

Steal This Place –  
The Aesthetics of Tactical Formlessness and  
"The Free Town of Christiania"



# **Steal This Place –**

The Aesthetics of Tactical Formlessness and  
"The Free Town of Christiania"

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Doctoral thesis  
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences  
Alnarp 2006

Acta Universitatis Agriculturae Sueciae  
2006:27

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ISBN:91-576-7076-5

ISSN:1652-6880

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Layout: Cattis Ahlgren

Cover illustration:

Cattis Ahlgren and Maria Hellström

Copy editing: Rolf Hughes

Photographs by the author unless otherwise indicated

Print: SLU Service/repro, Alnarp 2



# Abstract

Hellström, Maria (2006) *Steal This Place - The Aesthetics of Tactical Formlessness and "The Free Town of Christiania"*.

Acta Universitatis Agriculturae Sueciae. Doctoral Thesis No 2006:27

ISSN:1652-6880 ISBN:91-576-7076-5

Against a background of urban *aestheticization*, the following study addresses questions of urban formation and change. The aim of the thesis is to investigate how an activist urban configuration, in this case the so-called "Free Town of Christiania" in Copenhagen, may affect more general urban planning and design discourse, as well as the aesthetic assumptions behind contemporary spatial practice.

The working hypothesis of the study is that an actualization of expressive urban activist practices will lead to a different conception of spatial development and change than the one presently dominating the field of urban planning. It is also anticipated that the conceptual prerequisites for urban planning and design may be altered through a radical interrogation of aestheticization processes, as they have appeared through a controversial and in many respects illegitimate 'taking of place'. The objective of the thesis has therefore not been the assessment of the specific urban formation as an ideal solution to urban life. Instead the study should be seen as a problematizing interrogation *through* a concrete example of the complex relation between expressive aesthetic action, spatial reproduction and the representational power of form.

The study is undertaken in the conviction that urban formation is an intermediary and composite practice that cannot be understood in isolation from the social, linguistic, material, and political realities of expressive actions. Methodologically, this means that the present work is articulated within the paradigm of *performativity*, theorizing urban locality production from three different perspectives: *the formlessness of the subject*, *the formlessness of space*, and *the formlessness of power*, all of which constitute a *tactical* disassembly of the privileged notion of urban form. As such, the thesis aims at introducing a more elaborate and critically resonant aesthetic discussion into urban discourse, actualizing the creative potential of re-conceptualizing urban planning and design as intermediary *as-if* spaces of social and political interaction.

## Keywords:

aesthetics, urban planning, landscape theory, aestheticization, performativity, urban activism, subject positioning, representational critique, spatial reproduction, tactical formlessness, polemological analysis, bio-politics, tactical play



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## Acknowledgements

To begin with, I have been writing this thesis as a *traveler*, as a voyager between places, disciplines, and continents. Well aware of the distancing effect, I have also seen the advantages. As American writer Djuna Barnes pointed out at the beginning of the last century, being a stranger and traveler gives you the privilege not only to observe, but to reflect. At home “one looks upon things because one has eyes,” she wrote. In a foreign place “one has eyes that one may contemplate.”<sup>1</sup>

A journey along more or less beaten tracks, through more or less densely populated fields, this thesis has entailed so much more than contemplation. Rather, it is a compilation of encounters and dialogues, of convergences and intersections, all along a winding and capricious itinerary. In this sense, the present work should be read as a travelogue, a section of a collaborative work in progress, dependent upon the contribution of many co-travelers – mentors, colleagues, friends and family.

Essential cicerones on this long trip have been my scientific advisors. Both challenging and supportive, they have inspired and supervised my often impulsive and unreflective criss-crossing. Thank you José Luis Ramirez for encouraging me to initiate my doctoral studies and for bringing into attention the rhetorical power of aesthetic agency; thank you Irina Sandomirskaja for your guidance over the plateaus of philosophical argumentation; thank you Kenneth R. Olwig for mapping out the sometimes rugged terrain of landscape theory; and thank you Eivor Bucht for firmly taking my hand past the final mountainous passages of this academic voyage.

My deep gratitude also goes to my former teacher at Malmö Art School Forum, Gert Aspelin, who functioned as an early mentor, encouraging not only my artistic but my theoretical and literary endeavors; to Lennart Nordh, who back in the late eighties first invited me as a teacher to the landscape planning department; to former dean Gunnar Sorte, whose inter-disciplinary determination led to my being accepted as a doctoral student in 1999; and to the present dean Tiina Sarap, whose understanding and supportive attitude enabled me to wrap things up finally.

Special thanks goes to my co-advisor Thomas Binder, studio director at the Interactive Institute's Space and Virtuality Studio, who at an initial stage was courageous enough to host my project, thereby providing the financial means to make it come true. Under his command, the studio developed into an interrogative and energizing milieu, moreover the scientific mother ship, from where my further roaming has issued. Of great importance in this respect was also the support of Carl-Henrik Svenstedt and Pelle Ehn at the School of Arts

1 Djuna Barnes (1989), “The Hem of Manhattan (1917)” in *New York*, London: Virago Press, pp. 285-295.

and Communication at Malmö University, who initially mediated the contacts with this inspiring research environment.

I also want to thank Massachusetts Institute of Technology, School of Architecture and Urban Planning for taking me on as a visiting scholar, providing the most broadening and rich opportunities for my academic development, furthermore during the turbulent year 2001-2002. Here I would like to thank Stanford Anderson for inviting me, and William Porter and Mark Jarzombek for their valuable sponsorship and advice. I also want to thank Robert Haywood for great art historical tutoring and Hélène Lipstadt for enlarging and supportive discussions. Furthermore, my acknowledgement goes to The Swedish America Foundation for generous financial support, without which this most decisive stay would not have been possible.

At different more or less chaotic stages, a number of people have come to my rescue. I would like to thank Allan de Waal and Katja Grillner, who at different occasions served as engaged lecturers and constructive critics. I also owe a great deal to Rolf Hughes, whose deep acquaintance both with the English language and with spatial discourse compensated for the worst of my linguistic shortcomings. Without his close reading, this thesis would not have seen daylight. Gulli Reimer deserves huge thanks – her detective mind and physical endurance clearing some access in the referential jungle. A thanks also goes to Cattis Ahlgren for so eminently and swiftly transforming academic raw material into a more or less readable book. The fantastic staff at the library in Alnarp also deserves great acknowledgement for their indispensable and indefatigable work, without which I would have been completely lost in space.

Many close friends, whose sharp intellects I shamelessly exploited during endless hours of discussions, also deserve my appreciation. My gratitude in this respect goes to Gunilla Lindholm, dear colleague and friend, for spending so many hours helping me to sort out the confusing legends of knowledge and life; to Catharina Gabrielsson and Meike Schalk, for sharing with me the hardships of doctoral rock climbing; to Måns Holst Ekström, for always having been a poetic and academic source of inspiration; to Leo Gullbring, for an admirable inquisitiveness and critical insistence; and to Margareta and Frank Melin-Higgins for innumerable, both inspiring and supportive, late hour conversations. Thanks also to Monika Gora, Gunilla Bandolin, Lia Ghilardi, Jennifer Magnolfi, and Tania Ruiz, for many stimulating discussions, and to all my colleagues both at the Interactive Institute and at the Landscape Planning Department.

At this moment of retrospection, my gratitude should also be expressed towards a headstrong Free Town and its creative and determined inhabitants. Articulating in praxis what I have only touched upon theoretically, the alternative community of Christiania deserves my greatest recognition. I would like to give special thanks to Ole Lykke and Nils Vest, who not only shared their deep experience of expressive practice, urbanist activism, and creative living with me, but also so generously opened their historical archives and made their photographic documentation available. I would also like to thank

the Christiania Local Plan Group for inviting me to workshops and former Christiania residents Mikael Fock and Jakob Reddersen for taking interest in my project. Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my mother and father Rut and Hans-Erik, who brought me up to become a critical and thinking person, without ever questioning my often irrational choices of direction through life. I also want to thank my wonderful and courageous children Åse and Tor, now conscious teenagers, who have accompanied me without complaint on this meandering journey as my most faithful supporters. And, finally, my beloved Bo, the most precious of co-travelers.







Fig. 1 Aerial view from the west of Christiania's Ramparts and the Free Town of Christiania.

## I. Introduction

# I. Introduction

The ideal for a book would be to lay everything out on a plane of exteriority of this kind, on a single page, the same sheet: lived events, historical determinations, concepts, individuals, groups, social formations.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari<sup>1</sup>

The idea that 'locality makes a difference' has over the last decade or so (re-)gained wider recognition. Despite the massive 'de-localization' (virtualization, globalization) following the electronic augmentation of reality, local manifestation has become an issue. Through what has been called 'gentrification,' the process by which an urban area is rendered more genteel, moderate, middle-class;<sup>2</sup> 'place' has become a major commodity and a powerful status symbol. At the same time, 'reclaim' has become a slogan, chanted out in hip-hop rhythms or painted in distinct colors at street parties, actualizing the power of locality in a different way. On top of the debris of a collapsed 'anywhere,' an intense – and ever more complicated – interest in the acute 'here and now' of people and places has developed.

In this situation, what has caught my interest – as a practicing artist and lecturer in urban landscape aesthetics – is the new relationship between aesthetics, urban planning and design practices. However, although "the aesthetic dimension"<sup>3</sup> has now gained wider, more serious consideration, its political and more deep-seated implications often seem to be neglected. An inscrutable, controversial, and highly 'human' aspect of life, 'the aesthetic' is still mostly employed as the perfect argument and pretext for a shifting array of 'place marketing' or 'city

1 "L'idéal d'un livre serait d'étaler toute choses sur un tel plan d'exteriorité, sur une seule page, sur une même page: événements vécus, déterminations historiques, concepts pensés, individus, groupes et formations sociales." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980:16). All translations by the author unless otherwise indicated.

2 **gentrify**, verb, renovate and improve (a house or district) so that it conforms to middle-class taste. *The Oxford Dictionary of English* (revised edition 2004). *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Malmö högskola, 4 March, 2006, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e31023>;  
**gentry**, n., people of good social position, specifically the class next below the nobility. *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Malmö högskola. 4 March, 2006. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t23.e22904>.

3 *The Aesthetic Dimension* is the well-known English title of Herbert Marcuse's last book (in German *Die Permanenz der Kunst*, 1977), where Marcuse tried to summarize the emancipatory experiences of the sixties and seventies in aesthetic terms. See Herbert Marcuse (1978).

branding' projects.<sup>4</sup> And as such it is highly successful. "In fact", writes German philosopher and art theorist Wolfgang Welsch, "if advanced Western societies were able to do completely as they wish, they would transform the urban, industrial and natural environment *in toto* into a hyper-aesthetic scenario."<sup>5</sup>

It is against this background of urban *aestheticization*<sup>6</sup> the following study should be understood. The role assigned to the 'aesthetic' – its importance in the transformation of cities – is based upon its elevation of the recognizable and familiar, the temperate and mainstream. But what happens if one shifts perspective, and instead focuses on urban aesthetics from a more 'extreme' point of view? What happens if one approaches the city from the perspective of a locality alternatively expressed, a locality that in many regards – aesthetically as well as in urban terms – has been considered aberrant?

Such a locality is without doubt "The Free Town of Christiania" in Copenhagen, an activist community that since 1971 has contested both urban policies and aesthetic conventions. A self-appointed and controversial agent in an urban aesthetic field, the "Free Town" offers an interesting opportunity to investigate the mechanisms and premises of urban aestheticization, as well as the circumstances under which it may be actualized and disputed.

The main aim of the thesis is therefore not to investigate Christiania as a circumscribed object or a physical locality, but as an *agent provocateur* in a wider urban discourse of aestheticization. How has the Free Town been articulated aesthetically, and how has its expressive agency affected the aesthetic presumptions behind contemporary urban planning and landscape design? What does the Free Town of Christiania *tell us* about the role of aesthetics in the development of contemporary urban space?

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4 The literature on the topic of 'city branding' and 'place marketing' is extensive and frequently quoted in urban policy making. A work that has gained a great deal of attention is the study by Richard Florida (2002), *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, as well as the earlier book by Charles Landry (2000) *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. For a discussion of the issues of urban aesthetics in the local context of Malmö and the Öresund Region, see the special issue of the magazine *Area* (2001) with the theme "Hela Malmö? En bomässa möter en stad" ("All of Malmö? A Housing Expo meets a City"). This issue was co-edited by Leo Gullbring and myself. See especially Maria Hellström and Leo Gullbring: "Bo enligt Tham" (Live According to Tham) and Maria Hellström: "Gör det själv" (Do it Yourself).

5 Wolfgang Welsch (1997) *Undoing Aesthetics*.

6 Both Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard have employed the notion of "aestheticization" in order to describe the blurred boundaries between real and imaginary, between art and daily life. Originally used to denote a modernist tendency to obscure political conflicts by appeals to High Art, as in the Haussmannization of Paris, aestheticization is in the postmodern sense used to indicate the increasing importance of signs or appearances in increasingly mass-mediated everyday life. Especially applied to processes of *consumption* of objects or commodities, including architecture, urban environments, places and landscapes, aestheticization can be seen as the driving force of an economy of symbolic exchange. For a discussion of aestheticization as a central notion in postmodern discourse, see Mike Featherstone (1991). For a general aesthetic critique of aestheticization processes, see Wolfgang Welsch (1997) *Undoing Aesthetics*.

## Main hypothesis and objectives

The study is pursued from a conviction that urban formation is an intermediary and composite practice that cannot be understood in isolation from the social, linguistic, material, and political realities of expressive actions. The Free Town of Christiania will in this respect serve as a relatively non-structured “plane of exteriority”, in the words of post-structuralist writers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari; a propagation, where different means of expressive agency – lived events, historical determinations, concepts, artistic actions, planning proposals, spatial conflicts – may be directly associated with different modes of urban formation. Rather than focusing on Christiania as an isolated composite of phenomena or trying to get hold of the ‘real’ Christiania as experienced from a resident’s perspective, I have approached what I have access to – ‘Christiania’ as a compound of discursive enunciations, unfolding within the framework of a general urban/aesthetic debate.

The working hypothesis of this study is that an alternative understanding of aesthetic practice and activism will lead to a different conception of spatial development and change than the one presently dominating the realm of urban planning. It is also anticipated that the conceptual prerequisites for urban planning and design may be altered through a radical interrogation of official and alternative aestheticizing practices, as they appear in and around the specific urban landscape of the Free Town of Christiania.

Articulating the issue at stake in this way, it also becomes clear that the objective of this thesis is not the assessment of Christiania as an alternative or ideal solution to urban life. Instead, the objective is the interrogation *through* Christiania of the complex relation between expressive aesthetic action, spatial reproduction and the representational power of form. I have thus taken the liberty to use the Free Town of Christiania to actualize a larger spatial problematic of urban aestheticization, spatial representation and formation. Apart from discussing concrete cases of aesthetically spurred activism and official planning practices, the underlying presumptions of spatial aestheticization will be interrogated. This foundation includes questions of:

- *subjectivity and subject positioning*
- *spatial representation and spatially reproductive usage*
- *socio-spatial power and socio-material empowering*

Within spatial theory and urban planning research, the latter terms of the above mentioned pairs of concepts are generally the least studied, whereas within the field of interrogative aesthetics, art and philosophy, they have been more thoroughly discussed.

Entering the field of landscape and planning research from the perspective of artistic practice and applied aesthetics, it has therefore been my deliberate aim to develop the agency-oriented perspective implied by the second terms in the

above disposition. In this respect a fundamental question for the investigation has been what a reorientation of spatial aesthetics would mean in relation to the general understanding of urbanity and urban planning. This was also the initial problem I, as a practicing artist, was confronted with when I first entered the field of landscape architecture, planning and design, and it is a problem that subsequently has continued to function as a generative vector in the work on this book.

## Performativity, Landscape, Discourse

An important objective in this study has been the problematization of urban aesthetics beyond its function as a *formal* support for urban planning and design.<sup>7</sup> Methodologically, this means that the present work is articulated within the paradigm of *performativity*.<sup>8</sup> Based on the theoretical assumption that meaning should not be seen as a given, ontological configuration, but unfolds as a result of an interactive and linguistic act of *theorizing*, the thesis will literally unfold as a spatially performed 'making sense.'

In aesthetic terms, performativity entails a disjunction of interest from *form* to *agency*, from perceived formal structures to expressive spatial practice. As a result, the spatial notion of *landscape* will play a significant role. As emphasized by among others Danish urban theorist Tom Nielsen, the relation between urbanity and landscape has been subject to reinterpretation. The landscape has in this sense left its marginal role as pictorial backdrop, now actively merging with the city, transforming the centralized metropolis into a proliferating *urban field*. Not only an ensemble of circumscribed places, distinct edifices and tectonic forms, this new urbanity constitutes a horizontal and non-finalized

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7 Far from a coherent academic discipline, *Theoretical and Applied Aesthetics*, as a field of study within the domain of planning, architectural/landscape architectural research and education, presents a broad discourse on artistically informed aspects on design practice and theory. In Swedish *Formlära*, which literally translated would be *form theory*, has traditionally represented the domain of design studies, whose major preoccupation has been the theorizing and producing of aesthetic judgments of value. Theoretical and Applied Aesthetics is only one designation for a broad range of theoretical, aesthetic and/or artistic approaches within the spatial disciplines, furthermore not that extensively studied. Focusing on Scandinavia, a search gives at hand that the number of doctoral dissertations amounts to not more than around thirty within this 'field'. In Finland, the situation is somewhat different than in the other Scandinavian countries, since there is also besides the academic PhD the possibility to achieve an artistic doctorate.

8 Performativity; a generic term for de-constructivist scientific approaches of ontological and epistemological critique. The notion of performativity has to a large extent come to be associated with the American queer theorist Judith Butler and her appropriation of J.L. Austin's theories of performativity in language (developed in Austin's posthumous *How to Do Things with Words* of 1962). Broadly understood, performativity implies a focus on the communicative event as such; thus the situated generation and manipulation of identity and meaning as it unfolds in a localized setting of a specific community. See Kira Hall (2000) and Judith Butler (1997).



“formlessness.”<sup>9</sup> In this respect, the notion of ‘landscape’ provides both an intermediary dimension and an open narrative, through which contemporary urbanity may be studied.<sup>10</sup> Even though the choice to read the surroundings as landscape can be regarded a kind of ‘tradition’ in modernity, it does also, as Nielsen argues, provide “a means to include general and insignificant things within an aesthetic field, thereby opening the possibility to work with them.”<sup>11</sup>

Without going astray in the landscape at this early point, I would like to point to the composite role of landscape in this work; on the one hand an aesthetic field of study and on the other a narrative method. In this respect, my situating of the thesis within a landscape context also reflects a more general ‘spatio-aesthetic’ turn within the social sciences and the humanities. Often referred to as ‘linguistic’ or ‘rhetorical,’ this ‘turn’ is however also geographical distributed.<sup>12</sup> My reference to an ‘urban landscape’ should therefore first and foremost be interpreted as a way to mark a shift in attitude towards the city, where, rather than a positive entity, the city constitutes a *discursive field*, a field of expressions and narrations.

In Latin, *dis-currere* signifies a running to and fro over a field; a spatial covering, or an activation of in-betweenness.<sup>13</sup> A change of focus from locations to dislocations, from positions to transpositions, and from properties to relations and actions, a discursive approach also brings into attention the general *context dependency* of a study

9 As for the discussion of the formless within an urban context, I owe a lot to Tom Nielsen and to the inspiration and support for my argumentation that I found in his book *Formløs: Den moderne bys overskudslandskaber* (*Formless: The Surplus Landscape of the Contemporary Metropolis*) (2001). As for the potential affinity between my arguments and those of Nielsen, including the title, I will have to refer to the play of coincidences, as well as to a similar body of primary sources.

10 Tom Nielsen (2001:82).

11 “At vælge at læse omgivelserne som landskab kan beskrives som et slags ‘tradition’ i moderniteten for at inddrage almindelige og uanselige ting i et æstetisk felt og dermed gøre det muligt at arbejde med dem.” Tom Nielsen (2001:82).

12 In this respect, what I call ‘the spatio-aesthetic turn’ is related to what has over the last forty years been referred to as a “linguistic” or “geographical” turn within social and spatial studies. While the “linguistic turn” would refer to an increased awareness of the linguistic constructedness of the human environment and the “geographical turn” would actualize the spatial, historical and cultural context of this construct, an ‘spatio-aesthetic landscape turn’ would combine these two critical reflections. See Richard Rorty (1967) *The Linguistic Turn. Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*; and Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (2000:xi).

13 I here refer to American historian of ideas Martin Jay, who employs discourse as “the best term” to denote what he sees as “a corpus of more or less loosely interwoven arguments, metaphors, assertions, and prejudices that cohere more associatively than logically”, and where discourse in this usage “is explicitly derived from the Latin *discurrere*, which means a running around in all directions” (1993:16).

of human undertakings. In relation to context-independent 'disciplinary' science, this study will therefore probably appear less fixated and generalized.<sup>14</sup>

This shift from object to discourse is not just a matter of an 'upscaling' or widening of the perspective. Instead, it is a matter of deliberately practicing a 'landscape thinking.' As American landscape architect and theorist James Corner has argued, to regard landscape as merely an object is to overlook the aestheticizing or mediating effects of 'landscapization.'<sup>15</sup> In this sense 'Landscape thinking' is a means to avoid such simplifications; a discursive and comparative approach that takes also linguistic relations and social participation into account. What matters here is not a geographical object per se, but the subject's situatedness within a relational setting of differences and 'otherness'.

It is in this sense we should understand this work; as dialogical *reasoning* rather than a product of *logical reason*.<sup>16</sup> Running along communicative paths and expressive sequences, this work could therefore be regarded as a form of critical discourse analysis.<sup>17</sup> Heading off from Michel Foucault's ideas of discourse as operating in relation to a condition of *possibility*, the work builds on the conviction that, more than anything, humans are connective beings, continuously establishing and re-establishing relations with 'others' and

14 In an attempt to interrogate the relation between urbanity, rationality and power, Danish urban theorist Bent Flyvbjerg points to the difference between context-independent and context-dependent knowing. When it comes to concrete human environments, he argues, the accumulation of knowledge does not aim at universality and context-independent *explanation* – at a general answer for all situations – but on the contrary at an increased context-dependency – a sensitivity to particularity and potential *narration*. See Bent Flyvbjerg (1991:24).

15 See James Corner (1999a:155-156).

16 As for this methodological positioning, I rely upon a neo-Aristotelian epistemological critique, where knowledge is defined not only as *episteme*, logical reason, but also as *techné*, practical reason, and *phrónesis*, discursive or dialogical reason. "Dialogue is by definition central to phronetic research", states Flyvbjerg and refers to its etymological definition as *dialogos* (Greek, *dia*, through or in-between; and *logos*, reason); *in-between reason*. ("Dialog er pr. definition centralt placeret i phronetisk forskning." Bent Flyvbjerg (1991:85). José Luis Ramirez also puts an emphasis on dialogue as privileged discursive method; dialogue understood as the practicing of a discursive *logos*; a *communicative* rather than *cognitive* dimension of knowing. "The dialogue should strictly speaking be understood as 'discourse,' that is, as a reasoning that is actualized through speech, as opposed to the formalized and entirely objectified language that emerges with writing and science". ("Dialogen bör egentligen uppfattas som 'diskurs', d.v.s. som ett resonemang som går via talet, till skillnad från det formaliserade och helt objektiviserade språk som uppstår med skriften och vetenskapen." José Luis Ramirez (1995a:283)).

17 The specific "Critical Discourse Analysis" proposed by Lili Chouliarakis and Norman Fairclough (1999) (*Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*) could be described as an articulation of a critical tradition that brings together social theory and linguistics with an analytical framework, setting up a dialogue between them. It emanates from the theory of discourse as developed by Foucault, although focusing on the analysis of the hidden agendas of political speech acts. The critical discourse analysis proposed here to a much greater extent looks to a wider historical framing, bringing in issues such as social narratives, spatial disposition, and structures of power.

‘elsewhere.’<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in this study, the Free Town of Christiania functions as an actualizer of possibilities, an activator of a ‘formless’ discourse, through which to actively roam.

## An Empowering Example

This is how I will approach Christiania; not as an object of study, not as a circumscribed place, but as a discursive landscape of utterances, as Foucault has expressed it “in their dispersion as events, and in the instance that is proper to them.”<sup>19</sup> Initially articulated as an eventful *place theft* with a tremendous media impact, Christiania originally presented itself through a questioning of the idea of a *place proper*. Established as a spatial exception – an *as-if* space – the Free Town constituted a challenging and fundamentally interrogative field of study. The Greek word for such an *as-if* dimension would be *topos*; in Aristotelian rhetorics signifying the mental ‘place’ where the matters for argumentation are amassed. *Topos* is in this sense a contextual storage of potential arguments waiting to be released,<sup>20</sup> and *topics* consequently, the ‘method’ of its releasing. “Topics is the methodology of problematic thinking”, argues José Luis Ramirez;<sup>21</sup> it is a ‘methodology’ of embracing a discursive potentiality in all its contextual width.

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Rather than an *analysis*, this discursive study could therefore be understood in terms of ‘topicalization.’ Neither based upon empirical or participatory investigation, nor on anthropologically inspired observational studies of the specific area and its patterns of life, the study is first and foremost focusing on mediation. Except for a fair amount of visits to the Free Town of Christiania over the years and a limited number of interviews with Christiania residents, the main field of inquiry has been the representational and reproductive expressions constituting ‘Christiania.’ Irrespective of whether mediated through fanzines, planning documents, films, theater performances, newspaper articles or scientific reports, I have approached this ‘Christiania’ as a composite of different *topoi* with an exemplifying relevance also for the urban environment as such.

‘Example’ in Greek is *parádeigma*.<sup>22</sup> To say that the Free Town of Christiania in this study acts as an example does not, however, mean that it serves as a

18 See further discussion in Maria Hellström (2006).

19 “...il est constitué par l'ensemble de tous les énoncés effectifs (qu'ils aient été parlés et écrits), dans leur dispersion d'événements et dans l'instance qui est propre à chacun.” Michel Foucault (1969:38).

20 See José Luis Ramirez (1995a:265).

21 “Topik är namnet på det problematiska tänkandets metodik...” José Luis Ramirez (1995a:262).

22 José Luis Ramirez (1995a) *Skapande mening. En begreppsgenealogisk undersökning om rationalitet, vetenskap och planering* (Creative Meaning: An investigation of the Genealogy of Concepts of Rationality, Science and Planning), p.258.



guiding paradigm or a normative ideal. Instead, the example should be understood in rhetorical terms, as *telling*. In Bent Flyvbjerg's words a both extreme and paradigmatic *case*, the example constitutes a specific problematic, which may function as a metaphor for the field of knowledge that the study concerns.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the example is *strategic* insofar as it recognizes and takes into consideration also the epistemological consequences of its own discursive interference.<sup>24</sup> In this sense the example is not randomly chosen but chosen from the point of view of a specific context-dependency, a specific interpretation as well as a specific expectation of a transformative impact. Accordingly, Christiania did not just happen by chance to lie across my route to a doctoral degree. It was an eye-opener for me personally in my relation to urban planning and design, and my hypothesis is that it will have a revelatory effect also in a more scientific context.

Another aspect of the example of Christiania is its actualizing of what Foucault called "the radical pluralism" of discourse, its *inter-disciplinary* and *polemical* character, spatially articulated by French anthropologist Michel de Certeau, whose ideas have come to play a significant role in the present study. The most central aspect of de Certeau's rhetorical onset is in this respect his emphasis on the relationship between *structures of power* and *empowering practices*. A tentative and tense in-between, this relationship should be approached through what de Certeau calls a *polemological analysis*.<sup>25</sup> In line with this, the strategic does not necessarily produce signification or meaning, but presents itself as an empowering potential; a *heuristic*, or discovering logic of telling conflicts and rivaling usages and figures. A sharpening of the discursive field, the strategic example thus serves as a polemological agent and interrogative guidance, enabling future transformation. My hope is that this holds not only for Christiania, but for this study as such.

21

## Itinerary for Readers

What remains of this introduction is simply a brief instruction for the courageous reader of the following deliberations. In concrete terms, the study consists of four main fields of investigation, one of which is the discursive study of Christiania. The other three parts are three *topoi* of great relevance to

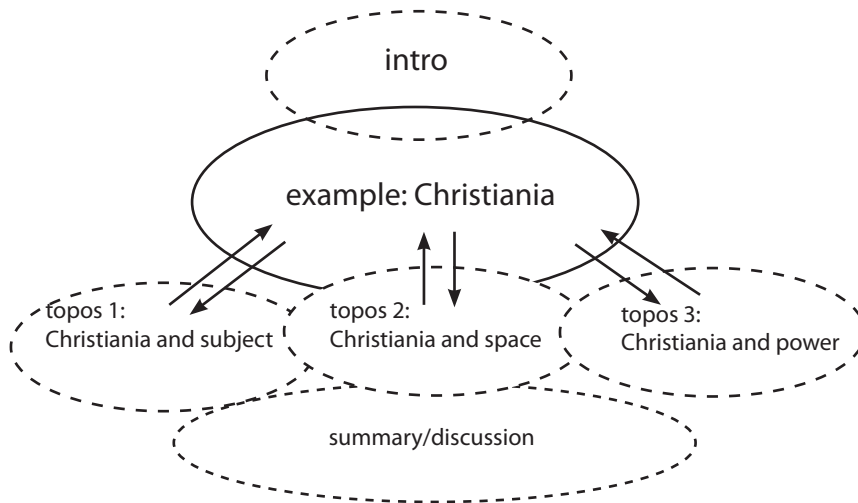
23 Bent Flyvbjerg (1991:149-50).

24 Bent Flyvbjerg (1991:142 and 149). As José Luis Ramirez has pointed out, in a discursive investigation, the example constitutes the rhetorical correspondence to logical induction. From an epistemic point of view it has therefore been regarded a less reliable and too circumscribed a methodological onset. While induction is an indicating of states, the example is a tracing of relations. While induction is an abstraction or disinterested estrangement, the example entails engaged enactment. José Luis Ramirez (1995a:256-262). See also the discussion of the example in Anders Larsson (2004) *Landskapsplanering genom jordbrukspolitik (Landscape Planning through Agricultural Politics)*, pp. 37-39.

25 Michel de Certeau (1980) *L'invention du quotidien: Arts de faire*, p. xlv.

developing urban aesthetics. Schematically outlined, the terrain of the thesis could be described as below:

**Fig. 2.** The ‘terrain’ of the thesis



22

The first chapter examines the historical unfolding of Christiania as a contested urban landscape. Presented as *A History of Representation and Reproduction*, this chapter covers the empirical research of Christiania’s cultural history, its self-establishment and self-administration, as well as its cultural and political function as an urban agent. An important point of departure is the aesthetic complex of *spatial representation and reproduction*. ‘Representation’ will in this context refer to the different practices that Wolfgang Welsch has called “surface aestheticization”<sup>26</sup> – practices establishing a normative relationship between a representative referent and a ‘real.’ In such a relationship, the representative is not only seen as a formal and mental substitution, a stand-in for the sensuous world beyond, but also as the intentional or ideal corrective of this world.<sup>27</sup> ‘Spatial reproduction,’ or more clearly expressed, ‘production and reproduction,’ will on the other hand be used in order to indicate the fact that representative actions also entail a creative involvement, an active and concrete interference. As such, ‘spatial reproduction’ refers to a more “deep-seated aestheticization”<sup>28</sup> with a more fundamental and radical destabilizing and transformative potential, also on the level of consciousness.

26 Wolfgang Welsch (1997:2-4).

27 Raymond Williams (1976/1983) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, pp. 266-267.

28 Wolfgang Welsch (1997:4-5).

The aggregate 'representation *and* reproduction' will in this sense constitute an aesthetic point of departure, indicating a reciprocal interdependence between on the one hand attempts to *describe* or *form a knowledge* of the world, and on the other attempts to *appropriate* or even *ex-propriate*, and thus actively *perform*, a *knowing*. As such, the focus on spatial representation and reproduction, as filtered through the Free Town of Christiania, will indicate a critical entanglement of epistemological and aesthetic questions.

This account of Christiania will then provide the foundation for a continuous spatio-aesthetic or topical 'disassembly'; a further unraveling of the aesthetic, spatial, and political strands that have appeared in the close study of the Free Town. The first of these topical unfoldings, *The Formlessness of the Subject*, will deal with the question of subject positionality<sup>29</sup> from the point of view of both the anti-utopian and the anti-avant-garde currents that inspired Christiania to be established. Relating the emergence of Christiania to the anarcho-libertarian drifting of Situationism and the international hippie movement, I will discuss the politization of subjective aesthetics, and the corresponding aestheticization of the political subject. This discussion also traces the re-interpretation and transgression of normative aesthetics and the adjacent decentralization of the subject as it has been formulated from Kant onwards. The decentralized and thus 'formless' subject will then be reconsidered in relation to a number of discursive enactments as they have appeared in Christiania. These include the manifestation of the subject in relation to oral and scriptural practices, its manifestation as staged event, its manifestation as spatial bewilderment and its function as interceptive spatial disturbance.

23

The second topic, *The Formlessness of Space*, will deal with the notion of formlessness from a more explicit spatial perspective; first and foremost as a critique of idealist aesthetics and its dependency upon an eidetic or essentialist idea of beauty. This critique will proceed from the Kantian category of the sublime, which in distinction to the notion of beauty is constructed performatively. This distinction will then lead to a discussion of two spatial approaches, here referred to as *phenomenological re-centerings* and *polemological exteriorities*, both of which are relevant in relation to the discourse on and around Christiania. In this part, the discourse on *space*, *place* and *-scape* plays a central role, providing a platform for a 'polemological' interrogation, first and foremost of phenomenology as it has developed within the spatial disciplines. Through this polemological approach, distinctions between different spatial tactics and

29 The idea of *subject positionality* emanates from Michel Foucault, and his definition of discourse as "a field of regularity for various positions of the subject" ("un champ de régularité pour diverses positions de subjectivité"). Rather than a simple phenomenon of expression (verbal translations of previously established syntheses), discourse should be understood as "a totality, in which the dispersals of the subject and his discontinuities with himself may be determined" ("un ensemble où peuvent se déterminer la dispersion du sujet et sa discontinuité avec lui-même") See Michel Foucault (1969:74). For a critique, see David Harvey and his interrogation of the idea of subject positionality in *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference* (1996:77).

aesthetic perspectives will unfold, differences articulated and developed first and foremost in the writings of Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and Arjun Appadurai.

The third topic, *The Formlessness of Power*, constitutes a return to the Situationist problematic of performativity, now pronounced in relation to a macro-landscape of governing moral presuppositions and political ideologies. In the case of Christiania, this has been most explicitly staged under the appeal of *normalization*. Here, I will relate Christiania's concretely articulated critique of urban formalization to the Surrealist and Situationist rejections of "lexical prisons"<sup>30</sup> or enveloping "*isms*."<sup>31</sup> While George Bataille was seeking emancipation in the raw materiality of *l'informe*, the Situationist critique of Raoul Vaneigem was constructed around the spatial play-tactics of *savoir-vivre*; the 'formless' art of living. These critical aesthetic practices will then be related to the *microphysics of power* as formulated by Michel Foucault. Discussing Christiania in relation to the critique of Foucault's concept of power, I will approach the question not only of how power is being executed and distributed through space, but also of how it is counteracted on a material level through the principle of *tactical play*; through a conscious 'formlessness' challenging every extension of spatial power.

24

The last chapter finally consists of a discussion of the relationship between a critical aesthetics and the discursive landscape of tactical formlessness as enacted in and through Christiania. The final discussion will further recapitulate the different aspects of formlessness around which the thesis has circled. As such, the dilemmas of planning and spatial design will be actualized, as well as the problems associated with formal aestheticization and a place-related or placial<sup>32</sup> identity production.

An inter-disciplinary study, the literature referred to has been derived from a number of fields and a number of linguistic spheres, with the main emphasis put on art theory, architectural theory and philosophy, including philosophical and critical studies from other domains such as urban sociology, social anthropology and cultural geography. More than anything, this work could therefore be seen as one of translation; an intermediary undertaking, not only in between languages (a task which, unless otherwise indicated, has been pursued by the author), but in between disciplines, fields of knowledge and

30 See Denis Hollier (1989:60-61).

31 "Le monde des *ismes*, qu'il enveloppe l'humanité toute entière...", Raoul Vaneigem (1967:16).

32 Not part of a standard English vocabulary, the neologisms 'placial' and 'placality' are nevertheless used in spatial discourse, among others by Edward S. Casey, who in his philosophical history of place uses the notions in order to further emphasize "the deep differences between earth and world – differences that have their own placial and spatial determinations." (1997:266). I will occasionally use 'placial' as the adjective form of 'place' referring to that which is 'of place' or 'related to place.'

scientific perspectives, all of which represent different ways of making sense. Yet, with Christiania as a living and instructive example, I hope to be able to give a fair enough an account of the multifaceted and composite story, which is that of expressive and conflictive urban formation.



## II. The Free Town of Christiania: A History of Representation and Reproduction



Fig.3 "The Flea Building." Façade towards Princess Street.

## II. The Free Town of Christiania: A History of Representation and Reproduction

### Split Vision

28

My first encounter with *Fristaden Christiania*, “The Free Town of Christiania”, could be described as one of confusion. I went there in December 1994, and I remember that already in *Prinsessegade*, Princess Street, I had a sense of some kind of *Otherness*. The mass media stereotypes I brought with me were difficult to shake off. Was this not a relic hippie reservation from the seventies, an oasis for disorderly, spontaneous and psychedelic cannabis-fueled romantics? Was this not a communitarian initiative that time had since long left behind? The pre-conceptions were as numerous and colorful as the bikes and knitted sweaters I fancied. Expectations increased as I walked along the extended brick wall of the *Loppebygningen* (the Flea Building), the solid façade of the 350-year-old military barracks, which still served as imposing interface between normality and oddity. Despite being decoratively wallpapered with posters for alternative music events, theatre performances and other exhibitions, it still manifested a physical boundary, separating predictable ordinariness from its disorderly offspring. Today, when the main entrance has been moved back to its original position on the corner facing the city, the ritual aspect of the approach has been somewhat defused, so that it no longer reinforces the alternative as a sudden fold in the regular city fabric; an unexpected offer, a potential slippage to a vast unknown.

With a new interest in landscape planning, I had decided to visit the notorious and mythic place on the other side of the Öresund in a studio course investigating potential implementations of *sustainability*. An alternative community built upon military surplus and leftovers from a run-away consumer society, Christiania should have something consistent to say on this matter, not least as its sustainability seemed to be a very fragile one, constantly threatened, both for economic and political reasons. All through the speculative eighties I had never managed to visit, busy as I was with my own alternative, green, and creative existence. However, in the early nineties, the time had arrived for reflection; progressive alternatives and social critique seemed both indispensable and problematic. In this situation, Christiania required a new actuality, perhaps above all because of its remarkable ability to survive; because of the fact that, despite a history of massive protest against its unlikely expropriation of space in the center of the Danish capital, no one had yet been able to give as crushing a definition of the Free Town as to once and for all wipe it out.

My first impression would perhaps also have been less confused had I approached the Free Town from a different direction on a different day. I could have chosen a sunny day in May; I could have entered the area from the south, walking along a gravel road bordered with imaginative and varied cottages. The sun would have made the open water surface glimmer, and on the wooden bridge crossing



to the other side, I would have met other *flaneurs*, curious visitors like myself, perhaps a jogger or two, possibly a trailer bike loaded with kids or groceries, or just a dog on its daily tour. This time however, our group gathered shivering by a sooty and sinister main barrack, which we eventually, hesitatingly, entered. Having found our way up the old stairs of the former military storage building to a seminar room, our group got a thorough and enthusiastic introduction to Christiania's own alternative planning and governing procedures by the special Guiding Group. We got to ask the obligatory questions about drugs and living costs, housing cooperatives and police raids; trivial questions in one respect, core issues in another. Yet, the presentation suffered from the classroom situation, as if the guides asked themselves if Christianite life was at all possible to mediate from within the four walls of a meeting room. And by the time we started our guided tour of the vast, 122 acres<sup>1</sup> area it was already dark. Rain was in the air, that kind of typical Öresund winter dampness that seeps into your bones.

Nevertheless, *Pusher Street*, Christiania's Main Street, was crowded, and as the yearly Christmas Arts and Crafts Market had opened, there were lots of visitors elsewhere. Icy dampness mixed with the warmth from numerous open fires and the sweet smoke of cannabis oozing from stalls and localities. The fires also served as light sources; apart from them, light was scarce, and Scandinavia in December is pitch-black already around five in the afternoon. Silhouettes of people, exposed bricks of cannabis in a range of brownish varieties, dogs crisscrossing – all of this conveyed a feeling of harshness and vulnerability that I from my safe position found problematic and provocative. It created a feeling of balancing along the edge of the order facing the backside of Western wealth. Not many windows were lit, just a few here and there, misted-over. It could have been the stage setting of Brecht's *Mutter Courage*, I thought, an aesthetic reinforcement of the Thirty Years' War. The impression of the military camp as it might have felt in the seventeenth century was still there, and it gave very little to hold on to.

Even though I had seen the plan, it dispersed while walking, and instead I remember moving forward as in a tunnel. The buildings emerged one after the other: *Operaen*, *Løvehuset*, *Mælkebøtten*, "The Opera", "The Lion House", "The Daffodil"; *Stjerneskipet*, *Novahuset*, *Melkevejen*, "The Star Ship", "The Nova House", "The Milky Way"; the naivety and playfulness of the names, often with political or cosmic undertones, stood in stark contrast to the crudity of the place, but also in themselves gave to the physical walk along muddy paths a character of mental appropriation. Further on, the local health center and sauna appeared, then the grocery cooperative and the sculptural shape of *Bananehuset*, the "Banana House"; a house erected and continuously improved by German traveling craftsmen. Gradually, the military atmosphere was replaced by a more pioneering one (or was it processional?), an Advent walk, a continuous dismantling of codes and systems yet unknown but decipherable. Undoubtedly

an outsider, at the same time embraced by, or engulfed in, signification, I had become part of a narrative, an emerging story where the whole point was that I did not know the end. Poor lighting reinforced its continuous and unfinished character, and I found myself thinking of my first experiences of being on my own, detached from middle class security, recalling the shock of encountering the world unplugged for the first time, a world both scarce and redundant. It reminded me of my own naïve and determined attempts to establish a life of my own, an authentic, decent and meaningful life that I could defend in every aspect. Walking around Christiania somehow meant balancing along this existential threshold, exposed to sudden and cursory insights of both the immensity and vanity of *adulthood*; not only in terms of social responsibility and communal obligations but as an undefined space; a changing, expanding and promising space.

The evocative walk through unknown terrain finally ended up at the Christiania restaurant *Spiseloppen*, where a delicious beetroot dish made a worthy finale to the day. Sustainability had become a spatial conundrum, a paradoxical composite of questions, where the dominant and most puzzling for me, as an artist and scholar dealing with the urban landscape, was how to grasp what I had seen. In relation to the city as such, Christiania seemed to be both clearly distinct and evasive, both strongly identifiable and open-ended. How should one be able to embrace the multiple levels and intertwined ramifications of spaces, stories, and visions that constituted Christiania? How should one understand its way of working and its relation to the city as such? And how should one, ultimately, communicate, evaluate or generalize its multiple intentions and continuous metamorphoses? What seemed to be demanded here was a split vision, a multiple perspective with the capacity to reproduce – not a coherent place – but a multifaceted and abundant space reaching far beyond visible or formal borders.

\* \* \*

This description of my first and bewildering confrontation with the Free Town of Christiania is included neither in order to mystify nor to romanticize. Instead it serves the important function of outlining a field of inquiry, which would evaporate within a conventional epistemological framework. Over the years, ever since the declaration of independence of the alternative community in 1971, the threat of clearing has been ever present without ever being realized; a tension that has been both productive and destructive, and which should be related to the difficulties of giving a full account. During these years, Christiania has seen a swift flow of representations, of images, reports, films, articles, myths; it has been mediated over and over again, all in attempts to provide answers as to its degree of 'difference' or its 'proper identity', as to its challenge to law and order or its contributions in terms of re-socialization and re-habilitation.

That Christiania has consistently resisted a single description, means that it would be paradoxical to now classify and reduce it to fit it into a particular (spatial) box or label. It would be more appropriate to consider how the image of 'Christiania' has varied. Over the years, it has been designated as everything from an activist do-it-yourself urbanity to 'a slum of despair', from a drug-liberal hippie paradise to a subsidized garden village for an intellectual elite. In the early years, the 'free town' could be described in the most categorical of ways, often over-simplified, either approvingly or indignantly. While for some commentators Christiania would appear as "a living, sprouting life; a green plant in between the paving stones; that which no legal paragraphs can create";<sup>2</sup> or a place where "[f]requent parties are bubbling", and where "the inhabitants are leading a vigorous everyday life sparkling with relaxed confidence and humanity";<sup>3</sup> it would for other observers evoke a darker landscape. "Christiania is called a social experiment", said a member of the Danish Communist party in *Folketinget*, the Danish Parliament, in 1974, "but we would prefer to call it a social emergency stopgap, as the experiment of living on the border of starvation through social welfare and in slums is an experiment known by the lower classes ad nauseam for decades and centuries."<sup>4</sup> The 'Christianites' themselves, the inhabitants of the area, have meanwhile been quite at ease with these diverse opinions, self-assertively dubbing their territory "a nitwits' reserve."<sup>5</sup>

31

"Christiania is not theory, politics, or religion. Christiania is a physical actuality, a remarkable reality", wrote the architectural professor Steen Eiler Rasmussen in 1976, when eviction was in the offing.<sup>6</sup> As complex reality, he argued, as manifest fusion of buildings and people and lives, Christiania was not possible to impartially or correctly *represent*, but had to be *lived*. The message conveyed by the Free Town in Rasmussen's interpretation was the dream of a hands-on urbanity, where 'freedom' first and foremost was understood as an independence from distorting and manipulative, theoretical or political, practices of spatial representation.

2 "[...]Christiania er et levende spirende liv, som en grøn plante mellem brosten. Den kan ingen paragraffer skabe." Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1976) *Omkring Christiania*, p. 17.

3 "Hyppige fester bobler i staden og borgerne udfolder et frodigt hverdagsliv, der lyser af afstresset tro og menneskelighed". Niels Herskind, Susanne Mogensen and Douglas Evans, *Christianshavn med Christiania som udgangspunkt*, in *Arkitekten* 1:1975, p. 292. This text was part of the second prize winning proposal in the 1974 competition initiated by the *Akademirådet*, an architectural authority consulted by the government.

4 "Man kalder Christiania et socialt eksperiment. Vi vil heldre kalde det en social nødløsning, for eksperimentet at leve på sultegrænsen på socialhjælp i slum, det er et eksperiment, som underklassen har kendt til hudløshed i årtier og århundreder." Hanne Reintoft, the Danish Communist Party, *Folketinget*, the Danish Parliament, May 8, 1974. Quoted in Mark Edwards (1979:247-248).

5 "Ordet tossereservat er Christianias eget". Richard Løvehjerte (1980) "Christiania... et socialt eksperiment og mere og andet end det" (Christiania...a Social Experiment and More and Other Than That), p. 27.

6 "Christiania er ikke teori, politik eller religion. Christiania er en fysisk realitet, en mærkelig virkelighed." Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1976:7).

This however, extends Christiania beyond the physically remarkable. “Whatever image you have, you can have it confirmed”,<sup>7</sup> declares one observer in 1977, indirectly referring to the arbitrary gap between representation and realization. And perhaps this is what ultimately motivates the following study; the fact that Christiania actualizes both the confirming and evasive character of the urban landscape, also on a more general level; an agonizing, spatial potentiality that, not unlike the urban landscape as a whole, cannot be dealt with in all its width other than as an aesthetically, or even artistically, informed ‘landscape urbanist’ activism. “Freedom”, writes a former Christiania resident solemnly, “is nowhere as big as in Christiania, and nowhere as frightening.”<sup>8</sup>

This fear of a labyrinthine and non-substantial freedom is certainly also something that affects any attempt to critically approach the Free Town. My way of structuring the course of events and discursive statements that has constituted the Free Town has therefore been disposed as a historical narrative. Providing a chronological backbone, the account will be aesthetically thematized around different representative and reproductive events, building upon an extensive study of primary and secondary sources directly linked to the representational practices and urban polemics developed in and around Christiania. The main focus will here be set on the floating boundary between representational and non-representational practices; between descriptive formalism and reproductive activism. In the appendix, a graphical time-line will further clarify this story of conflicts.

As this chronological presentation will map Christiania from a discursive point of view, it will bring into attention a number of concepts and themes relevant to the urban landscape in general. This chapter will allow only for shorter raids into these issues, postponing the expanded theoretical reflection to the chapters that follow. However, as the story of the Free Town unfolds, five main periods will crystallize, each of which are more or less characterized by a main topic of discussion. The first years are in this respect characterized by the attempts to legitimize Christiania as a space where the individual may develop new kinds of social engagement, and where, conversely, ‘the social’ could be reinterpreted as an enabling and creative rather than restrictive and governing framework. A second wind then follows when Christiania obtains a more explicit role as agent in an urban and juridical discourse, to a great extent profiting from its role as a capricious, playful and unpredictable spatial maverick. In a third phase, the conflicts following on an increasing degree of permanence begin to be felt. A more structured independence now stands against a high degree of temporality and volatility, resulting in a delicate balancing between, on the one hand, protective stagnation and, on the other hand, total ‘dreggification;’ a deterioration and surrender to what the Christianites themselves designated

7 “Vilken bild man än har, kan man få den bekräftad”. Lena Karlsson (1977) *Fristaden Christiania*, in Arkitekttidningen, p. 13.

8 “Nulle part aussi grande qu’à Christiania, la liberté n’y est nulle part aussi effrayante.” Jean-Manuel Traimond (1994:40).

as the 'dregs'.<sup>9</sup> A forth phase then follows, characterized by a more or less threatening 'normalization' or 'gentrification.' An insidious adaptation to certain unpronounced representational premises and main-stream narratives, this is a transformational process with inner as well as outer causes.

The fifth theme in the story of Christiania is also the most recent one and covers the discussion on normalization from the point of view of an ongoing debate. In this debate, the Free Town is again described as everything from a matter of violation of historical landmarks and landscape values to a matter of multiplicity and social capaciousness.

## The First Years: 1971-73

### From Illegality to Fragile Legitimacy

A former military barrack area and ammunition depot, Christiania or *Bådsmansstræde Kaserner* and *Ammunitionsarsenalen*, is situated within the historic center of the Danish capital, not more than a kilometer from *Amalienborg*, the seat of the Danish royalty, and probably just as close to *Christiansborg*, which is the seat of Danish political power. The area embraces half of what is still left of the historical ramparts, *Christianshavns Vold*, which is one of Denmark's most significant historical landmarks. It can be traced back as far as the 12<sup>th</sup> century. However, its present design, with a link of bastions forming a combined sea- and land fortification, dates back to the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These defensive works, erected during a period of time characterized by the continuous threat of Swedish invasion, were extended in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with a lower, outer rampart, *Enveloppen*. Most of the barrack buildings were erected from 1836 and onwards. The southern parts of the military area were abandoned in 1916 and turned into a public park, and in 1961, a further section north of the main thoroughfare of Christianshavn was included. During the period from 1967 to 1971, the military phased out its activities in *Bådsmansstræde*, even though neither the landowner the Ministry of Defense, nor the Copenhagen Municipality had yet presented any alternative plans for the area.<sup>10</sup>

33

There were, at this time, vague plans to develop the area for educational and cultural purposes; a new music conservatory, an opera academy and a theater school. The Municipality had begun projecting a take-over of the area already in 1968, proposing a mix of social housing, sports facilities and parks, counting

9 See **Børge Madsen (1981)** *Sumpen, liberalisterne og de hellige – Christiania, et børn af kapitalismen* (*The Dregs, the Libertarians and the Holy Ones – Christiania, a Child of Capitalism*).

10 Basic sources: *Lokalplan for Christianiaområdet (Local Plan for Christiania)*, planstyrelsen, 1991, *Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet (General Plan for the Christiania Area)*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, *Christianiaområdet og Christiania (The Christiania Area and Christiania)*, Del II, Christianiaudvalget, draft January 24, 2004.

on a *tabula rasa* situation where only four of the military buildings on the site would remain.<sup>11</sup> However, with the site vacant, various unofficial visitors soon found their way through walls and fences – the first to arrive, unsurprisingly, being scrap dealers and looters, who rapidly emptied the area of movable and exchangeable goods. During the summer of 1971, other categories of people, especially children from the neighboring, over-populated slums, came to enjoy the green and open space. Soon enough, some of the abandoned buildings in this green, forgotten and partly pastoral urban enclave, began to be used as summerhouses.

Others, like young people from the city, some of whom were active in the radical youth squatting movement of the time, some nomad hippies, some who simply could not afford an apartment, saw the possibilities. In late September, a group of intellectuals with ties to the alternative newspaper *Hovedbladet*, picked up on these tendencies and staged a ‘conquest expedition’ to the newly discovered, prohibited territory. This happening, which took place on September 26<sup>th</sup> 1971, and appeared, richly illustrated, in the *Hovedbladet* edition of October 2-3 1971, is often referred to as the founding date of Christiania. The writer behind the article, Jacob Ludvigsen, as passionate as ever, was a conqueror: “And now one house after another came into view. Big, solid buildings, which now are empty, hollow shells, crying for content. We were in the new land, Christiania.”<sup>12</sup> In the political climate of the early seventies, the program was clear: “It is the biggest chance yet to build a society from scratch – but one still to a certain extent based on the remains of what was there before.”<sup>13</sup> Immense possibilities were envisioned, and emigration was easy: “You simply catch Line 8 to Princess Street. Cost: one token.”<sup>14</sup>

The history of Christiania can to a great extent be read in terms of such enacted *fictionalization*, such mediated transformations of the real. From the very beginning a challenging of that which *is* by that which *could be*, it has entailed a re-negotiation of the regulative presupposition of a defined *place*, actualizing its dramatic, narrative or dynamic potentials. Christiania also ‘happened’ at a time when such fictionalization, through mass media, had begun to assert an increasing influence, generating alternative ‘lifestyles’ and new approaches to urban space. It is thus not surprising to note that Christiania from the very start

11 For an account of the unrealized plans for the area, see Pernille Skov and June Maestri Ditlevsen (2003).

12 “Og nu åbenbarede hus efter hus sig. Store gedigne bygninger, der nu står tomme, hulle skale, der råber på inhold. Vi var i det nye land, Christiania”. Jacob Ludvigsen (1971) “Militærets ”Forbudte by” på Christianshavn blev i stilhed indtaget af gemene civilister” (The deserted ‘Prohibited City’ of the Military at Christianshavn was Quietly Occupied by Ordinary Civilians”), article in *Hovedbladet*, 2-3 October, reprinted in Jacob Ludvigsen (2003:28).

13 “Det er den hidtils største chance for at bygge et samfund op fra grunden – men dog alligevel til en vis grad på det bestændes efterladenskaber.” Jacob Ludvigsen (1971:28).

14 “Emigrationen til den nye frie stad vil være let: Man tager blot linie 8 til Prinsessegade. Rejseudgift: en polet.” Jacob Ludvigsen (2003: 28).

was as much a mediated potentiality as a manifest reality. In one of the most significant images from the founding event of September 1971, the conquest was staged as a 'break-through', showing six activists symbolically and artfully demolishing an already penetrated wall. Other images showed the group as partisans, armed and in berets, picnicking on the slopes of the historical ramparts.<sup>15</sup> As a 'story' it had great attraction, and already by November it was evident also to the authorities that the old barracks were inhabited by several hundred people.

One of the intriguing questions that immediately emerged was of course how such an elusive and volatile project as Christiania could exert such attraction and generate such mobilization. As an open-ended deviation from the official urban story, Christiania did not exactly represent an entirely independent account with its own well-defined scenario, but instead actualized the very limitations of every attempt to 'define', 'delineate', or govern a complex human setting. Rather than a place of its own with an intentional and strong identity, Christiania was from the very start multiple and dynamic, shifting over time. Even though it originated in a specific, historical situation of urban tension and insufficiency, it was not, like most *intentional communities*,<sup>16</sup> legitimized through a common religious, political or ecological worldview. Instead, its legitimization was based upon a more amorphous and open-ended quest for *a space for agency*. The question of how the legitimizing of such a space should be handled or articulated was thus an important issue at the outset. Even though the answers were not obvious, one aspect was evident – in one way or another, it would have to be dealt with practically.

35

\* \* \*

The gap in which Christiania was to appear revealed a constitutive discrepancy between old forms of industrial (and in Denmark to a large extent rural) production balancing needs and claims, and a new societal dynamic, governed both by new demands upon the individual, and by the desires and creativity of a growing, and young middle class. The increase in mobility and education resulted in an entirely new social space with new constellations. When Christiania emerges, it is therefore a direct consequence of a new social awareness, where official organization and planning of urban space had come to play a decisive political role.

15 Jacob Ludvigsen (2003:23-47).

16 The concept of *intentional communities* is used as a generic term for communities, which are founded on a common ideology or religious conviction. See for example Terry A. Veling (2002) *Living in the Margins: Intentional Communities and the Art of Interpretation*, Robert C. Schehr (1997) *Dynamic Utopias: Establishing Intentional Communities as a New Social Movement*, Barry Shenker (1986) *Intentional Communities: Ideology and Alienation in Communal Societies*, *The Directory of Intentional Communities* (1992) Fellowship for Intentional Communities.



Christiania's physical location also reflected this emergent awareness of an urbanity, no longer simply industrially or economically important, but important as a dynamic social field. The Free Town did not emerge just anywhere, but in a strategically specific place. The old ramparts and barracks constituted a geographical borderland, formerly marking the outer limits of the historical city, and neighboring on the commons of Copenhagen; the vast *Kløvermarken* allotment garden area and *Amager Faelled* (Amager Common). As for the establishment of the new community, this marginal position, including its formal design as a military area, was almost certainly of decisive importance, not as 'form proper' but as 'free' or 'exceptional' space in a complex interplay with the city as a whole.

The borderline location in combination with the quite open plan of the area thus created specific prerequisites for its legitimization as a spatial unity, but without an explicit goal. Within its physical confines, its potential authority already from the start built more upon plurality than upon conformity, combining free personal development with the open-ended intention of a common activity, a *building*. As both physical and fictional event, it was to be continuously changed and improved. This is notable, not least, in the following often quoted, unofficial manifesto, dated November 13, 1971:

36

The aim of Christiania is to build a self-ruling society, where each individual can unfold freely while remaining responsible to the community as a whole. The society is to be economically self-sufficient, and the common goal must always be to try to show that mental and physical pollution can be prevented.

Thus formulated by Sven, Kim, Kim, Ole and Jacob with the right to make improvements.<sup>17</sup>

In this statement, which has become attached to the community ever since and appears almost as a mantra in a great number of publications, both ambitions and ambiguities become evident. What is expressed here is a categorical imperative in the Kantian sense; an ambition to combine freedom and common rules in one simple maxim, and to let this maxim organically generate a society, where the conflict between individual *action* and unified societal *form* (community) is eliminated. This quite vague vision expresses a potential dynamic between 'becoming' and 'sustaining', a dynamic which also actualizes an *ethical* space between an 'I can' and a 'you should'. This spatial ethics, founded in a spatially defined "economical self-sufficiency", should be understood, not in absolute terms, but as the provision of a rich sphere of a physically accessible 'otherness', which would prevent the contaminating or manipulative interlocking of "mental" and "social" spheres.<sup>18</sup>

17 "Christianias målsætning er at opbygge et selvstyrende samfund, hvor hvert enkelte individ frit kan udfolde sig under ansvar over for fælledskabet. Dette samfund skal økonomisk hvile i sig selv, og den fælles stræben må til stadighed gå ud på at vise, at den psykiske og fysiske forurening kan afværges". English translation by Adam Conroy (1995:8).

18 "The categorical imperative', Kant's most famous contribution to ethics, expresses



The formation of this ethically 'self-sufficient society' took off immediately in the fall of 1971, with pioneering intensity. The many concrete problems of trying to inhabit old barracks and barns, often not at all meant for dwelling, slowly gave rise to a social structure. However, this took place not without problems.

And slowly it sprouts and takes shape. In the beginning as something confused and chaotic, where the law of coincidences rules. Someone behaves like the authorities and tries to find a systematic method, others are toiling in their own little home, trying for the first time to behave like a ceramic stove expert with a reluctant smoker that does not want to comply, while it gets colder and colder... Appropriations are being made and the houses change owner while you are out in the old world or at the movies to relax.<sup>19</sup>

Despite vaguely defined common goals, the settlement constituted itself, and by Christmas 1971 a number of common functions had been established, such as an information office, weekly meetings, security patrol, and working groups, which in turn led to the setting up of common facilities such as kitchen, multimedia house, grocery cooperative, renovation office etc. Furthermore, a number of private initiatives were taken, such as establishing a bakery, a pub, a sleep-in facility, a discothèque and a number of smaller crafts enterprises.<sup>20</sup> Interesting to note here is the fact that a multitude of communicative forms played a significant role from the start. The non-representative practice was in this respect closely interrelated with linguistic and cultural practices, constituting an everyday discursivity or performativity, manifest in wall-paintings, plantings, architectural additions, and many other combined appropriative and communicative practices,<sup>21</sup> many of which continuously reinforced the feeling of Christiania as a fiction rather than a concrete order.

37

the relation between freedom and common good as the imperative to act as if the maxim of your action through your will could become common law. This simple ethical address, like the manifesto of Christiania, appears in the breach between a 'you should' and 'I can'; ideally bridged in the 'we' of mankind. This was expressed by Kant also in the practical imperative: "Act so that you always will treat humankind, both in your own person as in every other, as a *purpose* and not as a *means*." Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, quoted in Erik van der Heeg and Sven-Olov Wallenstein (1992) "Roten, arkipelagen, analogin – den kopernikanska vändningen och den kritiska arkitektoniken".

19 "Og langsomt gror det og ta'r form. I begyndelsen som noget uoverskueligt og kaotisk, hvor tilfældighedernes lov råder. Nogen optræder som autoriteter og forsøger at sætte i system, andre pukler i deres eget lille hjem og forsøger sig for første gang som kakkkelovns-ekspert overfor en genstridig os der ikke vil makke ret, medens det bliver koldere og koldere... Der scores og husene skifter ejer medens man er ude i den gamle verden eller i biffen for at slappe af." Per Løvetand Iversen (1972a:71). See also Børge Madsen (1979:87).

20 Per Løvetand Iversen (1972a:9).

21 See Line Kjær Nilsen (2003) "Spatiale tilegnelsepraksisser på Christiania" (Spatial Praxes of Appropriation in Christiania).

As such Christiania was continuously exposed and re-enacted, often in an indirect, satirical form somewhere in the rich flora of internal publications and fanzines that started to appear by the autumn of 1971.<sup>22</sup> These publications were from the beginning plain text stencils but rapidly developed more composite forms of expressions. Many of them were read also far beyond the physical borders of the Free Town, thus pointing to the fact that 'Christiania' as a community – or as an intersection of communities – was not limited by its physical location. One of the first issues of one of the earliest fanzines was for example dated according to the cosmic calendar, and also contained a considerable amount of non-conformist Christian material. In December 1972, the bandwidth was further increased by the founding of Christiania's Free TV cooperative, followed, in 1975, by an internal radio channel.<sup>23</sup> The first music festival was arranged in November 1971; a three day festival presenting many of the most popular groups at the time,<sup>24</sup> as well as several light-show groups.

There was also an opening in communication with the authorities. A change in government in October 1971, when the social democratic party took office, led to an intensification of contacts and negotiations during the spring 1972. It became clear that the new and radical Minister of Defense was prepared to grant the illegal occupation some sort of acknowledgement. In May 1972, a "provisional agreement", the so-called *Ten Points Agreement* was signed.<sup>25</sup> The agreement granted the approximately 500 inhabitants<sup>26</sup> a certain collective right to the area, implying among other things that sanitation and fire fighting equipment be provided, that the inhabitants be registered, and also that they pay a monthly 'users fee' for the consumption of energy and water.

The question of *illegality* was thus after less than a year turned into a question of *legitimacy*.<sup>27</sup> In this respect, the interim agreement also immediately unveiled the representational problem at core in this essay, namely the gap between constitutive, or legal representation, and constituting, or legitimizing action. Is meaning and rationality inherent to civil society or is it a consequence of its continuous reproduction? Should a delimited group of people acting on their own, in this way be able to change the normative framework of society as a whole? Should an isolated event of trespassing and dislodging be allowed

22 First Christiania Tidende (*Christiania Times*), *Ordkløveren* (*The Word Splinter*), *Referaten* (*The Transcript*), and from February 1972 also *Christianias Alternative*, and during 1975, *Folkets Avis* (*The People's Paper*)

23 Advertisement in *Christianias Alternative*, December 1972: "CHRISTIANIAS FREE TV: NOVA VIDEO TV". No pagination.

24 Such as the Danish rock groups *Gasolin* and *Røde Mor*.

25 "en foreløbig aftale". Birgit Jæger, Leif Olsen, Olaf Rieper (1993:42-44).

26 Jæger, Olsen, Rieper (1993:46). The number of inhabitants at this time is unclear. Jæger, Olsen and Rieper mean that a common estimation is that there were 300 persons living in Christiania by the end of 1972, but that the number rapidly increased during the winter up to around 800, in summer even up to around 1.500; a figure, which has since remained fairly stable.

27 Jæger, Olsen, Rieper (1993:87, footnote 12).

to fundamentally alter a wider spatial structure? Through the provisional agreement, the Ministry of Defense admitted a discrepancy as to the specific circumstances, and even though the agreement was considered 'temporary', this did not change the fact that a space of maneuverability had been, from the one side, acknowledged, and from the other, appropriated.

The delicate matter also spurred a parliamentary narrative, in which Christiania to a great extent figured as watershed between right and left. Strongly criticized from the political right as an illegal seizing of state property, it was from the left wing perspective regarded as a non-parliamentary, yet legitimate critique; a culturally multifaceted and innovative attempt to find new solutions to problems of spatial organization, participation and wealth distribution.<sup>28</sup>

More surprisingly, the legitimizing agreement also created strong tension between different groups within Christiania. Some regarded the agreement as stabilizing, while others saw it as a surrender to the system. Yet others, residing completely outside of all infrastructures, and therefore using neither electricity nor water utilities, saw it as simply unfair or irrelevant.<sup>29</sup> Though not explicitly spelled out, it revealed diverging opinions in how to interpret the social foundations of Christiania, the meaning of such notions as 'freedom', 'community' and 'goal'.

39

This divergence eventually led to the dissolution of *Fællesmødet*, the Plenary, which soon after the constitution of the alternative community had emerged as the decisive body of the community. The organizational structure of Christiania was from the beginning a combination of explicit anarchism and more general anti-authoritarian or libertarian tendencies; a structure not resting upon a representative public authority, but upon self-organization and self-control.<sup>30</sup> It was based upon a personal engagement, mediated and acted out directly in plenary debate. This engagement would then be reflected in a consensus decision, which would not come about unless each and every individual was profoundly convinced. "From an anarchistic measure", wrote one of the activists, Keld Løvetand, in a later reflection, "all governing is an evil, as no human being profoundly speaking is able to govern others [...]."<sup>31</sup> For this reason, the Plenary was initially the decisive body, also in order to prevent any divide-and rule strategy to develop in relation to the authorities.<sup>32</sup>

28 Jæger, Olsen, Rieper (1993:42). If you compare the ups and downs of Christiania with the terms of office of the different Danish governments since 1971, the threats of closure and the intensity of police actions have tended to be stronger under conservative government terms, and conversely, the tolerance greater during social democratic periods, especially during the first years.

29 Pernille W. Lauritsen (2002:17).

30 Jakob Reddersen (1991) *Christiania: En nogenlunde organiseret anarki (Christiania: A Somewhat Organised Anarchy)*. No pagination.

31 Keld Løvetand (1976). No pagination.

32 Recalling the event, Keld Løvetand writes: "It was chaotic, as people were counting on

After the dissolution of the Plenary, it became clear that Christiania had to be governed from the base. Decision-making was distributed to a local level of nine districts (today fourteen), all constituted by *Områdesmødet*, or 'the District Meeting.' This decentralization reinforced the idea of 'self-government' and consensus democracy even further. The Plenary, which still would be open to everybody, would now only deal with issues of concern for the entire community.

Despite considerable skepticism, the 'Ten-Points Agreement' was signed, and slowly gained acceptance. In the internal newsletters from the first year one can trace further attempts at producing a cohesive, yet open conception of the Free Town, simple enough to re-habilitate internal legitimacy. "The simple thing which gathers all the different meanings and opinions, which Christiania represents", writes Per Løvetand, the editor of Christiania's *Alternative* in September 1972, "is the wish to decide over one's own circumstances, on one's own terms – within a community which is not mandatory but which one has chosen."<sup>33</sup>

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Having survived its first anniversary by a hair-breath, Christiania agreed on the forming of a contact committee with members from the ministries and authorities. With responsibility for the follow-up of the agreement in relation to Christiania, this committee was in itself proof of further acknowledgement. And even though this relation was not without problems, it was nevertheless, from the point of view of both parties, a proof of the fact that communication and change was feasible. If the first critical moves of the Free Town now, despite all, had proven successful, the central concern from now on would be the delicate and paradoxical issue of how to *maintain* such a temporary and dynamic criticality.

sufficient discipline on behalf of the inhabitants for such a meeting to be held in peace and order. After about a quarter of an hour however, I, the undersigned, had to stand up and shout louder than the others to finally, as peace returned, suggest a chairman, a position for which I myself was elected. Hence the first governing took place while all the people of the Free Town were gathered." ("Det var kaotisk, fordi man regnede med at der var disciplin nok fra borgernes side til at holde et sådant møde i god ro og orden. Efter ca. et kvarters tid måtte undertegnede rejse sig op og vedvarende råbe højere end de andre, for tilsidst, efter at det blev ro, at forslå en ordstyrer, hvilket jeg selv blev valgt til. Hermed fandt den første styring sted mens alt fristadfolket var samlet.") Løvetand continues to describe how the first meeting then decided to assign to a group of ten people to take care of the most acute governing of the Free Town. After two weeks however, the group had found out that it was impossible to get anything done without having been granted authority. This was the crucial point, and as no decision was taken, a group of people tried to force through a kind of coup in order to establish a governmental board. This coup failed, and it was then decided that the Plenary would be the only decisive body. **Keld Løvetand (1976). No pagination.**

33 Per Løvetand (1972b) *Christianias Alternative*, September-October 1972. "Det enkle, som samler alle de forskellige maninger og synspunkter som Christiania repræsenterer, er ønsket om at kunne bestemme over egne forhold, på egne betingelser – inden for et fælleskab, som ikke er påtvinget, men som man har valgt." No pagination.

## The Dream of the 'Ting Place'

With its first, fragile legitimacy, the inner organization of Christiania began to develop; a formation that to a great extent also reflected the complex self-image of the community. On every level, consensus democracy would be practiced, guaranteeing that no surrogate exercise of power would occur. The number of indirect mediations, or representations would thereby, also in the domain of decision-making, be reduced and restricted, the foundation for negotiation and decision-making being a rich oral culture. According to Keld Løvetand, even the Plenary in this respect worked well for quite a while, "simply because it was a great piece of theater – you would not believe how much fun we had and how we laughed."<sup>34</sup>

Decentralization did not automatically lead to a reinforcement of participation and co-determination. On the one hand one might think that the smaller the group, the easier to practice consensual democracy. On the other hand, this structure did not impede the same strong and non-collaborative individuals from dominating the situation, individuals to whom the mere word 'community' would sound dangerous.<sup>35</sup> However, the basic idea was clear; every decision, if it were to be sustainable, must reach legitimacy not through a single fall of the gavel, but in *dialogue*. This was the inherent meaning of the manifesto's talk about the possibilities for each and every individual to develop freely while remaining responsible to the community. Even though this sounds quite simple, it also revealed discrepancies in regards the political implications. Some interpreted this as a libertarian, individually defined, anarchist model, where the only dialogic responsibility consisted in the avoidance of direct violence, whereas others would interpret it as a direct desire for communitarian anarchism and collaboration.

One of Christiania's inhabitants has referred to its dialogic structure as a "dream of the Ting place",<sup>36</sup> a dream of ancient direct democracy at the meeting place of the 'thing.' In the first months of the community's existence, notes from the Plenary were made in a *Tingbog*, a 'Ting Book'.<sup>37</sup> *Ting* is still a frequently used word and concept in Scandinavia, signifying both a legislative meeting place, a physical object-like place, and furthermore, in a less political context, a designation for an approximated amount of work to be carried out.<sup>38</sup> However,

34 "…simpelthen fordi det var et enormt stykke teater – kors hvor vi grinede og morede os." Keld Løvetand (1976). No pagination.

35 Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:47-48). See also Børge Madsen (1981) and Keld Løvetand (1976).

36 Jakob Reddersen (1991). No pagination.

37 See for example Peter Møllerup and Keld Løvetand (1976a:III), "Inledning" ("Introduction"). No pagination. See also Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen in their later vision for a civil structure for Christiania (*Skytten – en boplads på Christiania/The Archer – A Dwelling Place in Christiania*, 1980), where they envision a "tingbog", a "ting book."

38 In Scandinavia, *ting* refers back to ancient Scandinavian customs of legal gatherings at

it also refers to the ancient Germanic name for the representative and legal body of a land – the *thing* or *moot* – the root of the modern words *thing* and *mee-ting*, which is also the reason why it has surfaced as a concept within more general geographic and landscape discourse.<sup>39</sup>

The notion of the ‘Ting’ subsequently situated the question of legality or legitimacy within a spatial discourse, and turned the question of spatial identity into a question also of juridical identity. A phenomenon that is legal or illegal is so according to a law; an abstract structure, independent of situational aspects. The legitimate on the other hand, is related to a specific context, to a spatial setting, however also an intersubjective dimension. In this respect, the difference between legality and legitimacy opened up a distinction between urban space as a defined and juridically regulated *property* and urban space as a less definite urban landscape; a space regulated by custom and cultural patterns; a ‘Ting Place.’ The concrete spatial problem of Christiania was thus to legitimize its appropriation of property, its stealing of ‘place,’ by transforming the idea of place from a thing grounded in properties into a ‘thinging’; a utility-based right founded upon spatial interaction.

42

Later, when power was distributed from the Plenary to the District Meeting, the dream of the ‘Ting Place’ was similarly distributed and disseminated, reflecting a disjunction from ‘Ting’ to a less organized ‘clustering.’ Not unproblematic, this informal dissolution of the dialogic space that the Plenary could be seen as an ‘intimization,’ a preference for an intimate and potentially less problematic ‘near-sphere.’ Dialogic space was replaced by a structure that to an increasing extent had to be “loved into existence”;<sup>40</sup> a structure that required an intimate and passionate kind of engagement. As Christiania for many of the inhabitants embodied a deliberate rejection of any systems politics in favor of a peace-and-love based politics of life, this was a logical development. In an illustrated contribution to the internal newsletter *Ordkløveren, The Word Splinter*, this was also clearly expressed: “Systematic political work is incompatible with/

certain designated, geographical places. In Swedish it is still used to denote the lowest legal level, the Municipal Court or the *Tingsrätt*, and in Danish, for example, to refer to the highest political organ, *Folketinget*, the ‘People’s Court.’ *Ting* also means simply object, thing, with an origin in the ‘legal thing.’ It is also used to denote an approximated or contracted work, a *be-ting*, a thing to be done, a project or a body of work. It also appears as a verb, *tinga*, meaning negotiate, bargain for, contract. *Svensk Etymologisk Ordbok (Swedish Etymological Dictionary)*, 3rd edition, 1966.

39 This is a relation discussed by Kenneth R. Olwig in *Representation and Alienation in the Political Landscape*, in *Cultural Geographies* 12:1, 2005. Olwig here takes as a starting point for the discussion Martin Heidegger’s etymological reflections upon the *Thing* as “a gathering, and specifically a gathering to deliberate on a matter under discussion, a contested matter.” The *Thing* does not have a social life; it is the *essence* of the social, or the *res-* in *res publica*: “*Res publica* means not the state, but that which is known to everyone, concerns everybody and is therefore deliberated in public.” (Martin Heidegger, *The Thing*, quoted by Olwig. See also Martin Heidegger (1971) “Building Dwelling Thinking”, p. 153: “Gathering or assembly, by an ancient word of our language, is called ‘thinging’”).

40 Børge Madsen (1979:56).

deceives everyday life – reality. Bio-political work never ceases – it is incessant solidarity.”<sup>41</sup>

Ultimately, this ‘clustering’ politics to a certain extent dissolved even the District Meetings, entailing a distribution of power to an even more informal level, described by one inhabitant in the following way:

The community mostly manifests itself in the form of ‘the parliament of the street’ – in other words in a form where you react upon each other’s actions and find mutual solutions in the concrete situation. In many cases, the more formal decision structure has very little influence on developments in Christiania.<sup>42</sup>

The relative formality of the ‘Ting Place’ was soon replaced by a legitimizing practice completely separate from a formalized common space, instead associated with the continuum of the *street*, where positions were established and re-established in relation to a continuous flow. This did not necessarily mean that decisions were arbitrary, but that they were re-negotiable, however not always easy to recollect or trace. ‘The parliament of the street’ in this respect constituted a recognized public and political sphere that within a more structured societal system would not be recognized as an important venue for communicative action.

43

In a research report from the Academy of Architecture, Department of Building Technology, Per Løvetand Iversen, both resident and architect, also emphasized this “main thread” of communicative action meandering through Christiania. The report pointed to the fact that Christiania at a very early stage deliberately decided to use its forces on the practical concern of incessant consolidation (to a great extent a day-to-day work), rather than on conventional representational practices.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, Børge Madsen stressed the fact that it would have been impossible to force general plans upon the anti-authoritarian ‘low proletariat’ and the freedom-loving ‘libertarians’ who constituted the majority of Christiania’s inhabitants: “Many of these groups had escaped precisely such circumstances and felt a need for the spontaneous and immediate.”<sup>44</sup>

As a foundational intention, the ‘Ting Place’ proved to be more complicated and problematic than expected. The idea that each decision be taken in an entirely

41 “Systempolitisk arbejde er uforenligt med/svigter hverdagslivet – virkeligheden. Livspolitisk arbejde ophører aldrig – det er uophørlig næstehjælp.” Illustration in *Ordkløveren*, October 16, 1973 (probably), quoted in Bent Pedersbæk Hansen (1978). The word *næstehjælp* literally means ‘neighbor-help’, connoting the Christian idea of ‘neighbor.’

42 “Fælleskabet manifesterer sig oftest i ‘gadens parlament’ – dvs. ved at man i den konkrete situation reagerer på hinandens handlinger eller bliver enig mand og mand imellem. Den mere formelle beslutningsstruktur har i mange tilfælde ringe indflydelse på udviklingen på Christiania.” Jakob Reddersen (1985). No pagination.

43 Per Løvetand Iversen (1972c:86).

44 Børge Madsen (1981:102).



reciprocal rather than representative dialogue also implied the rejection of a formal 'place' or 'Ting' (the Plenary) in favor of the everyday spatial practice – a kind of relational 'tinging' dissociated from place but understood as an entirely 'social' *event space*, like that of the 'street' or the pragmatic District Meeting. The discussion of the Ting Place in this sense revealed the central problematic of the Free Town of how to expand subjective being, how to unfold the private sphere into a *res publica*, a publicly extended being, without submitting to authoritarian forms of representation.

### The Social Experiment

If the 'Ting Place' for many of the Christiania inhabitants constituted a constraining and all too intentional idea of commonality, a more successful and prevailing label would come to be that of *the social experiment*. Even though this was a legitimizing epithet attached to Christiania from outside and above, it would prove to be sufficiently vague and malleable to serve also as a mobilizing slogan for the Free Town as such.

44

During the very first year of the Free Town's existence, as the social democratic government was pressed by the conservative opposition to take measures to control Christiania, an action plan was developed and presented in March 1973. This plan stated that Christiania should remain under state administration for another three years, and that an architectural competition about the future of the area be announced. This decision was further elaborated at a meeting in June 1973, where the Social Minister, the Cultural Minister and the Minister of Defense together granted Christiania the status of "a social experiment."<sup>45</sup> The core of the agreement was that Christiania should continue to function according to its own rules, with a high degree of legal autonomy.

The definition of the Free Town as a 'social experiment' suited both parties. For the social democratic government, the idea of the social experiment was a constructive way of showing creativity and efficiency before demands to revitalize the social welfare system, a position evident in the following quote from the ministry's report:

An increasing number of groups cannot or do not wish to accept the demands put forward by society. This is particularly true of the numerous young and socially disadvantaged groups, where society's promises have proven to be insufficient and unacceptable. It concerns minority groups, those expelled from family, friends and working communities, as well as lonely and elderly people, those who feel estranged from society. (...) In regards these

45 The notion of 'the social experiment' seems to have appeared officially for the first time at a meeting between the government and Christiania's negotiation group, and appears in minutes from the meeting from the Ministry of Culture of June 30 1973, and in a report of the same meeting by the Minister of Defense. Ole Krarup (1976: 20 and 74). See also Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:42 and 87).



groups, Christiania should be regarded a social experiment which aims to equip the individual with the prerequisites for a meaningful existence.<sup>46</sup>

From the point of view of the settlers, on the other hand, the notion of 'the social experiment' was understood as "societal experimentation", a constructive criticism of notions like 'the social', 'the disjunctive', and 'the normative.' The core issue, according to some, was that Christiania, rather than an experiment, had become "an attempt to practically generate a model of an alternative society."<sup>47</sup> While one inhabitant could express societal experimentation as "a place that combines inner liberation with outer revolution",<sup>48</sup> others would more ironically label it "a lunatic asylum, which many claim would be a more correct designation than the 'social experiment' of the authorities."<sup>49</sup> The importance of not becoming "an institution" in the hands of the social authorities was emphasized,<sup>50</sup> while yet others proposed more offensive interpretations. As an example, in relation to the debate, Paolo Soleri's experimental and utopian society *Arcosanti* was put forward as an inspirational role model.<sup>51</sup> However,

46 "Man oplever i disse år en førøvelse af grupper, der ikke kan eller vil tilpasse sig de krav samfundet stiller. Det gælder de mange unge socialt truede grupper, hvor samfundets tilbud har været utilstrækkelige eller uacceptable. Det gælder minoritetsgrupper der er stødt ud af familie, venner og arbejdsfæller. Det gælder ensomme og gamle der føler sig fremmedgjorte.(...) Overfor disse grupper må Christiania vurderes som et socialt eksperiment med det sigte at søge at give den enkelte forudsætninger for en meningsfyldt tilværelse." Quote from the report from the Ministry of Defense, in Ole Krarup (1976:6).

