGRAM CAN POSSIBLY BE ABLE TO PERCEIVE ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF THEIR DEVICE,  
EVEN JUST THE 3D OBJECTS?

THE COMPLETE LIBERATION OF THE LAND FROM THE PHYSICAL NEEDS OF HUMANS  
WOULD BE A SOLUTION TO A NUMBER OF GLOBAL ISSUES, YET I DOUBT THE  
POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFERRING THE HUMAN INTELLIGENCE TO COMPUTER WITHOUT A  
SIGNIFICANT LOSS TO IDENTITY.

WE ARE NOT OUR BRAINS (AT LEAST NOT COMPLETELY) BUT A RESULT OF COMPLEX  
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE BODY AND THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT. THE  
DESIRE TO ESCAPE OUR EMBODIMENT WOULD COST OF DISSOLVING THE WHOLE RANGE  
OF EXPERIENCES THAT CONSTITUTE THE HUMAN BEING.

PERHAPS IN THE FUTURE SOCIETY THE CHANCE TO HAVE A PHYSICAL BODY WILL  
BECOME THE PRIVILEGE INSTEAD OF NATURAL LAW OR, VICE VERSA, THE CURSE FOR  
THOSE WHO CAN NOT AFFORD THE STERILE LIFE IN THE DIGITAL SPACE.

IN FACT THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM, WHAT IS IMPORTANT THAT  
BOTH ARE THE RESULT OF ESCAPING THE GRAVITY OF MATTER, THE TENDENCY  
INHERENT IN OUR PRESENT.

I REMEMBER A HOMELESS PERSON WALKING UP AND DOWN THE SAME STREET EVERY  
DAY. IN MYMEMORY HE GOT THINNER AND THINNER, LAST TIME I SAW HIM, HE LOOKED  
ALMOST TRANSPARENT.

FIRST HE MOVED BY HIMSELF, THEN WITH A STICK, NOW I DON'T SEE HIM ANYMORE. IF  
I COULD DESCRIBE IN ONE SENTENCE THE STATE OF THE SOCIETY TODAY, I WOULD

SAY: "HOMELESS PEOPLE LOOSING WEIGHT."

THE MODERN ANXIETY, IN MY OPINION, LIES IN HUMAN JEALOUSNESS OF TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY TO BECOME LIGHTER, FASTER AND SMARTER. SINCE THE ANCIENT TIMES, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BODY SIZE AND TIME. THEY HAVE NOTICED THAT THE INSECTS, FOR EXAMPLE, MOVE MUCH FASTER THAN THE REPTILES, AND THOSE ARE FASTER THAN HUMANS. THEY HAVE MEASURED THE RATE OF MAMMAL'S HEARTBEAT AND CALCULATED THE PROPORTION TO THEIR WEIGHT. AS A RESULT, THEY HAVE FOUND A UNIQUE FORMULA: THE TIME IS PROPORTIONAL TO THE WEIGHT RAISED TO THE ONE-FOURTH WHICH MEANS THAT THE WEIGHT BECOMES SIXTEEN TIMES HEAVIER AND THE TIME PERCEPTION BECOMES TWO TIMES SLOWER.<sup>23</sup> AND IF BIOLOGICALLY IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THE TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN INTO AN ANT OR A MICRO HUMAN, THEN THE COMPUTER SCIENCE GIVE THE IDEA AN EDGE.

FROM THE AESTHETIC PERSPECTIVE TOO, THE DRIVE TOWARDS TRANSPARENCY, MOVABILITY AND LIGHTNESS BECOMES APPARENT IN DIFFERENT ART DISCIPLINES. ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN ITEMS ARE PRODUCED TO CORRESPOND TO OUR BODILY FEELING. THE MAJORITY WANTS TO BE SPORTIVE, FLUID AND FLEXIBLE, DRIVE A SMART CAR, WEAR LIGHTWEIGHT CLOTHING, CARRY PORTABLE ELECTRONICS AND LIVE IN AN OPEN BRIGHT HOUSE.

THIS ALSO REFLECTS THE CONTEMPORARY MENTAL CONDITION IN WHICH ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE BECOME INTERPENETRATING. WE NO LONGER WANT TO BE SURROUNDED BY ANYTHING HEAVY OR MONUMENTAL BECAUSE IT REMINDS US OF OUR OWN CORPOREALITY.

