

A tale of two feathers

An interview to D. Grahame Shane

Entrevista:

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Usually, when journalists or writers make a frame for a well-known and relevant person in the context of contemporary culture, they cast him with the best comparative peers, to calibrate his significance. A sharp reader can remember how, in one of the many compilation books on his interviews, the prologist compares Foucault with Diogenes, to argue that the utility of philosophy was, for the great *doxograph*, to be prepared and prepare to every eventuality. As the Greek supports, so the French maintains, we could say. And, in the wild encounter after the comparison, there are no words to express the admiration for the audacity, for the focused person who finally acquired new wings to fly higher. In this way, interrogated himself in the retirement tribute lecture after five decades teaching, Colin Rowe used masterfully a Giambattista Tiepolo's picture with tumbled angels out from the frame to express his vertigo towards the heights (trying to climb to the great knowledge) inducing him to fall, as a Modern Icarus. Joan Ockman was the one who told us the story, now history, and in addition to more peers, as James Stirling, Alvin Boyarsky, Fred Koetter and many others.

Brueghel, the Elder, fascinated his contemporaries with an earlier but also impressive picture in which you can see peasants attending their normal duties, ploughing, fishing, sailing to a safe port. In it, an oversized sun in the background places limits to the composition, but also to the human ambition.

The captivated people saw themselves epitomized instead of the divinity or other higher iconography. The title was "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus", but Icarus was not there, in the sky. Icarus was visible only for two of his feathers, just in the very moment he crashed into the sea, absolute in the immaterial air, floating detached and delayed in comparison with his two white legs still visible in the water. One of the peasants still is looking up, not enough interested on inquiring the source of an inconsequential whisper.

Icarus, son of the master architect Daedalus, creator of the Cretan Labyrinth, provokes a genetic transformation in the time, by means of which we see frames that we now call cities and with relevant figures still in the air. It is necessary to recall a preceding picture, perhaps the original version, is exactly the same as the Brueghel's one, and still contains the image of Daedalus and the peasant looking at him, heading up.

If architecture and the city are the superimposition of what is visible and invisible, the recombinant action of urban norms and forms, architect's decisions, evolving theories. If they play to generate a complex time, synthetic, a hybrid product of the "spirit" of history, or *zeitgeist*, this is the thought of a descendant architect with lineage of all these main figures in modern and contemporary architecture and urban design.

After training and influencing students and architects for decades, as well as writing about Architecture, as in his referential book "Recombinant Urbanism", D. Grahame Shane is not only one of these descendants, but also an ascendant. He was trained by Colin Rowe, colleague and friend of Boyarsky, Stirling, Dalivor Vesely, Sam Stevens, Bernardo Secchi and Paola Viganò, Lebbeus Woods, Arie Grafland, Steven Peterson, and so many other well-known architectural peers. But the worth extracted of all of them to apply him, to our eyes, is neither the decentred frame, nor the censor sun, he is not the cynic philosopher, nor the jealousy architect, as Diogenes and Daedalus were. The quality is the honesty, the knowledge and restless curiosity he possesses of all those historical and as well contemporary human landmarks in architectural and urban theory and manages to explain, inside the frame, things they could not.

(MRA+CTM) Do you share the feeling expressed by Brueghel the Elder's picture, in the sense of the indifference of society in the banalization of culture, where the architect only would appear showing tragically his legs in the hope of something else, whatever, for his rescue?

(GS) What a wonderful way to begin with the 2 Brussels pictures! Do you think Brueghel shows the banalization of culture? Obviously the architect is irrelevant if he is Icarus and you make a beautiful connection to Rowe's final lecture with his fear of vertigo, his reaction late in life to the constant cries of crisis in architecture. If there was no crisis, why would anyone cut the picture down, crop it to remove the successful, wise father figure in the 1560's?

This is a very political question as the Protestant Dutch States in the 1560's had just begun their revolt against the Spanish Occupation of the Netherlands, the result of the dynastic marriages of the Catholic Hapsburgs. Perhaps Brueghel cut down the picture to remove the high-flying Emperor whose empire stretched across the globe? Perhaps Icarus is the Emperor's representative, his surrogate son, the cruel Duke of Alba who brought mercenary armies and the Inquisition to quell the resistance and wrought havoc, ruining trade and agriculture? Then his disappearance would not be a cause for sorrow?

Brueghel began painting in Antwerp at the height of its mercantile power in the 1560's. If the ship in the *Fall of Icarus* was Dutch then the cropped absence of the father emphasizing the unnoticed disappearance of the son and the prominence of the setting sun would make sense as a commentary on the dream of the end of the Spanish Empire. The Netherlands suffered under its hubris, based on gold brought from Latin America debasing all the currencies of Europe with massive inflation. Of course, the Spanish Empire did go bankrupt shortly after Brueghel's death and the Protestant States gained independence after a 90 year war.