47 "Christiania er for mig et forsøg på at praktisere sig frem til en model af et alternativt samfund." Henrik Karlsvognen (1976).

48 "Christiania må blive det sted der forener den indre frigørelse med den ydre omvæltning." Tine Schmedes (1976), "Kronik: Vi må gøre vårt mål klart" (Chronicle: We should clarify our goal). No pagination.

49 Per Løvetand Iversen, article in *Arkitekten*, 10:1974.

50 Per Løvetand Iversen (1974: 202-207).

51 *Christiania Alternative*, 14:1973. In the 70s, the Italian architect Paolo Soleri began building his *Arcosanti*, a mega-structure for one thousand five hundred people, in the Arizona desert outside Phoenix. According to the official homepage, a kind of "urban laboratory", this highly personal project was a reaction to the sprawl of American cities. It has continued to develop over the years, even though only a part of it has been completed. It currently counts around sixty inhabitants. *Arcosanti* should be regarded as the embodiment of Soleri's organic theory of architecture, *arcology*, formulated by Soleri as follows: "In nature, as an organism evolves it increases in complexity and it also becomes a more compact or miniaturized system. Similarly a city should function as a living system. Arcology, architecture and ecology as one integral process, is capable of demonstrating positive responses to the many problems of urban civilization, population, pollution, energy and natural resource depletion, food scarcity and quality of life." (Soleri quote from official website at <http://www.arcosanti.org/theory/arcology/main.html>). Arcology is a theory that attempts to respond to the necessity of the radical reorganization of a sprawling urban landscape, building instead upon the idea of dense, urban synthesis, three-dimensional cities with an organic complexity. Close to the idealistic and acropolis-like site, there is also *Camp*, the suburban satellite to *Arcosanti*, where volunteers and workshop participants may stay. There are two kinds of houses in *Camp*, the *Cubes* and the

even though the 'the experiment' entailed a certain recognition of the Free Town, it was controversial, and the inhabitants were not sure of how to interpret the situation:

A cultural experiment (trivial word) with potential assistance concerning the solving of arduous assignments, however with total self governance as to inner appearance and affairs, or a 'declared Free Nation', with a 100% expelling attitude towards anything coming from higher (or lower) instances.... If we are to show some of the doubters that we aim at something beneficial to society, we should prefer 'the experiment'.<sup>52</sup>

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In terms of legitimacy, *the social experiment* was indeed a very powerful representation of Christiania. It established important links to an outside, which at the same time also recognized its deficiencies. However, it also placed the community in a paradoxical situation. Implicit in the vision of the social experiment was not only a benevolent, social democratic agenda of caring, but also a more deep-reaching bio-political framework; a pre-assumptive structure consisting of a number of more or less fundamental expectations, about social reproduction on the one hand, and about knowledge and experimentation on the other. Hidden in the idea of 'the social experiment' lay the assumption of 'social health' as a governing principle of modern society, an ideal sociality, which, once recognized, would be possible to synthesize. Different from 'the aesthetic', 'the social' was considered a value or a function separate from other values or functions, and therefore possible to research and treat separately. From the perspective of the authorities, Christiania was a 'social' issue, neither economic, ideological or cultural, nor historical, commercial, or legal, even if some of these aspects certainly had turned up in the debate at certain points. Furthermore, the 'social experiment' implied a linking of this 'soft' social value to positive knowledge. In this sense, 'the experiment' obscured an epistemological goal-means rationality, a problem-solving expectation, which at any time could be transferred into *evaluation mode*, into a situation, where the experiment was to be put up against the wall and critically assessed.

The 'cost' for Christiania for accepting the label of the social experiment would then be the seemingly moderate delivery of 'knowledge.' And as the quote above suggests; if Christiania aimed at anything the least beneficial to

*Bunk houses.* In many ways, *Camp* shows a more interesting 'arcological' development than the 'mothership', with many of the small standard entities having been personalized and manipulated over the years. Even though highly innovative on a formal level, *Arcosanti* remains Soleri's private project, and does not, in the same way as Christiania, reflect the social complexity and conflicts of alternative urban development.

52 "Et (fortærskede ord) kultureksperiment, med tilhørende assistance til løsning av pressende opgaver, men total selvbestemmelse med indre udseende og formål, eller en 'erklæret Fri stat', med en 100% afvisende holdning til alt hvad der kommer fra højere (eller lavere) instanser...Hvis vi skal vise nogle tvivlere, at vi vil noget samfundtjenligt, må vi fortrekke 'eksperimentet'. Hans Løvetand, *Ordkløveren* (1972: October 28).

society, the 'experiment' was to be preferred. However, questions remained as to what kinds of experiments were envisioned and what kind of knowledge was expected. The nomination of the social experiment also created a storm of protests from conservative parties, which in this only saw an acknowledgement of an illegal and destructive drug culture. As a reaction to the turbulence, Christiania organized a "Goat Market", a kind of carnivalesque answer to the scare mongering, which had been experienced as a smear campaign.<sup>53</sup> The Goat Market was one of many attempts to kaleidoscopically and playfully mirror the stereotypical representations of the 'experiment' as a social margin populated by a bunch of smelly, yet stubborn and willful dropouts. It was also an opportunity to transfer the clinical notion of the social experiment into a multiplying 'event', a political counter-action, where the controlling dimension of the 'experiment' was displaced by multiplying the 'experimental'.

One of the most important traits of Christiania, its non-homogeneity, also diminished the trustworthiness of the 'social experiment.' Christiania was not one separate social entity, but intertwined with the rest of society in a number of ways. It unfolded as a composite of different stories and fates, expressively described by one of its inhabitants in the following way:

There are youngsters, there are foreigners, and there are minority groups and flotsam of all tints. There are the active, the passive, the peaceful and the violent, the idealists and those who have found salvation in a sinful confusion. There are criminals and there are 'the social misfits', the unadjusted or the nonadjustable.<sup>54</sup>

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A similar, although more critical observation is made by another bystander, who claims that "[t]here was little unifying thread between this collection of intellectuals, students, 'squatters', criminals and the poor, apart from the negative reaction to the wider 'outside' society."<sup>55</sup> The difficulty then, and the key to the understanding of Christiania from a 'social' point of view, is not so much a matter of finding a complex and representative description or categorization. It is rather a matter of understanding a tactical negativity; its *circumstantialities* and its *perseverance*; a production and reproduction of social engagement against all odds. The 'experimental' synthesis of ideals into an alternative and particular order, which had been the conventional model for activism, had in Christiania been replaced by a circumstantial and situated interventionism,

53 Peter Møllerup and Keld Løvetand (1976b:IV). No pagination.

54 "Det er unge, det er udlændinge, det er minoritetsgrupper og drivgods af alle afskygninger. Det er aktive, passive, fredlige og voldelige, idealister og frelste i en syndig forvirring. Det er kriminelle, og det er 'sociale tabere', de utilpassede eller utilpasslige." Per Løvetand Iversen (1972c:38).

55 Adam Conroy (1995). Børge Madsen also points to this discrepancy and to the fact that many of the new Christiania inhabitants were recruited from the neighboring "Projekt Hus", a municipal project for homeless people with severe drug problems. According to Madsen, "Projekt Hus" was a failure, and was also shut down at the time of Christiania's appearance. See Børge Madsen (1979:43).

tactically pliable and sensitively flexible. Again, Christiania did not unfold as an alternative *order*, but as an alternative *dis-ordering*; a consequence of, as much as a reaction to, prevailing societal forms. Consisting of singular movements and actions, its dis-ordering was furthermore a compound of trajectories, engaging and connecting spaces within and outside, interlocking others.

In an attempt to understand this lack even of experimental order, Christianite Børge Madsen emphasized the fact that Christiania already from the start constituted a multiple narrative. His division of the Christiania settlers into three different categories is subsequently not a static categorization but an attempt to trace different 'routes' through the new and politically tense urban landscape. Subsequently, "the dregs", "the libertarians" and "the holy ones"<sup>56</sup> in Madsen's description all represented different *enactments* of a new, urban situation; enactments, which Madsen labels "social bankruptcy", "ideological defection" and "individualization."<sup>57</sup> "The dregs", or "the B-team", were the low proletariat; in an industrial economy the *Lumpenproletariat*; now rather social than economic 'losers'; a matter of, often complete, 'non-adjustability' and 'social bankruptcy.' The other two groups both represented an expanding middle class, whose social collapses were of a more ideological character, a reaction to a dehumanizing societal machinery, and an ideological defection from Stalinism, Marxist determinism and the society of mass consumption. Within this middle-class group, there were the hard-core activists and intellectuals, internally labeled "the holy ones", for whom communitarian anarchism played an important role, and who saw Christiania as an opportunity to politicize life in practice. However, there was also a considerable group of "libertarians" who prioritized different forms of individual freedom and self-realization.<sup>58</sup>

These groups represented disparate patterns of action, with different relations to the surrounding city. This created, according to Madsen, a "seesaw" situation,<sup>59</sup> where destructive and constructive tendencies often counter-balanced each other. When one individual or group was going down, they would hit a point, causing an activity of recuperation somewhere else, which would create a kind of paradoxical, intertwined and perhaps even interlocked mobility. This tension was especially obvious between 'dregs', who saw the opportunity for developing a black economy of private enterprise, and the

56 Børge Madsen (1981) *Sumpen, liberalisterne og de hellige – Christiania, et barn af kapitalismen* (*The Dregs, the Libertarians and the Holy Ones – Christiania, a Child of Capitalism*).

57 "Social deroute", "social bankruptcy". Børge Madsen (1979:52-55).

58 Børge Madsen (1979). According to Madsen, the categorizations used within Christiania were often stark simplifications, such as "pushers and activists" or "the dregs and the Holy ones", neglecting the extensive and in terms of mediation and 'buffering', very important middle groups.

59 "Jeg vil gå videre med det jeg byder at kalde CA's vippefunktioner: folk der er på vej ned rammer en vippe og begynder at ryge op ad." ("I would like to proceed with what I call the seesaw functions of CA: that people who are on their way down hits a beam and begin to move upwards") Børge Madsen (1979:98).

‘activists’ on the other hand, who hosted grand communitarian ambitions for an autonomous economy.

Even though Madsen belonged to the intellectual group of activists who believed that Christiania’s survival depended on its ability to develop sustainable, overall patterns of action and negotiation, he acknowledged the ‘seesaw’ function, by virtue of its non-methodological character, to have a re-socializing effect. However, its relative success might not so much have to do with its ability to balance communitarian and petit-bourgeois tendencies, or to calibrate tolerance and powerlessness, as to its creating an awareness of social psychological patterns, of group dynamics and of identity formation. The interlocked rocking back and forth between different ‘ideologies’ or patterns of action demanded new skills in terms of decision-making and community building, new tightrope-walking skills. In this situation, unification was not a matter of a common intention or future vision, such as the social experiment or anything similar, but a matter of *space*; a counter-balancing potentiality, a circumstantial milieu; a combination of an exigent physical environment with its groves, ramparts, streets and buildings, sanitation pipes and its main fuses, and an enabling imaginary landscape of associations, trajectories and possibilities. Despite deviating ideologies, this spatial potentiality remained unifying.

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## A Second Wind: 1973-78

### Christiania versus the State

Having obtained the status of ‘social experiment’, Christiania had to face new threats. In its role as a planning authority, the Municipality of Copenhagen put new pressure on the owner of the area, the Ministry of Defense.<sup>60</sup> One of the arguments for postponing clearance had been the lack of a master plan. The idea was that while the ‘social experiment’ was running, a competition was supposed to be held and a plan established. The Municipality had already in 1968 initiated the planning process, and had also in 1972 delivered a proposal for the future district of Christianshavn. Although the alternative community had at that time already existed for five months, its existence was not considered in the proposed plan, which in itself constituted a threat. Instead, two alternative plans were presented; one where the area was designated for cultural institutions, and another, envisioning a multi-purpose use, combining social housing, schools and recreation.<sup>61</sup> In this situation, the government felt the necessity to initiate the clearance process, and in October 1973, a demolition plan for a large number of houses was established. This plan was followed up two months later by a new liberal-conservative government, proposing the bulldozing of half of the buildings to save money for an expensive renovation. At the same time, the new ministry declared that

60 Pernille W. Lauritsen (2002:20-21).

61 Pernille Skov and June Maestri Ditlevsen (2003).

they had no intention to support the 'social experiment'. The Free Town was to be dissolved and eradicated.

In 1974, the wind turned temporarily, when Christiania obtained a seat in the municipal elections and the organization *Support Christiania* was founded. Facing concrete threats towards its physical location, Christiania mobilized its extended network of sympathizers, thus actualizing the fact that its existence as an oppositional force was a much more complex matter than the mere seizing of place. An example of this was the fact that the advisory expert counsel for architectural questions, *Akademirådet*, also chose to act in the affair. Critical of the new government's treatment of Christiania, as well as of the fact that the Ministry of Culture had announced no competition, the council drew up its own competition program.

The first planning-related document directly motivated by the anarchist settlement, the program could also be regarded as the first more official attempt to give a 'representative' image of the Free Town in all its width. The task for the competition was to work out guidelines for the future beyond the 'experiment', and it is interesting to see how the young community already in 1974 had managed to put its marks on the urban debate.

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For *Akademirådet*, the failure of the modern metropolis was a self-evident and implicit presupposition. The architectural assignment, therefore, was not simply a matter of the regulation of traffic patterns, or the safeguarding of architectural monuments, but was divided into urban, architectonic and social pedagogic considerations. The latter included the question of how to fit social experimentation into the rational web of modern urbanization. Furthermore, it also included consideration of how to prevent the centrally located area from turning into an arena for real estate speculation. What Christiania had made clear, already at this point, was the need to rethink the city as something other than a system of rational or commercial production. It had forced a radicalization of the architectural debate, expressed in an issue of the leading Danish architectural magazine:

The much debated existence of Christiania as phenomenon and free town; the inventive recycling of an abandoned barracks area – now in its third year – is in itself a proof of the fact that there are other intentional forms of settlement than those currently offered by the construction industry, and that the possibilities for human societal formation are not exhausted by the problematic city development in which we have recently been entangled.<sup>62</sup>

62 "Selv Christianias omdiskuterede tilstedeværelse som fænomen og fristad, og den opfindsomme genanvendelse af et forladt kaserneanlæg – og nu på tredje år – er vel også en art dokumentation for, at der findes andre hensigtsmæssige bosætningsformer end de som byggeindustrien idag ka tilbyde, og at mulighederne for menneskelig samfundsdannelse ikke er udtømt med den problematiske byudvikling, som vi i øvrigt har indviklet os i." Viggo Møller-Jensen, Holger Sørensen and Ole Thomassen (1975:285-286).

The representation of Christiania as 'social experiment' had evidently affected ideas concerning how it should be reproduced. The architectural issues were situated within an explicitly political context, where 'normalization' was considered one of two extremities, the other being absolute improvisation and total lack of overall planning.

Regarding the social and political complexity of the task, it is not surprising that only seven proposals were submitted by the day of the deadline in January 1974. Common to all was the proposed maintenance of Christiania. Several of the proposals also argued for an expanded 'Christianization', an extended self-governing also in the rest of the city district of Christianshavn. The two prize-winning submissions however, could be said to represent two different, if not opposite directions in terms of development; on the one hand that of *integration*, suggesting a successive blending of 'social experiment' and city structure; and on the other hand that of *radicalization*, proposing an expansion of the urban activist perspective to embrace a greater part of the city.

Based upon a step-by-step restructuring of the working class district and former military- and industrial area surrounding Christiania, the winning proposal presented a formal planning approach, where the most important ingredients were the re-disposition of traffic flows, an extensive slum-clearance and a laying out of generous green areas and public spaces.<sup>63</sup> Much more far-reaching in its envisioning of an urban alternative, the second prize winning proposal presented a strategy, in which Christiania was seen as the incentive for a much more profound shift of planning paradigm. According to the architects behind the proposal, Christiania emerged at a point in history where Copenhagen found itself at a threshold, where a future of heavy exploitation and centralization loomed. In this situation, the occupation of the former barracks acted as an eye-opener, or a diagnosis of an urbanity in crisis. More than a 'social experiment' Christiania could be understood as a rescuing venture, safeguarding the remnants of the historic city from the jaws of modernity,<sup>64</sup> as well as defending multiplicity and mixed-use patterns against the rationalization of the metropolis.<sup>65</sup> If the winning proposal employed a formal and structural language with the emphasis on everyday accessibility, functionality and mobility, envisioned mainly as a plan, the runner-up proposal made use of a more narrative, collage-like representational form, focusing on future scenes and situations. It is interesting to note how the improvisations of Christiania managed to imbue both program and proposals with an underlying agenda of social movement.

63 Per Midholm (1975:286-288).

64 In their extensive analysis of a number of planning documents from 1968, Pernille Skov and June Maestri Ditlevsen tell the "*contra-factual*" story of what would have happened had Christiania not happened. They argue for the probable scenario of a barracks area under municipal governance, with around 300 social housing units, schools and recreational areas, but where only four of the original military buildings would remain. See Pernille Skov and June Maestri Ditlevsen (2003).

65 Niels Herskind, Susanne Mogensen and Douglas Evans (1975:289-293).



Despite the competition, the clamor for closure continued, enabling the ultra-conservative *Framskrittspartiet*, the Progress Party, to force a decision. The decision was taken in April 1975. The date of eviction was set to April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1976, and in May 1975, the Ministry of Defense urged Christiania to present a plan for the clearance. As a reply, Christiania carried out a number of required building improvements, and in December 1975 also handed in a summons against the State for breaking the 10-point agreement from 1972, as well as for neglecting the 'social experiment' status from 1973.<sup>66</sup> In the summons, Christiania presented three accusations against the State. Firstly, the government had neglected to set up a competition for the future use of the area, and had thus not complied with its responsibilities. Furthermore, the date of eviction was arbitrarily set and answered only approximately to the three years respite. Thirdly, by virtue of its acknowledged status as a 'social experiment', Christiania could not be regarded illegal. This legitimization certainly had legal consequences. "Christiania started as a violation of the law – as all relevant revitalizations in the history of societies have begun with such a violation", wrote the Christiania lawyers. "But the state accepted and legalized Christiania."<sup>67</sup> Through its recognition of Christiania as a 'social experiment', the government had made room for the alternative community within the established, societal framework. It could not be considered compatible with a civil rights system, argued Christiania in the summons, to initiate and encourage an experiment embracing several hundreds of people, only to immediately dismiss, ignore and disavow it.

### Protracting Popularizations

Even though the eviction was now scheduled, it was evident that the Christiania inhabitants did not intend to vacate the area. On the contrary, the outer threat led to an increase in cultural activity and again helped to sharpen common identity.<sup>68</sup> Consolidation continued and support from outside grew stronger. A large number of cultural events had contributed to create a veritable grassroots movement of support, not only in Denmark, but internationally. The media showed increasing interest, and gradually a more positive image of Christiania emerged. In January 1976, some three months before the planned clearing, a documentary was broadcast on national television, showing the 'typical' Danish family Hansen's visit to Christiania.<sup>69</sup> The documentary, featuring Mr. Hansen, an unemployed construction worker in his forties; Mrs. Hansen, a cleaning assistant in her late thirties; and their two sons, eleven and sixteen years old, generated increased sympathy. The reportage followed the family during a week's stay in the Free Town; and while the family initially felt the community should be closed, by the end of the week they were much more uncertain and closer to the view that Christiania should remain.

66 Ole Krarup (1976:6).

67 Ole Krarup (1976:6).

68 Jens Falkentorp, Dino Hansen, Steen Juhler, Mogens Kløvedal and Per Løvetand (1982).

69 Fleming Balvig (1979).



This gradual shift in opinion was also clearly discernable elsewhere,<sup>70</sup> and with the date of closure approaching, Christiania mobilized all its cultural resources, arranging large peace and spring gatherings, which attracted huge crowds. Christiania also got some unexpected help when in February 1976 a cost-benefit analysis undertaken by the Danish University of Technology showed that the expenses for closure would be significant, taking into account not only the cost of physical clearance, but also of social and criminal rehabilitation.<sup>71</sup>

The most efficient means of redirecting popular opinion however, was not of a representational kind, but consisted of a swift stream of outreaching cultural manifestations which rapidly washed the stigmatizing undertone of the delimiting 'social experiment' away and expanded it into a pro-active notion of spatial reproduction. Alongside attempts on behalf of the authorities to *incorporate* the new settlement into its own legal and societal body, the settlement was itself involved in intense mutation and propagation, thus continuously *changing the presuppositions* for integration. What I would like to point to in relation to this phase in Christiania's development is this paradoxical *de-formation* or metamorphosis, generating not only an unpredictable course of events, but also a space of maneuver, of potentials. Christiania's way of accomplishing this spatialization has to a great extent involved different forms of artistic action; as such partly employing a given formula of de- and transformation in relation to the much more rigid body of official urban planning practice.

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Even though the artistic actions were staged by a limited number of people during a quite limited period of time in the history of Christiania, they have had a decisive impact as concerns the reproduction of the Free Town and its legitimacy as an agent in the urban landscape. Many of the events that attracted most attention were pursued by the action theatre group *Solvognen*, "The Sun Wagon", based in and closely associated with Christiania from 1973 until around 1980.<sup>72</sup> The productions, many of which involved many different forms of expressions and a large number of actors, were often of an interventionist kind, embracing the space and the social context in which they were performed. Staged either in the huge *Grey Hall* addressing a large audience, or taking place outside of Christiania, the *Solvognen* events in an efficient way expanded the 'socio-dramatic know-how' of the Free Town, provocatively actualizing the workings and fixed positions of the surrounding urban landscape.

I will return to the political re-enactments of *Solvognen*. In this historical context however, it is sufficient to note how the 'spatial identity' of the Free Town from the very start developed into a contested matter of spatial positioning and social narratives. As such it constituted a play both with the representational status

70 Fleming Balvig (1979:57).

71 *Overslag over Christiania* (Estimate Over Christiania) (1976), notat (notice) 76-1.

72 **Many of the members in the theatre group moved out of Christiania after 1978-79,** but the group was not officially dissolved until 1983. See Nina Rasmussen (2002).

and the intentionality of the city as unified object and purposeful plan. The construction of an alternative identity was similarly playful and manipulative rather than uniform; grotesque masks, buffoonery and satirical hoaxes played an important role. Even the very first seizing of the abandoned military area had been a mediated re-enactment; a performance addressing as much the authorities and the general public as the young, international urban activist movement.

This re-enactment of Christiania could be understood as a satirical staging of 'the social experiment'; a twisting impersonation of its clinical implications and therapeutic undertones. An identity stuck onto Christiania from outside, it was in the performative, aesthetic tactics of *Solvognen* recycled as a *ludic*, playful *prop*; as such more inclined to unveil the pathology of a surrounding urbanity than the self-evident shortcomings of a radical alternative.

The massive cultural activity and popularizing inventiveness ultimately made the liberal government understand that a clearance would be impossible without the use of a considerable amount of violence, money, and political will. Only two days before the announced eviction date, April 1<sup>st</sup> 1976, the government launched the idea of a "soft landing" and changed the demand for immediate closure to a closure "without unnecessary delay."<sup>73</sup> Christiania had thereby resisted the threats of eviction for the time being.

Immediately after this victory, however, the court proceedings commenced, and a year later, a District Court ruled against Christiania. At that time however, the idea of the Free Town had settled in the popular consciousness, which brought about a quite remarkable additional comment to the verdict. This comment built upon a consideration of the fact that even though Christiania could be considered illegal according to legal premises, a closure would be *socially* problematic. In February 1978, the Supreme Court confirmed the verdict, clearly stating the fact that Christiania had no legal rights to remain. At the same time, the court once again underlined the fact that this judgment was strictly juridical, and that a final decision would also have to take political, social and human aspects into consideration; a responsibility incumbent not upon the juridical body, but upon government and Parliament.<sup>74</sup> The legal system had thus clearly stated that what they were set to judge fell merely within the framework of juridical representation, of the already established, of the fixed and set, irrespective of whether legitimate or not.

With this statement in mind, the government set up a "planning committee", to which Christiania was invited "in case they are capable of cooperation"<sup>75</sup> This meant that the spatial solidarity, the concerns for the area as such, had

73 Mark Edwards (1979:241).

74 Falkentorp, Hansen, Juhler, Kløvedal and Løvetand (1982:262).

75 *Folketingets forhandling* (a parliamentary report), column 5943, quote Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:55).

to be re-articulated in a more consistent way than as a theatrical play. Having re-invented itself over and over again before the threats of total eradication, Christiania had established a negative identity, which externally may have appeared as a quite significant and distinct spatial gesture, but from within was spreading in all directions, like a splaying hand. More important than establishing an alternative form was the manifestation of *difference*; a deviation, a space of play, a leeway. In this sense, Christiania's existence did not rest only on the defense of the spatial territory or the control of its borders, but on a never-ending actualizing of dissimilarity and discrepancy, which as such constituted the basis for its cultural reproduction.<sup>76</sup>

## Internal and External Threats: 1979-89

### Spatial Clashes - The Junk Blockade

A provocative and irritating wedge in the urban landscape, Christiania had brought into consciousness a number of distinct ideas of urbanity and urban change. On the old drill grounds, a cartographic and controlled urbanity had clashed with an urbanity emerging from below; a civic urbanity of constant negotiation. Also within Christiania, claims for stabilizing forms, for sustainable scaffoldings were raised, countered by the demands for space to maneuver, for available surfaces of action. Christiania did not simply reject the first model in favor of the second. Instead, it has wedged out a space in between the two, generating new hybrids between the rational and the popular, between the representative and that which is acted out. Undefined and contested, this hybrid space had both involved freedom and frustration. It had turned out to be an explicitly ideological space, a space in which the projections of urbanity, by virtue of their glaring insufficiency, were more present than elsewhere.

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Paradoxically enough, the persistency of Christiania was in this perspective as much a result of its ideological deficiency as of its physical resistance. As ideologically blurred and unstable, it has functioned as a forceful mirror of a much more general social inadequacy, its ambiguity rendering sufficient disjunctive space as to give raise to an urban drama. This is specifically obvious when considering the appeal of Christiania to the media. The continuous story of Christiania contained all the elements of drama; heroes and villains, eloquent expressions and dirty tricks; a plot with an unpredictable ending.<sup>77</sup> There were bikes and kids and dogs against the bulldozers of the authorities, a plot also deliberately used, transcribed and manipulated by the Christianites

76 Per Løvetand Iversen (1972c:87-88). Also Jakob Reddersen comments on the importance of difference in the constitution of Christiania identity, something that he sees as one of its main problems: "The most important thing was to stick together – a principle that was also used by the Social Democrats in the thirties under the slogan – 'Inwardly we are like five fingers, outwardly we are a closed fist.'" See Jakob Reddersen (2004:23).

77 Fleming Balvig (1979).

themselves. By 1979, headlines like “Give Christiania a chance”<sup>78</sup> had become more frequent, and clearly expressed general and broad support. Alongside this new benevolence however, antipathy also increased, and for many people, Christiania continued to signify criminality, drug dealing, and general immorality. Nevertheless, the Free Town managed to hold its place in public discourse, contributing to a less predictable image of urban reproduction.

In terms of visions, the legal process had taken a great deal out of Christiania. Combined with the economic recession of the late seventies, this had consequences for the Free Town in terms of an increase in social and drug-related problems. A new form of ‘support’ was coming from the new drug barons of Europe, who saw the possibility of establishing a cocaine and heroin market in Scandinavia. Combined with increased police activity, which according to several observers only worsened the drug problems and increased drug-related crime in Christiania, the visionary outlook almost disappeared in favor of sheer confrontation.<sup>79</sup> Despite research reports pointing to a decrease in criminality due to Christiania, the police continued to treat Christiania as a special problem.<sup>80</sup> “Christiania is the most relevant experiment within the field of criminal politics right now”, wrote Fleming Balvig sarcastically as early as 1976, “and this is why it is up the creek when the politicians want to wind Christiania down without an evaluation of the venture.” The popular image of Christiania as a ‘problem’ was furthermore evidently constructed by the authorities, implied Balvig. “I recall police statements reported from the last six months”, he wrote, “where ‘it is suspected that Christianites are behind’, or ‘the perpetrator disappeared in the direction of Christiania’ (in relation to an incident in the inner city).”<sup>81</sup> The actively promoted stereotype of Christiania was that of a dangerous landscape, a veritable swamp, potentially dragging anyone into the mud.

This pressure also led to a sharpening of internal relations between pushers and activists, or between the pragmatists who wanted to find a solution to the drug problems – with or without the help of the authorities – and the fundamentalists, who saw every critique of the situation as treachery. By November 1979, the

78 “Giv Christiania en chance”, headline in Denmark’s main newspaper, *Berlingske Tidende*, September 13, 1975. In Fleming Balvig (1979:37).

79 Here, the *Uru-patruljen*, “The Disorder Patrol”, a plainclothes police corps fighting drugs through continuous disturbance activity, played a significant role, practicing a highly concrete body-politics through provocative searches and non-sanctioned household raids. See Mark Edwards (1979:250-255), Balvig, Koch, and Vestergård (1976) and Bjarne Maagensen (1996:32).

80 Fleming Balvig (1976).

81 “Christiania er det væsentligste eksperiment inden for det kriminalpolitiske område lige nu, hvorfor der er helt hen i skoven, at politikerne vil afvikle Christiania uden at foretage en evaluering af forsøget. Jeg erindrer refererede politiidtalelser fra det sidste halve år gående ud på at ‘man mistænker, det er christianitter, der står bag’, og at ‘gerningsmændene flygtede i retning af Christiania’(Ved en episode i den indre by).” Fleming Balvig (1976) quoted in Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:51).

situation was almost out of control. With around two hundred hard drug addicts frequenting Christiania daily, everyday life was now to a great extent governed by violence and confrontations with the police. However, after numerous failed attempts to collaborate with the police,<sup>82</sup> several hundred residents managed to stage a “Junk Blockade”, an action, which implied a ‘siege’ of the main building, *Fredens Ark*, “The Peace Ark”, where the problems were the greatest. Pushers and addicts were thrown out and only re-admitted when they could prove they were clean. Through this collaborative venture, Christiania again managed to confront a considerable threat, and resolve it through action. If earlier cultural manifestations had been efficient tactical means to turn a negative, external opinion around, the *Junk Blockade* marked a similarly critical step in its revoking of self destruction and internal exploitation. “The Junk Blockade”, writes one of the inhabitants in 1996, “seems to me to be one of the most important things that ever happened in Christiania.”<sup>83</sup>

The Junk Blockade raised critical questions of a more fundamental kind. The action targeted not only hard drugs, but also confronted the ultra-libertarian praxis of leaving people to their own devices, regardless of consequences. It hit at the weakest point of the alternative community, which was its attempt to maintain rules and norms without explicit structures of sanction or penalty. Christiania never had a policing body of authority through which to govern or sustain order; its structure and rules relied exclusively upon self-organization and self-discipline.<sup>84</sup> Nor did it have a system of private ownership to replace such a force, nor a body of congruous conventions or traditions. Instead, as territorial space, it was at the mercy of continuous and time-consuming negotiations between individuals and groups.<sup>85</sup> At the time of the Junk Blockade, large parts of central Christiania were more or less expropriated by profiteering drug barons and worn-out addicts. Total deterioration was a threat as real as that of eviction.

Through the Junk Blockade however, the activists of Christiania managed to reclaim the initiative. A cooperative action against self-destructive addiction, it also had a decisive ideological importance for the future reproduction of the community. To many Christianites, the Junk Blockade therefore stands out as

82 Mark Edwards (1979:262). According to several sources, this was partly due to the exhaustion strategy used by the police, who rather than cooperating with the Christiania inhabitants in the cleaning up of the drug-traffic, preferred to channel the dealing within Christiania. Attempts were made by certain Christianites to collaborate with the police to expose the dealers in charge. The collaboration failed, according to several observers, when the police relinquished the agreement to hit at the top hard drug dealers in a joint action, and instead pursued a premature raid against minor hash dealers, which did not affect the hard drug market at all and rendered impossible any serious strike against hard drugs. See Bjarne Maagensen (1996:32). See also Børge Madsen (1981). I also refer to an interview with Nils Vest in January 2004.

83 See Bjarne Maagensen (1996:31).

84 See Jakob Reddersen (2004).

85 Katja Gravenhorst and Simon Kristensen (2000).

a decisive turning point in the history of Christiania.<sup>86</sup> Around one hundred new inhabitants could move in, and the presuppositions for continuation of the experimental community changed again.

### A New Optimism

The success of the Junk Blockade led to a period of intensified activity. In the years that followed, many new activities were initiated. The restaurant *Spiseloppen* opened; the public Bath House and the movie theater were improved and re-inaugurated. The Hairdressers and a printing shop were other enterprises that took off, as well as several other pubs and cafés.<sup>87</sup> Some of these new work places, like the carpentry workshop *Optimisten*, “the Optimist”, and the consultancy office *Herifra og videre*, “From Here On”, had clear socio-political ambitions, taking on the heavy responsibility of rehabilitation and reintegration of drug addicts.

As socio-political initiatives, some of the projects drew financial support from the authorities.<sup>88</sup> This in turn led to an intensified ideological debate about governing mechanisms and forms of collaboration, both inside and outside of the Free Town. As for the socio-political aspects, a report already in 1976 had shown that the cost for the authorities to take over the area would heavily exceed the cost for legalized maintenance, even one including considerable social support and renovation of the buildings.<sup>89</sup> This conclusion was built on two assumptions. Firstly, it presupposed that extensive commercial development of the area would be impossible due to its historical status. Secondly, it was based upon an estimate of the institutional costs for social rehabilitation, which would, even though it concerned only a few of the Christiania inhabitants, be far more expensive than when handled internally by Christiania.<sup>90</sup> The socio-political dimension of the Free Town as a ‘social experiment’ in the positive sense was subsequently, through the Junk Blockade and the ensuing reproductive activity, further emphasized. As a result, a declaration from the Minister of Defense in February 1979, again sanctioned the use of the area, now until a local plan was approved; a process which was estimated to take two to three years.<sup>91</sup>

86 Pernille W. Lauritsen (2002:31).

87 Bjarne Maagensen (1996:40).

88 Børge Madsen (1981).

89 *Overslag over Christiania: Beregninger over indtægter og udgifter for stat og kommune ved at bevare eller rydde og evt. nybebygge et byområde (Estimate concerning Christiania: Calculation Over Costs on Federal and Municipal Level in Relation to Preservation, Clearance and Possible Development of an Urban District)* (1976).

90 Børge Madsen (1981:18).

91 *Erklæring från försvarsministeriet (Declaration from the Ministry of Defense)*, June 1, 1979, quoted in *Christiania – arbejdsprogram for tilvejebringelse af forslag til en planlægningsmæssig helhedsløsning for arealernes fremtidige anvendelse (Christiania – Program for the Development of a Proposal for a General Solution as to the Future Use of the Area)*,

A new collaborative planning committee was once installed, with the responsibility of squeezing out guidelines for a future local plan.<sup>92</sup> These guidelines were to differ considerably from the 1974 competition program. A conventional planning document rather than a source of inspiration, the guidelines downplayed the socio-political aspects, proposing instead a preservation policy. Focusing on the protection of the historical rampart structure and the military complexes, the document reduced the social issues to a matter of securing breathing space and recreational areas in the center of the city, thus preserving a typical 'mixed-use' character, now associated with the former slums of old Christianshavn.

The policy was furthermore developed in the form of five intentional scenarios, mainly proposing different forms of public use of the area. These models were (1) the active recreational area, including protection and preservation; (2) passive protection; (3) housing district and public games pitches; (4) state institution; and (5) municipal institutions. Significant for these scenarios was their defusing of activism and participatory practices in favor of recreation. Arts and crafts, sports clubs, and sailing here replaced the envisioned self-governing, cooperative economy and active tenant initiatives which had constituted a central theme in the 1974 competition program and proposals.

More than anything, the new program represented an attempt to de-politicize the planning process and bring the representational initiative back to the planning authorities, reclaiming planning as a formal structuring of common, public space. This was also made explicit in the rhetoric, where the committee preferred to refer to an earlier planning directive<sup>93</sup> rather than to the current situation, in order to legitimize their arguments. The earlier directive had explicitly emphasized the importance of urban environmental regeneration, which implied a general concern with "free spaces", "breathing space", "local recreational areas", and furthermore an intention that existing buildings may be "recycled."<sup>94</sup> Despite an explicitly 'public' policy, the committee was emphatic

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Planstyrelsens Christianiaarbejdsgruppe (The Christiania Working Committee of the Municipal Planning Board), October 1979.

92 **Christiania was not part of this committee, neither was Akademirådet**, the architectural board behind the 1974 competition. The argument for not including these parties in the committee was the ambition to formulate the new plan with the greatest possible neutrality, and thus exclusively according to planning legislation. *Christiania – arbejdsprogram for tilvejebringelse af forslag til en planlægningsmæssig helhedsløsning for arealernes fremtidige anvendelse* (Christiania – Program for the Development of a Proposal for a General Solution as to the Future Use of the Area), Planstyrelsens Christianiaarbejdsgruppe (The Christiania Working Committee of the Municipal Planning Board), October 1979, p. 14.

93 *Miljøministeriets landsplanedirektiv* (National Planning Directive from the Ministry of Environmental Affairs) (1975).

94 *Miljøministeriet* (1975:4-7), **quoted in** *Christiania – arbejdsprogram for tilvejebringelse af forslag til en planlægningsmæssig helhedsløsning for arealernes fremtidige anvendelse* (Christiania – Program for the Development of a Proposal for a General Solution as to the Future Use of the Area), Planstyrelsens Christianiaarbejdsgruppe (The Christiania Working Committee of the



as to the non-political character of their assignment, leaving what in the 1974 program had been called 'the social pedagogic aspects' aside.<sup>95</sup> However, despite the clear non-political ambition, the alternative community could not be completely neglected. The committee expressed it thus:

Considering the future disposition of the area, it is difficult to entirely overlook the current use of the area as 'free town'. Some of the activities that today are practiced in the area show positive traits that perhaps should be preserved, possibly in an expanded or changed form, while other activities are definitely of a character unacceptable to retain in the area in the future.<sup>96</sup>

Instead of a neutralization of the Christiania issue, the committee put a finger on the planning paradox that Christiania, by virtue of its self-management, had actualized. What the committee somewhat hesitantly groped for was the programming of a space that would be formally free but socially governing or edifying. While the intention of the program was the disassociation of planning and direct socio-political concerns, its implicit message was almost the opposite. As pointed out by Jæger, Olsen and Rieper, through the new guidelines, the committee clearly exemplified that "[i]t is not possible to separate physical and social aspects in the planning of an area."<sup>97</sup> The intended neutralization did not come off as planned – instead, political awareness both within and outside the community increased, initiating a new wave of ideological formation.

### The Projective Archer

As a reaction to the 1979 guidelines for a new local plan, two groups were formed within Christiania, representing two different alternative directions for the future.<sup>98</sup> One of the groups, dissociating itself from 'planning' as a governing instrument, presented a dialogic and aesthetically articulated approach, producing an ambitious slide show to initiate discussion. The 'show' imperatives may very well have been to *narrate* the course of events that

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Municipal Planning Board), October 1979, pp. 16-18).

95 See Viggo Møller-Jensen, Holger Sørensen and Ole Thomassen (1975:289-293) *Christianshavn og det fremtidige Christiania* (*Christianshavn and the Future Christiania*).

96 "Ved overvejelser omkring Christiania-arealernes fremtidige anvendelse er det vanskeligt at helt se bort fra områdets nuværende anvendelse som 'fristad'. Visse af de aktiviteter, der idag foregår i området, rømmer positive træk, som måske bør søges bevaret og eventuelt udbygget i en ændret form, medens andre afgjort har en karakter, som gør det uacceptabelt at bibeholde dem i området i fremtiden." in *Christiania – arbejdsprogram for tilvejebringelse af forslag til en planlægningsmæssig helhedsløsning for arealernes fremtidige anvendelse* (*Christiania – Program for the Development of a Proposal for a General Solution as to the Future Use of the Area*), Planstyrelsens Christianiaarbejdsgruppe (The Christiania Working Committee of the Municipal Planning Board), October 1979, p. 25.

97 Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993).

98 Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:57-58).



constituted Christiania, to depict the manifold reality of the Free Town, with its pros and cons. It was most certainly efficient in emphasizing neglected aspects, remote corners or marginalized figures, reinforcing the fragmented experience of everyday life. However, as an interpretative representation, an attempt to stage a common yet diverse canon, the 'show' as method risked overlooking the central, participatory issue of social dynamics. What the visual representation gained in terms of representational variety or 'fraternization effect',<sup>99</sup> would easily be lost or narrowed down when it came to the working out of a pattern for social interaction. In this respect, as aestheticizing representationalism, the visual show had more in common with conventional planning than one would think. Only slightly different from other visual material like images, maps, or plans, the 'show' was dependent upon a constructed yet diffuse viewpoint through which it was linked to a 'real'. In order to function as a reproductive force however, the 'show' would have to be understood as a discursive statement, a projective modification or re-production of reality rather than a representation of it.

The other group instead chose a more structural approach, elaborating a seventy-page proposal for a re-vitalization of the community. Entitled *Skytten*, 'The Archer', the program aimed at more than a re-orientation of Christiania, but was a draft for "a new social- and unemployment politics," and a draft "for people who like to dream and imagine a future Denmark."<sup>100</sup>

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With the subtitle "a dwelling place in Christiania", the program presented a composite and evocative challenging of general opinions about planning as well as about dwelling. It questioned the idea of planning as exclusively restrictive and governing, and similarly the idea of 'the dwelling place' as merely petit bourgeois and static. What it envisioned was a dwelling place of a less socially and culturally prescriptive kind, a dwelling place for a mobile and transient being. "The Archer", argued the authors behind the program, "is inhibited by too stagnant a life, limited in terms of activities and visions. The archer is far-sighted, penetrating, freely mobile, and autonomous. The archer raises the bow – takes aim at something in the distant horizons."<sup>101</sup>

Explicitly confronting planning as a practice, "The Archer" asked whether planning necessarily has to imply the definition of and adaptation to a representative (and thereby, according to the majority, also non-creative)

99       The 'fraternization effect'; a dimension of the realistic revolutionary theatre in Russia after 1930; a minimization of the distance between actors and audience advocated by among others Okhlopov. See David Bradby and John McCormick (1978:20).

100       "Ikke bare et oplæg til Christiania og dets planlægning men også et oplæg till DK om en ny social & arbejdsløshedspolitik. Et oplæg til mennesker der kan lide at drømme og visionere om et fremtidigt DK." Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980).

101       "Skytten bliver hæmmet af et for stillestående liv, der er snævert m.h.t aktiviteter og udsyn. Skytten er vidtskuende, indtrængende, frit bevægelig, uafhængig. Skytten løfter buen – sigter mod noget i de fjerne horisonter." Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980), inside of cover.

norm, or if there also could be an activist planning, interrogating the very representative presuppositions. The ultimate aim of 'planning', argued the authors behind the manifesto, is "to interfere with established conditions – to change them or to preserve them."<sup>102</sup> Planning is in the highest degree more a question of actualizing than of controlling power; a problematic practice only for the powerless. The powerful have no problems with planning. An empowered Christiania would consequently also have to consider the potentials of planning. If the community could be equated with a 'we', it was argued, planning would be one way of reproducing and re-enacting this 'we'.

The Archer's embrace of planning as a viable concept was also a way of counteracting the gold-digger mentality that was one of Christiania's more implicit traits. Officially, Christiania had rejected planning because of a strong belief in community and consensus. This, however, was more a reflection of an unwillingness to recognize conflicts than of a wish to deal with them. As a result, Christiania had developed into "the land of the thousand half-done projects."<sup>103</sup> The Free Town was certainly libertarian, yet a disillusioned place with a non-functional decision structure, a non-existent common vision and furthermore a bad economy – a situation preventing any sustainable change. What Christiania needed to consider was the fact that planning is not necessarily an objective and neutral activity but an ideological aim, an *élan vital*, and as such an indispensable part of self-organization.

The reluctance against planning in Christiania was however related to a strong and to a certain extent motivated fear of bureaucratization. In the vision of "The Archer", 'the dwelling place' therefore unfolded as the alternative to bureaucracy. With reference to Max Weber and André Gorz, a strengthened non-hierarchical organizational form was envisioned, a societal structure without fixed official positions or privileges, combining direct and representational democracy as well as the structured and the non-conventional.<sup>104</sup> Facing destructive processes of 'social bankruptcy', and increasing greed concerning the drug market and

102 "Alle ved, at det at planlægge er at gribe ind i bestående forhold – at ændre dem eller bevare dem." Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980:1).

103 "...de 1000 halve projekters land." Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980:30).

104 French-Austrian social theoretician André Gorz was an important source of inspiration for the outlining of "Skytten", which included extensive quotes from Gorz's book *Écologie et politique* from 1977 (in Danish *Økologi og frihed*, 1979). With works like *Stratégie ouvrière et néo-capitalisme* (1964), *Le socialisme difficile* (1967) and *Adieux au prolétariat: au delà du socialisme* (1980), all of which were rapidly translated into the Scandinavian languages, the humanist ideals of Gorz reached a broad audience. From 1941, he had functioned as co-editor for *Les Temps Modernes* together with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, and he was also a co-founder of the independent left wing magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* in 1964. For the development of the new left, the philosophy of Gorz has been influential. Recently, his ideas about a civic salary to compensate for the diminishing value of labour, have gained new attention. In his book *Métamorphoses du travail: quête du sens: critique de la raison économique* (1988), Gorz also introduced the influential notion of "the two third society"; a characterization of a capitalist society in crisis, in which unemployment has become institutionalized.

the pubs, Christiania had to dissociate itself from mediocrity and non-binding tolerance and unify around some commitments.<sup>105</sup> This was also the point at which the planning of “The Archer” both deviated from and intersected with conventional planning. Planning is by necessity a re-productive undertaking. More than a simple representation, it aims at providing a framework for a composite of actions and dialogues; a framework out of which a more or less sustainable and stabilizing physical form will emerge. The decisive difference actualized by “The Archer”, however, was that between planning as an *enabling or generative framework* for action, and planning as a *constitutive ground* for preferable and predictable social formation.<sup>106</sup>

“The Archer” was an ambitiously elaborated program, sharply deviating from the seemingly airier ‘slide show tactics.’ Yet neither of the mobilizing attempts managed to raise enough enthusiasm as to drastically change the structure or workings of Christiania. While the slide show managed to raise feelings and visions of a common identity, it did not have the mobilizing power, and thus remained a formal aestheticization. On the other hand, while “The Archer” proposed a generative metaphor for unprejudiced projection, furthermore suggesting a pragmatic organization of the Free Town in the economic units of ‘the dwelling place’, it was considered by many to be a product of the drawing board. Insufficiently sensitive to its own premises as representational practice, “The Archer” remained prescriptive and aesthetically delimiting. Despite its radical analysis and constructive approach, it was received with suspicion, even interpreted by many as an activist conspiracy, masking its underlying objectives of regulation or even ‘normalization.’ “Rapidly the rumors took shape”, writes one of the authors behind “The Archer”, “and different versions spread like a wildfire: a secret plan, 200 seek to throw the rest out, financed by Erhard Jakobsen, collaborate with the government etc...”<sup>107</sup> Confronted with such anxiety and distrust, many of the advocates for a cooperative, and more economically viable, structure for the Free Town resigned.

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### Some Steps Ahead: The Møller & Grønborg Plan and its Offspring

Despite considerable planning activity on both sides of the barrier around 1980, no local plan was in sight. Instead, the government, which was now social democratic, wanted a new, inspirational draft that could motivate legalization of the area. An architectural firm, *Møller & Grønborg*, was assigned to the task.

105 Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980:28-30).

106 Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980:57).

107 “Hurtigt tog rygterne form, og som en steppebrand gik forskellige versioner: en hemmelig plan, 200 vil smide resten ud, finansieret af Erhard Jacobsen, samarbejde med regeringen osv...”, Børge Madsen (1981:195). Erhard Jakobsen was originally a social democrat and also the mayor of one of Copenhagen’s most progressive suburbs, Gladsaxe. In 1973, he founded the political party Centrum-demokraterne; a party neither socialist nor liberal, which immediately won 14 seats in Parliament, Folketinget, and which has collaborated both with labour and conservative governments over the years.

And to a certain extent one could say that many of the ideas outlined in “The Archer” here got a second chance.

Where the 1979 guidelines had proposed a clear de-politization, the 1982 Møller and Grønborg plan again reintroduced the socio-political aspects. Regarding the fact that the experimental settlement had now existed for ten years, the historical preconditions, it argued, were also altered. “The houses worthy of preservation do, from a museum aspect, in part look like they had suffered from a bomb raid”, it stated. At the same time, “there is also an historical interest to see what has happened to the houses, and how people have lived in them when traditionally known frameworks and values were gone.”<sup>108</sup> The draft was an ambitious attempt to consider seriously the specific ambiguities of the alternative settlement, particularly its governing structure, which were considered one of its most significant traits.

The architectural firm had initiated a broad series of dialogues with the residents, thereby further unveiling the split self-image of the community. Dialogues and collaborative workshops were a delicate matter. Some wanted Christiania to stay away from all collaboration with the authorities, whereas others here saw an opportunity for ideological debate. With a clear recognition of Christiania’s legitimacy however, Møller & Grønborg managed to establish enough trust for a communicative platform to evolve.

Again, the questions were transferred to the socio-political level, a level where politics and life intersect, and where representative planning practice had to be confronted with the discontinuous and conflictive reproduction of life and space as it appeared in the Free Town. Again, general questions were raised. What really is Christiania? Is it slum or is it a dawning popular movement? Is it an asylum for criminals and the mentally disturbed or a valuable social buffer zone, regulating the worst urban problems? Is it a unique urban playground or is it simply a crack in everyday life? In the difficult tactical choice between socially and culturally valuable ‘experimentation’ and the political demands for normalization, the draft proposed a problematic middle way labeled *Førsøgsbyn*; a vague articulation of something in between a cautious “Urban Attempt” and a more pro-active “Experimental City.”

In this sense, the title of the proposal revealed a general ambition to draft a kind of house-trained Free Town, also with a clear use-value for society as a whole. Not quite as radical as the second prize-winning proposal from the 1974 competition, the draft argued for an acknowledgement and continuation of the experiment under controlled forms, excepting the suggested revolutionary ‘Christianification’ of the rest of Christianshavn. A circumscribed Christiania,

108        “De fredede huse vil, set fra et museumssynspunkt, af og til ligne resultatet af et bombnedslag. Men det har også et historisk interesse at se, hvad der skete med husene, og hvordan folk levede i dem, når traditionelt kendte rammer og normer var borte.” Møller & Grønborg (1981:21).

between the normalized and “the wild”,<sup>109</sup> argued the architects, could still provide the perfect scientific basis for socio-spatial experimentation. With this formulation, Møller & Grønborg aimed at modifying their recognition of the Free Town, implicitly stating that an acknowledgement of the alternative community would not be possible exclusively on the basis of its status as urban Otherness, but would have to be established within the value system of the city as such.

The Møller & Grønborg draft was an interesting attempt to combine conventional governing and planning instruments with a participatory development of a new urban narrative, in which Christiania would have an acknowledged role. The draft gave a problematized background, pointing to Christiania’s non-intentional character, its informal and non-methodological way of working, as well as to its interdependency with the surrounding society. To a great extent, the plan ambitiously mirrored the extensive dialogue with the inhabitants. It did not simplify or idealize, but pointed to the fact that Christiania had to be seen as a polemic space, founded with considerable suspicion towards planning and governing. Radical self-governing was therefore, according to Møller & Grønborg, a presupposition for a sustainable solution, as well as a political will to invest in non-traditional urban structures. A successful integration of social dissidents, misfits, squatters and other generally creative people, would not only be of local, Danish interest, but would also represent an urgent concern for the modern Welfare State on a more general level.<sup>110</sup>

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The success of the plan, however, was ultimately dependent upon a political will within the community as such; upon the successful unfolding, not necessarily of a clear vision or delimited goal, but of creative and inclusive patterns of action. Awareness of the decisive importance of collaborative *action* was also the greatest asset of the Møller & Grønborg plan. Their strategy was “process rather than plan” where “it is more important to stimulate running processes than to impose a more or less theoretical plan on the inhabitants.”<sup>111</sup> Part of the solution was to develop three different “surfaces of encounter” or ‘interfaces’ between Christiania and its surroundings; a kind of strengthening of public access to Christiania on its own premises. Another significant part was the strong focus on small-scale enterprises, which should be “amateurish” in the literal sense of the word: sustained by engaged participation and offering a genuine opportunity to ‘learn by doing.’<sup>112</sup> This sensitivity was also mentioned by Christiania inhabitant Jakob Reddersen, one of the authors behind “The

109 Møller & Grønborg (1981:35).

110 Møller & Grønborg (1981:29-35).

111 “Det er vigtigere at stimulere igangværende processer end at trække en mere eller mindre teoretisk plan ned over hovedet på beboerne.” Møller & Grønborg (1981:55).

112 “Aktiviteterne vil være amatør-mæssige i ordets betydninger: De vil blive holdt oppe af deltagernes engagement i opgaven, men deltagerne vil ikke være professionelle specialister indenfor de særlige aktiviteter, de begiver sig ud i. De vil som regel lære ved at gøre tingene selv.” Møller & Grønborg (1981:44).

Archer” plan, as a motivated attempt “to make a social and political bridging between life-form and authorities.” According to Reddersen, the plan in this respect showed a surprising sensitivity to the potentials of a planning that did not reject but rather enable the development of ‘slums of hope’, thereby counter-acting ‘slums of despair’ – which, from both perspectives, was possibly “a peaceful and worthy solution.”<sup>113</sup>

Yet, when it came to actually outlining a trustworthy and pragmatic action plan, the Møller and Grønberg proposal did not mobilize enough enthusiasm. To a great extent this was due to a shift of government in late 1982, when the conservatives were returned to office. The proposal’s explicit ambition to “delegate important decisions to a group of people of which some have severe personal problems and other have been declared incapable of managing their own affairs for a long time and yet others have difficulties expressing themselves clearly in words”,<sup>114</sup> no longer inspired the same support. However, despite its good intentions, the plan struggled to develop a communicative formula sufficiently exciting and open-ended for the undefined, the unprogrammed and the abundant that characterized Christiania. The Møller & Grønberg plan in this respect suffered from the same weaknesses as “The Archer” plan, which also, despite a consistent use of a visionary and projective language and a clear recognition of Christiania as official ‘experimental urban space’, was interpreted by many as precisely the opposite: a representative and politically correct form imposed from above. While the plan on the one hand acknowledged the Free Town’s self-organizational capacities, on the other hand it made considerable efforts to propose a structure for how this self-organization should be planned, internally evaluated, and improved; all in order to prepare Christiania for larger commitments and increased financial support from the authorities.

Bringing different stories and projections of Christiania in line with each other, the Møller & Grønberg plan constituted an ambitious effort to give legitimacy to alternative urban narratives of the Free Town. Through dialogue, political sensitivity and personal engagement, the architects tried to combine activists’ visions, social concerns and public, urban demands into what unfolded more as a work in progress than a representative master plan. Drawing on previous analyses from the 1974 competition, from the 1979 guidelines from the Municipal Planning Board and not least from internal Christiania documents and discussions like that of “The Archer”, it defended a multi-functional Christiania serving as “home for 600-700 Christianites, recreational area for

113 “...et forsøg på et socialt og politisk brobygningsarbejde mellem livsform og myndigheder. Planlægning skulle være en process, der støttede udviklingen af ‘slums of hope’ og ‘slums of despair’ – men Møller og Grønbergs ord ‘en fredelig og værdig løsning’”. Jakob Reddersen (1985:37).

114 “Vi lægger op til et forsøg, hvor man søger at overlade væsentlige beslutninger til en gruppe mennesker, hvoraf nogle har svære personlige problemer, andre har været umyndiggjorte i længre tid og atter andre har svært ved at udtrykke sig i ord.” Møller & Grønberg (1981:43).

the 10 000 inhabitants of Christianshavn, and experimental area for 5 million Danes.<sup>115</sup>

This sensitivity, however, was possibly also the greatest drawback of the proposal, which lacked the aesthetic risk-taking, surprising turns or spatial creativity that Christiania, as an intricate urban landscape, demanded. Focusing on the social experiment, the plan underestimated the capacity of the reproductive forces at work, and their ability to generate the unexpected. Such unplanned creativity however, in order to become successful, would have to come from inside rather than in the form of a consultancy report. If Møller & Grønborg, unsurprisingly, had failed in engaging the Christianites, they had at least made them aware of this simple fact: the next step forward, if there was to be one, would have to be theirs.

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With the Møller & Grønborg plan buried by the new conservative government, Christiania was again left in turmoil and uncertainty, and thus became a profitable political target. Despite the Junk Blockade, a negative image of the Free Town was reproduced and spread throughout the Nordic countries.<sup>116</sup> Such a fragile status quo was also an explicit reality within Christiania, where the tension between ultra-libertarians or petit bourgeois entrepreneurs and utopian activism escalated to the point where all initiative was throttled. This situation paved the way for *Bullshit*, a notorious motorcycle gang, to settle in Christiania. The consequence of this unwelcome development was a swelling hash market, a growing illegal pub and catering trade, and intensifying violence. Police raids were numerous, as were open conflicts between different bikers' gangs and individuals.<sup>117</sup> The process of legalizing pubs and restaurants – often complex hybrid organizations of social work places, cooperatives and illicit liquor shops – also came to a standstill during this period. Tired of the aggressive atmosphere, many of the inhabitants also successively withdraw their implicit support of both hash commerce and illegal pubs. In 1989, a violent police assault led to the closure of all the localities.<sup>118</sup>

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115 Møller & Grønborg here quoted Per Midholm who used this phrase in his winning proposal in 1974 competition. See Møller & Grønborg (1981:78).

116 In a major debate in Sweden, Christiania was identified as the drug center of Scandinavia, which led to demands for its immediate closure. Christiania answered by sending the action theatre group Solvognen on the mission "Love Sweden"; a carnevalesque happening performed in a number of cities, including Stockholm, where it coincided with a Nordic ministerial summit. Totally ignored by Swedish media, the campaign still had the effect of encouraging the Danish representative, at the time a social democrat, to express his support for the Free Town. Many of the secondary sources report on the campaign, which was one of Solvognen's last events. I refer to accounts given by one of the, at the time, new members of the action theatre group, Ole Lykke, with whom I have communicated on several occasions.

117 This spiral of violence did not end until 1986, when a biker was found killed and buried under the floor in one of the buildings, which ultimately led to the disintegration of gang activity and their expulsion from the area. Bjarne Maagensen (1996:43-52).

118 Bjarne Maagensen (1996).



At the same time, the internal socio-reproductive and creative forces that the Møller & Grønberg plan possibly had failed to recognize, continued to operate. The counter-images thus produced also gave a more diverse and constructive impression of the Free Town. In 1982, *Ugespejln*, or 'The Weekly Mirror', a new, weekly (still in print) newsletter was published.<sup>119</sup> While 'the parliament of the street' more and more turned into a battlefield, the newsletter provided an ongoing platform for more reflective dialogue. Despite the hardening of the climate, Christiania also continued to function as a free space for alternative events and underground initiatives, creating international networks and contacts with other threatened groups and communities in other parts of the world.<sup>120</sup> As already mentioned, in the years after the Junk Blockade, many new enterprises were founded, among them the Women's Blacksmiths Workshop and the Green Recycling Hall, both of which are still active.

If the policing activity in Christiania during these years was intense, the authorities' interest weakened – a deliberate strategy in order to avoid a legalization debate. In 1986, the opposition forced the decision in Parliament that a local plan should be developed for the area, which, in order to become legalized, should become both more accessible and more regulated. A "Special Governing Group" was formed to take care of the process.

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In answer, Christiania presented the "VOILÁ" report. The report was an attempt to further strengthen Christiania's character of decentralized and autonomous community, where decisions were taken in consensus without voting. The economy was here described as a "mixed economy", resting upon both private initiatives and internal, collaborative enterprises. *Self-financing* was, according to the report, only possible insofar as the authorities would legalize *self-administration* through a special law, that, among other things, would involve considerable tax reductions for the enterprises within the community. In support, the report pointed to the close connection between financial, legal and cultural aspects, and the fact that the Free Town for many years had functioned as a catalyst for the cultural life of the capital. "That these places give more than 500 performances yearly", argued the report sarcastically, "and function as a training ground and incubator for both local artists and artists from elsewhere, make far less impression on the 'authorities' than social arguments."<sup>121</sup>

Through the "VOILÁ" report, Christiania hoped to be able to exercise a certain pressure on the 'Special Governing Group', which through its composition also

119 Ole Lykke was the editor of *Ugespejln* until 2003.

120 Concerts in support for the Indians in Big Mountain, USA were organized, as well as the Aassiviq conference for the Innuits of Greenland. See *Christiania Guide* (1996) and Pernille W. Lauritsen (2002:36).

121 "Att disse steder affholder mere end 500 arrangementer årligt og fungerer som øve- og udklækningssteder for såvel lokale som udefra kommende kunstnere, gør lige så lidt indtryk på 'væsenerne' som sociale argumenter." The VOILÁ report quoted in Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:66).



had a certain intermediate position.<sup>122</sup> Set to prepare the ground for a peaceful normalization, rather than a politically controversial legalization, the task of the Group was delicate; a fact that was clearly reflected in the declaration *One step ahead...Christiania*, presented in 1987.<sup>123</sup> Here the Governing Group pointed to the importance of special legislation to initiate acute renovation projects, to secure valuable social activities, and to regulate a swelling speakeasy and restaurant business. The group further discussed the implications of 'legalization' in relation to Christiania. In the attempts to find unconventional solutions, the group argued, a 'legalization' of the alternative community should be pursued "according to the spirit of the law" rather than "according to the letter of the law."<sup>124</sup> The government did not react, and a year later, in 1988, the group launched a second declaration: *Two steps ahead – complement*.<sup>125</sup>

During this period however, the Governing Group managed to initiate a concrete, collaborative renovation project. Twenty-five million Danish kroner were set aside,<sup>126</sup> and *Christiania Byg*, an internal building committee, was formed within Christiania. A number of acute re-construction projects were initiated, where *Christiania Byg* operated relatively autonomously as a minor building contractor, prioritizing projects, working out proposals, plans and budgets. When craftsmen were not found within Christiania, the labor force was reinforced with craftsmen from outside. Several larger projects, like chimney construction, expansion of the electric network, renovation of structures attacked by dry rot, and the establishment of paths and walkways were realized. However, the opinions concerning how the work should be organized and carried out deviated greatly. Many of the inhabitants also felt that the work proceeded too rapidly, that the projects were too strictly governed from outside, and that democracy suffered.

After one and a half years, Christiania, surprisingly but perhaps logically enough, said 'no' to the millions, again manifesting a persistent doubt towards planning and experts, even though a certain change in attitude was notable. There were several 'yes-persons' in Christiania, but still quite a few of the hardier 'no-persons', whose opinions were highly respected. One cannot, they argued, maintain self-administration within a municipal structure, where you are not really authorized to administer yourself.<sup>127</sup> The proposal of the Christianites was instead a tax reduction for the enterprises of the Free Town, whose surplus would form the basis of an internal Construction Fund for larger works. This

122 "Den Særlige Styringsgruppe", "*The Specific Governing Group*", had close relations with Christiania and had four members, one of whom being social consultant Tine Bryld who formally had been engaged in various projects within Christiania. Another was architect Ib Møller, from the architectural firm Møller and Grønborg. In Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:66-67).

123 Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:69).

124 Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:69).

125 Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:72).

126 1 Dkr = 0.13 Euro

127 Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:82-84).

solution gained a hearing, and a new construction committee, *Christianias Byggekontor*, “Christiania’s Building Office”, was formed.

The first pioneering and activist phase of Christiania’s history, which in itself had had an empowering force, was in the eighties replaced by a much more sluggish phase of maintenance, where ideological disagreement, often a staple of the ‘alternative’ status of the community, also had an eroding effect. Ideological vicissitudes, furthermore, were architectonically materialized, not only as an expanding public flow-through and an increasing architectonic diversity, but also as a growing and involuntary decay. Continuously oscillating between despair and hope, Christiania now had to invent new patterns of reproduction, new means of mapping its own both increasingly meandering and well-worn paths.

## Normalization from within: 1989-2000

### Predictable Turns - The Local Plan and The Green Plan

Eventually, the government reacted to this untenable situation of insecurity, and developed a proposal for a special law for the area, which was passed in June 1989. The objective of *Christianialoven*, *The Christiania Law*, was to enable continuous use according to the planning directives yet to be developed. The purpose of the law was, furthermore, to gather all the decisive power for the area under the Ministry of Defense, which was accredited extensive authority to give special permissions, to set special conditions, to set up restrictions and to impose sanctions.<sup>128</sup> The Ministry was also given the authority to set up an executive secretariat, which was to handle the running negotiations and affairs concerning the area.

Despite its vagueness, the passing of the *Christiania Law* by a broad parliamentary majority altered the presumptions for the Free Town’s continuous existence completely. The squatting of the old barracks was now, after almost twenty years, legalized. If that also implied *normalization*, it was yet too early to say. The law was thought to be executed through particular agreements with each and everyone of the Christiania inhabitants, but due to the political structure of the alternative community, the Ministry of Defense, through its Christiania Secretariat, soon had to accept a solution to draw up a general agreement with Christiania as a whole; to be re-established, at first every year, then on a five year basis.<sup>129</sup>

128 *Lov om anvendelse af Christianiaområdet (Law concerning use of the Christiania area)*, law number 399 of June 7 1989. Available at <http://www.retsinfo.dk>.

129 The negotiations within Christiania and between Christiania and the secretariat were intense. In 1991, it was made clear that Christiania did not want to accept an agreement based upon either individual contracts or district-based contracts. In a report from a meeting in February 1991, the Secretariat’s conclusion was that “it is unclear how an agreement with Christiania as such (instead of district-wide agreements) should be constructed. For example:

The law and the agreement now presupposed a local plan, in relation to which it was expected to become operative. In 1989, a proposal for such a plan was presented and two years later, the final plan was passed.<sup>130</sup> Together with the law, the plan was not only a rational representation of the area, but a governing tool according to which further reproduction would have to submit. An attempt to synthesize twenty years of discussions into a sustainable framework, one of the main points of departure was the acknowledgement of the alternative settlement on equal terms with its historical ground.

In the plan, Christiania was described in tolerant words, although more from the point of view of landscape engineering than from a social perspective. Its organizational structure and self-management was in this respect discussed only indirectly, in terms of 'acidification of the moat due to poor purification', in terms of 'worn-down green areas due to a huge number of dogs', or in terms of 'dry rot attacks on buildings due to poor maintenance or inadequate renovation work.' Although critical, the plan was based on the Free Town's right to exist. This was a legitimization further reinforced by the fact that the buildings worthy of preservation now also included seven of the spontaneously erected houses. These houses, it was stated, "express the specific building culture, which has originated in Christiania", and even though this building culture was characterized by transformation and temporality, it should be worthy of preservation and "not be considerably changed and should be kept in an acceptable condition."<sup>131</sup>

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The statement put the alternative settlement in a paradoxical situation. Having reached a specific cultural recognition, the community should now, according to the local plan, concentrate on preserving its essence of alterity, its original cultural identity. As such, the local plan suggested a means of incorporating Christiania into the normative system of the city by adding it as yet another

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who is signing? Who is responsible for what? How are local unsatisfactory conditions to be handled? Is everyone responsible for everyone else's good and bad actions? Will the districts become weakened in relation to the current situation? – A clarification as to these and similar circumstances is necessary for the Secretariat to be able to evaluate the possibilities to mobilize political support for an agreement. It is in any case a huge leap from the law's recommendation of individual contracts, over the Secretariat's proposed district contracts to one all-embracing contract." ("det er uklart, hvorledes en aftale med Christiania som sådan (i stedet for områdefaletter) skal konstrueres. Fx: **hvem skriver under? Hvem hæfter for hvad? Hvorledes håndhæves evt. lokale misligholdelser? Bliver alle ansvarlige for alle andres 'gode og onde gerninger'?** Bliver områdene for svage i forhold til nu? – En afklaring af disse og lignende forhold er nødvendig for at CAS kan vurdere, om der kan skabes politisk opbakning hertil. Der er jo i givet fald tale om et stort spring fra lovens individuelle aftaler, over CAS'/Styrringsrådets forslag til områdefaletter til en enkelt altomfattende aftale.") Quoted in Jæger, Olsen and Rieper (1993:108).

130 *Lokalplan for Christiania (Local Plan for Christiania)*, Miljøministeriet, 1991.

131 "Endvidere kan 7 selvbyggerhuse tillades bibeholdt, da de giver udtryk for den særlige bygningskultur, der er opstået i Christiania. De må ikke forandres væsentligt og skal holdes i en acceptabel stand." *Lokalplan for Christiania (Local Plan for Christiania)*, Miljøministeriet, 1991, p.43.

architectonical *type* or urban *theme*, with its specific cultural essence. The acknowledgement of the alternative community in the local plan was in this sense only superficial: affirmative of the alternative as representational form, but dismissive of its alternative means of reproduction and propagation. Social, cultural and historical agencies were neglected in favor of seven representative 'objects', seven typical signs; a seemingly objective and impartial 'evaluation' of essence, unveiling a formal aesthetics and an imagination of an ideal and representative urban landscape of cultural diversity, where the defined 'specificities' would stick to their designated role.

The most conspicuous trait of the local plan however, was its division of Christiania into two parts, one urban and densely populated, where a certain amount of future building could be taken into consideration, and another more rural part, which was to be kept as unexploited recreational area, and which should be gradually cleared of settlements.<sup>132</sup> A *typologization* of the area, this refinement strategy differed from previous attempts to understand the area, as it took as a starting point a classification according to visually defined landscape types. According to this sub-division, neighborhood organization and cultural activities were reserved for the hardier urban realm, whereas the overgrown ramparts were referred to as a nature park "for the benefit of all the population of Copenhagen" and should remain as untouched as possible.<sup>133</sup>

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Focusing neither on more delimited archeological objects nor on politically complex social concerns, this typologization of the area in terms of 'urban' and 'rural' landscapes, marked a shift in attitude. No longer a matter of 'understanding', the strategy of the plan was now rather explicitly scenic and formal; a matter of locating or establishing a common point of view, an outlook on the Free Town that would smoothly integrate it into the wider scenery of the urban landscape as such.

Even though this typologization built upon a visual and emotional experience of the area from a ground level perspective, it ignored both Christiania's recent history as urban-rural hybrid, *and* the historical interrelation between barracks and ramparts. Without motivation and largely unreflective, the plan instead presented a somewhat modified and softened version of a modernist, function-separating planning paradigm, based upon formal and functional identification and refinement. The Christiania area was subsequently subdivided into one part reserved for urban activities or private enterprise, possibly also a dynamic cultural reproduction; and another landscape-like part, purely representative or even monumental. As a public park, it would accommodate recreation 'for

132 The Local Plan here followed up on a general state directive from the Ministry of Environmental Affairs of March 1989, which in turn built upon directives and proposed municipal plans from 1968 and 1972. See Pernille Skov and June Maestri Ditlevsen (2003).

133 "Delområde II omfatter det historiske voldanlæg, som skal være rekreativt område til gavn for hele Københavns befolkning." *Lokalplan for Christiania (Local Plan for Christiania)*, Miljøministeriet, 1991, p. 39.

all of Copenhagen.’ At the same time, however, it would provide a general ‘alibi’, a mask for the denser exploitation demanded by urbanity.

The protests against the local plan were swift. The subdivision of the area was compared with a “divide and rule” strategy, rendering self-administration impossible.<sup>134</sup> Many of the pronouncements also expressed their opposition to the idea that experimental housing was incompatible with recreation: “Christiania is today a living proof of the fact that there is greater recreative attraction to this inhabited area, than to the municipally maintained rampart area.”<sup>135</sup> Christiania is not only re-creative, some argued, but also ‘creative’ and ‘active.’<sup>136</sup> Yet others meant that the alternative and experimental area should be expanded rather than further delimited.<sup>137</sup> Several of the protests also concerned the local plan as such. The plan, it was argued, is neither good nor bad, but simply the wrong instrument in relation to a self-administered, continuously changing area.<sup>138</sup> Only a minority of the views received supported the plan, especially its ambition to restore and preserve the historical ramparts.<sup>139</sup>

Considering the ideological turbulence of later years, this de-politicization on the part of the authorities might be understandable. However, it is all the more surprising to encounter a similar rhetoric in Christiania’s own answer to the local plan; *Den Grønne Plan*, the Green Plan. In this document, Christiania first of all employed a much more conventional self-representational format, and secondly adopted a predominantly ‘green’ rather than explicitly socio-political language. Even though the Green Plan was not the first attempt to develop an internal planning practice,<sup>140</sup> it was the first to apply a conventional planning format – description, evaluation, and mapping. Even if the founding principles of self-government, responsibility and solidarity still played a prominent role, there was a disjunction also here. While earlier internal documents, such as “The Archer”, had positioned Christiania within a political or power discourse, The Green Plan reframed the Free Town within an environmental discourse.

134 *Lokalplan for Christiania (Local Plan for Christiania)*, Miljøministeriet, 1991, lb.nr. 22 and lb.nr. 54.

135 “Christiania er idag et levende bevis på, at der er mere rekreativ attraktion i dette beboede område, end i det kommunalt plejede voldterræn.” *Ibid*, lb.nr. 56.

136 *Ibid*, lb.nr. 60.

137 *Ibid*, lb.nr. 55.

138 *Ibid*, lb.nr. 79, lb.nr. 90.

139 *Ibid*, lb.nr. 5, lb.nr. 204, lb.nr. 206, lb.nr. 211.

140 Examples of earlier internal planning documents are *Fristaden Christianias udvikling*, ed. Peter Møllerup and Keld Løvetand (1976b), a compilation of different articles and other contributions, and Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980) *Skytten – en boplads på Christiania* (*Skytten, a Settlement at Christiania*), both of which were attempts to collect communitarian experiences and discuss what alternative planning could be. Another example is *Christiania – en byggesag til et store miljøbeløb*, (*Christiania – a bigger construction work to a greater sum of millions*), authors Allan and Bjarne, undated, probably written around 1980, and the VOILÁ report, from 1986.

The afore-mentioned aim to prevent mental and physical *pollution* had now been complemented by a less sharply formulated “balance with nature.”<sup>141</sup> Christiania was envisioned first and foremost as an ecological community, based upon renewable sources of energy and recycling of water and waste; an interplay with natural rather than political forces. Concrete measures were also proposed and projected in the areas of sanitation, preservation of historical buildings and landscape, energy supply, paths and roads, etc. This ultimately led to a number of extensive renovation projects throughout the 90s. In a status report from 2003, the importance of the Green Plan in terms of “self-understanding, development and free scope” is also positively emphasized, as well as the fact that it showed significant similarities with the Local Plan.<sup>142</sup>

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In regards the many protests that had been raised against the local plan, this similarity is particularly interesting. In part, the Green Plan managed to answer to expectations not yet explicitly spelled out in the local plan. For example, the Green Plan recognized the maintenance of “the culturally formed landscape” as its point of departure, and even though this cultural landscape was clearly defined as consisting of both natural and built structures, it was more engaged also in its recognition of the historical ramparts.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, the recreational values were expressed in relation to the ecologically formulated means of production and reproduction, as a return to a more natural state. The master narrative of the Green Plan in this sense coincided with that of local plan, only more explicitly and possibly also more dramatically articulated. A popularized version of the Fall, the Green Plan described a decline from harmonious co-existence to a situation where nature for most people had been replaced by “caged birds, images of cows on the wall and a potted plant in the window sill.”<sup>144</sup> Thus where the Local Plan vaguely talks about “cultural historical, architectonic and recreational values”<sup>145</sup> the Green Plan surprisingly takes a step further, pointing to the conflict between certain buildings on the ramparts and “the aesthetic balance in this otherwise beautiful and peaceful area.”<sup>146</sup>

141 *Den Grønne Plan*, 1991, p. 2.

142 “Lokalplanen og ‘Den Grønne Plan’ spiller frem til 2001 en central rolle for Christianias selv-forståelse, udvikling og råderum.” *Den Grønne Plan*, 1991. *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision till virkelighed*, 2003.

143 “...vores udgangspunkt er det kulturskabte landskab med natur og bebyggelse, der er opstået gennem godt 300 år som militæranlæg og gennem de sidste 20 år i Christianias varetægt.” *Den Grønne Plan*, (1991:1).

144 “Mennesket vandrer fra landet til byen. Mister sine rødder. Og sidder tilbage i sin lejlighed, med en fugl i bur, et billede af en ko på væggen og en pottaplante i vindueskarmen.” *Den Grønne Plan*, Christiania, (1991:3).

145 “...kulturhistoriske, arkitektoniske og rekreative værdier”. *Lokalplan for Christiania (Local Plan for Christiania)*, Miljøministeriet, 1991, p. 61.

146 *Den Grønne Plan* (1991:6).

Socio-economical issues and questions of political empowerment were further downplayed in favor of the envisioned *Økosnittet*, 'the Eco Section',<sup>147</sup> a model which was supposed to visualize waste water treatment, the use of clean technology, and possible changes in consciousness and lifestyle. Possibly a sign of accumulated street-wisdom, Christiania here showed a great capacity to adjust to the idea and procedures of normal, rational planning. Understood as *ecology*, or literally, 'natural economy', the idea of planning did not seem as alien or as threatening as it had done in relation to a purely socio-economic framework. If alternative sources of energy, simple technology and small-scale production in earlier project proposals was the presupposition for *autonomy* from the market economy, they now marked a *dependency*; that of nature and natural balance. What this shift in attitude also exposed was the return of aesthetics, not as an experimental and generative force of enactment, but as a natural ordering principle. Subsequently, the Green Plan seemed to express that planning in relation to a given natural balance is a legitimate, aesthetic activity of harmonizing and economizing, ultimately eliminating social conflicts and economic injustice. What it also clearly expressed was that it is less controversial to conceptualize or defend the constraints of life in biological terms than to confront waste-flows or collapses on a socio-economic level.

Generally, the Green Plan dismissed inner and outer conflict in favor of an ecologically sustainable and constructive vision, one that could be shared with society outside. Similar to the local plan, the Green Plan expressed an ambition to grasp a cultural essence, envisioned in utopian drafts of future buildings such as earth dwellings and pontoon houses; an organic and sympathetic development of a do-it-yourself architecture.<sup>148</sup> In that sense it marked an important step in the direction of a popularization and a 'normalization', yet with some important differences. The most important of these differences was in this respect the Green Plan's rejection of the division of the area into two parts. Instead of a more concentrated and urban Free Town, the Green Plan envisioned a unitary Christiania; "open, creative and re-creative",<sup>149</sup> where the two parts would be seen as complementary;

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147 *Den Grønne Plan* (1991:7). *Økosnittet*, the Eco Section, was a proposed method of visualizing environmental improvement in a model, to be able to better evaluate different solutions. The Green Plan here directly referred to methods developed "outside the fence" ("udenfor plankeværket") by a number of ecologically aware municipalities. It is also interesting to compare the Green ideology as envisioned in the Green Plan with earlier models, such as for example "The Valley Section" of Patrick Geddes. As opposed to the *Økosnittet*, Geddes' Valley Section was a deliberate attempt to integration natural and socio-economical processes into a more complex framework. See Meike Schalk, *Imagining the Organic City: The City Between Nature and Capital*, forthcoming PhD thesis.

148 The utopian proposals for future development in the Green Plan have subsequently been published in *Christiania Arkitektur: Idéer til fremtidigt byggeri* (Christiania Architecture: Ideas for Future Constructions) (2004). While much of the Green Plan concerned pragmatic ecological works, the illustrations expressed both a more wild and more romantic vision of the contradictory community.

149 *Den Grønne Plan* (1991:1).