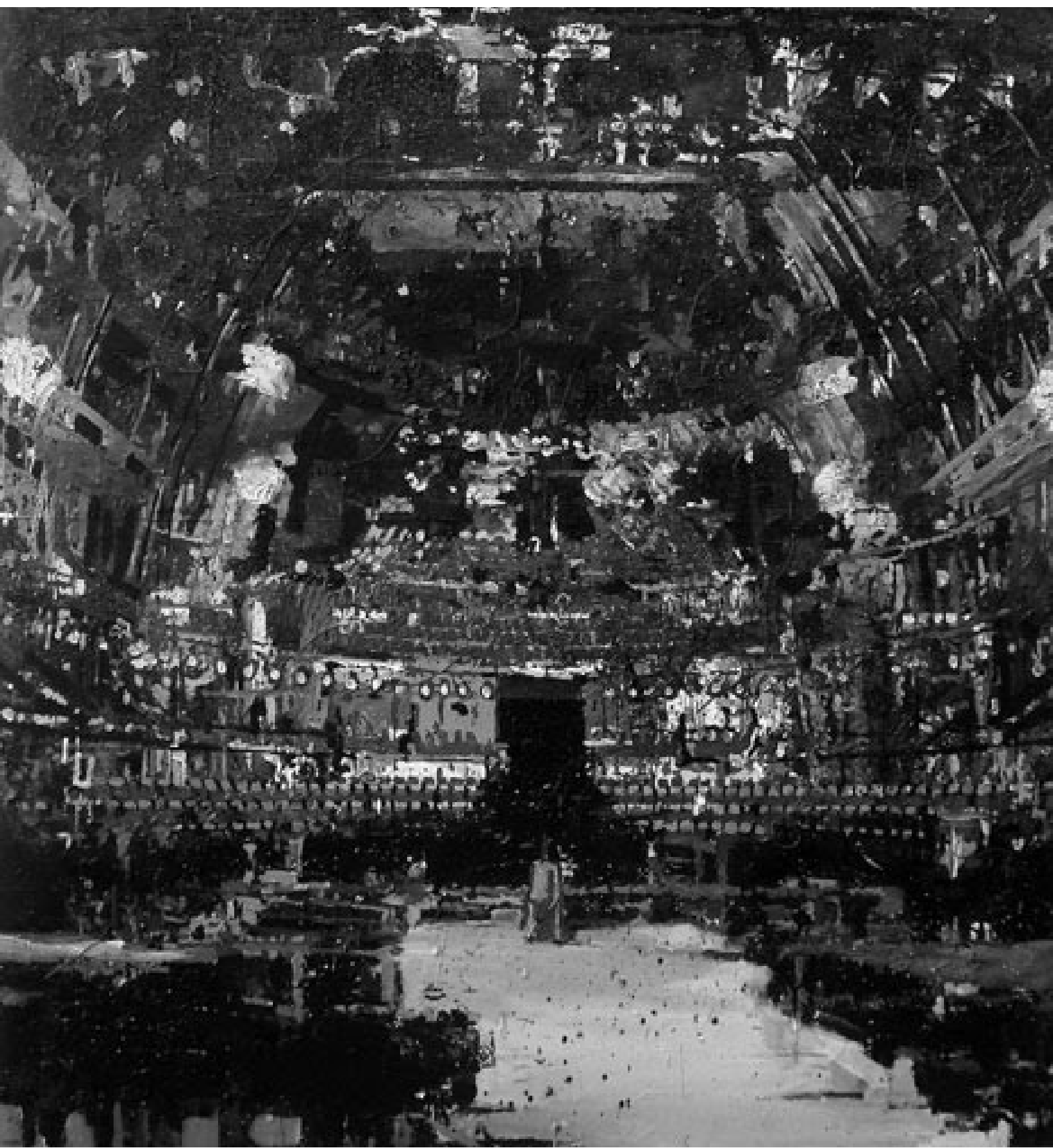
IF ERNST BLOCH WAS RIGHT CALLING ART A LABORATORY IN WHICH EVENTS, FIGURES, AND CHARACTERS ARE TESTED FOR THEIR POTENTIAL, THEN THE HUMAN FUTURE IS LITERALLY EVAPORATING.<sup>24</sup>

PARADOXICALLY ENOUGH, YET THE AMBITION OF DISEMBODIED WEIGHTLESSNESS TURNS TO BE NO MORE THAN ANOTHER DEFENSIVE MECHANISM AGAINST AN UNSTABLE CONDITION OF THE WORLD. CALLING OURSELVES THE "MEATBAGS" WE WANT TO BE TAKEN FURTHER, BEYOND THE MATERIALITY, BUT EVERY ATTEMPT WE MAKE BRINGS US CLOSER TO THE MOST RADICAL FORM OF ENCAPSULATION -CONFINEMENT. THIS IS A THRESHOLD. WE ARE CURRENTLY REACHING AN EMOTIONAL AND INTELLECTUAL VACUUM IN OUR BUBBLES. THE CAPSULE IS NO LONGER A SAFE PLACE, IT ACQUIRES THE FEATURES OF A CARNIVOROUS PLANT LOCKING UP A MAN IN A PRISON OF SATISFACTION.

EVENTUALLY THE PERSONALITY BLURS LEAVING THE ROOM FOR UNIFIED COMPOSITION. IT IS TOO SOON TO SAY WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE PROCESS OF THIS FERMENTATION BUT ONE THING IS CLEAR, THE HUMAN AS WE KNOW HIM WILL CEASE TO EXIST.

BACK TO THE UTOPIA/DYSTOPIAN THINKING I TRULY BELIEVE THAT WE NEED TO UPDATE OUR MORAL CONSTITUTION. TO STAY FIRM ON THE GROUND, WE ONCE AGAIN HAVE TO REMIND OURSELVES HOW VALUABLE OUR BEING IS AND CHALLENGE THE NOTIONS WE HOLD ABOUT LIFE OF PROSPERITY.





TJEBBE BEEKMAN. PAINTING

AMDERMA IS A RURAL LOCALITY IN ZAPOLYARNY DISTRICT IN RUSSIA, THREE TIMES ABANDONED, TWO TIMES REBUILT. FROM NENETS LANGUAGE TRANSLATED AS A WALRUS ROOKERY, AMDERMA SYMBOLIZES THE HUMAN HOPE OF FINDING A HOME AND OWN "SKIN", AN ANALOGY WITH MYTHOLOGICAL SELKIE.

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