To return to the question of banalization. Is the portrayal of the peasant, the shepherd and fisherman a banalization? They are front and foremost, not part of a crowd and marked as individuals. They represent the Feudal past raised to an idealized level, as in Thomas More's *Utopia*, the classical Humanist text written 50 years earlier in Antwerp. More idealized the medieval world and its charitable hospices Beguinages in Antwerp, voluntary places of refuge supported by the Catholic church for women who became impoverished, making these institutions the model of the social welfare in his utopian city. In addition, More described the geography of Utopia as surrounding a great bay with a fort at the entrance, separating the island city-state from the continent. The inland capital city followed a Italian Renaissance grid plan with a central temple, but there was also a port city where the curving river estuary met the big bay as shown by Brueghel.

Seen from a great height this picture encompasses both the old world of Feudal agriculture giving power to hereditary princes, where peasants were owned like cattle, and simultaneously shows sailors setting sail on ships representing the new global sea power, of commerce, science and engineering reaching out to a new world. The city and architecture have their place at the interface between these two worlds where land a sea meet, Brueghel shows church towers on the skyline of the walled port city. This is the utopic dream of a contemporary Humanist paradise in the midst of a bloody rebellion. From this perspective the role of the city as the interface between two worlds, creating a third is fascinating, especially as it is seen from a fourth aerial perspective.

It is not so easy to transfer this political logic to the contemporary world. Today Icarus would use a handheld phone and the Internet to book a flight on a Dreamliner to a distant destination, flying to an airport, before arriving at a hotel and into the city proper. No need for personal wings. The modern Utopia machine incorporates global logistical systems and cuts everyone down to size except the 1%. So architects legs are sticking out everywhere as the seats shrink. Perhaps the failure of the Paris Climate Accords represents Architect Icarus' last plop?

(MRA+CTM) In an era of post-truthy alternative facts, of simulacra, do you think that Architecture is present in the political table? How do you define the role of the architect today?

(GS) In a superficial way Architecture is at the political table as a utopian "Green Wash" ignoring fundamental ecological facts of the contemporary urban system that will need major restructuring if climate scientists are right.

Few architects treat seriously the potential threat of large-scale disruption of the political system in the future as some geographers and the American military does. It is a depressing and dystopic projection, another crisis that humans hope to avoid without taking evasive action. Top American climate scientist Jim Hansen claims that the last time there was this much heat in the earth's atmosphere water levels were 75ft/25meters higher, as satellite's report the earth's axis shifting as the weight of ice disappears from the poles. It is an alarming prognosis.

It is an age of global information, satellites and sensors providing massive amounts of ecological and other data that belongs to the world of ships and machines detailed with such love by Brueghel by the sea shore. Now these machines extend to spacecraft and jumbo-jets, mega container ships and atomic armed submarines that disappear underwater for months at a time. It is an age of aerial perspectives, upclose and remote. Satellite navigation guides cars, even pedestrians getting lost as tourists in the medieval streets of Venice. Everyone relies on the accuracy of such scientific devices for much of contemporary life, tracking packages, timing deliveries, at a personal level tracking heartbeats and regulating medications etc. Today this is a largely automated world that hides its

inequalities around the globe, now offering as a mask the utopian dream of the *Etopia* and "Smart Cities".

Undoubtedly architects are important as the builders of technocratic and utopian cities, but much of the world's urbanization takes the form of shantytowns today, sometimes making up to 60 or 80% of the city fabric. These shanty cities lie outside but in relation to the city machine and make up a strange hybrid. They echo medieval urban forms of self-organization and poverty, yet connect to satellite communication systems and electricity, if not water, sanitation and industrialized society. They are hybrid interfaces, like Brueghel's port city, part medieval cities of faith and charity (with NGO's and the UN), but also modern informational systems. They connect to the informational city and consume industrial products, satellite dishes, cell phones, televisions, even cars and trucks. Since often land tenure is unclear or even shared, like in *Utopia*, these cities are often outside the financial system relying on trade and barter, sharing and family connections, even agricultural ties back to villages.

What is truth in a hybrid city like this with its neo-feudal and other barons? What is the relevance of the architect and his/her clear domain of the bourgeois city machine with its clean, hygienic perspectives as shown in Brueghel? Diogenes, after failing as a banker, lived in the street in a barrel to tell truth before power, begging for a living. He was a showman and irritant. But what if the majority of the multitude lives in a dystopia of barrels without food and clean water but can watch Mexican metacity soap operas on TV and on handhelds? It seems like simulacra rule but truthiness has its limits here as people need water, food, sanitation and air to survive.

(MRA+CTM) In a world of an ever increasing urbanization, partially defined by a technological and informational revolution, but in which the urban space answers to global and economic practices and the city, as you poses, "became a symbolic object, especially for tourists' leisure and pleasure", which kind of city is possible today? What urban processes are you interested in?

(GS) This question points to the problem of the neo-liberal city of consumption and individual choice as a driver of informational, metacity urban economies.

Other drivers include the finance, insurance and real estate industries recycling petro- and electro-dollars in their secure, air-conditioned towers. Once the utopian social democratic programs of the 1940's, 50's and 60's were abandoned in the 1980's of Thatcher and Reagan what should the role of old cities become? Growth was essential for the mythology of neo-liberalism as for the social democratic state. The re-investment of petro-dollars was a big problem as are the trillions of dollars held by electronic and Internet companies off shore today. As David Harvey pointed out in *The Condition of Post-modernity* (1992) investing in real estate produces rent for years to come.