“not mixed as a mush”, but as “alternating areas – beautiful, spacious, and full of pleasant surprises.”<sup>150</sup>

Another significant difference was the level of concretization. While the local plan was a structural document with the purpose of establishing guidelines, the Green Plan operated through scenarios or plots, directly linked to specific places and problems. As such, the Green Plan was also taking into consideration the reproductive consequences of the planning activity. In the context of Christiania, concretization clearly actualized the personal engagement and taking of sides demanded in each scenario. It also suggested that future goals cannot be separated from the organizational questions of maintenance, participation and everyday action as they unfold on the ground. This was further reinforced in the 1994 *Development Plan*; an expansion and further concretization of the Green Plan. Among other things, it proposed a reconsideration of housing principles in order to improve the maintenance of the ramparts.<sup>151</sup> The regulative aspect of planning was reinforced – cautiously expressed in the Green Plan as a need to “at specific occasions re-evaluate our housing conditions”, and for the individual “to regard his house with the eyes of the community...”<sup>152</sup>

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Together with the Christiania Law and the Local Plan, the Green Plan had a major impact on the inner workings of Christiania. More than a threatening governing principle, the very existence of a ‘plan’ was now empowering; an expression of the fact that “we will not be evicted tomorrow.”<sup>153</sup> Some of the arbitrariness, unsettling disruption and temporality were eliminated, which in turn contributed to a kind of ‘normalization’ from within; a development of sustaining norms that did not arouse the same kind of protests. In the early years, the debate about the actual *form* of planning as representational gesture had been central. In 1976, for example, a document on the development of the Free Town was deliberately presented as a compilation of different voices, as a sampling from meeting reports and newsletters, rather than as a proper plan.<sup>154</sup> At the same time, theater performances and other cultural manifestations were often set up in direct dialogue with the official procedures of urban development and planning. A project proposal from 1980 had also included an extensive discussion about the possibilities of developing activist planning based upon interference with and interrogation of power.<sup>155</sup>

150        *Den Grønne Plan* (1991:4).

151        *Christiania's udviklingsplan: konkretisering af den Grønne Plan (Christiania's Development Plan: a concretisation of the Green Plan)* (1994), København: Christiania. The plan proposed a reinforcement of the unwritten rules for housing in Christiania, which were: 1) A halt to new buildings along the moat shore, 2) All larger reconstructions or extensions to be approved by the District Meeting, 3) Commerce with houses and apartments not allowed.

152        ”Derfor må vi i de enkelte tilfælde, nyvurdere vores beboelse, og den enkelte må se sit hus med fælleskabets øjne...”, *Den Grønne Plan (The Green Plan)*, p. 5, quoted in *Christianias Udviklingsplan (Christiania's Development Plan)*(1994:4).

153        *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision till virkelighed* (2003:27).

154        Peter Møllerup and Keld Løvetand (1976a).

155        Børge Madsen and Jakob Reddersen (1980).



In the Green Plan, however, questions of representational presuppositions were left unattended. Implicitly, this marked a shift from an interrogative activism to a more programmatic one, emphasizing the fact that Christiania now also had left the pioneering phase and become an integrated part of the urban landscape, and a very popular one with hordes of visitors, whose movements and whereabouts had to be governed. Subsequently, planning was no longer simply the dubious tool for internal control, but a necessary means for an empowered Christiania in its managing of its own spatial interests, not least on an economical level. With an increasing number of visitors, Christiania also saw itself less as subcultural or liminal space and more and more as part of an urban option; a specific destination or theme on an urban route.

In this respect, and from an aesthetic point of view, the most ‘normalizing’ trait of the Green Plan was not its implementation of ecology or environmental normativity, but its deliberate yet unreflective use of ‘planning’ as an aesthetic means to profile Christiania, to work out its spatial identity, and to position the Free Town – as a specific urban ‘theme’ – within a larger urban landscape.

### Cinematographic Narratives and Ideological Myths

During the nineties, Christiania went through a step by step normalization, both as regards the inner workings of the Free Town and as regards its relation to the authorities. A social democratic government was also generally positive to the alternative community. However, in 1994, the conservatives initiated a debate in Parliament, which led to a certain sharpening of the Christiania policy. Christiania should, it was stated, show its ability to control the hash market, it should facilitate police patrolling and it should fulfill its duties according to the official agreement. Failure to do so would result in eviction. An examination of the situation showed, however, that the administrator of the area, the Ministry of Defense, was more than satisfied with the Christiania inhabitants, who were even regarded as “model citizens” when it came to fulfilling their duties.<sup>156</sup>

Apart from controversies concerning the hash market, Christiania during the nineties was thus characterized by internal reconstruction. In 1995, the first common new building was erected. *Rosinhuset*, or “The Raisin House” as the building was called, was an ecological kindergarten with sun panels and organic earth closets. Facilitated on the one hand through the setting up of the Green Loan Fund<sup>157</sup> and on the other through a close collaboration with the Ministry of Defense, “The Raisin House” was proof that Christiania could also handle larger projects and considerable economic undertakings. In 1996, normalization took another step when Christiania together with the Ministry

156 Pernille W. Lauritsen (2002:48).

157 *Den Grønne Lånefond (The Green Loan Fund)* facilitates interest free loans on up to 24 000 Danish kroner (2500 Euro) loans to Christiania residents for realizing projects approved of by the District Meeting. *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision till virkelighed*, 2003, p. 77.

of Defense presented a “developmental plan”; a compromise between the Green Plan and the local plan.<sup>158</sup>

Along with planning and administrative consolidation however, cultural activity still constituted a significant part the Christiania ‘repertoire.’ Concurrent with the Green Plan, and just in time for the twentieth anniversary of the Free Town, the documentary movie *Christiania you have my heart* was released.<sup>159</sup> Made by one of its most experienced and engaged inhabitants, film-maker Nils Vest, the film was far from an impartial or objective ‘document.’ Instead it was a deliberate attempt to propose an alternative representational foundation for the reproduction and further planning of the community. In the film, the history of the community was traced through a composite of biographical accounts, a network of personal narratives. Interweaving historical sequences with everyday situations and encounters, the film interrogated the stereotypes and demonizations of the Free Town and to a certain extent brought the planning debate back to the essential question of how people relate to and engage in their everyday life.

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Mediated by a guide on a tour bus, Christiania emerges in the beginning of the film along with other ‘sites of particular interest’ – The Little Mermaid, the Royal Castle, not to mention *Tivoli*, the legendary amusement park laid out in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century on another part of the historic ramparts. *Hier rechts eine besondere gegen von Christianshavn, Christiania genahmt...*: “We are going to pass a special area, called Christiania....” The multi-lingual presentation reinforced the ambiguous reputation of the notorious city district. Discernible behind the curtains of the bus and implicitly described in a lowered voice as an aggregate of ramshackle façades, rootless existences and unpruned greenery, the Free Town was classified as social exoticism. “It was called a social experiment”, says the tour guide insinuatingly, thereby leaving the question of its contemporary status open.

The explicit aim of the film was to address this question. Presenting a wide range of situations and stories, it focused on the creative side of the community, its tolerance and differentiation, but also on its radical and unveiling spontaneity. This is conveyed in one of the early scenes – a jam session in *Langgaden* – where the message is accompanied by captivating banjo rhythms: “Christiania is quite a place – it shows you your face.”

Whether this ‘face’ is reassuring or provocative is less clear, as the jam session in the film is followed by a riot scene. In front of “The Peace Arc”, a heavily equipped police squad is seen retiring at the attacks of an angry mob of pushers. Simultaneously, a tour guide tells the utopian story about hash, alternative trade and non-violence. Stones fly through the air. “Who threw

158 *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision till virkelighed*, 2003, p. 77.

159 Nils Vest, *Christiania du har mit hjerte/Christiania you have my heart*, 1991, documentary, 62 min.

the first?” Eggs are okay, says an indignant woman on a Christiania bike, but not stones!

At the same time, people in another part of Christiania are taking a bath in a wooden bathtub; others are renovating houses, painting grimy military façades in a friendlier pink color. Things work, amazingly, although “life can be quite hard out here, both physically and psychically”. The young woman, who lived almost all her life in Christiania, smiles when she describes her city district, at the same time casting a fond eye over her baby. A young craftsman agrees. “There are major problems with the maintenance of buildings and common spaces in Christiania, but you have to ask yourself where your heart is and take on some responsibility.” The categorical imperative is in the highest degree a matter of everyday life. In the bicycle workshop, new Christiania bikes are being finished, and in the Green Recycling Hall, old doors are being taken care of. “Christiania is a micro-society”, says the prim woman at the Citizens’ Consulting Office. “People need help with moving, with contacting the authorities, with immigration.” The impression she conveys is that of a trustworthy and self-confident community that takes care of itself; a community where most things are a bit different, yet pretty much like everywhere else.

The face of Christiania that emerges in the film is thus the face of the city as such – simply more distinct and more acute. “Christiania feels like a giant theater”, says one of the inhabitants, recalling not only police riots and public manifestations, but also the very engagement required, the imagination and humor, the sarcasm and irony; the same dramatic and culturally innovative weapons activated in the theater group *Solvogner*’s versions of Christiania, which the film also recalls. More than social exoticism, Christiania here appears as an actor in the urban drama; possibly burlesque, an amusingly distorting mirror and simultaneously an actor with the ability to take on any unpredictable and illuminating role.<sup>160</sup>

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In this context of spatial representation and reproduction, *Christiania You Have my Heart* provides an interesting parallel to both the Local Plan and the Green Plan, but also to earlier attempts, such as “The Archer” or the Møller & Grønberg Plan. Inevitably more subjective, it stages the community; it reconstructs it, not as visual type or spatial form, but as a narrative in motion. A composite of voices, utterances, and statements, the motion picture contributes to the complexity of the urban landscape rather than present a structure or representative image of the city. The film was in this sense as real as the dramatization of Christiania; one of the many symbolic actions that comprise the urban landscape.

What came through in the motion picture version of Christiania was the absurdity of placing value-adding demands on urban life forms. Focusing

160 In this sequence, several theater performances are depicted, such as an anti-war hoax from the early 70s in front of the Parliament, a bloody re-enactment performed in 1973 of the carnage at Wounded Knee, and finally *The White Castle* of 1980, a surrealist cabaret expressing the cruelty of dope utopia.

on urban social movement as ongoing cultural reproduction, the film made explicit Christiania's rejection of any system of purpose or general value, instead pointing to the right to be different as constitutional of the urban landscape. However, conveying a strong feeling of resistance and survival against all odds, a utopian belief in difference and self-governed reproduction, the film also evoked a kind of crust of common ideals and values, difficult for anyone but the initiated to penetrate. In a central scene, one of the inhabitants also expresses this ambiguity of difference and strong identity as follows:

We came from all over but now [...] a wave of people [are moving in], attracted to a place like this, people, who neither have all the dreams of what it could be, nor the knowledge about the underlying history. And I think we need to consider that history now. [...] Many of the new Christianites miss an identity for lack of experiences. We are so loaded with experiences from the early days, and now we need to create new situations, so that the newcomers may share some great, amazing, common experience. You cannot expect people to understand what Christiania is, if they have not had the good experiences.<sup>161</sup>

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This passage to a great extent expresses one of the dilemmas of Christiania: its dependency upon continuous differentiation and change, and at the same time, its strong need for a unifying identity. Christiania never wanted to become an intentional society in the strict sense; nevertheless a common identity has unfolded. Even though this identity is an identity of temporality and transformation, of deviation and non-conformity, it is an identity constantly running the risk of being idealized and monumentalized, of being turned into a vehicle for normalization.

An attempt to bring together history, stereotypes, people and everyday life, *Christiania you have my heart* indirectly raised the question about normalization from a representational point of view. If Christiania's identity is its difference, what does normalization entail? A minimization of difference, or a monumentalization of the same? Christiania's problem no longer seemed to be a legislative one, as it now had gained the status of a continuously negotiated juridical space. The problem was instead aesthetic – a problem of representing Christiania without simplification, but in a way so as to make it graspable for reproduction, for further usage, for continuous recycling. The plan may be one way, the movie another way, and the action day a third possibility – each presents different dialogic gestures.

Normalized or not; in the juridical sense, Christiania was by the early nineties legal. There was a special law, there was general agreement and there was a

161 Nils Vest (1991) *Christiania du har mit hjerte/Christiania you have my heart*. Here, I have not included the Danish original as this is a translation of my own transcript of the soundtrack of the film.

local plan. Cultural life was also blossoming, especially the music scene, with huge rave parties and public concerts in the Grey Hall with internationally well-known names, such as Alanis Morissette, Blur, Bob Dylan and Rage Against the Machine.<sup>162</sup> However, as an indication of the diminishing gap between the Free Town and the surrounding society, the interest and control also increased. The police reinforced their presence and launched new attacks on the hash market. Constant and random assaults, searches and use of teargas made everyday life seem everything but normalized. The result of the policing efforts was – paradoxically enough – a new brutalization of the area, and after repeated reports of illegitimate use of violence, the special patrol was disbanded. The focus on the hash market continued but had to find new forms. Within Christiania, opinions differed between the libertarian wing, who wanted to work actively for the legalization of cannabis, and the activist wing, which saw the hash market as an anomaly to their communitarian ideals, but who also opposed the idea of a collective guilt in relation to the explicitly illegal drug commerce. If the criminal hash market was the only remaining problem in Christiania, this was a police matter and not something that could be solved by civilians.<sup>163</sup>

## The Naturalization Apparatus: 2001-

### Politics of Preservation

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The last phase of Christiania's historical unfolding to be dealt with here begins with the historical parliamentary elections in 2001, where a right wing party for the first time in Denmark since 1920 received more votes than the social democrats.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, the elections were a tremendous success not only for *Venstre*, but also for *Dansk Folkeparti*, the ultra-conservatives. The new government made Christiania one of its special targets. The Christiania Law was no longer considered sufficient to legitimize the existence of the alternative community, and demands for a more *fundamental* normalization were raised; a normalization which initially implied a final submission of the area to regular planning procedures and legislations.<sup>165</sup>

Again it was made clear that legalization had not brought about normalization, as had been hoped. This seemed to demand a much stricter interpretation of the law, including the *deepest* intentions of the legal framework. It might follow

162 *Christiania Guide* (1996).

163 This argument is a compilation from different sources, among others Pernille W. Lauritsen (2002:46-47), Jacob Ludvigsen (2003) and *Christiania Guide* (1996).

164 The last election where one conservative party got more votes than the Social Democrats was in the election of 1920. *Venstre* (the liberals) here got 51 mandates compared to the Social Democrats, who got 48 mandates in *Folketinget*, the Danish Parliamentary Chamber. See Danmarks Statistiks Statistiske Meddelelser om Riksdagsvalgene, Sep/Oct 1920.

165 On April 9, 2002, *Folketinget*, the Danish Parliament, urged the government to implement a legislation which would enforce standard policing in Christiania.

that normalization would entail a much harsher cure for any city district than legalization. The question now was what the government, a coalition influenced by the nationalists, was aiming at in terms of urbanism. In which direction should Copenhagen go? As Danish urban planner Jens Kvorning has pointed out in the recent debate about Christiania politics, there are three main themes in contemporary urbanism – the *creative/innovative* city, the *experiential/manifold* city and the *open/spacious* city. “In relation to all these themes”, argues Kvorning, “the concept of *normalization* is an anomaly.”<sup>166</sup>

However, since the government decided on the new strategy, a steady stream of reports and plans has appeared, all with the clear objective of a final solution. In May 2003 the Ministry of Defense presented their account, which led to the formation of a new *Christiania Committee*, with the responsibility of working out a competition program, an overall plan and an action plan for the area. The competition program was released in August 2003, along with an evaluation of the built structure, pursued by a private architectural office.<sup>167</sup> In December 2003, an evaluation of the legal status of Christiania was presented, and in January 2004 the result of the competition was made public.

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In March 2004, the Christiania Committee presented the final version of their general plan and action plan for the future of the area,<sup>168</sup> together with a proposal for a new Christiania law. The process was then further accelerated, allowing a period for consideration of only two weeks. In April, the final report from the district attorney on the legal status was due, and in June 2004, the new law, “Law on change of law on use of the Christiania area”,<sup>169</sup> was passed. Shortly thereafter, the ownership of the area was transferred from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Justice, to be administered by *The Palaces and Properties Agency*, which is the authority responsible for historical landmarks.<sup>170</sup> The new law also implied the expiry of the general agreement between Christiania and the former owner, an agreement that had granted the community a collective utility right to the area, a right that, according to the new law, would be extended only until the first of January 2006, when it would finally expire.

The main impression of these documents was their *unconditional* character. A final evaluation of the ‘social experiment’, which had been initiated thirty years ago, was not even considered, the perspective instead being entirely on problem-solving. In the program for

166 “Over for alle disse temaer er begrebet normalisering et kontrabegreb.” Jens Kvorning (2004a:12-15) *Tre by-temaer (Three City Themes)*. See also Jens Kvorning (2004b) “Christiania og grenserne i byen” (Christiania and Borders in the City), pp. 84-92.

167 *Registrering af Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania (Registration of Cultural environments and Buildings in Christiania)*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003.

168 *Christianiaområdet fremtid - helhedsplan og handlingsplan (The Future of the Christiania Area. General Plan and Action Plan)*, Christianiaudvalget, 2004.

169 *Lov om ændring af lov om anvendelse af Christianiaområdet*, LOV nr 431 af 09/06/2004.

170 *Slots- og Ejendomsstyrelsen, SES*.

the competition from 2003, the focus was put on four Christiania-free success criteria; “the historical”, “the recreational”, “the characteristic”, and “the new city district.”<sup>171</sup>

“The historical” implied an uncovering of the historical ramparts and the demolishing of houses unworthy of preservation. “The recreational” implied a transformation of the area into a public space for all of Copenhagen. With “the characteristic”, the committee suggested considering a possible preservation of the “physical values, which certain parts of Christiania today represent”,<sup>172</sup> an entirely non-political and non-historical characteristic of the settlement, and a significantly weaker recognition than in the previous local plan from 1991, where the possibilities “for the area to, to a great extent, be used as previously”<sup>173</sup> had been acknowledged. With “the new city district” finally, the idea of a mixed and composite urban space was implied, combining housing, small enterprises and cultural activity. However, adopting the notion of ‘physical value’, and distinguishing between cultural activity, housing and enterprises, the new policy sought to exclude the previous *use* of the area in favor of a normalized physical *appearance*, a normalization bluntly spelled out, not only in relation to “the flagrant hash commerce”,<sup>174</sup> but also in relation to architectonic and economical practices:

A normalization of the Christiania area will furthermore imply:

- subordination of the area to physical planning regulations such as use regulations for housing units, enterprises, public spaces etc., all that which is customary for a city district with Christiania’s location, and which create the framework for a vital and sustainable urban neighborhood.
- establishment of regular infrastructure
- a change in land ownership and building ownership structure so that there be a mix of different ownership forms
- renovation and modernization of buildings intended for preservation, according to relevant building standards for future use<sup>175</sup>

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171 *Idékonkurrence om Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet (Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area)*, *Christianiaudvalget* (2003:10).

172 *Idékonkurrence om Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet (Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area)*, *Christianiaudvalget* (2003:10).

173 “Lokalplanen åbner muligheden for, at området i vid udstrækning kan anvendes som hidtil.” *Lokalplan for Christiania*, Miljøministeriet (1991:39).

174 “...den åbenlyse hashhandel...”, *Idékonkurrence om Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet (Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area)*, *Christianiaudvalget* (2003:10).

175 “En normalisering af Christianiaområdet vil endvidere betyde: – Inddragelse af området i den fysiske planlægning med anvendelsebestemmelser for bolig, erhverv, offentlige formål mv., der er sædvanlige for en bydel med Christianias beliggenhed, og som skaber rammerne for en levende og bæredygtig bydel. – Etablering af sædvanlig infrastruktur. – Ændring af ejerskabet til jord og bygninger ved en blanding af forskellige ejerformer. – Opretnings og



Through these criteria, the committee emphasized the fact that the former Christiania Law “had changed the customary planning and regulation procedures”,<sup>176</sup> and that the program merely suggested a rehabilitation, a return to a more logical procedure. Referring to “that which is customary” without discussing the fact that these customs were also norms based upon laws passed on the same parliamentary premises as the Christiania Law, the Christiania Committee not only turned the clock considerably backwards but re-introduced a *natural* legal rhetoric, a disjunction from *normalization* to *naturalization*.

Even though this rehabilitation would rest upon a naturalized, customary framework, it was accompanied by an extensive amount of visual and verbal representations. A range of different media was employed, such as a series of interviews with a number of Christiania inhabitants.<sup>177</sup> There was also a strong emphasis on statistics, used as to map either Christiania’s *deviance* from the norm, in terms of education, demographical composition, and economical status, for example, or in other areas, its trivial *normality*, such as when it came to the number of cars per capita. This statistical classification was furthermore often presented without other contextualization than a comparison with Copenhagen as a whole.<sup>178</sup>

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The initial documents from the committee were characterized by a problematic representational ambiguity, some norms or laws considered as natural, whereas others were considered as “changed.” This ambiguity was even more pronounced in the architectural inventory, which accompanied the program.<sup>179</sup> The inventory was a so called *SAVE inventory*, a Danish protocol for systematization of preservation values in buildings and environments.<sup>180</sup> Mainly based on photographic documentation of exteriors, the inventory left out social and relational aspects. In the preface described as “simplified” in

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modernisering af de bygninger, som skal bestå, i forhold til relevante bygningstandarder for den fremtidige anvendelse”, *Idékonkurrence om Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet* (*Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area*), Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 4.

176 “Loven ændrede på de sædvanlige planmæssige og beslutningsmæssige procedurer...”. *Idékonkurrence om Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet* (*Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area*), Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 4.

177 *Interviewundersøgelse blandt Christianias naboer og beboere* (*Interview Study of Christiania’s Inhabitants and Neighbors*), Tholstrup Consult, 2003.

178 *Idékonkurrence om Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet* (*Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area*), Christianiaudvalget, 2003, pp. 17-19.

179 *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003.

180 *SAVE: Survey of Architectural Values in the Environment* is a Danish protocol for systematization of preservation values in buildings and environments. The aim with this specific protocol is to take into account both the value of specific buildings and the value of certain city structures. It opens for consideration of the historical context and also subjective observations and evaluations of spatial structures and relations. The SAVE protocol thus overtly acknowledges the fact that architectonic experience is subjective and thereby also ideological, evasive, temporal and relative. See *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003. See also Kasper Lægning Nielsen (2003) “Bevaringsstrategier for Christiania, in Christiania.”



relation to the prescribed SAVE protocol, which should embrace also cultural, historic and environmental values, the inventory proposed a general evaluation of architectonic value. Due to “the many and extensive changes” however, as well as to “the later additions and new constructions”,<sup>181</sup> the prescribed *technological* assessment had not been possible to pursue. Furthermore, “due to the significant transformations that frequently have been done and continue to be done, both as regards older and more recently erected buildings” the “evaluation of originality” had also not been pursued.<sup>182</sup> A surprisingly passive and uncritical preface to a decisive inventory, it was no less than a clear admission of the inadequacy of the proposed evaluative standards in relation to such a socio-culturally generative and ‘unfinished’ milieu as that of Christiania.

Although the chosen inventory according to the protocol should open for subjectively grounded evaluations of cultural and historical landscape traits, it consequently avoided relational or politically colored statements, which in fact countered the specific intentions inscribed in the SAVE procedures. Instead, it re-invented a natural morphology of aesthetically defined “spaces.” The naturalizing agent in this endeavor was architectonical harmony and scenic *landscape*. Carefully formulated, every trace of social or cultural becoming and change was left out in favor of natural forces:

In the vast landscape-like space, the new houses are marked with great distinction. Some are hiding completely in the dense vegetation; others are searching locations, which expose view and visibility, which in turn affects the vast landscape space. At the same time, the new buildings are threatening the rampart structure as construction work, veiling the experience of the ramparts.<sup>183</sup>

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This passage expresses an ambiguous relation between reality and representation, blurring the interdependency between cultural transformation and natural presuppositions. Here houses affect the landscape, greedily “searching location”, whereas the ramparts are threatened, as well as the experience of them. Houses are described as agents with a transforming capacity, whereas the constructed landforms of the ramparts appear as a given, not only by virtue of age, but by virtue of their symbolical, and thus also highly constructed, value. Furthermore, a non-specified *experience* is here more closely connected with

181 *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 3.

182 ”Vurderingen af originaliteten er ikke gennemført i lyset af de store omdannelser, der løbende er sket og fortsat sker af både gamle og nyere bebyggelser.” *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 3.

183 ”I det store landskabelige rum markerer de nyere huse sig med stor forskellighed. Nogle gemmer sig helt i den tætte beplantning, andre søger placeringer, der eksponerer udsigt og synlighed, som markant påvirker det store landskabsrum. Samtidigt truer nybyggeriet voldanlægget som bygningsværk og slører oplevelsen af volden.” *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 17.

the historical landscape than with the intruding houses, which are seen merely as disturbance.

The shift in politics in relation to Christiania did reflect a more general shift in urban politics and planning, consistently implemented by the new, conservative Danish government. The key trait of this shift was the explicit aestheticization of urban space and the framing of the city in terms of historically grounded landscape scenery. As a representational strategy this implied a shift from a rhetoric of normalization to a rhetoric of naturalization, where landscape functioned as a masking device, rendering invisible the alternative spatial narratives of the city as enacted by Christiania.

### From Experiment to Competition

Bearing in mind this purging mind-scaping on behalf of the Christiania Committee, the limited interest in the competition did not come as a surprise.<sup>184</sup> However, as an ideas competition, it was not in any way binding for the Christiania Committee; a fact further emphasized in relation to the public presentation of the proposals, since they were, without exception, critical to the initial program and its unconditional focus on 'normalization.' The three first prize winning drafts had in common an acknowledgement of the non-planned and self-organized structure of Christiania as an invaluable urban asset, even a *brand* or strong identity in itself – and that of a magnitude that not even the best of publishing companies could ever dream of creating.<sup>185</sup> Another common conclusion was the necessity of considering and questioning the relation between *organizational* and *physical* form; or between reproductive patterns of action and representational appearance. This implied a general critique of regulation and a corresponding appreciation of the participatory processes already at work within the community; an aspect that had been entirely avoided by the program committee. If the idea of preservation was discussed, it was discussed rather in relation to "the Christiania idea",<sup>186</sup> to Christiania as

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184 Of the seventeen proposals delivered, only eight were considered relevant to the assignment. Five of these were awarded; three of them with the highest award, even though the quality and inventiveness was far from what had been expected. The awarded proposals were publically posted at the Christiania Committee website <http://www.christiania.org> during spring 2004.

185 In the debate about Christiania, Frederik Preisler, partner of the well known publishing company *Propaganda McCain* created a considerable stir when he argued for Christiania as a brand: "Christiania has become such a strong brand on the same premises that are at work for companies – yet exclusively through intuitive intelligence. It is the triumph of enthusiastic amateurs over cool professionals..." ("Christiania er blevet så stærkt et brand på de same præmisser, som gælder for virksomheder – men udelukkende baseret på intuitiv intelligens. Det er de begejstrede amatørers triumph over for de kølige professionelle..."), interview in *Berlingske Nyhedsmagasin*, quoted in *Politikken* Sep 21, 2003, again quoted in *Proposal 15000 Christiania Plus*, by TRANSFORM I/S. Download date for all the proposals 2004-05-15.

186 *Proposal 15000 Christiania Plus*, by TRANSFORM I/S 2003.

“life style”<sup>187</sup> rather than in relation to the historical ramparts or the specific Christiania architecture. The central problem in many of the proposals was rather how to preserve or re-generate such a ‘life style infrastructure’ without imposing regulations from above; a problem which in all cases was formulated more as an inquiry of how to re-vitalize, transform and reproduce regulative planning and formal architectural praxis, and less as a problem of a specific city district.

The submitted proposals were without exception ‘pro Christiania.’ What the creative and self-administered urban ‘layer’ of Christiania needed from outside was not ideas but *recognition*; a recognition of alternative organizational practices and non-profit structures. The structuring principle of *adding* rather than *clearing* was therefore generally promoted. When it came to the problem of adding bigger structures or new “raw-buildings”,<sup>188</sup> this was generally envisioned in terms of collaboration with publicly owned housing companies or non-profit organizations rather than in terms of private enterprise.

Several of the proposals challenged the notion of openness versus clear borders. In the program, the committee had explicitly stated as a criteria that the area should be opened up towards Christianshavn, “both physically [...] and functionally.”<sup>189</sup> Christiania is remarkably accessible – with 300 000 visitors a year from outside (the sizeable number of people from the neighboring areas passing through on a daily basis not included) – so this demand was for many difficult to understand. What the demand reflected was rather the experience or sensation of *difference* or *otherness* that many of the proponents considered not an abnormality, but an asset. A ‘ghetto’ may be a stigma, but there is also an empowering potential to the ‘ghetto’ as a specifically clear, yet threatened, *place*; a discernible social and cultural form developed over time – a spatial ‘enclavization’ that in other more ‘well-to-do’ contexts is something specifically aimed for.<sup>190</sup>

Emphasized also by the appointed assessment panel in the evaluation of the proposals, the opening of Christiania towards the surrounding city could very well imply a strengthening of its particularity. As one of the panel members argued, “[i]t is precisely in the physical and architectonic passages the dynamics of the city is contained.”<sup>191</sup> Crossing borders is in this sense synonymous with

187      **Proposal 69662, Christiania**, by Denis Larsen, Martin Thue Jacobsen and Sune Oslev 2003.

188      **Proposal 15000 Christiania Plus**, by TRANSFORM I/S 2003.

189      *Idékonkurrence om Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet (Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area)*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003.

190      **Proposal 15000 Christiania Plus**, by TRANSFORM I/S 2003.

191      Jan Christiansen, “Stikord til vurderingen afgivet af den rådgivende komité” (“Keywords Delivered by the Consulting Committee”), in *Idékonkurrence om helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet – Vurdering afgivet af den rådgivende komité (Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area – Evaluation Delivered by the Consulting Committee)*,

an acting out of relations, a spatial re-appropriation through movement, a playing out of differences, where the border as such is a necessary requirement for complexity.<sup>192</sup> Instead of dissolving the borders between Christiania and society, several proposals also suggested reinforcing them – using borders not only as a spatial design element, but as a means of reinforcing identity and difference.

Conceiving of Christiania as part of the urban landscape came to be less a matter of handling a specific spatial object and more a critical reflection of planning as ‘adjustment.’ This however also involved questioning the identity of the object to be planned or re-adjusted. What again is Christiania? The answer was preferably considered in terms of a composite narrative rather than in terms of form. No delimited definition or formal description would cover the character of Christiania, which had to be described rather as “a history about the world, about multiplicity and about life”,<sup>193</sup> a story about actions and negotiations of relations rather than about physical achievements.

After all, the competition had very little to do with Christiania. In this respect, the very announcement of a competition for a general plan for the alternatively planned community was a provocative gesture. Suggesting that Christiania was a white spot on the map, a forgotten surplus or a wasteland constituting an unexploited resource, the program opened the way for the area to be submitted to ‘design.’ But what was the assignment? To monumentalize Danish history? To make a new piece of land available for real estate speculation? To defuse the conspicuous evidence of a failed drug policy?<sup>194</sup> Or

December 2003.

192 Jens Kvorning (2004b) “Christiania og grænserne i byen/Christiania and Borders in the City”, p. 88.

193 “...en historie om verden, om mangfoldigheden, og om livet”. Proposal 74591 *Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet*, by NIRAS Rådgivende ingeniører og planlæggere A/S 2003.

194 **The question of the hash market is complex and loaded, and I have tried to avoid** a direct discussion of the matter, as some readers may have noted as the hash debate tends to overshadow other aspects. However, it is my conviction that the question of hash use and sale is a question implicit in the argumentation around spatial ethics and aesthetics, both in terms of personal freedom and in terms of social responsibility. In the expert panel’s assessment of the competition, Merete Ahnfeldt-Møllerup brought forward a relevant comment; “Another common problem that manifests itself more clearly in Christiania than in other places in the country”, she writes, “is the relation between the law and its enforcement. Self-evidently, this concerns the serious problems with organized crime. The commerce with hash (and with hard drugs outside of Christiania) has created an economic hot bed for an enormous expansion of organized crime, similar to the prohibition era in the USA. The open hash market in Christiania is provocative. But the fact that hash and hard drugs can be purchased from pushers in each and every discotheque in the country, even in the smallest cities, is a far more serious threat to society. This extensive criminal activity has integrated a large part of the country’s young people in networks that constitute a brutal and dangerous alternative to the rest of society. Just like the prohibition era, it is significant that hash use today is regarded as being acceptable. The government should be requested to solve the overarching problem with organized crime instead of focusing on ‘the

to eradicate the last potential of social engagement and grassroots' initiatives in the urban landscape?

An invitation to a conventional competition, in which the proposals were to be handed in anonymously, first and foremost rendered collaboration and dialogue impossible; a dialogue that in the case of a 33 year-old self-administered community would have been the most self-evident way of proceeding.<sup>195</sup> What the competition actualized was in this respect not the intended 'future Christiania', but, involuntarily, the political field of planning, its hidden presumptions and premises. In this sense, the competition in itself constituted a reproductive field, though less the generative and performative play that characterized Christiania and more the replicative and re-adjusting procedure characterizing the State apparatus.

In their assessment, the appointed expert panel also criticized the political naivety of the program as such. "The advocates of a structural approach", wrote the panel, "regard the over-arching social structure as something almost 'naturally given', something inviolable."<sup>196</sup> The discernible shift in contemporary

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tip of the iceberg', and its visual appearance in Christiania." (*Et andet almindeligt problem, der fremstår tydeligere på Christiania end andre steder i landet, er forholdet mellem lovgivning og håndhævelse. Dette gælder naturligtvis de alvorlige problemer med organiseret kriminalitet. Handlen med hash (og hårdere stoffer udenfor Christiania) har skabt økonomisk grobund for en enorm udvikling af den organiserede kriminalitet, fuldstændig som man så det i forbudstidens USA. Det er provokerende at hashhandelen er synlig på Christiania. Men det er en langt større trussel for samfundet som helhed, at man kan købe både hash og hårdere stoffer af pushere på ethvert diskotek i landet, selv i de minste byer. Denne omfattende kriminelle virksomhed har integreret en stor del af landets unge i netværker, der udgør et brutalt og farligt alternativ til resten af samfundet. Det har her, som i forbudstiden, stor betydning, at mange af landets borgere mener at hashrygning er fuldt acceptabelt. Man må opfordre til at regeringen løser det overordnede problem med den organiserede kriminalitet, fremfor at fokusere på 'toppen af isbjerget', dens synlige framtræden på Christiania.)* *Idékonkurrence om helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet – Vurdering afgivet af den rådgivende komité (Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area – Evaluation Delivered by the Consulting Committee)*, December 2003.

195 In an article written by Ulrik Dahlin in *Dagbladet Information*, a Danish daily newspaper, on 6 September 2003, several of the main Danish architectural offices also expressed their unwillingness to participate in, and skepticism towards, a competition they perceived as extremely political. According to Eva Jarl Hansen from BBP Arkitekter, the very competition appeared to be an attempt "to smear the architects with an unpleasant political decision". Furthermore, the form of the assignment was experienced as unclear and ill-considered. "It is not particularly smart for architects to mess about with peoples' housing situation when they are not involved themselves", argued landscape architect Peter Friis at the firm Møller and Grønborg. "Christiania has done it by itself in such an excellent way that I don't see with what we would be able contribute". Only one office announced their participation. Through the architect Jens Arnfred, the well known office *Vandkunsten* sarcastically announced that their contribution would be a four meter long poster with the simple text "Long Live Christiania."

196 "Strukturtilhængerne betragter den overordnede sociale struktur som noget i det nærmest 'naturgivent', som noget ukrænkeligt." *Idékonkurrence om helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet – Vurdering afgivet af den rådgivende komité (Ideas Competition concerning*

planning towards *intermediation* between an over-arching formal structure and a grassroots level of a more unruly or formless kind, as a necessary hotbed for new ideas, was totally absent in the program. The panel therefore high-handedly suggested the addition of a number of new success criteria to the program, such as “dynamics”, “organizational forms”, and “rules for negotiation” (i.e. dialogue forms and time perspectives)” –<sup>197</sup> aspects that also reflected the core content in many of the delivered proposals.

Another misleading presumption of the initial program was, according to the panel, the definition of Christiania as fundamentally *different*. Rather than being exceptional, Christiania’s complications are merely more distinct examples of the difficulties a planner would encounter anywhere in the country. Deviations from planning norms and regulations are commonplace, and a part of the everyday dialogue between the public, the building industry and real estate sector, and the authorities. Christiania only differs in so far as it has, at least historically, staged this dialogue in socio-political terms. In this sense, Christiania has functioned and continues to function as a powerful reminder of a problem which is not merely one of planning but one of democracy in the wider sense, namely the necessity of developing new inter-disciplinary and action-oriented spatial practices capable of engaging a larger number of citizens.<sup>198</sup>

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## Final Plans

Since the transfer of Christiania to its new administrator, the Ministry of Justice and The Palaces and Properties Agency, the preparations for a final normalization and reintegration of Christiania into the official urban web has continued, following the intentions in the final plan and action plan presented in March, 2004. Only slightly modified, this plan did not reflect the multiplicity of arguments or the fundamental critique of presumptions, but maintained a strong focus on ‘normalization’:

Normalization of the area does not imply normalization of the residents, or that there be no room for alternative ways of living. It simply means that the Christiania area again be embraced by the general laws and regulations that are applied to the rest of Denmark, and that it should be possible to generally exercise authority and normal police efforts.<sup>199</sup>

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*a General Plan for the Christiania Area – Evaluation Delivered by the Consulting Committee*), December 2003.

197 *Ibid.*

198 **Merete Ahnfeldt-Møllerup**, *Christiania som del af Danmark (Christiania as Part of Denmark)*, *Idékonkurrence om helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet – Vurdering afgivet af den rådgivende komité (Ideas Competition concerning a General Plan for the Christiania area – Evaluation Delivered by the Consulting Committee)*, December 2003.

199 “En normalisering af området betyder ikke en normalisering af beboerne,

The committee here distinguishes between identities and ways of living and, on the other hand, the regulative framework within which this identity is supposed to unfold. It thereby disregards the fundamental fact that the main purpose of regulative frameworks is to reflect the way people lead their lives. This separation of normative structure from the lived space it is supposed to reflect only further exemplifies how representation has become naturalized and disconnected from its own reproduction. In the same way as the State often is taken for granted as a natural entity rather than as the representational form it actually is, laws and regulations here in the same way appear as a given. "Normalization" is tautologically defined as adjustment to "generally exercise" the "normal efforts" of the police, transforming a temporary political scaffold into a natural skeleton, the bone and marrow of urban life. In this respect, one could say that the Christiania Committee rejected what Christiania has always embodied and enacted – namely, the fact that normative systems involve transformative human beings and that norms are formative and operate on lives.

The final general plan did not present any radical changes. Except for a minor adjustment of the functional separation of the area earlier proposed and the addition of a cooperative scenario, however unlikely, the general plan reaffirmed the intentions already outlined in the initial program. Instead of two landscape types – urban and landscape – the plan now operated with three types, the only difference being that the urban part was now divided into two parts, one of which being envisioned as a dense city district, and the other as a lower and sparser building body behind the central ramparts.

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In the general plan, three 'developmental scenarios' were also presented: "The Market Scenario", "The District Scenario" and the "The Foundation Scenario." The first of these was based entirely on selling the central area to private developers, although with certain politically-correct guarantees that a certain percentage of social housing would be reserved for economically disadvantaged groups. The second scenario was based upon conventional cooperative housing, where apartments would be owned as shares of larger units. The possibilities within the framework of this scenario for a more commercial development were also emphasized. The third scenario, the "foundation" solution, however, was based upon a concrete proposal from the Free Town as a viable way of continuing. Here the community would be juridically transformed into a private foundation which would then buy the area at a reduced price, thereby guaranteeing common right of use and self-administration. This solution had been discussed since the seventies, and had also been employed by other alternative communities in other parts of the world, as a way to finally formalize the experimental. In the general plan, however, this solution appeared only

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eller at det ikke fortsat skal være plads at leve på en anden måde. Det betyder slet og ret, at Christianiaområdet igen skal være omfattet af de almindelige love og regler, der i øvrigt gælder i Danmark, og at det skal være muligt at gennemføre almindelig myndighedsudøvelse på området, herunder normal politiaktivitet." *Christianiaområdets fremtid – Helhedsplan og handlingsplan (The Future of the Christiania Area. General Plan and Action Plan)*, 2004, p. 5.



dutifully, as an ugly duckling or an anomaly with no support from the basic arguments in the plan as a whole.

The use of the notion of 'scenario' would suggest openness to a relational and interactive development, or to the unfolding of a course of events. In the general plan for Christiania however, the 'scenarios' appear to have more definite significations, related to a more formal vision of landscape types. The first two scenarios did for example not give room for much indeterminacy, but revealed a naturalized view of urban, spatial organization. Entirely related to private ownership, the urban landscape was conceived of as an economic structure, where also publicly accessible areas would have to be "subsidized" within this system. With assessment criteria further emphasizing this structure, the evaluation of the scenarios was given.<sup>200</sup>

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Apart from a general indifference to questions of spatial reproduction and redistribution, urban dynamics in terms of alternative ways of life, subcultural identity formation, alternative forms of political organization and participatory planning procedures etc., the plan also showed a surprising lack of awareness as to the dynamics of *historical* space. To a great extent, the general narrative of the new plan was that of a rescuing venture, a release of heritage from its thirty-year-old captivity in the hands of a short-sighted 'here-and-now' mentality. In this sense, two paradigms of *authenticity* stand against each other. The former aimed at maintenance of a common feeling of loss, of past and glorious times that will never come back, whereas in the latter, authenticity was understood as a present and synchronic emergence in time and space.

In the plan, history was envisioned metaphorically, masked as landscape. The plan here described visual "courses of events", "continuous spaces", a formal "dialogue" between the ramparts and the city, between "inside and outside"; a culturally loaded language employed to activate a "pronounced and specific image" rather than a historically specific, and thus also socio-political, becoming. This image however, was now threatened to being reduced to no more than "backdrop and views" for the newer houses, which then littered

200 The extent to which this view is naturalized comes through more clearly in the evaluation of the different scenarios in the plan. The plan presented seven assessment criteria for the future of Christiania: (1) Normalization of legislation (2) Mixed ownership forms (3) Clearance of those buildings on the ramparts unworthy of preservation (4) Renovation of barrack buildings (5) Social diversity through housing opportunities for large groups (6) Limited relocation need (7) Economic balance for the State. The criteria give in themselves an image of a specific point of departure, since several important spatial aspects were left out, such as development of new forms of participation and democracy, spatial dynamics or potentials for change, and the contribution to the spatial diversity of the city as a whole. However, the most noteworthy features of the assessment was the evident indifference to any but the two first scenarios. The first and second scenarios in the assessment were acknowledged to potentially meet the requirements, whereas the third scenario was surrounded by a number of question marks. *Christianiaområdets fremtid – Helhedsplan og handlingsplan (The Future of the Christiania Area – General Plan and Action Plan)*, (2004:63-73).



this view.<sup>201</sup> As a setting for social life and reproduction of space, the rampart landscape subsequently lost its “impressiveness” and was transformed into conflictive reality.

Christiania’s reproduction as an alternative community is in the general plan almost exclusively presented in terms of erosion of the historical and authentic experience of the moat and ramparts. However, several observers point to the fact that without Christiania, a great part of the historical military area would be long gone.<sup>202</sup> One could talk about the spatial reproduction of Christiania also in terms of preservation, where a great number of the smaller and more differentiated buildings that were used by the military – former “parasite buildings” like workshops, stables, barns, sheds and other wooden barracks – thanks to inventive and differentiated usage have continued to exist. Within another scenario of development, all these secondary buildings that to such a great extent bears witness of former use and changes, most certainly would have been long gone.<sup>203</sup> Christiania has in this sense preserved neither a *spatial ideal*, nor a *historical fiction*, nor a *freezing* of the area at a certain stage in time. Instead, it has preserved and developed the area as a space of variable and multiple uses, as a space of continuous re-appropriation and re-production, which to a considerable extent was the characteristics of the area also during its military era.

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The process of normalization has continued, its aim being to “define the frames for a new development in Christiania, with room for an alternative way of life, but within the general regulations of law.”<sup>204</sup> In practice, this has entailed the cancellation of the collective use right to the area, and the definition and registration of specific buildings and addresses. Further studies have been pursued, most notably the so-called “volume study” initiated by the new administrators as a further concretization of the general plan, where three architectural firms in January 2005 were assigned the task of investigating the consequences of a further exploitation of the area, one of which was collaborating with Christiania.<sup>205</sup> The result of these studies was presented in February 2005.

201 “Efter hånden er væsentlige dele af fortidsmindet ændret til kulisser og udsigter for nyere bebyggelse.” *Christianiaområdet fremtid – Helhedsplan og handlingsplan (The Future of the Christiania Area – General Plan and Action Plan)*, (2004:52).

202 See several of the articles in Anne Tjetjen and Svava Riesto (2003), especially the contributions by Kasper Lægning Nielsen, Pernille Skov and June Maestri Ditlevsen and by Anne Nielsen.

203 I here refer to Anne Nielsen (2003).

204 ”Den nye Christianialov fastlægger rammerne for en ny udvikling på Christianiaområdet, med plads til at leve på en anden måde, men inden for lovgivningens almindelige regler.” *Den nye Christianialov: Information til Christianias beboere (The New Christiania Law: Information to the Inhabitants of Christiania)*, Slots- og Ejendomsstyrelsen, July 2004.

205 Initially, two firms were assigned the task by the Palaces and Properties Agency; Arkitektfirman Nøhr og Sigsgaard A/S and Tegnestuen Vandkunsten Aps. The idea was that

In April 2005, Christiania presented a “white book” as a political contribution to the discussion, where the community presents its views upon ownership structure and organizational principles.

In May 2005, the Palaces and Properties Agency presented their report as an extensive foundation for further decisions concerning the future organization and ownership structure in Christiania.<sup>206</sup> The scenario outlined in the report is a future Christiania with mixed ownership forms and with a rehabilitated historical landmark as its main objectives. A public housing organization takes over the responsibility for larger buildings, whereas the social and cultural activities specific for Christiania are guaranteed a future existence through the establishment of a foundation. In a first phase, the landscape along the moat will be cleared of about twenty self-built houses, and in a second phase, part of the central area will be sold off to private investors.

Preservation or Revitalization?

In this ongoing transformational process, the ambitions of the authorities to normalize the area and submit it to regular legislation and planification thus stand against Christiania’s own ambitions to remain a self-administered and mixed community based upon right of collective use and consensual democracy. It is in this context important to recall that there are also within Christiania diverging opinions about the future reproduction of the Free Town, a divergence that has not only been masked but also emphasized in the recent debate. The slogan *Bevar Christiania* (“Preserve Christiania”) was not accepted without complaint, as many of the residents demanded *revitalization* rather than preservation. “Christiania should remain a forum for cultural innovation”, argues, for example, Ole Lykke, the editor of *Ugespejln*, “The Weekly Mirror.” “Here should be room for young and low-budget experiments”, he continues, “otherwise we lose our legitimacy.”<sup>207</sup>

In the internal debate, three main areas of discussion can be identified. The first of these has concerned *the relation between the individual and the community*. This is a relation clearly actualized by Christiania, and where the specific Christiania ‘formlessness’ unfolds as a conflict between, on the one hand, a

Christiania at the same time would assign a third firm, at its own expense, to participate in the process on equal terms. However, one of the officially assigned firms (Vandkunsten) immediately chose to shift sides and fulfil the assignment as representative of the Free Town. A third firm was then assigned in its place; Vilhelm Lauritzen A/S. See *Christiania er ikke til salg! Planforslag til Christianias fremtid* (*Christiania is Not For Sale! Planning Proposal for the Future of Christiania*), Vandkunsten, Feb 2005. See also *Studie af nybyggeri på Christiania* (*Study of New Constructions in Christiania*), Vilhelm Lauritzen A/S, Feb 2005, and *Christiania. Volumenstudier og Workshop* (*Christiania. Volume Study and Workshop*), Nøhr og Sigsgaard A/S, Feb 2005. Posted at the Palaces and Properties Agency website <http://www.ses.dk/> during 2005. Download date 2005-07-29.

206 *Fremtidige organisations- og ejerformer på Christianiaområdet* (*Future Organization and Ownership Structure in the Christiania Area*), Slots- og Ejendomsstyrelsen, May 2005.

207 Jacob Ludvigsen (2003:177).

libertarianism with strong focus on the individual right to development and self-realization, and, on the other hand, the idea of common usage and a non-representative, consensual democracy. Over time, a radical libertarianism however, also produces social structures, goods and power. As an example, the unitary living cost, which initially was thought of as a just principle, has with time developed into a subsidizing of those who have at their disposal larger houses or apartments, or those who benefit from a relatively high income.<sup>208</sup> With common ownership, but almost nothing outside private investments in time and money, living standards have also varied considerably. Though difficult to turn into cash, individualism has tended towards what has been described as “the inhospitable fencing towards the surrounding world”,<sup>209</sup> a tendency towards self-righteous barricading. The creative dynamics and the right to be different have thereby clashed against ideas of reciprocity and social capaciousness.

The second problematic concerns *the relation between the temporary and the permanent*. Rather than a question of subjective rights, this is a problematic that unfolds *in* and *as* space. While the temporary – as spatial usage, relational interaction, and change – does not necessarily require formal regulation, the permanent is, spatially, much more controversial. In Christiania, this difference is acutely enacted in the double meaning of the ‘Free Town’ as signifying on the one hand free space, leeway or spatial flux and on the other hand ‘refuge’, a potential rootedness and belonging in a transient world. In this respect, the question of formalizing ownership structures becomes critical. The unregulated ownership might on the one hand have created a creative dynamic, a horizontal power structure and a tactical advantage in relation to the authorities. On the other hand, however, it has also to a certain extent, at least lately, made the community more vulnerable to expropriative attacks.<sup>210</sup> A formalization of ownership structures (as for example a foundation solution) would in this respect imply a strengthening of Christiania and a necessary final step in its legitimization. Christiania in this respect has to find ways to formalize space without normalization; to defend and preserve its dynamics and social capaciousness without submitting it either to a definite identity or to the process of ‘Tivolization.’<sup>211</sup> It has to find ways of implementing what has been acknowledged as its specific “anarchic process”, a “shortcut to more daring

208 I am here referring to Jakob Reddersen and a presentation he gave at a workshop “Shadow City – Paradoxes of Planning” in Christiania, arranged by the Belgian office O2 during the conference City Living/Living City: The 6<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Towns and Town Planners in Europe, Danish Town Planning Institute, June 10, 2005.

209 **Vandkunsten (2005)** *Christiania er ikke til salg! Planforslag til Christianias fremtid* (*Christiania is Not For Sale! Planning Proposal for the Future of Christiania*).

210 Jakob Reddersen, lecture on the history and present situation of Christiania at the workshop “Shadow City – Paradoxes of Planning” in Christiania, arranged by the Belgian office O2 during the conference City Living/Living City: The 6<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Towns and Town Planners in Europe, Danish Town Planning Institute, June 10, 2005.

211 The specific Danish variety of ‘Disneyfication.’

solutions”, yet in combination with the continuous development of a social responsibility and an architectonic radicalism.<sup>212</sup>

The third area that Christiania inevitably stumbles over is *the relation between the ‘consensual’ and the conflicting*. The most frustrating but also ‘characteristic’ actualization of this paradox has, according to some of the Christianites, been the development of an implicit *sensus communis*; an unassailable *we* with a tendency of masking or suppressing conflicts rather than making them part of everyday social dynamics. What motivated a non-representational consensual structure in the first place was the idea that it would promote constructive conflict, where solution would unfold through common agency. Instead it has often led to an interlocked situation and an inability to act. It has also led to the development of informal and non-transparent power structures, operating entirely outside the dialogic space that constitutes the ‘official’ Christiania. The dynamics of ‘the parliament of the street’ has in this respect mainly favored single male agents, usually with connections to the economically strong hash market. Therefore, a revitalization of Christiania cannot be thought of without a revitalization also of its power structures and its democratic praxis. This revitalization however, is far from a submission of the area to “general regulations.” Instead, it is a political and reproductive challenge, entailing the working out of spatial, economical and social tactics which, as Christiania’s architectural collaboration partner Vandkunsten has expressed it, gives the clear and generative signal, both inwards and outwards, that “Christiania is not for sale.”<sup>213</sup>

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## Christiania – A Formless Re-production of the Urban Landscape

Christiania has for more than three decades now generated a veritable urban landscape test bed. A willful stealing, a taking of place in the urban landscape, Christiania has constituted a composite, and therefore also provocative, hybridity. However, rather than a space either for social *or* aesthetic experimentation, Christiania has presented a register of communicative spatial practices, multifarious activism and many-voiced critique. Non-coherent and formally impermanent, the Free Town has unfolded through actions and dialogues rather than through form, critically affecting also the surrounding urban landscape. Already from the start, Christiania was not merely an alternative, a marginal outside, but a concrete embodiment of both shortcomings and potentials of the city as such. Christiania has required an interrogation of routinized procedures of representing the urban landscape; it has forced and actualized structures of domination. The provocative critique of the Free Town might sometimes have been more circumstantial than deliberate, and it might not have led to the development of a clear, alternative and sustainable urban form. What Christiania has entailed is instead a bringing into general notice all those spatial

212 Vandkunsten (2005).

213 Vandkunsten (2005).

aspects which is *not* covered by form, all those dimensions of urbanity which cannot be formally represented, all those relational *practices* and *actions* that motivates us talking about the city in terms of landscape.

In my historical account of Christiania, I have chosen to shed light on some of these practices and their specific staging of urban development as a composite of aesthetic actions. Christiania has in this sense functioned as a 'poetic' interrogator, critically trying out the relation between spatial *representation* and cultural *reproduction*. Throughout the history of Christiania, many attempts have been made to impose a representative form onto the Free Town. What Christiania has brought into public attention is however, the reproductive impact of spatial representation; the fact that spatial, intermediary practice plays an active role in a production and reproduction of space.

It is in this respect possible to regard the totality of Christiania as a critically aesthetic action. Its objective has been the grasping and understanding of urban life as such, and this in a non-simplified way, in a way that neither would imply a submission to formal abstraction nor emotional mystification. Rejecting conventional forms of aesthetic and/or political representation, Christiania has actualized the relation between these formal practices and urban form; the fact that the city is not a presupposition for representational activity, but a consequence of it. The non-representativity of Christiania should in this sense not be understood as a rejection of spatial representation altogether, but as a manifest and hands-on reconsideration of its premises.

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It is subsequently, or paradoxically, in its capacity as manifest 'non-representativity' that Christiania has contributed to a critical landscape aesthetics. The question is now how to understand this non-representativity in relation to 'urban space' as representational framework. What are the aesthetic implications of Christiania within a discourse on urban representation and reproduction? The answer is far from evident. Tracing the many turnabouts in 'the Christiania question', not to mention the many disconcerted truces, it becomes clear that what Christiania has brought into attention is rather the *ambiguity* of urban, spatial representation and reproduction rather than one or the other ultimate *form*. Christiania does not first and foremost present a unified or alternative urban identity; it is not simply a circumscribed or thematized place or an ideologically defined community. Instead, it has appeared as a yet formless intersection of trajectories, of circumstances, of spatial actions, an in-between, which does not only concern its own representative legitimacy, but the aesthetic, or intermediary legitimacy of urban form on a more general level.

In and around Christiania, the critical link between spatial aesthetics and the urban landscape has perhaps first and foremost been exemplified as what American anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has described as a question of "how to produce locality under conditions of anxiety and entropy, social wear and

flux, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility.”<sup>214</sup> This is also why I will expand the discussion about aesthetics, activism and urbanism to embrace also the general questions of subjectivity, space, and power. In the three following chapters, I will therefore approach Christiania from a theoretical point of view, in an attempt to understand the potentials of the specific urban formlessness that Christiania in its capacity as Free Town has revealed.

The first of these chapters concerns what I in this context will refer to as *the formlessness of the subject*. In Christiania, this aspect is played out already in the first manifesto, as an emancipatory statement. The emergence of Christiania is in this sense first and foremost a break-out of the idea of a coherent and original Self, submitted to a set of essential and absolute representational rules. I will therefore discuss the ‘experimentation’ in Christiania in relation to a wider interrogation of the production and reproduction of subjectivity and individuality as it unfolded in modern, rational and commercial urban space. Against a controlled subject formation, Christiania set up stage for differentiation, broadening the conceptions of what a consistent subjective identity or unambiguous Self could mean. Privileging the wandering, negotiable and transformative over the unifying, grounding or ordering, Christiania has remained polemical, continuously actualizing questions of composite mediation and displacement, to a certain extent at the expense of questions of meaning and familiarization.

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The second theme concerns *the formlessness of space*, and in this respect most notably urban space. What is most evocative about the spatial practices of Christiania, is perhaps its disturbance of preconceived ideas about the representation and reproduction of complex human settings. I will subsequently discuss in what ways Christiania actualizes questions of urban form and locality (re)-production. When it comes to the attempts to find more composite ways of representing and reproducing urban space, Christiania may function as an *agent provocateur*; an interrogator of notions such as place, locale, habitat, scenery or landscape, evoking what could be called a ‘critical spatial reproduction’. Rather than a formulation of clear-cut spatial identities or a development of a distinct place-form, Christiania motivates a reconsideration of spatial presuppositions, such as centers and margins, grounds and intentions, dwelling and dissemination, bringing into attention an alternative *-scape*; not necessarily as a cognitively experienced whole, but as a practically embodied propagation.

The third theme that Christiania with emphasis has actualized is *the formlessness of power*, the mechanisms of representational *regimes*; imposed patterns of regulation, which set up rules for how our environments should be conceived, approached, used and transformed. It is in this respect important to discuss how the practices of and in Christiania managed to displace focus from the explicit forms of power in terms of laws and regulations, to the performances through

which it is executed, such as the activities of legalizing and normalizing, but also that of naturalizing. I will therefore inquiry into the issues of how power, as a both convincing and creative force, is acted out, spatially, materially, and as intermediary force.

A locality production 'against all odds', combinatory rather than reconciliatory, an example of 'anarchic activism' as well as an 'archer's vision', a 'Slum of Hope' as well as a 'Green Plan', Christiania constitutes a challenging starting point for further inquiry. Staged as a theft, a withdrawal, of the basic grounds upon which urban landscape practice many times depends; the illegal seizing of Christiania constitutes an opportunity to interrogate the claims for general and total representability. Interfering with, yet at the same time fuelled by, a desire to *take place*; to express and to generate change, Christiania has provoked some general questions, important not only for the future of the Free Town, but for the development of the urban landscape in general. What does it mean to be a subject? Where and how can life take place? What are the enabling and restrictive rules?





Fig 4a

The sea ramparts in 1692.

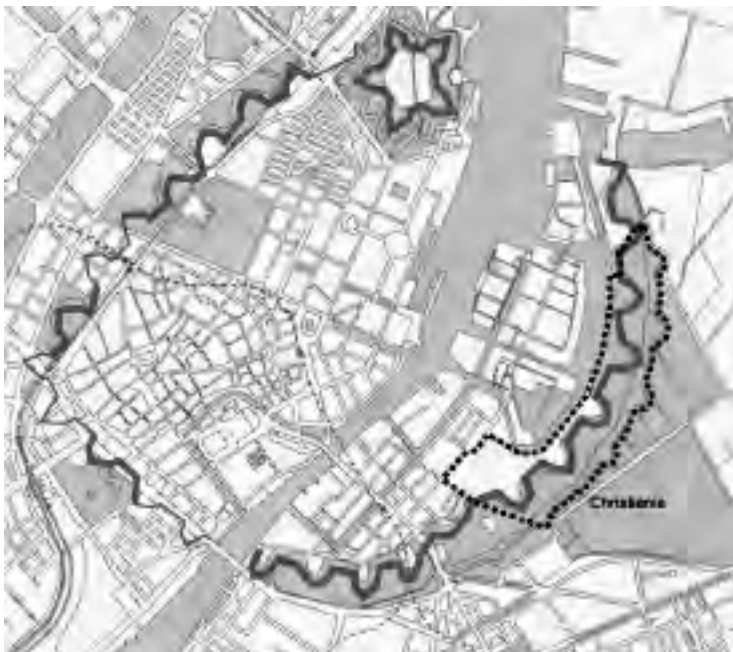


Fig 4b

The sea ramparts in 2004.





Fig. 5

"The deserted 'Prohibited City' of the Military at Christianshavn was Quietly Occupied by Ordinary Civilians." Headline in Hovedbladet, oct 2-3, 1971.



Fig. 6

Breaking through the wall. Christiania 1971. Photograph by Erik Nielsen.



Fig. 7 The Christiania 'Manifesto'; the first page in Christiania's 'Ting Book'.



Fig. 8 The Junk Blockade, 1979: Eviction of hard drug addicts from "The Peace Arc." Photograph by Nils Vest.



Fig. 9      Decentralized development. From *Christiania is not for Sale*, volume study by the architectural firm Vandkunsten, 2005. © Vandkunsten.





Fig. 11 Theatre Group Solvognen (The Sun Wagon). "Pig Claus," performance 1977. Photograph by Nils Vest.



### III. The Formlessness of the Subject

#### The Subject In Between

One of the main objectives of the new Christiania Law of June 2004 was the cancellation of the agreement on collective utility right; an agreement that had constituted the basis for Christiania's organization as a 'free town'. All utility rights would henceforth be registered individually. In order to facilitate this individualization and further implementation of the new law, or as it is formulated in the official information material to the residents, "as a part of the development of the Christiania area as a city district",<sup>1</sup> the area should be authorized with official names on streets and places, including a numbering of all buildings. The residents should thereafter be registered at a specific address, as opposed to the former situation, where all the approximately seven hundred residents had been – informally – registered at the same address: 43 Boatman's Street.

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This priority given to spatial formalization based upon individual utility rights illustrates the fact that one of the major traits of Christiania as a 'free town' was precisely its challenging of such an individualization process based upon spatially implemented *privatization*. In Christiania, the very meaning of an all the more central and bearing 'individuality' was radically questioned, as well as the representative 'commonality' to which this individuality was thought to give rise. What Christiania implied was instead an opening up of the undefined leeway between subject and surrounding space; an establishing out of defiance of a space of maneuver, where, as the manifesto had stated, "each individual can unfold freely while remaining responsible to the community as a whole."<sup>2</sup> The challenge was a *spatial* one, to the highest degree concerning the question of how to rethink an urbanized space that in its conventional form exclusively favored a coherent, 'atomized' individuality. Through the emergence of Christiania as first and foremost a field of interaction, an urban playground, the whole idea of the *subject* as *submitted* to a formal system was questioned. Instead of each subject being thrown upon its own restricted 'place proper', strictly positioned within a circumscribed, representational commonality, Christiania provided room for a tentative subjectivity and a commonality of potential 'otherness'.

In the following, I would therefore like to relate Christiania and its interrogation of the relation between subject and space to a more general aesthetic discourse on the construction and critique of subjectivity. In order to motivate this comparative discussion, I will start off with a reflection on the historical background of Christiania, situating the Free Town as a part of what could be

1 "Som led i udviklingen af Christianiaområdet som bydel..." *Den nye Christianialov. Information til Christianias beboere* (The New Christiania Law. Information to the Residents of Christiania), July 2004, Slots- og Ejendomsstyrelsen.

2 See ch. 2, pp. 33-34

called a 'critical aesthetic turn' of spatial discourse. A turn that could be traced back at least as far as to the Enlightenment, this shift was again actualized in the fifties and sixties, bringing about a spatialization and politicization of the aesthetic discourse on the 'subject', and a concurrent aestheticization, or an expressive turn, of political space. Formerly the foundation for intimate concerns such as religious contemplation or aesthetic 'taste', logical cognition or meditations over nature, the subject now became a political and economic battleground. However, rejecting increasing commodification, the subject would also become the point of departure for a critique of a bourgeois aesthetics and its 'intimizing' of such social dimensions as sexual desire, authentic experience, symbolic interaction and imaginative mobility.

The subjective was instead turned outwards. Externalization or popularization, the discourse on subjectivity transformed from intimate self-confidentiality to an emancipatory manifestation, often simply referred to as "The Movement"<sup>3</sup> a movement furthermore manifested in and through the urban landscape. In my interpretation of Christiania, I will therefore start off by situating its underlying premises to a general aesthetic discourse on *subjective positionality* – on the representation and reproduction of the subject in relation to a given surrounding. Through this interrogation, the subjective unfolding upon which Christiania rests will be possible to understand as an experimental or tactical re-enactment of given positions, as well as a simultaneous development of alternative tactics. Rather than a formal consequence of its predetermined position, the subject is understood as a relational agent, with a direct impact on the development of its surroundings, including also common urban space.

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### Situational Subjectivisms

Squeezed in between delirious Modernity and social Utopias, Christiania has for many of its residents implied as much a passage of self-positioning as a deliberate urban activist statement. This intersection of the subjectively or privately fuelled with the spatially and politically conditioned is something we recognize as characteristic of the political activism and youth liberation movements following on the Second World War. Appearing in 1971, Christiania was certainly an offspring of the same desire to expand the subject and re-enact society at the same time – a double aspiration that to a great extent coincided in a partly demolished and partly reconstructed urban space. Christiania in this sense appeared almost as a conclusion of the tendencies of the time; a composite manifestation of current thoughts and social movements, a mobilizing media-event, a popular concretization of communitarian ideas, and not least, a devoted affirmation of the odd, the surprising, and the specific. "Spontaneous and unplanned";<sup>4</sup> Christiania was a logical response to a situation, where a preconceived and centralized urban form could no longer hold, but would split up into a pattern of autonomous trajectories and destinations, and where the acting subject would achieve a new role.

3 See Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert (1984:28).

4 Per Løvetand (1978: 36 and 47).

Without any ambition to give a full record of the historical and political course of events preceding Christiania, I would still like to enter the turbulent blend of ideas that constituted the epoch, accumulated evaporations that – not least through Christiania – have been transmitted to a contemporary urban situation. Even though the influences and inspirational sources behind Christiania probably are as many as there are occupants, not all being as politically or aesthetically conscious, there are certain historical circumstances and tendencies of decisive importance for the emergence of the Free Town, including the blend of personal and political already in the very name of the Free Town. It is not clear who first coined the name Christiania. In any case, the ambiguous name immediately set the relational stage for the development of the Free Town, first and foremost marking an emotional re-coding of the military landmark. On the other hand, this re-coding implied a satirical ‘wedding’ of the surrounding slum of Christianshavn with the royal capital. It also implied a symbolic expansion of the geographically circumscribed place, adding to it a more imaginary, fantastic or dreamlike dimension.<sup>5</sup> What these nuances in meaning indicated in a more specific historical sense we will have to leave aside, yet they reveal a considerable sensitivity and satirical playfulness as to questions of representation and reproduction, where simple name-giving, as a dislocating practice, certainly had a subjectively engaging effect.

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Rather than a consequence of traditional class confrontation, Christiania appeared at the crossroads between a rapidly developing Welfare State and an escalating consumer culture, in between two complementary forms of stereotypical ‘middle-classification’, both in different ways targeting the individual as the locus of representation and reproduction. Furthermore, rather than simply individual or local, these social trends were global, linking particular subjectivities to a new situation of increased mobility and mass communication. What surfaced inside the fences of *Boatman’s Street Barracks* was in this sense not only a reaction to a local housing shortage, but a concretization of personal biographies in a new urban landscape, embracing both the far away and the close.

When the first activists entered “the new land” of Christiania, it was certainly staged as a utopian venture. However, while Thomas More’s 16<sup>th</sup> century Utopia also had served the double aim of delivering both a cultural critique and an inspirational ideal, it was still imbued with a utilitarian spirit. Egalitarian and uniformly organized, the ‘good society’ of early utopianism was grounded

5 In her *Christiania – Kort fortalt – guide og historie (Christiania – Shortly Told – Guide and History)* (2002), Pernille W. Lauritsen writes about the name that “[s]ome claim it was coined by a guy called Victor, others by ‘Fisher-Kim.’” The Norwegian capital Oslo, relocated and rebuilt after a fire in 1624 by the Danish king *Christian IV*, was also given the name *Kristiania* (a name kept until 1905); culturally very much associated with the *Kristianiabohemen*, *Christiania Bohemia*, a group of radical artists and intellectuals in the 1880s, advocates of free love and a natural way of living.



in canny and joyful rationalism.<sup>6</sup> The alternative utopianism of post-World War II Europe on the other hand, was first and foremost motivated by a *critique* of rationalism. “Utopia has been a subversive form”, writes historian Krishnan Kumar,<sup>7</sup> an unsettling combination of deadly seriousness with playful imagination. Rejecting rosy-cheeked decency, critical utopianism favored only the more satirical, agitated, or pleasurable parts of the utopian discourse. As a basis for artistic practice, utopian imagination had turned into an inverted energy provider – not a dream of fulfillment but a generative and evocative principle. Successively, Dada, constructivism, futurism, and surrealism had in different ways deconstructed the utopian figure (and this also in its disguise as *avant-garde*), only to recycle it as raw material in an art that to an increasing extent embraced *life* as such.

Already in the midst of the nineteenth century, when Charles Baudelaire gladly lost his halo somewhere in the dirt of the emerging metropolis, critical utopian practice had re-located to the street.<sup>8</sup> As such, the utopian ‘nowhere’ coincided with the emergent sphere of urban “everyday life” a dimension that in a similar way seemed to answer to the newly born questions of modernity, alienation, and identification, and, shortly, to the subject’s relation to its political surroundings.<sup>9</sup>

6 “Thomas More”, writes Krishnan Kumar in *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (1986), “did not just invent the word ‘utopia’, in a typically witty conflation of two Greek words (*eutopos* = ‘good place’, *outopos* = ‘no place’): he invented the *thing*. Part of that new thing was a new literary form or genre; the other, more important part was a novel and far-reaching conception of the possibilities of human and social transformation.” The birth of the classic modern utopia, argues Kumar, like Thomas More’s *Utopia* of 1516, Campanella’s *City of the Sun* of 1602, and the, in this context coincidentally interesting *Christianopolis* of Andreae of 1619, coincided with the break-up of the Christian world, the voyages of discovery and the exploration of the New World, as well as the emergence of the idea of scientific progress, and should be understood as a typically European invention – a vision of an egalitarian, affluent and dynamic society on earth.

7 Krishnan Kumar (1991:87).

8 It was in *Le Spleen de Paris* that Charles Baudelaire’s prose poem *Perte d’auréole* (*Halo Lost*) appeared. The poem describes the occasional encounter between the poet and a friend in one of Paris’ ‘bad’ establishments, where the poet tells the story about how he, crossing the street in the middle of traffic, happened to lose his halo, and how much this eventually pleased him, not having to live up to the dignified standards of High Art. See Charles Baudelaire (1980) *Petits Poèmes en Prose: Le Spleen de Paris*.

9 In 1947, French philosopher Henri Lefebvre published what would become the first volume of his influential *Critique de la vie quotidienne*. Drawing upon Heidegger’s concept of *Alltäglichkeit* as inauthentic Being and loss of direction, and indirectly upon Georg Lukács’ even earlier definition of *Alltäglichkeit* as the trivial and alienated world of objects and reified consciousness, Lefebvre developed his quotidian *critique*; actualizing the actions and movements of everyday life it becomes possible also to stand back from the greyness and monotony of the ‘already there’ in order to revolutionize it. The revolutionary way of the everyday in this respect unfolds as an alternative both to the ‘poetic way’ proposed by the surrealists, and to the metaphysical way of existentialist thought. See Henri Lefebvre (1947/1977) *Critique de la vie quotidienne*. See also Michael Trebitsch “Preface” (1991), in Henri Lefebvre (1947/1991), *Critique*

One of these everyday utopianisms that indirectly exerted an influence on the staging of Christiania was the informal and quite limited network of activists who gathered under the cover of Situationism.<sup>10</sup> In the post-war atmosphere of re-habilitating modernity, the Situationists distinguished themselves by their radical articulation of new tactics for revolutionizing not primarily the means of production, but an increasingly controlled and commercialized everyday life.

Inspired by 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchism,<sup>11</sup> or perhaps on a more general level influenced by what one of the Situationists described as “the tradition of dissent

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of *Everyday Life*.

10 I choose to describe this influence as indirect since I haven't found any direct links between the Situationist movement or the most radical circles of the artistic avant-garde. Nevertheless, this rapport between avant-garde urban activism and grassroots movements emerges during this period, first and foremost as a result of an expanding youth and popular culture, where radical artistic expressions rapidly multiply and propagate. When during the years immediately after the Second World War, a small group of artists in Paris engaged in the rediscovery of the critical practices of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century avant-garde, above all the Dadaists and the Surrealists, this was therefore already more than a limited avant-garde concern. The group, calling themselves Lettrists, were concerned with “Dada-type cultural sabotage” (Christopher Gray (1998:3) and had an amazing talent for appropriating place in the media landscape. The hoaxes performed by the group were often spectacular, like the hoax pursued at Easter mass in Notre Dame in 1950, where a small group of Lettrists (Isou himself not involved) stripped and bound one of the priests, climbed the pulpit and took over the mass with the initial words “Frères, Dieu est mort” (Greil Marcus 1989:246-257). However, the conflicts within the group grew, and in the summer of 1952, after having wrecked Charlie Chaplin's press conference for Limelight, where anti-Chaplin leaflets were distributed, the young Guy Debord broke with Isou and changed the name of the group to L'Internationale Lettriste. In 1958 finally, this constellation merged with a number of other lettrist inspired groups from various countries, among others the CoBrA group with painter Asger Jorn, the Scandinavian and German Mouvement pour un Bauhaus Imaginiste and the London Psychogeographical Committee; the name again modified to L'Internationale Situationniste. (Christopher Gray (1998:4).

11 The main inspirational sources for the unfolding of Situationism was certainly the early anarchist ideas of Communards Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Paul Lafargue (*Le droit à la paresse*) and Elisé Reclus (anarchist geographer), and the political writings of Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin. In his *Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism* (1997), David Weir provides a good introduction to anarchism in general and to its influence on cultural production in particular. As a political ideology, anarchism may have failed, writes Weir, but its death “should not be exaggerated”, as anarchism has shown an “abiding presence...in culture itself.” A movement “fraught with a number of internal contradictions”, anarchism has continued to function as an important source of inspiration, argues Weir. As for many of the ideas discussed along the course of this work, I have chosen to deal with them without direct reference to anarchism, which would have been another possibility. However, many of the central tenets of early anarchism are certainly core issues in the aesthetic polemic presented here, such as Proudhon's ideas of a “mutualist” society that (unlike that of Rousseau) would be based not upon one social contract, but on “an endless multiplication of contracts among specific individuals for specific ends and purposes that would cover the entire spectrum of human desires and aspirations”. Aaron Noland “Proudhon and Rousseau”, from 1967, quoted in David Weir (1997:22).

which encompasses de Sade, Fourier, Lewis Carroll, Lautréamont, Surrealism and Lettrisme”,<sup>12</sup> the Situationist ambition was to enable a new kind of subjective unfolding and a new kind of creativity. Situationist creativity would take off where bourgeois art had failed – in the very space between individually fuelled cultural formation and the politics of everyday life. Art – if one at all could talk about Situationist creativity in such pretentious terms – should not direct its energies towards its own intimate and cognitive images but directly towards the active transformation of life as such.

The Situationist point of departure was the inherent crisis upon which capitalist society was based, a crisis encroaching directly upon the individual subject, alienating and reifying its consciousness, turning it into a commodity among others. “Young people everywhere have been allowed to choose between love and a garbage disposal unit”, wrote one of the Situationists sarcastically, “and everywhere they have chosen the garbage disposal unit.”<sup>13</sup> What the Situationists saw and reacted upon was the surrender of the creative human being to functional and utility-based comfort. Beyond the convenience and moral excellence of the garbage disposal unit, the crisis of the subject opened up, a subject that had given up its passionate desires for an abundant and enriching life.

Situationism should therefore first and foremost be understood as an aesthetically spurred activism; a performativity, which engaged in and critically challenged campaigns of subject formation, as they unfolded in modern, bourgeois, and commercial urban space. The creation of ‘situations’ was in this respect equivalent with a conscious and critical defamiliarization of a commodified everyday; an unsettling appropriation meant to contest the representation of the subject as a passive consumer of ‘spectacles’, visually seductive and pacifying ‘entertainment’. Situations were not only anti-consumerist but also the opposite of works of Fine Art, which were meant to represent and sustain the idea of a coherent subject. Through a number of experimental *behavioral practices*, the subordinate subject would transform into a co-actor, a participator, who through direct action would “contest the retreat of the directly lived into the realm of representation.”<sup>14</sup> These practices were thus not representative *techniques*, but reproductive interactions constituting a continual embodiment of the participator in social, political and historical space.

One such critically spatializing action was the *dérive*, or *drifting*. Through the tracing of invisible paths and traits of the city, the *dérive* constituted a re-enactment of an urban *psychogeography*. The psychogeographic drift was in this sense an alternative *mapping*, not merely a subjectively defined ‘mnemonic

12 Raoul Vaneigem (1962-63/1998) *The Totality for Kids (Banalités de base)*, p. 7-8.

13 “Entre l’amour et le vide-ordure automatique la jeunesse de tous les pays a fait son choix et préfère le vide-ordure.” Gilles Ivain (Ivan Chtecheglov), *Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveau*, IS no 1:1958, *Internationale Situationniste* (1997:17-18).

14 See Tom McDonough (2002) “Situationist Space”, p. 254.

prosthesis' or 'rational memory aid', but a generative approach, which remained open to the shifts, coincidences and relations unfolding through dislocation. The drifters differed from the flâneurs in that they would abandon themselves to the terrain and the encounters evoked, thereby rejecting the totalizations of the eye in favor of embodied confrontation; a kind tactical blindness, according to Simon Sadler meant "to alert people to their imprisonment by routine."<sup>15</sup>

The *détournement* was an even more articulated Situationist practice. In French, *détournement* has the multiple meaning of diversion or rearrangement; also in the more violent sense of fornication or hijacking; a tactical seizing or re-coding developed as "the last usage possible of a fossilized culture."<sup>16</sup> Often provocative and confrontational, the *détournement* was a playful devalorization, a decomposition of the prevailing values of a representational regime and a simultaneous recycling of them in new contexts.<sup>17</sup> Through *détournement*, the monuments and institutions of the city would find new functions, revealing rather than masking the city's inter-subjective relations. Also the bourgeois subject, monumentally represented by the institution of the Artist, subsequently became target for *détournement*; the *dérive* constituting one way of decomposing the coherent and disciplined Self, stripping it of its passions for the formal and visible, including its own form, transforming it into an embodied trajectory. "The Situationist ego is detestable", argues Vincent Kauffman in a commentary to Situationist practice, "and the use of 'I' is permissible only when certain requirements are met."<sup>18</sup> These requirements are first and foremost the giving up of the 'I proper' of self-representation in favor of a more amorphous I with the potential of free and unrestrictive development in a situation of continual revolution or change. Later emphasized by Situationist-in-command Guy Debord in his manifesto *La société du spectacle*, Situationism was a *collectivist* anarchic struggle – "the claims of anarchism in its individualist variants", according to Debord, "[being] laughable."<sup>19</sup>

Fundamentally anti-authoritarian, the Situationists targeted both the pacifying exploitation of a "spectacular" market economy and the caring paternalism of the Welfare State. To a large extent anticipating the ideas of an initiative like Christiania, the Situationists proposed the combinatory idea of unitary urbanism, in relation to which the subject would be able to unfold freely. As opposed to the

15 See Simon Sadler (1998:94).

16 In his *Histoire de l'Internationale Situationniste*, Jean Francois Martos discusses how *détournement* was justified as a way of revealing "le dernier usage possible d'une culture fossilisée." Jean Francois Martos (1989) *Histoire de l'Internationale Situationniste*, p. 115.

17 See Asger Jorn, *Le détournement comme négation et comme prélude*, published in *International Situationniste* no 3, December 1959 (1959/1997). See also Jean Francois Martos (1989:116).

18 Vincent Kauffmann (1997/2002:288).

19 "...car dans ses variants individualists, les prétentions de l'anarchisme restent dérisoires." Guy-Ernest Debord (1967/1987) *La société du spectacle*, § 92 in chapter IV, "Le prolétariat comme sujet et comme représentation."

rational and 'function separating' urban ideals of the time, 'unitary urbanism' entailed a composite, mixed and non-planned urban interplay. "Need for a total creation has always been inseparable from the need to play with architecture: to play with time and space", wrote one of the Situationists, Ivan Chtcheglov, in his *Formula for a New City*;<sup>20</sup> a visionary text published in the very first issue of the mouthpiece *Internationale Situationniste*.

As a revolutionary aesthetics, Situationist ideas spread over Europe, not least to the Scandinavian countries. The radical anti-representationalism, however, also soon led to the first rupture within the movement, whereupon everything but the intellectually rigorous core was pruned away.<sup>21</sup> The Scandinavian section nevertheless continued to stage several Situationist interventions in the early sixties, but was sarcastically and critically denominated "Nashists"<sup>22</sup> by the French core (after one of the leading figures Jørgen Nash, the brother of Danish painter Asger Jorn, who initially belonged to the circle around Debord). Triggering the split was the theory behind what the Scandinavians called "anti-happenings" or "CO-RITUS." Even though these were spectacular and certainly also playful actions that attracted much media attention (such as a wall painting action in Copenhagen in 1962, the decapitation of the famous Copenhagen sculpture "The Little Mermaid" in 1964, and the "uprisings" at the Venice Biennale in 1968),<sup>23</sup> the Debord's critique was merciless. Most

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20 Gilles Ivain's *Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveaux* was written already in 1953, but not published before 1958. See *Internationale Situationniste* (1997:15-20). See also Christopher Gray (1998:4).