Tourist cities demonstrate the consequences of this condition in extreme form. Clearly the inhabitants of the tourist city suffer the consequences of these investments and often move out, perhaps seeking better schools, environmental conditions or more space, for many different reasons. Few municipalities or architects have a good solution other than total banning of tourism or capitulation to the dollars. Here the low-flying, bottom-up example of Giancarlo de Carlo in Urbino perhaps provides an alternative, social democratic model in the 1960's. His projects in small increments over many years made major provisions for mass tourism, adapting the section of the city for parking with escalator access, while simultaneously upgrading the services to inhabitants in the medieval hill town. It is interesting now to watch contemporary Asian and Chinese cities adjusting to their changing economy, promoting historic preservation and tourism.

The tourist city represents one way in which historic cities can survive. Paolo Portoghesi had already pointed in this direction in the *Presence of the Past* Architectural Biennale of 1982. It is not perfect, but perhaps essential services get upgraded in the inevitable gentrification process making the old city more habitable in accommodating machine city components. The future is always uncertain and it is quite possible this upgraded infrastructure will serve different populations in the future when flying becomes expensive again. It is too easy to condemn people's desire for culture, even if it is following a flag with a headset in your language through the Piazza San Marco. Would it be better if people stayed at home with virtual reality machines and the cities were empty except for the 1% elite and backpackers? Should Icarus say how people should spend their leisure?

(MRA+CTM) The growing economic systems in Eastern countries, is enough to have an opportunity and relocate the democratic gravitational world pole, traditionally sited nearby Europe or USA, or a higher prosperity poor in values predicts a "cheaper" global democracy? We mean, by the powerful emergence of incredible new cities, these models haul the form in which were built, including social inequity, freedom abduction, or withdrawal rights, in the permanent city marketing competition around the world?

(GS) This is an impossible question to answer as Asian cities and nations are so complex and varied. There is a huge danger of Orientalism, projecting visions and fantasies, although Asia itself has a mirror Occidentalism of its own, importing urban models and reproducing them at a scale and speed unknown in the original iteration.

Obviously, China stands out if the statistics are to be believed. In the last 20 years the equivalent of the US or the EU population, 350 million people, have officially moved from the countryside to cities. It is hard to imagine the scale of this operation, its speed and scope is unmatched in human history. The state apparatus has made many mistakes but projects to repeat this pattern in the next 10 years, this time settling the "floating" population of perhaps 150 million unofficial migrant workers in the cities so that 70% of the Chinese population is classified as urban.

These are spectacular industrial machine cities produced by an Asian state-corporate hybrid that defies normal European analysis. It difficult, for instance, to say what is public and private, since the state owns the land, banks, pension funds and investment funds, even funding the development corporations and construction companies. It is a very different form of neo-liberalism empowering former peasants as urban citizens. The speed of the transition is remarkable, four times as fast as the UK, twice as fast as Mexico and at a far greater scale.

The result is, as you say, the gravitational pole of global urbanization has undoubtedly shifted away from Europe and the USA. Whether this leads to a "cheaper democracy" is unclear. If the population of a country is 1 billion and 4% become millionaires, that is 40 million millionaires. Europeans and Americans are not used to this scale of thinking. If 35% are

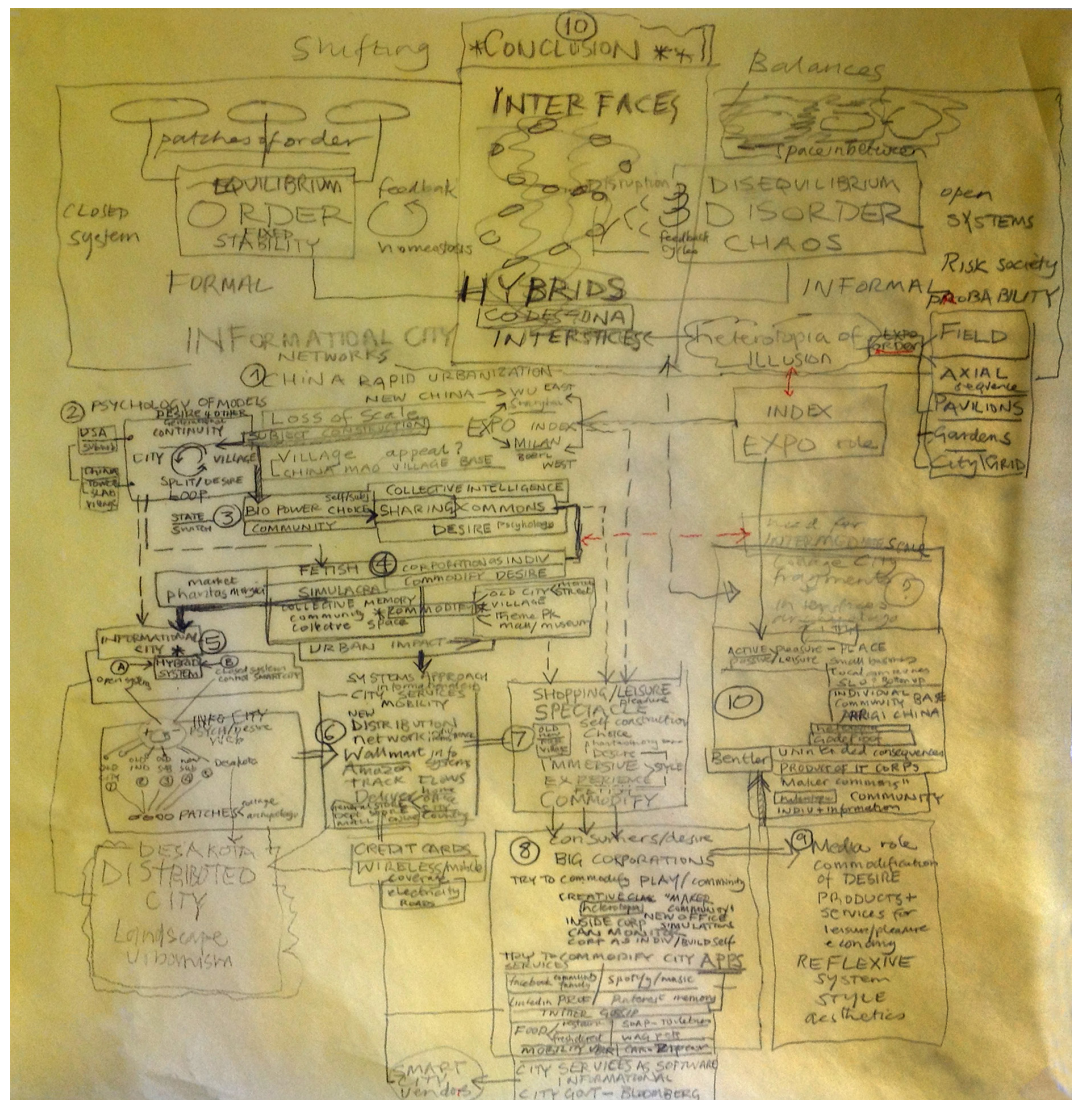
middle class that is 350 million, the population of Europe or the USA. If 50% become urban, that is 500million people. Democracy at this 1 billion scale is a complete unknown, hardly "cheap", probably very difficult. Neither the EU or USA operates at that scale while both have their democratic flaws.

Living in the US or EU with a quarter of the population of China in a comparable landmass it is easy to be critical, projecting our values that sadly we can seldom achieve at home. In reality half the Chinese population still lives in rural conditions of poverty or as the "floating population" in urban villages trapped inside larger city expansions. To witness this enormous planned transformation in a lifetime is amazing. Education and literacy was key in China and presents a huge contrast with the Indian path to

development. Slower maybe be better allowing India to learn from Chinese mistakes but the present Indian plans, if executed, promise to replicate the Chinese model of fast growth megacity machines in regional developments with Indian characteristics. Watching Hong Kong, an ex-British colonial heterotopia, work as a city-state with a dual system of laws inside China provides an insight into the evolving ideas of Asian democracy.

(MRA+CTM) In British Law, there are common law rights, such as personal liberty, access to justice, etc. The catalogue of these rights, which can be derogated from the 'clear' language of a law, is that of a liberal society, where it is understood that the concept of freedom implies the possibility of doing everything that the law does not prohibit.

Image 1: Hand Conceptual diagram on Shane's research "Chinese rapid urbanization". Source: D. Grahame Shane's archive.



What do you consider better, as British born, in the unavoidable globalization, an universal chart for human rights or an universal understanding of the protecting principles of the British Ombudsman?

(GS) British common law was liberal, medieval even, constantly evolving case-by-case, precedent by precedent, a survival from when barons negotiated with the king giving them local control. Before the 1970's people could walk anywhere in Britain across property provided they did no damage. A house that was left empty could be occupied under a law from the Black Death if the front door was not secured. There were countless prohibitions and restrictions on democratic rights in Trafalgar Square, the heart of the Empire, but demonstrations took place there nonetheless. Policemen were unarmed and often lived in the community they patrolled. There was no Ombudsman.

Foucault in his late 1970's lectures idealized the flexible British legal system in contrast to the authoritarian, fixed rights of the French legal codes. He dug deep into the British high school history of Liberalism, never noting its demise in 1910. The execution of Charles I in the British Revolution of the 1640's undoubtedly put an end to the idea of Royalty's divine right to rule in Britain. One proud fellow student's regicide ancestor had signed the warrant for the Royal execution. Coming from a family with three generations of successful lawyers the intricacies of the British system were fascinating. Most of life was lived outside the law and this undoubtedly was what appealed to Foucault and became the basis for his theory of biopolitics giving space to the individual instead of the state.

Ironically in the same period the Thatcher regime shifted to a machine city, neo-liberal, punitive emphasis on property rights over people's rights, creating a huge transformation in British law, making it unrecognisable in a generation. Foucault did not foresee this turn of events or its associated globalization. The results were on display when protesters in the economic crisis of 2007 demonstrated in the City of London. All the new "public" office plazas suddenly became private and closed. So the demonstrators camped in the tiny wedge of the old cemetery beside St Pauls Cathedral, eventually gaining the permission of the Bishop of London to use Church property. A

neo-medieval heterotopia of crisis! The private plaza of the neighbouring Paternoster Square, a post-modern, metacity urban design much praised by Prince Charles, remained barricaded and off limits.