21 The excluded branches thus continued to work in a 'Situationist' direction; the Amsterdam section, the *Provos*, being perhaps the most interesting in an urban context. The *Provos*, from 1965 onwards, published their own magazine *PROVO*, and also arranged several ground-breaking "manifestations-processions", which aimed at transforming the street into a "field of articulation." Together, the two leading figures, Roel van Duyn and Robert Jasper Grootveld, with assistance from former Situationist Constant Nieuwenhuis, developed what they called the "White Philosophy", of which the "White Bicycle" project of 1965 might be the most relevant in this context. In protest against an increase in traffic, a large number of white bikes were provided to the citizens of Amsterdam, the idea being that one should borrow a bike at one place and leave it at another. However, the bikes were almost immediately confiscated by the police, as 'they invited theft'. In Germany, the Gruppe SPUR in Munich, with among others Lothar Fischer and Dieter Kunzelman, was an equivalent activist group operating between 1958 and 1965, collaborating closely with the Scandinavian section centered around Asger Jorn's brother Jørgen Nash, artists Jens-Jørgen Thorsen and Hardy Strid, who together with a number of other artists constituted the *Bauhaus Situationists*, with headquarters *Drakabygget* in southern Sweden. See Christopher Gray in his 1998 essay "Shake in Your Shoes Bureaucrats": *The Situationists, 1965-1969*, in Christopher Gray (1998), pp. 67-68. See also Ambrosius Fjord and Patrick O'Brien (1970-71).

22 See Guy-Ernest Debord (1963/2002) "The Situationists and the New Forms of Action in Politics or Art", p. 161.

23 In 1962, in relation to the first CO-RITUS manifestation in Copenhagen, the Bauhaus Situationists in collaboration with the Gruppe SPUR, another of the expelled groups, staged an "urbanist action" a ritual take-over of the inner city as a "working area." A 300 meter long hoarding was appropriated and decoratively painted, an action which evidently had legal

unacceptable for Debord was the Scandinavian group's misinterpretation of the decomposition and emancipation of the subject, a misinterpretation first and foremost expressed in the counter-productive and treacherous rejection of the intuitive play principle in favor of the formalized and spiritually-oriented ritual, also revealing a difference as to methods of dealing with power.

It is thus somewhere here, between post-war ruins and a neo-functional society, that the ideas of a playful and unitary urban activism take shape; an aesthetico-political idea that not only embraced the transformation of urban space, but also entailed a radical experimenting with the idea of the urban subject and its reproduction. Even though there are no explicit links between the ideas of radical Situationism and the youth protests leading up to the seizing of Christiania, there are clear parallels both in time and space. A result as much of a spatio-political as a psycho-geographical awareness, Christiania could be understood as situational subjectivism in its popularized form – as a radical re-enactment of subjectivity on simultaneously 'behavioral' and 'positional' levels.

#### The *Movement*: Utopian Inversions and Tactical Theft

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The anti-utopians inspiring Christiania were thus not necessarily Parisian intellectuals, but of a New and Cool World, where the liberation of the atomized and reified subject was to become an even more central issue. Concurrent with the emerging pop culture, the young American equivalent to the Situationists were possibly more vociferous and extrovert, howling and singing in a far less 'artistic' manner:

Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!  
Holy!  
Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!

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consequences. The 1968 Venice action was pursued mainly by Jørgen Nash, Jens Jørgen Thorsen and the singer Cæsar, together with a number of student anarchists, who at the same time occupied the University. The intervention included a take-over of the Swedish part of the Nordic pavilion (which paradoxically had been closed by Swedish curator Olle Granath as a protest against the massive police presence) at the Giardini area under the urbanist motto "Citta aperta – arte aperta." With forged press cards, the artists were able to bring into the exhibition a "Trojan Horse" hiding spray paint, garlands and banderols, with which they rapidly re-decorated the show room. On the huge windows of the functionalist pavilion were written slogans like "Art belongs to everybody", "Pavilion for Freedom", and "Anarchy is Freedom", and the aim was to transform the Swedish pavilion into a kind of "Trojan Horse" within the Biennale, an independent space for free dialogue between students and authorities. The intervention was quelled by a major police effort, yet the artists (whose air tickets had been sponsored by the Danish charter tourism magnate Simon Spies), managed to escape. In relation to the "occupation", on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, an appeal was published in the student bulletin *Foglio*, whose editors at the time were Gaetano Pesce and Alessandro Zen, the main catchphrases being "basta con l'arte di elite", "basta con l'arte como destino", and "basta con l'arte." See Ambrosius Fjord and Patrick O'Brien (eds.) (1970-71) *Situationster 1957-70: En luxus-bog/collage om nogle af de vigtigste begivenheder i anden situationistiske internationale historie*.

The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy! The tongue and cock and hand and asshole is holy!  
 Everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is holy!  
 everyday  
 is in eternity! Everyman's an angel!  
 The bum's as holy as the seraphim! the madman is holy as you  
 my soul are holy!  
 The typewriter is holy the poem is holy the voice is holy the  
 hearers are holy the ecstasy is holy!<sup>24</sup>

By many regarded a starting-point for the popularization of the Youth Liberation wave of the sixties, this poem of Allen Ginsberg expressed much of the anarchic (anti)-utopianism that fuelled the broader social transformation out of which Christiania ultimately emerged. An imagination of bodily contiguity rather than cognitive recognition, utopia was transformed into a conspicuous wearable, a personal and 'holy' *accessoire* for everyday use.

Even though idealist utopianism had its advocates, the more interventionist variants were the more evocative. Popularized and transformed into tactics of urban survival, it inspired a new generation to experiment with new ways of social organization and cultural reproduction. As for the materialization of these experiments in Christiania, this transformation of political activism into general youth culture, merging music, art and lifestyles, was decisive. "Rebel without a cause," moans James Dean in a movie in 1955 and that feeling inspires many young people..." writes for example Jacob Ludvigsen, recalling the atmosphere that spurred the creation of Christiania.<sup>25</sup>

In the same way, Abbie Hoffman's manual *Steal This Book* of 1970 presented a direct and pragmatic approach. A treatise on how to get along in what he called "Pig America", the America of the Vietnam War, the book was a great success throughout the Western world.<sup>26</sup> "It calls on the Robin Hoods of Santa Barbara

24 Excerpt from Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl*, which appeared in 1956. A "stirring evocation of individual freedom and cultural transcendence," it inspired the young generation to reject mainstream middle-class values and experiment with their lives. Despite its dark beginning, where Ginsberg honored all those friends who had fallen victim to the new sense of hopelessness, the poem remained an important source of inspiration for the Civil Rights movement throughout the sixties.

25 "Rebel without a cause," jamrer James Dean på film i 1955, og den følelsen besjæler mange unge..." See Jacob Ludvigsen (2003:140-143). The links to American pop culture has of course also been verified in interviews, such as my interview with Christianite Ole Lykke, May 22 2004.

26 Abbie Hoffman (1971) *Steal this Book*, fittingly enough written in jail. Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, main tacticians of the Youth International Party, or the *Yippie* movement, together with six other student leaders, among which was the Black Panther leader Bobby Seale, had been indicted for conspiracy to incite a riot during the Democrat Convention in Chicago in August 1968.



Forest”, declared or chanted Hoffman, “to steal from the robber barons who own the castles of capitalism.”<sup>27</sup> The book was literally a survival manual, and presented a broad variety of means of how to manage without money, how to get hold of food, housing, and furniture without money, how to travel for free, how to get free education, free clothing, free culture, even free funerals – in short, how to reproduce oneself without contributing to the reproduction of the system.

Together with Jerry Rubin’s appeal *Do It!* of 1970,<sup>28</sup> Hoffman’s *Steal This Book* summarized much of the pragmatic fighting spirit that characterized the “Yippie” movement.<sup>29</sup> Hoffman and Rubin were two charismatic leaders who knew how to combine political ideas of emancipation with navigating an emerging media landscape. Hoffman had earlier published his *Revolution for the Hell of It*, which presented the Yippie ideas as they were formulated during preparations for the Chicago Youth Festival. Here Hoffman described his idea of an embodied revolution that “has rhythm”, a movement that blended pot and politics into a political grassroots movement – a cross-fertilization of the hippie and New Left philosophies.<sup>30</sup> In Rubin’s *Do It!* political praxis was similarly interlaced with physical interactive, bodily awareness. “The new left”, argues Rubin, “sprang [as] a predestined pissed-off child, from Elvis’ gyrating pelvis.”<sup>31</sup>

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To an even greater extent than the artistic avant-garde, the Yippies employed the revolutionary potentials of mass communication. “The presence of a camera

27 Abbie Hoffman (1971).

28 Jerry Rubin (1970) *Do It! Scenarios of the Revolution*.

29 The *Yippies*, short for the supporters of the Youth International Party, was according to Albers and Albers “a loosely knit association with no formal structure” which “blended new left and libertarian ideas with hippie lifestyle and a talent for media manipulation.” Their immediate program consisted in an aim to turn comedy, play, theatre and rock music into new forms of political protest. Emerging out of the psychedelic counterculture of the “hippies” and “flower children” of Haight Ashbury, San Francisco (both “hippie” and “flower children” were terms coined by local San Francisco newspaper columnists), and the radical university campus at Berkeley, and loosely connected also with the anti-Vietnam War movement, the Black Panthers and the Women’s Liberation Movement, the Yippies were one of the groups directly involved in the happenings around the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968. The prototype for *Yippies* and *hippies* for young rebels at this time was the *hipster*, the American version of the existentialist, the man who chooses to exist without roots, on the road, in an expanding present, where, as Albers and Albers express it, “man must go until he is beat.” “It is tempting”, wrote Norman Mailer in article in *Dissent* in 1957, “to describe the hipster in psychiatric terms as infantile, but the style of his infantilism is a sign of the times.” And in these new times, an intense present squeezed between the threat of an instant death by atomic war or a slow death by conformity, there was a clear choice – you were either Hip or Square. See Judith Clavir Albert and Stewart Edward Albert (1984) *The Sixties Papers: Documents of a Rebellious Decade*, p. 19, pp. 32-33, and Norman Mailer (1957/1984:93-107).

30 Abbie Hoffman (1968) *Revolution for the Hell of it*.

31 Jerry Rubin (1970) *Do It!*



transforms a demonstration, turning us into heroes”,<sup>32</sup> Rubin claimed, recalling the Chicago riots of 1968, where harassed demonstrators had chanted, “the whole world is watching” in the face of the police.<sup>33</sup> He regretted the puritanical attitude within parts of the revolutionary movement toward TV, and stated “[y]ou can’t be a revolutionary today without a television set – it’s as important as a gun!”<sup>34</sup> Revolution is, Rubin declared, “theater-in-the-streets”, theater in public spaces, and as such it should be staged.

The goal is to turn on everybody who can be turned on and turn off everybody else.

Theater has no rules, forms, structure, standards, traditions – it is pure, natural energy, impulse, anarchy.

[...] The only role of the theater is to take people out of the auditorium and into the streets. The role of the revolutionary theater group is to make the revolution.<sup>35</sup>

The idea of creative interception, an aesthetically and revolutionary motivated theft or re-appropriation, was subsequently a general feature for the new social movements. Not only was the right to vote or to decide over one’s own life and death to be snatched out of the hands of the establishment, but also the representation and reproduction of the self.

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The counterculture thus developed both into an activist or ‘interventionist’ platform and a new “mass culture of rebellion”,<sup>36</sup> bringing into focus questions of how subjective formlessness and transformability could affect general structures of power and knowledge, such as urban space. When British historian Krishnan Kumar describes the cross-section of artistic and political imagination that characterizes this period, he also gives a clear account of an ‘existential’ turn, in that ‘liberation’ during this period was reinterpreted as “intrinsically and simultaneously a personal and political matter.”<sup>37</sup> Articulated in terms of existential utopias, emancipation was oriented towards an expanded, ‘authentic’ present rather than towards a distant future. A combination of psychoanalysis, Marxism, and new biology, thinkers like Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse aimed at liberating the human body and mind from what Freud had termed “the instinctual repression.”<sup>38</sup> A working class still subject to bourgeois modes of

32 Jerry Rubin (1970).

33 Albert and Albert (1984:35).

34 Albert and Albert (1984:443).

35 Jerry Rubin (1970).

36 Albert and Albert (1984:15).

37 Krishnan Kumar (1986:399-401).

38 The most important of Reich’s works in English in this context are *Character Analysis* (1933), *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933), *The Function of the Orgasm* (1942), and *The Sexual Revolution: Toward a Self-Governing Character Structure* (1969). As Martin Jay has pointed out, the early Reich was also an important influence on the Frankfurt School of critical theory. See

controlling the libidinal energy of the self could never build socialism, declared Reich, whose book *The Function of the Orgasm* (1942) became a key influence, both for European and American intellectuals, as it fundamentally changed the idea of the individual as subjected to his or her sexual energies. Norman O. Brown went even further, and his *Life against Death* from 1959, was one of the key texts of the counter culture. Here he celebrated the life instinct and urged the release of sexuality's explosive energies.

The most well known and politically influential of the Freudo-Marxists was German-American philosopher Herbert Marcuse. In his *Eros and Civilization*, the first edition of which appeared in 1955, Marcuse argues against Freud's repression of the "pleasure principle." According to Freud, the "pleasure principle" should be replaced by the "reality principle", a principle that was rejected by Marcuse as the superficial, bourgeois "performance principle." Instead, Marcuse proposed a "non-repressive reality principle", implying a revolutionary eroticization and thus transgression of the coherent subject, transforming biological reproduction into authentic reproduction of culture as a whole.<sup>39</sup>

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In *One Dimensional Man*<sup>40</sup> (1964) Marcuse pictured a darker situation in which his idea of emancipating "non-repressive sublimation" or transgression of the individual had degenerated into a "repressive de-sublimation." A non-critical affirmation of individual satisfaction had generated a one-dimensional society in which the "poetic", as subsumed by the leisure and entertainment industry, had eventually become an enemy. Facing the "Happy Consciousness" of an emerging and all-embracing market economy, Marcuse hesitated. The question he asked himself was "how can the administered individuals – who have made their mutilation into their own liberties and satisfactions, and have thus reproduced it on an enlarged scale – liberate themselves from themselves as well as from their masters? How is it even thinkable that the vicious circle be broken?"<sup>41</sup> A few years later, experiencing the energy of the alternative movements anew, he was again more confident; *An Essay of Liberation* of 1969 is his perhaps most utopian work, and certainly one of the sources of inspiration for the events leading up to the founding of Christiania.<sup>42</sup>

Other important influential currents were different forms of neo-spiritualism often with strong influences from Zen Buddhism or other Eastern religions, similarly focused on a dissolution of a consistent and rational idea of individual being. One representative was Timothy Leary, who regarded hallucinogenic drugs as a way to *eupsychia*, the *eu*-topia, or beneficial and abundant places

Martin Jay (1973) *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-50*, pp. 86-112.

39 Herbert Marcuse (1955) *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*.

40 Herbert Marcuse (1964) *One-Dimensional Man*, p. 84.

41 *Ibid*, pp. 250-251.

42 Herbert Marcuse (1969) *An Essay on Liberation*.

of an expanded consciousness. In his *Politics of Ecstasy* of 1968, he famously argued that “[t]he politics of the social system must give way to the politics of the nervous system”, preferably revolutionized through the use of LSD.<sup>43</sup> A reaction to such psychedelic or explicitly bio-technological utopias of abundance was the *eco-topia*, a utopia rather of scarcity, fuelled by the new ecological consciousness. A kind of neo-puritanism, the ecotopia expressed a wish to dissolve the modern and rational individual through a return to nature. Dismissing large-scale technology and hierarchical structures, ecotopian ideas entailed a recovery of early anarchist and decentralist thoughts as well as fundamental communitarian or ‘primitive’ ideas of a subjectivity unfolding within the frames of *communitas*<sup>44</sup> or *conviviality*.<sup>45</sup>

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In Denmark as elsewhere, many new formations emerged, from ecological grassroots’ movements to the more urban *Slumstormerne*, the ‘slum stormers;’ the squatters’ movement operating in Copenhagen as a direct reaction to the 60s clearance wave.<sup>46</sup> The provinces followed, giving rise to extensive grassroots activity all over Denmark. Tenant activism, collectives, alternative communities and non-violent rallies were all new political articulations in space; attempts at constructively reacting upon, materializing and physically manifesting change. This spatial change did not only concern general economic or cultural issues, but more specifically the issue of the subject and its reproduction.

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43 Timothy Leary “The Politics of Ecstasy”, from 1968, quoted in Krishnan Kumar (1986:398).

44 Percival Goodman and Paul Goodman (1960) “*Communitas*”. Paul Goodman, an American anarchist who wrote several influential works on *ecotopia*, suggested very detailed schemes and blueprints for how to organize and realize agricultural or urban communities on a human scale. These certainly served as an inspiration for many concrete attempts to set up alternative communities throughout the Western world. See also Kumar (1986). In relation to Christiania, Børge Madsen and Jacob Reddersen’s *Skytten – en boplads på Christiania/The Archer – a Dwelling Place in Christiania*, 1980, shows one attempt in a similar direction.

45 Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (1971) and *Tools for Conviviality* (1973). Illich was a highly individual American Catholic priest who was forced to leave the church due to his radical ideas. In *Tools for Conviviality* he also expresses thoughts very much in line with Christiania philosophy: “A convivial society should be designed to allow all its members the most autonomous action by means of tools least controlled by others.” See Kumar (1986:407).

46 By 1965, *Sofiegården*, in Christianshavn, had been occupied. Four years later, in 1969, it was cleared out by two hundred police officers, an action intensely covered in mass media and subsequently causing a wave of indignation. *Sofiegården* was followed by a number of other squatting actions, like *Hudegården*, raided by police in April 1970, and *Størekassen* in Christianshavn, cleared out in May 1972 and demolished. See Nils Vest with assistance from Jørgen Bjødstrup, Britta Lillesøe, Ole Lykke and Nelly Nylon *Christiania. En oversigt til og med 1991*. See also the motion picture *Christiania du har mit hjerte (Christiania You Have My Heart)* by Nils Vest, 1991, and Pernille W. Lauritsen (2002) *Christiania – kort fortalt – historie og guide*.

The most emblematic and provocative of these spatial articulations was the *Thy Camp* in Jutland. It was established in the summer of 1970 by the youth organization *Det Nye Samfund* (*The New Society*), which then bought a 42 acres<sup>47</sup> piece of land in a beautiful and remote part of Denmark. This temporary, experimental society numbered up to four thousand residents the first summer, not including numerous curious visitors. Modeled on Woodstock, the camp was a flower-power protest against the 'plastic culture', with the characteristic celebration of natural ways of living, Eastern spiritualism, arts and crafts, self-expansion, organic food, progressive music and theater. Media coverage was intense, and the attitude of the local community was initially one of 'wait-and-see'. Soon however, the invasion of the Jutlandish plains – and finally even a local church<sup>48</sup> – by a sunbathing, pot smoking and guitar-playing crowd of naked young people, became too provocative. After the first summer of conflicts with local residents and authorities, the Thy camp diminished in size, but managed to remain an important meeting place and experimental field for the alternative movement.<sup>49</sup>

When Christiania emerges during the fall of 1971, it is thus a direct consequence of these more or less radical youth movements; movements that have been described by Christianite Børge Madsen as a fairly logical side effect of the painful middle-classification of Danish society, bringing with it many vague but non-negotiable transformative demands. "Young people especially, who had to become middle-class, had to undergo significant transformations."<sup>50</sup> Not only a transformation but a dislocation,

47 17 hectares.

48 The occupation of the Hjardemål Church is one of the better-known political-artistic happenings in the history of the Danish alternative movement. The church was occupied by fourteen of the camp participants, with artist Peter-Louis Jensen as initiator. The occupation was a revolt against the uniform governing of the camp as such and against society itself. The objective was clearly bio-political – a Fluxus-inspired attempt to "experiment with the action as life-form, that is to say an action in which aesthetics and politics enter into a higher unity". The church was raided by the police and cleared after barely a day and a half. See Niels Martinov *Oprørers radikalitet* (*The Radicality of Revolt*), article in *Politiken*, June 24, 1999.

49 Remotely located and with only around seventy residents, the Thy community, *Nordlyset*, or "The Northern Lights Survival Commune", has not gained the same kind of media attention as the proper camp or as Christiania. However, here a group of people settled in self-constructed huts, gypsy wagons and teepees, some of which were ruled illegal in court orders of 1977 and 1979 in an attempt by the authorities to clear the camp, which had expanded in neglect of zoning regulations and local plans. In 1995, the Thy settlement was submitted to the same kind of special legislation as Christiania, which also marked a similar recognition, even though the area was submitted to compulsory federal administration. Historically, there has been close links between Thy and Christiania, which seem to have had a complementary relation to each other, with many people commuting between the two. For a more detailed history of the Thy camp, see <http://arkiv.thisted-bibliotek.dk/thylejrweb/start.htm> and Jens Falkentorp, Dino Hansen, Steen Juhler, Mogens Kløvedal, and Per Løvetand (1982) *Alternative Ways of Life in Denmark*, pp. 251-268.

50 "Især unge der skulle 'middelag'seres' maade gennemgå store forændringer." Børge

this shift forced a large part of the former working class into the universities, where they were to constitute the foundation for emerging service and information sectors. These new, disciplinary demands on the individual, however, were accompanied by rising individual consciousness, resulting in reactions of dissociation and exclusion.

In this situation, the idea of an economically defined sense of 'class identity' was, if not dissolved, at least disjointed and transformed into a matter of social layering and group formation.<sup>51</sup> Dissociated from traditional communities, as well as from mass consumerism and spiritual leveling, many people simply had begun to "drop out" of the social framework, or consciously excluded themselves from any authoritarian life form imposed upon them, including housing and recreation.<sup>52</sup> This agonizing withdrawal also had a spatial dimension – it was transgressive of spatial boundaries, as in the concrete act of searching out abandoned spaces, voids, gaps, in-betweens, or the backsides of the urban landscape. In this sense, Christiania provided a 'drop out' space, both individually speaking and in terms of society; a questioning of the entire 'bourgeois' concept of social reproduction through a place-grounded and family-based 'dwelling'. "To dwell is the 'Drink Coca-Cola' of urbanism",<sup>53</sup> claimed the Situationists, and to 'drop out' of such a spatial mainstream seemed a life-sustaining necessity. Dwelling in the bourgeois sense was the same as hibernating; inhabiting life should be something else.

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The desire to realize something other than a home in which the individual would lose its shadow was certainly reflected by the psycho-geography of Christiania:

Well, for the person who owns a house full of valuable objects, and who every day decently goes to work, dwelling is something entirely self-evident. But remember that we now are in the margins of society, where you sleep in a room in 'The Peace Arc' for a few weeks, then in a housing collective at 'Dyssen' for a couple of months, where after you take off to the peninsula of Djursland for half a year. Next time we hear from the person he is working in Sweden and one year later, you happen to meet him in a pub in Vesterbro. (...) Who is the greatest dweller: the person who sleeps here at night and works in the city or the one who is active out here the entire day and falls onto his mattress late at night in Nørrebro?<sup>54</sup>

Madsen (1979) *I skorpionens halespids – et speciale om mig & Christiania (At the Scorpion's Tail End – A Master's Thesis on Me & Christiania)*, p. 53.

51 Børge Madsen (1979:22).

52 "Eller på godt dansk – man begynder at flippe ud." Børge Madsen (1979:55).

53 Raoul Vaneigem (1961) "Comments against Urbanism".

54 "Ja, for den der ejer et hus proppet med værdigenstande og hvor vedkommende

The private was no more a simple matter of place-bound belonging or dwelling, but had become a matter of mobilization and connectivity – less a formal spatial matter and more a relational and therefore also political issue. ‘Dwelling’ would now appear not as a regulating framework within which the subjected individual would appear, but as a narrative travelogue, a life route, a movement from one place to another, from one station to the next, but also from one in-between to another. As an ‘in-between destination’ on such a route, Christiania played a significant role for a large number of people.

Christiania appeared in a situation where mechanisms of control had moved from circumscribed institutions to become dispersed all over the social field. Through mass education, social security and health systems, mass transport, and not least housing policies, ‘society’ transformed into a fine-meshed scaffolding, not least in the Scandinavian welfare economies. Sustaining, unifying and leveling, this socio-political landscape also evoked a new spatial awareness and sensitivity as to potential independence, plurality, or disjunction. It is therefore not surprising to find a thorough presentation of Christiania and Denmark in a special issue of a Barcelona-based planning magazine from 1974.<sup>55</sup> The special issue dealt with housing and new socio-urbanist movements in Denmark and presented, as well as Christiania, the *Røde Rose* squatter initiative in Copenhagen, the *Sjællandsgade* initiative in Aarhus, the housing collectives movement, and the *Thy camp*.

In the issue, alternative modes of organizing and reproducing social space were discussed and analyzed from a Marxist point of view. The editorial took as its point of departure the permanent crisis of capitalist society, a crisis produced by the inherent contradiction between on the one hand the maximization of profit, which presupposes exploitation of labor and of the subject, and on the other hand mass consumption, which requires a certain level of general welfare, a growing public sector, and a certain ‘individual’ freedom.<sup>56</sup> This contradiction gives rise to a new situation of permanent crisis, an “urban state of conflict” that

hver dag pænt tager på arbejde, er dette at bo noget helt indlysende. Men husk på at vi nu er i randen af samfundet, hvor man sover i et rum i Fredens Ark i nogle uger, derefter i et kollektiv på Dyssen i et par måneder, hvorefter man tager til Djursland i et halvt års tid. Næste gang vi hører fra personen arbejder ham i Sverige og 1 år senere møder man ham tilfældigtvis på et værtshus på Vesterbro....Hvem bor mest på CA: personen der sover her om natten og arbejder i byen om dagen eller den der er aktiv herude hele dagen og falder omkuld op madrassen sent om aftenen ude på Nørrebro?”. Børge Madsen (1979:73).

55 Juana Roca (1974) “Dinamarca, Reacciones populares contra la situación actual de la vivienda”, *Vivienda y movimientos sociales urbanos en Dinamarca*, special issue, CAU: Construcción/Arquitectura/Urbanismo, March-April, no 24. Editorial p. 79, and article by Roca p. 80-117.

56 The editorial is signed J.L.C. and I have been unable to determine who is behind it. The editors were at the time Jesus A. Marcos and designer Enric Satue Llop. The collaborators counted among others the author Manuel V. Montalbán and the architect Oriol Bohigas, later a part of Martorell/Bohigas/Mackay, a firm which has been most influential in the urban rehabilitation of Barcelona after Franco.

does not confine itself only to the processes of exploitative *production*, but is actualized in all areas of urban life, first and foremost in the areas of collective *consumption*, such as housing, education, transport, health, leisure, etc. "The embodiment of this new state of conflict", writes the editors, clearly inspired by the recently published studies of Spanish urbanist Manuel Castells, "is the appearance of the social-urban movements."<sup>57</sup> These movements constitute the crystallization of a new era, where social conflict no longer concerns the means of agrarian or industrial production, but is acted out in a new landscape of consumption, social and subjective formation.

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The idea behind this brief mapping of the discursive geography in which Christiania appeared has been to show how, in the decades after the Second World War, aesthetic matters of representation and subjective experience explicitly overlap with political issues of spatial distribution and reproduction. This overlapping could in other words be described as a spatialization or decentralization of the rationally defined, individual subject; a concrete agitation, transforming the individual from subject into *agent*. Neither subordinated geographical location nor mental identification, the subject no longer accepts a subordinate role as 'product' or 'consequence' of a system, but unfolds in embodiment or active usage of its potentials. In Christiania, this subjective usage has been most dramatically acted out. Unlike earlier waves of social empowerment such as class related struggle, the social transformation of Christiania has been a question also of individual emancipation, not only in terms of intimate and 'bourgeois' *self-representation* (even if 'finding-your-true-self' might constitute one of many options), but in terms of a spatially performed *self-reproduction*, a creative questioning of the self as subjected to a preconceived representational space.

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### A Philosophical Unfolding

As Christiania and its pre-history have shown, an expanded discussion about a changing urban landscape includes also the issue of self-representation and reproduction. In relation to the general conception of urbanity as formal or structural organization, such a subjective grounding might appear detached. However, considering the emancipatory and reflexive currents generated by Christiania as an urban agent, the association of individual and structural transformation might seem less irrelevant. This association, described in Christiania's terms as the free unfolding of the individual in relation to the community as a whole, can also be described as an aesthetically constructed bond, the point of departure being the understanding of subject positioning

57 "La plasmación de este nuevo tipo de conflictualidad es la aparición de los movimientos sociales urbanos." CAU: *Construcción/Arquitectura/Urbanismo*, March-April, no 24. Editorial p. 79. Castells's early writing was published first in French as *La question urbaine* (1972) and *Luttes urbaines* (1973).



as a more or less creative positioning in relation to a historically constructed representational framework or 'regime'.

I will therefore briefly discuss the aesthetic frameworks and philosophical presuppositions sustaining processes of *subjectification*.<sup>58</sup> These frameworks constitute our world view; the generally accepted and often naturalized ways of conceiving our surroundings and ourselves. They are 'representational regimes' insofar as they produce and govern both ontological conventions – ways of articulating the state of the world – and epistemological conventions – ways of understanding the 'subject' and its perception of the world. Although a complete coverage of the genealogy of the subject lies beyond the scope of this work, I will nevertheless make some remarks on its historical construction. To a certain extent, I will perform theoretically what Christiania stages in practice – an epistemological shift, with the aim of releasing the 'subject' from its formal obligations as the fixed epicenter of an unquestioned system of meaning.

Examining the presuppositions for such an emancipatory shift, the Enlightenment constitutes an inevitable point of departure. Even though the harsh and sometimes obscure reality of Christiania might seem far from 'enlightened', the Free Town largely actualizes and interrogates the same ambiguous relations as those highlighted by the Enlightenment; the relation between subjective will, authority and the use of reason. In an attempt to understand the libertarian rhetoric of a Free Town, as well as its critical relationship to a normalizing representational system, it is therefore important to try to map carefully the philosophical clearing opened up by the Enlightenment.

Primarily formulated in the *Critiques* of Immanuel Kant, the Enlightenment entailed an important unveiling of the critical or *mediating* instances sustaining the relation between the human being and the world. However, both conciliatory and deconstructive, this focus on critical mediation also implied a simultaneous actualizing of a representational gap, ultimately giving rise to the aesthetic discourse on representation. The representing instances described by Kant – *Einbildungskraft* (imagination), *Vernunft* (reason) and *Urteilstkraft* (reflective judgment) – in this respect all imply different problematizations of the conditions for the practices of knowing and experiencing. This not only implies a study of knowledge as representative outcome, but more importantly entails a focus on the human being as the critical and largely unarticulated instance of

58 'subjectification,' or 'subjectification,' the English translation of the French 'subjectification,' according to Foucault the specific mode of objectifying, which transforms human beings into subjects ("...J'ai cherché plutôt à produire une histoire des différents modes de subjectification de l'être humain dans notre culture; [des] modes d'objectivation qui transforment les êtres humains en sujet.") Michel Foucault "Le sujet et le pouvoir," from 1982, in Michel Foucault (1994:222), originally written in English, translated by F. Durand-Bogaert. Deleuze and Guattari, referring to Althusser, define subjectification as a signifying regime, a constellation of power that produces subjects (Deleuze and Guattari 1980:163), by Brian Massumi translated into the English 'subjectification' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:130). I will follow Massumi's English translation and employ the notion *subjectification*.

the set-up called reality. “The human being”, write Swedish philosophers Erik van der Heeg and Sven-Olov Wallenstein, “is now the name of a problem, a conceptual vacancy still waiting for its definition, its truth and its essence.”<sup>59</sup> Kant’s perspective in this respect not only constitutes a clarification, but a de-stabilization. A turning away from truths and essences that had been regarded as givens, it entailed a rejection of a dependency on divine and rational orders. It brought about a refutation of the fundamental and passive *doubt* and *guilt* that had motivated the idea of the subject as subjected (from Latin *sub-*, under, and *jacere*, to throw),<sup>60</sup> in favor of a worldview based on an idea of the human being as an agent in a field of representation and signification. Both spiritual and positive *metaphysics* – the idea of a unity between God, mind and world – is now diffracted and transformed into a composite and practical *critique*; a problematization of the formative and imaginative efforts required in order to grasp reality.

Through a focusing on the active human being and its creative ability to exercise knowing, Kant’s *Critiques* constitute a spatial re-interpretation of earlier attempts to position the human being in relation to a surrounding world. If earlier philosophical thought had sought to reflect upon this setting, it had done so with the ambition to localizing a given form, inherent characteristics, or a significant and governing logic.

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By way of example, even though the meditative *Confessions* of Saint Augustine<sup>61</sup> may present an equivalent and original appearance “of something that calls itself

59 “...människan är hädanefter namnet på ett problem, en begreppslig vakans, som ännu väntar på sin definition, sin sanning och sitt väsen.” Erik van der Heeg and Sven-Olov Wallenstein (1992) “Roten, arkipelagen, analogin – den kopernikanska vändningen och den kritiska arkitektoniken”, p. 16. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the foremost thinker of the Enlightenment, who in his three ‘Critiques’, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Logical Reason*), *Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft* (*Critique of Practical Reason*), and *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (*Critique of Judgment*), published between 1781 and 1790, brought about a revolution of philosophy, establishing new directions for the study of human knowledge and the conditions of experience.

60 “The term [subject]”, writes Sven-Olov Wallenstein, “is a modern translation of the Latin *subiectum*, in turn referring back to the Greek *hypokeimenon*, literally translated that which is ‘thrown under’, sub-jected. That which is thrown down to the ground is hence also that which can have, or carry, characteristics.” (“Termen [subjektet] är en modern översättning av latinets *subiectum*, som i sin tur går tillbaka på det grekiska *hypekeimenon*, bokstavligen översatt: det som är ‘kastat under’, sub-jekterat. Det som kan kastas ned och kan ligga till grund är därmed också det som kan ha, bära upp, egenskaper[...]”) See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2001:37).

61 My interpretation of Saint Augustine is apart from a reading of the original text in English translation also based upon the interpretation in Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2001) as well as upon the interpretation mediated by Mark Jarzombek in a lecture on Mar 11 2002, as a part of the seminar “Thinking about Architecture” at MIT, School of Architecture, spring semester 2002. See also Saint Augustine, *Confessions, Prolegomena*, translated by James J. O’Donnell at <http://www.stoa.org/hippo/>. Download date: 2004-04-15 and *De Musica*, Book One (translation into English provided by Mark Jarzombek).

I, *ego*”, as Sven-Olov Wallenstein expresses it,<sup>62</sup> this neo-Platonist testimony is at the same time a projection of spatial ideals. A narrative of spatial positioning, it presents the pagan *ego* rambling through the exteriority of its own life, metaphorically described as a tantalizing and seductive garden. Suffering from doubt as to its ability to become truthful, the I of the story finally falls under a fig tree. Guided by a divine *voice* calling out from a beyond, which at the same time is a within, the *ego* may finally be subjected to the *ratio*, or rhythm, of divinity.<sup>63</sup>

An updated version of the cave metaphor in Plato with its alluring shadows only vaguely representing the ideal, the Augustinian *ego* is similarly exposed to a mundane and transient spatial setting, in relation to which it has to find its way home, or in other words, its way to its *ego* proper, where it may come to rest. However, while in Plato, the ideal is located *outside* of the visually seductive shadow play or phantasmagoria of the cave, Augustinian subjection is grounded in the submission to an inner, contemplative space. Acclaiming the act of *listening*, which, according to Wallenstein “indicates the fundamental passivity in the position of the Augustinian *ego*”,<sup>64</sup> the subject is paradoxically constituted through the giving up of its own disposition towards a ‘world’.

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The Augustinian *ego* is subsequently an *ego* constituted through obedience, through the following of an articulated order. Yet, if spatial ambiguity here is resolved through the denigration of the visual and bodily pleasures of the physical landscape, it still expresses reliance upon a voice, a potential dialogue. A remnant of a lingering oral culture, the positioning of the self remains in this sense an ambiguous and absorbing drama.

Through the visual formalization of the Renaissance, however, this dramatic ambiguity will be eliminated, as subject positioning becomes a matter of visual construction. The time-independent linear perspective of Leon Battista Alberti will make the submission to dialogic ‘rhythm’ redundant and outmoded. While the spatial setting in Augustine appeared as a narrative framework, it is now converted into a mathematical grid. Not only a supreme or divine principle but a regulative spatial *method*, linear perspective, or *costruzione legittima*, presents a spatial legitimacy,

62 “Det första storslagna framträdandet av något som kallar sig jag, *ego*, men alltså ännu inte subjekt i en mening som den postcartesianska filosofin skulle etablera...” Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2001:39).

63 In the *Confessions*, Saint Augustine describes how the distressing encounter with the world ends up in a garden, where under a fig tree he overhears a child’s voice, calling out the famous words “Tolle lege, tolle, lege”, “pick it up, read it, pick it up, read it.” See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2001:40), and for the original text, Saint Augustine, *Confessions, Prolegomena*, translation by James J. O’Donnell, and *De Musica*, Book One (translation provided by Mark Jarzombek). See also Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion*, translated from Latin by Albert C. Outler.

64 “...vilket indikerar den grundläggande passiviteten i det augustinska egots position.” Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2001:40).

imposed through architectural rather than divine form. As such, it introduces an explicitly aesthetic regime, depending not only upon priest and clerics but also upon architects, artists and scientists for its mediation and implementation.<sup>65</sup>

Combined with the intimate contemplations of Augustine, this mathematically conceived and aesthetically formulated human being finds its philosophical articulation in the thinking of Descartes, where it is formalized also in cognitive terms. As opposed to the *res extensa*, the extended Being of the material world, it is for Descartes the *res cogitans* or the thinking Being that generates the evidence as for the existence of an I in the objective sense. Through its cognitive aptitude for an 'evidential' seeing (from the Latin *videre*, to see), the ego bridges the gap between cognitive and extended being. A process of cognitive visualization or *identification*, the human 'I' comes into being, subjected to the *lumen naturale*, a natural searchlight with the potential of unveiling the true form of the world.

There is, however, in the meditations of Descartes also a more ambiguous actualization of the human being, which to a certain extent anticipates Kant's formulations. A self-reflecting being, Descartes also situates his own thinking activity in a transient present. "But what, then, am I?" Descartes exclaims. "A thinking thing, it has been said. But what is a thinking thing? It is a thing that doubts, understands, [conceives], affirms, denies, wills, refuses; that imagines also, and perceives."<sup>66</sup> The human being is an intermediary being, capable of dreaming and imagining, but also of degenerating into the insane and disordered, into that which has to be excluded from 'thinking proper'. The Cartesian *I* is consequently exclusively *self-conscious*, separated from and reflecting upon its own potential aberrations.<sup>67</sup> This separation is further sustained through the self-regulating *method*, providing the means to gradually augment and develop an independent body of knowledge,<sup>68</sup> a body submitted only to a general and objective 'form'.

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65 My argument here to a great extent also follows that of Martin Jay, who in his book *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought* (1993) points to this combined disembodiment and privileging of vision as inherent to Western, rational thinking.

66 René Descartes, *Meditations*. The original, Latin version was published in 1641 and the French translation by Duc de Luynes in 1647. English translation by John Veitch, 1901.

67 The self-conscious being that Descartes envisions consequently has to be distinguished from that of those who "pertinaciously [...] assert that they are monarchs when they are in the greatest poverty; or clothed [in gold] and purple when destitute of any covering; or that their head is made of clay, their body of glass, or that they are gourds[...]." Descartes (1641/1901) *Meditations* 1:4.

68 "...une méthode, par laquelle il me semble que j'ai moyen d'augmenter par degrés ma connoissance, et de l'élever peu à peu au plus haut point auquel la médiocrité de mon esprit et la courte durée de ma vie lui pourront permettre d'atteindre." René Descartes (1637) *Discours de la méthode pour bien conduire sa raison et chercher la vérité dans les sciences*, 1637. (*Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason, and Seeking Truth in the Sciences*).

Although Cartesian logic requires the instrumental exclusion of madness and other mental disturbances from reason, in the writings of Descartes it appears out of an almost vertiginous exploration of an irrational outside.<sup>69</sup> Reluctantly, the rationally aware human being depends upon the excluded disconcertedness of a relational experience of an ‘in-between;’ a “deep water” awareness of a space, where one is able neither “to plant [one’s] feet firmly on the bottom [nor] sustain [oneself] by swimming on the surface.”<sup>70</sup> What Descartes has to go through in order to reach clarity is a borderline experience, a state where everything is phantasm, but where everything also can be reconsidered, questioned and transformed.<sup>71</sup>

Returning to the aesthetics of Kant, it is this implication of a potential and present limit that gives to the ‘enlightening’ critique another character. The significant in this context is the modification of metaphysics: the subject is no longer an objective being in general or a fixed projection, but an historical ‘Being’ that exists and acts through the performative first person singular present *I think*; a being actively and continuously working on its own positioning.

It is thus the provocation rather than the identification of a subjective position that has come to be referred to as Kant’s ‘turn,’ but in Kant’s words a “Copernican” turn, a turn away from itself towards a greater space of potential events.<sup>72</sup> Dislodged from its non-reflective position in the center of happen-

69 The passage in Descartes about the relation between insanity and consciousness later gave rise to the ‘Cartesian’ debate between Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. In his *L’histoire de la folie* of 1961, Foucault drew attention to the fact that the ideas of rationality and madness are inter-dependently developed. In Descartes, the consolidation of reason is pursued through the exclusion of madness, distinguished also from the dream and from imagination by its bodily character. According to Descartes, Foucault argued, you may reflect upon the fact that you have been dreaming or been subject to an illusion, whereas ‘madness’ is a state entirely beyond self-reflection. In contrast with this interpretation, Derrida in his essay “Cogito et l’histoire de la folie” of 1963 (later included in *L’écriture et la différence*) focused on what Descartes seemed to be saying ‘in between the lines’. There is a difference, according to Derrida, between what Descartes is saying about pure reason and what he himself is performing through his creative writing, which could be understood as an ambiguous and agonizing experience, an opening even, towards a certain kind of ‘madness’. As Stuart Elden has pointed out in a commentary, both Foucault and Derrida point to the self-reflective and thus creative function of irrationality. However, where Foucault does this through a contextual interpretation of how ‘madness’ was constructed in the époque of Descartes, Derrida proceeds through an entirely textual interpretation. See Stuart Elden at <http://Foucault.info>. Download date 2006-01-07.

70 René Descartes (1641/1901) *Meditations* 2:1.

71 See also the interpretation in Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2001:52).

72 It is in the foreword to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that Kant already in the subtitle “Kopernikanische Wendung der Philosophie” referred to his own re-conceptualization of metaphysics as a spatial turn: “It is with this as with the first thought of Copernicus, who after having failed to explain the movement of the heavens when assuming that the firmament turned around the viewer, hoped to reach a more convincing explanation

ings, the *cogito* is thereby prevented from regarding the world from a fixed point of view as a given totality, but has to confront the fact that 'the world' is as much a result of its own 'reasoning' activity as it is a presupposition for the same.

What is actualized in Kant is an acknowledgment of the self-representation and self-reproduction of the subject. Constituted through a continuous reasoning, the subject has to be understood performatively, as an agency eventually also embracing that which seems irrational and formless. Against this background of philosophical re-positioning, Situationist *détournements*, Yippie ego-trips or Danish 'slum-storming', all emerge as intensified variants of the same kind of tentative explorations of an expanded Self. Spatially unfolded, released from preconceived forms and positions, the subject stands out in a new way, as an acute present, yet a present lacking both a decisive hermeneutics, a definite scaffolding system and a logical formula. The 'enlightenment' of Kant has in this respect opened up a critique, not only of conciliatory and representational regimes innocently bridging gaps, but a critical (in the sense of risky, daring) interrogation of the most emergent gaps, formulated not only as a 'what can be known', or 'what must be done', but also as the more open-ended 'what may be hoped for'.

#### Towards an Aesthetics of the Sublime

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Despite the repetitive attempts to define the human being in relation to an original representational regime, its historical unfolding has rather unveiled a fundamental mobility and transformability. Philosophically speaking, what we have come to think of as a coherent subject, reveals itself as a mediating in-between, a relational positioning or a situational turn; literally a gaping, telling breach. As such, the critical ontology formulated by Kant also transforms into an *aesthetics*; a reflection not only upon what we are but also upon the whole conundrum of experiential possibilities that we are not.

In his seminal comment to Kant's self-reflective article *What is Enlightenment?* Michel Foucault discussed the philosophical disjunctions proposed by the generic term of 'Enlightenment', as well as its implications in the present situation.<sup>73</sup> If earlier philosophical thought had asked the question of how reality could be represented, deciphered or analyzed on the basis of a totality or identity, the Enlightenment is a search for *difference*. In this sense, Foucault argues, the Enlightenment outlines what might be called "the attitude of

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if he instead assumed the viewer to move and left the heavens alone." ("Er ist hiermit ebenso wie mit den ersten Gedanken des Copernicus bewandt, der nachdem es mit der Erklärung der Himmelsbewegung nicht gut fortgehen wollte, wenn er anahm, das ganze Sterneheer drehe sich um den Zuschauer, versuchte, ob es nicht besser geigen möchte, wenn er den Zuschauer sich drehen und die Sterne in Ruhe liesse.") See Immanuel Kant (1781/1998), *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*. See also Erik van der Heeg and Sven-Olov Wallenstein (1992:15).

modernity.”<sup>74</sup> Modernity should not be conceived of as an epoch or a set of features characteristic of a certain period of time, but rather as an attitude:

By attitude, I mean a mode of relating with respect to the present; a voluntary choice made by certain people; ultimately, a way of thinking and feeling; a way also of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. Rather similar, no doubt to what the Greeks called an *êthos*. Consequently, rather than trying to distinguish the ‘era of modernity’ from the ‘pre-’ or ‘postmodern’, I think it would be more useful to ask how the attitude of modernity, ever since its formation, has found itself struggling with attitudes of ‘counter-modernity’.<sup>75</sup>

When Foucault then goes on to characterize this attitude of modernity, he does so through a reflection upon the aesthetic subject positioning articulated by Charles Baudelaire; the new and explicitly urban consciousness of the discontinuity of time and space. For Baudelaire, in an essay on the contemporary artist depicting modern life,<sup>76</sup> being modern does not lie in recognition of the continuous salvo of stimuli or the immense flux of changing forms of life, but, as Foucault expresses it, “in adopting a certain attitude with respect to this movement.”<sup>77</sup> This attitude is at the same time a glorifying of the present and its transitory, fugitive quality, and what Foucault calls an “ironical” transfiguration or dislocation;<sup>78</sup> “a difficult play between the truth of what

74 “...de ce qu’ on pourrait appeler l’attitude de modernité.” Michel Foucault (1984/1994:562-578).

75 “Par attitude, je veux dire un mode de relation à l’égard de l’actualité; un choix volontaire qui est fait par certains; enfin, une manière de penser et de sentir, une manière aussi d’agir et de se conduire qui, tout à la fois, marque une appartenance et se présente comme une tâche. Un peu, sans doute, comme ce que les Grecs appelaient un *êthos*. Par conséquent, plutôt que de vouloir distinguer la « période moderne » des époques « pré » ou « postmoderne », je crois qu’il vaudrait mieux chercher comment l’attitude de modernité, depuis qu’elle s’est formée, s’est trouvée en lutte avec des attitudes de « contre-modernité ».” Michel Foucault (1984/1994:568)

76 Charles Baudelaire (1863/1943) *Constantin Guys. Le peintre de la vie moderne*, pp. 14-15. In the essay *Constantin Guys. Le peintre de la vie moderne* (*The Painter of Modern Life*; first published in 1863 as a *feuilleton* in *Le Figaro*), Baudelaire developed the idea of the artist as a new type of human being; “man of the world, man of the crowd and child” (“L’artiste, homme du monde homme des foules et enfant”, the title of the third chapter in Charles Baudelaire 1863/1943:8). This artistic type is synonymous with the flâneur, the passionate spectator of modern life, for whom it is “an immense joy to settle in the heart of the multitude.” (“une immense jouissance que d’élire domicile dans le nombre”) Yet Baudelaire makes a distinction between the existence of “a mere flâneur” and that of the truly modern man, “le parfait flâneur”, “l’observateur passionné,” who has the ability to extract from the fugitive and transitory the very essence of contemporaneity.

77 “Mais, pour lui, être moderne, ce n’est pas reconnaître et accepter ce mouvement perpétuel; c’est au contraire prendre une certaine attitude à l’égard de ce mouvement...” Michel Foucault (1984/1994:568).

78 Michel Foucault (1984/1994:569).



is real and the exercise of freedom.”<sup>79</sup> As Foucault points out, this modernity does not necessarily liberate man with respect to his own cognitive being, but compels him to facing the freedom of producing, reproducing and elaborating himself.

Foucault describes this attitude of elaboration, characteristic of modernity, as a limit-attitude, a reflecting upon limits, a living at the frontiers. Through an active relation to limits and margins, criticism may be transformed from the identifying of formal structures and their identifying limits, to what Foucault describes as “a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression.”<sup>80</sup> This kind of practical critique will thus not be a matter deducing from a preconceived and interiorized regime what we are or what we are not, but instead a matter of generating the momentum of “the undefined work of freedom”<sup>81</sup> the inspiring possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, but to grasp and explore the exteriorities of what we could be.

This dislocation from preconceived formal structures to an open-ended exteriority of agency, is to a certain extent an analogy to the dislocation described by Kant in his development of the three *Critiques*. With the disappearance of an absolute point of departure as well as an absolute objective, the idea of form ‘transforms’ and coincides with the problematic of the subject, as it unfolds in the third *Critique*, the *Critique of Judgment*. Here the subject is understood through its voluntary and relational judgment of *taste* – a “pure ‘plasmatic’ condition, which is neither subjective nor objective, sensuous nor non-sensuous,”<sup>82</sup> but a feeling of pleasure or displeasure before an event. This is an aesthetic judgment, which constitutes its own spatial guiding principle, which, like smell or touch, as van der Heeg and Wallenstein have expressed it, is both *fundamental* and *eccentric* at the same time – an *extended* or *expanded* way of thinking, both *independently*, *in everyone’s place*, and *in concord with oneself*.<sup>83</sup>

The aesthetic judgment in this respect is not an evaluation in relation to an ideal, which might be important to stress. Instead, it constitutes a veritable dislocation of the subject (“both independently, in everyone’s place, and in concord with oneself”), an actualization of many potential positions. In other words this could be described as the fundamental tension between freedom as mobility/ability and the awareness of a common ‘good;’ the relation between an ‘I can’ and a ‘you should.’ This is a relational setting reflected already in “the

79 “...jeu difficile entre la vérité du réel et l’exercice de la liberté...” Michel Foucault (1984/1994:570).

80 “... en une critique pratique dans la forme du franchissement possible.” Michel Foucault (1984/1994:574).

81 “... elle cherche à relancer aussi loin et aussi largement que possible le travail indéfini de la liberté.” Michel Foucault (1984/1994:574).

82 Van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:55).

83 Van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:54).

categorical imperative”<sup>84</sup> the clause to act or judge as if the pattern of your action could become common law. This maxim poses the question of where and how to spatially position or ‘construct’ the ‘subjective’. Should we locate the ‘subjective’ beyond objectivity as a reason already defined by the *sensus communis* and thus something that, in case it does not fit into this common sense, can be dismissed as ‘simply subjective’? Or should we on the contrary understand the ‘subjective’ as an experimental reasoning, an out-reaching activity *preceding* the objective; as a double *becoming*, at the same time a becoming-subject and a becoming-common?<sup>85</sup>

According to Foucault, Kant deals with this double becoming through the introduction of the distinction between private and public uses of reason. What is significant here is that while reason, and not least aesthetic judgment, must be submissive in its private and intimate use, it must be free in its public and exterior use. This is, as Foucault points out, the opposite of the ordinary opinion on freedom of conscience and action. In private use, reason must be submitted to what Foucault later would talk about in terms of “the care of the self”, whereas public reasoning has to be understood as the political challenge inscribed in the heraldic exhortation “*Aude sapere*, ‘dare to know’, have the courage, the audacity, to know.”<sup>86</sup> This distinction between private and public, furthermore, is also expressed in the third Critique, as a more explicitly spatial differentiation between a *principia domestica*, a ‘homecoming’ principle of recognition, and a *principia peregrina*, a wandering principle. What the aesthetic judgment, as the major manifestation of the subject, performs in this respect is the actualization of the tension between familiarity on the one hand, and unsettled movement on the other. Derived from the Latin *peregrinus*, or *per ager*, a movement through the land, public space is thus an extended space of possible dislocation and transformation; a discursive propagation and an active confrontation with the foreign and the unknown.<sup>87</sup>

The aim with this spatial expansion of the subject has been to problematize aesthetics beyond its function as a normative discipline, based upon a private or ‘domestic’ principle of recognition that we also could call *beauty*, into a more ‘peregrine’ discourse corresponding to public, urban life. As the domain preoccupied with the theorizing of judgments of value, aesthetics cannot, as Kant also indicated, be restricted to the cognitively defined, inner sphere of the cogito. However, although the emergence of aesthetics as a field of study could be considered a direct consequence of the self-reflective ambiguity brought about by the Enlightenment, it has nevertheless been unambiguously defined

84 The categorical imperative is developed by Kant in his *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*. See van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:51).

85 See Van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:54-55).

86 “*Aude sapere*, aie le courage, l’audace de savoir.” Michel Foucault (1984/1994:565).

87 *peregrinus*, Latin, adj. coming from foreign parts, foreign, alien exotic, concerned with foreigners or aliens; a first element of disputed origin, perhaps from Lat. *per*, through + *ager* field, territory, land, country. *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford University Press.

as the formal systematizing of beauty. According to the dictionary, 'aesthetic' is that which is "concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty", and similarly, 'aesthetics' "the branch of philosophy which deals with questions of beauty and artistic taste."<sup>88</sup>

Baumgarten's original 18<sup>th</sup> century definition of aesthetics in this respect constituted an attempt to formulate a consistent theory of beauty, not only as it appears within the framework of Fine Art, but as a more all-embracing *scientia cognitionis sensitivae*: a science of sensuous knowledge.<sup>89</sup> The aim was the systematizing or formalizing also of that which falls outside of the domain of pure logic, but which still could constitute a ground for normative and commonly accepted knowledge. As a metaphysical value imbuing being, beauty enables us to fill out the gap between the true and the good. In Kant's third critique, this positively defined beauty is problematized as a "purposeless purposiveness" a purpose *without* a purpose. This immanent negativity, this pleasure without goal, renders to subjectivity a certain complexity, since it marks both an autonomy (from presupposed regimes), and a dependency upon the transcendent idea of a *sensus communis*, a fundamentally human, yet purposeless and pre-subjective principle. The free wandering of beauty thus always returns to 'man' as the only being for which beauty may appear or make sense. Beauty can therefore never be other than a dependent beauty, a value linked to the human principle of a guiding common sense.

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Already in the reflections upon beauty, there is consequently a touch of 'something else' – an unsettled principle of freedom, or agitated virtuosity,

88        *The Oxford Dictionary of English* (2005), 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition, Oxford University Press.

89        Baumgarten's unfinished *Aesthetica* was written between 1750 and 1758. See Ewa Jeanette Emt (1996) "Baumgarten och den moderna estetikens födelse" (Baumgarten and the Birth of Modern Aesthetics), in *Konsten och Konstbegreppet (Art and the Concept of Art)*. Alternative articulations of a coherent aesthetic theory focused on the experience of *pleasure*, either through the 'agreeableness' inherent in *taste*, or as a utilitarian opposition with *pain*. David Hume's famous essay *Of the Standards of Taste* constitutes in this respect an important point of departure as a first attempt to formulate a relational aesthetics not grounded in statements about the object but as experiences and expressions of the observer. A normative aesthetics based upon the difference pleasure-pain was presented by John Stuart Mill in his work *Utilitarianism*. Although positivist, these experience-oriented theories opened for later conceptions of aesthetics grounded in emotion, either emphasizing the inner experience of the creative subject and of a receptive 'audience' as in the "impressionism" of Leo Tolstoy, or in more expressive terms as an active or even constructive arousal of emotion as in the cognitive constructivism of R. G. Collingwood. While Tolstoy and the 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic idealists saw emotion as a *cause* to aesthetic action (and consequently authentic emotions as an absolute prerequisite for artistic action), Collingwood formulated an aesthetics based upon acts of imagination or imaginative discovery, closely connected with knowing. Strict "impressionism" reduces creative action to formal representation, to mere technical execution, whereas a dislocating and active imagination has the opposite effect. See Gordon Graham (1997) *Philosophy of the Arts: An Introduction to Aesthetics*, pp. 4-11 and pp. 24-41. See also R.G. Collingwood (1925/1994) "Imaginative Art", pp. 76-79.

which reaches its full expression in the notion of the *sublime*. Beauty is not enough, there is also a dimension of disharmony transgressing appreciation of taste, a disorder, confronting us not only with the purposeless but with the formless and excessive too. In Kant's third Critique, the analytic of the Sublime, furthermore occupies a modest and ambiguous place, seemingly interjected without justification.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, historically, it has opened for the possibility of a critical aesthetic with the point of departure in a transformative and performative understanding of the 'subject' and its positionality.

Within an idealist aesthetic tradition, however, the sublime has been understood as a category of spiritual elevation rather than relational semantic element.<sup>91</sup> Literally signifying "height",<sup>92</sup> the sublime has been interpreted first and foremost as a *higher* form of the sensuous, analogous with a reinforcement of the emotionally impressive, the heroic, monumental, and exaggerated. Furthermore articulated in terms of "towering peaks, belching volcanoes, icebergs, and other extravaganzas of nature",<sup>93</sup> the discourse on the sublime developed into an allegorical landscape monumentalism with moralizing undertones. As a result, the sublime has been erased from a humanist spatial agenda as an offensive and also politically compromised expression of megalomania. The sublime, it was felt, was everything that a commonly accepted and morally responsible landscape was not – irrational, extreme, eruptive and arbitrary.

The notion of the sublime does not emanate from Kant's critique, but is adopted by Kant as part of the aesthetic discourse emerging in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. With roots in Longinus' classical tract on rhetoric, the concept leads through the Romantic era, via an artistic avant-garde, all the way to the critical philosophy of our time. Here I do not aim to reconstruct this passage, but will confine myself to a reflection on the sublime in relation to an expansion and activation of the subject, emphasizing its rhetorical function as an intermediary principle. In a rhetorical sense, the heightening of the sublime also referred

90 Van der Heeg and Wallenstein, alongside other Kant interpreters, point to the inherent ambiguity and fragmentation of the third Critique, first and foremost expressed in the division of the text into an *Analytic of Beauty* and an *Analytic of the Sublime* (*Analytik des Schönen* and *Analytik des Erhabenen*), with a clear lack of balance between the two parts. See Immanuel Kant (1789-90) *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, available at <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/kant/kuk/kuk.htm>. Download date 2006-03-09. See also van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:55-56).

91 Wolfgang Iser (1977:10).

92 **sublime**, from Lat., *sublimis*, lofty; from Lat. *sub-*, up to, and *limes*, lintel. *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford University Press. The notion of the sublime is ascribed to the pseudonym Longinus, who in the classical manuscript *Peri Hypsous* (*On Height* or *On the Sublime*) paradoxically enough developed the concept as a means to free art from the criteria of normative judgment. Longinus' manuscript was translated from Greek by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux in 1674 under the title *Traité du Sublime, ou du Merveilleux dans le Discours*. It was this that inspired Edmund Burke to his strictly physiological explanation of beauty and the sublime in terms of pleasure and a kind of morally edifying pain. See Edmund Burke (1757/1998) *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*.

93 Pamela M. Lee (2000:138).

to the expressive and unpredictable turns of discourse. In the original text by Longinus, the sublime (in Greek *hypsous*), connotes “the elevated language” or “the grand style.” This is a linguistic ability, which is not aimed at convincing but at bringing about the open and active state of *enthusiasm*, a strong and transient state that strikes rather than elevates. For Longinus, the sublime was evoked not only by the hyperbolic or exaggerated, but could also be generated by other stylistic figures such as amplification, accumulation and gradual intensification, all of which aimed at an unpredictable agitation of linguistic mediation. Through the sublime, an aspect emerges which is not absolute, but situational, which gives it a performative and ultimately *ethical* dimension as a public, intermediary virtue that can only be grasped in rhetorical action.<sup>94</sup>

From a post-structuralist perspective, Jean-François Lyotard has also reinterpreted sublime enthusiasm as a transformative historico-political force; moreover the major difference between aestheticizing idealism and a ‘contemporary’, composite and relational attitude.<sup>95</sup> In fact, Lyotard went so far as to say that “perhaps [the sublime is] the only mode of artistic sensibility to characterize the modern.”<sup>96</sup> Emphasizing not only the cognitive restlessness of the subject but also its intermediary *Formlosigkeit* or formlessness,<sup>97</sup> Lyotard brings the subject down to a transgressive level of an “I don’t know what.”<sup>98</sup> While beauty – as intuitive recognition – could operate as a link between logical and practical reason, the sublime is always directed towards the outside, related to that part of reason that deals with vectors, relations and forces, with the unconditioned and historical events that reach beyond the confines of representative form.<sup>99</sup>

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In the ambiguous third Critique, Kant’s own thinking thereby actualizes subjective, reflective practice in a new way, which is why it has come to constitute the point of departure for modern, critical aesthetics.<sup>100</sup> What Lyotard tries to show throughout his writings on the sublime is how the sublime as a principle of a potential ‘other’ emphasizes the relation between aesthetics and ethics, between an exposed, practiced subject positioning and an idea of

94 See Longinus (1964) *On the Sublime*, in Swedish edited as Pseudo-Longinos (1994) *Om det sublima (On the Sublime)*.

95 Jean-François Lyotard (1984/1989:196-211) “The sublime and the avant-garde”, first published in *Art Forum* 22, pp. 36-43. See also Jean-François Lyotard, (1986) *L’enthousiasme. La critique kantienne de l’histoire* (in Swedish, “Entusiasmen. Kants kritik av historien,” in van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:241-295).

96 Jean-François Lyotard (1984/1989).

97 Immanuel Kant (1789-90:§ 27).

98 Jean-François Lyotard (1988) *Peregrinations. Law, Form, Event*, p. 12.

99 As emphasized by Lyotard, Kant uses the notion of *Begebenheit*, in Swedish *begivenhet*; the undefined character of historical experience. See van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:268).

100 See van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:56-57).

‘community’ as the intense sharing, not of such rationales as values and habits, but of *potentials*;<sup>101</sup> of such *irrational* dimensions as freedom, imagination, and desire.<sup>102</sup> An intermediary and horizontalized sublime in this sense suggests that a vital commonality has to be based not on rules, not even of the natural or harmonic kind, but on *the unconditioned*, on that which can only be dealt with as a situated and confrontational *trying out*; an intermediary criticality, which should be guided by a *discursive* rather than a *logical* or *practical* reason.<sup>103</sup> Also in the rhetorical sense – as in Longinus’ manuscript where it is originally expressed – the sublime connotes the indeterminacy of an extreme simplicity in a turn of phrase, a formal imperfection, or a technical shortcoming, which at the same time is able to provoke and communicate.<sup>104</sup>

The question in this context then is whether a disjunction of aesthetics towards the sublime would make sense in relation to contemporary urban aesthetics. In a dissertation which aims to outline an “aesthetics of dislocation”, Swedish architectural theorist Lars-Henrik Ståhl, discusses the critical aesthetics of modernity and its interrogation of the metaphysical search for the *form* of being. This interrogation has in different ways unfolded as a spatial deconstruction of form through concepts such as *marginality*, *outsider*, and *aberration*. What the latter concepts, according to Ståhl, establish is a conscious separation from ruling principles or normality, although “the word *aberration* is to be regarded as more dynamic than the definite *alienation*.”<sup>105</sup> The notion of the *marginal* however, expresses an active duality, a reciprocity in relation to a ruling principle of either active estrangement or mutual recognition. The marginal

101 Jean-François Lyotard (1991:272-278).

102 Van der Heeg and Wallenstein (1992:67). See also Jean-François Lyotard (1991).

103 A modern, evaluating aesthetics based upon the concept of Beauty in this sense represents a move away from an earlier and more action-oriented Baroque *poetics*, as in, for example, Boileau’s *Lart poétique*, published in 1674, and also emphasizing the sublime in emotion: “The Secret is, Attention first to gain; To move our minds, and then to entertain.” (Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, quoted in Marwin Carlson (1984:108). Often concerned with theatre, Baroque poetics explicitly embraced the ugly and grotesque, thereby differing from the idealized aesthetics of the Enlightenment and high modernity, where the main concern is visually based, disembodied and disinterested contemplation. Modern aesthetics thus unfolds as a *regulation* of creative action, at the same time paradoxically actualizing its own inherent drifting, its own inherent and uncontrollable irregularity.

104 See Longinus (1964) *On the Sublime*, and Pseudo-Longinos (1994) *Om det sublimes (On the Sublime)*. The reference to “Pseudo-Longinus” in the Swedish edition is marking the fact that Longinus is a pseudonym, and that we do not know who was the historical person behind.

105 “*Begreppen marginal, utanför och avvikelse* kan tyckas nära nog synonyma i min text. Det finns dock skäl att visa på nyanser som har med ett metafysiskt betraktelsesätt att göra. De båda senare begreppen söker visa på att de är avskilda från en rådande princip, även om ordet *avvikelse* är att betrakta som mer dynamiskt än det definitiva *utanförskapet*. Hos ordet *marginal* finns däremot en dubbelhet. Marginalen återfinns inom en rådande princip samtidigt som den inte står i centrum. Man erhåller här ett gränsvärde som ger upphov till ett inommetafysiskt spel.” Lars-Henrik Ståhl (1996) *Tre texter om förskjutningens estetik (Three texts on the Aesthetics of Dislocation)*.

in this sense constitutes a limit that on the one hand easily could be subject to mythologizing, but on the other hand answers to an inherent and critical disjunction of overarching principles. The marginal represents a (sublime) jeopardizing of the normal, a play with metaphysical positions – in short, a kind of temporal or tactical dislocation with an evocative effect.

Rather than vertical transcendence or elevation, the sublime thus indicates a horizontal and disseminating movement; a *spatialization* of subjective being into intermediary agency. A critical expansion, it embraces all that has been left outside normative aesthetics and rational planning practices – those ‘plethoric’ and undefined spaces of which the contemporary city also, although perhaps unwillingly, consists.

What I would like to discuss here is thus an aesthetics not in the first place concerned with the cognitive Self but with the displacement and spatialization of a Self, enabling an active incorporation of a potential Other. This would be an ethical aesthetics, or in Wolfgang Iser’s term an *aesthet/hics* concerned with that part of us that transgresses the Self and enables expressive and transformative interaction.<sup>106</sup> Quite the opposite of ‘the disinterested pleasure’ that constituted ideal beauty, the sublime presupposes an interest or engaged enthusiasm, an *inter-esse* or ‘in-between-being’, analogous with the “in-between-reason” represented by the *dialogue* as the ‘method’ of discursive reason.<sup>107</sup> The sublime actualizes a socially constructed ‘in-between’ logos, a *dia-logos*, which cannot be constituted without risk-taking, without imaginary and discursive action.<sup>108</sup> “Logos” argues Ramirez, “requires mutual talking but *dia* requires that this talk be an open and unfinalized discourse”, a discourse of Signifiers, whose signified is not given but consists of all the potential meanings and positions agitated and encountered through the dialogue as discursive event.<sup>109</sup> The dialogue unfolds as enthusiasm, a sublime encounter to a certain extent that will *do justice* to experience, not only in terms of a correspondence with a metaphysical given, but in relation with a historical and situated confrontation with an ‘Other’.<sup>110</sup>

106 See Wolfgang Iser (1997).

107 See Bent Flyvbjerg (1991:85).

108 In the writing of José Luis Ramirez, the dialogue is similarly understood as the very actualization of discursive logos, not as a decision-oriented process as in the “communicative action” of Habermas, but as an action that embraces the openness of an unpredictable and heterogeneous situation. The dialogic is not a discourse of compulsion, or conduct, but a discourse that is meant to awaken and stimulate activity; a discourse that becomes an incentive for a creative knowing rather than a mediation of finalized and codified knowledge. See Ramirez (1995a:283-284).

109 ”Logos kräver samtal men *dia* kräver att samtalet ska vara en öppen och oavgjord diskurs, en Betecknare vars betecknad inte är given utan består av alla de meningar som väcks och möts där Betecknaren uppenbaras.” José Luis Ramirez (1995a:284).

110 Wolfgang Iser (1997:70-74).



The sublime in this sense, from an aesthetic perspective, also embraces that which ‘democracy’ tries to embrace, as a similarly open-ended and dialogic in-between reason – the problem of how to co-exist in a world that is not grounded in an immediate feeling of sameness or common values, but in an experience of the world as dynamic, heterogeneous and polemical. In relation to beauty, which is a faculty relying upon an immediate sense of both subjectivity and a transcendental *sensus communis*, the sublime is dependent upon continuous intermediation; or, expressed differently, it is the very movement of intermediation, of contemplation *in* and *through* reasoning.<sup>111</sup> Lyotard also describes this reasoning multitude this heterogeneity of positions and movements in geographical terms as an *archipelago* of dispersed faculties, of interrelated phrases, in relation to which the sublime judgment appears as an evocative and agitating force, “a hijacker or an admiral, sending out expeditions from one island to the other.”<sup>112</sup> Rather than a pledge of allegiance to a fundamental or transcendental *sensus communis*, an aesthetic of the sublime constitutes an *activism*, a performative commonality, a common seizing of opportunities in a sea of possibilities.<sup>113</sup>

Having roamed through the problematic ‘cloud’ of subjectivity, one could start to unveil certain analogies between the modern subject as aesthetically understood and its spatial manifestations within the artistic avant-garde and the youth liberation movement. In this respect, the analytic turns of Kant have come to realization as critical *aesthet/hics*, a relational urban activism, with its point of departure in expressive practices of subject repositioning. The main objective of this activism, as in the case of Christiania, has not been a

111       Commenting on Kant’s original text on the sublime, Lyotard points to the fact that Kant declares that the sublime sentiment also makes universal claims, but not that of a *sensus communis*. “Notre text déclare au contraire que le sentiment sublime ‘fait certes appel aussi à une participation universelle’ [...]. Mais cet appel ne peut pas être immédiat comme dans le goût. L’exigence d’universalité qui est propre au sublime passe par ‘par une médiation [...], celle de la loi morale’[...]. Le plaisir sublime est déclaré ‘plaisir de contemplation qui raisonne’, [...] le plaisir de contempler tout en raisonnant.” (“Our text declares on the contrary that the sublime sentiment ‘also makes certain claims for universal participation. But this claim cannot be immediate as in taste. The demand for universality proper of the sublime passes by mediation, that of moral law. The sublime pleasure is declared to be ‘the pleasure of a contemplation that reasons’, that is the pleasure of contemplating reasoning.”) What Lyotard here actualizes is a non-teleological contemplating; the sublime as a theorem of reasoning action. Jean-François Lyotard (1991:271).

112       “Chacune des familles de phrases serait comme une île ; la faculté de juger serait, au moins pour partie, comme un armateur ou comme un amiral qui lancerait d’une île à l’autre...” Jean-François Lyotard (1986) *L’enthousiasme. La critique kantienne de l’histoire*, p. 33.

113       In another attempt to approach the tension between form and formlessness that the archipelago as a metaphor represents, Lyotard employs the peregrine and similarly geographic metaphor of the *cloud*; a sensitivity to singular cases, emerging forms, where “every emergence of something reiterates something else, every occurrence is a recurrence.” Clouds are relational spaces, spaces of recycled potentiality, but also critical formations requiring attentiveness and imaginative ability. Similar to spaces of colors, touch, or socio-cultural practice, there is in a cloud no absolute, yet a multiplicity of particular appearances. Jean-François Lyotard (1988:8).

fundamental or ontological revolution on the cognitive level; it has not been to once and for all sweep everything away and start anew. The main focus has instead been the embodiment of the world through action, the realization of the world as it is, in all its complexity – the practicing not of objectivity but of *worldliness*. Combining awareness of a spatially expanded, provocative, or ‘free’ subject with the social consequences of its movement as ‘world’, Christiania has interrogated the relation between ‘subjectivity’ and situation, between utopian inversions and provocative theft, and between practical form and unrestrained formlessness. A dislodged subject, a subject released from its fixed position within a given representational regime, the address-less ‘Christianite’ has unintentionally put forward a ‘third’ kind of critique, always from a *de-centered, non-finalized* location in space. Transformed from subject to agent, the ‘Christianite’, through his or her awkward or ambiguous position, opens up a relational landscape of spatial negotiation; a dramatic space where a re-casting and re-folding of the common good may be re-enacted.

## Tactics of Subject Re-Positioning

What the philosophical discussions so far have actualized is the fact that the ‘subject’, rather than confined within the limits of a ‘mind’, is actively constituted through representational and relational practices. One is tempted to ask whether this aesthet/hic understanding of the subject could also be analogously superimposed onto Christiania as an agent in a wider urban representational field. I will explore this thought in relation to the positioning practices developed in Christiania. These I will discuss in terms of their decentering and dislocating function as enacted critique, structured under four themes – *voicings, stagings, bewilderment* and *interceptions*. These themes each represent different inter-subjective and spatial tactics, addressing or challenging the conventional ideas of a formalized, regulated or given subject within a similarly given representational framework. What I hope to be able to show is how the ‘free zone’ of Christiania challenges spatial processes of subjective correction, unification and domestication, providing room for an aesthetically staged expansion with ethical implications.

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### Voicings

When considering the non-representational ambition of Christiania, and its specific and deliberate re-positioning of the subject, one of the most striking features is its coming into being as *orality*, as a district constituted on the basis of voices, of the spoken word. In Christiania, intermediation is to a great extent replaced with spoken dialogue, a seemingly non-representative and im-mediate form of direct contact. However, rather than a regression to a pre-literate or natural stage of oral communication, orality in Christiania has a much more complex and critical function, actualizing the expansion of the subject into a cultural agent in an acutely intermediary sense.

To interpret Christiania as an isolated oral culture developing entirely by word of mouth would be a gross simplification. Instead, one has to regard the central position of conversations, chats, discussions, informal symposia, talks and negotiation, and furthermore of gossip, rumors, hearsay and chitchat, as a deliberate displacement or re-scaling of representational practice, from the general level of official linguistic meaning to the specific level of the spoken word, to the level of what Walter J. Ong has called *voicings*,<sup>114</sup> the composite of an orally performed expressivity, a kind of vocal sonority, in Christiania's case bordering on the vociferous.

Officially constituted as Plenary, Christiania was from the beginning based upon the principle of 'one man, one voice' – a congregational standard that concurrently also produced a surplus of supplementary actions, groups, informal encounters or dialogic clusters. Questions of a communal kind have also been orally articulated and channeled through more deliberately staged cultural or aesthetic activities, multiplying the number of vocal contact surfaces even further. Even though one can trace in Christiania a certain tendency towards a 'primitivistic' idealizing of oral practice as direct and natural democracy,<sup>115</sup> its most interesting aspect has not only been its intermediary functionality, but its interrogative and disturbing potentials within an entirely 'scriptualized' urban culture. More than a 'natural' or 'proper' dialogue, orality in Christiania has unfolded as a critical aesthetics, an actualization of the *polemical* character of dialogic, expressive practice. As such, the insistence on orality has also affected other means of intermediation.

A general revitalization of inter-subjective communication, orality has thus functioned as a re-activation of those possibilities to expressive action set aside by what de Certeau called "the scriptural economy" of representative democracy, which has domesticated the voice of the People.<sup>116</sup> In this context, it is interesting to note that de Certeau here initiates his discussion with a

114 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001) *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, p. 13. In proposing the concept of 'voicing', Ong refers to Northrop Frye, according to whom all oral art could be defined as *epos*, a word with the same root as the Latin *vox* and the English *voice*. The word 'voicings' may, according to Ong, potentially have too many competing associations, but should the term be persuasive, Ong will, he says, "definitely support the use of it." The Jesuit father Ong has, since his dissertation in the fifties on 16<sup>th</sup> century pedagogic principles, been preoccupied by the relation between orality and literacy. His most renowned book is *Orality and Literacy: The Technologization of the Word*. See also Bruce E. Gronbeck, Thomas J. Farrel and Paul A. Soukoup (eds.) (1991) *Media, Consciousness and Culture, Explorations of Ong's Thought*.

115 See Børge Madsen (1979:192-193). Madsen critically discusses direct democracy as a consequence of individualization. See also the *Christiania Guide* (1996) where especially the idea of "neighborliness" is emphasized, and *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision til virkelighed*, (2003:12): "We have to listen to each other, until we reach consensus." ("Vi må lytte til hinanden, til vi når enighed.")

116 "L'économie scriptuaire" Michel de Certeau (1980:195-215). An interesting aspect in de Certeau's discussion of orality and literacy is his reference to the work of Danish linguist N.F.S. Grundtvig.

quote by Danish linguist N.F.S. Grundtvig: “Only words that wander, passing from mouth to mouth, legends and songs, in the protection of the land, keep a people alive.”<sup>117</sup> Yet, de Certeau’s interest in the ideas of Grundtvig is grounded in the same ambition as that of Christiania; to problematize the Grundtvigian idealization of orality and to explore what orality might mean in a scriptural world, which de Certeau expresses as follows:

We no longer believe, like Grundtvig (or Michelet) that behind the gates of our cities, in the countryside nearby, there still exist vast poetic and ‘pagan’ pastures, where the songs, the myths and the spreading murmur of *folkelighed* (a non-translatable Danish word since its French equivalent, *popularité*, has been devalued through over-use, in that it signifies in relation to *peuple* what *nationalité* signifies in relation to *nation*). These voices can no longer be heard except inside the scriptural systems where they return. They move around, as dancers and passers-by, in the field of the other.<sup>118</sup>

Orality can no longer be understood as a separate domain, but from within the scriptural economy. This economy is accumulative – like the economy of rational modernity, it is implemented through the action of *writing*. It is imbued by a developmental and teleological thinking, which transforms subjective expressivity and intermediation through a scriptural discipline to mere transportation from one defined point to a preconceived destination. Writing is according to de Certeau a form of regulated subject positioning, “a Cartesian gesture of an installing cut, along with a *place* of writing, the mastery (and isolation) of a subject before an object.”<sup>119</sup> Writing is in this sense a construction of a cognitive ‘place proper’ – the text – with its projective power. Similar to perspectival positioning, it requires a three-dimensional arrangement; firstly a relation to a blank page, an entirely new beginning isolated from the surrounding, secondly a relation to a ‘literal meaning’ – a system with sufficiently strong legitimacy to efficiently change or confirm the world – and thirdly an effectuation of

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117 I have translated this from the French, as I have not been able to trace down the Danish original : “Seules des paroles qui marchent, passant de bouche en bouche, légendes et chants, dans l’enclos du pays, tiennent le peuple en vie.” N.F.S. Grundtvig quoted in Michel de Certeau (1980:195).

118 “Nous ne croyons plus, comme Grundtvig (ou Michelet) que, derrière les portes de nos villes, dans le proche lointain des campagnes, il ya de vastes pâturages poétiques et ‘pains’ où parleraient encore les chants, les mythes et la proliférante rumeur de la *folkelighed* (mot intraduisible parce que son équivalent français, ‘popularité,’ a été lui aussi dévalué par l’usage que nous en avons fait, alors qu’il est pour ‘peuple’ l’analogue de ce que ‘nationalité’ est pour ‘nation’). Ces voix ne se font plus entendre qu’à l’intérieur des systèmes scripturaires où elles reviennent. Elles circulent, danseuses et passantes, dans le champ de l’autre.” Michel de Certeau (1980:195-196).

119 “Geste cartésien d’une découpe instaurant, avec un *lieu* d’écriture, la maîtrise (et l’isolement) d’un sujet devant un *objet*.” Michel de Certeau (1980:199).

accumulative power, a constituting a history of its own. “‘Progress,’ writes de Certeau, “is scriptural in type.”<sup>120</sup>

For de Certeau, the solution is not one of metaphysical oppositions, of “postulating [...] two opposed terms, whose contradiction could be transgressed by a third, or whose hierarchy could be inverted.”<sup>121</sup> Instead, de Certeau unveils the orality within literacy, the bodily dimension of literacy, the *inscription*, which is writing incarnated, embodied, voiced. Thus the places or ‘lands’ established through speaking is replaced only with the materialized moving that inscription entails – another bodily activity that can *take place* within literacy, that has the capacity of being immanent to the scriptural.

Christiania has similarly rejected a scriptural logic, but also very clearly denounced the idealized oral *folkelighed*, popular identity, upon which rests the Danish version of the Welfare State. Instead Christiania may be understood as an accumulation of all those ways in which the inscribed and inscribing body makes itself heard in language, despite language, through language, like a cry. What is interesting in this respect is not the reductive designation of Christiania as an oral culture, but the fact that the orality developed has had a specific, modifying (yet not necessarily ‘progressive’) impact within a scriptural economy. Christiania has in this sense not simply represented a reactionary rehabilitation of an original or natural oral culture, but an orality engraved onto the surface of the city, thereby actualizing its materiality, a page not blank at all but a surface for use, for intermediation and re-inscription. This orality is an engraving orality that, through the cry, the whisper, the outburst or the ironical aside also constitutes an erasing, a writing that displaces hierarchies and manipulates meanings, ultimately transforming the univocal scripture of the city into a multi-vocal and multi-dimensional palimpsest.<sup>122</sup>

What I would like to emphasize is the fact that there is in the discourse of Christiania no metaphysical opposition between oral and scriptural, between speech act and written language etc., but instead a tension, within which orality has a reproductive and critical role. This is also a view that deviates from the idea of a fundamental difference between oral and literal cultures. Ong’s claim that it is impossible for us, imbued by literacy, to grasp the mentality and logic of a genuinely oral society is apposite here. Condemned to eternal literacy, we cannot even imagine a situation where vocal sounds and phonemes constitute the core elements of communication, without any reference whatsoever to their visual representation as letters and words. However, instead of emphasizing a deep and insurmountable abyss between orality

120 “Le ‘progrès’ est de type scripturaire.” Michel de Certeau (1980:199).

121 “Se référer à l’écriture et à l’oralité, je le précise tout de suite, ne postule pas deux termes opposés dont la contrariété pourrait être surmontée par un tiers, ou dont la hiérarchisation pourrait être retournée.” Michel de Certeau (1980:197).

122 See Jaques Derrida (1967a), who in *L’écriture et la différence* employed the metaphor of the palimpsest, the recycled parchment, to describe a similar idea of a differentiating writing.

and literacy, as well as the impossibility of trying to re-establish a natural stage, one could see an emerging awareness of the difference as a reflective and critical stance, what has been called a “linguistic turn,”<sup>123</sup> in which vociferous, spoken practice again, as a part of post-industrial urbanization and the new social, ‘mass-mediated’ movements, gains a new importance.<sup>124</sup>

Christiania is an instance of this shift, an articulation of the psycho dynamics of orality. A dynamic rather than a logic, orality is first and foremost a non-visual dimension, a temporality rather than a visuality. Where words and literal sentences appear as representative signs or visible forms replacing utterances, the vocal expression is entirely time-bound, an event or happening rather than a formal appearance. To think about orality in terms of formalism is impossible, argues Ong, as its fundamental character is fugitive, evasive: “Sound exists only when its going out of existence.”<sup>125</sup> Where words in a scriptural culture are inexorably linked to the visual plane, there is no way in an oral culture to arrest the sound and still keep it. Vocal sounds are fundamentally formless, which subsequently also affects the possibility to develop a unified representative or affirming *regime* based on sounds. On the other hand, the word – uttered with emphasis – holds a specific, almost mythical power. Voicing requires forceful exercise, an expansion of the body reaching also the Other. In order to maintain its relational force, however, it has to be repeated, re-enacted.

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Orality is embodied *rhythm*, not form, which, according to Ong, bestows an *additive* rather than submissive role on the speaking agent.<sup>126</sup> Orality is a question of contributing, of adding, of combining, of superimposing, of commenting; a continual interference, its general frame or *form* thus being under constant re-construction, without reference to an original. It is *aggregative* rather than analytical,<sup>127</sup> consisting not so much of isolated entities as groups, clusters of entities, such as phrases, loaded with potential additions. Orality is in this sense *redundant* rather than rich in words,<sup>128</sup> a practice that expands, that takes detours rather than secures definite locations. It constitutes a situational, exaggerated and abundant per-formability, from which literacy, through formalization, has liberated itself. Where literacy needs to establish new words, new circumscribed visual units, in order to unambiguously cover

123 See for example Richard Rorty (1967) *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*.

124 Eric A. Havelock dates the oral turn in social science to 1963, when a number of important works on orality appeared – Claude Lévi-Strauss’ *the Savage Mind*, Jack Goody and Ian Watt’s *Consequences of Literacy*, Marshall McLuhan’s *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Ernst Mayr’s *Animal Species and Evolution*, and Havelock’s own *Preface to Plato*. “All of these works focus in different ways on the role of orality in the history of human beings”, write Lars Fyhr, Gunnar D. Hansson and Lilian Perme (1990:9) in the preface to the Swedish edition of Ong’s *Orality and Literacy*.

125 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:32).

126 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:37).

127 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:38).

128 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:39).

for new meanings, orality creates other kinds of unitary composites, where not only sound but gestures, repetitions, volume, gaze, mimics; different forms of amplifications of the vocal utterance plays a decisive role, situating the utterance in time and space.

This forceful and expressive redundancy also contributes to the fact that an oral culture may be regarded as more competitive, more *agonistic* or “agonistically toned”<sup>129</sup> more focused on direct confrontation. It is a culture where the subject is positioned, not in relation to an individualizing matrix, but a differentiating combat. “By keeping knowledge embedded in the human life-world”, writes Ong, “orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle.”<sup>130</sup> This is a struggle with a clear positioning function; a spatio-linguistic practice, that also appears in contemporary subcultures, often as an almost ritualized practice of mutual linguistic abuse.<sup>131</sup> This agonistic dynamic in oral thinking and expressive practice has, according to Ong, been of crucial importance to the development of Western culture, where it successively became institutionalized as Platonic (and later Hegelian) *dialectics*; a scientific framing of agonistic orality based upon literal, or representative, formalization. Writing is in itself an abstract synthesis, a practice that “disengage[s] knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another.”<sup>132</sup>

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On the other hand, verbal or formulaic expressions function as whole units and as a way to relate to a unitary, or aggregate, context. Orality presupposes *empathetic participation*,<sup>133</sup> a bodily becoming one with a situation, whereas literacy is a way to distance oneself from the context. As Deborah Tannen has pointed out, “in an oral tradition [...] it does not matter whether one says ‘I could care less’ or ‘I couldn’t care less,’” since the expression in both cases is a way to make reference to a situation that is already shared, to a familiar surrounding, to a mutuality, in relation to which the meaning unfolds.<sup>134</sup> In orality, the ‘meaning’ is *in* the context, whereas in literate tradition, the meaning is in the text. This “meta-communicative function”<sup>135</sup> of oral language, is nonetheless as important in agonistic as in ‘sympathetic’ expression; it is a question of involvement, of engagement in a situation.

129 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:43).

130 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:44). *Agonistic*; from Greek *agon*, the athletic contests of ancient Greece. In the rhetorical sense, *agonistic* refers to that which is “polemic, combative, striving to overcome in argument.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online Edition*. Download date 2006-04-30.

131 Walter J. Ong here refers to what in sub-cultural Caribbean circles in the United States was referred to as “dozens” or sometimes “joining” or “sounding” where the opponents try to offend one another by abusing their respective mothers – a verbal combat, which contemporary hip-hop culture calls ‘dissing’, from dis-respect. See Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:44).

132 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:44).

133 Walter J. Ong (1982/2001:45).

134 Deborah Tannen (1982) “The Oral/Literate Continuum in Discourse”, p. 2.

135 Gregory Bateson (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*.



When orality and literacy are dichotomically put up against each other in exclusive opposition, it is often with the purpose of sustaining an argument of loss. Through literacy, we have lost our capacity for deep identification, involvement, holistic thinking.<sup>136</sup> Paradoxically enough, such a view on orality is first and foremost a consequence of a 'literate' way of understanding involvement and unitary contexts, simplifying both oral and literal practices. While a 'literal' comprehension of empathic involvement is based upon a visually grounded sameness or concordance between sign and signified, and the idea of unity similarly on well-defined and significant form, the involvement and wholeness of orality is of an aggregate, interactive, and situational kind. The 'deep' involvement or contextual familiarity associated with orality is thus often mixed up with a kind of phenomenal equivalence or correspondence between sign and signified; a visually grounded recognition intimately linked to a literal practice of 'reading off'. Orality then becomes a means of giving voice to essential meanings, of manifesting familiarities, paradoxically enough replacing more vociferous expressivity with an ultimately *tacit* understanding. The voice is understood as a true expression, as an original statement of evidence with a direct relation to the soul, and thereby also to a transcendent *logos*.

Ong's conception of orality has been criticized on this point. In order to stress the dichotomy, he takes as his point of departure the extremes of the just and 'even handed' oral dialogue and the categorizing, 'ranking' text-book.<sup>137</sup> The critique of *logo-centrism* that Ong wants to propose through the privileging of the vocal utterance, runs the risk in this respect of transforming into another kind of atomistic thinking – a *phono-centrism*, where the focus is not on the act of speaking but on the oral statement or phonetic sound as such.<sup>138</sup> A strict opposition between the

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136 Ong is fairly ambivalent on this issue. Oral cultures create strong and beautiful expressions with high artistic and human value, he argues – values that are lost as soon as literacy has restructured our mentality. On the other hand, "orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing." Yet, this is a writing, a literacy, that has a very doubtful value by itself, although a value as it may "be used to reconstruct for ourselves the pristine human consciousness which was not literate at all." Ong (1982:13-14). An example of a more critical attitude towards literacy is presented by Manuel Castells, who blames literal culture (with reference to Havelock) for the relegation of audio-visual expression to the "private domain" of emotions. Castells is here guilty of an exaggerated and unnecessary simplification – of disregarding the fact that the phonetic alphabet is a highly visual invention, and that writing, as inscription, can be a material undertaking. See Manuel Castells (1996) *The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Vol 1: *The Rise of the Network Society*, p. 356.

137 See for example Per-Anders Forstorp (1992) "Orality- och literacybegreppen hos Ong: En kritisk granskning" (The Orality- and Literacy Concepts in Ong. A Critical Review).

138 The main advocate of this critique of phono-centrism is Jacques Derrida, who in his *De la grammatologie* (1967b) criticizes the primacy of the spoken word in Western thinking, and the different forms of phonetic idealism, such as the phonetic alphabet, that this has entailed. Instead of an opposition between orality and literacy, Derrida develops an idea of a fundamental scriptural action, an original *gramma*, or archaic script that unfolds from a signifying tracing, an establishing not of equivalence, but of a fundamental inscribing that is dependent upon space, time and relation. The scriptural in this sense represents the agonistic differentiating in linguistic practice, the exteriorization that creates tension. Writing as inscription or tracing is for Derrida

vocal and written has to be based on such an exclusive distinction between separate cognitive predispositions, with strict reference to a specific and objectified medium rather than to the activating of this medium in relation to a context.

As manifested by Christiania, an emphasis on orality today, rather than an attempt to re-establish a natural communicative ability, entails an agitation of the linguistic dynamics behind every communicative situation, where orality, not least through mass-media, but also through practices such as alternative planning and different forms of discursive mobilization, interfere with literacy. Christiania is a very good example of such interference, not least in its developing of the ability to transgress the often clear-cut limit between orality and literacy. The 'in-scriptural' orality developed in Christiania is in this sense less a part of a separate or exclusive orality, but to the highest degree a discursive expression. As such, it problematizes the process of subject positioning as *identification* or involvement with a (scriptural) whole. Identification is not so much a question of identifying a 'self' in correspondence with a matrix according to a principle of sameness. Instead it is a question of situatedness, according to a principle of contiguity. Rather than identity, it is a question of what Donna Haraway, in analyzing the new oral/scriptural economy of cyber-reality has called *affinity*.<sup>139</sup> Identity unfolds as a participatory engagement, as a spatial and timely situating, as a confrontation with the slight differences that such a situation actualizes. This is furthermore a situating that is not exclusively oral, but characterized by a mutual exchange between oral and literal, between involvement and embodied inscription, a scriptural tracing measuring even the slightest differences. Rather than annulling the opposition between orality and literacy through a literal understanding of the oral, an engaged polemic permits this opposition to go on being experienced as well as read.<sup>140</sup>

Instead of reinforcing the divide between oral and scriptural, the oral culture of Christiania thus presents a linguistic abundance, a modality of oralities and literacies, all of which are characterized by different relations to the scriptural economy of which it is an inherent part. A polemical voicing is allowed to 'spill over', resulting also in the production of graffiti, fanzines, wall-papers, rock lyrics, geographical naming, and theater performances; yes, even of meeting minutes and alternative planning documents. Internal documents, such as the formerly mentioned "Archer" proposal, or even the Møller and Grønborg Plan with its

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an actualization rather than a reduction of differences, and there exists subsequently already in oral cultures a mutuality between the oral and the scriptural that has been neglected. See Jacques Derrida (1967b) *De la grammatologie*, and Jacques Derrida (1967c) *La voix et le phénomène*. See also Mikael van Reis' Swedish translation of an essay from Jacques Derrida's, *L'Écriture et la Différence* ("Struktur, tecken och spel i humanvetenskapernas diskurs"), in *Res Publica*, #8, 1987.

139 Donna Haraway (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*.

140 From another point of view, British cultural theorist Stuart Hall has actualized a similar interdependence. Rather than an exclusive opposition between *identity* and *difference*, where difference is only negatively defined as non-identity, Hall's aim is the articulation of a relational distinction, a relationship of agency, where the opposition identity-difference "can go on being read." Stuart Hall (1996) *Introduction: Who Needs Identity?*, p. 1.

emphasis on workshop methodology and 'narrative' programming, are in this respect examples of this redundant inscription, that rather than a visual formalism encourages the unfolding of an episodic plot of themes stitched together into a changing broadsheet.

## Stagings

Through an emphasis on agonistic orality, the idea of Christiania initially developed as a rejection of every attempt to systematize and rationalize the situation of the subject within a representative, and thus also normative system. Linguistically speaking, it refused to adapt to the urban *grapholect*,<sup>141</sup> to the spatial grammar and vocabulary of official planning, and instead deliberately encouraged the development of dialectical deviations, oral practices continually reproducing rather than representing official meanings.

The rejection of projective approaches to architectural and urban space, such as perspectival methods, was an analogy on the visual plane. As a zone free from general planning, Christiania has not developed according to an overall visual principle or form. Instead, it has almost done its best to break up or disturb the original, military shape of the area, with its lines of flight visually radiating out from the royal center. Operating on the basis of a kind of spatial orality, privileging particularity and expressivity rather than wholeness and visual legibility, Christiania has in this sense disregarded the implicit demand to develop a representative surface, a 'face' or a publicly acceptable *masque*,<sup>142</sup> and instead focused on the interactions as such, on the situational or psychogeographic interplay between agents. This non-representative posture has sprung from an explicit frustration with rationalized and unified perspectival space, which, as German art theorist Erwin Panofsky pointed out in his seminal studies of spatial representation, is "quite unlike the structure of psycho-physiological space" also on a strict, physiological plane. Visually constituted by two constantly moving, 'agonistic' eyes rather than by a fixed and generalized viewpoint, psychodynamic seeing has very little to do with the idealized two-dimensional projection of central perspective. Instead it is spheroidal and relational, difficult to fully grasp within one, representative image.<sup>143</sup>

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The peculiar instability and internal inconsistency that may be experienced in perspectival representations from earlier periods should subsequently not be

141 Ong (1982/2001:8).

142 The *masque*, the theatre play in Renaissance Britain, where, according to Kenneth R. Olwig the positioning of the king in relation to space was reproduced according to the laws of visual, perspectival space, often a scenic illusion of landscape. See Kenneth R. Olwig (2002a).

143 Erwin Panofsky (1991:30). Already in 1914, Panofsky wrote his dissertation, *Perspektiv als Symbolische Form*; a neo-Kantian reflection on Dürer's 'Albertian' art theory, which ultimately led him to develop his own "Copernican turn" a critical contextualizing of Art and representational practice.

interpreted as a naïve inability to achieve a true representation. Instead, it might reveal attempts to seriously deal with the task of unrolling a multi-perspectival vision onto a two-dimensional plane.<sup>144</sup> One could of course interpret the peculiar visual instability and formal inconsistency that meets the visitor of Christiania as a consequence of a similar refusal to accept a simplified spatial representation. Rather than an inability to rationally coordinate multiple, subjective perspectives, Christiania constitutes an attempt to remain as multi-perspectival as possible.

In this respect, I would also like to emphasize the polemical and ambiguous rather than 'primitivistic' ambition of Christiania. Through its deviations, Christiania not only establishes its own multi-perspectival space, but through its resistance brings into consciousness the official procedures of planning, which gradually has developed into an entire technology of social, spatial and optical corrections; a *scenographia* or a staging, making up for the distortions that it has itself produced.<sup>145</sup>

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The formation and continuous development of Christiania was a result of a critical awareness of these 'scenographic' correction. It unfolded from a staging sensitivity, an ability to locate the points at which the corrective technology unveiled its inconsistency. This awareness was crucial not least in the initial staging of the 'occupation', where the area's former military connotations were playfully reinforced in order to expand the symbolic implications of the take-over. Deliberately and consciously employing the 'symbolic form' or the 'stage' of heroic conquest and exploration of land, the logical positions of agents, subjects and objects were ironically and playfully actualized.

The following 'irrational' development of the Free Town has further unveiled the dependency of conventional urban form upon strict, perspectival representation. It has emphasized the fact that logical space does not leave room for qualitative aggregation, for additive principles or compilation of distinct orders. As such, the idea of consistent urban form is a concrete expression of a geometrical shift, the visual articulation of a written validation of the world. Nevertheless, it is also (even

144 In Antiquity, represented space remained *aggregate*, composite, a space in which bodies and things co-existed as illusory *conventions*, a *perspectiva naturalis* or *communis*, aiming at *summarizing* rather than rationalizing experiential space or referring it to a higher order. The Euclidian perspective was, according to Panofsky, an attempt to mathematically formulate the laws of a *natural vision*; the resulting *perspectiva artificialis* providing a serviceable, pragmatic method for constructing images on a two-dimensional surface. During the Middle Age, this illusionism, these attempts to grasp viewing as experience, was deliberately abandoned in favor of a totalizing and substantial *unity* that, despite its simplistic and schematic appearance (as in icons and biblical illustrations of the time), nevertheless paved the way for the later Albertian rationalization. The 'historical assignment' of Greco-Roman and Byzantine art was in this respect to disintegrate aggregate illusionism in order to transform, for the first time, space into a homogenous, immeasurable and dimensionless idea of total illusionism (Erwin Panofsky 1991:35, 44 and 49).

145 Alberto Pérez-Gómez and Louise Pelletier (1997:97-111).

though it does its best to conceal the fact) a representational *practice*, a “symbolic form”, in which the term ‘symbolic’ indicates a layer of staged relations, of subject positioning (as constitutive of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical affiliation). Linear perspective presents an entire ontology, a worldview, a transcendental framework ‘unconsciously’ qualified through a unified mode of representation. When linear perspective is introduced, it also has implications far beyond the mere representational, as a pro-active and irreversible *reproduction* of reality, a formalizing of the subject’s location in relation to the world that, similar to the technologizing of the word, reaches deep into our own times and lives.

As a rationally produced object, representational space now becomes a corrective also in relation to the subject. When the logic of early Renaissance checkerboard interiors is transferred into a logic of public space, it becomes a general corrective, embracing each and every subject. At the same time however, it offers to every single viewer a privileged and secluded outlook.<sup>146</sup> As both a secretive peeping,<sup>147</sup> and a common sensical partaking, perspectival space establishes itself in the gap between engagement and self-regulating participation. On the one hand offering a highly intimate realization of a privileged self, and on the other hand giving rise to a sense of public belonging, centralized perspectivism constitutes the visual matrix of rational representationalism.

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Staging a seductive and all-embracing view, linear perspective at the same time fixes the position of the subject to a specific point, a place proper, a room of its own, a total privacy and intimacy. This disciplinary securing of a subject-object relationship is most explicitly exemplified by the *camera obscura*. At a first glance revealing more about the functioning of the isolated eye than about the social workings of spatial representation, this representational device also clearly exposed the *corrective* dimensions of vision and visibility. A dark room connected to the surroundings only through a small hole, the *camera obscura* refracts the light and represents an inverted image on the inner walls of the chamber; literally leaving the spectator alone inside a scale model of its own visual organ. As American art theorist Jonathan Crary has pointed out,<sup>148</sup> the

146 In early Renaissance painting, it is also obvious how the artists deliberately manipulate this new representative potential. We can only imagine the immense feeling of both joy and empowerment mediated by Renaissance painters such as Piero della Francesca. Depicting a baptized Christ, as standing on the very same plane and ground as we, the humble spectators, all of a sudden subjects on equal terms, Piero managed to create a unified, experiential space, a new kind of all-embracing presence. This strategic manipulation is perhaps even more significant in the urban and ethically more complex depiction of *The Flagellation*. Here Piero deliberately inscribes the spectator as witness to take part in the dubious event of assault and battery, brutally exposing the existential agony and guilt caused by such a passive partaking.

147 The idea of ‘peeping’ refers to the vast critique of ocular-centrism that has developed in the wake of Freudian psychoanalysis. The down side of the exclusive focus on sight in Western rationalist thought, according to this critique, is a perversion of vision, developing as scopophilia, voyeurism, narcissism, exhibitionism or scopophobia (the fear of being seen), a critique to a large extent associated with the writings of Jaques Lacan. See Martin Jay (1993:329-380).

148 Jonathan Crary (1990) *Techniques of the Observer*.

most important epistemological contribution of the *camera obscura* is however not its function as a documentary device, but instead precisely its actualizing of a representative situation from the point of view of the perceiving and conceiving subject. Performing an operation of not only subject positioning but more precisely *individuation*, the *camera obscura* materializes the new model of the conceptualizing Cartesian subject. Left alone and enclosed within its own dark confines, with only a narrow channel of connection to the outer world, the subject becomes indivisible, individualized – a single, unified and circumscribed volume. Cell-like and secluded, the *camera obscura* in this sense demanded a secular *askesis*, a self-disciplinary withdrawal from the world in order to reach an understanding of the same. As such, it constituted an explicit enactment of a ‘de-corporealized’ spatial logic, the act of cognition entirely liberated from the specificities of the particular body and its interactive movements.<sup>149</sup>

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On the one hand, a ground-breaking discovery of both a documentary and a disciplining technology, the *camera obscura* also highlighted the fragility of the relation between subject and world. The corrective and disciplinary reinforcements required by the new, objectifying regime also brought into consciousness the very conflicts and limitations it tried to transcend. Concurrent with the unifying and systematizing traits of rational representation, emerges an increasing interest in the exploration of the very *shortcomings* laid bare by these ordering attempts, an interest in imaginative drifts and manipulations, a development of practices disjoining the subject from its fixed position within the mathematical grid. As much as the *camera obscura* represented an emerging discipline of individuation, it spurred a growing awareness of concurrent practices of de-systematization and de-regulation, of all those sensations that had been abstracted through the new representational technique. What was meant to become a systematization of subjective space thus transforms into an expansion of the same, an alternative *scenographia* for potential re-enactment.

In the same way as Christiania has developed as an agonistic orality, it agitates or inverts also the idea of coherent visuality, to a certain extent opening up the enclosed space of subjective viewing, transforming it into a polemical stage for public expression. This tactical re-staging or re-configuration of the corrective urban scene has been further emphasized through the split vision between Christiania as spatially manifest and “Christiania” as an expressive pattern of interaction.<sup>150</sup> This is first and foremost exemplified by the theater group *Solvognen*, “The Sun Wagon”,<sup>151</sup> and its attempts to radically fuse everyday cultural

149 Jonathan Crary (1990:39-40).

150 The relation between a ‘real’ Christiania and a “Christiania” as symbolic form has also been examined by Signe Sophie Bøggild in a recent essay. See Signe Sophie Bøggild (2005) “Christiania/Christiania”.

151 In her book *Solvognen – berættelser fra vores ungdom* (*Solvognen – Stories from Our Youth*) of 2002, Nina Rasmussen tells the story about how the light-and-sound group formed in 1969 developed into the action theatre group *Solvognen*. (“The sun wagon” is a symbol which

activity, representational critique and politics into creative re-enactments of life. Altering between stage performances and political happenings in public space, the group on several occasions managed to reconfigure the disposition of roles in the planning process so as to actually change the course of events of the Free Town. It further implemented a spatial practice of interrogative and aesthetically conscious urban activism, which has also later played a significant role for the reproduction of the community.

With a great sensibility for the complexity of spatial reproduction, *Solvogner's* performances also contributed to the situating of Christiania and Copenhagen in a larger setting, where not only local hierarchies or representational conventions were actualized, but to a significant extent also global frameworks directly affecting the situation of each and every subject on a local level. One such happening was staged in June 1973, while NATO was holding an important summit in Copenhagen. In relation to this politically controversial event (closely following the American withdrawal from Vietnam in January the same year), *Solvogner* set up a fictional, yet convincing international corps. Modeled upon a European transnational NATO-force that had been accused of pro-junta sympathies in Greece and Portugal,<sup>152</sup> this make-believe unit had its headquarters at the former military barracks at Boatman's Street. In a realistic setting, the volunteering soldiers were equipped with proper NATO uniforms and machine gun dummies, and intensely drilled in military exercise and formation. Perfectly coordinated, the corps could then be observed marching along the streets of the capital, either brutally hitting at similarly fake demonstrators or helping old ladies and tourists to find their way. Over five days, the corps patrolled the center of Copenhagen and managed to create a significant amount of confusion.<sup>153</sup>

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appears in old Nordic mythology, exemplified by a Danish national heirloom, a gilded sun wagon pulled by a horse from the Bronze Age, now at the National Museum). As the group grew, it moved to Christiania, where the members also could find cheap accommodation. According to Nina Rasmussen, *Solvogner* had its base at Christiania from 1973 onwards. I have chosen to date *Solvogner's* appearance to 1972, when it expanded its activity to embrace political theatre and demonstrations. One of its very first events was a performance during the campaign around the Danish referendum concerning membership of the European Common Market in 1972.

152        **Denmark's membership of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was a highly controversial issue during these years.** The Allied Mobile Forces were a small multinational force, with headquarters at Heidelberg, Germany; a force which, according to the information at the NATO website, could be sent at short notice to any threatened part of the Alliance. Its role was to "demonstrate the solidarity of the Alliance and its ability and determination to resist all forms of aggression against any member of the Alliance." Established in 1960, it was disbanded in 2002.

153        **Film by Nils Vest, *Fem Dage for Freden*, 1978.** In this drama documentary, the NATO corps performance is similarly staged as 'real', simply employing NATO's own information format. In a review in the Danish newspaper *Information* in October 1978, one critic expressed this as follows: "Ned til mindste stilsikre detalje er den en perfekt pastiche af samtlige de film som bærer NATOs eget mærke. Teksten er et pragtstykke. Der siges ikke noget som ikke kunne forekomme i den ægte vare" ("Down to the slightest sophisticated detail, the film is a perfect



In December 1974, the military rhetoric was employed once again, when a unit of thirty or so Santa Clauses marched from Christiania, past the Royal Castle and up to *Kongens Nytorv*, the Royal Square, commanded by a red flag and a huge papier machée Christmas Goose. At the square, the Santa Claus Corps entered the main department store and started to hand out merchandise to a surprised and overwhelmed crowd, who only too eagerly accepted the gifts. The action self-evidently led to the detention of a significant number of Santa-Clauses, ensuring that this action also became a major media event.<sup>154</sup>

Both these actions, the NATO exercise and the Santa Claus Corps, were staged as satirical interventions, where conventional social roles and patterns of action were slightly displaced and reflected back in an absurd form, unveiling inherent contradictions and ambiguities. Instead of rejecting the disciplinary restrictions imposed upon the individual, these restrictions were spotlighted and taken to an extreme. Imploding the disciplinary *camera obscura* into a baroque curiosity cabinet, Christiania developed according to *buffoon tactics*, a grotesque in the face of society, reflecting its own bizarre disproportionality.<sup>155</sup> Interrogative staging in this sense constituted a kind of canceling of the subject-object or actor-audience relationship, and a reciprocal unfolding of what also in an action theatre context had been described as the creation of a *situation*; an intensification and dramatization of the rhapsodic character of everyday life.<sup>156</sup>

pastisch of NATO's own films. The text is a masterpiece. Nothing is said that could not appear in the original.") The adoption of a conventional representational format here entailed an unveiling of the concealed reproductive processes.

154 My source here is mainly an interview with Nils Vest in January 2004.

155 In medieval theatre, the *buffoon* or the *juggler* functioned as a mediating figure between play and audience, a figure hindering the plot and turning back towards the audience, often ironically or humorously, in an attempt to break the illusion and encourage reflection. One playwright who has explored these dramatic possibilities is the Brazilian dramatist and theoretician Augusto Boal, who in his *Teatro do oprimido* (*The Theatre of the Oppressed*, 1979) develops the *Joker* system, which mixes reality and fantasy, empathy and distance and tries to present simultaneously a performance and its analysis. The Joker stands between audience and play, commenting, guiding, creating – "urging the audience to view the play critically rather than seeking to draw them emotionally into it." Marwin Carlson (1984) *Theories of Modern Drama: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present*, p. 476. Dario Fo, especially in his *Mistero Buffo* from 1974, also explicitly employed the buffoon as a paradoxical character, occupying the liminal space between audience and actors.

156 In 1895, Georges Polti presented his proto-structuralist attempt to uncover all conceivable plot lines in his *Les trente six situations dramatiques* (*The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*), based on the assumption that "there are in life but thirty-six emotions." The situations listed by Polti were for example supplication, deliverance, crime pursued by vengeance, disaster, falling prey to a cruelty or misfortune, revolt, daring enterprise, self-sacrifice for an ideal, crimes of love, erroneous judgment, and so on. Also Jean-Paul Sartre, in an article in 1947, raised a call for a *theatre of situations*; a theater which rejected the psychologizing drama in favor of the borderline situation in which the hero is able to define himself through an existential choice. "The situation is an appeal", writes Sartre; "it surrounds us, offering us solutions which it is up to us to choose. And in order for the decision to be deeply human, in order for it to bring the whole

In August 1975, when the dark cloud of eviction cast its shadow over Christiania, this staging tactics exerted a direct influence on urban politics, when *Solvognen* presented an updated version of the national theater piece *Elverhøj*.<sup>157</sup> Solvognen's remake of the romantic and nationalistic play depicting 'The Elves Barrow' was a musical performed on five stages by forty actors – "a two hour long fantastic mix of music, singing, theatre, film, slides, and sound."<sup>158</sup> Facing demands for clearance, Christiania knew that the only chance of survival was to evoke a shift in opinion strong enough to render the eviction plans politically impossible. In this sense, *Elverhøj* was a manifestation of a counter-plan, a vociferous voicing, a way of convincingly materializing the capabilities and potentials of 'agonistic' space, both in terms of mediation, dialogue, organization and conventional 'result'. The play was a huge success. It reached a broad audience, including politicians and even the police, who voluntarily accepted the invitation to attend the performance.<sup>159</sup>

The underlying concept of *Elverhøj* was the re-enactment of the paradoxes and ambiguities of the alternative community, subsequently reflecting also relations with the surrounding society. It was meant to replicate and potentially reconcile the distinct philosophies of life within the community – on the one hand, the ambitions to build society anew through inner expansion of consciousness, and, on the other, a desire to revolutionize society through political struggle.<sup>160</sup>

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man into play, we have to stage limit situations, that is, situations which present alternatives one of which leads to death." (Georges Polti (1895/1998) *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, pp. 12-18, and in the same anthology, Jean Paul Sartre's *For a Theatre of Situations* (1947/1998:42-44.) When Guy Debord of the activist artistic group *Situationniste Internationale* formulates his vision about the construction of situations in the late fifties, it is first and foremost as a ludic, playful urban tactics, where the situation stands in opposition to the bourgeois and consumerist *spectacle*. "La construction de situations commence au-delà de l'écroulement moderne de la notion de spectacle...La situation est ainsi faite pour être vécue par ses constructeurs." (The construction of situations begins on the other side of the collapse of the idea of the theater...The situation is thus made to be lived by its constructors.) *International Situationniste*, p. 11.

157 *Elverhøj* was also the title of a festival play by the Danish national poet Johan Ludvig Heiberg, written for The Royal Theatre in 1828. In the play, an arranged marriage is complicated both by true love and old fairytales concerning the elf king's interference. However, the real king does not fear myths and ultimately brings everything, wisely and rationally, back to order. Superstition is thus set aside in favor of truth and love.

158 **Quote from a review in *Berlingske Tidende***, the main Danish newspaper, after the last performance on Sep 28, 1975; quoted in Nina Rasmussen (2002:263).

159 **Nina Rasmussen (2002:263). The review mentioned in the previous footnote reports the following:** "Even if it is performed at Christiania, some of the usual Copenhagen theatre-goers have been there. This is true of, among others, a row of social democratic and radical politicians – even Mogens Glistrup and wife have ventured there. And it is said that they were very enthusiastic. Even the police have been seen among the guests, including young police officers from the Police School, who were specially invited..."(Nogle af de sædvanlige københavnske teaterløver har dog været der slev om det er på Christiania der spilles. **Det gælder bl.a en række socialdemokratiske og radikale politikere**, ja, selv Mogens Glistrup med kone har vovet sig derud. Og det siges at de så ud at være meget begejstrede. Også politiet har været gæster, det gælder f.eks. unge politibetjente fra Politiskolen, som var blevet specielt indbudt...").

160 **Nina Rasmussen (2002:245-246).**

Inspired by the political theatre in the tradition of Agit-Prop,<sup>161</sup> and of dramatists like Bertolt Brecht, Dario Fo and Augusto Boal, *Elverhøj* had a strong popular appeal, re-producing Christiania as a narrative on the border between utopianism, expressive popular culture and experimental avant-garde.<sup>162</sup> The success of *Elverhøj* in this sense marked one of the decisive turning points in Christiania's history, and eventually managed to contribute to a shift in opinion strong enough to prevent the scheduled clearance of Christiania in April 1976. Christiania had become *Elverhøj* and *Elverhøj* – that mythical Danish landscape – was Christiania. In staging this chiasm, employing the national 'fantasy' in an entirely contemporary orchestration, Christiania/*Elverhøj* had a double alienation effect, what Brecht had called a "Verfremdungseffekt." A familiar framework, what Panofsky called a symbolic form was subjected to *détournement*, to a re-coding, an alienation powerful enough to make the act of recognition conscious. The estranging theatrical effect that might have been concealed or symbolically masked in the original romantic version was thus brought back into play with full force.<sup>163</sup>

161 I have no explicit verification of this, other than what I have been able to read out of dialogues with members of Solvognen, most importantly Nils Vest (January 2004) and Mickael Fock (January 2004). However, as a part of the popular political discourse of the day, I have assumed that these links were there. *Agit-Prop* was the propagandistic theatre of political conflict that developed in Russia and Germany after World War I. In direct contrast to the theater as unifying social religion, as developed for example in *Le Théâtre du Peuple* by Roman Rolland from 1903, *Agit-Prop* was a theater aiming at sharpening class differences in order to mobilize the working class, often using fairground tricks such as absurd puppets or buffoons, performing in a satirical, exaggerated way. See David Bradby and John McCormick (1978) *People's Theatre*, p. 21.

162 Not directly related to the fate of Christiania, *The Rebild Action* was another of *Solvognen's* artistic performances that generated a great deal of attention. It was staged during the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the American Constitution on the 4th July 1976. Denmark had for the 100th anniversary established a National Heritage Park at Rebild in Jutland; a typically Danish moor in a region that had seen many emigrants in the 19th century. This landscape constituted the stage for the celebrations, which counted the Danish Queen and the American Ambassador and which furthermore were to be broadcasted live to 250 million Americans. Defying extreme security, *Solvognen* managed to infiltrate the event, performing an extremely well rehearsed happening in front of the TV cameras. The performance started shortly after the beginning of the Queen's speech, when suddenly a chain of people from the crowd redressed as Native Indians started to chant and walk down the slopes. When the police attacked, brutally assaulting the peaceful chain, an image of massacre was created, as the actors wore bags filled with fake-blood inside their costumes. At the same time, a huge papier maché horse appeared out of a baby carriage, somewhere else in the audience a black Statue of Liberty arose. A group of Greenlanders, the Danish equivalent of aborigines, started to shout slogans and Vietnamese and Korean flags appeared, all of which were exposures of American crimes against the minorities of the world. A disillusioned Uncle Sam then stumbled down the hill, drawing attention to yet other groups of 'liberated peoples' from Angola, Cuba, Cambodia and Laos. When the confused police turned around, dashing in new directions, and with the turmoil approaching its peak, finally a group of 42 'Native Americans' on horses finally emerged at the ridge of the hill, as in a John Ford movie. The CBS commentator Walter Cronkite had to apologize during a live broadcast, and over 70 activists were detained. For more detailed documentation, see *Solvognen* (1977) *Rebildbogen: en dokumentation for skole og hjem* (*The Rebild Book: Documentation for School and Home*).

163 As an artistic technique, defamiliarization or subjective de-centering had been theorized already by Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky, who, in his famous essay *Art as*

To a certain extent, Christiania has the same kind of estranging effect on the urban landscape as a whole, actualizing the fragility of representational systems and the manipulability of symbolic forms. An urban buffoon, Christiania similarly turns objects 'unfamiliar' or complex; it increases the difficulty and length of urban perception, agitates or disrupts the naturalized rhythm of the city so that relations appear more clearly.<sup>164</sup> Re-enacting distances, relations and differences, the defamiliarization staged by Christiania constitutes a discursive, crisscrossing approach to space, an active peregrination rather than a reactive domestication of urban space. As such, the urban staging or theatrical alienation practiced by Christiania (not only through staged performances but also on an everyday level of urban interaction), constitutes a means to unveil latent positionality within a representational regime; spatial leeway within the confines of an Elsewhere. In this sense, the alienation effect is one of the most misunderstood aspects of aesthetic theory, often interpreted as the suppression of emotional pleasure. But, as theatre theorists David Bradby and John McCormick argue, for Brecht, "the strongest source of emotion to be found in theatre was the delight of understanding reality."<sup>165</sup> Similarly for the members of *Solvognen* and the residents of Christiania, the main purpose of spatial enactment and social staging is not the achievement of a finalized and edifying goal, but the understanding of indefinite and formless, yet relational, and thereby symbolic, agency.

155

## Bewilderment

As an aggregate of oral, literal and visual practices, the critical staging of Christiania actualizes the labyrinthine character of urbanity, the plasticity of a dialogical space expanding in all directions, including inwards. It actualizes the moment of expectant risk or tension inherent to the unfolding of this space, the confusion and enchantment of its unforeseen coincidences or situations. Rather than improving the potentials for surveillance and overview, the polemical staging that Christiania stands for activates the desire to get lost, to challenge the harmony of the world as unambiguous 'word' or 'still image'. It is perhaps in this sense more cinematographic than scenic, a filmic or fictional aspect of bewilderment generally

*Technique*, introduced the concept of *ostraneniye*, or literally "making strange." What Shklovsky aimed at was a theory that could combine the methodology of critique with the purpose of art. Attacking "imagistic aesthetics", or the view that art is a representational "thinking in images", Shklovsky had claimed that the main purpose of art instead was to "remove the automatism of perception" or to force us to take notice. "A representation which alienates", wrote Brecht, "is one which allows us to recognize its subjects, but at the same time makes them seem unfamiliar." See Bertolt Brecht (1948/1998) "A Short Organum for the Theatre".

<sup>164</sup> In poetry, which provided Shklovsky's example, this defamiliarization might appear as a "roughened" or "disordered" rhythm, making pronunciation difficult; it could be spelled out as "barbarisms", or as "*attenuous, tortuous* speech." Poetry should not be about creating poetic images; it should be about employing words, putting them to play, activating them as to cause the highest possible awareness. See Viktor Shklovsky (1917/1965) "Art as Technique", pp. 3-24).

<sup>165</sup> David Bradby and John McCormick (1978:115).

abstracted from planning discourse. More of a Lyotardian *Scapeland*, an extension of not yet formalized and finalized expressive potentials, Christiania constitutes an overwhelming and material lining-up of possibilities that we normally do not associate with controlled urbanity.<sup>166</sup> Related to a basic and material sublime rather than to formal beauty – to the essential ‘dumbfound-ness’ of ordinary life – the displacements and chiasms of oral staging bring about a spatial abundance that is always both a present and a beyond. In a discussion about what kind of spatial tactic an alternative community may develop in order to legitimize its existence, the more bewildering ones are certainly of special importance.

To say that Christiania provides bewilderment is certainly a quite estranged and possibly also romanticizing statement. Nevertheless, its ability to bewilder and confuse constitutes one of its aesthetically more specific and potentially important traits. What one should ask, however, is how this bewilderment is generated and sustained in relation to the general urban planning ambitions of control and predictability. While the amusement park of *Tivoli* is also a place of bewilderment, similarly occupying a part of the former outskirts of the royal city, it is tempting to understand Christiania in similar terms, simply another kind of likewise temporal, evasive and entertaining Otherness, furthermore with the same profitable potential.<sup>167</sup>

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Despite the many similarities between Christiania and *Tivoli*, as surplus ‘commons’ as well as alternative set designs, where social regulations to a certain extent have been agitated and put into play, it is nevertheless important to discuss the differences, and the fact that as ‘free zones’ these two urban areas are not at all operating on the same premises and with the same agonizing ambitions in relation to processes of subject positioning and socialization. While *Tivoli* stages a circumscribed and exclusively sensational or phenomenal displacement of subjective positions, Christiania constitutes a more radical bewilderment, a disorienting obstruction or confusion on a material level, interrogating the foundations for positioning as such.

One aspect of spatial experience that Christiania and *Tivoli* both challenge and problematize is the idea of subject positioning as *spatial orientation*. Inscribed in the logic of the central perspective, the subject is offered a position not only

166 Jean-François Lyotard, *Scapeland* (1989). In this text, Lyotard poetically describes the unsettled landscape of ‘sublime’ disjunction, the moment at which the coherent perspective splits into a total encounter with a *raw* realm of possible meaning, with, in Lyotard’s word, a *Scapeland* or discursive melting-pot of potential representational practice. As a logical inversion, the *Scapeland* opens out as the basic and material level of linguistic practice, a surplus space of possibilities, where everything remains unorganized, formless, yet up for grabs, resisting the compositional powers of eye and mind.

167 In the Christiania debate, several voices have argued that Christiania has become an amusement park, or a spatial brand as strong even as *Tivoli*. See for example interview with Frederik Preisler, partner of the well-known publishing company *Propaganda McCain* in Berlingske Nyhedsmagasinet, quoted in Politiken Sep 21, 2003.

as viewer, but as *beholder* or *proprietor* in relation to space – as the master in command of three-dimensionality. In this sense, pictorial landscape, or the ‘window view’ as a bourgeois invention represented the proprietary ideal as seen from the burgher’s window, the visual controlling of a vista, and a subsequent controlling of the self. Radiating down an urban, socio-spatial hierarchy in the same way as the orthogonal lines of the perspective, this proprietary gaze reached out from the piazza of the ideal city to comprise the surrounding fields.<sup>168</sup> The scenic landscape with its balanced horizon is subsequently closely related to urbanity as a balanced bourgeois economy, with the subject as its accumulative and stabilizing focus.

An affirmative stance would define this bourgeois space with its point of departure in the controlling human eye as *humanist* – as a space in relation to which the human subject appeared as a point of security, of certainty. The function of the amusement park is to actualize the risks inscribed in this relation, the balancing function of the subject, in order to reinforce its self-regulative awareness. The temporal destabilization offered by the amusement park, the momentary canceling of control over sensations, either through an exaggeration of speed, through a distortion of vision, or through an annulment of balance, is in this sense a calculated and strategic rather than tactical disorientation; ultimately functioning as a reinforcement of the normal, proprietary attitude from which it originates.

157

The amusement park is in this respect an explicit representation of a cognitive mindset, a more entertaining variant of the dark chamber of logical cognition as represented by the *camera obscura*. This prototype for photographic documentation to a great extent designates the positioning of the subject as it has unfolded within a humanist tradition, where the validity of perspective is suspended on a single thread, a tiny opening. While this technology of spatial representation and orientation became more and more refined, the awareness of potential destabilization and disorientation also increased. As a pocket amusement park, the *camera obscura* is a comment on itself, not a deconstruction, yet a poetic and imaginative construction, generating an awareness of disorientation and bewilderment as a domain of subjective development and transformation.

In an essay titled *Lost in Space*, American architectural theorist Mark Wigley discusses orientation and bewilderment in relation to Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*.<sup>169</sup> Crusoe’s re-location in space furthermore delivers an example of the

168 See Denis Cosgrove (1985) “Prospect, Perspective and the Evolution of the Landscape Idea”, pp. 45-62.

169 Mark Wigley (1996) “Lost in Space”. “Lost in Space” furthermore, in Wigley’s article, refers to a popular TV show broadcasted in the US between 1965 and 1968. Financed by Groucho Marx, the show presented the Robinson family who gets lost in “the trackless void of outer space”, where they try at their best to reconstruct familiar and social structures “while cut off from the familiar space in which those structures are usually sited.”

relation between spatial orientation and subject positioning explicitly related to landscape. In the novel, the shipwrecked man from civilization, deprived of his spatial connectedness and distinct form, pursues what Wigley calls a “gradual improvement in the sense of orientation,”<sup>170</sup> a “gradual solidification” of a dissolved surrounding – an edifying rehabilitation of a rational spatial logic that ultimately will bring him back to civilization.

As Wigley points out, Crusoe never loses confidence in the sustainability of this logic, a confidence that should be compared with the concurrent emergence of the indeterminate, formless and risky, with the dissolution of solid values and eternal truths. It is a comforting confidence which should be understood in relation to the enormous, hazardous, cosmological gamble that had taken him outside culture in the first place; the vertiginous ideas of Copernican space, of industrial space, of urban space, or oceanic space – new kinds of spaces that, according to Wigley, transcended the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself in direct interaction with a phenomenal surrounding. Yet, the confidence of Crusoe emanates from his pragmatic ability to deal with this insecurity. Crusoe knows that locating oneself is no longer a matter simply of organizing the immediate environment perceptually, but to map a position cognitively, projectively.<sup>171</sup> To be completely lost in space would be to lack this projective ability, or to lack a spatial *plan*. Through his confident domesticating activity on the island, Crusoe shows that even though he may lack perceptual grounding or direct referentiality, he still has his projective ability, his aptitude for planning; for balancing risks and stabilizing changes.

Spatial planning, argues Wigley, conventionally follows a Crusoean logic, as a preventive measure in a sea of disorienting fear, where the solidifying and domesticating principle is a *visual formalization* that entails also a strict positioning of the subject. An example discussed by Wigley is the spatial semiotics of Kevin Lynch, one of the most important and influential Crusoean edifiers of the spatial disciplines. Lynch’s work from the late fifties and early sixties on different forms of ‘cognitive mapping’ may be seen as an assiduous attempt to eliminate the risks of getting ‘lost in space’. In his first and most influential book, *The Image of the City*, from 1960, Lynch depicts urban space in terms of a human *habitat* for survival, where getting lost appears as the most terrifying threat:

To become completely lost is perhaps a rather rare experience for most people in the modern city. We are supported by the presence

170 Mark Wigley (1996:32).

171 Mark Wigley (1996:34). Here Wigley also refers to the often mentioned *Bonaventura Hotel* in Los Angeles, built by the architect-developer John Portland in 1977, and brought forward by Fredric Jameson in the seminal essay on postmodern space, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1992). The *Bonaventura Hotel* here appeared as an example of a new spatial logic that breaks with the logic of the Renaissance in that it does not build upon fixed positions between a generalized exterior and an individualized interior, but rather presents a space that does not have an exterior, and that subsequently does not have a governing and legitimizing ‘nature’ in relation to which it might be evaluated.



of others and by special way-finding devices: maps, street numbers, route signs, bus placards. But let the mishap of disorientation once occur, and the sense of anxiety and even terror that accompanies it reveals to us how closely it is linked to our sense of balance and well-being. The very word 'lost' in our language means more than simple geographical uncertainty; it carries overtones of ... disaster.<sup>172</sup>

Lynch describes this situation in very emotional words. Losing your sense of orientation and form is equivalent to losing yourself. Even if not explicitly spelled out by Lynch, designers and planners, as "the guardians of form", become guardians also of security in a psychological sense.<sup>173</sup> In a situation of increasing complexity and mobility, where the eye is no longer fixed to one point of *vista*, the ability of locating oneself is critical and has to find new grounds. The solution for Lynch was to pay even more 'literal' attention to the organizing principles of the visual image. If the urban landscape before could be mapped on the basis of one perspectival view, the mapping now should be based on sequences of slightly different visual frames. The aim for Lynch was to present the beholder, who now had become a *traveler*, "with a coherent and rhythmical succession of visual events" a task which implied the development of an entirely "new art form with tremendous potential for the enjoyment of millions of observers."<sup>174</sup>

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The art form Lynch referred to was that of *urban design*, which to a much greater extent could make use of new knowledge of visual perception and cognition, thereby enabling a more secure navigation through the disseminated urban landscape; a navigation that ultimately also would bring about a safer and less anxious process of individuation. Inspired by *Gestalt* psychology,<sup>175</sup> a branch of cognitive psychology grounding cognitive, spatial understanding in certain elementary structures of vision corresponding to a neurological architecture or field of forces, the Gestalt theory answered to

172 Kevin Lynch (1960:4). See also Mark Wigley (1996:34-35).

173 Mark Wigley (1996:35).

174 Kevin Lynch and Donald Appleyard (1995) "Sensuous Criteria for Highway Design". See also Mark Wigley (1996).

175 Lynch was in this respect influenced by the writings and practice of the painter, filmmaker and photographer György Kepes, who taught at MIT from 1946 to 1974, where he sat up the Center for Advanced Visual Studies in 1967. With a Bauhaus background, Kepes had collaborated with both László Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius, and his theories on perceptual vision were already developed in his landmark book, *The Language of Vision* of 1944. Together with his contemporary Rudolf Arnheim at Harvard, Kepes was very influential in applying the principles of modernism and *Gestalt Theory* to artistic and architectural education; principles of which the *lingua franca* was visual representation. For an introduction to Gestalt psychology, see Kurt Koffka (1935) *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, and Wolfgang Köhler (1929) *Gestalt Psychology*. For an overview of *Gestalt* psychology as applied to art, see Rudolf Arnheim (1954) *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*. See also D. Brett King (2004) *Max Wertheimer and Gestalt Theory*.

Lynch's ambitions to rationally map the experiential geography of the viewing subject.

Within cognitive psychology, the *Gestalt* is the elementary pattern or shape that enables an immediate or effortless apprehension of complex, spatial relations. As a common denominator of visual perception, it is what makes visual communication possible over linguistic and cultural borders. According to Gestalt principles, visual communication is universal and international, and knows no limits of tongue, vocabulary or grammar, and the conviction was that it could be perceived by the illiterate as well as the literate.<sup>176</sup> Explicitly rejecting the fundamental *polyvalence* of images, as it was concurrently formulated by for example Roland Barthes,<sup>177</sup> Lynch's urban design theory was instead developed into an ideal visual system of signification. The problem with contemporary visual conception was that *verbal* language was superimposed on top of visual perception as "a ret raining the eye" a putrefying grid of words obscuring vision.<sup>178</sup> A regime of predominantly written information was thus the direct cause of an urban environment 'running wild'. The trauma could only be dealt with through the rehabilitation of a *natural order*, through a kind of visual disinfection or sanitation. However, despite its naturalness, this visual purification required *teaching* people how to see. Educating people in *basic vision* was a way to *help* people regain control of their own environment.

160

A truly altruistic ambition, the risk-eliminating humanism of Kevin Lynch aimed at concrete and applied solutions. As signs, maps and guides were not enough to produce a sense of spatial safety, Lynch elaborated the visual logic into an urban, aesthetic grammar of security, insisting on the fact that the entire environment should be reshaped in order to produce "a sense of being at home instead of being lost."<sup>179</sup> The urban designer was an architect not only of the outer environment, but also of the inner, cognitive milieu – the constructor of a visual *script*. Subsequently, Lynch developed the practice of 'mental mapping', in an ambitious attempt to minimize the risk not only of exterior disorientation but also of mental and spiritual pollution.

Recalling the manifesto of Christiania and its similar ambition to prevent "mental and physical pollution", it is relevant to ask how its clearing away of oppressive obstacles may relate to the visual technique of Lynch, a spatial

176 György Kepes, *The Visual Arts Today*, from 1960, as quoted in Jorge Otero Pailos (2002:304).

177 Roland Barthes (1957) *Mythologies*.

178 See Jorge Otero Pailos (2002:304). Otero Pailos writes that "Kepes shared Lynch's conviction that the 'ret raining the eye' was an imperative, and insisted that only through visuality could humanity hope to control the industrialized systems of production that, in his (widely shared) view was turning urban cores into 'nodes' within immense sprawling metropolises." "Ret" in this passage refers to the process of soaking flax or hemp in order to decompose the stalks and separate the fibres; the rotting of the woody stalk; *Oxford English Dictionary Online Edition*. Download date 2006-04-30.

179 Kevin Lynch in a 1965 essay, quoted in Mark Wigley (1996:42).

paradigm to a certain extent still dominating the field of urban planning design. Pointed out by Mark Wigley, Lynch's aesthetics of security was first and foremost a domesticating principle that mixed a scientific approach with ideas of the British Townscape movement and its fetishization of the relation between traditional visual form and mentality.<sup>180</sup> When reconsidering *The Image of the City* some twenty years after its publication, Lynch would still insist upon balanced and beautiful visual space as a kind of cognitive 'home',<sup>181</sup> resolving the fear of disorientation in a functional narrative of "way finding."<sup>182</sup>

In Christiania however, the prevention of mental and physical pollution did not come about through visual domestication or purging. Instead, it was implemented through the deliberate elimination of an overall visual principle. What had been a military field of exercise, a visible or visual fortification, perfectly legible from a visual point of view, was rapidly occupied in a visual sense through an increase in expressive activity of all kinds, where the emancipatory potential of unpruned greenery, architectural snipping and engrafting, temporary shortcuts and heaps of material was acknowledged. In Christiania, pollution was the tedious, mind-numbing order, and the pre-conceived aesthetic norm. Preventing mental and physical littering had nothing to do with establishing an economy of perception, but with a deliberate use of perceptual energy, generating a creative space for the expressive, the cacophonous and peregrine in relation to which the subject as agent would not be bereft of, or barred from, the right to its own enriching aberrations.

161

In the way-finding morphology of Kevin Lynch, the discredited functionality and *usefulness* of visual form is rehabilitated. What large scale modernity had perverted and exploited, the visual idea of *cityscape* would re-create; a re-creation not only of spatial uniformity expressed in terms of scenic, surveillable landscape, but a re-creation of subjective oneness, of the subject as a coherent, non-interrupted and secured spatial narrative. Christiania on the other hand, constitutes an aesthetic not of functionality but of bewilderment, a labyrinthine aesthetics inspired less by neuroscience and more by an avant-garde tradition of deliberate disorientation, such as surrealist automatism, Situationist *dérive* or experimental rock music; an aesthetic of waste rather than of purification,

180 Gordon Cullen's influential philosophy, summarized in his *Townscape* of 1961, but preceded by numerous articles in the *Architectural Review* since the mid-40s, described according to Wigley, "the art of townscape" as the control of the sequence of views presented by an urban landscape", where the city is actually conceived of as "an 'art gallery', as a series of 'pictures' in which one painterly view leads to the next, indeed 'forces' the eye (and therefore the body holding it up) forward through space." Fusing pedestrian, secure townscape aesthetics with a car driver's visual sensibility, Lynch developed what he came to call "the Drama of Driving" a directed and emotionally functional staging of the visual experience. See Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch and John R. Meyer (1963) "The View from the Road: A Highway Redesigned for the Drama of Driving", pp. 74-77. See also Mark Wigley (1996), p. 42 and p. 46.

181 Although Kevin Lynch would later admit that his hypotheses of visual primacy were more assumed than proven, his work retains a firm grip on spatial and planning discourse today.

182 See Mark Wigley (1996:46).

whose main objective was the propagation of the subject into a vast unknown of potential interactions.

The critics of structural urbanism build their arguments on similar reflections as those practically articulated in Christiania. A secured and predetermined visual orientation in urban space can never become a value in itself, since what characterizes urbanity is not only a visually coherent form, but social and communicative interaction. Getting lost therefore also has its indispensable and quite generative value – if one becomes lost, one can always ask or consult someone, one can always re-activate the social relations of which the city consists. This to a certain extent self-evident statement emphasizes the fact that there is a creative potential to bewildering disorientation, which is entirely neglected in a way-finding logic based upon a naturalized aesthetic of preconceived and hereditary forms and signs.

As a critique of orientational logic, Christiania actualizes the fact that the simple dynamics of participation and oral interaction are excluded from formalized spatial planning principles – the practice of, dialogically or polemologically, finding one's way. In the place of such a way-finding involvement, a formal aesthetics of essentialist meanings is developed, as in the normalizing process of Christiania. This aesthetics is furthermore framed in terms of a securing landscape; an outlook immediately accessible for each and every inhabitant of Copenhagen. In a future, normalized Christiania, the objective is that no one should feel obliged to ask his or her way. Instead everyone should be guaranteed the possibility of immediate cognitive understanding, not only of the area as a specific city district, but as a common historical denominator, positioning the subject in accordance with a normative frame. The idea is that Christiania should emerge as the commonsensical "elongated landscape-like space" it so obviously is, a scenic vista with formal qualities in which the advanced bastions "provide motion and perspective as you move along the water."<sup>183</sup> Mental mapping here has explicitly transformed into a deliberate "mindscaping",<sup>184</sup> a governing technique making use of a normative staging in order to clearly localize and map a unified and secured (Danish) urban identity.

Way-finding/providing aesthetics takes as its point of departure the visual definition of cognitive properties, of identities and circumscribed forms. It is in this sense a visually based reifying aesthetics, with the aim of facilitating a kind of scriptural concordance. This approach similarly constituted the point of departure for the SAVE inventory, which formed the basis for the

183 "Voldanlæggets og Stadsgravens langstrakte landskabelige rum med få synlige huse er et storslået menneskeskabt anlæg midt i storbyen. De fremskudte bastioner giver bevægelse og perspektiv, når man bevæger sig langs vandet." *Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 8.

184 Kenneth R. Olwig (2002a) *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic: From Britain's Renaissance to America's New World*, pp. xxxi-xxxii, and p. 218.

normalization process.<sup>185</sup> Designated as an objective observation of “well-defined” spaces or forms “marked with great distinction”,<sup>186</sup> the inventory imposed a language or script of ‘sameness’, indicating what would “not fit together” or what would “not harmonize.”<sup>187</sup> Even though the SAVE protocol was not meant to suppress subjective perspectives, but on the contrary aimed at a situated evaluation of specific buildings in relation to their historical/cultural context, thus acknowledging the ideological, evasive, and temporal character of architectonic experience, it nevertheless disregarded the performative and bewildering aspects of Christiania in favor of a generalizing and orientational logic. While ‘subjectivity’ in the case of the SAVE inventory is of the ‘objectifying’ kind, a subjectivity established in relation to a cognitive designation of forms and identities, the ‘subjectivity’ of Christiania is expressive in kind, based upon the provision of space for expansive action. The underlying aesthetics is an aesthetics exclusively relying upon taste, a taste that in turn falls back onto a *sensus communis*, a non-questioned (and non-articulated), way-providing representational regime.

An alternative mental map or plan, Christiania is not of the solidifying or edifying kind, but a disseminated cartography of irregularities, deviations, events and encounters. As the practice of localizing the subject in the wide archipelago of potentials, cartography does not necessarily have to be equivalent with a securing way-finding or a calculated minimization of disorientational risks. Less of a Crusoean planner, the Christiania inhabitant or visitor becomes its own cartographer, an agent, who through its discontinuous unfolding and movement produces and reproduces an alternative map, which, as James Corner has expressed it, “provides the game-board” rather than the final solution, the pitch “for playing out a range of urban futures.”<sup>188</sup> According to Corner, mapping is so much more than a safekeeping measurement, but enables a heuristic relation between agent and a *milieu*. Mapping is not merely an iterative copying or calculation of an objective reality, but an unfolding or recitation of arguments as to how this relation may develop and proliferate.

185 SAVE: *Survey of Architectural Values in the Environment*.

186 “I det store landskabelige rum markerer de nyere huse sig med stor forskellighed. Nogle gemmer sig helt i den tætte beplantning, andre søger placeringer, der eksponerer udsigt og synlighed, som markant påvirker det store landskabsrum. Samtidigt truer nybyggeriet voldanlægget som bygningsværk og slører oplevelsen af volden.” *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget (2003:16-17).

187 In an evaluation of a building that consisted of a combination of what had been at hand, the SAVE inventory stated that the building architectonically was “a joint of two buildings that do not fit together” (en sammenbygning av to bygninger der ikke passer sammen). The extension furthermore “seemed to have been knocked up without much consideration.” (“Tilbygningen fremstår som et hus der er blevet banket op uden de store overvejelser”). *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, C2A, bygn.nr.3.

188 James Corner (1999b) “The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention”, p. 243.

In relation to this discussion, it is interesting to dislocate the question of how Christiania should be normalized, SAVEd, or subjectively mapped, and instead focus on Christiania as a cartographic performance or enactment, a tactical mapping of the urban landscape, embracing also its bewildering aspects, its non-identified spots and its non-finalized forms. As such, it is a mapping that does not build upon the definitions of units, properties, or identities, but on a disorientational desire, opening for the unpredictability and arbitrariness of complex urban space.

## Interceptions

As a bewildering cartography in a spatially controlling economy, Christiania has constituted a provocative element. Instead of a re-centering of the subject in relation to an objective and clearly discernible surrounding, Christiania has blurred the borders of both surrounding and subject, thus actualizing the centrifugal, disseminating tendencies of a 'Copernican turn' – a fundamental shift in the way to understand and situate subjectivity. What used to be described as a fixed position is now understood as suspended in between representative submission and imaginative projection, also in between modern functionality and a-modern security, a suspension that different kinds of either grounding or planning practices have sought to stabilize.

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Rather than passive suspension however, this in-between positionality of the subject could be understood as a potential *interception*, a reminder of the inherent limitations and the ubiquitous instability of a representational system that has become naturalized, taken for granted. This interceptive potential at the same time constitutes the subject in a new way. No longer unfolding as a consequence of a submission to a system, the subject now comes into being through an expressive act of a deviating, critical and interrogative kind. This new role of the subject is firstly explored by an artistic *avant-garde* articulating a transgressive rather than cyclical cosmology, the movement of "*la vie moderne*", an urban movement described by sidewalk poet Charles Baudelaire as a state of constant flux, a "transitory, fugitive element, whose metamorphoses are so rapid", yet which should "on no account be despised or dispensed with."<sup>189</sup>

The artistic avant-garde, to a great extent a particularizing movement, a movement actualizing the active, often bohemian and queer interception of the subject in public life, already from the beginning contributed to a splitting of modernity in two. Described by Belgian architecture theorist Hilde Heynen as *programmatic* and *transitory*,<sup>190</sup> these two modernities represented entirely different approaches to spatial change. While the programmatic looks upon

189 "la modernité c'est le transitoire, le fugitive, le contingent." Charles Baudelaire (1863/1943) *Constantin Guys. Le peintre de la vie moderne*. See also Hilde Heynen (1992) "Architecture Between Modernity and Dwelling: Reflections on Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*", pp. 79-91.

190 See Hilde Heynen (1992).

modernity as a project, a problem-solving projection of an ideal onto reality, the transitory stresses the expansive, 'fugitive' or disorientational tendency, the tendency to discontinuous and unpredictable drift – linguistically, culturally, and politically. This also answers to the difference implied already in Kant's critique between a domestic, nestling principle and a peregrine, wandering desire. Two diverging paradigms, one dialectically oriented towards progress and one dialogically articulated as expansion, they describe entirely different spatial settings.

This difference could be understood also as a difference between two paradigmatically distinct *avant-gardes*. A military term, within modernity employed in order to designate the conquest of an epistemological unknown; the avant-garde describes a projective idea, a strategic positioning ahead of or beyond mainstream society, possibly closer to a transcendent ideal. Understood as such, the avant-garde is constituted by the *forerunners*, not merely transgressing the limits of the present but also functioning as *safeguards* guaranteeing the future, of the relevance and validity of the present program in relation to a vast unknown. In progressive modernity, the *scouts*<sup>191</sup> are the *avant-garde*, strategically securing the way for the main troops. Operating on an ideological field, their transgression is advancement towards perfection also in moral terms. In this respect, the avant-garde represents a vertical scheme, its fore-runners advancing from a solid ground towards a light not yet solidified. The modern, progressive avant-garde sustains what art theorist Benjamin Buchloh designates as a kind of theological orientation towards a higher goal, yet on a worldly level, as "[...] the solely accessible secularized experience of the *sacred*."<sup>192</sup>

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Buchloh's argument is that within programmatic modernity, the only purpose of creative practice is to represent a secularized sacred – ideals and principles providing a new kind of evaluative guidance. The avant-garde describes a spiritual sublime, a principle of *elevation* rather than a principle of dirty *up-rooting* or horizontal re-routing. It describes a secular monumentalization and glorification of transgression, which instead of generating radical change, transforms into a representative principle, an "affirmative mimesis",<sup>193</sup> a principle programmatically confirming preconceived, elevated ideals.

191 Scout in English is a quite compromised word that quite clearly expresses its inherent military associations, and thus also my intended critique. However, in other languages, as for example in Swedish, this military and moral signification is less clear, which on the one hand makes it more difficult to discern the evolutionary and progressive ideological ballast of modernity, and on the other hand makes modernity as such more ambiguous. See for example Swedish art historian Ulf Linde, and his classic collection of essays, with the polyvalent title *Spejare (Scouts)* from 1960.

192 Benjamin Buchloh (2000:xxii).

193 Benjamin Buchloh (2000:xxi).



The transitory forerunners of modernity however, are of a different kind. Not at all programmed to take off in a certain direction, these runners are less projecting and safeguarding 'scouts' and more immanent, possibly disturbing disseminators, finding their way through the system wherever a space opens out.<sup>194</sup> In his critical inquiry of the modern avant-garde, Benjamin Buchloh describes such immanent movements in terms of "neo-avant-garde"<sup>195</sup> generative formations, which could be characterized as interceptors rather than forerunners, seizers as well as obstructers of opportunities. Provocative rather than transgressive, these immanent actors are furthermore tactically operating within rather than strategically beyond reality.<sup>196</sup> As interceptors, transitory figures, they run diagonally, transversally, but first and foremost horizontally, with no other objective than the exploration of possible leeway, of tentative connectivity.

194 In my discussion of the transitory avant-garde as immanent 'forerunners' I have chosen not to comment on the apparent connection to Deleuze's and Guattari's mapping of modernity in terms of *rhizomatic propagation*. The *rhizome*, propagating horizontally in all directions, launching numerous offsprings, roots in new localities. Rhizomatic mapping is an expansive and enabling mapping that takes into consideration the sprouting of many-headed experience, the possibility to become lost, de-territorialized, rootless, and the subsequent potentiality to concurrent re-rooting and re-routing. "[D]ifferent from trees or their roots", argues Deleuze and Guattari, "the rhizome connects any point to any other point...[i]t is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion." ("Résumons les caractères principaux d'un rhizome: à la différence des arbres ou de leur racines, le rhizome connecte un point quelconque avec un autre point quelconque...Il n'est pas fait d'unités, mais des dimensions, ou plutôt de directions mouvantes. Il n'a pas de commencement ni de fin, mais toujours un milieu, par lequel il pousse et déborde." Deleuze and Guattari (1980:31). As the unfolding subject in motion, "[i]t has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle [*milieu*] through which it grows and overflows." If in an arborescent structure the subject is constituted as an hierarchically structured *leaf* with its own proper place, submitted to the overall structure or code, it is in a rhizomatic structure unfolding as a principle of unsettled mediation and 'link-ability,' as the aerial or subterranean *runner* materializing a broadcasting potential of connectivity. (*Runner*; in Swedish, 'reva', 'utlöpare', 'skott'; botanical term.)

195 Benjamin Buchloh (2000).

196 The idea of a critical *arrière-garde*, as proposed by architectural theorist Kenneth Frampton, in this respect presents an even more securing strategy in relation to progressive modernity and its alternatives. In his critique of modernism, Frampton interprets *radicality* as a form of resistance to naïvely programmatic progression. The movement of the *arrière-garde* is in this respect not necessarily a movement backwards, but constitutes a rear-guard both actualizing the importance of common roots, and preventing these roots from taking over and transforming into stigmatizing nostalgia. In terms of representation, the *arrière-garde* is furthermore an essential actor in Frampton's envisioning of a *critical regionalism*, where the *arrière-garde* also functions as the safe-guard of regionally or locally defined immediate and non-discursive practices. A strict application of *holism*, critical regionalism is based upon the idea that regions form untranslatable unities all of which are vertically grounded in their specific circumstances, and between which there should be and could be no horizontal (*rhizomatic*, my comment) exchange. See for example Kenneth Frampton (1985) "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance", pp. 16-30 and Kenneth Frampton (2002) "Rappel à l'ordre: The Case for the Tectonic". For a critique of Frampton, see for example Jorge Otero-Pailos (2002) and Gunnar Sandin (2003).

Disconnecting, rerouting, and recoding established patterns of values from within a situated present, the 'neo-avant-garde' runner, as both a generative and critical agent within a transitory modernity, operates in analogy with the agitator, the buffoon, the joker, or the entertainer, all of which makes use of the surplus of a given situation. It is within such a framework and in such a role that Christiania appears, legitimizing itself as an immanent and transitive figure, expanding the range of interceptions rather than affirming transcendent, representative or idealizing claims.

\* \* \*

In my critique of the urban landscape in which Christiania has emerged, I have chosen to take as a point of departure the transformed situation and role of the subject. As expressed in the Christiania manifesto of 1971, one of the main objectives behind the establishing of the Free Town was the defense of urban space as a space for the individual to unfold, to realize its potentials in relation to a non-representational, non-restrictive and non-commercial surrounding. At the intersection of concrete social presuppositions and spatial play, a new subject would unfold, a subject less circumscribed and unified, a subject not only defending its coherent core, but acknowledging also its potential expansion, its agitated, restless dimensions; its possibilities to become Other. This new subject would accept neither its divine predestination, nor its fixity within a 'spectacular' representational framework, but demand its spatial right to take action, to take place, to perform. An intersection of different subjective movements and trajectories – epistemological, aesthetic, and political – Christiania attains a specific significance as a full-scale realization of a performative, formless, participatory and (subjectively) activist urban landscape.

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My further interpretation of this activist landscape has proceeded in four steps. The first of these steps has consisted in the location of what can be called a new urban state of conflict – a historical, post-war urban situation in which the subject was to be positioned in a new way. As individualized consumer in a capitalist Welfare State, the subject is presented to freedom as a commodified product, including also its potential relation to an abundant urban space. The Situationist answer to this circumscriptive process of individuation was a strong de-centering and disseminating movement, a dissolution of the subject through drift, through *détournement*, through satirical play. Representative individuation was countered by the urban *situation*; the idea of an open-ended encounter or event in relation to which the subject would be able to expand into agent.

The second step has been the expansion of this situation into a Movement, into a force of cultural de-centralization with wider implications, a Movement of which Christiania certainly was a part. Apart from a clear politization of the private, this Movement consisted of a popularization of an initially quite limited critical aesthetic posture. The de-formation or un-doing of the individual subject became a global concern for an entire generation, embracing the expansion of

the personal both on an aesthetic, erotic, and political plane. If man within the representational system of the consumerist society and the Welfare State had come to believe in his one-dimensionality, this view was now challenged by a more multi-dimensional attitude, a permanent revolution acted out on an inter-personal plane. Identities and placial belonging were provocatively agitated rather than submissively fetishized, creatively recycled rather than arduously produced, stolen rather than worshipped; ultimately a tendency that also came to affect urban development and planning in Denmark.

The third step in this discursive tracing of a de-centered subject has consisted of a mapping also of the aesthetic and philosophical archipelago in which this expansion has taken place. This theoretical situating has included a discussion of the “Copernican turn”, the simultaneous emergence and disappearance of the subject as a locus, a site for epistemological controversy. This turn has not only affected the way we understand the subject’s ability to form a coherent and unified image of a fragmented and manifold world, but has also opened up a critical awareness of the vastness of this world, and of the presuppositions for every attempt to simplify, to reduce, to formalize or to plan the further reproduction of this multiplicity. It has actualized the re-centralizing ambitions associated with these endeavors, the attempts to establish guiding, edifying, or naturalizing *verticals*, but also its predominant *horizontal* character, the principle of an expansive, externalizing and peregrine rather than elevatory, internalizing, and monumental, spatial sublime.

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The fourth step finally, has consisted of a discussion of this Copernican turn and its implications in terms of spatial practices of representation and re-production. As exemplified in and through Christiania, this shift can be described as a shift from representational strategies of formal positioning to re-productive tactics of formless re-enactment. These tactics – in this context understood as interactive responses to hegemonic representational regimes – have entailed an interrogation of the concrete presuppositions for the positioning of the subject, such as linguistic practice, spatial representation, practices of orientation and spatial innovation. While planned urbanity rests upon literal meanings, fixed perspectives, orientational security, and progressive development, the realization of an expanded subject entails an entirely different geography – an urban landscape of complex voicings, of dramatic potentials, of bewildering deviation and interceptive change.

What I have wanted to emphasize is the fact that, as a historical and political event, Christiania forms part of a wider contestation of programmatic modernity, and the attempts to minimize the effects of subjective agitation and activist expansion. Through the imposition of different, more or less *securing* aesthetic frameworks, either elevatory or normative, urban planning and design have unfolded as efficient individuating and re-individuating strategies. This rationalization of civic activity (that of spatial interaction) into what Jean François Lyotard has called “a grand narrative”, a foundational representational regime, is thus what Christiania, from the level of the singular agent, has

emphatically denounced. Instead of a passive submission to the casting associated with such a grand narrative, Christiania has invented alternative positions, unveiling an abundance of “minor narratives”<sup>197</sup> in relation to which subjects, as agents, eventually may take place or give voice, and for which they need not merely rely upon a specified location but can realize their inherent discursive disposition to run to and fro over an expanding field.

As the subject has become decentralized and spatialized, the concept of space has concurrently been actualized in a new way, not only as natural container, but as voicings, as dramatic space, as bewildered place and interceptive actualization of encounters, of borders. In the following, I will discuss how this expansion may be understood from a spatial point of view, from the point of view of a ‘space’ that will not content itself with the secondary role as formal scaffolding in relation to which the world and subject may again be re-centered or held upright. It is rather a ‘space’ that asserts itself in its own right, a material propagation in relation to which the subject, as agent, will never have to suffer from the compulsion of coming to rest.

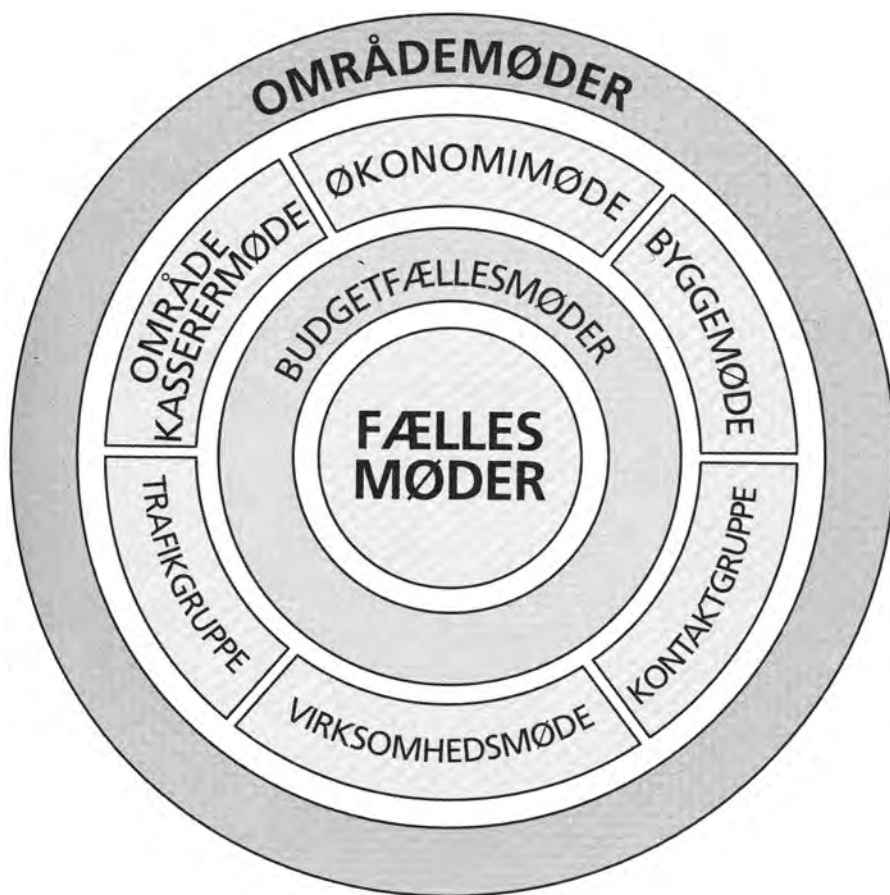


Fig. 12

Organizational structure. From *Christiania at Work*  
– *Status Report: From Vision to Reality*, 2003.

(Translation, from the periphery inwards)

- District meetings
  - Economy meeting
  - Construction meeting
  - Contact group
  - Business meeting
  - Traffic group
  - Districts accountants meeting
  - Budget Plenary
  - Plenary





Fig. 13

Action Day 1990. Photograph by Nils Vest.



Fig. 14

Theatre group *Solvognen* in 1977. Photograph by Nils Vest.



Fig. 15 Self-experimentation in Christiania – worshipping of meditation, yoga, Buddhism, Taoism etc.; “and note to what extent we worship the spontaneous and individual praxis” (Børge Madsen 1979).





Fig. 15

A public park in Christiania: "The Future Forest" 2004.

## IV. The Formlessness of Space

To practice space is thus to repeat the joyful and silent experience of the child, that is, in place, *to be other* and *to move toward the other*.

Michel de Certeau (1980)<sup>1</sup>

One of the main driving forces behind the emergence of Christiania was the craving for a surplus space, a space outside of the planned and ordered – a space for alternative subject-positioning in relation to a likewise alternative ‘society.’ Once proclaimed, the driving issue for the Free Town has been the incessant legitimization of this superfluity and independence. In a wider sense, Christiania’s contested position as either loot or left-over in relation to a formalized urban landscape, has unremittingly brought the notion of ‘space’ to attention: What does an initiative like Christiania want to do with the ‘space’ or ‘place’ it has claimed? And how does its emergence affect the way these ambiguous notions are generally understood?

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As a discursive test-bed, not only for the general notion of ‘urban space’ but also for other spatial notions, such as ‘Free Town’, ‘loonie asylum’, ‘meeting place’, ‘village green’, ‘historical landscape’, or ‘neighborhood’, Christiania presents an opportunity to interrogate a wide range of spatial aspects; representational, epistemological, organizational. A manifestation of a to a certain extent neglected surplus of spatial ambitions, Christiania has contributed to the actualization of certain principal ambiguities when it comes to spatial representation and reproduction. One way of conceiving of these ambiguities has been to describe them in terms of oppositions, preferably between geometry and phenomena, or between rational space and lived place. Such oppositions may be efficient for establishing a representational regime, but of little value when it comes to understanding the composite real of what Michel de Certeau has called “ways of making”<sup>2</sup> – spatial and discursive procedures or usages, which, rather than producing and reproducing new representative orders, polemically consumes such orders, thereby also constantly revitalizing them.

In the following discussion, I will nevertheless address the ambiguous notion of ‘space’ from the point of view of two different aspects of spatial experience and interpretation. I will start off by arguing, that rather than a theological idea, a geometrical grid, or an abstract void, ‘space’ has emerged as an aesthetic dimension, but not necessarily in the normative sense. While the aestheticization of space on the one hand entailed a turn towards the subjective and intimate conditioned by a transcendent *sensus communis*, it has on the other hand also inspired the opposite tendency of peregrine expansion; an unsettling of formal identities and structures. Even though such a comparison might run the risk of being interpreted as a simple opposition of the dichotomizing kind, it is first

1 “Pratiquer l’espace, c’est donc répéter l’expérience jubilatoire et silencieuse de l’enfance; c’est, dans le lieu, *être autre et passer par l’autre*.” Michel de Certeau (1980:164).

2 “*manières de faire*”, Michel de Certeau (1980:xl).

and foremost thought to open up more reciprocal and entangled distinctions, such as that between *representational spaces* ordering reality and the *spaces of representations* and signifying practices, producing and reproducing reality; distinctions to which we will return.<sup>3</sup>

As a strategy of re-centering a scattered space, the former of these two aspects has been quite thoroughly discussed, not least within the spatial disciplines. The latter perspective has been less investigated, developed as a critical or artistic rather than scientific or architectonic discourse. In my discussion, I will address both perspectives. Approaching attempts to stabilize space through such representational notions as ground, authenticity, intentionality, and dwelling, I will present a critique of phenomenologically articulated theories of space. In their place, I will suggest what Michel de Certeau would have called a *polemological* understanding, an understanding of space as a confrontational and dialogic domain of reproductive and interactive uses, where different spatial practices play different discursive roles. This polemological understanding will be further developed through the relating of linguistic and spatial practices in their actualizing of *liminal* spaces, borderline domains of semantic instability and formlessness, where, as in the case of Christiania, relations can unfold in open-ended usage with no recognizable end.

## Urbanity: Space De-Centered and Re-Aestheticized

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If a rational or Cartesian idea of space had been based upon the conception of the surroundings as a general 'subject matter', a potential spatial object to be grasped and handled by the subject through the cognitive act, Kant enlarged the cognitive site into a 'turning space', a cognitive *Raum* for manoeuvres and dislocations, a conceptualization of the surrounding in a new way. But the question remains; why is 'space' still interesting and how do we relate to it within a complex urban situation? Is it a dimension proposing a *recollection* of the scattered subject or is it contrarily rather a potential reinforcement of its dissemination?<sup>4</sup>

Even though space, as the 'matter' *par préférence* of architectural and landscape practices, has been ascribed qualities beyond the naively ontological, physical,

3 Henri Lefebvre (1974) *La production de l'espace*, pp. 48-57.

4 The actualization of 'space' as a 'subject matter' in the cognitive sense (as for example defined by Kant in his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*) is part of the rational/modernist discourse founded in a subject-centered model of the world. This is also why, as Mattias Kärrholm points out in his dissertation on space as territoriality, 'space' constitutes an issue in all disciplines. According to Sven-Olov Wallenstein, 'space' as privileged object in the spatial professions is not explicitly spelled out until it appears in August Schmarzow's lecture *Das Wesen der architektonischen Schöpfung* from 1893, where he formulates an entire aesthetic around the idea of *Raumgefühl* (feeling of space) and architecture as *Raumgestalterin* (shaping of space). See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004) *Den moderna arkitekturens filosofier* (*The Philosophies of Modern Architecture*), p. 31. See also Mattias Kärrholm (2004) *Arkitekturens territorialitet* (*The Territoriality of Architecture*), pp. 17-18.

or geometrical, it has often emerged as a re-centering faculty, a faculty with the potential of bringing back some order to a twisted and distributed universe. Under a variety of names emanating from German aesthetic theory, such as *Raum* (room), *Ganzheit* (wholeness), *Gestalt*, *Zusammenschau*, (composite whole),<sup>5</sup> space has been thought of both as an emotional and cognitive category, with the main function of coordinating the ideas of the human mind as a locus not only for analytical-logical judgment, but for its aesthetic equivalent as well. A combination of Cartesian *res extensa* and *res cogitans*, ‘space’ develops within a rational discourse to the privileged pan-representation that makes up Mind in its entirety.<sup>6</sup> As a combination of memory, experience and projection, ‘space’ has been conceived of as a proto-psychological dimension, an ‘object’ of study first and foremost in a cerebral, mental and emotional sense.