The need for an Ombudsman represents a failure for the old British liberal system that strangely still survives in the courts at the local level. The Ombudsman will still adjudicate on the rights of property, not individuals, as set in current law. Sadly looking across the Channel at the principled system of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity with its rigid forms does not inspire much confidence either as the same inequalities and injustices survive. The Ombudsman represents a media fix for the loss of liberties, a metacity artifice.

(MRA+CTM) Can we say that the modernism and its negative transparent space held a promise and still have here the last chance to accomplish it?

(GS) At one time the transparent space of modernism was part of a Positivist dream of the machine city opening up of old boundaries and limits, allowing a new freedom, light and transparency. This was the promise of the free plan, the pilotis on the garden city ground plane and the literal transparency of the glass facades. Add in the Maison Domino column grid, pedestrian ramps, a few service enclosures and automobile trajectories for much of the poetics of modernism described by Giedion in *Space, Time and Architecture*. Benjamin followed Giedion in seeing the innovative qualities of glass and iron architecture, especially in the Parisian shopping arcades. These machines displayed the fantastical productions of industrial society aimed at modern consumers of fashion, fetish and myth.

In his appreciation of the arcades Benjamin also followed Louis Aragon as he revelled in the low life inside with its absurd juxtapositions and contrasts, tracking past phantasmagorias and consumer fetishes, turning negative into positive, reversing codes. This code reversal was crucial for Benjamin's negative approach to documenting the life of Paris, seeking clues amidst the debris of the material history of bourgeois consumption, tracking the fashionable fetishes and masks that hid the on going disaster inside the heterotopia of illusion.

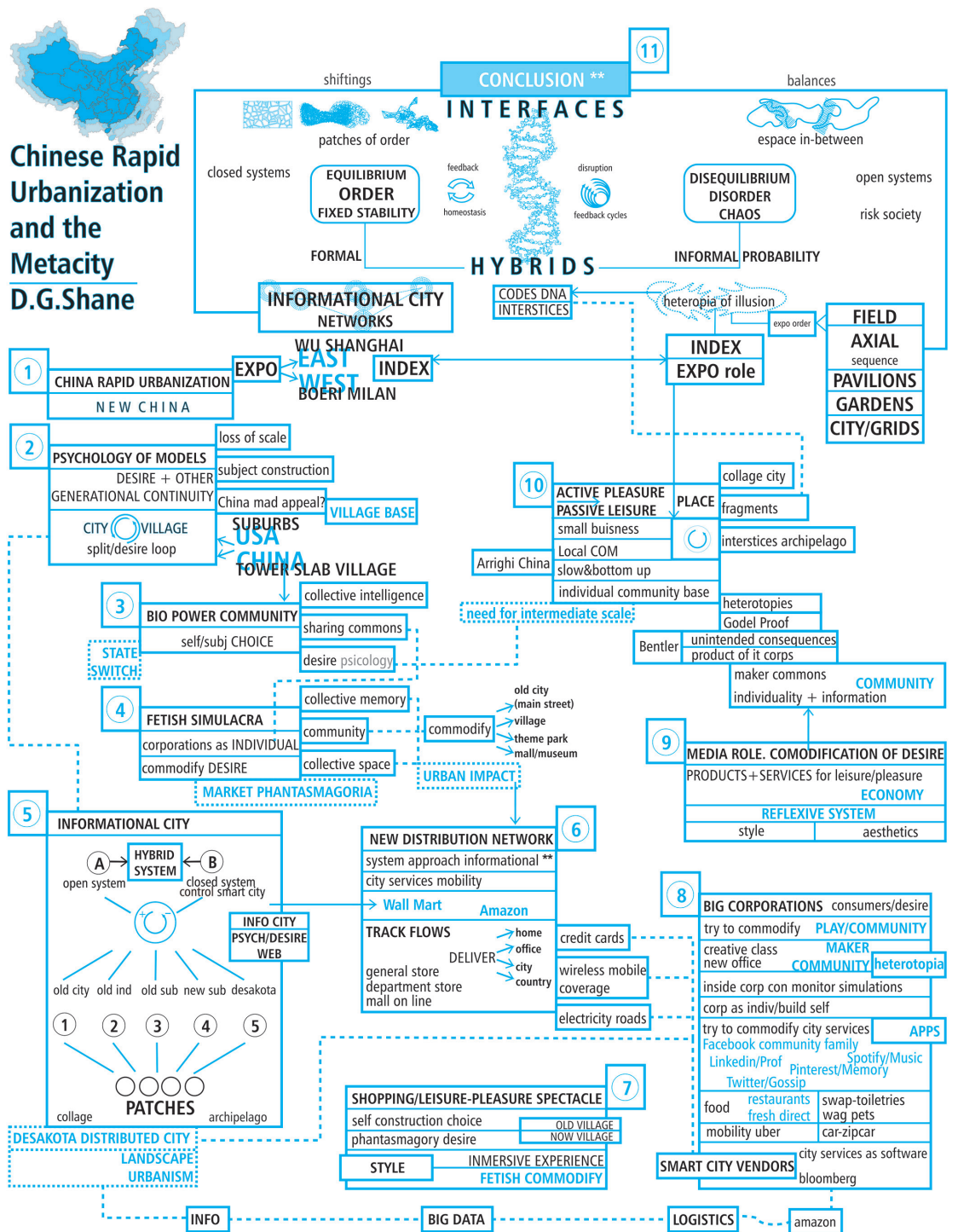


Image 2: Computer Conceptual diagram on Shane's research "Chinese rapid urbanization". Source: drawing by Carlos Tapia.

Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1927) played on exactly this negative, destructive theme laying waste to past bourgeois phantasmagorias. Benjamin and the Surrealists occupied an ambiguous position because, like Foucault later, there was no question of going back to a better time, only the reality of contested space now. Articulating that complexity and extracting beauty from the contrasts and juxtapositions required great patience, observation and poetic skill. Some contemporary architects understand this complex position and take the time. So yes, there is still a last chance!

(MRA+CTM) German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk presents the idea of a spherology, bubbles and foam as a metaphor to explain how we relate to the world around and within us and how, with fragile but well defined limits, we build our own social circles and relationships. Likewise, Byung-Chul Han, argues our society is not anymore a disciplinary society, but a society of achievement, a doped society overloaded with "transparency", mainly of information, in which politics have become merely a referendum. In this context, considering that urban modelling may be an effective method for design practices in an urban context, how do you envisage the conceptual modelling and mental mapping of the contemporary city?

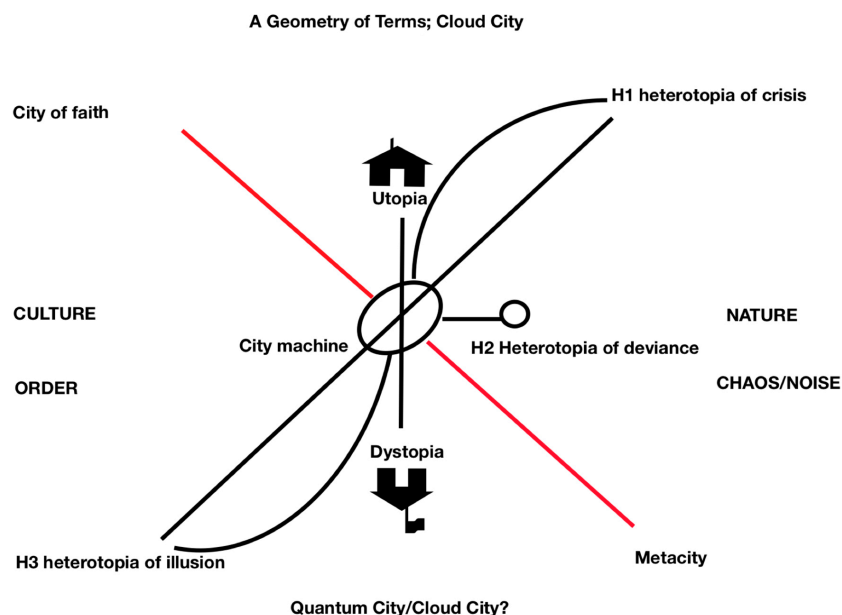
(GS) These are both metacity theories with some explanatory power but in the end fast changing fictions, totalizing heterotopias of Illusion.

Sloterdijk's spherology seems like a continuation of the Germanic tradition of Nature Philosophy, an organicism that can easily veer off course into landscapes of exclusion and fragmentation, also typical of neo-liberal practice. Byung-Chul Han seems to accept the myth of meritocracy and the neo-liberal end of ideology arguments often associated with the metacity illusions of transparency and "freedom".

Designers need to be able to recognize these urban apparatuses as heterotopias of illusion in the metacity. In addition as Foucault (1967) argued modern space has not been de-sacralized completely. Actors from the city of faith are still present, but now with media dimensions. Also the Panoptic machine city has not disappeared and should also be modelled with its heterotopias of deviance. The city machine still remains the basic model for the construction of the modern city with its dream of total control tied to the state/corporate worlds.

All these city models are co-present today in the metacity to different degrees and map into our individual and collective consciousness simultaneously. Designers have to know how to recognize and manipulate these various apparatuses mixing and matching layers to suit their situation, goals and communities giving a poetic sense of openness and a potential for social justice.

Image 3: Quantum City/ Cloud City?. Source: D. Grahame Shane's archive.



(MRA+CTM) Is still nowadays valid the Walter Benjamin's diagnosis in phantasmagoria and reality?

(GS) Benjamin's analysis opens up many lines of investigation. To keep it brief, the crucial point was that the cornucopia made possible by the modern, industrial society created new horizons of wealth and pleasure for the bourgeoisie. Following the analysis of early Marx, Benjamin was especially interested in the pleasure palaces of the bourgeoisie while other Marxists went to the factories of production. He concentrated on consumption. Places of display and marketing had a special fascination, world's fairs, exhibition halls, department stores and Parisian shopping arcades.