‘Landscape’ also emerges as a ‘synaesthesia’, a visual sensation analogous to the cognitive idea of an external, yet internalized ‘space.’ An early example could be found in the writings of German 19<sup>th</sup> century aesthetician Friedrich Theodor Vischer, who emphasized precisely this interconnection, or unity, between an inner and outer experience of space:

Consider first the beauty of landscape, which is so strangely analogous and related to the beauty of music. Here light and color affect us through inorganic forms and yet they do so in such a way that the landscape as a whole appears to us a mirror image of our own emotional state.<sup>7</sup>

The idea of *Raumgefühl* here appears as ‘landscape’, as an *aesthetic* dimension, a spatial construction reinforcing a “psychologizing re-interpretation”<sup>8</sup> of the Kantian actualization of an out-reaching and de-centered subject. As an intimate and strong *identification with* space, ‘landscape’ as a category is a consequence of that for which aesthetician Robert Vischer (son of Friedrich Theodor) would reserve the relational notion of *empathy*. Empathy was for Vischer the ability to actualize “our own psychological life as percipients bring[ing] into contact [...] any and every phenomenon capable of being grasped aesthetically.”<sup>9</sup> Even though the phenomenal world might remain external and out of reach for us as

5 For a landscape related comment on these concepts, see Torsten Hägerstrand (1995) “Landscape as Overlapping Neighbourhoods”, p. 89, where Hägerstrand in turn refers to German geographer Gerhard Hard’s discussions on the development of the concept of landscape.

6 Edward S. Casey (1997) *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, p. 211.

7 Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1866/1998), from *Kritik meiner Aesthetik (Critique of My Aesthetics)*, p. 689. F.T. Vischer used the notion of “withholding” for this ability to aesthetically conceive of a composite, outspread and fragmented category as a unity, as such anticipating the notion of “bracketing” developed by Husserl in his phenomenology.

8 See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:21).

9 Robert Vischer (1874/1998) “The Aesthetic Act and Pure Form”, p. 691. Vischer’s theory on empathy was first published in the essay *Über das optische Formgefühl (On the Optic Experience of Form)*, which was published in 1873.

agents, we may still as sensible and intellectual subjects reach all the way into the inner being of objects or spaces. 'Landscape' is in this respect an expression for such an empathic, outreaching force, more a reflection of our own imaginative ability than a representation of the real.

The actualization of a perceptible, sensible, or phenomenal 'space' has not primarily been considered a means to expand and explore without bias a de-centered reality, but a means to rehabilitate a consistent subjectivity. 'Landscape' and ideal personality are in this respect both reflections of the same unifying ambition. However, landscapes as formal, visual representations of physical space have been pleasing to us not because they have been representations of reality but because they have mobilized our imagination. What they have articulated is not only pleasure, but a transgressing, aesthetic ability, an ability to move beyond, which rendered to the aesthetic and spatial categories a new dimension. 'Space', as *Raum* now came to be understood not only as a structure a priori of a universal knowing, but as a dimension possible to form and affect, not least through human architectonic or artistic practice. At the same time, the cognitive awareness of space also spurred the unfolding of a range of positive sciences such as physiology, geography, anthropology, or psychology,<sup>10</sup> all of which were in fact springing from the subjective aestheticization, or cognitive construction, of space.

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Space unfolds first and foremost as 'presentism', a cognitive means to establish and grasp the direct and empathetic 'co-feeling' connecting reality and mind. Articulated in terms of *authenticity*, this presentism developed from a new kind of secularized experience, which also constituted the basis for empirical observation. On the one hand based upon the intense concern with a spatially defined 'becoming-oneself' or 'finding oneself', the authentic could on the other hand be understood as an uncompromising self-eradication, the basis for a Newtonian, mathematical cosmology. However, as American cultural theoretician Marshall Berman has pointed out, there was in this new empiricism also an implicit social radicalism. "If this mechanistic perspective seemed to lessen man's stature in the universe, yet in another sense it pointed the way toward a new humanism."<sup>11</sup> Demystifying the presumptions of a divine set of forms circumscribing the plurality of nature, the mechanistic perspective also "opened infinitely the horizon of what was possible in the world."<sup>12</sup> 'The authentic' in this respect entailed an activation of the spatial abundance formerly suppressed by a prevailing representational regime. Authenticity in this sense also had political consequences,<sup>13</sup> in that it constituted a call not only for man's capacity to *be* and *feel* alive, but for his possibility to *act out* this 'liveliness' in a continuous becoming. As expressed already by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, this

10 See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:21).

11 Marshall Berman (1970) *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society*, pp. 12-13.

12 Marshall Berman (1970:13).

13 Marshall Berman (1970:xv).

morality stressed our obligation as humans “to fully ‘use every part of ourselves’ and simultaneously ‘feel our own existence.’”<sup>14</sup> The authentic would come to us not in passive contemplation, but in our ‘making use of ourselves’, in our active, conscious and empathic *partaking*. An independent ‘self-doer’, from the Greek *authentēs* (*auto*, self, and *hentes*, a doer),<sup>15</sup> the authentic and empathic subject is first and foremost a radical spatial activist:

Life is not breath, but action; to live is to make use of our organs, our senses, our faculties, every part of ourselves which gives us the feeling of our own existence. The man who has lived longest is not he who has passed the greatest number of years, but he who has most felt life.<sup>16</sup>

The book in which this quote of Rousseau appears, Berman’s *The Politics of Authenticity*, was published only a year before Christiania’s emergence and exemplifies to what extent aspects of subjectivity and identity now became inscribed in a spatial discourse. The specific focus of Berman’s reading of Montesquieu and Rousseau is in this respect the paradoxes of this new awareness of subjective spatiality unfolding in relation to the emerging modern metropolis. When Rousseau talks about “the vast space of the world”,<sup>17</sup> he referred both to the adolescent feeling of stepping out of the restraining environments of his childhood Geneva and the corresponding excitement of entering the metropolis, the capital, Paris. At the same time, this new spatial freedom seemed to spur an even stronger feeling of insufficiency. As Berman expresses it, “[f]or him who would discover man, the ‘*vaste espace du monde*’ turned out to be empty, a ‘*vaste désert du monde*’.”<sup>18</sup> The metropolitan experience of authentic space as a dynamic openness and promising potentiality of encounter thus also brought with it another kind of alienated ‘authenticity’ cut off from the world, an entirely cognitive freedom, with no real power to change neither the self nor the surrounding space.

What Berman localizes in Montesquieu and Rousseau is a kind of proto-modernity, emanating from the destabilized spatial position of the subject. Like the *dandy* of Charles Baudelaire, the metropolitan citizen activates space in a new and more interrogative way, embodying a conflicted and tense correlation between what *is* and what *could be*, between what is conceived of by the sensing ‘soul’ and could be achieved by the active ‘body.’ Exposed to the immense flux of changing forms of life, the contemporary human being is at the same time a distant observer, who has learned to see through pretensions and surfaces, and an altogether *modern* being, with the ability to actively engage

14 Marshall Berman (1970:172).

15 *Online Etymology Dictionary* (2001), compiled by Douglas Harper, <http://www.etymonline.com>. Download date 2006-04-30.

16 Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, I, as quoted in Berman (1970:171).

17 “la vaste espace du monde”, quoted in Berman (1970:113).

18 Marshall Berman (1970:115).

in the original conflict of life,<sup>19</sup> an active, aesthetically conscious percipient, able to extract out of the “transitory, fugitive element”, of the metropolis, out of its rapid metamorphoses, that new kind of fragmented wholeness called modernity. Even the most diverse urbanity may in this sense appear as a whole, a paradox of opportunities and stimuli for the development of both individual *independence* and differentiating *inter-dependence*, a secular sensation of space, or in the words of early sociologist Georg Simmel, “one of those great historical formations in which opposing streams which enclose life unfold, as well as join one another with equal right.”<sup>20</sup>

A paradoxical inconsistency is particular to this new kind of wholeness, a conflict that cannot be expressed other than in *spatial* terms. In Simmel’s early writings on the city, spatial experience also emerges as composite, consisting of on the one hand the material of the worlds, the unsorted contents of reality, and on the other hand the totalities formed by each and every sensing human. However, for Simmel, it is also the particular aesthetic ability to *incorporate* reality, to perceive and cognitively make sense, which is constitutive of the notion of “World.” The deepest problem of modern man, argues Simmel in the *The Metropolis and Spiritual Life*, is the individual’s claim to autonomy of existence in an increasingly complex society. Submitted to the *intensification of nervous life* caused by the rapid and continuous changes of outer and inner experiences, man transforms from a coherent subject to an *Unterschiedswesen*, a “differentiating creature.” Situated in an urban context, man reacts upon dissimilarities and is stimulated by the distinctions created by one phenomenon followed by another.<sup>21</sup> This is, however, an intensification that also in itself is ambiguous, a quantitative concentration of difference that at any moment may transform into indifference, into what Simmel calls “the blasé attitude”, a surfeit of a nervous life that has reached its peak.<sup>22</sup> In such a situation, the question of autonomy has to be raised in a new way.

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For Simmel, metropolitan existence is an “intellectualist” kind of living, a dialectics between on the one hand reason, which generates an undifferentiated form of life, characterized by precision, calculation and exchangeability, and on the other hand (as a defense mechanism and a new kind of self-assertion) an intensified nervous life, an increased consciousness as to the distinctions that

19 As mentioned in Chapter 3, Baudelaire makes a distinction between the “mere *flaneur*” and the modern, passionate observer, who also has the ironic ability to extract from the fugitive and transitory the ‘heroic’ essence of contemporaneity. See Charles Baudelaire (1863/1943:14-15).

20 Georg Simmel (1903/1997a) “Metropolis and Modern Life”, p. 185. Originally published in 1903 under the title of “Die Grosstädte und das Geistesleben.” I have here relied upon the English translation by Kurt H. Wolff from 1950.

21 Georg Simmel (1903/1997a:175). In my interpretation, I have also relied upon the Swedish translation by Erik af Edholm, with some of the central German concepts inserted. See Georg Simmel (1903/1981) “Storstäderna och det andliga livet”, p. 209.

22 Georg Simmel (1903/1997:179).



constitute autonomous identity, a state of continuous, imaginative dislocation. Italian architectural theorist Massimo Cacciari, in a reflection on Simmel's urban observations, has described this agitated positioning as a "propellant force, the fuel of the intellect";<sup>23</sup> a radicalized existence entailing an interrogation of spatial prerequisites. In the metropolis, the positioning of the subject is not only a phenomenal issue, but a *wandering* enactment, a potential interrogating of relations and changing of location – an actualizing of different discursive levels of intermediary circulations.<sup>24</sup> It is also in the metropolis that the cries for a new kind of liberty are raised. This new kind of liberty is to be formulated not only as a right to the bare necessities of life, but as a right to mobility and experience, a right to radical differentiation of the Self and its surrounding.

According to Cacciari, Simmel localized in metropolitan life a generative contradiction between on the one hand modernity's leveling tendencies, its emphasis on intellectual objectifying or conceptualizing, and on the other hand its differentiating inclinations, its arousing of a subjective transformability and manipulability, an externalized nervous life, a life that has to be acted out in and through urban space. Yet, Simmel did not stand up to the radical consequences of this conflict, but instead worked out a synthesis, where urbanity emerged as a new kind of anthropomorphic totality, assimilating the negativities opened up by the opposition between nervous and rational life, ultimately avoiding the *tragedy*, the dramatic and eventful spatialization evoked by a de-centered subject.<sup>25</sup>

What I have wanted to bring to attention in this discussion is how the expanded, de-centralized and actualized subject generated an ambiguous 'space' as the

23 Massimo Cacciari (1993) "Metropolis", p. 4.

24 David Frisby has in his analyses of Simmel's sociology emphasized this relational sensitivity. The relevance of Simmel to the study of modernity in general, argues Frisby, "is its emphasis upon the sphere of circulation and exchange, not merely of money and commodities but also by social groups and individuals, a dynamic intersection of social circles." See David Frisby (1992) *Simmel and Since: Essays on Georg Simmel's Social Theory*.

25 The *tragic*, as distinct from the regrettable, of human culture is equivalent (according to Simmel) to the gap or negativity constantly actualized by the subject, who, in order to fully understand life, also is bound to deviate from it. This notion of tragedy was developed by Simmel in the text "Der Begriff und die Tragödie der Kultur" of 1911/12, in English "The Concept and Tragedy of Culture" (1903/1997b:55-75). In his interpretation of Simmel, Massimo Cacciari also understands the Metropolis as an embodiment of this cultural tragedy. However, comparing Simmel with another of the great thinkers of the Metropolis, Walter Benjamin, Cacciari argues that "where Simmel attempts to reconcile this negativity with the conditions of its past, Benjamin assumes it to be not only the fundamental experience, but the only experience." (Cacciari 1993:20). Nevertheless, even though Simmel's aim was reconciliation, he did in a very clear way actualize two fundamental positions of urbanity. Patrizia Lombardo has described these positions as "the *almost* negative and the *fully* negative: the utopian and the tragic; or the synthetic and the radical; or one oriented toward historical continuity and one embracing crisis as the engine of changes that defy programmatic prediction." The utopian and the tragic are in this sense two spatial directions intimately interconnected in and through urban formation. Patrizia Lombardo (1993) "Introduction: The Philosophy of the City", p. xxvii.

bearing idea of its own unfolding within an aesthetic discourse. Rather than simply rational and positive, this 'space' is imbued with the expressive and imaginative forces of a mobilized and to a certain extent dissolved subject, which further complicates its coherent definition. I have chosen to emphasize this aestheticization of space through the notions of *empathy* and *authenticity* as early problematizations of the relation between the subject and surrounding space. Even though these forces on the one hand were conceived as highly intimate and private sensations constituting the individual, they were on the other hand direct consequences of an intensified *urbanization*. As such, they also unveiled and actualized an inherent and permanent *crisis* experienced as the rupture or disjunction between what is and what could be, between a mechanistic openness and an imaginative potentiality. While the empathetic and authentic on the one hand rapidly could develop into new formal categories through a psychologizing aestheticization, they also brought into attention a new culture of generative restlessness. "The uprooted spirit of the Metropolis", Massimo Cacciari argues, "is not 'sterile' but productive par excellence."<sup>26</sup>

Within a spatial discourse, empathy and authenticity have often been associated with a lost innocence, a lost idea of a natural relationship to the surroundings. Not least have such ideas surfaced in the Christiania debate, where such a loss of naturalness has been referred to on both sides of the conflict. On the one hand it appeared as one of the key ideas of the Christiania manifesto, which was built upon a reconstitution of the right to "freely unfold." On the other hand it has also been one of the most important arguments for a reconstruction of the natural beauty of the former ramparts and moat, which "appear as surprisingly intact."<sup>27</sup> What Christiania in practice has shown, however, is the fact that empathy and authenticity are sensations actualized in an entirely urbanized and politicized space; a space imbued with relations and movements. The emergent authentic, empathic or aesthetically attentive subject is a metropolitan subject; the independent 'self-doer' of the *polis*,<sup>28</sup> an agitator of and in space. Emotionally liberated but also politically enlightened and emancipated, this authentic subject/agent is embodying the fact that the idea of 'space' today is more complex than can be understood simply as either a geometrical or a cognitive or psychological entity. However, as both aesthetic projections and active parts of a highly material urban discourse, the ambiguous dimensions of empathy and authenticity anticipate

26 Massimo Cacciari (1980/1998:395).

27 "...som trods sin udstrækning og beliggenhed i hovedstadsområdet og på trods af den stigende bebyggelsen gennem de senere år fremstår bemærkelsesværdigt intakt." *Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 8.

28 In *The Politics of Authenticity*, the book of his dissertation, Marshall Berman initiates the discussion with a critique of Montesquieu's proto-Romantic novel *The Persian Letters*, published already in 172. The urban 'self-doer' is in Montesquieu's urban narrative a Persian king visiting Paris, and through his letters describing his personal subject formation; his transformation from a despot to a dialogic and free human being. What Berman shows is how Montesquieu's urban reflections in this sense anticipate the Copernican turn of Kant in its actualizing of the urban experience as an authentic encounter with the Other, thus also an active becoming-other. See Marshall Berman (1970:3-53).

the spatial conflict that has unfolded as much around as within Christiania; the conflict between spiritual consolidation and expressive 'drama', between a re-centering around the perceiving Self and a confrontation with the World. This conflict leads on to the philosophically articulated divergence between a *phenomenological* and what could be called a *polemological* approach to the urban landscape. A conflict also between space as an intimate or interactive affair, this distinction will constitute the topic for the following discussion.

### Phenomenology and Polemology: Two Spatial Perspectives

The 'space' unfolding around the de-centralized and 'formless' subject is subsequently a composite and complex one, and the question is, as exemplified in the Christiania debate, how one should approach the problem of its representation and reproduction. In the following I will discuss this issue both from a *re-centralizing* and a further *de-centralizing* point of view, both of which constitute attempts to approach the problem of space as a matter of the *lived* and *experienced*. My ambition however, is to show that there are both cognitivist and activist ways of understanding the 'lived', both formal and performative means of handling spatial experience, a difference that in many ways is embodied in the polemics around Christiania. Even though this fundamental spatial difference has been quite extensively problematized within a critical aesthetic discourse, not least embodied in the form of an artistic avant-garde, it has not obtained the same attention from architectural, landscape and urbanist points of view. While critical aesthetics to a great extent has developed into a domain of representational experimentation and polemical critique, the applied disciplines have instead been constituted around a phenomenally defined 'object', as for example 'dwelling', 'landscape' or 'place.'

Even though attempts have been made, both from the inside of and from the outside to define Christiania from a phenomenal point of view, as a perceived and conceived 'place' with its specific re-centering and re-habilitating character and identity, I will argue that what Christiania more than anything else has acted out, are the difficulties associated with such a phenomenological approach. I will in this chapter therefore put quite a lot of effort into discussing the representational presumptions behind a phenomenological apprehension of space and its claim to embrace the 'real.' I will then relate this understanding with an activist stance with the emphasis on expression rather than on cognition. Where a *phenomenal logic* of space constitutes a logic dealing with internal dialectic excitation aiming at synthesizing perception and conception, a *performative logic* would approach space as a matter of a social excitation, an intensification and actualization of encounters, relations, locations, and hierarchies. A performative logic might in this sense also require a dialectical analysis of inner conflict, but first and foremost it requires the development of what Michel de Certeau in opposition to dialectics has called a *polemology*, or a *polemological analysis*,<sup>29</sup> an entirely externalized inquiry of expression. Acted out

in space, it is an analysis of intervention and dissolution as regards the 'object' of investigation. It does not aim at an 'understanding' or conceptualizing of space as meaningful in the cognitive sense, but at a polemical agitating of forces significant enough as to evoke spatial figures, operations and articulations.

Working through activation and polemical modification, polemological analysis constitute a reproductive rather than representative logic, problematizing matter rather than defining truths. And, as de Certeau puts it, like another polemology, that of civil *law*, it "develops in an atmosphere of tensions, and often of violence, for which it provides symbolic balances, contracts of compatibility and compromises, all more or less temporary."<sup>30</sup> Polemology thus provides an expressive and activist venue for approaching also that which is not evident in itself but on the contrary is stirred or disarranged, simply in order to actualize its relations to an 'Other.'

Later in this chapter, in relation to a discussion about space, place, and landscape, I will develop this polemological approach to space further. Already at this stage however, it is not too difficult to discern certain parallels between the spatial activism of Christiania and that of polemology. Rather than a 'social experiment' aiming at resolving a number of social conflicts, Christiania could be seen as a polemological undertaking, the main purpose being that of provoking the existing structure sufficiently to make it susceptible to modification.

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A phenomenological interpretation of Christiania would on the other hand fit well with many of the attempts to describe Christiania as a Free Town, which in the Scandinavian *Fristad* also means 'sanctuary', a place saved from the degenerative forces of planning and commercialism. Such an interpretation builds upon the idea of Christiania as a more authentic, non-discursive and in Steen Eiler Rasmussen's words "remarkable reality",<sup>31</sup> a spatial actuality with enough resonance to generate unique experiences. The Scandinavian *Fristad* is not to be understood in this sense as an emancipated zone, but as an ideologically defined refuge, further sustained by an informal, yet specific logic of spiritual self-realization and introspection, most clearly expressed by Christianite Børge Madsen as "an enormous worshipping of meditation, yoga, Buddhism, Taoism, astrology, tarot cards, healthy food, and note to what extent we worship the spontaneous and individual praxis."<sup>32</sup>

introduire une analyse *polémologique* de la culture." Michel de Certeau (1980:xliv).

30 "Elle se développe dans l'élément de tensions, et souvent de violences, à qui elle fournit des équilibres symbolique, des contrats de compatibilité et des compromis plus ou moins temporaires." Michel de Certeau (1980:xliv).

31 "...en mærkelig virkelighed." Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1976:7).

32 "...en enorm dyrkelse af meditation, yoga, buddhisme, taoisme, astrologi, tarot kort, sund mad, og bemærk hvordan vi dyrker den spontane og individuelle praksis." Børge Madsen (1979:193).

In the different attempts to formulate a conservation policy, either of the historical ramparts or of Christiania as specific 'place', phenomenological arguments have dominated. Based upon identification and experiences of authentic belonging, such arguments are certainly important to legitimize decisions about the future of the area. Yet the aesthetic, formative presuppositions for processes of spatial identification, authenticity, and belonging are seldom discussed. What I will argue is therefore that, although the phenomenological discussion is important, it does say very little about underlying representational, formative regimes as well as about how these regimes are being reproduced and transformed.

Even though Christiania certainly is a "remarkable reality", it also interrogates this reality and its different dependencies upon aestheticizing practices. It is difficult to say that Christiania simply and authentically 'is', its 'reality' having been constantly contested. What one has to ask is therefore if a designation of Christiania as a composite of spatial phenomena is enough to understand its potential role in an urban landscape, or if we would need to take into consideration also the polemical discourse and expressive practices with which it has been associated.

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In the Christiania debate, these approaches, which I will call the phenomenological and the polemological, have surfaced amongst both *pros* and *contras*. Having been described as intimate dwelling place as well as an intensified archer's range, a family household as well as an experimental stage, a green oasis and a social waste dump, Christiania has agitated the premises for our experience of space in general and contemporary urban settings in particular. As such, it also motivates a further investigation of the grounds for spatial legitimization, not least as they have been formulated from a phenomenological point of view.

## Phenomenological Interiors

With the point of departure in an entirely fresh encounter with the world, in a lived, perceived and authentic actuality, phenomenology is on one level a generic term for spatial approaches bringing forward a fundamental critique of an all the more pre-ordered, rationalized and instrumentalized space. As a reaction against an urban externalization of the self, phenomenology proposes a re-centralization around a unified, phenomenal *interior*. Without aiming to give a full account of phenomenology as a philosophy of consciousness, I would like to discuss the significance of phenomenology in relation to the complex, contemporary urban situation in focus. The question to be asked is how this logic is conceived and what consequences it has in relation to the transformative ambitions in focus here. In particular, this questioning concerns phenomenology's proposition of a non-discursive "turn to the things themselves."<sup>33</sup>

I will in the following discuss this ambitious program, focusing on its spatial points of departure, such as the notions of ground and intentionality, of existence and agency, and of belonging and identity. These are all to the highest degree aspects relevant to the more specific discussion of aesthetic activism and the urban landscape.

## Between Ground and Intention

In terms of location, the phenomenological re-formulation of spatial being takes place between a common *foundation* and a projective *intentionality*. As formulated by Edmund Husserl, the father of phenomenology, this in-between constitutes the *directedness* of the human consciousness.<sup>34</sup> Investigating this directedness, Husserl intended to establish a scientific ground for knowing in general, based upon “the principle of freedom from presuppositions”,<sup>35</sup> a knowing based upon pure first hand experience.

According to Husserl, our experience is directed toward, or ‘intends’, things as they are through *phenomena*,<sup>36</sup> which are the immediate representations resulting from the intentional act of the attentive mind. Intentionality is thus the human means to constitute the lived world. What interested Husserl was in this respect not the question of the world’s existence *per se*, but the presuppositions for our most basic making sense of the same. Yet, this is not the same as to say that the world is merely a mental construct. Out-reaching intentionality, through an act of re-cognition, depends on or falls back onto a *foundation* in relation to which content or meaning unfolds – and upon which the experiencing subject rests.<sup>37</sup> Husserl’s phenomenology in this sense describes an intricate interplay between on the one hand the projective forces of an autonomous intentionality, and on the other hand the constitutive backdrop of self-evidence, essence, and authentic thinking.<sup>38</sup>

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34        **A student of Franz Brentano, Husserl further developed Brentano’s notion of intentionality** i.e. “reference to a content, direction toward an object, or immanent objectivity” (Brentano’s intentionality thesis). See Wolfgang Huemer (2002) “Franz Brentano”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2003 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2003/entries/brentano/>>. Download date 11 March 2006. My understanding of Husserl depends on a broad range of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources have been read in English translation.

35        **Edmund Husserl** (2001) *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, p. 97.

36        **Focusing on the phenomenon**, Husserl further developed what Brentano envisioned as a scientific psychology. From the Greek *phainomenon*, noun, ‘thing appearing to view’, based on *phainein* ‘to show’. *The Oxford Dictionary of English* (revised edition). Ed. Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson. Oxford University Press, 2005. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. Malmö högskola. Download date 11 March 2006.

37        **Edmund Husserl** (2001:291-296).

38        **Edmund Husserl** (2001:324, 331-336, 365-367).

The descriptive phenomenology of the early *Logische Untersuchungen*, takes as its unquestioned point of departure the human subject, and more specifically its cognitive, first person ego.<sup>39</sup> **Strongly rejecting psychologism** as arbitrary empiricism, Husserl aimed at an alternative psycho-logic, a strict and scientifically sustainable ‘grounding’ of the ‘grasping’ agency of human being. Later, this description of the ego will be given an even more explicit *transcendental* interpretation, rendering to the grounding act a more decisive role.<sup>40</sup> Not solely an out-reaching movement towards a wide horizon, intentionality is rather understood in relation to the arresting moment, in Husserl expressed through the Greek notion of *epoché*, or *bracketing*.<sup>41</sup> Intentional bracketing is thus the method that enables us, through the acts of experiencing the world (willing, believing, desiring, despising, etc.) to seize or hold back the content of these acts (the wanted, the believed, the despised, etc.). Even though intentionality constitutes an activation of a potential space, it also entails a suspending action, a *Still-halten* of the “keeping-moving” (*In-gang-halten*) of the acting body.

Despite a problematization of different kinds of experiences, such as the *Sehraum* – the space as perceived by the eye – and the *near-sphere of corporeality* – the “situation in which bodies appear, manifested through kinesthetic enactment”,<sup>42</sup> Husserl’s phenomenology thus develops in an introspective direction, where human beings depend upon *transcendental reduction*: the ability to ‘bracket’ or abstract from the stream of consciousness a meaning related to a given *a priori*. According to the later Husserl, this fundamental *époque*, in order to give rise to an authentic thinking, requires an existential re-direction of the subject “comparable in the beginning to that of religious conversion.”<sup>43</sup> Critics have pointed to this as a ‘theological turn’, where the initial, out-reaching intention, articulated as a turning to things themselves, takes on the character of a return to a Cartesian, idealist epistemology of essences and eidetic structures, a solipsist “ego-logy”<sup>44</sup> bracketing also the human being within the confines of the self.<sup>45</sup> Intentionality becomes a gesture of constraints, in Derrida’s

39 This is obvious from *Ideen*, from 1913, and onwards. Recent positive philosophy of mind, or cognitive science, has criticized this tradition of being a subjective “autophenomenology”, instead advocating a “standard third-person objective methodology”, or “heterophenomenology” as for the study of human experience. See Daniel C. Dennet (2003) “Who’s On First? Heterophenomenology Explained”.

40 See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004) *Den moderna arkitekturens filosofier* (*The Modern Philosophies of Architecture*), p. 36.

41 David Woodruff Smith (2003) «Phenomenology», *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2005 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2005/entries/phenomenology/>>. See also Bernard Barsotti (2002:14).

42 In Husserl’s *The World of the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World External to the Organism*, from 1931, quoted in Edward S. Casey (1997:224).

43 Husserl in *Crisis* § 35; quoted in David A. Bell (2003) *Husserl: The Argument of the Philosophers*, p. 163.

44 Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:37).

45 This theological turn constitutes the point of departure for most critics of Husserl’s



words “a movement of purifying critique.”<sup>46</sup> “Phenomenology”, Derrida writes laconically, “has criticized metaphysics only to restore it. It has done its best to revive its essence, the originality of its purpose.”<sup>47</sup>

In his later writings, Husserl self-critically tried to modify these solipsist consequences of his transcendental turn, expanding the original and constitutive ‘I’ into an *inter-subjectivity*, the transcendental ground imagined as a ‘we.’ “Ultimately”, argues David Bell, “these considerations lead us away from solitary, immaterial, self-subsistent consciousness, as the focal point of philosophy, and indicate instead the importance of the body, of the existence of a plurality of conscious beings, and of the life world, or *Lebenswelt*, which they share.”<sup>48</sup> This movement away from a transcendental grounding of existence was further articulated in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who instead suggested an existential grounding in the experiencing body. Complete reduction is impossible, Merleau-Ponty argued, since perception is affected not by consciousness alone but by the body as spatially extended, relational and lived. The world is in this sense not a phenomenal appearance with the body as an observer, but grounded in bodily potentials – not an ‘I think’ but an ‘I can.’<sup>49</sup>

Unfolding as the science of the experiencing subject, phenomenology has constituted an important source of inspiration. Exploring the spatial constitution of the mind, it has emphasized the role of attention and intentionality also in relation to what might be experienced as a space of blind rationality. Yet, the possibilities of understanding the phenomenal life world not merely as an ideal ground of consciousness, but as the historical stage of situated and embodied being, has remained an issue of philosophical contention. What I have wanted to stress through this discussion, however, is the ambiguous spatial standing of some of the most central phenomenological ideas. These ideas, such as authenticity and intentionality, are ideas that have played and continue to play a central role in the contemporary, urban debate. Similarly, in

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phenomenology. See for example Jean François Lyotard (1954/1967) *La phénoménologie*, Jacques Derrida (1967c) *La voix et le phénomène: Introduction au problème du signe dans la phénoménologie d'Husserl*, Jacques Derrida (1972) *Margues de la philosophie*, Dominique Janicaud (1991) *Le tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française*, Mark Jarzombek (2000) *The Psychologizing of Modernity: Art, Architecture, History*. See also Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:38-39) and Bernard Barsotti (2002:14).

46 “...un mouvement de critique purificatrice.” Jacques Derrida (1972) *Marges de la philosophie*, p. 187.

47 “La phénoménologie n’a critiqué la métaphysique en son fait que pour la restaurer. Elle lui a dit son fait pour la réveiller à l’essence de sa tâche, à l’originalité authentique de son dessein.” Jacques Derrida (1972:187).

48 David A. Bell (2003:203).

49 Flynn, Bernard (2004) «Maurice Merleau-Ponty», *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2004 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2004/entries/merleau-ponty/>>.

the Christiania debate both sides have proposed a 'grounding' strategy, related to a set of phenomenologically defined and therefore 'natural', authentic, and non-discursive experiences. In the internal status report *From Vision to Reality* (2003),<sup>50</sup> Christiania also describes itself in non-discursive terms as "balanced" in relation to the "spirit of the place." At the same time, Christiania claims to be a location where there should always be "room for dreams and real enthusiasm, social and physical free space for new ideas and initiatives",<sup>51</sup> potentially proposing a more embodied intentionality of situated desire.

Furthermore, the SAVE inventory pursued by the authorities also argued according to the phenomenological spirit, referring to a grounded morphology of "a landscape-like space",<sup>52</sup> attempting a differentiation based upon an assessment of "originality." Yet, what this inventory reflects is merely a conventional and widely accepted application of transcendental phenomenology to urban planning practices, where its potential criticality in an even more explicit way tends to turn into 'purifying' aestheticization. In the following, I will discuss a few examples of how phenomenological ideas have migrated into the spatial sciences and architectural discourse, and how they in this applied context have entailed a re-centering of interest around the perceiving subject, thereby potentially evoking the correspondence to a 'theological' turn.

### Existential Place or Perceived Space

From a phenomenological perspective, one of the effects of the activism of Christiania has been the actualizing and questioning of the *meta-intentionality* inscribed in the idea of urban planning practice. What are the grounding ideas of the *plan*? How is it presented and what transformations has it gone through? The answers to these questions have most often been framed in terms *space* and *place*. Constituting an attractive dialectical opposition, the two concepts have been employed in the architectural and planning discourse in order to emphasize a decisive meta-intentional rift between on the one hand logical systems and on the other hand a lived world. The question, is however, to what extent this rift reflects a shift from transcendental models of legitimization to a recognition of a historical situation, or if it is to be conceived as a superficial divide between two equally ideal spatial regimes.

Reflected in ordinary language, the dichotomy between place and space has been translated into a difference between an intimate and authentic 'lived place' and a distant and abstract 'geometric space.' "There is 'outer space'", argues W. J. T. Mitchell, "but 'outer place' sounds odd."<sup>53</sup> While place would be grounded in

50 *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision till virkelighed*, 2003.

51 "Stedets ånd – kvalitet og økologi", subtitle in *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision til virkelighed*, Christiania, 2003, p. 23. Furthermore in the same publication on p. 11: "Her skal altid være plads til drømme og ildsjæle med social og fysisk frirum."

52 *Kulturmiljøer og bygninger på Christiania*, Christianiaudvalget, 2003, p. 17.

53 W. J. T. Mitchell (1994a:ix).

experience, space would refer to an eidetic, or ideal reduction of a 'higher' order. Inscribed in this oppositional framework, Christiania would most certainly be described as the latter's rebellion against the former, a place of lived experience in a space of abstract calculations. While 'place' resounds with particularity and qualitative belonging, 'space' is associated with a quantitative or purely functional positioning.<sup>54</sup> Space is simply *anti-place*, sometimes described in even more neutral terms, such as *site*. At least this has increasingly come to count as an official history of spatial representation, although told from a phenomenological point of view.

Despite its antithetical construction, this understanding of place and space has also to a large extent permeated spatial discourse over recent decades, where it has constituted a reaction to a runaway modernity, spatializing everything at an increasingly furious speed. So Edward S. Casey describes how beneficial place "brings with it the very elements sheared off in the planiformity of site: identity, character, nuance, history."<sup>55</sup> Another influential account has been offered by Canadian geographer Edward Relph,<sup>56</sup> who, with the help of place, wanted to compensate for what he experienced as a drastic loss of an essential *geographical sense*.<sup>57</sup> Relph's thinking in this respect offers a telling example of a phenomenology aiming at a more 'local' or bodily grounding of existence. What is also exemplified however, is how problematic this shift is, and how easily it results in a similarly transcendental reduction.

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'Place is by Relph defined not only as a transcendently grounded, 'common sense', but also as bodily located and lived. In order to *be*, argues Relph, one has to be bodily located somewhere, a somewhere, which responds to "the unity of place, person and act."<sup>58</sup> This unifying aspect of place is in Relph's geography conceived of in terms of *identity*. A composite aesthetic quality, it unfolds as 'placeness' or *insideness* – a matter of spatial *belonging*. The strongest degree of existential insideness is defined as a self-evident, non-reflected and close habitual relation to a place, which should be compared to the *outsideness* of

54 W. J. T. Mitchell (1994a:viii).

55 Edward S. Casey (1997:xiii). See also Gunnar Sandin (2003) *Modalities of Place: On Polarisation and Exclusion in Concepts of Place and in Site-Specific Art*, pp. 23-34.

56 In the introduction to his book *Place and Placelessness*, the Canadian geographer Edward Relph discusses the phenomenological basis of geography, quoting the geographer Eric Dardel, who in his *L'homme et la terre: Nature de réalité géographique* from 1952 talks about "une géographicité de l'homme comme mode de son existence et de son destin." Edward Relph (1976:5).

57 Relph defines a number of different categories of *space*: pragmatic or primitive, perceptual, existential (which discriminates between sacred and geographical space), architectural or planning space, cognitive and abstract space. Space is thus understood as the 'resting' or transcendental category, reduced from lived place. In this respect, it might be difficult to discern the difference between place as fundamental Being-in-the-World and existential space, which is only one transcendental aspect, yet claiming the universality that place in itself lacks. See Edward Relph (1976:9-28).

58 Edward Relph (1976:44).

not being involved at all, despite a physical presence.<sup>59</sup> The role-model for an existential outsider is the *artist*, who, according to Relph, is occupied by “a self-conscious and reflective uninvolved”, a kind of de-familiarized stance that renders impossible true belonging.<sup>60</sup>

This establishment of place as a *natural* identity of unity and wholeness is dependent upon a concurrent construction of ‘non-place.’ Non-place is in-authentic place, a secondary effect of a rationalized and soul-less “environment machine” that does not take as its point of departure the individual, experiencing and lived body.<sup>61</sup> The phenomenology of place for Relph has an ideological function, a questioning of a situation where we either have to, as he describes it, “celebrate and participate in the glorious non-place urban society, or to accept in silence the trivialization and careless eradication of the significant places of our lives.”<sup>62</sup>

With the apparent ambition to denounce reductionist space, Relph instead proposes a transcendental reduction, or bracketing of the personal geography of subjective experiences – “memory, fantasy, present circumstances, and future purposes”<sup>63</sup>– into the notion of ‘place.’ Defined as untimely, immediate and unquestioned identity, ‘insideness’ in Relph unfolds as an unconscious merging with an idealized and absolute bodily being, paradoxically only graspable from outside. Outsideness, conversely, defined as aesthetic attention, is only possible to understand in terms of a cognitive intimacy, possible to seize only from the deep interior of the Self.

The “deep human need”<sup>64</sup> for bodily identification with significant places that Relph wants to emphasize does not in any way distinguish itself from a transcendental reduction of experience, ultimately leaving the experiencing subject enclosed within the confines of a sensing self. Place is understood as the spatial manifestation of an existential necessity, a fundamental relationship between human and world, constitutive of other spatial manifestations, such as cultural, narrative, or historical manifestations. Paradoxically enough, it is only when Relph discusses *placelessness* that he talks in terms of historically situated, discursive expressions. Richly illustrated, Relph gives several interesting examples of significant ‘placelessnesses:’ “landscapes of tourism”, “disneyfication”, “museumisation”, “futurisation”, “subtopia”, “the placeless landscape of industry”, “retailing”, “administration, etc.”<sup>65</sup> all of which present

59 Edward Relph (1976:44-55). Gunnar Sandin has also discussed this opposition between insideness and outsideness in Relph, as well as its stigmatizing effects when it comes to an understanding of spatial modalities. See Gunnar Sandin (2003:35-36).

60 Edward Relph (1976:51).

61 Edward Relph (1976:102).

62 Edward Relph (1976:147).

63 Edward Relph (1976:4).

64 Edward Relph (1976:147).

65 Edward Relph (1976: 79-115).

examples of transient, combinatory and expressive locations, whose meaning is not associated with a transcendent 'ground.'

Relph tries to avoid the solipsistic and theological pitfall through the notion of *secularisation*. Place, argues Relph, "will not come about automatically but through deliberate effort and the development of 'secularisation', an attitude which corresponds closely to self-conscious authenticity."<sup>66</sup> "Secularisation" in this respect has to be understood as Relph's equivalent to *intersubjectivity*, yet expressed as the common movement of historical actions, which "dislodges ancient oppressions and overturns stultifying conventions."<sup>67</sup> However, phenomenologically defined, the *secular* process of place-making, rather than an alternative to theological transcendentalism, offers a reconciliation of historical movement as authentic, spatial *fate*, a unity masking the unsettling unpredictability of a confrontational, historical situation.<sup>68</sup>

'Place' has, within the spatial disciplines, almost exclusively played the role as *rehabilitator* of the relation between perceiving subject and objective world. At the same time, place has fulfilled the no less important function of rehabilitating and guaranteeing the professional position of the *designer* as indispensable for the interpretation of this authentic relation. However, if the phenomenological quest for an authentic encounter with the world at one point in history appeared politically subversive, this does not guarantee its radical status in other circumstances. Instead of an active questioning of simplifying, dichotomizing and homogenizing spatial tendencies, the notion of place has turned into what American architectural theorist Jorge Otero Pailos has described as "a catch basin for all disillusionment with modernism, while serving to prolong and even accentuate the crises on which it feeds."<sup>69</sup>

Within the spatial disciplines, the notion of 'existential place' has paradoxically enough unfolded as a popularizer of phenomenological ideas, a discursive expression representing what could be called "a cult of innocence."<sup>70</sup> While celebrating itself as a notion associated with freely exploratory practice, autonomous from any main theoretical body or dogma, 'place' nevertheless mediates explicit ideas of identity and meaning. Embodying the bondage of

66 Edward Relph (1976:145).

67 In Harvey Cox *The Secular City*, from 1965, quoted in Edward Relph (1976:145).

68 American architectural theorist Jorge Otero Pailos has in a dissertation tried to uncover some of these fundamental ambiguities of the existential place-movement as it has been historically constituted within the architectural and urbanist discourse. From a critical historiographic perspective, Otero-Pailos tries to unveil some of the common traits of the different place strategies in what he describes as their ambition "to cover over the fundamental ambiguity between experience and cognition that is at the heart of the modern crisis of authenticity." Jorge Otero Pailos (2002) *Theorizing the Anti-Avant-garde: Invocations of Phenomenology in Architectural Discourse, 1945-1989*, p. 20.

69 Jorge Otero Pailos (2002:15-17).

70 Jorge Otero Pailos (2002:28).

“inner vision” and “outer reality”, the meta-intentionality of place conveys a forceful grounding of the subject in a de-politicized and de-historicized ‘identity’.<sup>71</sup> Most often understood in terms of a transcendental “poetic image”, authentic place identity eventually comes very close to the modernist paradigm of space with its roots in the idealist aesthetic idea of empathic *Raumgefühl* than is normally admitted, a fact that also may explain its strong impact on architectural and landscape architectural education all over the Western world.<sup>72</sup> Complex placial concerns have furthermore been validated in the immediacy of *images*, functioning as ‘non-theoretical’, or non-discursive representations of a lived and experienced world. As a faculty with the power of performing the necessary existential *kiasm* (the inversion of being and transcendental, eidetic imagining), vision has emerged as the holistic unifier *par preference*.

What we have to ask however, particularly in relation to the discontinuous appearance of Christiania, is whether an *a priori* envisioning of existential place really has an all-embracing legitimacy. As ‘poetic imagery’, it has a tendency of taking on a *quasi-independent*, non-discursive status, ultimately requiring a significant level of disciplinary vocabulary and acquaintance in order to be ‘properly’ experienced. Phenomenological projections of place in this respect often serve an *intra-disciplinary* purpose within the spatial disciplines, contributing to the development of a highly specialized, yet emotionally articulated, disciplinary identity. As such, the idea of place develops into an ideology of authenticity, governing rather than enabling spatial interaction and creative generation.

Even though Christiania to a certain extent is a child of the existential place movement developing in the 60s and 70s, it has also functioned as one of its most fierce critics. What Christiania actualizes is in this respect the impossibility of conceiving an authentic intentionality or an intentional

71 Otero-Pailos here provides an important account of how well a de-politicized and sensuous phenomenological approach to design adjusted to the political climate of McCarthyist America. The emphasis on authenticity and intentionality could in this regard be seen as an adaptation of the phenomenological ideas to a different political climate, where its socio-political claims had to be downplayed and reinterpreted within an emotionally driven consumerist notion of experiential space.

72 As Otero-Pailos points out, the de-theorized architectural education that was introduced in the seventies is to a great extent still prevailing. In the 1970s, the reading list in a typical design class focusing on “spatial composition and dynamics” would be Gaston Bachelard’s *La poétique de l’espace* (*The Poetics of Space*), Moore’s and Bloomer’s *Body, Memory, and Architecture*, Christian Norberg-Schulz’s *Existence, Space, and Architecture*, and Rudolf Arnheim’s *The Dynamics of Architectural Form*, all of which would be presented out of their historical context, often accompanied by likewise non-contextualized fragments of poetic texts, some of which would be the same in architectural studios all over the Western world. A bodily grounded, aestheticizing pedagogy, it can be derived from Merleau-Ponty’s *L’œil et l’esprit* of 1964, where he analyses the work of Paul Cézanne. “The visual – and only that”, argues Merleau-Ponty, “– gives me the presence of that which is not me, of that which merely simply and completely is.” (“Le ‘qual visuel’ me donne et me donne seul la présence de ce qui n’est pas moi, de ce qui est simplement et pleinement”) Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964/1985) *L’œil et l’esprit*, pp. 84–85.

authenticity that does not at the same time present itself as a guiding meta-intentionality, a representational regime. Christiania has, probably for this very reason, never consolidated itself as an “intentional community” in the pure sense, a community based upon a transcendental ground, a common belief or political goal.<sup>73</sup> Instead, its discontinuous development has been fuelled by its interrogative stance, its ambiguous relation to its own identity, and its discursive re-positioning in relation to an authoritative outside. What may be discerned as “Christiania” is rather a provocative re-conceptualization of authenticity and intentionality in relation to a historical movement of voices, statements, and spatial constructs. Instead of referring to an existential intimacy, Christiania unfolds as a kind of spatial outspokenness coughing up phenomena from their cognitive refuge. Less a bracketing of an intentional or ‘eidetic’ determination, Christiania is more an expansive embracing of an abundance that will not stay in place.

Unintentionally, Christiania has transformed the space-place relation into a more entangled affair, further problematizing the meta-intentionality or *telos* of the urban plan. **Where the plan tends towards a ground, the activist *telos* is of a relational desire or drift towards an Other or Elsewhere.**<sup>74</sup> Where the plan is to be *fulfilled*, the only imperative of activist desire is that it should be *performed*. The activist *telos* is in this sense a ‘clustering’ or intensification; the cloud of an “I don’t know what” as described by Lyotard.<sup>75</sup> **Even though attempts have been made to fit Christiania into an urban landscape of existentially identifiable ‘places’,** Christiania has in different ways rather played a performative role as a narrative and dialogic space with neither unified ground nor intentional end.

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### No place like home?

Having problematized the idea of an existentially grounded place, one cannot deny the fact that Christiania today constitutes a *home* for a great number of people. It is their solid basis, their ground. Having invested a lot of time, effort, not least of the communicative kind, into the place, people have certainly

73 The notion “intentional community” is used as a generic term for communities founded upon a common ideology or religious conviction. See Terry A. Veling (1996) *Living in the Margins: Intentional Communities and the Art of Interpretation*, Robert C. Schehr (1997) *Dynamic Utopia: Establishing Intentional Communities as a New Social Movement*, and Barry Shenker (1986) *Intentional Communities: Ideology and Alienation in Communal Societies*. For an overview of intentional communities around the world, see *The Directory of Intentional Communities*, Fellowship for Intentional Communities, 1992.

74 **In a commentary to Aristotle’s notion of *telos*** José Luis Ramirez writes: “Our ‘goal’ is utterly relative; one does not know whether it refers to a final point or if it merely connotes a new means related to an even farther goal.” (“Vårt ord ‘mål’ är ytterst relativt; man vet inte om det anger en slutpunkt eller bara innebär ett nytt medel till ett bortre mål.”) **As there is no correspondence in Greek to the figure ‘means-goal’,** Ramirez argues for the possibility to interpret *telos* as a ‘means-related’ goal, a goal referring to the sustenance of the indispensable in human life, which is not intersubjectivity but *inter-human praxis*. See José Luis Ramirez (1995a:135).

75 Jean-François Lyotard (1988) *Peregrinations. Law, Form, Event*, p. 12.



developed a strong sense of belonging and identification. It is also interesting to note that in the normalization process, the utility right achieved over time and spatially manifested through architectural form is legally acknowledged, however only as an individualized right, based upon a subjectively and emotionally defined spatial attachment. A spatial belonging based upon a social network of interactions has not gained the same kind of legal or general recognition.

Instead, it is the notion of an individually grounded home that constitutes one of the guiding principles for normalization. Even though most of the Christiania inhabitants still build their engagement upon a problematizing of, and experimentation with, the notion of home, it by and large remains unquestioned as a ground also for social belonging. As a squatters' home, a home for the homeless, or an abundant secondary product of a welfare economy, Christiania has provoked a central aspect of a phenomenologically spurred planning discourse, where the idea of the 'home', the Greek *oikos*, insidiously domesticates ever greater parts of a conflictive *polis*.<sup>76</sup>

Within the spatial disciplines, the notion of 'home' also holds a special place as an epistemological umbrella term, embracing several phenomenologically defined aspects such as recognition, trust, security, continuity, identification and belonging. Understood as a common, existentially grounded place it furthermore has important implications for the development of a reformist market economy and a modern notion of the nation state.<sup>77</sup>

In an architectural context however, the idea of 'dwelling' as the existential act of 'being at home' has clear phenomenological connotations. Through what could be understood as an 'eidetic' or 'transcendental' reduction, the notion of dwelling has furthermore been strongly associated with the domesticating principle of *genius loci*, the spirit of place. Introduced into architectural discourse by Norwegian architect and architectural historian Christian Norberg Schulz, this originally Roman concept was further grounded in Scandinavian spiritualism. From the point of view of a deep religious belief,<sup>78</sup> Norberg-Schulz's 'placial' ambition, although framed as a spatial morphology, was of the moral kind; a conservative critique of modernist degeneration. A spatial representation of the idea of belonging, the concept of *genius loci* constituted a theoretical consolidation of *home* and *land* on a local, regional, and even national level. As such, *genius loci* holds a prominent position as one of the most frequent notions in professional spatial vocabulary, often used as part of a rehabilitating and caring rhetoric. Extracts from Norberg-Schulz' extensive output recur in

76 The Greek *oikos*, literally house, also appears in the form *oikonomia*, domestic management.

77 I am subsequently referring to the Scandinavian, or more specifically Swedish, idea of *Folkhemmet*, the nation state as a common and safe home for the people.

78 Norberg-Schulz converted to Catholicism in the 1950s. See Jorge Otero-Pailos (2002:336).

contemporary architectural discourse and education, its philosophical and representational foundations only rarely problematized.<sup>79</sup>

For Norberg-Schulz as earlier for Relph, the *loss* of place was the natural point of departure. Opposed to the technological development and the propagating of grand scale functionalist space, he was concerned about an increasing estrangement and lack of meaning. As an active participant in the post-war modernist debate, Norberg-Schulz was also well acquainted with the critique of modern architecture and functionalist monotony and early came in contact with the new circles of phenomenologically-inspired architects and theorists.<sup>80</sup> A reading of the late Heidegger combined with a strong interest in traditional Norwegian architecture induced him to attack the contemporary architectural focus on mobility and flexibility. Characteristic for the modern human being, argued Norberg-Schulz, was that she first and foremost has emphasized her identity as a free agent, a conqueror of the world. Today however, we have come to understand that in order to become truly free, we have to *belong*, which, according to Norberg-Schulz, is the deep meaning of the Heideggerian notion of *dwelling*. “What must we demand of the environment so that man may continue to call himself such?” Norberg-Schulz asked rhetorically.<sup>81</sup> *Place* was the answer – an articulation of a natural architecture and at the same time a deeper and richer human belonging to surroundings.

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79 As late as 2003, the leading architectural magazine in Sweden published a text by Norberg-Schulz with the title *Nordic Architecture*. A text aiming at pin-pointing the *genius loci* of the Nordic countries exclusively in terms of natural features, it described the Nordic as more indistinct and unfinished than Southern Europe, at the same time incomplete in the sense of virgin, which I consider to be a quite widespread stereotype, not far from other more sexually motivated stereotypes of the Nordic. Norberg-Schulz here applied an extreme overview on the Scandinavian peninsula, Denmark and Finland, describing a geographically coherent whole, where Finland appeared as the most unfinished, closer to its own original. However, common to all the lands, argues Norberg-Schulz, “is their ‘incompleteness’, and thence Nordic understanding becomes a dream or a vision rather than a distinct *idea*.” Norberg-Schulz here clearly argues for a not only de-politicized understanding, but for a non-intellectual view, yet employing a scientific-rational gaze in his flying in over the Nordic Seas. See Christian Norberg-Schulz (2003:28-31).

80 In his detailed study of the introduction of phenomenology into architectural discourse, Jorge Otero-Pailos maps the development of the thinking of Norberg-Schulz. A student of Siegfried Gideon in Zurich, he attended Gideon’s lecture about eroding humanist principles. As a Fulbright student at Harvard in 1951-52, he was further introduced to the *Gestalt* aesthetics taught by Rudolf Arnheim, and as a student representative, he also took part in the “Darmstadt Conversations” in 1951, where Heidegger gave his influential lecture *Bauen Wohnen Denken*. However, it was not until the mid-seventies, during a stay at MIT as a visiting professor, that Norberg-Schulz, partly in opposition to the more formalist ideas of György Kepes and Kevin Lynch, initiated the closer reading of Heidegger, which would result in his 1979 book *Genius Loci*. See Jorge Otero-Pailos (2002:239-346).

81 Christan Norberg-Schulz “Il Concetto di Luogo” (The Concept of Place), in *Contraspazio* 1 from 1969, as quoted by Jorge Otero-Pailos (2002:292).

In the seminal work *Genius Loci*, published in 1979, the idea of ‘the dwelling place’ was further elaborated.<sup>82</sup> The ambition was to develop a phenomenology of architecture that went beyond the dualism between geometrical or objective space and the subjective field of perception, a cognitive expansion of architecture into a landscape-like place. Wallenstein has interpreted this development as a transcending movement, from an initial visualization of our immediate understanding of place, through a symbolization that enables us to extract a meaning free from the immediate context, to a final stage where all placial qualities are gathered in an existential center – a *genius loci*.<sup>83</sup> Instead of being scientifically represented in terms of its components, the symbolic content of place should be expanded and deepened. It should be a *concrete symbol* of what Heidegger had poetically expressed as “[t]he way in which you are and I am, the way in which we humans are on earth.”<sup>84</sup> The unfolding of *genius loci* was in this sense no less than an answer to the search “for a way to reach beyond transitory facts and to resolve the problem of change.”<sup>85</sup> In this respect, *genius loci* was conceived of as an essential *image*, an *aléthic* or transcendental experience. *Alétheia* is the Greek word for truth, which, following Heidegger, is derived from a verbal stem denoting ‘to escape notice’, ‘to be concealed.’<sup>86</sup> In relation to the place discourse, *alétheia* had an ontological function; it would reveal “the things themselves; it signifies what shows itself – *entities in the ‘how’ of their uncoveredness.*”<sup>87</sup> The function of *genius loci* was to provide such an *aléthic*, pre-logical image, a visually conceived *a priori*.

The home-coming or recognition inscribed in *genius loci* is subsequently a visually defined home-coming, an intimate, subjectively circumscribed relationship between representation and the real. Even though the *genius loci* is often understood in concrete terms – closely related to *place-making*, to a practical rehabilitation of placial spirit, it comes into being exclusively as a pre-logic, but also non-dialogic, poetic act of *visually* securing a coherent whole – a pre-disposition which also explains the redundant reference to images in

82 Only indirectly formulated in his first book, *Intentions in Architecture* (1965), the existentialist perspective was more explicit in his second book, *Existence, Space and Architecture* (1971), where Norberg-Schulz set out to extend the *Gestalt* perceptual psychology with “existential space.” Inspired both by Heidegger and by Merleau-Ponty, he interchangeably used both *existential space*, *place* and *genius loci*.

83 Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:102).

84 Martin Heidegger: *Building Dwelling Thinking*, as quoted in Christian Norberg-Schulz (1979).

85 Jorge Otero-Pailos (2002:309).

86 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1929/1962), footnote on p. 57.

87 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1929/1962:262). In his discussion of discursive reason, José Luis Ramirez points to the relation between *alétheia*, as the truth behind *dóxa*, the illusory. While the *alétheic* is expressed through *lógos*, *dóxa*, as uncertain knowledge or experience, has to be expressed through *órganon*, rhetoric. See José Luis Ramirez (1995a) *Skapande mening (Creative Meaning)*, p. 225.

Norberg-Schulz texts.<sup>88</sup> Architecture is a non-discursive, poetic activity that can teach us to see, to live poetically and symbolically, and to understand the natural vocation of place, but that has very little or nothing to say when it comes to social conflicts or political change.

As a de-politization of modernist space, the non-discursive and intimate idea of *genius loci* does paradoxically enough unfold as a driving force in an international architectural discourse, conflating visions of authentic vernacularism, German and French existentialism, American ideas of poetic cognitivism and Scandinavian natural spiritualism. The political ambiguity of dwelling and homecoming, of common roots and identities, is in this discourse left outside, which is also why it so clearly distinguishes itself from the squatter movement and its claims for a 'home.' The *oikos* at the bottom of *genius loci* is a teleological domestic principle, a principle of spatial scarcity and self-command. At the bottom of the alternative home of Christiania, on the other hand, is a conflictive and peregrine principle, at one point in Christiania's history also conceived of as the paradox of 'an archer's home.' It is in this sense not a *locus* built upon identification and homecoming, but as much upon differentiation and potential departure – a possibility of re-configuration that an individually-defined belonging does not provide room for.

At certain moments in history, the idea of belonging to place has functioned as a mobilizing call, actualizing the place, not as an object to be controlled, but as a collection of signs and practices of significations. In Christiania, the articulation, rather than the definition, of a common ground has played a decisive and vitalizing role for its struggle to survive. The numerous cultural manifestations have in this sense served a double task, both that of actualizing the place as a system of signifying practices, and that of simultaneously reconstituting and modifying these practices. What could be called a 'place-bound' commonality, or sense of belonging to a place, is in the case of Christiania clearly related to a discursive awareness, a certain spatial confidence emanating from the fact that the place itself is a set of arguments difficult to ignore.

The idea for an alternative economy or household that was outlined in the late seventies and eighties, as well as the exchange economy based upon the internal currency, the *Løn*, should in this respect not be interpreted as a downright attempt at self-sufficiency, to establishing place as a closed circuit, but as a practical interrogation of the signifying presumptions behind any economy, any household, any dwelling place. The *Løn* constitutes an open system of signification, a *play*, not only with belonging, with referential meaning, but also with exchangeability, with potential otherness. Even though the Christiania rhetoric at times has been of the more spiritual kind, its manifestations and discursive practices in relation to a political reality have prevented it from

88 In the work of Norberg-Schulz, one can, according to Wallenstein, discern influences from Husserl, particularly his later works where he describes the relation between science and the *Lebenswelt*, but also from other phenomenologists such as Gaston Bachelard (2004:100). See also Jorge Otero-Pailos (2002:328-329).

transforming into an alethic image of itself. Rather than a metaphysical ground of recurrent return or mythologized home-coming, Christiania has acted out its potential role as discursively fertile soil – an urban underground where significations are still possible to radically modify.

## Polemological excursions

In the preceding notes, I put forward a critique of the attempts to consolidate urbanity around the phenomenologically defined notions of ‘authenticity’, ‘home’, ‘spatial identity’, ‘dwelling’, or ‘genius loci.’ This critique has served the purpose of denouncing any transcendently-motivated evaluation of Christiania, irrespective of whether such an evaluation would be beneficial or not. Christiania is neither a remarkable, substantial reality, nor an urban or spatial phenomenon that may be identified, grounded and logically ontologized, but a composite of expressive practices, signifying gestures, and linguistic turns.

For an analysis of such an intermediary space, phenomenology is not adequate. What we would need, and what Christiania calls for, is an approach that does not take the reality for a mute granted, a silent given, but that recognizes the problematic leeway between world and words, between Reality and the conflictive practices upon which ‘reality’ depends. Manifesting itself through a perforated framework, Christiania comes into being as a formless room for transformational practice, disseminating rather than centripetal, representing a quite ‘non-alethic and at first glance ‘non-Heideggerian’ placeness. A controversial conundrum, the spatial reflections of Heidegger may however be of great relevance as for the understanding of such an explicit location as that of Christiania. In the writings of Heidegger, we can discern a clear rejection of transcendental phenomenology, expressed as the explicit disseminating of being in the contextual space of linguistic practice. Nevertheless, when Heidegger appears in architectural discourse, it is first and foremost in order to motivate a strong transcendental (re-)turn.

Frequently referred to, Heideggerian thinking therefore constitutes one of the most inevitable, and also most thorny, passages towards a deeper understanding of contemporary (urban) space. In this context, I will argue for a reading of Heidegger as a transition from the transcendentalist stance of grounding and spiritual identification, to an intermediate and performative logic emphasizing the *Lebenswelt* in a new way, where, rather than an *a priori* phenomenal object, it unfolds as a consequence of human interference.

### Heideggerian Disseminations

As much as Christiania is an imperative of ‘dwelling’, it has in practice problematized and criticized the conventions surrounding the notion of belonging. Rather than affirming and ‘representing’ the idea of the dwelling place, the Free Town has undermined and deconstructed this idea, all in

order to re-cultivate or re-cycle the different strata of existential, social, or economical/political intentions embedded in the notion. Developing an activist form of dwelling, Christiania has in this respect also actualized the existential distinction between individual *being* and social *becoming* – being perceived as that which simply *is* and that which continuously has to come into a situated presence.

The distinction between being and becoming is also one of the main issues in Heidegger, related as it is not only to space but to time. While the idea of dwelling, understood as *genius loci*, the spirit of place, has often appeared as what Spanish architectural theorist Ignasi de Solà-Morales has called “a mythical divinity, a private demon”,<sup>89</sup> it plays a more active and generative role in Heideggerian thinking. Understanding placial dwelling as a foundation or origin, argues Solà-Morales, “belongs to cultures that find their identity in the struggle against the passage of time, seeking to arrest time by means of ritual and myth.”<sup>90</sup> Yet, an alternative understanding of dwelling is possible, also from the point of view of Heideggerian existentialism, and then “[n]ot as the revelation of something existing in permanence, but as the production of an event.”<sup>91</sup>

The inspirational source behind the spiritualist place concept as developed within an architectural phenomenology is first and foremost the later meditations of Heidegger, and more specifically the essay *Bauen wohnen denken* (“*Building Dwelling Thinking*”) that has gained more prominent status within the spatial disciplines.<sup>92</sup> Yet, the question is whether an isolated reading of this text alone can motivate a return to an understanding of spatial dwelling in general and architectural and urban practices in particular as a natural rather than cultural human dimension. And as architectural historian Alberto Perez-Gomez has argued, even though such a reading may be the fault of Heidegger himself as he chooses to convey a vernacular and traditional conception of ‘place,’ “in the context of his other related writings, alternative readings are more plausible.”<sup>93</sup> For Heidegger, ‘place’ had unfolded as a result of his attempts to dissociate himself both from a metaphysically defined, objective ‘space,’ and from the psychologizing tendencies of subjective phenomenology. Objective or geometrical space, Heidegger argued, had no relevance when it came to explaining the complexity of meanings that constituted the lived and experienced exteriority of the ‘World.’ Subjectivity, correspondingly, failed to explain the facticity of the same World, its resistance and willfulness in relation

89 Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1997:97).

90 Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1997:100).

91 Ignasi de Solà-Morales (1997:104).

92 This essay was originally delivered at a speech at the “Darmstadt Gespräche” in 1951; a seminar held in relation to CIAM VIII. See Jorge Otero-Pailos (2002:299).

93 See Alberto Pérez-Gómez (1998) “Dwelling on Heidegger: Architecture as Mimetic Techno-Poiesis”. *Wolkenkuckucksheim, Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, Vozdushnyj Zamok* ><http://www.tu-cottbus.de/theo/Wolke><. Download date 2006-03-14.

to human intentionality.<sup>94</sup> The world in Heidegger's universe was rather poetic, in a human, technological sense – a world of modifying and relational *equipment* and *concerns*.<sup>95</sup> Doing justice to this world demands an acting out of potentials in a linguistic reproduction of being itself – a form of spatial dispersion of the subject. “In its metaphysically neutral concept”, wrote Heidegger, “Dasein's essence already contains a primordial *bestrewal* (*Streuung*), which is in a quite definite respect a *dissemination* (*Zerstreuung*).”<sup>96</sup> A consequence of the ‘thrown-ness’ of the subject (as understood in its Latin sense as a combination of *sub*, under, and *jacere*, to throw),<sup>97</sup> a thrown-ness into the world, which transforms it into a scene of the multiple.

The early Heidegger constitutes the subject in this way, as the spread-out-ness of a circumspective “whither” that he also called a *region*,<sup>98</sup> a yet formless space in which being unfolded in relation to the many beings, which it, at the same time, was not. Thrown-ness and dissemination in this sense actualizes the manifoldness and ‘otherness’ of the world, which does not present itself as unified identity, but as composite expansion, as a *potentiality-for-Being*.<sup>99</sup> Fundamentally dispersed, the world in Heideggerian terms appears as Aroundness, (*Umhafte*), Environment (*Umwelt*), Range (*Umkreis*), or Dealings (*Umgang*), the use of the prefix *um-* reinforcing both an encircling and an

94 Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:75).

95 In German ‘Zeuge’ and ‘Besorgen’, ‘Zeuge’ there is no English word for Zeug. “While it may mean any implement, instrument or tool, Heidegger uses it for the most part as a collective noun which is analogous to our relatively specific ‘gear’ (as in ‘gear for fishing’) or the more elaborate ‘paraphernalia’, or the still more general ‘equipment’...” ‘Besorgen’ further, stands rather for “the kind of ‘concern’ in which we ‘concern ourselves’ with activities which we perform or things which we produce.” John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson in a comment on the English translation of *Being and Time* (1962:83).

96 Martin Heidegger, *The Metaphysics of Logic*, quoted in Edward S. Casey (1997) *The Fate of Place*, p. 259. The italics are Heidegger's. Heidegger's own drifting development is definitely not unambiguous and may be subject to many interpretations. I am here stressing a deterritorializing or propagating dimension, which I see as particularly relevant for landscape thinking and formation; an aspect also put forward by Casey: “Where in *Being and Time*, the emphasis had been on being-in-the-world as a ‘unitary phenomenon’ – unitary thanks to being-in as dwelling, the care-structure, and above all temporality – and Dasein's ‘dispersion’ was regarded as a ‘deficient mode’, in the lecture course of 1928 (his last given while at the University of Marburg) Heidegger places the stress on a radical ‘dissemination’ that is the reflection of Dasein's essential multiplicity of modes of being-in-the-world” (*The Fate of Place*, p. 259). According to Deleuze and Guattari, this openness is something that Heidegger will carelessly drop: “Heidegger lost his way along the paths of reterritorialization because they are paths without directive signs or bannisters.” (“Heidegger s'est perdu dans les chemins sans balise ni parapet.” Deleuze and Guattari (1991) *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 104.

97 *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1989, Oxford University Press.

98 ‘Gegend.’ “There is no English word that corresponds to ‘Gegend’. ‘Region’ and ‘whereabouts’ perhaps come the closest...” John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson in a comment to the English translation of *Being and Time* (1962:136).

99 Martin Heidegger (1929/1962:275).



abundance, thus creating a tense totality of a primordially relational spatiality. In relation to this space, time constitutes an “ecstatic horizon”, a displacing dimension *beyond* or *outside* of ourselves (Greek, *ek-stasis*, displacement, from *ex-histanai*, which means ‘to put out of place’, or in a phrase, to put a person out of his wits).<sup>100</sup> Heidegger chooses to talk about this timely out-reaching in terms of *event*:<sup>101</sup> a faculty not possible to exclusively deduce from time, but a spatio-temporal here-and-now. Instead of disclosing existence as an *a*-temporal “beingness”, one has to see to its *coming into being*, “the event of presencing”, the condition of eventful potentiality as it is realized first and foremost through *linguistic practice*.

When Heidegger then proposes “*wohnen*”, *dwelling*, as a form of being-in-the-world, it is first and foremost from the perspective of a cultural or linguistic presencing it should be understood. In *Bauen Whonen Denken*, Heidegger begins his philosophical inquiry by introducing the two activities of *building* and *dwelling*, interrelated as means and end. We attain to dwelling, he says, by means of building. However, according to Heidegger, the distinction is not causal – for, as he says, “to build is in itself already to dwell.”<sup>102</sup> This relation is not representational, but mutual, intermediary – a matter of linguistic agency. “It is language that tells us about the nature of a thing, provided that we respect language’s own nature.”<sup>103</sup> As a poetic dimension, dwelling has to do with respecting language, with becoming through language. Knowing how to dwell thus means knowing how to incorporate or appropriate a linguistic space through what Heidegger describes as a ‘presencing event’, which has the potential of making or establishing a meaningful difference.

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This ‘presencing’ is in Heidegger exemplified through architectural practice, through the combination of *erecting* and *cultivating*. In Heidegger’s model, erecting and cultivating are as interrelated as building and dwelling. We cultivate by way of erecting, and we erect through cultivation. By erecting a bridge, we cultivate our neighborhood, our orientation towards our near-dweller, in order to form a *landscape*: “The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream.”<sup>104</sup> Out of this *gathering* activity, a meaning appears which, in Western thought, has been read into the thing as an inherent property of the thing itself, a property thus associated with its place in the world. However, what the presenting of the bridge actualizes is also the fact that there is no *a priori* place, no ‘natural’ ground in this landscape. Instead places are results of the presencing activity, in this case of the human artifices presented, which will give rise to or produce location through its gathering ability. Through the thing erected, gathering and emergence coincide, thus orienting rather than defining

100 Oxford English Dictionary, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford University Press, 1989. See also Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:78).

101 ‘Ereignis’. See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:79).

102 Martin Heidegger (1971:146).

103 Martin Heidegger (1971:146).

104 Martin Heidegger (1971:152).

existence. This is also the implication of the German *Raum*; a space *cleared or freed* for settlement and lodging, a space where beginnings can occur and from which something “begins its presencing.”<sup>105</sup>

Building, as human dwelling-in-the-world, is not a representational practice simply gathering or re-centering being in relation to an ideal foundation, ground or home. Instead it provides an orientation, allowing human beings to participate in the totality of the ‘world’ on their premises, as cultivators. The building-dwelling of Heidegger should therefore be understood, not in relation to transcendental absolutes, but in relation to the other aspects of human being that Heidegger chose to emphasize, namely art and technology as specifically human concerns and means. Building-dwelling is in this sense the specific human being-in-the-world – not a representation but a specific poetic-technological intermediation that enables a becoming-other.<sup>106</sup>

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Criticizing simplified or essentialist interpretations, many interpreters, not least within the spatial discourses, have proposed a similar, contextual reading of Heidegger. Advocating a more linguistically-oriented phenomenology, Perez-Gomez argues for an understanding of the building-dwelling space of Heidegger as an active “space of intersubjectivity where we appear for the other and therefore appear as ourselves.”<sup>107</sup> From an even more radical point of view, Italian architectural theorist Massimo Cacciari has rejected a reading of Heidegger in terms of a return to an original and authentic ground. Heidegger does not propose a nostalgic recovering of a pre-modern *genius loci*; instead, what is at stake is rather the uncovering of an authentic way to confront and handle the inherent paradoxes of modern being-in-the-world. There is according to Cacciari a negative openness in Heidegger that guides us towards that which has to be interrogated: “What speaks is not dwelling but the crisis of dwelling. And its language is critical: to be exact, division, detachment, difference.”<sup>108</sup> Again, if contemporary dwelling emerges as an un-poetic, un-artful living, the implicit Heideggerian answer to this situation is to make poetry, to make justice to man’s specific abilities. In this sense, Heidegger radicalizes the discourse on building-dwelling, articulating the discord and disunion of being, but also its potential, expressive width. If the early Heidegger had intended to *describe* our existence as spatio-semiotic beings, the later Heidegger attempts to generate a turn within language as such, not through revelation or explanation, but rather through the transformation of our *relation* to language.<sup>109</sup>

105 Martin Heidegger (1971:154).

106 Alberto Pérez-Gómez (1998) specifically points out the relation between the Building Dwelling Thinking text and four other important essays: «Die Frage Nach der Technik» (1949), «Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes» (1960), «Die Zeit des Weltbildes» (1938) and «Die Kunst und der Raum» (1969), all of which deal with the complex linguistic/constructive relations between humans and world.

107 See Alberto Pérez-Gómez (1998).

108 Massimo Cacciari (1980/1998:396).

109 See Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2004:93).

The most important contribution of Heidegger to spatial discourse is not the metaphysical conception of a naturalized dwelling through which man may come to peace. Instead it is the articulation of a building-dwelling, which reveals a human existence and “debunks the incredible linguistic confusion between lodging and nostalgia for home that constitute the specific form of architectural ideology.”<sup>110</sup> The essence of dwelling in Heidegger’s own philosophical practice also reveals itself as a “remaining”, or a “staying on”,<sup>111</sup> and this in a way that does provide a kind of emergent peace – a staying on in such a way as to make all aspects of being appear. As being-in-peace, dwelling *works*, through language, as a desire or request, urgently calling forth, or *provoking* the world to become present. Only if we are capable of an *active* and *interrogative* dwelling that respects and is equal to our poetic, linguistic, or technological potentials, Heidegger seems to say, only if we are capable also of a disseminated being independent of essential, original forms, only then can we dwell.

Although the linguistic existentialism of Heidegger might seem to take us far from the dwellings of Christiania, it does to a certain extent present the same problematic of place-making as neither merely a representational matter of uncovering an original spirit, nor simply an ingenious invention of an ideal form, but a matter of provoking the world in its becoming-world, in its becoming a totality of relations and expressive actions. In between uncovering and inventing, the stealing of place exemplifies such an interrogative dwelling practice, a borderline, which, like Heidegger’s bridge, in its gathering already represents a transgression of limits, already a re-directing departure, and as such already a betrayal of every exclusively unifying order.

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### Spaces of Representational Production: Lefebvre

As a re-conceptualization of building, dwelling and thinking, Christiania has certainly challenged the entire composite of being-in-the-world, the entire complex of a mortal existence. Unfolding as a cultivating-erecting, it has furthermore been most productive, generating not only a great number of do-it-yourself architectural objects, but an abundance of spatial and linguistic practices, new patterns of political interaction and socio-cultural reproduction. As such, Christiania has repeatedly interrogated the difference between a phenomenological approach to existence as a virgin confrontation with the world, and a relating to the world through a continuous ‘presencing’, enacted as linguistic, socio-cultural, and artifactual cultivation. This understanding of space in terms of socio-cultural work or constructive production is further worked out in the thinking of Henri Lefebvre, French Marxist theorist,<sup>112</sup>

110 Massimo Cacciari (1980/1998:397).

111 Massimo Cacciari (1980/1998:397).

112 The work of Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) spans a period of almost seventy years, his first book, discussing among other issues André Gide and Dadaism, appearing in 1924. A member of the French Communist Party, Lefebvre reintroduced Marxist thinking into the academic debate after World War II in a series of popular lectures, developing what was

who most certainly would have been enthusiastic about the socio-cultural experiment of Christiania.

In this context, it is first and foremost Lefebvre's emphasis on space as productive of social meaning that arouses interest. Inspired by Heideggerian deconstruction and spatialization of phenomenological metaphysics, Lefebvre confronted and re-interpreted idealist dialectics, especially in terms of its inability to deal with the *ordinary*, its inability to grasp the world as a lived totality.<sup>113</sup> Against objectivist and a-political attempts to localize truth through logical deduction, categorization, or reduction, Lefebvre proposed a politically motivated 'excluded third', the complex and plural composite of *le quotidien*, the everyday of human interactions, thus calling for a *sociology* rather than a *phenomenology* of being.<sup>114</sup>

The notion privileged by Lefebvre is *space* – space as a social, relative and practical construct, intimately linked with human intercourse. As opposed to absolute and mathematical Cartesian space, which is a *mental representation*, social space is a dimension that has to be performed, enacted, *produced* and *reproduced*. Also as mental representation, as a form of knowledge, space is understood as produced. Yet, divorced from bodily action, from the operations

to become his central issues: the relation between Marxism, philosophy and sociology, an intersection of thought that eventually led him to the study of the everyday production of space. In the first volume of his *La critique de la vie quotidienne* (1947/1977), Lefebvre develops Georg Lukács' and also Heidegger's concept of *Alltäglichkeit* into an attack on the mystification and simultaneous de-politization of 'real life' that was a result of surrealist (and bourgeois) celebration of the spiritual and unconscious. In this context however, the central works are those where Lefebvre works out his spatial theories in relation to urban life, such as *Le droit à la ville* (1968), *La révolution urbaine* (1970), *La pensée marxiste et la ville* (1972), and *La production de l'espace* (1974). In *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai also comments on the influences from Lefebvre, although he does not explicitly work this out. For a discussion on Lefebvre and Marxist spatiality, see also Meike Schalk (forthcoming) *Imagining the Organic City: The City Between Nature and Capital*.

113        One of the most important interpreters of Lefebvre is in this respect Edward Soja, who in his *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989) thoroughly discussed Henri Lefebvre's importance for the "spatialization" of Marxist dialectics. The opposition that occupied Lefebvre and that in his opinion stifled Marxist thinking was, according to Soja, that between spatial and social concerns, where a privileging of space according to the more rigid Marxists, would run the risk of obscuring the focus on class struggle and furthermore only lead to a fetishizing or idealizing of space and spatial organization as a societal remedy. Central to the understanding of Lefebvre is, however, according to Soja, that space in Lefebvre is not a physical or scientific object "removed from ideology and politics" (in Henri Lefebvre's *Reflections on the Politics of Space*, from 1976, quoted in Soja (1989:80)). Or, as Lefebvre expressed it in *La Révolution Urbaine* (1970): "Space and the political organization of space express social relationships but also react back upon them." In Lefebvre, argues Soja, social and spatial relations are dialectically interdependent – "both space-forming and space-contingent." See Soja (1989:81).

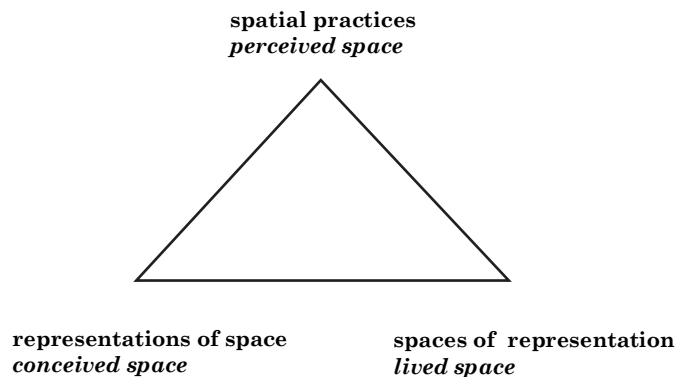
114        See Michael Trebitsch (1991) "Preface", in Henri Lefebvre (1947/1991) *Critique of Everyday Life*, p. xxiv. See also Meike Schalk (forthcoming).

and practices constituting it, space has transformed into an exclusively cognitive category, a natural *a priori* to be revealed and represented: “Producing space”, writes Lefebvre, “those words give rise to surprise.”<sup>115</sup> However, as a social category, space is a matter of establishing relations, of inventing codes, of actualizing passages between body, world and the “concrete abstractions” of which the common, social sphere consists.

In this sense, the genesis of space could be understood as a triangular relation between firstly, *spatial practices* generally speaking (production and reproduction of space ensuring continuity and relative cohesion); secondly, *representations of space* (practices linked to the ordering of space, to the production of knowledge through signs and codes); and thirdly, *spaces of representation* (spaces producing more complex symbolic relations, not as spatial codes, but as recoding of spatial codes, associated with the continuous revitalization of social life). These three aspects can also be understood as three moments of spaces, all with different relations to the human body: *perceived space* (the practical, everyday foundation for the relation with the exterior world, space as spontaneously encountered), *conceived space* (the space of professionals, planners, technocrats – in one way or the other, space submitted to systemized action), and finally *lived space* (space which relates to social interaction, space experienced through practices of symbolic expression).<sup>116</sup>

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Fig. 16 a. Aspects of space according to Henri Lefebvre.



There is in Lefebvre’s scheme no explicit difference between spaces, *espaces*, and places, *lieux*. However, when *lieu* appears as a category, it is often related to the right side of the triangle, to the space of representational practices, containing “places [lieux] of passion and action, of lived situations, immediately implying time.”<sup>117</sup> On the other hand, understood as spatial

115 “‘Produire l’espace’, ces mots étonnent...” Henri Lefebvre (1974 :23).

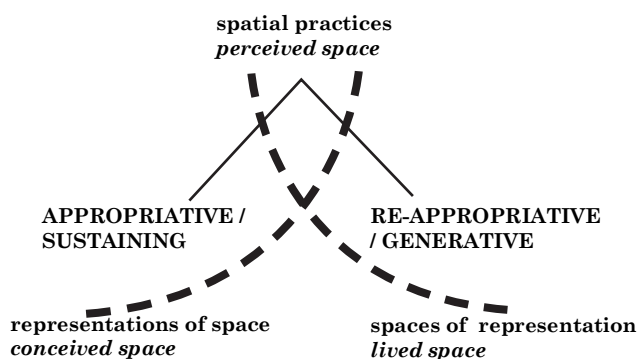
116 Henri Lefebvre (1974:48-57).