Benjamin was clear about the role of dream in this cycle of consumption and that the dream masked the reality of the workers productive role in society and hid contested spaces. Foucault shared this suspicion of dreams and utopias masking reality. After his heterotopia of crisis and heterotopia of deviance, he listed his third category as the heterotopias of illusion. Here he pointed to the same illusory display spaces as Benjamin; world's fairs, exhibitions, art galleries, museums etc adding bordellos and the stock exchange, as well cinemas and theatres as places of fast changing fashions and fetishes. These places, like the historic tourist city, are sites of visual consumption and leisure activities.

As Benjamin pointed out the Parisian arcades open a portal to virtual dream worlds, phantasmagorias. The arcades housed early shadow puppet shows, dioramas, photography studios, magic lantern shows, Edison's kinetograph peep show machines, the predecessors of the cinema, as well as later cinemas and theatres. Foucault also categorized the arcades as heterotopias of illusion. The arcade's structure of windows still frames searches on the Internet. The transfer to the small hand held, mobile screen has made Benjamin's understanding of the arcades as virtual organizational apparatuses even more important inside the territory of themetacity.

(MRA+CTM) And from there, how to disembark into foucauldian heterotopias, a topic specially researched and upgraded towards a spatial turn by you? Are they useful in Diogenes terms? In the very last page of your book "Recombinant Urbanism",

you say that cities still houses the dream-spaces of humanity, that they can still be places for the growth of knowledge and social justice. If we accept that an inclusive city is still possible in the context of a Market driven global metacity, how do you see the notion of public spaces? Are they heterotopias of illusion?

(GS) Diogenes is not enough. He maybe effective as a media critic but he had no strategy for living together with differences in a non-combative relationship that is fundamental to the role of heterotopias in society as conceived by Foucault. Diogenes exemplifies the mirror function of the heterotopia, reversing the code, challenging the norm, miniaturizing multiple issues in symbolic gestures.

Foucault borrowed the heterotopia as a metaphor based on his understanding of a precise medical condition where two cells that were not usually in proximity developed a shared, non-malignant relationship that worked for both, enabling them to live together in the same place. Barthes, his sponsor at the College De France, wrote along similar lines about public spaces in Algeria, closing his eyes and listening to the hubbub of people together in the cafe, languages, machines and music in the enclosed space.

People living together produce cultures to aid in survival and the cultures can share dream spaces, conceptual apparatuses of governance that serve their purpose in the most unusual places. Structures designed for one purpose can become used for another, temporarily housing unforeseen events and that become phantasmagoria, producing heterotopia of illusion. The so-called *Umbrella Revolution* for democracy in Hong Kong is a beautiful example lead by high school students. People camped on the highway as it went through the center of the Admiralty business district in front of the new City Hall, but not on the public plaza provided by the government. People used the publicly owned space of the highway that forms part of the city machine, the city of flows, speed and transportation.

The students blocked the highway and switched its code to become a massive demonstration space between the shopping mall podiums with office

towers above. Many different groups came to occupy this metacity media space, but the students took the limelight and did their homework in the tents at night. The tents and camping gear came from their nomadic family vacations and their handhelds are part of the metacity. Still the general atmosphere was a heterotopia of crisis, a place of shelter for the disaffected who entered and left voluntarily. The police were incredibly circumspect in this heavily mediated metacity space.

What does public space mean here? The highway? Who is "the" public? The high school students? Obviously Hong Kong as an ex-colonial, heterotopic, dual law enclave inside China is an exceptional case in many ways. It is still a hybrid society commanding great wealth, yet hiding pockets of poverty and exploitation. All the same the city like all cities still holds a dream, a utopian element, obviously limited and in this particular instance, sadly unsuccessful. The students with their handhelds, unlike Diogenes, demonstrated how to live together in the heart of the neo-liberal city. This was a great achievement and perhaps a great lesson for Asian democracy.

(MRA+CTM) In this issue, we publish also an interview with Steven Kent Peterson, in an update of his seminal article *Anti Space* from 1980. You said to us in one occasion that negative space could be understood as a third position between traditional space of enclosed cities and open plan of futuristic modern utopian transparency. In this sense, Lefebvre wrote in *The Production of Space* that "The 'counter-space' goes beyond the typical opposition between 'reform' and 'revolution'. Any counter-space proposal, even the most insignificant in appearance, shakes up the existing space, its strategies and objectives: the imposition of homogeneity and transparency before the power and its established order". Have you found explicitly the essence of both notions somewhere in your more recent researches?

(GS) Peterson's *Anti-Space* article from 1980 was a product of a debate at a particular moment and his own career shifting from Physics to Architecture, giving him a deep understanding of the space-time of modern mathematics and scientific space that he associated with modernism. He called this abstract space-time "negative space" in his radical article.

But the significance for design remained somewhat ambiguous. Later he shifted to be closer to Colin Rowe's more classical and conventional reading of negative space as the void contained inside an urban fabric or enclosure, not open and abstract as in the earlier article. Rowe's reading was also ambiguous since the negative space for Rowe was both positive and negative, based on the ability to imagine the interface between the two systems, as Michelangelo did in his late sculptural works, where solid and void worked in a reciprocal relationship for an expressive, humanist end.