117 “Il contient des lieux de la passion et de l’action, ceux des situations vécues, donc implique immédiatement le temps.” Henri Lefebvre (1974 :52).

practice, representational practice is also a matter of localization, attributing to each activity a certain punctual place (*lieu*).<sup>118</sup> “In this sense,” argues Lefebvre, “space contains multiple intersections of assigned places and locations.”<sup>119</sup>

Before problematizing the *espace-lieu* distinction further, some linguistic remarks might be of importance. As several theorists of space and place have pointed out, the translation of this conceptual congregate is not entirely simple. While the French *espace*, like the English *space*, is a general term designating the three dimensions, like the Latin *spatium*, an indefinite extension containing all objects, *lieu* is a more ambiguous term that can be used in a number of different contexts. In daily usage, *lieu* appears in the construction *avoir lieu*, which in English would be ‘to take place’, and in the construction *au lieu de* (which is synonymous with *à la place de*) – in English ‘instead of’. In these examples, *lieu* signifies either a specific location or a place of event. In the expression *en dernier lieu*, signifying ‘finally’ or ‘ultimately’, *lieu* appears as the background circumstances that ‘in the end’ will prove decisive. *Lieu* also appears in the meaning of motive or reason, as in the phrase *il y a lieu de*, which means ‘it is convenient to’, a meaning similarly referring to a background of circumstances, either habitual or otherwise regulated.<sup>120</sup> In Lefebvre’s thinking, however, the distinction *espace-lieu* is not explicit, yet it is possible to discern two kinds of *espaces/lieux*; one *appropriative* or *sustaining*, providing the operational structure for spatial practice, and one *re-appropriative* or *generative*, actualizing a vacancy or a potential abundance for social mobilization and change, which results in the following expanded diagram:

Fig. 16b. Sustaining and appropriative spatial practices in Lefebvre.



118 “...l'espace des planificateurs, celui de la localisation qui attribue à chaque activité un lieu ponctuel.” Henri Lefebvre (1974:56).

119 “Ainsi l'espace contient ces entrecroisements multiples, en lieux et places assignés.” Henri Lefebvre (1974:42).

120 *lieu*, n. m., “s'emploi dans de nombreuses locutions.”; *Avoir lieu*, se produire en un endroit et à un moment donné. *Avoir lieu de*, avoir une raison pour. *En dernier lieu*, enfin, finalement. *Au lieu de*, à la place de. *Larousse de la Langue Française*, Librairie Larousse, 1979. While *lieu* have a relation to patterns of action and use, the term *endroit* is more equivalent to ‘location’ in the general sense.

On the left hand side there is subsequently a kind of configured 'place', a place of representative positions answering to an appropriate and sustaining perceptual space. On the right hand side, there is 'place' as re-appropriation, as interrogation and experimental practice – an activated kind of place. Embracing the perceived and immediate from different perspectives, these two spatial approaches also answer to the difference between *representative regimes* and productive and/or *re-productive events*. While the left hand side would designate a certain governing principle, the right hand side would imply an emphasis on the necessity also of an event-driven challenging of these principles. The overlapping of the two spheres in the middle could in this respect be understood as an attempt to indicate the possibility of an ideal, utopian, both sustaining and generative space – a simultaneously perceived and collaborative *art* of spatial being.

This figure however, could also be understood as a designation of the complex interrelation between socio-biological *reproduction* and the social means of *production*. Production and re-production cannot be separated, argues Lefebvre. As an example he puts forward the division of labor, which is both affected by and has repercussions on family structures and thus socio-biological reproduction. In pre-capitalist society, he argues, biological reproduction and economic production enveloped social reproduction, in a continuous perpetuating of society over generations. With capitalism however, and especially with a rapidly mutating neo-capitalism, the situation has changed so as to create a *tense* relation between the two spheres; a relation in which biological reproduction – as *sexuality* – holds an ambiguous and complex role.

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The important conclusion to be drawn from the diagram is the fact that space can no longer be conceived of as a passive medium, nor can it be reduced to a mental faculty, but has to be approached as a composite of corporeal and symbolic, of human desires and practices. Simultaneously medium and result, condition and product, space is to be understood as a reproductive dimension, a 'here we can', expressed by Lefebvre as follows:

As a product, interactively or retroactively, space intervenes in production itself: organization of productive work, transport, flow of raw materials and energy, product of distribution networks. In its productive role, and as a producer, space (well or badly organized) becomes part of the relations of production and the forces of production. [...] Does it not also play a part in *reproduction*, reproduction of the productive apparatus, of enlarged reproduction, of relations, which it realizes in practice, 'on the ground'?<sup>121</sup>

A composite of practices continuously constituting its own realization, social space furthermore is a category which lacks origin, which lacks a foundational



creative moment. There is thus no social space ‘proper’, no essential state to which one could refer – no original, creational gesture. “The moment of creation has disappeared”, writes Lefebvre,<sup>122</sup> implying that space is neither a divine form, nor an auratic *œuvre*, but a worldly *product*, reproducible through social interaction. It also suggests that all *production* of social space be conceived of as *reproduction*, not in the replicating sense of mechanical reproduction, but rather in the differentiating sense of socio-biological reproduction, presenting an innumerable amount of potentials.

In this sense, ‘social space’ becomes a critical reproduction, entailing an actualization of modalities, of leeway. A “non-objective concretization”,<sup>123</sup> of potentials, it describes an informal dialectic, a dialectic that cannot – through synthesis or otherwise – be reduced to a preconceived logic. The production of space in this sense proposes an alternative ‘logic’ of spatial, representative agency, an understanding of space which neither objectifies nor psychologizes, but which comprises contradictions through a focusing on spatial agency. “Only the act”, argues Lefebvre, “can retain that which is being dispersed: like the closed fist full of sand.”<sup>124</sup> The “unitary theory”<sup>125</sup> thus constituted does not entail a unification, such as that of normalization or leveling, but is a theory of the composite, amalgamated complexity of the everyday. It is therefore an energizing theory, actualizing inherent virtualities, counter-spaces and alternatives.

A logical question for Lefebvre, so concerned about the everyday validity of his theories, was subsequently how this spatial consciousness could be politically applied. The answer was formulated in terms of an “urban revolution.”<sup>126</sup> As urbanity as such embodied the “critical phase” of capitalism, a heterogeneous phase, characterized not only by an increasing conceptualization of space, but to a large extent also by historical and political *deviation* from spatial and social norms, it would also entail an inevitable challenging and interrogation of representational spatial regimes. In this sense, the “urban problematic” according to Lefebvre, supplants industrialization as the motive force of historical change.<sup>127</sup> As an intensified and differentiating social space, urban space provides both a new communicative and highly expressive medium for social interaction, “a unique quotidian environment available for future reconstructions of sociability and desire”, a space that is not entirely focused on industrial production, but on the reproduction of itself.<sup>128</sup>

122 “Le moment de création a disparu.” Henri Lefebvre (1974:90).

123 Henri Lefebvre (1974:88).

124 “Seule une action peut retenir ce qui se disperse: comme le poing fermé tient du sable.” Henri Lefebvre (1974:369).

125 Henri Lefebvre (1974:18).

126 Henri Lefebvre (1970) *La révolution urbaine*.

127 Neil Smith (2003) “Foreword”, in Henri Lefebvre: *The Urban Revolution*, p. xii.

128 Henri Lefebvre (2003:xiv).

Through the notion of everyday urban space, Lefebvre aimed at problematizing the relational interdependence in the writings of Heidegger between *dispersal* and *gathering*.<sup>129</sup> Urban space in Lefebvre unfolds as ultimately 'lived' and 'practiced', as an expressive, externalizing 'work' or a semiotic, transformative 'production' that both gathers and disseminates. This actualization of an empowering everyday sphere of creative – and fundamentally critical – re-appropriation also had a direct influence on the formation of the urban social movement of which Christiania was and is a part. Less an attempt to create an ultimate life form and more an expression of a desire to re-vitalize the everyday, Christiania has offered space to deconstruct routines and customs, to de-familiarize them and unsettle them, in order to energize, dramatize or consciously act them out. Everyday functionality is in Christiania a concern, a social *matter*, not an established, representational space. Every 'establishment', like the Kindergarten, the Women's Welding Shop, the Optimist Carpentry, the Green Hall Recycling Center, or the Forest of the Future,<sup>130</sup> are dependent upon engaged agents sustaining the matters, the practices of which they consist. There is no given structure upon which to count.

This repetitive reproduction of meaning does also entail a social and spatial stress, a stress that also actualizes the conflict between advocates for a more representative, unified or domesticating principle of unitary dwelling, and those in Christiania supporting a more experimental, but also potentially less peaceful development. What is apparent, however, is how "the soul of place"<sup>131</sup> in Christiania is never left in peace or accepted without debate, but repetitively confronted with the everyday "right to be different."<sup>132</sup>

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### Tactics of Narrative Consumption: De Certeau

Having associated Christiania with Lefebvre's ideas of spatial *production* and *reproduction*, it would be entirely logical to ask what kind of spatial *product* is the result. As in the rhetorical figure of "the social experiment", there is an idea of productivity at work, a goal-oriented utility of spatial production that eventually will crystallize in the form of a serviceable social space. The question is, however, if it is at all possible to discuss the urban landscape in terms of

129 The former train of thought could mainly be attributed to the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, but perhaps even more to the thoughts developed in *The Metaphysical Foundation of Logic*, where Heidegger puts an emphasis on radical dissemination. The latter train of thought, more concerned with Being-in (*In-Sein*), with inhabiting and dwelling, with acts of delimiting and caring, may be referred to as the work of the "mature" Heidegger, as earlier discussed. See also Edward S. Casey (1997:243-284).

130 *Fremtidsskoven*, "the Forest of the Future", is the public park in front of the *Månefiskeren Café*.

131 "Stedets ånd – kvalitet og økologi" ("The spirit of place – quality and ecology"), subtitle in *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision til virkelighed*. Christiania 2003, p. 23.

132 "Retten til at være forskellig" er essensen i Christiania" ("The right to be different is the essence of Christiania"). See *Christiania på arbejde. Statusrapport: Fra vision til virkelighed*. Christiania 2003, p. 75.

production, in terms of a work that will generate a result. This has also formed the basis for a critique of the socio-spatial conception, which was to a great extent dealt with by Lefebvre himself. Understood as productive, space still rests upon a subject-object relationship, upon an idea of a subject's making or realizing, on the basis of an original intention, an objective and positive 'something.'

What Christiania *delivers* however, is nothing consistent, but a disassembling *mode of usages* – a composite of everyday spatial practices, repetitiously actualizing, re-appropriating, re-presenting, and re-enacting urban space. This brings into attention a reinterpretation of Lefebvre's everyday 'socio-spatiality' that takes Heideggerian *presencing* into account in an alternative way, a re-interpretation provided by Michel de Certeau. In his socio-spatial studies of the everyday, he also brings in *the temporality* of representational action into the spatial discussion in an active way. In de Certeau, the everyday is then understood as the sphere of the present, as *practice*. Focusing on what Lefebvre called "the space of representations" – the space where representations are being produced – de Certeau engaged in a close examination of ordinary linguistic practices, popular procedures, 'miniscules' and the quotidian, as they appear in an interplay with the disciplinary and already formalized mechanisms of the everyday.<sup>133</sup>

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De Certeau's field of investigation was "the thousands of practices by means of which users re-appropriate the space organized by techniques of socio-cultural production."<sup>134</sup> For de Certeau, this represented a further elaboration of the Wittgensteinian idea of the everyday as a composite of linguistic practices; it implied an epistemological unfolding of the quotidian "anti-discipline"<sup>135</sup> as described by Lefebvre, and furthermore a dialogue with the contemporary ideas of Michel Foucault of a "microphysics of power."<sup>136</sup> However, comparing

133 In a foreword to the 1990 French edition of *L'invention du quotidien: 1. Arts de faire*, Luce Giard provides a portrait of Michel de Certeau and his work. Born in 1925, having received a classical training in philosophy, language, history and theology, de Certeau joins the Jesuits at the age of twenty-five. Respected for his studies of religious movements of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century and his exigent epistemological critique, his research interests would after May 1968 partly take another direction. With a report on cultural politics, *La culture au pluriel* from 1974, de Certeau initiates his project of studying "the disseminated proliferation" of anonymous, everyday creation (*La culture au pluriel*, pp. 241-243). The report leads on to a research commission for the Cultural Ministry that would result in the first volume of *L'invention du quotidien*, of which the other was the volume *Habiter, Cuisiner* co-written by Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol with the assistance of Marie Ferrier.

134 "les milles pratiques par lesquelles des utilisateurs se réapproprient l'espace organisé par les techniques de la production socioculturelle." Michel de Certeau (1980:xl).

135 Michel de Certeau (1980:xl) and footnote p. 303. De Certeau here refers to the work of Henri Lefebvre as "une source fondamentale."

136 Michel Foucault (1975:31-33). In the general introduction to *L'invention du quotidien: 1. Arts de faire*, de Certeau discusses his points of departure; the psychopathology of everyday life of Freud, the microphysics of power as formulated by Michel Foucault, the influence from

Lefebvre's Marxist definition of the everyday with that of de Certeau, a significant difference appears with respect to our understanding of the concrete spatial intervention and everyday critique as developed in Christiania.

Lefebvre's notion of urban space as an everyday space of representation is in this respect formulated from an explicitly Marxist point of view, where 'the everyday' appears as a category enabling a superseding of privatized and intimate consciousness and a subsequent articulation of a collective sphere. As a space of representation, this sphere entails a critique of representational mystifications, such as those of 'needs', 'work', or 'freedom', in favor of *an alternative production* of representations. Instead of seizing control over the means of industrial production, the alienated class should now, in the era of late capitalism, direct its efforts towards the everyday of urban life, in order to become its authorized producers. For de Certeau, however, the everyday emerged as central for an investigation of everything that within a Marxist analysis would appear to be nothing but passive submission – the micro-differences, the micro-resistances and micro-liberties unfolding in and as ordinary life. Instead of analyzing cultural products, or 'space' as the system of their production and distribution, de Certeau turns his attention towards another production, called *usage*, or *consumption*. As such, de Certeau is shifting focus from the *producers* of common space, either technocrats (planners, architects), poets, or other legitimized providers of contexts, to the *consumers*, to those who through their trivial usages, their temporal modes and alternative ruses, are engaged in a manipulation of space without being its original makers. And de Certeau expresses this as follows:

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In reality, a rationalized, expansionist, centralized, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production called 'consumption' and characterized by its ruses, its fragmentation (the result of circumstances), its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quiet activity, in short by its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products (where would it place them?) but in an art of using those imposed on it.<sup>137</sup>

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Bourdieu, Garfinkel, Bernstein and others. The work of Henri Lefebvre is in this respect also mentioned in a footnote. Concerning de Certeau's sources of inspiration, Giard comments: "A coté de Freud, l'influence la plus profonde n'est exercée ni par Foucault ni par Bourdieu dont les thèses sont pesée et scrutées dans un meme chapitre, ni par Detienne et Vernant dont la 'ruse' grecque a joué un rôle essentiel dans la mise en évidence des ruses des pratiquants, ni par Lévi-Strauss dont les 'bricolages' ont été un facteur déclenchant, mais par Wittgenstein auquel le crédit maximum est accordé: 'cette œuvre disséminée et rigoureuse semble fournir une épure philosophique à une science contemporaine de l'ordinaire.'" See Luce Giard, "Histoire d'une recherche", in Michel de Certeau (1980:xxvii). See also pp. xxxix-xlii in the same volume.

137 "En réalité, à une production rationalisée, expansioniste, centralisé, spectaculaire et bruyante, fait face une production d'un type tout différent, qualifiée de 'consommation', qui a pour caractéristiques ses ruses, son effritement au gré des occasions, ses braconnages, sa clandestinité, son murmure inlassable, en somme une quasi-invisibilité puisqu'elle ne se signale guère par des

This 'art of usage,' exemplified by consuming practices such as walking, reading, talking, moving about, shopping, or cooking, are described by de Certeau as spatial *tactics*, reactive moves, "neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop."<sup>138</sup> Different from a strategy, which postulates a place *proper* and which can be delimited as its own and serve as a base, tactical practices do not have their place proper, but are actions determined by their lack of a proper locus. "The space of a tactic", writes de Certeau, "is the space of the other",<sup>139</sup> like *poaching*, the illegal catching of a prey by trespassing onto the other's domain,<sup>140</sup> like the encroaching upon someone's property, or the stealing of an idea.<sup>141</sup>

This alternative production that is usage, or consumption, is a parallel making, a *faire avec*,<sup>142</sup> a use and re-use, and thus a kind of *re-production* of the place on which it imposes itself, in English translation a spatial "making-do."<sup>143</sup> This informal or illegal "faire avec" is in the quote above by de Certeau described in terms of an *art* – the art of "making-do", which is a way of making nothing in particular, nothing productive, but a way of activating relations. It is thus a kind of aesthetic practice, actualizing a space in between itself and the other, or the system in which it takes place – a tactical know-how, activating a given place.<sup>144</sup>

produits propres (où en aurait-elle la place?) mais par un art d'utiliser ceux qui lui sont imposés." Michel de Certeau (1980:53).

138 "...ni déterminés ni captés par les systèmes où elles se développent", Michel de Certeau (1980:xlvi).

139 "La tactique n'a pour lieu que celui de l'autre." Michel de Certeau (1980:60).

140 "un braconnage" Michel de Certeau (1980:239).

141 **As an example of such a diversionary practice – the inhabiting of a system in spite** of its postulated constitution – de Certeau mentions what in French is called *la perruque*, "the wig." "La perruque" is the spatial distraction or popular play with meaning, the ordinary worker's diverting of time (not goods, since he uses only scraps) for work that is "free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit." ("...le travailleur qui 'fait la perruque' soustrait à la usine du temps (plutôt que des biens, car il n'utilise que des restes) en vue d'un travail libre, creative et précisément sans profit.") Michel de Certeau (1980:45).

142 Michel de Certeau (1980:50).

143 See the English translation by Steven Rendall in close collaboration with the author, Michel de Certeau (1984) *The Practices of Everyday Life*, p. 29.

144 Swedish philosopher José Luis Ramirez has developed this difference between an instrumental making and a conscious and self-reflecting 'making-do' from an Aristotelian perspective, as a difference between 'making and acting' (in Swedish 'göra och handla', where the verb 'handla' also has clear 'consumptive' connotations, signifying both acting and 'shopping'). In Ramirez' thinking, this difference is derived from the difference in Aristotle between *poiesis* and *praxis*. "Aristotle," writes Ramirez, "calls *poiesis* (making, a making) that activity which in itself would not be desirable did it not lead to something beyond the activity as such. *Praxis* (agency in the proper sense of the word, or perhaps rather *acting*) is on the other hand an activity that is pursued for the sake of the activity as such." (Aristoteles kallar *poiesis* (görande, ett göra) den aktivitet som i sig själv inte vore önskvärd om det inte ledde till något annat än själva aktiviteten. *Praxis* (handling i egentlig bemärkelse, eller kanske bättre *handlande*) är däremot en aktivitet som bedrivs för aktivitetens egen skull.) José Luis Ramirez (1995a:117).

It is in relation to this artfulness and inventiveness of everyday consumption as well as its dissolution of the subject-object relationship, that one should understand de Certeau's distinction between space and place. Place, or in the French original *lieu*, argues de Certeau, is the common and specified presupposition, the *order* according to which the elements are distributed in coexistence. It is the sustaining background principle, by law, habit or otherwise imposed.

A place [*lieu*] is the order (of whatever kind) according to which the elements are distributed in a relationship of coexistence. It thus excludes for two things to occupy the same location [*place*]. The law of the proper rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its proper and distinct location [*endroit*]. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.<sup>145</sup>

In this passage it is obvious that for de Certeau, *lieu* is the general concept for describing a certain spatial co-existential relationship, embracing the more specific notions of French '*place*' and '*endroit*', locational determinations. The decisive capacity of place/*lieu* for de Certeau is however its capacity as "order", as sustainable context – *quel qu'il soit*, of whatever kind.<sup>146</sup> "The law of the 'proper' rules in the place" – the law of identity, of unique and original character, which is why, as de Certeau argues, two things cannot occupy the same place, as this, within the place-order, would be schizophrenia. Space on the other hand, or *espace*, refers to that which is not localized, that which unfolds as soon as "one takes into consideration vectors of direction, quantities of velocity, and the time variables."<sup>147</sup> In this sense, *espace* comprises the specific spatialization or *actuation* of place – the re-configuration of the localized. "Space would in this respect relate to place like the word when it is spoken", writes de Certeau, "that is when it is grasped in the ambiguity of an actualization [...]"<sup>148</sup> Different from place, space has nothing of the coherence or stability of the 'proper.' Place *is*, whereas space *occurs*.

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145 "Est un lieu l'ordre (quel qu'il soit) selon lequel des éléments sont distribués dans des rapport de coexistence. S'y trouve donc exclue la possibilité pour deux choses, d'être à la même place. La loi du 'propre' y règne: les éléments considérés sont les uns à côté des autres, chacun situé en un endroit 'propre' et distinct qu'il définit. Un lieu est donc une configuration instantanée de positions. Il implique une indication de stabilité." In the English translation by Stephen Rendall, both the French *place* and *endroit* are translated by "location", whereas *lieu* is translated by "place." This is, according to my interpretation, correct. I have also followed the same principle in my translation. Michel de Certeau (1980:173).

146 See also the discussion in relation to Lefebvre's employment of these French notions; footnote 112.

147 "Il y a *espace* dès qu'on prend en considération des vecteurs de direction, des contités de vitesse et la variable de temps." Michel de Certeau (1980:173).

148 "L'*espace* serait au lieu ce que deviant le mot quand il est saisi dans l'ambiguïté d'une effectuation [...]" Michel de Certeau (1980:173).

In short, following de Certeau, “*space is practiced place*”<sup>149</sup> a matter of tactical consumption of placial presuppositions and potentials. A street, defined as *lieu* by virtue of its status as configuration – conventions, customs, or rules manifested in the form of a street – is thus transformed into an *espace* of potential change by walkers and passers-by, who will continuously find alternative trajectories, innumerable ways to re-tell or re-articulate the street. Similarly, ‘speaking’ is the ‘space’ unfolding when activating or consuming the framework provided by language, and ‘reading’ the de-centered and agitated ‘space’ emerging when activating the particular sign system, or place, represented by the book.<sup>150</sup>

The Certeaudian ‘sustaining-consuming’ constellation *lieu-espace* differs from the oppositional relation, which made the basis for the development of the existential concept of place. Problematizing the attempts to establish an ontological difference between space and place – the idea of ‘space’ as abstract and geometrical and ‘place’ as an accumulation of the lived and experienced – de Certeau instead focuses on epistemological questions, on the *how* of spatial appropriation and re-appropriation. Instead of regarding space and place as different *forms* of positive representations, de Certeau approaches the problem in a way that comes closer to that of Lefebvre, distinguishing between on the one hand given representations of the world and customized and conceptualized ‘normalities,’<sup>151</sup> (including given epistemic conceptions and methodologies), and on the other the *exteriority* where these representations are coming into being, acted out, challenged and re-produced *as events*.

De Certeau’s developing of a spatial dynamics through the rhetorical re-interpretation of ‘space’ and ‘place’ constitutes a fundamental critique of the anthropological and phenomenological space-place tradition. This critique is first and foremost delivered through the understanding and differentiation of space as *narrative* – a rhetorical *vagabondage* or drifting that actualizes the difference between ‘founding’ and ‘transgressive’ narration. With the point of departure in Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on the bodily aspects of space, de Certeau focuses on the ‘operational’ rather than the ‘experiential’ consequences of this embodiment. Distinguishing between “une espace géométrique”, and another spatiality, an “espace anthropologique”,<sup>152</sup> Merleau-Ponty had aimed at a distinction between on the one hand a structural and “geometrical’ univocity”<sup>153</sup> (which for de Certeau corresponded to a structure of defined ‘places’), and on the other hand the experience of an existential space, a space that according to Merleau-Ponty would have “the same essential structure of our being as a being

149 “En somme, *l’espace est un lieu pratiqué*.” Michel de Certeau (1980:173).

150 Michel de Certeau (1980:173).

151 See Gunnar Sandin’s (2003) discussion of de Certeau, p. 101.

152 “Déjà Merleau-Ponty distinguait d’un espace ‘géométrique’ (‘spatialité homogène et isotrope’ analogue de notre ‘lieu’) une autre ‘spatialité’ qu’il appelait un ‘espace anthropologique.’” Michel de Certeau (1980:173) and Michel de Certeau (1980:173-174). De Certeau here refers to Maurice Merleau-Ponty *Phénoménologie de la perception* from 1976.

153 Michel de Certeau (1980:173).



situated in relation to a milieu".<sup>154</sup> And it was the transformative rather than foundational consequences of such a relational being that de Certeau wanted to explore further.

The 'landscape' in this respect represents another form of determination; a phenomenologically-defined essential structure preceding any potential differentiation. In his critical interpretation, de Certeau takes as a starting point the fact that such a distinction, in order to be something more than a dichotomy between two different *founding* principles, two different cognitively defined '*Gestalts*' or eidetic representations, has to take into consideration also the forces of differentiation and transformation.<sup>155</sup>

For de Certeau, the spatial distinctions appearing in daily narrating practice constitute an alternative to phenomenological determination. As such, de Certeau's wandering rhetoric constitutes a de-construction of the core of Western epistemology; the idea of the 'proper', of the conceptual, spatial and subjective idea of 'property' as a founding principle. In this way, through the idea of spatial consumption, de Certeau reinterprets the Lefebvrian notion of a productive or appropriative space of representations from a rhetorical perspective into a migrational, 'peregrinal' and discursive 'landscape'.

De Certeau's critique of phenomenology takes as its departure the difficulty of distinguishing between these two ideas, as both are 'grounded' in an absolute subjective experience. His own idea of the lived and embodied is therefore fuelled by an ambition to find another way of relating to the world than through subjectively experienced phenomena. Exteriorizing the idea of embodiment, de Certeau instead develops a spatial logic of linguistic usages; a *rhetoric* rather than a phenomenology. As such, he aims at breaking up the paradoxical predestination of subjectivity implied in the phenomenological model. According to de Certeau, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, although bodily grounded, remains an individually conceived and onto-centric representationalism, relying upon the *localizing* of an anthropological "flesh"

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154 "la même structure essentielle de notre être comme être situé en rapport avec un milieu;" Merleau-Ponty as quoted by de Certeau (1980:174).

155 Both Michel de Certeau and Jacques Lacan address the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, in different ways criticizing his phenomenological alternative to Cartesian cognitivism and the accompanying attempts to articulate an embodied and direct seeing through "the flesh of the world", grounding both subject and object. According to Lacan (as well as to de Certeau), Merleau-Ponty did not manage to draw the full conclusions of his radical ideas of an incarnated or embodied vision. Instead, he relied upon a presupposed layer of meaning prior to reflection, a layer not related to embodied action but to the impersonalized dimension that he called "la chair du monde" ("the flesh of the world") – "son *Horizonthaftigkeit* (horizon intérieur et extérieur) ("its *Horizonthaftigkeit* (interior and exterior horizon)). De Certeau pointed to the fact that the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty thereby remained an onto-centric representationalism, neglecting the dislocating potential of the *acting* body. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964/1985) *Le visible et l'invisible*, p. 324. See also Martin Jay (1993:360), Michel de Certeau (1980:174), and Michel de Certeau (1986) "Lacan: An Ethics of Speech", in *Heterologies*, pp. 47-67.

proper, a placial unity between subject and world. As an alternative, de Certeau's perspective, with its focus on external practices, dislocates spatial thinking and transforms it from a cognitively understood 'viewing' to a bodily wandering, from a rational *carte* (map but also Gestalt) to a *parcours* – a criss-crossing or discursive travelling *through*. It implies a movement from *langue* to *parole*, from reading to reciting – a rhetorical turn, in relation to which spatial practice, as a *récit*, a re-citation, explicitly practiced, outspoken, acted out. It is "topological, concerning the deformations of figures, rather than topical, defining places."<sup>156</sup> It is consumed and reproduced through different turns, different deviations and twists, metaphors, metonymies, synecdoches; a topology, which as such also constitutes a *tropology* – a rhetoric of the linguistic move.<sup>157</sup>

De Certeau's space is a *narrative* space, a spatio-temporal unfolding – not a distinction between inside and outside, or between mind and 'flesh', but between different "sorts of determinations in stories",<sup>158</sup> where the "law" of placial 'being-there'<sup>159</sup> is one and the events of embodied spatial whereabouts is another. Space is not a domain for eidetic operation, for establishing a structure of properties, but proposes a potential modifying of the proper. Besides the representative and existential *taking place*, de Certeau puts up an activist place-taking, in relation to which phenomenological representationalism has to give way to a 'situationism', a tension between territorializing and deterritorializing forces, between production and consumption. In his own theorizing, de Certeau makes use of the imaginative, wandering openness of *espace* as a complement to a conforming *lieu*, which apart from a sustaining framework constitutes a cultural sedimentation, a process of slow accumulation or petrification – or, as de Certeau puts it, "a putting to death (or putting into landscape) of heroes."<sup>160</sup>

The American art historian W.J.T. Mitchell has attempted to apply de Certeau's thinking to landscape. Confronting Certeaudian rhetoric with the landscape iconography, he proposes a re-conceptualization of landscape in terms of a visual narrative. The hegemonic landscape is the scenic, the picturesque, the facial – a kind of superficial ignorance presented by the view. Landscape should in this tradition be *seen*, not touched or walked upon. Landscape, argues Mitchell, is an abstraction from *place* in de Certeau's sense, an abstraction from place proper, and an equivalent reification of *space*, a transforming of paths and movements into a map. "A landscape then, turns site into sight, place and space

156 "L'espace d'opérations qu'il [le récit] foule et fait de mouvements: il est *topologique*, relative aux déformations de figures, et non *topique*, définisseur de lieux." Michel de Certeau (1980:189).

157 For a similar rhetorical approach to spatial representation and reproduction, see José Luis Ramirez (1995b) *Om meningens nedkomst: En studie i antropologisk tropologi* (On the Delivery of Meaning: A study in Anthropological Tropology).

158 "...l'opposition entre 'lieu' et 'espace' renverra plutôt, dans les récits, à deux sortes des déterminations..." Michel de Certeau (1980:174).

159 "...loi d'un lieu..." Michel de Certeau (1980:174).

160 "...la mise à mort (ou mise en paysage) des héros...", Michel de Certeau (1980:174).

into visual image.”<sup>161</sup> However, as Mitchell points out, the specular construction is not merely “an inert, static foil to the vitality of the place and space”,<sup>162</sup> but an *animated* image – a visual space proposing a universe of ways of seeing. The visual landscape then comes close to that of *espace*; a space of representational practice, a space presenting a number of usages, or ways of spatial consumption – commercial, communicative, religious, symbolic, or subversive. The landscape would then become a narrative, relational, and often conflicting passage, both in real and imaginary terms.<sup>163</sup> As in the case of politically-contested areas, the *landscape*, as Mitchell chooses to put it, is furthermore “a visible, perceptible shape that is freighted with so many associations and conflicting representations that it is a wonder that the earth’s crust does not buckle under their weight.”<sup>164</sup>

Even though the specific notion of ‘landscape’ in de Certeau’s writings first and foremost appears as related to phenomenological representationalism or visual aestheticization, polemological analysis presents alternative exteriorities. Polemological ‘space’ unfolds as a discursive expanse that provides alternatives to the mere representational – a narrative or ‘recitational’ space of what I earlier designated ‘voicings.’ It is within the framework of such an exteriority we have to understand Christiania; as a space of “pedestrian enunciations”,<sup>165</sup> a stage for embodied, but also discursive, uttering – “a legitimizing *theater* for effectuating *actions*.”<sup>166</sup> As an everyday field of linguistic usages, an incessant semiotic consumption of potentials, concretely staged as district meetings, working groups, actions days, plenaries etc., Christiania could be described as a ‘pedestrian discourse’ with three constituents; the present, the discontinuous or eventful, and what de Certeau refers to as the *phatic*.<sup>167</sup> The *phatic* is that which, like most speech, is directly employed in order to “establish social contact and express sociability rather than specific meaning.”<sup>168</sup> In this sense, *phatic speech* is speech that excludes representativity, speech without content and without

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161 W.J.T Mitchell (1994b) “Israel, Palestine, and the American Wilderness”, p. 265.

162 W.J.T Mitchell (1994b:265).

163 In her dissertation *Ramble, Linger and Gaze: Dialogues from the Landscape Garden*, Katja Grillner (2000) discusses the spatial constitution of the landscape in epistemological terms from the point of view of the 18<sup>th</sup> century English landscape garden. In her dialogic interpretation, the landscape unfolds as the liminal space of Enlightenment, a spatial embodiment of the border between a transcendental conception of space and space as a narrative and social construct.

164 W.J.T Mitchell (1994b:266).

165 “Enonciations piétonnières” Michel de Certeau (1980:148).

166 “Tel est précisément le rôle du récit. Il ouvre un *théâtre* de légitimité à des *actions* effectives.” Michel de Certeau (1980 :183).

167 “Considérée sous ce biais, l’énonciation piétonnière présente trois caractéristique qui d’emblée la distinguent du système spatial: le présent, le discontinue, le ‘phatique’” *Ibid*, p. 149.

168 **phatic**, *adj.* (of speech) used to establish social contact and to express sociability rather than specific meaning. (from Greek *phat(os)*, spoken). *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford University Press. Online edition, Malmö University. Download date 2006-04-30.

purpose – ‘small talk’, speech with an exclusively social aim – dialogue for the pleasure of it.<sup>169</sup> Both embodied, often accompanied by bodily gestures, and creative in relation to the actual situation, the phatic is a dimension that gives to the discontinuous present a certain unity.

The phatic is in this sense a ‘compositional’ or integrative faculty that we eventually could spatialize or situate as a kind of *land-scaping*. However, rather than the land-scape of more or less dead ideals or “heroes”, the monumental and representative landscape of forms that, as de Certeau expressed it, have come to rest in their places proper; the *phatic landscape* would be the non-representative and thus also formless landscape of expressive interaction. It is an exteriority in the becoming, an expanse of spatial displacement, of stories and movements, an exteriority, which know many borders but no formal finality.

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What opens up through de Certeau’s articulation of an embodied and spatial *rhetoric*, a ‘making-do-space’, is the possibility to produce representations, and also consume their potentials; to exchange, interpret and reproduce (pre-)conceived representations in order to displace and renew. De Certeau envisions an externalization of spatial experience, a transformation of spatial separatism or onto-centrism into *activism*. As in Christiania, instead of a search for ‘place proper’, spatial potentials are acted out within the governing framework, within the controlled city, within ‘the place of the other.’ In this sense, the placing and spacing of Christiania constitute an alternative aestheticization, a phatic, urban *land-scaping*, a creative consumption of the semiotic leftovers from the practices of rational planning. Christiania materializes this discontinuous recycling of that social and spatial waste, of which the everyday is full.

The landscape of phatic usages furthermore can be seen as a reproduction of space that recognizes also the imaginative dimension of urban activism, its coming into being as a composite of trajectories, of modes, ruses, traces, and histories with ramifications far beyond its own geographical limits. In a mass-mediated culture this space has become a global space of representational practice that has grown in importance, not least through the advent of communication technology and popular mass culture. Christiania has from the beginning developed according to these presuppositions, deliberately actualizing the phatic dimension on both local and trans-local levels. As such, it has recognized the fact that urbanity is non-representational; its purpose neither possible to express in terms of an original, hereditary order, nor in terms of an ideal result. Urbanity does not refer to anything but the practices of which it consists. As in the case of Christiania, this phatic character of the urban landscape is clearly spelled out as a production and re-production of place, which is at the same time consumption, usage, or activation of spatial potentials. As a composite of such reproductive practices, inhabiting becomes a question of appropriation and re-appropriation – a phatic *faire avec*, a ‘making do’, of the relations of which common space is made up.

169 For a linguistic discussion of phatic speech and phatic communion, see Roman Jakobson (1964) “Concluding Statement: Linguistics and Poetics”, pp. 350-377.

Understood as phatic consumption, as a composite of social uses existing in its own right, Christiania needs no justification, but constitutes and actualizes the potentials inherent to, but suppressed by, the city as plan. What distinguishes Christiania from the phatic in general is the fact that the phatic here is embodied, in all its temporality, simultaneously as place and space. As such, Christiania unwillingly acquires a therapeutic function, in that it sustains a tangible potential of an immanent rather than transcendent other, a present abundance in the midst of the everyday. However, in the era of information and communication, there are also new ways of understanding the phatic, as well as the 'spatial phatic' that Christiania represents, as a space that, like orality, comes into being as it is being practiced. In this respect, Christiania exemplifies the phatic as 'networking', as an augmentation of the locale and beyond locational 'law', an activity agitating analogies, potential metaphors, dislocational potentials.

In the era of global networking, the phatic dimension constitutes a spatial agency with wider implications than the mere production of locality; a new kind of spatial narrativity embracing global webs of solidarity and urban social movements answering to global geometries of governing and control. It is a spatial activity generating new kinds of 'dwelling' practices, new kinds of localities, described by American anthropologist Arjun Appadurai in terms of global 'households', answering to the similarly new potentialities that are conceived by Appadurai as *-scapes*. In Appadurai's attempts to establish a "trans-national anthropology", an anthropology for communities that are no longer defined on the basis of a fixed geographical belonging, the problem of space and place arises anew. Christiania has to be understood from this perspective, as a result of a new cosmopolitanism, where new cultural formations challenge old truths about the link between locality, stability, and cultural reproduction. Despite its relative 'place-boundedness', the prevalence of Christiania has depended upon its combination of the mediated and the directly experienced – its multiple emergence as a matter of do-it-yourself architecture, mass media representation, life-styles, spiritual practices, politics, or tourism. As such, it has combined cosmopolitanism with the exclusively site-specific, activating the entire scale between global and local.

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Through examples of post-colonial or post-national traveling practices of cultural and spatial reproduction, Appadurai discusses how the global and local interact, giving rise either to "cascading" spatial formations;<sup>170</sup> cultural formations 'exploding' into diasporas; or "implosions"<sup>171</sup> of group identity, which should be understood as the local outbursts of ethnicity or group belonging.

170 Arjun Appadurai (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, p. 150. Appadurai borrows the image of "cascades" from James Roseneau (1990) *Turbulence in World Politics: A Theory of Change and Continuity*.

171 Arjun Appadurai (1996:149).

Both these spatial figures, processes of de- and re-centering, are caused by a spatial “heating”, intensified by a global network of communication. It was such a heating process that once led to the emergence of Christiania, which, rather than either a cascading or imploding spatial figuration, has to be understood as a combination of both.

In Appadurai’s thinking, post-national reproduction of space is an imaginative and generative order of interference and interfusion on a larger plane. This imaginative order is not a definite representational regime, but “a complex, overlapping and disjunctive order that cannot any longer be seen in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centers and peripheries).”<sup>172</sup> It is not susceptible to rules, but has to be understood in discursive terms, as verbal communication, as sets of arguments, as stories, or as Appadurai chooses to frame it, as *-scapes*. Global socio-cultural space, is described by Appadurai in terms of *ethnoscapes*, *mediascapes*, *technoscapes*, *financescapes*, and *ideoscapes*,<sup>173</sup> where the suffix *-scape* allows him to emphasize the irregularity of these representational spatialities, the fact that they are not objectively given but “perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness.”<sup>174</sup> The *-scape* of Appadurai, rather than emanating from an individual act of cognition, is constituted through the movement of different sorts of actors, like nation-states, multinational corporations, diasporic communities or sub-cultural formations, even smaller and more or less temporary units of agency, like neighborhoods or families. “Indeed”, argues Appadurai, “the individual actor is the last locus of this perspectival set of landscapes, for these landscapes are eventually navigated by agents who both experience and constitute larger formations, in part from their own sense of what these landscapes offer.”<sup>175</sup>

What the *-scape* of Appadurai actualizes is thus a re-combinatory interdependency between larger sets of potentials and perspectival applications, and the production of locality as it is being dealt with on an everyday level; an interrelation between a spacing, ‘cascading’, and a placing, or gathering, state of mind. On the one hand it concerns the ability to include others and elsewhere, and on the other the continuous ability to produce and reproduce loyalties and localities. It is in this respect interesting to associate this post-national locality production to a pre-national one, as discussed by cultural geographer Kenneth R. Olwig. Derived from the Dutch *-shap* or the old Nordic *-skap* or *-skab*; the English *-ship* has a similar function as that of the *-scape*. As Olwig has pointed out, in its old English form, this decisive suffix defines a “state”, “nature” or “constitution” of a relation, something shared between people, but also “something abstract and difficult to define”, like *friendship*, or *comradeship*; the totality

172 Arjun Appadurai (1996:32).

173 Arjun Appadurai (1996:33).

174 Arjun Appadurai (1996:33).

175 Arjun Appadurai (1996:33).

of human interaction.<sup>176</sup> According to Olwig, *-ship* in this case also designates “something showing, exhibiting, or embodying” this interactive state, revealing the same kind of twofold dimension.<sup>177</sup> On the one hand, the *-scape* serves an *abstracting* function, extracting and conceptualizing a shared and common sphere. On the other hand it implies a *concretization*, stemming from the old Scandinavian *-skaper, skapr*, and the Old German *-shap*, all different words for the *creative act* of shaping.<sup>178</sup> The *-scape* thus, also etymologically, is not primarily an abstraction but an *abstracting action*, which from another point of view is the same as a creative concretization of potential intersections. The *-scape* is the disjunctive gesture, a reproductive re-enactment of spatial relations and socio-cultural desires.<sup>179</sup>

“Locality production” in Appadurai’s thinking thus suggests a re-interpretation of anthropological ‘place’ as it has been formulated within phenomenology, characterized as it has been by primordialism, expressing itself “in certain kinds of agency, sociality, and reproducibility.”<sup>180</sup> In contrast, Appadurai reserves the notion of “neighborhood” to designate the actually existing social forms in which locality – as a dimension or value – is realized in relation to the wider *-scape*. As *neighbor-hood*, locality is an inherently fragile and transient social achievement, which must be maintained, revitalized and explored “against various kinds of odds.”<sup>181</sup> The spatial techniques for this locality production, the building of houses, the laying out of paths, public areas or gardens, the mapping of terrains – in other words the formal preoccupation of most communities – have, at least when it comes to the more traditional or exotic, been thoroughly

176 Kenneth R. Olwig (2005) *Representation and Alienation in the Political Land-scape*.

177 Kenneth R. Olwig (2005).

178 *Svensk Etymologisk Ordbok (Swedish Etymological Dictionary)*, 2:a upplagan, 1966. See also Kenneth R. Olwig (2005).

179 When Olwig discusses the workings of the *-scape* suffix, he does not distinguish as I do here between representation and re-enactment. Instead he talks about “representation through objectification”. When Olwig then defines the objectification of the *-scape* in terms of a common embodiment of the “abstract, collective will of the citizenry or landmen”, it comes closer to my conception of the *-scape* as a re-enactment machine, even though there is a huge difference between an “abstract, collective will” and a composite of players acting together.

180 Arjun Appadurai (1996:178).

181 Arjun Appadurai (1996:179). An interesting aspect is in this respect the relation between the suffixes *-scape* and *-hood* in English; both suffixes forming nouns, and both signifying “condition or state.” While *-scape* is related to space, *-hood* however, is rather more closely related to a body of persons, “originally a distinct noun, meaning ‘person, personality, sex, condition, quality, rank... from same root and in same sense, is *-head*,” and as such also more explicitly to subject positionality. In the Scandinavian languages, landscape and neighborhood have the same suffix (*landskab/skap, naboskab/grannskap*), whereas childhood, manhood and illness are examples of words constructed with the suffix *-dom*, signifying a juridical submission, a sentence. You are in this respect *sentenced* to the positionality inscribed in the *-hood* or the *-dom* (still obvious in *free-dom; dóm*, statute, judgement, jurisdiction), while the *-scape* appears to have a more political and negotiable character. *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford University Press. Online edition, Malmö University. Download date 2006-04-30.



documented, often in terms of hereditary or habitual patterns. But, as Appadurai remarks, they have not been regarded *instances* of locality production, *events* of composite, social re-invention, articulation and re-configuration, but as more or less *genuine* representations with reference to an original or proper form. All locality production, argues Appadurai, involves moments of colonization or re-appropriation, moments of deliberate, risky, even violent action in relation to soil, site, or situation. This articulate action, in anthropological language associated with what has been called “foundational ritual”, implies recognition of the *force* that is required in order to “wrest a locality”<sup>182</sup> from previous control; **to bring its potentials into consciousness or to actualize its inherent polemics.**<sup>183</sup> As we have seen in the example of Christiania, this ‘colonizing moment’ may consist of a recurrent trial of, or deliberate playing with, social formations; a playing that is not reducible to place formation, but that unfolds as a result of a consumption, a ‘non-productive’ usage of meaning. Stressing the ‘eventual’, emancipatory, and subversive, the idea of locality production in this respect constitutes a critique of the idea of ‘cultural reproduction’ as a *context-driven* or ‘site-specific’ reproduction of spatio-temporal relations or a reproduction dependent upon existing representational configurations. In such a case, Appadurai argues, locality is understood merely as a taken-for-granted, commonsensical set of presuppositions, “historically received, materially embedded, socially appropriate, naturally unproblematic: fathers yield sons, gardens yield yams, sorcery yield sickness, hunters yield meat, women yield babies, blood yields semen, shamans yield visions, etc.”<sup>184</sup> Instead, locality production should be understood as a *context-generating* situation, in which the formerly unproblematically understood local ‘subject’ deliberately starts to act differently, engaging in and interrogating the fragility of the *-hood* as a potential dynamic of representational and reproductive practices.

182 Arjun Appadurai (1996:183).

183 Here, the argumentation of Appadurai comes very close to the discussion in de Certeau about the authoritative function of the story as a means to “set in place”, a foundational function analogous to that of the *-hood*. De Certeau here refers to George Dumézil and his discussion of linguistic foundational notions such as the Latin *fas*, “the mystical foundation” (l’assise mystique) without which all forms of conduct authorized by human law are doubtful, or even fatal. “A time, a place”, writes Dumézil, “are said to be *fasti* or *nefasti* [favourable or fatal] depending on whether they provide or fail to provide human action with this necessary foundation.” (“Un temps, un lieu sont dits *fast* ou *nefasti* [fastes ou néfastes] suivant qu’ils donnent ou ne donnent pas à l’action humaine cette nécessaire assise.” Dumézil quoted in de Certeau 1980:182). According to de Certeau, we should understand this foundation as an opening up of a legitimate “theater for effectual actions” (“un théâtre de légitimité à des actions effectives”; de Certeau 1980:183). However, what de Certeau emphasizes is the polemical relation between the *fasti* and its inherent *nefasti*; an immanent “disobedience of the law of the place” (désobéissance à la loi du lieu), a “betrayal of an order” (“la trahison d’un ordre”) that should be understood as the vital delinquency, or mis-behavior of any spatial story (de Certeau 1980:188-190)

184 Arjun Appadurai (1996:185).

The spatial practices which constitute Christiania each in different ways actualize the fact that much of what may be considered 'local knowledge' in a contemporary situation has to be a kind of negatively defined knowledge; a knowledge of, as Appadurai states it, "how to produce and reproduce locality under conditions of anxiety and entropy, social wear and flux, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility",<sup>185</sup> in short, as a practice taking into consideration the potentials inherent in a complex regime, a composite urban *-hood* and *-scape*. It is a knowledge unfolding as an ability to *perform* rather than *form*, interrogating a number of reproductive discourses, including economic flows, mass-mediation, and commodification, all of which constitute attempts to subsume or 'normalize' this 'negative' production, or non-productive usage, under the signs of allegiance and affiliation. Christiania in this respect plays the role of precisely such a negatively defined production, indispensable as to the generation of spatial alterity, particular locality, and social capaciousness.

Christiania, instead of submitting to circumstances, has, as a formation 'against all odds', acted out certain ignored spatial potentials, tactically legitimizing itself as a fragile, social formation. This has implied and demanded a locality production that has exceeded existing material and conceptual boundaries, a development of locality or 'hoodness', but not in terms of a primordial 'place' or circle to which one would have to submit, but as a kind of *re-scaping* on a micro-level. Generating a variety of usages, a consuming of the surplus of grand scale *-scapes* for alternative, social purposes, Christiania has similarly developed into a context-generating or *-scaping neighborhood*, a locality with wide ramifications embracing also a significant number of social agents also in other geographical locations. Reflected in the great number of visitors, the widespread counter-*scaping* of Christiania emerges as a new kind of locality production or trans-local 'art' that on a larger scale appears as a creative and expressive use of a spatial surplus with effects even on a global level.<sup>186</sup>

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To the notion of locality or place, we thus have to add the generative dimensions of imaginative uses, repetitively transgressing the customized and routinized. As a discursive entity, 'Christiania' also appears in the valleys and dungeons of the media and network society, where the production of locality has to be understood also in trans-local terms; as new kinds of commonalities, new kinds of clusterings, new *-ships* and *-hoods*, social formations driven forward not only by geographical nearness but also by playful topological formation. "The imagination", argues Appadurai, "is now central to all forms of agency, is itself a

185 Arjun Appadurai (1996:181). The expression "local knowledge" refers in this context back to Clifford Geertz and his seminal book *Local Knowledge* from 1983.

186 In one of his later texts with the title "Landscape as Overlapping Neighbourhoods", Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand also discussed the representational difficulties related to the attempts to describe complex exteriorities, "realms [of] personal everyday activities" with certain "duration." Hägerstrand here argues for the landscape as a relational rather than denotative concept, as "in the sense of the German *Landschaft* or Scandinavian *landskap*." See Torsten Hägerstrand (1995:94).

social fact, and is the key component of the new global order.”<sup>187</sup> In this respect, Christiania, through its discursive appearance and with its connections to a wider alternative urban movement, is an example of how locality production today has transformed into a counter-*scaping*, connoting an altogether new condition of surroundedness or neighborliness.

### Liminality and Language

What the discussion of spaces and places, what *-scapes* and *-hoods* makes explicit is first and foremost the struggle and continuous attempts to understand and articulate the interplay between de-centralizing and re-centralizing forces in our conception of the world; between generative and sustaining, reproductive and representative. As a political and historical figure, the urban landscape is a complex embodiment of this very struggle; a cosmopolitan expanse which, despite the odds, also generates new contexts, local events and particular occurrences. As a de-centralized and temporal spatiality, it has called forth a rethinking in practice of the idea of spatial identity as tied to a phenomenologically-defined place proper, instead opening up a potential to understand identity in terms of spatially-enacted uses or practices of consumption.

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Christiania could also from a spatial point of view be regarded as a performative and highly demonstrative interrogation of representative presuppositions, not least phenomenologically articulated grounds and intentions, in relation to which the main objective is an identification and localizing of formal *sameness*. What Christiania brings into consciousness in this respect is not a space grounded upon recognition, but a space of distinction, of bordering aberration; an intensification of limits and margins for passage and for exchange. In relation to the formality of the city, Christiania might from one perspective appear as a specific place with its own characteristic properties; yet from another perspective it unfolds as a distinct in-between, actualizing an agonistic contiguity and a provocative interference, contesting empathic similarity.

An intermediary space or immanent potential, Christiania functions as an actualization of the limit as *per-formance*, as a differentiation in time-space established through agency. When Christiania first appeared, the official strategy was to treat it as a non-identity, not even a margin, but an anomaly. It was, for example, unthinkable for the landowner, the Ministry of Defense, to collect rent from the squatters, as this would have been equivalent to recognition. Taking advantage of this non-existence, deliberately trying to maintain this formless status, not least for economic reasons, Christiania could continue to direct its energy towards performance rather than towards consolidating formation. Establishing a positive identity, a definite form, was in Christiania's case not simply 'bourgeois' or reactionary, but first and foremost *risky*; a unified identity would be so much easier to politically reject. Instead, Christiania, more or less deliberately, chose to maintain an ambiguous in-between, an expansion of the very *limit* as such.

In this role as expanded limit, the Free Town tells as much about the surrounding urban landscape as about itself. As border, Christiania does not constitute a limit at which this urban landscape ceases to exist, a limit at which it gradually disappears. Instead it is the expanded margin at which another urbanity, other aspects of the urban landscape, presents itself anew, as a revitalized coming into being.<sup>188</sup> In relation to the urban landscape as such, Christiania therefore could be designated in terms of *liminality*. The *liminal* constitutes an inherent bordering, a dynamic 'state' in between reversal and emergence, furthermore vital to every system. As distinct from *identity*, liminality constitutes a spatial dimension which cannot be thought of as a fixed setting or pattern, as a positive form; nor as a margin related to a center, but as an immanent leeway, a negativity or difference, without which certain spatial aspects, especially those of dislocation and change, cannot be thought of at all. The 'identity' of the liminal borderland is always 'too much,' it is the superfluous 'excluded third,' an abundant passage of potential modification.

The un-doing or trans-forming activity of which Christiania consists, should furthermore not simply be understood as a vagueness, an identity not yet entirely developed, or a 'place' in the becoming which only needs time. Instead, the formlessness of the liminal is an operative dimension; not a blurry and passive *vagueness* or in spatial terms *vaga-bondage*; a drifting over boundaries and a challenging of bonds.<sup>189</sup> Anthropologically speaking, this critical limit has been referred to in terms of ritual passage, of *rite-de-passage*, a functional space of socialization, of 'becoming-human,' a more or less institutionalized, yet also transformative, wandering between different stages in life.<sup>190</sup> Equivalent to a 'spacing out' of the threshold between self and Other, the liminal passage is a passage from an *individual* to a *social* existence; a ritualized transition (like baptism, initiation, marriage or pilgrimage), furthermore often spatially manifested, associated with certain controlled localities providing the creative and generative limbo meant to evoke development and change. Liminality is in this sense the dissolving and de-centering aspect of **centralized existence**, the negativity *within* a specific spatial structure; the accepted, yet not openly or formally manifested, play of relations, configurations and bonds.

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As emphasized by anthropologist Victor Turner, liminal space is a necessary component for the continuous re-vitalizing of any society, of any culture. In his writings on different cultures, Turner repeatedly showed that the liminal, as a

188 Unlike the Latin *finis*, which is related to a coherent interior coming to an end, the Latin *limes* connotes a borderline with a clear extension as well as with an apparent beyond. While the *de-finit* is a conception grasped from the core, from the essentials of a center, the limit has to be experienced, tested, and searched out.

189 Discussing nomadic thinking, Deleuze and Guattari criticize Husserl's attempts at formulating a "proto-geometry" that would address a *vague*, yet original morphology of space. What Husserl did not take into consideration, argue Deleuze and Guattari, was the relation between the *vague* and the *vagabonding*; between the not yet defined and the not yet spatially bonded and settled. Deleuze and Guattari (1980:454).

190 Arnold van Gennep (1909) *Les rites de passage: Études systématique des rites*.

complex phase of re-enactment or re-production of society's deepest values and relations, constitutes an indispensable domain for questioning, experimenting and play.<sup>191</sup> As opposed to the hierarchies of representational space, liminality implies an equalizing of levels; an acknowledgement also of the weak, the poor or the deviating; a space which dissolves normative regimes through a flattening horizontality. Turner calls this horizontality *communitas*; or "social anti-structure",<sup>192</sup> an emergent social space, not yet formalized. Lacking form and customized placial patterns, *communitas* is a simultaneity of communicative action (like the phatic *-hood*), that repeatedly has to be manifested. The liminal *communitas* is in this sense a plastic, manipulable space, that with Turner's words is "incorporated into [established society] as a potentially dangerous, but nevertheless vitalizing moment, domain, or enclave."<sup>193</sup>

Unlike the marginal, the liminal is therefore not a fringe phenomenon defined from the point of view of a fixed center, but the differentiating and critical principle inherent to every spatial constellation. A both necessary and subversive force, the liminal is therefore often subject to strict ritualization – paradoxically enough in order to delimit its potential ability to bring about unpredictable and agitating change. As for Christiania, directly relating to the isolated and ritualized liminality represented by the space of the former military barracks, it provides an open-ended liminality, a subversive passage, where spatial structures of signification may be radically deconstructed and undone. In this sense, Christiania proposes a de-ritualized liminality, a liminality that has not been stripped off its more risky, challenging and playful dimensions; a liminality whose function, both for the inhabitants directly involved and for the urban structure as such, is a polemical one, potentially 'adolescent' and provocative, but nevertheless agitating in a revitalizing sense.

'The everyday' of Lefebvre and de Certeau in this sense also constitutes a liminality – an immanent unpredictability with an underestimated, displacing potential. In the case of Christiania, it is precisely through its triviality, its basic banality, its everydayness, that it has exerted its agitating pressure on the urban landscape. It has in a way constituted the ultimate triviality, a triviality in which nothing is trivial anymore, but brought into consciousness in its material, re-configurable state. In Christiania, liminality unfolds as the possibility to un-do and re-think the most banal functions of everyday life, such as heating and cooking, but also more composite activities, errands or needs, such as being able to receive mail, to start up a workshop, or to repair a ceramic stove.<sup>194</sup> In the urban context where it appears, the liminal space of Christiania is an attempt, not necessarily to regain control over the built environment, but to make use of still existing possibilities to an urban reproduction outside of control.

191 Victor Turner (1986) *The Anthropology of Performance*, p. 102.

192 Victor Turner (1974) *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, p. 45.

193 Victor Turner (1974) *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, p. 243.

194 See Per Løvetand Iversen (1972) *Christiania – 1 år (Christiania – 1 year)*, p. 71.

This is exemplified in the practice of (re)-naming that has developed in Christiania; a polemical and intermediary practice, where the logical or naturalized links between signification and spatial location have been decomposed. Through this practice, the relation between the *place* from which a name proper could be derived, and the not yet defined elsewhere that a renaming may evoke, is agitated. The names of streets and buildings in Christiania are in this sense not simply proper names, but traces of a directional practice of appropriation and re-appropriation. As such, the names actualize what Michel de Certeau has pointed out as the relationship between the meaning of words (*le sens des mots*) and the direction of a walk (*le sens de la marche*); a relationship that constitutes the space in two different ways, one interior (a 'placial' extension under the stability of a signifier) and one exterior ("to walk is to put outside").<sup>195</sup> The naming of Christiania is a walking naming, a naming that brings this ambiguity to attention; as much a dislocating narrative as a gesture of spatial identification.

Either these names express personal and coincidental experiences, such as *The Fakir School* (a name according to hearsay emanating from the fact that the first inhabitants had to clean the building from thousands of nails); a political positioning, such as *The Dandelion* (a classical symbol of class struggle); or an ironic comment, such as *The Peace Arc* (in the early years the most violent part of the Free Town); these unconventional names not only contribute to a spatial re-direction of the inhabitant, visitor or wanderer, but function in themselves as liminal passages, as "a kind of pockets of meaning",<sup>196</sup> spaces of abundant meaning, bewildering rather than informative.

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A domain of both symbolic and spatial reproduction, Christiania provides an example of the fact that every anthropological liminality is also a *tropological* space;<sup>197</sup> a space of linguistic moves and disjunctions. Or perhaps it is the other way around: every *tropology*, every 'logic of linguistic tropes' is eventually also a liminal space in the anthropological sense, a space of social de- and re-composition. Michel de Certeau's notion for such liminal spaces was *énonciations piétonnières*; walking, drifting utterabilities; spaces of semiotic re-enactment, where the relation between linguistic formation and everyday spatial configuration could be tried out. Turns (or 'tropes'), he argued; are in this sense those movements, which inscribe in ordinary language a liminal dimension, an immanent liminality, like the "ruses, displacements, ellipses [...] that scientific reason has *eliminated* from operational discourses in order to

195 ..."(marcher, c'est mettre au dehors)". Michel de Certeau (1980:156).

196 "...en slags lommer for betydning." *The names of buildings and areas in Christiania* is a special story in itself, far from merely functional or site-specific meanings as they are. In an essay inspired by Michel de Certeau, Line Kjær Nielsen describes the specific practices of naming in Christiania in terms of narrative movement rather than identification. See Line Kjær Nielsen (2003) "Spatiale tilegnelsepraksisser på Christiania" (*Spatial Praxis of Appropriation in Christiania*), pp. 28-33.

197 José Luis Ramirez (1995b) *Om meningens nedkomst: En studie i antropologisk tropologi* (*On the Delivery of Meaning: A study in Anthropological Tropology*), p. 84.

constitute ‘proper’ meanings”<sup>198</sup> (my italics). Semiotic turns or tropes inscribed in the very names of Christiania, constitute a linguistic *surplus*, the excluded third of common urban space.

De Certeau’s “spatial stories” or “walking rhetoric” can in this sense be understood as an actualizing of the liminal dimension of language. There is no *grammar* to narrative space, argues de Certeau, no formalized pattern, but only threshold practices, such as reading, narrating and speaking. As a composite of “pedestrian utterances”, the city has to be spoken, and to a great extent through *metonymical* “tricks” such as those of re-naming; rhetorical tropes situating the abstractions of a “scriptural economy” in relational to an intermediary space.<sup>199</sup> While the *metaphor* as a representational trope refers to an act of *recognition*, to an establishment of sameness, the *metonymy* is relational in a different way, referring to nearness, to contiguity, to a spatial happening, a stumbling, potentially actualized through walking.<sup>200</sup> The metonymical is the horizontal situating of the vertically coded, the ‘spatializing’ of place proper, the activation of its immediate surroundings, confronting it with its own social and historical neighborliness.

In distinct ways, both metaphor and metonymy refer to the associating actions that assist us at the *limits* of our imagination. However, while the metaphor is a trope intimately connected with identification, the metonymy implies *dislocation*. In the wanderings of de Certeau, things are complicated by the fact that the metaphor is also *metonymically displaced*, liberated from its strictly representative tasks: “In modern Athens”, he writes, “the vehicles of mass transportation are called *metaphorai*. To go to work, or come *home*, one

198 “Des ‘tours’ (ou ‘tropes’) inscrivent dans la langue ordinaire les ruses, déplacements, ellipses, etc., que la raison scientifique a éliminés des discours opératoires pour constituer des sens ‘propres.’” Michel de Certeau (1980:43).

199 See Mike Crang (2000:150). De Certeau speaks about the synecdoche and the asyndeton in the section *Marches dans la ville* in *L’invention du quotidien*, where he refers to a distinction made by J.-F. Augoyard in 1979 in *Pas à pas. Essais sur le cheminement quotidien en milieu urbain*. The synecdoche is a special variant of metonymy naming the trope where a part takes the place of the whole including it (such as ‘blue collar’ for ‘workers’). Different from the synecdoche, the *asyndeton* “is the suppression of linking words such as conjunctions and adverbs, either within a sentence or between sentences. In the same way, in walking it selects and fragments the space traversed; it skips over links and whole parts like a child, hopping on one foot.” (L’asyndète est suppression des mots de liaison, conjunctions et adverbs, dans une phrase ou entre des phrases. De même, dans la marche, elle sélectionne et fragmente l’espace parcouru; elle en saute les liaisons et des parts entières qu’elle omet. De ce point de vue, toute marche continue à suter, ou à sautiller, somme l’enfant, à cloche-pied.”), Michel de Certeau (1980:153).

200 See Roman Jakobson (1956/1971) *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances*, p. 95. Jakobson argues that a competition is manifest between metaphor and metonymy in any symbolic process, “be it intrapersonal or social.” Jakobson here makes a reference to Freud, who in his *Die Traumdeutung* observes this rivalry in dreaming, where the decisive question is whether the dreamt sequences are constituted through contiguity (metonymical “displacement” or synecdochic “condensation”), or whether they are generated through similarity (“identification and symbolism”).



takes a 'metaphor' – a bus or a train."<sup>201</sup> Metaphor, in fact, means 'transport', which also implies a risk, a liminal passage, a work, and not merely a vertical and representational transference.<sup>202</sup> Tropological analogy, or "the method of Hermes" as Michel Serres calls it, is not in any way given or simple. As the practice of exporting and importing, of traversing and inventing, it can also be mistaken. For that reason, it is seen as "dangerous and even forbidden – but we know of no other route to invention."<sup>203</sup>

A tropological approach to the urban landscape actualizes the negative, liminal routes of Hermetic traversal of which it also consists. As symbolic animals, we might be dependent upon representation, upon the understanding of one thing through something else. However, where the metaphorical constitutes an *economy* – a settled household of representational references – metonymy opens out a disjunctive potential, a horizontality of attachment and contiguity, which is the material base of language. It is the *Scapeland* in which things may eventually bump into each other and thereby come into existence in a different way. While the metaphor represents the referential part of *logos*, the metonymy could be understood as its executive dimension.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, while metaphorical similarity produces *lexicon*, a meta-linguistic structure of symbolic meaning, metonymical contiguity produces *syntax*, requiring a spatial re-enactment of relations, not only of equivalences and parallelisms, but of spatial potentials, of situations, of contexts. Interpretation thus turns into re-construction of a field, or re-production of a course of events.

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Tactical, but also to a certain extent *syntactical*, Christiania constitutes an important problematization of the relation between "emitter" and "receiver"

201 Michel de Certeau (1980:43). Indirectly commenting de Certeau, José Luis Ramirez writes that "[t]he metonymy finds its way from one thing to the other, choosing that which will express meaning. The metaphor is the stamp that stipulates, that defines meaning and gives name. The metonymy is the bus moving from one stop to the other. The metaphor is the driver's voice in the loudspeaker when he announces 'Karlapan!'" ("Metonymin söker sig från det ena till det andra och väljer det som ska uttrycka mening. Metaforen är stämpeln som fastställer, bestämmer mening och ger namn. Metonymin är bussen som rör sig från en hållplats till den andra. Metaforen är förarens röst i högtalaren när han ropar 'Karlapan!'" José Luis Ramirez (1995b) *Om meningens nedkomst: En studie i antropologisk tropologi* (*On the Delivery of Meaning: A study in Anthropological Tropology*), p. 88.

202 In his dissertation *The Architectural Metaphor*, Anders Johansson has analysed the 'transportational' role of the architectural model as metaphor and narrative. The architectural model in this respect works as an activation of passages and relations that otherwise would remain secondary in a specific spatial setting. See Anders Johansson (2003:246-250).

203 Michel Serres and Bruno Latour (1995:66).

204 Roman Jakobson (1971) "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances". Roman Jakobson pursued these studies of aphasic persons when in exile in Sweden during World War II. Discussing metaphor and metonymy as the polar figures of speech, Jakobson stressed the fact that metonymy, based upon differentiating rather than identifying, easily defies interpretation, which is also why it has not been given the same kind of attention within conventional aesthetics. See also José Luis Ramirez (1995b:89-90).

in semantic, urban play. As a metonymical space of contiguity, of associative nearness, Christiania, rather than an aesthetic of fitting *combination* or *composition*, draws upon a situational *selection*, where in each and every moment things and relations have to be actualized and interrogated.<sup>205</sup> However, while an exclusive use of metaphorical language results in definite, highly specific meanings, a rigid formalism neglecting the necessary selection and appropriation to a given situation, an exclusive use of metonymy results in a circling around, a continuous relating to a certain context, a circling that, in cases of *aphasia*, of linguistic derangement, has no clear or decisive direction or outcome, but appears as linguistic formlessness.<sup>206</sup> From this, one may draw the conclusion that language as well as locality production is a form of oscillation between these two modes of constructing: the metaphorical and the metonymical. When applying the metaphorical process we subsequently depend upon the *code*, the (placial) pattern in relation to which we can replace things. When employing the metonymical mode, we are instead dependant upon the surrounding *context*, the spatial setting and its inherent possibilities of association by contiguity.

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A pathologically-inspired analogy is, of course, not far away. Rather than a re-vitalizing rite-de-passage, Christiania could be understood in terms of an urban aphasia, a diseased urban state of excessive metonymical relativity, parasitically feeding upon general urban form. Such scornful diagnoses have certainly been expressed. Christiania, however, has not been entirely opposed to such a designation, deliberately characterizing itself as “a loonie asylum.”<sup>207</sup> A self-referential ‘making-do’, poetry is also a form of *aphasia*; a capacity of the human being to forget lexical rules in order to enter an abnormal, liminal, decompositional, or *formless*, state. What Christiania actualizes in relation to the surrounding city is a willingness to play the role of the aphasic in a society that has denounced its own syntactic and contiguous activity, or, in de Certeau’s words, its spatial *phrasing*.

\* \* \*

‘Space’ is an ambiguous notion, yet it has come to play a very important role in architectural and planning discourse. Throughout this passage, my aim has been to show how this representational dimension of experience has been open to manipulation, and how it has been re-interpreted in order to fit different

205 A spatial distinction by Roman Jakobson observed in his studies of pathological linguistic states, or forms of *aphasia*, this difference also plays a decisive role as for the understanding of urban space. Even though Jakobson, through his studies of certain pathological linguistic states, certain forms of *aphasia*, wanted to establish a normative rather than emancipatory system, he still unveiled the importance of situational spatiality in language.

206 Roman Jakobson (1971).

207 “Ordet tossereservat er Christianias eget”. Richard Løvehjerte, “Christiania...et socialt experiment og mere og andet end det” (“Christiania...a social experiment and more and other than that”), p. 27.

spatial intentions, not least in the concrete urban planning situation as unfolds in and around Christiania. The point of departure has in this respect been the aestheticization of space that has been the result of urbanization, and the accompanying development of different spatial regimes or ways of normatively defining space in terms of bad or good, degenerated or harmonious. This aestheticization has led to an actualization of representational issues, as well as how modes of representation affect the continuous generation of space.

Through its specific rejection first and foremost of rational and geometric forms for spatial representation and reproduction, Christiania also motivates my concern with two alternative approaches to space, approaches that I have chosen to describe as *phenomenological interiors* and *polemological excursions*. Both these approaches constitute attempts to critically deal with the spatial problem of the lived and experienced; with all those aspects abstracted from the functional grid of modernist planning aesthetics. Confronting the question of how we should understand ambiguous spatial being, they present different answers. While the phenomenological solution consists in the grounding of existence in an inner 'placeness', the polemological answer consists in an evasive maneuver, activating the field of conflictive figures that the question had aimed at eliminating.

My main intention in the chapter is to show that, as a (continuous) stealing of 'placeness', the Free Town motivates a critique of eidetic, or idealist, aesthetic theories and norms as they have been developed within a phenomenological discourse, or more adequately, within a phenomenological academism in architectural theory and pedagogy. Initially developed in order to counteract a reductionist and alienating 'International Style' modernism, this approach led to a fixation of space in new reductive properties' or *a priori* forms, such as the notions of authentic place or *genius loci*.

Christiania is in this respect a much more composite place constituted by many different strivings and conflictive forces. It is not necessarily a phenomenal place resting upon a ready-made ground, but rather constituted as a radically 'practiced' or performed place, continually 'spaced out' or 'freely unfolded.' An intermediary passage between different spatial approaches, Christiania emerges as an existential and potentially poetic 'building-dwelling' that would have human action at its disseminated center. Even though phenomenological ideas have played an important role in the Free Town, re-collecting and re-centering a scattered and function-separated urbanity around an alternative common ground or placial spirit, the attempts to submit Christiania to one transcendental, representational regime, or one intimate and grounded household have failed. Instead, these attempts have developed into a narrative, spatial discourse, which, rather than producing one idea of a 'place proper', has generated a *spatial rhetoric* of wandering, pedestrian utterances. Instead of a clear place form, a space of formless tendencies has developed; the specific formlessness of Christiania being the polemo-logic of performance.

More specifically, the formlessness of the Free Town promotes a manifold critique, first and foremost of the tendencies to an aestheticized spiritualization of space, irrespective of whether in the form of grand scale planning or phenomenological place worshipping; secondly of the objectivist interlocking of place and form through the imposition of different representational regimes; thirdly of utopian production of space or place, which eliminates the modality of the every-day and disregards the 'phatic' art of making; and fourthly, of a locality production that does not take into consideration the imaginative and expansive –*scaping* challenging global, or imperial –*scapes*. The *critical sense of place* that Christiania thus proposes, is of a specific kind – 'sense' in this respect having very little to do with a cognitively defined phenomenal authenticity or ideal harmony. Rather, the 'sense' of Christiania is a 'sense in the making', a spatially negotiated and an elaborated sense, reproduced and actualized in usage and dialogic agency.

As a locality of expressive sense-making and sense-negotiating, Christiania also constitutes an aesthetic turn in relation to rational, geometric 'space'. However, this is an aestheticization that does not fall back onto an ideal of formal beauty or harmonious truths – instead it constitutes an open-ended aesthetics of turns and tropes, a tactical space opening up a plurality of grounds and intentions.

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This is how Christiania has been staged and re-enacted, as a potential leeway, a yet formless in-between. It constitutes the ignored surplus of an urban landscape of otherwise thoroughly defined and identified places. As such, Christiania is by and large a discursive agent in an urban context, revealing as much about the surrounding urban landscape and its workings as it does about itself. Despite a commonplace formlessness, or perhaps precisely because of it, it constitutes a liminality, an ambiguous but also tactical passage, with a dissolving, deforming, and interrogative force. Actualizing not only practices of subject positioning and spatial representation, but moreover these practices as means of governing and domination, its claims to free or formless unfolding is self-evidently also a challenging of forms and expressions of *power*. In the discussion that follows, I will therefore explore how power may be understood from an urban aesthetic point of view, and how it may be contested in empowering practice.



Fig. 17

Do It Yourself. Børges house, the Factory Area.



Fig. 18

*Det sjette sans* (The Sixth Sense) in the Northern Area.



Fig. 19

A space of usages. Pusher Street, 2005.





Fig. 20

Street view, Christiania 2005.





Fig. 20 Hash shed from Pusher Street, now in the Danish National Museum. Photograph by Nils Vest.



Fig. 22 Christiania Girls' Corps, established in 1991. Photograph by Ole Lykke.

## V. The Formlessness of Power

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is in itself a heterogenous space.

Michel Foucault<sup>1</sup>

If it were not for that word 'Free', Christiania would simply have been a lower-case element in a capital city. Now the word is there, almost in italics, a fact that has raised questions not only about the position of the subject and the configuration of space, but about the urban landscape as a hierarchic structure, as a field of oppression. Referring to the quotation from Foucault above, Christiania has constituted an interrogative 'clawing and gnawing' on urban space, an irritating contiguity that has brought into consciousness a wider surface of friction than the one normally referred to when it comes to the managing and developing of urban space.

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The point of departure in this chapter is to discuss the Free Town in terms of *power relations*. In this respect, the 'clawing and gnawing' has a liberating effect in itself, since it dislocates interest from forms and facts to the acts and performances that actually sustain, and thereby also transform a relationship, at least potentially. But the question is how these performances are expressed and where they take place. The answer would be a 'clawing and gnawing aesthetics' that not only deals with questions of grounds and intentions, but with questions also of bodies, wills, matter and movement. In this discussion, power, spatial formation and aesthetics are closely related. But how, more specifically, does the relation between space and power find expression in a place like Christiania? And what does this entail in terms of urban aesthetics?

As for the further articulation of a relation between aesthetic theory and a discourse on power, it is to a great extent the 'clawing and gnawing' aspect of spatial activism that will constitute our guiding principle. One point of departure has in this respect been the critical aesthetics articulated by French author Georges Bataille. In the context of spatial discourse, it is perhaps first and foremost Bataille's challenge to intentionality via *desire* that will attract our attention, as well as his materialist tactics of *déclassement*, or degradation of representational hierarchies.

1 "L'espace dans lequel nous vivons, par lequel nous sommes attirés hors de nous-même, dans lequel se déroule précisément l'érosion de notre vie, et notre temps et notre histoire, cet espace qui nous ronge et nous ravine est en lui-même une espace hétérogène." Michel Foucault (1967/1994) "Des espaces autres".

The aesthetic tactics of Bataille will then lead to a further discussion of how this exuberant degradation was articulated in Situationist tactics of desire, most notably in the critical 'life manual' of Raoul Vaneigem; the *Traité de savoir-vivre pour les jeunes generations* of 1967. Explicitly combining issues of power and aesthetics, governing and desiring, this treatise had an inflammatory effect on the urbanist debate. A passionate critique not only of power structures in general but of the specific form of 'caring intentionality' developed by the modern Welfare State, it also actualized the close tension between an aesthetics of representation and an aesthetics of reproductive practice. As interception, aesthetic practice does not necessarily constitute an exclusively 'artistic' stance, but an articulation also of a marginalized 'will to power' – an attempt to materialize an aesthetically engaging, *political* reality; a bewildered project, of which Christiania is an offspring.

Bataille and Vaneigem's analyses to a certain extent anticipate the 'polemological' analysis of power as developed by Michel Foucault, who in 1970 also wrote the preface to the first edition of Bataille's complete works.<sup>2</sup> Similarly based on a spatial situating of 'power' at its lower case, as a set of actions, Foucauldian analysis entails more than an enlightenment of governing form. It constitutes an agitation of fixed locations, thus revealing an intricate *play* of forces. In relation to the spatial disobedience presented by Christiania, Foucault's mapping of a disciplinary 'landscape' of *bio-power* and life-sustaining power technologies, as well as his unveiling of an epistemological 'architecture', constitutes an almost inevitable point of reference. Yet with its focus on governing mechanisms, his architectonics may evoke a determinist rather than Dionysian effect. I will therefore examine the critique of the dystopian trait in Foucauldian thinking, not least in relation to an aesthetic debate.<sup>3</sup> Targeting the tendency towards a description of humankind being trapped in a "carceral archipelago"<sup>4</sup> or a "lexical prison"<sup>5</sup> of spatial representations, from which no one seems to be able to escape, this criticism has also actualized the importance of conceiving power as a generative force on the level of embodied and social agency.

However, the actualization of power as a spatial play with limitations and extremes does, as with Christiania, also initiate a broader urban movement of a transformative kind. Rather than a return towards a virgin state or an organic, non-carceral innocence, this movement is performed on a socio-material level of cultural play and participatory social agency. What will be subject to investigation is urban space as a possible combination between the *bio-political*,

2 "On le sait aujourd'hui: Bataille est un des écrivains les plus importants de son siècle." Michel Foucault in Georges Bataille (1970a:5).

3 See for example Martin Jay (1986) "In the Empire of the Gaze: Foucault and the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought," a text later expanded and developed in Martin Jay (1993) *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought*.

4 See Michael Walzer (1986:59).

5 See Denis Hollier (1989:60). Translation from French by Betsy Wing.

the *socio-material* and the *ludic*; a combination that, similar to Christiania, would not be guided by a higher intention, but by reciprocal and engaging desire.

### Defying Incarceration: *L'informe*

In the writings of Georges Bataille, the opposition between intentional representational regimes and the unlimited movement of human desire is ubiquitously present.<sup>6</sup> A 'polemology' of directions, of limits and of extremes, it has inspired a wide range of thinkers, not least within spatial fields.<sup>7</sup>

For Bataille, the development of a critical aesthetics of dissemination and complexity was a direct attack on aesthetics as formulated in the tradition of Hegel and German idealism. With its privileging of *architecture* as a metaphorical and dialectical edifice, Hegelian thinking for Bataille constituted the height of a morally motivated rehabilitation of metaphysics.<sup>8</sup> Architecture,

6 In my approach to the work of Bataille, I have apart from the original French texts from *Œuvres Complètes* also relied upon the English translation by Allan Stoekl of Georges Bataille (1985) *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927-39*. I have also consulted secondary sources such as Martin Jay (1993), Denis Hollier (1989) and Yves-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss (1997a), as well as the discussion in Tom Nielsen (2001) and Mattias Kärrholm (2004).

7 In the mid-twenties, Bataille formed part of the Surrealist circles in Paris as the co-editor of the journal *Documents*. However, after the publication of the Second Surrealist Manifesto in 1929, Bataille distanced himself from the Surrealist core represented by André Breton. Inspired by Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger among others, Bataille published his perhaps most famous work in 1928, *Histoire de l'œil* (*The History of the Eye*). A novel first read as pornography, it has later gained an influence as a prominent example of transgressive literature, bridging the gap between poetry and philosophy. In Nietzsche, Bataille found the Dionysian principles of decomposition upon which he built his own writing. "When Nietzsche made DIONYSOS (in other words, the destructive exuberance of life) the symbol of the will to power," wrote Bataille, "he expresses in that way a resolution to deny to a faddish and debilitating romanticism the force that must be held sacred." ("Quand Nietzsche a fait de DIONYSOS, c'est à dire de l'exubérance destructrice de la vie, le symbole de la volonté de puissance, il exprimait par là une resolution de refuser au romantisme velléitaire et débilitant une force qui doit être tenue pour sacrée.") Georges Bataille "Cronique Nietzsche," from 1937, in Georges Bataille (1970a), *Œuvres Complètes I: Premiers écrits 1922-1940*, p. 484; see also "Nietzschean Chronicle," in Georges Bataille (1985) *Visions of Excess, Selected Writings, 1927-1939*.

8 Already in 1929, "Architecture" appeared as one of the entries in *Dictionnaire critique*, published in the magazine *Documents*. Here architecture was described as the "official expression" of the human being; an expression which, like the physiognomy of certain officials "who give orders and prohibits with authority," also "inspire social decency, and often a veritable fear." ("En effet, seul l'être idéal de la société, celui qui ordonne et prohibe avec autorité, s'exprime dans les compositions architecturales proprement dites.... Il est évident, en effet, que les monuments inspirent la sagesse sociale et souvent même une véritable crainte.") Georges Bataille (1970a:171). The Hegelian critique, expressed in an article from 1932 co-written with Raymond Queneau, "La critique des fondations de la dialectique hégélienne," was first and foremost an attack of the architecture of Hegelian dialectics. Instead of a naturally synthesizing dialectics, Bataille's aim was the articulation of a dialectic, where "the terms of dialectical development become

as the stern physiognomy of society, was for Bataille an ideological erection of a tectonics, or a system, that threatened to petrify a human being, that just recently had been so promisingly liberated from the constraints of religion and authoritative power. In his *Aesthetics*, Hegel had described architecture at its purest moment, as the inaugural act of artificial manifestation, as the introduction of the *monument* into time, pointing out both the victory of death and the victory over death; a victory of form over death. Bataille opposes all this. His 'desire' does not at all connote a being of such a productive kind. Instead, according to French literature theorist Denis Hollier, Bataille expresses a will to "bring closer whatever wrecks projects and edifices, [whatever] frustrates plans and shatters monuments."<sup>9</sup> What interests Bataille is instead that which emerges in the gaps of edifying structures, in the fissures and slits, that which no architecture, no archaic tectonics or structure, no matter how perfected, will manage to suppress.