Lefebvre's "counter-space" can be read as a political equivalent of Rowe's ambiguous sense of the interface between positive and negative space, breaking the old binary. Certainly Lefebvre's humanism overlapped with Rowe's while his Marxism did not. Still Lefebvre was important because he retained the element of utopia as an inspiration for design within the limits of reality, as did Rowe in the after-forward of his last book *The Architecture of Good Intentions*. Personally in this regard I admire the work of Secchi-Vigano Studio in Antwerp that involved a multi-year study of the North West European Metropolitan Area, then a long, methodical and poetic study for the municipality of Antwerp on its recent design history with recommendations for the future. Finally winning the competition for a new municipal theater by suggesting the re-equipping the existing municipal theater with an underground car park, new fire stairs and a canopy partially over its square. Its a beautiful project and has already been used for many unintended purposes like the Hong Kong highway.

The Antwerp theater square is a "third space", part heterotopia of illusion associated with the theater, part city machine associated with the fire stairs and car park, and part heterotopia of crisis, with its big overarching sheltering roof for free activities on the city ground plane. Markets, soccer games, skate boarders, children and old people use the shelter space, as well festivals and demonstrators. Cyclists use it as a short cut and tourists come to the surrounding cafes. There are subtle level plays in the ground surface delineating different areas of occupation as well as a grove of trees and allotment gardens in a small grid opposite the main facade of the theater.

The Secchi-Vigano work also connects with the discussion of negativity and negative space in Question 6. There the critical and negative narrative related to the history of capitalism in terms of wreckage and debris revealing the fetishes and fashions deposited by the bourgeoisie and their various heterotopic apparatuses. The Secchi-Vigano methodology scanned this debris and engaged the citizens and municipality in a long dialogue about their ambitions, for the city and then for the theater square, trying to ensure it was an open city and space open to all city inhabitants, legal and illegal.

(MRA+CTM) As the prolific traveller you are, and in particular going to the East, do you feel in some of its societies a more wide enthusiasm and confident with architecture to do the best for them in a scale loosen in Western countries? What do we have to learn from them?

(GS) As in Question 4 this is an impossible question to answer as Asian cities and nations are so complex and varied. There is a huge danger of Orientalism, projecting visions and fantasies, although Asia itself has a mirror Occidentalism of its own, importing urban models and reproducing them at a scale and speed unknown in the original iteration.

Most other continents are already urbanized beside Africa and so will not replicate the massive, rapid urbanization that has just taken place in East Asia. Africa, like India, will be different lacking China's literacy, scale, organization and industry, but leap-frogging into the metacity with internet banking, education etc.

In my work I have tried to trace the migration of urban ideas and apparatuses from continent to continent over time as they get transformed by local actors and reinterpreted. Urban elements are recombined in Asia in new combinations that can offer the rest of the world lessons.

In East Asia there is still a great faith in the power of the city and the state to improve lives. Asian cities are still super dynamic and the plans of the state and corporations drive city growth. These are fast growth "shock cities" like Manchester

in the British Industrial Revolution in the 1830's, or Chicago and New York at the end of the 19th century. Western countries generally now face shrinking cities and populations. They also have lost faith in the power of governments and corporations to provide the growth to expand the middle class to new immigrants. Borders are shutting down.

The urban lessons of East Asia do not transfer easily without the dynamic state and corporate structures. In any case some Asian countries, like Japan, are reaching similar stages of slow growth and shrinking population. Designing for slow growth and shrinking populations has not yet proved an interesting topic for the typical high-flying Daedalus architect.

(MRA+CTM) Hence, what are the main goals in Chinese rapid urbanization for expecting a transference into Urban Design Theory?

(GS) Three features stand out beside the enormous scale of the operations:-

1. First the city-territory has a long tradition of including agricultural lands in a system named "Desakota", Indonesia for Village-City, by Terry McGee. The nature of this hybrid has changed over the years with globalization but remains in place on the periphery of all the great Asian cities. Industry is included in this mix.
2. The urban villages mentioned in Question 4 are very interesting for their small scale survival and many heterotopic services offered to the surrounding modern city. Designers are beginning to imitate their scale and hybridity, replacing the traditional low-rise podiums of tower blocks with three dimensional, mixed use matrixes, sometimes malls, but often commons spaces and community uses.
3. Because of shortages of land in Hong Kong super dense, hybrid, mixed use, three-dimensional public and private spaces have created a complex model of transport oriented urban development employing vertical malls that has been exported around the world sponsoring super high density enclaves.

(MRA+CTM) Professor Shane (G.S.), in your opinion, after almost 50 years teaching and writing about architecture and urban design do you think that the schools of architecture are being capable of answering to the transformation and challenges posed by the contemporary society? Does it make any sense to you to teach Politics and Philosophy, or even Genetics, to a future architect?

(GS) This question is too hard to answer properly at this point and would require too much space. Teaching in my lifetime has changed enormously from pencils and T squares to BIM and satellite

imagery, from hand drawn perspectives to virtual rendering machines and immersive headsets. Instead of well taught history classes, vast memory banks of images to search and collage in the metacity. It is difficult now to predict how education should or will change. How can we know how the profession will change and who its customers will be? Perhaps, as you proposed at the start the profession will plop down like Icarus into the sea unnoticed with our uncertain climatic future in the reduced canvas of the future city? Will only two feathers and legs remain as traces?

Image 4: Portrait of D. Grahame Shane. Source: photography by Carlos Tapia Martín.