For Bataille, intentional forming or planning constituted nothing but a mutilating and self-denying restriction, encapsulating life as agency in an airless and unlivable enclosure. "MEN ACT IN ORDER TO BE," exclaims Bataille; action is not understood in the utilitarian sense as a necessity in order to avoid death, but understood "in the positive sense of a tragic and incessant combat for a satisfaction that is almost beyond reach."<sup>10</sup> The intentional "project" is in relation to a life of agency a governing restriction, an incarceration of the desire and creativity associated with what Bataille saw as the abundant, "labyrinthine" human being; in Hollier's interpretation the "locus of an *excess without issue*."<sup>11</sup>

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In his interpretation of Bataille's anti-architectural theory, Denis Hollier has described this emphasis on labyrinthine acuteness as a generative principle, as a multiplying of meanings by de-centralizing, inverting and splitting them. In relation to a monumental or pyramidal positivity, the labyrinthine emergency unfolds as a potential formlessness, a kind of space in relation to which hierarchies of meaning, impossible to follow, disintegrate, and in relation to which "lexical prisons"<sup>12</sup> become unbalanced and perverted, causing an outburst of laughter. "Above knowable existences," writes Bataille, "laughter traverses the human pyramid like a network of endless waves that renew themselves in all directions."<sup>13</sup> Labyrinthine formlessness is in this sense not a solipsistic denial

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elements of real existence" ("...les termes du développement dialectique deviennent des éléments de l'existence réelle"), and where also "negativity takes on a special value" ("...dans lesquels la négativité prend une valeur spécifique.") See Georges Bataille (1970a:288-289).

9 Denis Hollier (1989:3). Translation from French by Betsy Wing.

10 "LES HOMMES AGISSENT POUR ÊTRE. Ce qui ne doit pas être compris dans le sens négative de la conservation (afin de ne pas être rejeté hors de l'existence par la mort) mais dans le sens positif d'un combat tragique et incessant pour une satisfaction Presque hors d'atteinte." See Georges Bataille "Le labyrinthe," (1935-36/1970a:433).

11 See Denis Hollier (1989:61).

12 See Denis Hollier (1992:60).

13 "Au-dessus des existences connaissables, le rire parcourt la pyramide humaine comme

of language but an acknowledgement of the semiotic infinity characteristic to humanity. “Human beings have a labyrinthine structure,” comments Hollier, “the labyrinth is the structure of existence because existence is unthinkable without language [...] (‘words, their mazes...’)”<sup>14</sup> As Hollier points out, language in Bataille’s universe makes man into a relationship, an acting and spatial being, a practical negation of intimacy and cognitive isolation. Language is that ability which allows the human being to externalize him or herself.

But what would a material valorization of abundant formlessness – something which every formation of knowledge/power aims at repressing – really imply? Would it not lead to meaningless nihilism, a spatial opening, yet without possible destinations? Is this not the question materialized by Christiania, although explicitly related to an urban context? As an accidental and indifferent, yet agitating *slippage*, Christiania unfolds as the formless *event* provoked by the banana peel, the puddle, the sudden clash; an unpredictable historical and material configuration presenting itself in the form of a happening. In their book *Formless – A User’s Guide*,<sup>15</sup> art theorists Rosalind Krauss and Yves-Alain Bois take as a point of departure Bataille’s explorations of *l’informe* in a discussion of performative aesthetic practice. *L’informe*, the formless, epitomizes in a quite physical way a representational critique of ‘lexical’ attempts to embrace meaning through systematic form. Appearing as a short contribution to a “critical dictionary” published in Bataille’s magazine *Documents* in the late twenties, the fragment on the formless unveils the rich rupture in modernity:

#### Formless

A dictionary begins when it no longer gives the meaning of words, but their tasks. Thus *formless* is not only an adjective having a given meaning, but a term that serves to bring things down in the world, generally requiring that each thing have its form. What it designates has no rights in any sense and gets itself squashed everywhere, like a spider or an earthworm. In fact, for academic men to be happy, the universe would have to take shape. All of philosophy has no longer a goal: it is a matter of giving a frock coat to what is, a mathematical frock coat. On the other hand, affirming that the universe resembles nothing and is only *formless* amounts to saying that the universe is something like a spider or spit.<sup>16</sup>

un réseau de vagues sans fin qui se renouvelleraient dans tout les sens.” Georges Bataille (1935-36/1970a :441) “Le labyrinthe”.

14 See Denis Hollier (1992:65), who in this quote is referring to Georges Bataille (1943/1973:7-189) “L’expérience intérieure”.

15 Yves-Alain Bois and Rosalind E. Krauss (1997) *Formless: A User’s Guide*. Originally published in France as *L’Informe: Mode d’emploi*; a catalogue accompanying an exhibition at Centre George Pompidou in 1996.

16 “Un dictionnaire commencerait à partir du moment où il ne donnerait plus le sens



In this passage, Bataille gives voice to the aspiration to “bring things down” – to dissolve the representational mania of neatly displacing one thing for another. Rejecting the “frock coats” of academia and philosophy as merely representational coverings, stiff architectonic physiognomies proudly presenting themselves as erect and upright common sense, Bataille instead wants to evoke the starkness of a world in action.

This is exemplified in another of the entries in Bataille’s “critical dictionary” written by Michel Leiris, where *spittle* emerges as an evocative sign. An expressive secretion, spittle is “scandal itself, as it lowers the mouth – the visible sign of intelligence – to the level of the most shameful organs.”<sup>17</sup> Through its inconsistency and vague contours, its ambiguous color and intrusive humidity, spittle is “the very symbol of the formless [*informe*], of the unverifiable, of the non-hierarchized.”<sup>18</sup> A symbol, yet impossible to define, the formless is furthermore only possible to *perform*, to act out as a relational vector of force. Embodying a composite of accumulated actions challenging the purism of established modernism, the formless spitting performance is an act against the myths of verticality and visibility.<sup>19</sup>

In this context, there are a few aspects of the informal Bataillean terrain that are of special interest.<sup>20</sup> Firstly, as an articulation of *horizontalité*, the *informe* (im-)perfectly captures the dynamic nature of spatial power. Against the authoritative and upright skeleton of rationality, of architecture, Bataille localizes and indicates potential ways out into a kind of spatial ‘trouvé’ – a metonymical space of potential encounter and displacement. Human life should be understood horizontally, as an immense and labyrinthine insufficiency opening up in all directions,<sup>21</sup> as a distracting propagation of “places of pilgrimage,”<sup>22</sup> or as a landscape seen not as a window screen, but in the perspective of “the wasp who is crushed against its illusory surface.”<sup>23</sup>

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mais les besoins des mots. Ainsi *informe* n’est pas seulement un adjectif ayant tel sens mais un terme servant à déclasser, exigeant généralement que chaque chose ait sa forme. Ce qu’il désigne n’a ses droits dans aucun sens et se fait écraser partout comme une araignée ou un ver de terre. Il faudrait en effet, pour que les hommes académiques soient contents, que l’univers prenne forme. La philosophie entière n’a pas d’autre but: il s’agit de donner une redingote à ce qui est, une redingote mathématique. Par contre affirmer que l’univers ne ressemble à rien et n’est qu’*informe* revient à dire que l’univers est quelque chose comme une araignée ou un crachat.” Georges Bataille (1929/1970a:217) “Informe”. See also Y.-A. Bois and R. E. Krauss (1997:5).

17 Michel Leiris, *Crachat: L’eau à la bouche (Spittle: Mouth Water)*, *Documents 1*, 1929:7, quoted in Yves-Alain Bois and R. E. Krauss (1997:18).

18 Yves-Alain Bois (1997:18).

19 Yves-Alain Bois (1997:24).

20 **In their interpretation, Bois and Krauss chose four partly different entries to Bataillean geography – horizontalité, base materialism, pulse, and entropy.** Y.-A. Bois and R. E. Krauss (1997).

21 “Le labyrinthe” (1935-36/1970a:434).

22 “Lieux de pèlerinage Hollywood” (1929/1970a:198-199).

23 “...la guêpe qui se brise contre sa surface illusoire.” In “Le paysage”, (1938/1970a:521).

Secondly, as *base materialism*,<sup>24</sup> the formless appears as a weapon against all kinds of material idealisms, all kinds of fetishizing of matter as ideal form. The majority of materialists, according to Bataille, are not materialists at all, as “[t]hey situated dead matter at the summit of a conventional hierarchy of different ordered facts, without noticing that they in doing so held on to the obsession with an *ideal* form of matter, a form that more than any other came closer to what matter *ought to be*.”<sup>25</sup> Materialism should not be understood as a return to objectivity, but as a recognizing and affirming of the very basic materiality of repetitive deformation and change. A crude materialism, it is a further attack on the “Hegelian edifice” and its ideal *synthesizing* of matter as form. The ‘formless’ type of matter that Bataille speaks about, cannot become synthesized, but is the kind of matter of which we do not have *idea*, but experience, that which cannot be absorbed by the image. “Base matter,” argues Bataille, “is exterior and foreign to ideal human aspirations, and it refuses to let itself become reduced by the grand ontological machines that are the result of these aspirations.”<sup>26</sup> Like soil, it is a materiality that should be bodily approached through touch, taste, smell; a materiality that does not recognize the distinction between form and matter, but rather evokes its collapse.<sup>27</sup>

Another aspect of Bataillean thinking, closely linked to the provocative contiguity and organic materiality that it generates, is *consumption*. Rejecting representational systems as well as the production of monumental meaning, the fuelling agency of base materialism is a consuming one, an un-doing of form as grounded in an ideal sustenance, a drift towards effectuation, metamorphosis, and decomposition. Bataille would perhaps have preferred the concept of “expenditure” –<sup>28</sup> a concept more explicitly expressing the act of wasting or making use of energy, a semantic de-regulation through active *use* rather than

24 See both the entry “Materialisme,” of the *Dictionnaire critique* of 1929, in Georges Bataille (1970a:179-180), and the text “Le bas matérialisme et la gnose,” in Georges Bataille (1970a:220-226).

25 “Ils ont situé la matière morte au sommet d’une hiérarchie conventionnelle des faits d’ordre divers, sans s’apercevoir qu’ils cédaient ainsi à l’obsession d’une forme *idéale* de la matière, d’une forme qui se rapprocherait plus qu’aucune autre de ce que la matière *devrait être*.” In “Materialisme,” Georges Bataille (1970a:179).

26 “La matière basse est extérieure et étrangère aux aspirations idéales humaines et refuse de se laisser réduire aux grandes machines ontologiques résultant de ces aspirations.” See “Le bas matérialisme et la gnose,” in Georges Bataille (1970a:225).

27 Yves-Alain Bois (1997:29).

28 Yves-Alain Bois (1997:30). Proposing the notion of entropy, I mean that Bois and Krauss to a certain extent either misinterpreted the thermodynamics of Bataille and his problematizing of formlessness as a tense, subversive, and potential state, or reinterpreted the physical notion of entropy in order to open also for the potential inversion of the concept and the inexorable movement that it describes; a movement towards complete stagnation. In the schematic *Dossier “Hétérologie,”* entropy as a process occupies a place equivalent to that of gentrification/art ordinaire du type bourgeois XVIIIème siècle. (I want to thank my advisors Eivor Bucht and Irina Sandomirskja for making me develop this point.) See “Tableaux hétérologiques,” in Georges Bataille (1970b:178-202).

through passive loss. As such, base materialism also proposes a base economy, where the expenditure of the surplus constitutes a necessary and emancipating praxis, a basic field of action, where the encapsulated energy of linguistic (or architectural) formation may be released, activated and *spent*.<sup>29</sup>

While these aspects of the *informe* challenge power structures and formal ideologies, they may also seem to tend toward a romantic view of the organic, the animalist, the inert flow of an eternal, sensuous present. However, for Bataille, there is no solution to the human dilemma of existence, no homecoming or salvation. The horizontalizing, lowering and consuming forces of Bataillean thinking are in this sense not resolving forces, not synthesizing or harmonizing energies. They are not part of a virgin state, not representatives of an untouched nature, but embracing also 'low' tensions, raw urges, and vectors of interfering powers. Rather than a closed, cyclic system, the ecology of Bataille is to be understood in terms of *le jeu*, the play. Through play, the brutal link between nature and culture, as represented by sexuality and death, may again enter social life as transgressive desire, playful eroticism, or Dionysian festival. According to one of his admirers, Michel Foucault, Bataille "introduced play to thought – a risky play – of the limit, of the extreme, of the summit, of the transgressive."<sup>30</sup> The human being is engaged in a both creative and destructive play with its own insufficiency, a play that manifests itself through an intervening laughter, which "characterizes the totality of emptied existences as *ridicule*."<sup>31</sup>

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These aspects of the *informe* reinforces the spatial implications of the formless formerly discussed; *horizontality's* activation and exteriorization of subject, the transformative *materiality* inherent to embodied interaction, and the *expenditure* implied in every narration, in every enactment of locality. In relation to Bataille's economy of the surplus, of waste, his *heterology* (his science of the aberrant)<sup>32</sup>

29        The formless unfolds as an *eroticism*; a discharge of energy and a 'release' of identity – a state where "[b]eing is dissolved, carried away by the action of dissolute existence" (Denis Hollier, 1992:74, translation from French by Betsy Wing). As a non-erect, material, heterogeneous and actively consuming otherness, the formless unfolds as a spatial propagation released from its duties as ideal representation, a locality re-production which has no beginning and no end, and which, like the urban landscape, is not a secured space, but a space of agents who are prepared to spend their energy in relational 'emancipation.' See also Tom Nielsen's discussion on the formless of Bataille in his *Formløst: Den moderne bys overskudslandskaber* (*Formless: The Surplus Landscapes of the Modern City*), where Nielsen discusses formlessness from the point of view of both Robert Venturi/Denise Scott Brown and their ideas of popular architecture, Rem Koolhaas' theories on the generic city, and artist Robert Smithson's works on entropy, thus comparing their approach with Bataille's anti-idealist and material heterology. See Tom Nielsen (2001:184-191).

30        See Michel Foucault's preface, "Présentation," in Georges Bataille (1970a:5).

31        "...il caractérise l'ensemble des existences vidées comme *ridicule*." In "Le labyrinthe," Georges Bataille (1970a:440).

32        "Hétérologie\* science de ce qui est tout autre." See "La valeur d'usage de D.A.F. de Sade," in Georges Bataille (1970b:61). See also "Tableaux hétérologiques," in Georges Bataille (1970b:178-202).

or *scatology* (the science of dirt),<sup>33</sup> Christiania proposes a similar non-reductive embrace also of the heterogeneous and ‘low’ in life, a reaction to a formalizing aestheticism incapable of embracing the multifarious and changing surplus emerging from the ruptures and in-betweens of its own idealistic aspirations. Or, as Hollier summarizes the scatological claim, “So reason has to be given to shit. It is a low blow, but this is precisely what it is all about.”<sup>34</sup>

What Bataillean aesthetics presents to us is a ‘denunciation in action’ of clear, finished and beautiful form, as well as a subsequent *de-sublimation* of conventional aesthetics. Rejecting pre-established ‘values’ this de-sublimation is equivalent to the horizontalizing and lowering of the romantic and elevated sublime, a ‘bringing down’ of its erected spirituality to a material level of bodily transgression and propagation. As such, the de-sublimation of Bataille corresponds to the performative bringing down proposed by Lyotard – the peregrine activation of the exploratory level of an “I don’t know what.”<sup>35</sup> An heterogeneous and diverging formlessness, this uncertainty operating on the level of the singular Self, also opens up an aesthetic criticism to the problem of the Other, of the inter-subjective realm of the urban landscape. As clearly expressed in Bataillean aesthetics, the *informe* does not entail yet another formalism, but an *activism*,<sup>36</sup> a bringing to attention of questions of power and empowerment, of governing and emancipation that are constitutive of the rapports between “society,” “organism,” and “being.”<sup>37</sup> What Bataille provided, and what still makes his ideas powerful and relevant, was this articulation of an aesthetics that neither gave way for, nor masked, issues of formal structures, but rather drew its legitimacy from the experiential undoing of these structures. It is this un-doing, by Bataille performed within an aesthetic field, that by the Situationists will be transferred to the discourse of the urban landscape.

### Situational De-Formation and the Know-How of Living

Lacking a clearly articulated avant-garde program, Christiania does not automatically fit into a critical aesthetic discourse. Pragmatic and ‘vernacular’, it seems to be an example of spatial empowerment with few explicit ties to the artistic, or even ‘elitist’ movements of French intellectuals. Yet, Christiania may be understood as a part of the very ‘base matter’ from which these movements and their followers emanated. In this sense, Christiania could be interpreted as a popular elaboration of the same aesthetic enthusiasm and critical pungency

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33 “Mais c’est surtout le terme de *scatologie* (science de l’ordure) qui garde dans les circonstances actuelles (spécialisation du sacré) une valeur expressive incontestable, comme doublet d’un terme abstrait tel qu’hétérologie.” See “La valeur d’use de D.A.F. de Sade,” in Georges Bataille (1970b:62).

34 See Denis Hollier (1992:98).

35 Jean-François Lyotard (1988:12).

36 “Bataille speaks rarely of political action,” writes Hollier, “but frequently of revolutionary agitation.” Denis Hollier (1992:55).

37 See “Rapports entre ‘société,’ ‘organisme,’ ‘être,’” in Bataille (1970b:291-30).

as that of Bataille heterology; an 'anarchic' formlessness that potentially has gained a new actuality.

In this respect, the discursive activism developed by the Situationists represents an important intermediary between the artistic transgressions of the twenties and thirties and the youth movement of the seventies. In my former discussion of Situationism, I focused on its critical interrogations of subject positionality, and the associated dissolution of the subject-object matrix in favor of an everyday situation. However, even though 'the situation' entailed an emancipating expansion of the subject, it was first and foremost its subversive impact on a social level that to such a great extent would come to inspire a broader urban movement. Replacing the class-related struggle for the control of the means of production, Situationist urbanism instead developed as a more expressive, even lavish way to bring life and politics together. Coinciding with massive, postwar urban transformation, this aesthetic awareness unfolded as a desire to intensify rather than manage social life, and this far beyond the functional confines of beneficial, modernist tectonics: "Reconstruct life, rebuild the world; one and the same will."<sup>38</sup>

In order to further explore the polemical dimension of a Free Town as an urban phenomenon between social life, art, and spatial reconstruction, I will refer to one of the pre-68 manifestos, implicitly inspiring the course of events also among the barracks in Boatman's Street; the Situationist and revolutionary 'pamphlet' *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes generations*, in English literally "Treatise of savoir-vivre for the young generations."<sup>39</sup> The ambition of the text was to fuse playful creativity and political being into one and the same artful life. However, rather than simply an account from a grassroots' perspective, or an elitist, political appeal, the manifesto, as discursive utterance, was itself an enactment and agitation of space, a piece of anarchic urban poetry linguistically generating much of the symbolic presuppositions which constituted the foundations also for Christiania.

This programmatic text of Raoul Vaneigem was published in 1967. It provided a condensed version of a decade of aesthetically fuelled attacks on the emerging consumerist landscape of a rationally planned Welfare State. A re-reading of *Traité de savoir-vivre* in relation to Christiania is therefore interesting. Together

38 "Réconstruire la vie, rebâtir le monde: une même volonté." Raoul Vaneigem (1967) *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes generations*, p. 94.

39 **The English translation**, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, was published in 1983, subsequently with a title that does not quite correspond with that of the French original. An alternative English translation of the title however, would be "Manifesto on the Art of Living for the Young Generation," or, as suggested by Ken Knabb in his *Situationist International Anthology* (1981), "Treatise on Living for the Young Generations," perhaps not in the same clear way spelling out the subversive aspect of its content, but more its pragmatic ambition of serving as a bio-political manual for a revolutionary everyday life.

with *La société du spectacle* by Guy Debord,<sup>40</sup> this book was perhaps the single most influential work for the uprisings of May 1968. The general ambition of the book was the *détournement*, the semiotic re-coding of bourgeois *savoir-vivre* into a revolutionary ‘art of living.’ Transformed from an “acquaintance and practice of worldly manners,” the *savoir-vivre* would take on much more radical aesthetic connotations, involving an expansion of the well behaved, representational subject into a passionate activist.<sup>41</sup> The critique implied in this disjunction of bohemian, bourgeois mannerism was in this sense double-edged, directed against the homogenization of both society and political protest. “What would I do,” writes Vaneigem, “in an activist group that forces me to leave in the vestibule, not only some ideas – as those ideas would rather be of a kind as to deceive me to rejoin the group in question – but the dreams and desires, which I would never leave behind; the will to live authentically and without limit?”<sup>42</sup>

For Vaneigem, the *Traité* was an essential and acute response to the new kind of misery unfolding within modernity, the social treadmill, where the guarantee of not dying of starvation is exchanged only for the risk of dying of boredom.<sup>43</sup> The *Traité* was in this sense less an ideal for a qualitative improvement of life and more a tactical manual for survival to be put in the hands of readers, who would no longer be passive followers, but mediators of a critical posture. The treatise was in itself a kind of situational *dérive*; subversive arguments adrift in the pockets of an increasing number of *agents provocateurs*.

Divided into two parts, “The Perspective of Power,” and “The Reversed Perspective,” the *Traité* aimed at dismantling all the more evasively distributed power. In the first part of the *Traité*, Vaneigem strikes at the different disguises of power – firstly its objective guise as *analysis*, as an exaggerated cult of epistemological enlightenment, secondly as *morality* with its misleading propagation of guilt, and thirdly as *capital* with its seductive offerings of comfort and security. These new and indirect forms of power

40 See Guy-Ernest Debord (1967/1987) *La société du spectacle*, and the chapter *Le prolétariat comme sujet et représentation* where he explicitly comments on the practice of environmental planning. As Christopher Gray points out, this book together with the *Traité* were both almost completely ignored by the French press when they first were released. Not until the following year, in the months following the students’ uprising in the streets of Paris, did they attract attention. “After it was all over,” writes Gray, “Vaneigem’s *Traité* turned out to be the most ripped-off book in France.” Christopher Gray (1998:69-70).

41 *Savoir-vivre*; connaissance et pratique des usages du monde. *Larousse de poche*, édition refondue, 1979.

42 “Qu’irais-je faire dans un groupe d’action qui m’imposerait de laisser au vestiaire, je ne dit pas quelques idées – car telles seraient mes idées qu’elles m’induiraient plutôt à rejoindre le groupe en question – mais les rêves et les désirs don’t je ne me sépare jamais, mais une volonté de vivre authentiquement et sans limite?” Raoul Vaneigem (1967:17).

43 “Nous ne voulons pas d’un monde où la garantie de ne pas mourir de faim s’échange contre le risque de mourir d’ennui?” Raoul Vaneigem (1967:8).

were all increasingly formless, according to Vaneigem operating indirectly on the body, like “a crowd of little hypnoses” –<sup>44</sup> as information, as Culture, as urbanism, and as advertisement; hypnoses that could be understood as ‘scapes’ conditioning the everyday. ‘Power’ was not localized, but a distributed spatial order consisting of the *sum of constraints, universal mediation, and the sum of seduction*. The “constraints” consisted of the humiliation, isolation, and degeneration of human labor, which rendered impossible all forms of engaged expansive participation. “Universal mediation”, the technologization and quantification of dialogue, hindered basic communication. “Seduction” finally, operating through different forms of ideologically articulated and beneficial sacrifice, thwarted all authentic and purposeless realization.<sup>45</sup>

The most flagrant expression of this new power was according to Vaneigem *urban planning*; a practice which was nothing but an even distribution of a new kind of misery, of humiliation, quantification, and sacrifice. A practice characterized by a new kind of mental and spatial scarcity, it was still operating upon the illusion of ‘being together’, upon the idea of a beneficial and secure sociality. What ‘planning’ really signified was, however, *prevention*. Planning was a securing method, a means of impeding people from actively and creatively exploring their full potentials. The actual social product of this securing method was *alienation* – an institutionalized and individualized insufficiency, often metaphysically wrapped up in spiritual or poetic terms as the individual’s constitutional loneliness and littleness before either Nature, urbanity as a whole, or God. The result of planning was a *lamenting* civilization in which power operated through a perverted altruism of *decompression*.

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The operative mode of decompression was *form*; a normative arrangement of the conflicts that the activity of planning itself had created. Decompression was the permanent control of antagonisms generated by a dominating order, a balancing or harmonizing that at any given moment would be able to neutralize or synthesize even the most fundamental conflicts. This was, according to Vaneigem, Hegel’s ideal *dialectics* in its most dubious appearance – a pretence to host difference only to be able to bring it to account.

Together with Situationist Attila Kotányi, Vaneigem had already in 1961 written extensively on matters of urban planning, as for example in the *Programme*

44 “...d’une foule de petites hypnoses.” Raoul Vaneigem (1967:15). Vaneigem is here apparently influenced by the early work of Foucault on the clinic. At the same time, the Situationists had also inspired Foucault’s thinking on power.

45 The three first chapters of the *Traité* bears the following titles: “La participation impossible ou le pouvoir comme somme des constraints” (“Impossible Participation or Power as the Sum of Constraints”), “La communication impossible ou le pouvoir comme médiation universelle” (“Impossible Communication or Power as Universal Mediation”), “La réalisation impossible ou le pouvoir comme somme de séductions” (“Impossible Realization or Power as the Sum of Seduction”). Raoul Vaneigem (1967:21-159).



*élémentaire du bureau d'urbanisme unitaire*.<sup>46</sup> “Unitary urbanism” was in their view not an alternative *doctrine* for the city, but a critique of rational and specialized urban space, which was seen as generative of contradictions and fragmentation. What they envisioned was an urban *movement* with the ultimate aim of reproducing the city according to a “unitary” everyday life, where work, art, and leisure could be integrated and rehabilitated.<sup>47</sup> “Unitary urbanism” would in this respect replace the leading principle of planning – infrastructural separation and circulation – with participatory and communicative, direct action.<sup>48</sup> As Simon Sadler has argued, “unitary urbanism was a vision of the unification of space and architecture with the social body, and with the individual body as well.”<sup>49</sup>

In Vaneigem’s terms, “unitary urbanism” was the spatial application of the new *savoir-vivre*; a *merging* not only of architecture and social space, but also of art and life. A ‘purposeful disorder’, unitary urbanism was the living critique of the constraints, the leveling and the seduction of domesticated and stereotyped urbanity. It presented an entire psychogeography of power, and one of its main targets was the capitalist Welfare State, privileged representative of *L'ère du bonheur*, the Era of Happiness. The Welfare State was not only the social-democratic social ideal as developed in Scandinavia, but the general idea of a democratic, liberal, and post-industrial society, in which opposition has become obliterated, replaced by moderation, where even love has been inscribed in the general social pattern of health and recreation. For Vaneigem, love is a serious and forceful, intense and empowering matter, and nothing that should be disarmed and domesticated, as in the Scandinavian version of innocent and natural nakedness and love, probably mediated through films, to a great extent the source of Scandinavian licentious, yet ‘light’, sexuality, furthermore staged in a surrounding of scenic or ‘decompressive’ landscape.<sup>50</sup> “From now on we

46 This program appeared for the first time in *Internationale Situationniste*, no. 6, 1961. See Simon Sadler (1998:121).

47 The main targets were obviously large scale neo-Corbusian living factories like that of Mourenx, a company suburb in south west France, or the *grand ensemble* at Sarcelles; both of which were obvious examples of how housing was used to stratify and control workers to their very skin. See Simon Sadler (1998:52).

48 An explicitly utopian antecedent to “unitary urbanism” may be found in the writings of 19<sup>th</sup> century utopian socialist Charles Fourier, who argued for the establishment of what he called *phalanstères*; urban ensembles of “unitary architecture” embodying a passionate social harmony. See Simon Sadler (1998:118).

49 See Simon Sadler (1998:118).

50 “Déjà les conceptions hygiénistes de la social-démocratie suédoise ont popularisé cette caricature de la liberté d’aimer, l’amour manipulé comme un jeu de carte.” Especially Swedish films like Arne Mattson’s *One Summer of Happiness* (*Hon dansade en sommar*) of 1951, and Ingmar Bergman’s *Monika: A Story of a Bad Girl* (*Sommaren med Monika*) of 1952, had contributed to create this reputation of moderate immorality. A contrast to this ‘light sexuality’ and perhaps more in line with a Situationist critique, Vilgot Sjöman’s *Jag är nyfiken – en film i gult* of 1967 and *Jag är nyfiken – en film i blått* of 1968 (“I am Curious – Yellow” and “I am Curious – Blue”); presented a groundbreaking critique of the Welfare State to a large extent

will live less from hate than from contempt,” wrote Vaneigem sarcastically, “less from love than from affection, less from ridicule than from stupidity, less from passions than from sentiments, less from desires than from envy, less from reason than from calculation, and less from a lust for life than the keenness of survival.”<sup>51</sup>

The capitalist Welfare State was for Vaneigem the height of decompression, a system that perhaps seriously would succeed in choking the unpredictable richness of intense human life. Fine Art was in this respect no alternative, but just decompression. The most corrupt form of sacrifice, the normative ‘Aesthetic’ was an exaltation of virtue, even more efficiently than religion mediating eternal glory. Bourgeois Art presented a double seduction that not only replaced lived experience with the representation of the artist, but also masked its commercial role through the mythology of the *œuvre*, of perfect aesthetic form. Before an aesthetic ‘economy’, the artist would sacrifice his or her lived intensity, the moment of creation and spontaneity. “The function of the ideological, artistic, or cultural spectacle,” argued Vaneigem, “consists of transforming the wolves of spontaneity to shepherds of knowledge and beauty.”<sup>52</sup>

This was why the revolution could not be a grand fight for a noble Cause, but had to be a party, a carnival, a continual revolution of the everyday. “The moment you have to make sacrifice for revolution,” argues Vaneigem, “it will cease to exist. [...] Revolutionary moments are festivals where individual life celebrates its union with regenerated society.”<sup>53</sup> A re-vitalization of an anarcho-aesthetic tradition of critical and experimental formlessness, the *Traité* in its second part developed the ludic tactics of *carnevalesque* and *informal play*. A spatially distributed, formless and hypnotic power puts up new demands on any counter-movement, which will have to develop a similarly formless tactics;

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through transgressive eroticism. As the films became subject to American film censorship, they attracted a lot of attention, spurring the exploration of relation between subversive politics and free love.

51 “On allait désormais vivre moins de haine que de mépris, moins de d’amour que d’attachement, moins de ridicule que de stupidité, moins de passions que de sentiments, moins de désirs, que d’envie, moins de raison que de calcul et moins de goût de vivre que de l’empressement à survivre.” Raoul Vaneigem (1967:70).

52 “La fonction du spectacle idéologique, artistique, culturel, consiste à changer les loups de la spontanéité en bergers du savoir et de la beauté.” Raoul Vaneigem (1967:116).

53 “La révolution cesse dès l’instant où il fait se sacrifier por elle....Les moments révolutionnaires sont les fêtes où la vie individuelle célèbre son union avec la société régénérée.” Raoul Vaneigem (1967:112). Henri Lefebvre, who in 1965 published his *La Proclamation de la Commune*, a close study of the 1871 anarchist uprising in Paris, was important for the development of these ideas. There had also been close contact between Lefebvre, and the young Situationists, first and foremost during Lefebvre’s period of teaching in Strasbourg in the early sixties, where Debord, Vaneigem, Bernstein and a few others counted as his students. It was also the discussions on the Paris Commune that ultimately led to a break between the Situationists and Lefebvre, as Debord and his group accused Lefebvre of having stolen their ideas. See Henri Lefebvre (1965) and Kristin Ross (1997) “Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview,” in *October*, Vol 79, Winter.

a playful presence sophisticated enough as to be able to infiltrate the spatial order of power, thereby counter-acting it in new ways. Rather than sacrificial ritual, it is situational play that should generate the dissolution necessary to transgress individual action and enable common movement.<sup>54</sup>

With an insistent passion, the *Traité* worked out the spatial sensitivity as to formations of power that a few years later would constitute the foundation also for Christiania. The revolutionary *triade unitaire*, the unitary triad of *participation*, *communication* and *realization*,<sup>55</sup> developed in order to counteract power's constraining, manipulatively mediating and seductive forces, was also in Christiania in the highest degree relevant. In the *Traité* as well as in the counter movement of Christiania, the point of departure was "a radical subjectivity of presence,"<sup>56</sup> a subjectivity transformed into the ability of actively positioning oneself crosswise in relation to power. The *savoir-vivre* developed in Christiania has similarly been based upon a sensitivity as to the spatial distribution of power and its discursive rather than disciplinary ways of working. Ubiquitous power has in this sense counteracted by a tactics of passionately 'being there' – a 'being there' constituted by horizontalizing *participation*, of re-materializing *communication*, and of consuming *realization*, thus combining the de-composing aesthetics of Bataille with the political activism of Vaneigem.

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As a full-scale treatise of interactive social transformation, the most striking and critically efficient dimension of Christiania has also been its ability to keep its character of event, of repetitive happening, of engaging play; a dimension that also reveals a tactical ability to read off and react to the dispersed spatiality of power. Clearly demonstrated in the initial happening of occupation, symbolically reinforced and efficiently mass-medialized, it has provided a re-enactment of the urban power play in operation, bringing into consciousness the tension of upon which the aestheticized urban landscape is founded.

The works of Bataille and Vaneigem constitute not only a passionate but also a keen-sighted mapping of the relational socio-political '–scape' that constituted the hot-bed for the urban social movements of the late sixties and early seventies, and which still, through local movements such as Christiania,

54        **It was this distinction between *play* and *ritual*** that in the early sixties had led to the breach within the Situationist movement between the Paris group and the Northern fractions, first and foremost the Gruppe SPUR in Munich and the Bauhaus Situationists in the Öresund Region. In 1961, a group of Situationists, among others Jørgen Nash, Dieter Kunzelmann and Jens Jørgen Thorsen had articulated what they called the CO-RITUS manifesto, and in 1962 proclaimed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Situationist International, immediately condemned by the Paris group with Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem as spokesmen. See Ambrosius Fjord and Patrick O'Brien (1970-71), eds., *Situationster: En luxus-bog/collage om nogle af de vigtigste begivenheder i anden Situationistiske internationale historie*.

55        Raoul Vaneigem (1967:245-278).

56        "La subjectivité radicale du présence – actuellement repérable chez la plupart des hommes..." Raoul Vaneigem (1967:245).

are exerting a critical pressure on the urban discourse. As not only a political, but a more general *representational* critique, these movements pursued a polemical and interceptive analysis of power that to a certain extent anticipated the epistemological and discursive interrogations of Michel Foucault, the pre-eminent critic of the field. As for the general understanding of the aesthetic working principle of the urban ‘-scape’ – urbanity as a space of representational exercise – the Foucauldian agitation of spatial governing structures is of central importance. As for the specific understanding of ‘Foucault’ – of Foucault’s ideas not only as paralyzing apocalypse but as empowering counter-espionage – the generative formlessness of Christiania might be of equal weight.

## Foucault and Power 1: Horizontality

A transversal urban wedge, Christiania in many ways has managed to agitate the diffuse and ambiguous web of actions of which the urban landscape consists. From within an aestheticized structure, the Free Town has initiated an ‘anarchic’ re-enactment of aesthetic premises and representative principles, thereby bringing them into consciousness. ‘Anarchic’ would in the case of Christiania, however, not refer simply to ‘anarchy’ as an opposition to the *archos*, the political leader, but as a general opposition to *arché*, to any absolute origin, or normalized principle of *a priori* representation.<sup>57</sup> In this sense the Free Town has through its interference first and foremost staged an interrogation of the premises, not only for the circumscription of individual freedom through imposed codes, but for the general working principles of a social apparatus.

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This questioning posture in no way makes Christiania unique, but brings it close to other libertarian activists such as early democrats or republicans, or even certain modern liberals.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, activism in Christiania has, not without internal conflicts, developed in a more obvious way according to the Batailleian frustration-principle: opposing incarcerating tendencies of any kind, including those beneficial governmental techniques that Vaneigem described

57 “Anarchy does not mean simply opposed to the *archos*, or political leader. It means opposed to *arché*. Now *arché*, in the first instance, means beginning, origin. From this it comes to mean a *first principle*, an *element*; and finally *sovereignty*, an *empire*, a *realm*, a *magistracy*, a *governmental office*. Etymologically, then, the word anarchy may have several meanings. But the word Anarchy as a philosophical term and the word Anarchist as the name of a philosophical sect were first appropriated in the sense of opposition to dominion, to authority, and are so held by right of occupancy, which fact makes any other philosophical use of them improper and confusing.” American anarchist Benjamin Tucker quoted in Paul Eltzbacher (1908/1970) *Anarchism* (original title *Der Anarchismus*), translation into English by Steven T. Byington.

58 Defining Anarchism, Raymond Williams quotes Spencer, who in 1862 stated that “the anarchist...denies the right of any government...to trench upon his individual freedom.” Williams here also stressed the fact that “[c]onscious self-styled anarchism is still a significant political movement, but it is interesting that many anarchist ideas and proposals have been taken up in later phases of Marxist and other revolutionary socialist thought, though the distance from the word, with all its older implications, is usually carefully maintained.” See Raymond Williams (1976/1983:36-37).

as “de-compressive”, such as beneficial social programs and plans, Christiania has defended a micro-level of singular differentiating agency.

Well aware of the risks of drowning these examples of practical dissent in the vast and speculative pool of ‘Foucault’, I will nevertheless take on this challenge. The simple reason for this is that, within a landscape discourse, the ‘Foucauldian’ conception of power is highly relevant and difficult to avoid. What will become evident in this discussion is the fact that power, although closely interrelated with ‘space’, should not be understood as spatially defined, but as spatially distributed, enacted and materialized – a fact most clearly actualized and developed in Christiania. The aspects I will emphasize in Foucault are first and foremost the *horizontality* of power, and secondly its *materiality*, both of which are aspects contributing to the ‘-scaping’ – the undoing of the urban landscape as form.

### Visibilities and Sayabilities

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Power is exercised, yet it is not always evident *where* and *how*. As a re-enactment of power relations and subject positionality, Christiania has enticed power out of its shadows, forcing it to articulate itself, not only as visibly manifest form, but also, and more importantly, as discourse, expressive actions such as police assaults, media events, planning documents, or otherwise uttered expressions of ideas, norms, and conventions. The ‘play’ of Christiania has in this sense been more than a direct, physical staging of individual *mundi*, but a *speaking out loud*, a provocative formulation of associative utterances and critical opinions, in the midst of a representational space. Christiania has in this respect not constituted a meaningful place, but a space of encounter, a borderline confronting us with the spatial aspects of *potentia*, of power.

One ‘methodological’ point of departure in Foucault’s deconstruction of power is the critical distinction between states and directions; between different kinds of ‘positivities’ in space. Linguistic expression in this sense differs from visual perception; an imperative distinction in Foucault. The *visible* rests on perception and cognition, whereas the *utterable* is constitutive of social practice in and by itself.

Even though Foucault later came to modify this view, his fundamental critique of representative ‘lucidity’ is central. Human space has to be understood as an *enunciative modality*,<sup>59</sup> according to Foucault’s interpreter Gilles Deleuze, “a *field of sayability*.” Rather than “a *place of visibility*” (my italics), a *collection of discernible forms*, this enunciative modality constitutes an *expansion* of expressive occurrences.<sup>60</sup> Giving primacy to systems of *utterances*, in French

59 Michel Foucault (1969) *L’archéologie du savoir*, p. 143.

60 In the French original “un champ de dicibilité” and “un lieu de visibilité.” Gilles Deleuze (1986) *Foucault*, p. 55.

*des énoncés*, rather than to *perceptions*, the enunciative field proposes a non-phenomenal, discursive approach to spatial being. The decisive factor in this respect is the different kinds of positivities proposed by utterances and visibilities; a difference that might be understood, rather simplified, as a difference between performativity and cognitivism – between an active and participatory relationship and a passive and ‘objective’ posture to the world.

Under the sign of the utterance, the encounter with the world unfolds as an assemblage of sayability; as horizontal *discourse*. As mentioned, the Latin, *discurrere* signifies a running to and fro, a spatial de-tour, or an actualization of positions, which, rather than an acknowledgement of an evident principle entails an ongoing mapping of spatial relations (in this sense a discursive –*scaping* rather than a visual forming). Different from scientific knowledge (*science*) as well as from the specific corpus of practical knowledge (*connaissance*), general knowledge (*savoir*) should be understood as a discursive field experience, a knowing that takes as its object a historically specific propagation of utterances. Horizontal discourse here takes the place that in phenomenology was occupied by subjectively grounded consciousness, canceling the idea of a transcendental inter-subjective locus.

In *L'archéologie du savoir*, Foucault expressed this discursive critique as the task of “no longer treating discourses as collections of signs [...] but as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak.”<sup>61</sup> Of course, says Foucault, discourses are composed of signs, but they always perform *more* than the representative task of designate things. “It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language and to speech. It is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe.”<sup>62</sup>

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What Foucault here is emphasizing, is the fact that discursive practice not merely constitutes a representative and denotative use of language, a set of (disciplinary specific) linguistic statements about the world, but a reproductive and interfering spatial practice of *persistent knowing*. This is a knowing that “systematically forms the objects of which it speaks” – an expansive and relational knowing, a knowing with the power to establish complex *fields* of words and things. As emphasized by Danish urban theorist Bent Flyvbjerg, this entails a knowing of actions and events, of dialogic relations that, like *urbanity* or *locality*, do not really ‘exist’ unless we articulate and entertain them.<sup>63</sup> It is

61 “...à ne pas – à ne plus – traiter les discours comme des ensembles de signes...” Michel Foucault (1969) *L'archéologie du savoir*, pp. 66-67.

62 “C’est ce *plus*, qui les rend irréductibles à la langue et à la parole. C’est ce ‘plus’ qu’il faut faire apparaître et qu’il faut décrire.” Michel Foucault (1969:67).

63 It is in an urban planning context important to relate to the interpretation presented by Bent Flyvbjerg, of Foucault’s work as an example of a concrete alternative to the epistemic scientific ideal, where Foucault’s genealogy unfolds as a ‘phronetic’ method, a discursive research praxis alternative to that of *episteme*, operating, as Foucault expresses it, “on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied

furthermore a knowing that to a great extent coincides with poetry, with artistic practice, which, as should not be forgotten, “subsumes both nonsense and the greatest profundities.”<sup>64</sup> The unity of a discourse, unfolding as an urban –scape, is thus neither made up by the formal object ‘city’, nor by the constitution of a single horizon, an ideal, intentional form. Instead, the discourse on the urban landscape would be constituted through the discursive play of rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time. As *formational forces* rather than form, utterances are not articulations *about* the visible, but a dimension separate from it, even evocative of it. The utterance should be understood as *traveling* rather than *dwelling*, a peregrine principle rather than a domestic – a movement implying a positioning along transversal, horizontal lines, the field of vectors constituting human sayability.

Situating Christiania in such a discursive urban field, it becomes clear that, throughout its history, the Free Town has rejected the temptation of being merely a visually distinguishable part of the urban landscape. Instead, the specific tension evoked by Christiania has emanated from its agitated character of what has earlier been called ‘voicings’ – a chorus of discursive utterances. This has been noticeable already when approaching the Free Town from Princess Street, where the extended barrack’s façade has transformed into a giant billboard. As enunciative modality, Christiania has actualized the very interplay of rules, of statements and discontinuous articulations; all those time- and site-specific relations of which urban space consists. The ‘Christiania’, or the many ‘Christianias’ that I have tried to localize in my study, unfold as a composite result not of formal considerations, but of changing life styles, of economic considerations, of irrelevant national legislation or municipal plans, of public expectations, and day by day dislocations. Rather than a typology of visual form, this discursivity has unveiled what Michel de Certeau called “énonciations piétonnières,”<sup>65</sup> pedestrian enunciations in a tactical space of turns and deviations. As such, Christiania transforms the urban landscape

many times.” (Michel Foucault in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*, quoted by Flyvbjerg 1991:90). Flyvbjerg emphasizes that his interpretation should not be understood as an attempt to ascribe an Aristotelian onset to Foucault, but simply as an example of how *phronesis* may be articulated within the field of the social sciences. The phronetic perspective is furthermore particularly relevant for an understanding of the difference in Foucault between sayabilities and visibilities. Where visibilities constitute the foundation for an epistemic method, as evident facts and axioms, sayabilities may be understood as their discursive equivalent, constituting the basis for a dialogic method. “*The consequence of not focusing on theoretical universals*,” argues Flyvbjerg, in italics, “*is thus neither realism nor nihilism, but the acceptance of the human privilege and basic conditions; meaningful dialogue in context.*” (“Konsekvensen af, at fokus ikke er på teoretiske universaler, er således verken relativisme eller nihilisme, men accept af et menneskeligt privilegium og grundvillkor: Meningsfuld dialoge i kontekst.”) Bent Flyvbjerg (1991:99).

64 “Il se peut que Foucault, dans cette archéologie, fasse moins un discours de sa méthode que le poème de son œuvre précédente, et atteigne au point où la philosophie est nécessairement poésie, forte poésie de ce qui est dit, et qui est aussi bien celle du non-sens que des sens plus profonds.” Gilles Deleuze (1986:27).

65 Michel de Certeau (1980:148).



into a creative play with sayabilities, with horizontally running diagonals, with linguistic expressions and abilities; an intricate spatial agency that the visible, as holistic appearance or coherent spatial form tends to mask.

The notion of the enunciative field allowed Foucault to situate knowing beyond the philosophy of the subject, dissociating himself both from structuralism, which excludes the subject altogether, and phenomenology, which is engulfed by it. Instead, knowing in Foucault is *spatialized*, transformed into what Deleuze has called a “cartography” –<sup>66</sup> a new kind of spatial awareness illustrated through the actualization of “landscapes”, of spaces of representation, of powerful diagrams and emancipating actions.<sup>67</sup> The distinction between visibilities and sayabilities in this sense, through a general –*scaping*, allows us to ‘reframe’ the question in a more composite way. As suggested by Vaneigem, power is no longer operating directly through visibilities but through discursive formation, as the multi-layered sum of constraints, mediation, and seduction. Spatially distributed, power appears as propagated presuppositions, framing rather than actively showing itself; and in case it appears, it does so only negatively, as decompression rather than active oppression. The question is thus how to get hold of a power, how to appropriate a relational expanse, not a thing or an image, but a composite of utterances, murmurs, polemics, slogans, manifestos, shouting, and laughter, of permitting and restricting practices. Even though Foucault does not provide answers (which also constitutes the main argument against his analysis), the answer would reasonably coincide with an understanding of power, not only as spatially repressive or restrictive, but possibly also as generative – power as *empowering* rather than simply governing.

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### Landscape Panopticism

The distinction between visibilities and sayabilities allowed Foucault to make distinctions between representational and reproductive forces, and to elaborate on these aspects in terms of relational *functions* rather than finalized *forms*. As such, these dimensions also revealed their distinct governing character, as well as their different articulation of power. Arguing along the lines of Nietzsche, power for Foucault was functional; a relation *in actu* – spatially and practically acted out. This stands in opposition to the train of thought emanating from Thomas Hobbes, who in his *Leviathan* developed a concept of power as power *in potentia*; power as capital or property.<sup>68</sup> Foucault’s opinion was that to study

66 “Un nouveau cartographe.” Gilles Deleuze (1986:31-51).

67 “Ce nouveaux fonctionnalisme, cette analyse fonctionnelle ne nie certes pas l’existence des classes et de leurs luttes, mais en dresse un tout autre tableau, avec d’autres paysages...” Gilles Deleuze (1986:33).

68 In his *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic: From Britain’s Renaissance to America’s New World* (2002a), Kenneth R. Olwig discusses how the explicit power *in actu* of Renaissance Britain (where the king literally had to travel throughout his country to make his body power

power, “[w]e must eschew the model of Leviathan,”<sup>69</sup> whose throne has long lost its relevance. The head of Leviathan is cut off and his power is dispersed over a vast field.

As Bent Flyvbjerg has argued, while Hobbesian power theory deals with power “in terms of *possession, sovereignty and control*,” Foucault on the other hand, “in a tradition with roots in Machiavelli and Nietzsche, thinks of power in terms of *exertion, strategy, and struggle*.”<sup>70</sup> Vertical hierarchy, converging in one point, has melted down to form a floating and horizontal infra-structure. On the one hand this disseminated power is always operating locally, specifically on local bodies. On the other hand, however, as a diffused force, it is impossible to understand from an exclusively local position.<sup>71</sup> Power thus emerges as local effects, local events, but operates on the level of overarching relations, –*scaping* forces, propagating over vast areas.

According to Foucault, power is not to be seen as the property of a ruler or a social class; it is nothing you can “appropriate” or lay hands upon. It is rather to be understood in terms of “dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functions” –<sup>72</sup> all of which are aspects demanding a discursive search, a mapping endeavor. It was in the work *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*, published in 1974, that Foucault more explicitly focused on discourse not only as the totality of the utterable, but as an inter-human aspect reproducing itself; a social *power*.<sup>73</sup> Discourse in this sense neither entails a total surrender to a self-referential play of linguistic signification, nor a reduction of interrelations to an overall structure, but is the clue to social agency.<sup>74</sup>

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manifest) gradually was *masked* by institutionalized forms of symbolic overview, firstly acted out within the limits of the *masque*, the theatre play, where the position of the king was reproduced within the perspectival space of the theatre; a scenic illusion of landscape, conveying the idea of space as an embodiment of a national and unified *corpus* of power.

69 In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (1980a:102). See also Michael Walzer (1986:67).

70 “...magt i termer af *besiddelse, suverænit*et og *kontrol*, modsat Foucault, som inden for en tradition med rødder i Machiavelli og Nietzsche tænker magt i termer af *udøvelse, strategi* og *kamp*.” Bent Flyvbjerg (1991:104).

71 “On remarquera que ‘local’ a deux sens très différents: le pouvoir est local parce qu’il n’est jamais global, mais il n’est pas local ou localizable parce qu’il est diffuse.” Gilles Deleuze (1986:34).

72 “...ses effets de domination de soient pas attribués à une ‘appropriation’, mais à des dispositions, à des manœuvres, à des tactiques, à des techniques, à des fonctionnements.” Michel Foucault (1975:31).

73 Foucault here turns away from his *archeological* ambitions, which easily may be associated with an aim to uncover not only discursive layers of knowing, but more original ones; instead developing what he calls a *genealogic* method; an inquiry into the historical ‘how’ – the play of forces during certain periods of times. See David Couzens Hoy (1986:5).

74 See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1986), “What is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on ‘What is Enlightenment’,” p. 113.

In *Surveiller et punir* this ambition was exemplified through a study of the discourse of penal institutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Foucault here describes how these institutions developed. Having been theatrical enactments, public spectacles of bodily punishment and direct physical retaliation, penal justice was now dislocated into systematized institutions, which, during the Enlightenment, also entailed arithmetic retribution, preferably measured in time. Due to increasing awareness and public opposition to hierarchical structures, punishment was then successively withdrawn from publicity and located to specific, disciplinary facilities *outside* of society, where they, as an indirect and subtle *threat* of exclusion, eventually had a more efficient effect on people's behavior.

Foucault thus formulates the problem of power around its *exercises* rather than its attributes, its *physics* rather than its form. Besides the *macro-physics* of power, constituted through the Law, the Contract and the Institution, there is also a "microphysique du pouvoir," a *micro-physics* of power, which reaches far beyond and is much more 'potent' than institutional practice. This microphysics is a matter of activated and activating forces and relations, a principle of governing which, like the de-compression described by Vaneigem, is not exercised through compulsion or prohibition, but through the dissemination of forces to an innumerable number of points.<sup>75</sup> Foucault calls this kind of 'pneumatic' micro-power 'disciplinary' – a power focusing on the individual body as its manipulable locus.

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As a modality of agency, disciplinary power can be identified neither with a specific institution nor a localized apparatus. Embracing a whole set of instruments, technologies, and procedures, it is more like a representational regime, a *-scape*. It also calls for a special kind of inquiry, an observation of dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, functions; a web of constantly tense and constantly active relations.<sup>76</sup> Even if it is possible to localize prison guards, teachers, corporate boards or bureaucrats as executive agents, it is at the same time important to note to what extent these agents are themselves subjected to disciplinary technologies.<sup>77</sup> Again, individuals do not possess power as objects possessing qualities, but are rather – as bodies – physical *places* for its continuous articulation.

75 Michel Foucault (1975:31-33).

76 "Or l'étude de cette microphysique suppose que le pouvoir qui s'y exerce ne soit pas conçu comme une propriété, mais comme une stratégie, que ses effets de domination ne soient pas attribués à une 'appropriation', mais à des dispositions, à des manœuvres, à des tactiques, à des techniques, à des fonctionnements; qu'on déchiffre en lui plutôt un réseau de relations toujours tendues, toujours en activité plutôt qu'un privilège qu'on pourrait détenir; qu'on lui donne pour modèle la bataille perpétuelle plutôt que le contrat qui opère une cession ou la conquête qui s'empare d'un domaine." Michel Foucault (1975:31).

77 See Mats Beronius (1986:29).

Even though Foucault in *Surveiller et Punir* explicitly discusses the body as the place for the execution of disciplinary power, he chooses an architectural model to illustrate its workings, an example between architectonics and landscape. This example is Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, the ideal for disciplinary surveillance. An example of a disciplinary strategy that becomes more and more sophisticated and coordinated, more and more dispersed in space, more and more automatic, the *Panopticon* presents a persuasive and gripping conceptual case. Conceived of as a spatial ideal, the *Panopticon* was a circular building, intersected in cells. Each of these trapezium cells had two windows; one that let light in from outside, and one facing the inner circle, in the middle of which is placed a control tower. From this tower, the supervisor could clearly watch every closed up cell with its silhouette of a prisoner, graphically outlined against the light. "Every cage is a little theatre," writes Foucault, "for one actor only, totally individualized and constantly visible."<sup>78</sup>

The *Panopticon* thus reverses the old principle of the secluded and dark prison den. Here, light and visibility has become the disciplinary instrument. Visible, yet without being able to see himself, the prisoner has no possibility of knowing when he is being subject to surveillance or not. In this way, the *Panopticon* attained its perfection as a surveillance *automaton*. Without possibilities to decide whether the watching eye is active or passive, the control is incorporated by the subject, made part of her own nervous system; a guardian of life, like the idea of the *soul*, which in this sense is one of the most efficient panoptical principles. "The soul," argues Foucault, "is at the same time effect and instrument of a political anatomy. The soul is the prison of the body" –<sup>79</sup> an internalized *genius loci* of each and every individual.

Through the metaphor of the *Panopticon*, Foucault gives a vivid, yet dystopian image of the power-scape; a governing and controlling landscape that through its very framework not only organizes powers, but reproduces and sustains them. This is a landscape, where power operates not through absolute sovereignty, but through continuous calibration, evaluation, diagnosis, or discrimination between normal and abnormal; constant spatial assessments which reveal an "enormous medical hunger"<sup>80</sup> for care, cure and re-habilitation. Rather than generative, this landscape is "therapeutic" –<sup>81</sup> a space where control is exercised through bodily treatment. A 'feel-good' regime, this landscape changes the character of the disciplinary apparatus, rendering to it an appearance of *normality*, like health care, like life-long education, like cultural regimes. Panopticism is in this sense the general principle for a new kind of "political anatomy", a *bio-politics*, a political practice for which the objective is not the

78 "Autant de cages, autant de petits théâtres, où chaque acteur est seul, parfaitement individualisé et constamment visible." Michel Foucault (1975:202).

79 "L'âme, effet et instrument d'une anatomie politique; l'âme, prison du corps." Michel Foucault (1975:34)

80 "immense 'appétit de médecine'..." Michel Foucault (1975:311).

81 Michel Foucault (1975:311).

regulation of the relation between sovereign and subject, but the regulation of (the reproductive) life processes as such.<sup>82</sup>

Christiania is an explicit reaction to this new, horizontal landscape of bio-politics. For the Christianites, as well as for the youth movement in general in the late sixties and early seventies, the new bio-political practices were highly manifest, bodily experienced, and thus also bodily rejected. What is striking in this respect is perhaps the indicative sensitivity performed by Christiania; the discursive power associated with its appearance, its 'occupying' of the very limit between institutional macro-power and disseminated micro-powers, the limit where this politico-anatomical shift was actually taking place, where the beheaded *Leviathan* was about to be dispersed. Christiania in this sense filled out the empty spaces, the hollows of the panoptical social model. Christiania actualized but also to a certain extent motivated the whole range of new governmental techniques with which it would come to interact: criminology, social care, urbanism and journalism. As much as Christiania is a drop-out and a disturbance of the panoptical system, it is a new kind of social object, a body that brings into action all those corrective principles of which the panoptical landscape is constituted.

#### Bio-Politics: Arts of Governing

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The most recent phase in Christiania's history has been dominated by the notion of 'normalization.' This notion has been employed by the authorities in an attempt to finally assess the 'experiment' of the Free Town. This assessment has been pursued with implicit reference to a 'naturally given' – first and foremost the historical ramparts as representative of an unquestionable 'landscape value', which requires no acknowledgement but submission. Nevertheless, it has been claimed that "[a] normalization of the area is not the same as a normalization of the inhabitants."<sup>83</sup> On the contrary, a 'natural' and de-politicized "normalization," tautologically defined as an adaptation to "general exercise" and "normal efforts," is presumed to have a consistent meaning first and foremost for the benefit of society, implicitly "for the benefit of all citizens" as masters of their own lives.<sup>84</sup>

In his book on the prison, Foucault initiated an investigation of the social body as a composite arena for such normalization processes, presumably 'for the benefit of all citizens.' Later, in a series of lectures at Collège de France in 1978-79, Foucault developed these ideas from a more explicitly political perspective,

82 Michel Foucault (2004) *Naissance de la bio-politique: Cours au Collège de France. 1978-79.*

83 See *Christianiaområdet fremtid – Helhedsplan og handlingsplan (The Future of the Christiania Area – General Plan and Action Plan)*, (2004:5).

84 "...en normalisering og udvikling af Christianiaområdet som et kvarter i København til gavn for alle borgere." See *Christianiaområdet fremtid – Helhedsplan og handlingsplan (The Future of the Christiania Area – General Plan and Action Plan)*, (2004:5).

relating the bio-political model of panopticism to the political ideology of liberalism. Through the administration of freedom and justice, liberalism developed as what Vanéigem would have called a technology of 'decompression' – a sophisticated "liberal art of governing."<sup>85</sup> Liberalism in this sense, rather than an ideology of freedom, unfolds as 'the art of governing less', a minimal governing, of operating through 'natural' demands, rules, and economies of values, rather than through laws.<sup>86</sup> This art of governing, argues Foucault, "is rather naturalism than liberalism."<sup>87</sup>

What Foucault shows is how this distributed ideology of freedom merges with the natural landscape, which serves as its transcendental ground. Yet, freedom is not a natural 'given', or, as Foucault expresses it, "a pre-existing region that one has to respect",<sup>88</sup> but "something that is produced in every instant."<sup>89</sup> In this, it resembles power.

The technology for masking this requirement for reproductive action may thus be summarized in terms of *the norm*.<sup>90</sup> Through the norm, governing 'seductively' appears as *enabling* rather than circumscribing, permissive rather than restrictive. The norm domesticates the unpredictable and uncanny, it transforms the foreign 'Outside' to a controllable exterior.<sup>91</sup> Linking independent actions of subjects to the principles of a 'whole', the norm constitutes the very operative shift from what Foucault called the "anatomo-politics of the human body" – the technologies of correction operating directly on particular and localized bodies; to the new and more subtle phase of a "bio-politics of the population" – the governing techniques operating on a larger '*-scaping*' scale, modifying behaviors, functions and interactions, reproducing entire cultural landscapes through implicit codexes.<sup>92</sup>

85 "art libéral de gouverner" – Michel Foucault (2004:62).

86 From Ferguson's "civil society," Jeremy Bentham's "economy as art," and Max Weber's "protestant ethics," to the "good society," of neo-liberalism, Foucault traces this 'art' of liberation/correction. Michel Foucault (2004:327).

87 "...ce nouvel art dont je vous ai parlé, ça serait plutôt le naturalisme que le libéralisme." Michel Foucault (2004 :63).

88 "...la liberté n'est pas une region toute faite qu'on aurait à respecter..." Michel Foucault (2004 :66).

89 "La liberté, c'est quelque chose qui se fabrique à chaque instant." Michel Foucault (2004:66).

90 Michel Foucault (1975:310-311).

91 Gilles Deleuze draws our attention to this distinction between the *exterior* and the *Outside*, a theme also present in Heidegger. While the exterior connotes an environmental relation between distinct forms, exterior to one another, the Outside concerns forces, potential emergencies, potential events; formless forces arriving from an irreducible outside "*an outside which is farther away than any external world and even any form of exteriority, which henceforth becomes infinitely closer*" ("*Un dehors plus lointain que tout monde extérieur et meme que toute forme d'extériorité, dès lors infiniment plus proche*." See Gilles Deleuze (1986:92).

92 The first of these notions subsequently refers to what Foucault in *La volonté de savoir*,

To a certain extent supplementing each other, the shift from anatomo-politics to bio-politics also indicates a disjunction of the way power is exercised. Having been a *dressage* – a system of direct punishment/reward, it now transforms into a control based upon a number of ‘natural’ practices, a “governmental naturalism”<sup>93</sup> focusing on those formations that directly involve the body (the family, sexuality, sports, consumption, recreation – all of which may be spatially organized through planning), a ‘normative naturalism’, and one which was, furthermore, excellently formulated by the Christiania Committee in their general plan. Normative formations, intimately engaging the subject, although concerning the well-being of the population as such, these institutions have the great advantage of being of a *preventive* rather than a *corrective* kind. An increasing occupation with disease and birth control, sanitary conditions, health, education and general socialization, bio-politics thus more than anything concerns the *reproduction*, not of a political society, critical thinking nor of artistic creativity, but of *life* as such.

However, in Foucault’s historical re-construction, the individual body of ‘the citizen’ or ‘the subject’ may seem to unfold as passively and hopelessly exposed to the technological procedures of the overall social body. Critics of Foucault have also pointed to this as a defeatist point of departure, neglecting the role of the subject as transformative agent. According to Michael Walzer, Foucault drew too far-reaching conclusions from his studies of surveillance and punishment technologies, underestimating the difference between actually being in prison and living in an imprisoning society, furthermore between living in a restrictive, yet democratic society and living under a totalitarian regime. In neglecting this difference, Walzer argues, Foucault produced a stigmatizing rather than empowering image of an incarcerating society, where self-censoring and isolated individuals have no power whatsoever to invent their own standards.<sup>94</sup> In the writings of Michel de Certeau, a criticism of this kind can be encountered, even though it here appears more as a source of inspiration. With the point of departure in a discussion of Foucault’s unwillingness to acknowledge the subject’s potentials as a tactical agent operating from within a representative system, de Certeau develops his idea of the subject as discursive agent, creatively recycling surpluses and dislocating meanings.

In this respect, it is important to understand the concept of bio-politics, not only as a technology of the norm, but as a geography, on the micro-level of which the Self unfolds. For Foucault, the reflections upon power were eventually closely interrelated with its effectuation on the level of the acting body. In the text

*Histoire de la sexualité* described as “...des procédures de pouvoir qui caractérisent les *disciplines: anatomo-politique du corps humain*,” and the second notion to “...[un pouvoir qui] opère par toute une série d’interventions et de *contrôles régulateurs: une bio-politique de la population*.” Michel Foucault (1976:183).

93 Michel Foucault (2004:53).

94 Michael Walzer (1986) “The Politics of Michel Foucault”, pp. 51-68.



*The Subject and Power* (1982), Foucault stated this quite clearly: “The goal of my work during the last twenty years”, he said, “has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. I have rather sought to produce a history of different modes of subjectivation of the human being in our culture [...]”.<sup>95</sup> The goal for Foucault was subsequently to approach the problematic of historically concrete, human interaction, as made up of enunciative modalities and relations forming a ‘self’.<sup>96</sup>

The focus on the subject, not as mental value (genius) but as *topos*, as practiced place, where one of the mediating concepts is what Foucault calls “the care of the self”,<sup>97</sup> is particularly interesting in this respect. This ‘care of the Self’ should according to Foucault be understood as the positioning and re-positioning practices of the subject, performed in relation to others and expressed through sexuality. The ‘care of the Self’ has in our philosophical tradition, according to Foucault, been confused with and entirely overshadowed by the cognitive, introspective and abstract ‘know thyself’, successively through neo-Platonism, Christianity, and Cartesianism, thus being developed into a disciplinary principle of self-control.<sup>98</sup>

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In this context, however, the *topoi* of caring selves constitute an alternative biopolitical geography, a parallel to the *savoir-vivre* of Vaneigem. As opposed to a disciplinary and isolated ‘thinking’, the care of the Self expresses the ambition in Foucault to embrace historical situations as instances where people “think and act at the same time.”<sup>99</sup> The situated care of the Self in Foucault thus turns into an expressive practice, an ‘aesthetic of the self’, directly associated with “the undefined work of freedom.”<sup>100</sup> As regards Christianity, the idea of the “free” is similarly linked to the idea of an active and expressive ‘care’ of the freedom of the Self, as a mediator between an individual and communitarian level.

Foucault calls the all-pervasive power diffusing throughout everyday life *bio-power*. Embracing the day-to-day activation of power relations, bio-power escapes representation in terms of law or place. Bio-power is dispersed, induced through procedures that make us regulate ourselves, mentally as well as bodily. As part of a liberal market and interwoven with an economic submission, bio-power transforms populations into important ‘fields’ of

95 Michel Foucault (1982) “The Subject and Power,” p. 208.

96 As Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow expressed it: “a phenomenology to end all phenomenologies,” See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1982:44).

97 See Michel Foucault (1984) *Histoire de la Sexualité III: Le Souci de soi*.

98 I have here consulted also the French translation of “Technologies of the Self” – a lecture at the University of Vermont in 1982. See Michel Foucault (1982/1994) “Les techniques de soi,” pp. 783-813.

99 Michel Foucault (1994:781).

100 “...le travail indéfini de la liberté” Michel Foucault, “Qu’est-ce que les Lumières?” in Michel Foucault (1994:679-688).

natural resources, and the body similarly, into an important and profitable 'place' of production.<sup>101</sup>

Liberal bio-politics, as 'the Art of governing', subsequently in itself constitutes an extra-legal means to impose security and stability, at the same time implicitly sustaining and encouraging a culture of transgression, of risk, of satisfaction of individual needs. "After all," writes Foucault, "one could say that the device of liberalism is 'Live dangerously.'"<sup>102</sup> As such, liberal bio-politics also produces its own counter movements, its own immanent avant-garde, mediating between discipline and autonomy. However, "[o]ne should not forget," Foucault states, "that this new art of governing or of governing as little as possible, [...] is a form of doubling, of internal refinement of the State; a principle for its maintenance, for its more complete development, for its perfection."<sup>103</sup>

Yet, what 'normalization' does not recognize is its own constitutive abnormality, its inherent need for the aberrant and queer, the fact that it is not nature, but a socio-cultural, discursive art. Conversely, what Christiania so vividly has made concrete is precisely this bio-political art, but from a more empowering and subversive perspective, opening out a multiplicity of possible positions and alternative expressions. Rather than inventing another authentic or natural state, Christiania operates on a micro-physical level of subjective *topoi*, articulating the points of attack of a 'liberal' urban space "in the benefit of all citizens." In relation to a naturalist normalization, Christiania develops as a realist differentiation; a horizontal 'bringing down' of abstract self-discipline to a material level of embodied self-care, where things actually may be expressed differently.

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## Foucault and Power 2: Materiality

Bio-power, as a horizontally propagating power, operating discursively through regimes of values, through norms and self-regulating rules, brings the issue of spatial reproduction and transformation down to a material level, to a basic plateau of directions, of contiguity and of modification. Therefore, *materiality* plays a much more important role in the utterance than in visibility. Whereas

101       **Today this is even further reinforced, as power now consists of forces executed** through machines directly organizing not only the activities of bodies, as in welfare systems or monitored activities, but the activities of the brains, which more and more assume the character of communication systems, information networks etc. As the driving force of what by Deleuze has been described as *the society of control*, bio-power has transformed into cybernetics, a force of action affecting other actions. See Gilles Deleuze (1990) "Postscriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle," in *Pourparlers*.

102       Michel Foucault (2004:68).

103       "En fait, il ne faut pas oublier que ce nouvel art de gouverner ou encore cet art de gouverner le moins possible [...], est une sorte de redoublement, enfin, disons, de raffinement interne de la raison d'État, c'est un princip pour son maintien, pour son développement plus complet, pour son perfectionnement." Michel Foucault (2004:30).

‘the visible’ has an eidetic character; the utterance, irrespective of whether voice, written word, or architectural sequence, constitutes a *singularity*, a specific happening, and as such a composite of substance, place, and date. The utterance is in this sense an expression that, in its realization, cuts across the domain of preconceived structures and unities and, as Foucault has expressed it, “make[s] them appear, with concrete content, in time and space.”<sup>104</sup> Neither proposition, nor a general ‘vision’, the utterance is “essentially rare”<sup>105</sup> – a positivity that cannot be reduced to an abstract ‘form’ or *Gestalt*.

*Materiality* subsequently constitutes an important dimension in relation to the urban landscape and its potential change. Even though the relationship between materiality and form constitutes a fundamental philosophical issue, one too vast to be dealt with in depth within the limits of this work, there are nevertheless some aspects of materiality that are essential in this context; first and foremost as concerns its importance for a performative approach to the urban landscape as an emergent *social* space of interaction and dialogue.

### The De-Materializing Gaze

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Resting upon principles of formal aestheticization or rationalization in relation to overarching ideals, conventional urban planning practice could be described in terms of *de-materialization*. This calls to attention one of the central aspects of Foucault’s power analysis, articulated as a discussion of the spatially and socially structuring, yet bodily operative *gaze*.

The tension of power effectuated in the base materialism of Bataille was that between a de-materialized gaze and a desiring, bodily eye. What Bataille made clear was thus the paradox at the base of an ocular-centric culture, privileging seeing and visibility but censoring its affects on the level of the specific body. In his survey of aesthetic discourse, American historian Martin Jay discusses this theme in relation to Foucault’s thinking, and his ambiguous relationship to the gaze.<sup>106</sup> Although for Foucault, fields of sayabilities had primacy over fields of visibilities, he also remained utterly attentive to what he *saw*. In Foucault’s writing, visual issues play a prominent role, to a great extent constituting the very point of departure in many of his studies. The subtitle of Foucault’s early work, *Naissance de la clinique* (“The Birth of the Clinic”) was also “une archéologie du regard” – an archeology of the gaze.<sup>107</sup> And even though Foucault later might have denounced this subtitle, he also, as Gilles Deleuze also points out, “never stopped being a *voyant*.” Foucault’s work, irrespective of whether archeological

104 “...qui croise un domaine de structures et d’unités possibles et qui les fait apparaître, avec des contenus concrets, dans le temps et l’espace.” Michel Foucault (1969:115).

105 “D’autant que Foucault explique que les énoncés sont essentiellement *rare*s.” Gilles Deleuze (1986:12).

106 See Martin Jay (1993:381-416).

107 Michel Foucault (1963) *Naissance de la clinique: Une archéologie du regard médical*.

or genealogic, has a 'detective' character.<sup>108</sup> Also Michel de Certeau stressed the ever-present "visual character" of Foucault's thinking, its "optical style", each book presenting "a scansion of images" out of which forgotten systems or patterns begin to 'show' – in fact, as de Certeau sees it, "[Foucault's] entire discourse proceeds in this fashion from vision to vision."<sup>109</sup>

Although emphasizing a focus on discursive practices, Foucault admits a "spatial obsession",<sup>110</sup> which to a great extent consists in a sensitivity to visual analysis, geographical data, or 'mapping', upon which he built his genealogy of spatially dispersed power, of panoptical landscapes. Vigilant as to the function of this visibility, aware of the 'evidence' evoked, he would follow up on an anti-visual or anti-ocular tradition of ontological critique, represented by among others French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, who, through his "spatial poetics" had stated that "[s]ight says too many things at the same time."<sup>111</sup> This represented the linguistic turn away from the visual, a turn that has been significant in twentieth century critical thinking, to a great extent emanating from the Saussurian (and Nietzschean) idea of linguistic referentiality as *non-ressemblance*, the claim that words are arbitrary, that they do not show any formal or visual *similarity* with what they represent.

For Foucault, the visual was predominantly associated with a visual regime of *surveillance*, of super- or meta-visibility, constituting what Foucault called the "sovereign power of the empirical gaze."<sup>112</sup> However, unlike the introspective, Cartesian gaze, this all-pervasive super-vision is an outwards-looking gaze, paradoxically enough transforming into a gaze that 'says' everything; a *speaking* gaze, an extrovert gaze that actually unfolds as a social imperative, taking hold of bodies.

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What are the implications of such a speaking, out-reaching gaze in relation to the urban landscape? The main difference in relation to the introspective gaze illuminating the Cartesian ego, is that this gaze, as Martin Jay expresses it, "emphasized the totality of observers."<sup>113</sup> Rather than a cognitive dimension of verification, the gaze is a *prescriptive* force, a prophylactic power of social organization, operating through space. Rather than a method for cognitive

108 "Foucault n'a jamais cessé d'être un voyant..." Gilles Deleuze (1986:58). See also Michel de Certeau (1986) "The laugh of Michel Foucault," in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, p. 195, where de Certeau claims that the stories of Foucault often takes the form of surprises – "as in detective novels."

109 Michel de Certeau (1986) *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, p. 196.

110 See Michel Foucault "The Question of Geography," (1980b:69). See also Martin Jay (1993:385).

111 Gaston Bachelard (1957/1969) *The Poetics of Space (La poétique de l'espace, 1957/1974)*, pp. 214-215, translation into English by Maria Jolas. See also Martin Jay (1993:388).

112 Michel Foucault (1963:xiii).

113 Martin Jay (1993:393).

formalization, the gaze unfolds as an economy of seeing or even foreseeing; a balancing of inter-subjectivity; a socio-spatial *speculation* (or a plan). The speaking gaze in Foucault's thinking first and foremost constitutes a socio-spatial dimension, a spatial principle of organization, a (panoptical) architecture, with social implications.

The gaze is in this respect a constituent, a governing mechanism which, although not necessarily an *a priori* given, permeates space. In the case of Christiania, this gaze has appeared under different names and on both sides of the debate. Christiania has unfolded in the shadow of "planning" – of a 'planificatory gaze' resting upon the conviction that the spatial and social regimes are inter-dependent. The 'green' turn, articulated from within, in this sense only proposed another 'prescriptive' gaze. This planificatory gaze is then – irrespective of whether normalizing or green – equivalent to a 'medical' or 'clinical' gaze – a gaze functioning as a beneficial justification for many micro-physical actions or gestures which, within another social context, would have been experienced as humiliating or offensive on the specific bodily level. Within a planning context, each of these actions, irrespective of whether mapping, statistical surveys, or other forms of visual determinations, constitute de-corporealized, de-materialized practices, detached from the material level of acting subjects and subjected individuals. It is thus a gaze that needs no specific embodied eye in order to be effectuated and no material body in order to have an effect.

The gaze is in this sense power de-materialized, neglecting the fact that it is operating on a material, micro-physical level. It is precisely in this paradoxical intersection that Christiania emerges, as a diffractionary agent, or perhaps a annoying, irritating one, breaking up the unity of the ubiquitous gaze, actualizing its material points of attack. Still under the supervision of the prophylactic and diagnostic gaze, it unfolds as materiality, as that kind of space, which I referred to initially as a 'clawing and gnawing' space. Foucault also develops a concept for such space, falling out of the socio-spatial consistency. As distinct from the ideal socio-spatiality of Utopia, it is designated as *heterotopia*,<sup>114</sup> or in Jay's words, a "disturbingly inconsistent spatial configuration."<sup>115</sup> Through its disturbingly manifest materiality, Christiania has in a similar way been able to undermine the socio-spatial ambitions of the gaze.

114 *Des espace autres* was originally a talk on French Radio on the theme of "*Utopie et littérature*" in December 1966 (available as audiofile at <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/>). A few months later, Foucault developed the text into a lecture at *Centre d'études architecturale* in Paris. Except for the appearance of the original French version in the Italian magazine *L'Architettura, cronache et storia* in 1968, this influential text was not really given any attention until 1984, when Foucault gave his permission to the publication of the text in relation to the IBA, Internationale Bauausstellung in Berlin, and the exhibition *Ideas, Process, Result* at Martin Gropius Bau. See Michel Foucault (1967/1994) "*Des espaces autres*". See also Daniel Défert (1997) "Foucault, Space and the Architects".

115 Martin Jay (1993:413).

Foucault defined the gaze as the constitutive spatial force imbuing society. Understood as such, *society* is a consequence of surveillance, not of social interplay. What we call 'the social' is already strictly configured by the gaze, which behind images and exchanges continuously forces its intentions through, like a meticulous dressage of utility, mediation, knowledge. The gaze is the *socio-spatial order* in relation to which society and subject is produced. "We are much less Greek than we believe," argues Foucault. "We are neither on the grand-stand or on the scene, but inside the panoptical machine, embraced by its power, which we ourselves are re-distributing, as we ourselves constitute one of its gear-wheels."<sup>116</sup> Even though we, as creative human beings, have fabricated the spatial machine, we have become its matter; the spatial gaze now working upon us.

Both spatially and socially determining, the idea of the gaze sustains the socio-spatial idea that spatial organization is governing social reproduction; by many critics seen as a quite defeatist and passive understanding of social space. However, as indicated by the notion of *heterotopia*, Foucault's idea of the gaze is indeed more complicated. Rather than a de-materialized socio-spatial formula, the gaze, as a 'speaking' dimension, is a double nature. On the one hand, the gaze constitutes a visibility, a logic of evidence, an overarching and penetrating formal structure upon which social life depends – the very *Gestalt* of social formation and organization. On the other hand, the gaze unveils the discursive field of micro-physical functions, procedures and embodied practices upon which it operates. The panopticon is in this sense not simply a spatial formation evoking social patterns of behavior, but a social working principle materialized.

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Mediating between the macro-physical level of surveillance and a micro-physical level of local operations, the gaze thereby both constitutes and actualizes a disciplinary space, sustaining procedures of social control. Critics, like Michael Walzer, have interpreted this as reinforcement also of the determinism in Foucault, where social life appears as "discipline squared"<sup>117</sup> – as a spatially enhanced discipline, which does nothing but reproduce itself. Gaze and space coincide in this model; for every society there is a naturalized gaze, a functional regime of truth, which leaves no room for positions outside.<sup>118</sup> Others however, have interpreted Foucault's penetrating analytics as an anti-disciplinary fiction, disentangling the paradoxical nature of a power, furthermore materializing its diffuse origins as highly concrete and embodied effects. As a 'heuristic' enterprise, it could even, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (and in a more contemporary context, Hardt and Negri) has suggested, function as an account for "post-enlightenment practices" of spatial counter-production or transgressive capabilities.<sup>119</sup>

116 "Nous ne sommes ni sur les gradins ni sur la scène, amis dans la machine panoptique, investis par ses effets de pouvoir que nous reconduisons nous-mêmes puisque nous en sommes un rouage." Michel Foucault (1975:219).

117 Michael Walzer (1986:64).

118 Michael Walzer (1986:64).

119 See Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (1986) "What is Maturity? Habermas and

However, as de Certeau has pointed out, Foucault might have insisted so much on unveiling panoptical functionality that he remained indifferent to the other side of the socio-spatial coin – the micro-practices of everyday life. These practices, as practices of use and consumption, are repeatedly subverting and dislocating prophylactic power, diffracting the gaze and re-producing space in a different way than the proposed. As use and consumption of (ideal) form, of formalized structures, these practices *re-materialize* the gaze according to *that which happens* – according to spatial abundance, to chance. Inspired by Foucault, de Certeau thus developed his material argument: if spatial knowledge derives from and provides the ground for social control, then every social reformation makes possible a dislocation also of spatial order.

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What I have sought to explore in this passage is thus the fundamental ambiguity of a discursive gaze, as well as of the socio-spatial presumptions that it mediates. In Christiania, these presumptions have played an important role for both parties, articulated as a belief in the gaze, or the visionary view, as transformative also of social patterns of interaction. The gaze, it is presumed, has the *power* of overcoming material, situational, or historical circumstances, thereby through a speaking vision, prescribe a socio-spatial organization. These presumptions have through Christiania certainly come to be actualized. Through its refusal to submit to the self-regulation proposed by the planificatory gaze, it has forced the gaze to ‘reveal’ itself on a material level – irrespective of whether in the form of police assaults, building regulations, junk blockades, or tourists’ invasions – as an embodied eye. Christiania in this sense constitutes a re-materialization of the gaze as well as its reintroduction into a historical everyday situation. When the authorities in the Christiania debate claim that “a normalization of the area does not imply a normalization of the inhabitants,” Christiania constitutes the living proof of the fact that this is simply not possible.

### Aspects of Socio-Matter

Rather than claiming that Foucault completely neglected the material and generative side of bio-power, his partial ‘dis-regard’ might very well have been deliberate. Fully aware also of this disjunctive and generative dimension of power, Foucault was careful not to present a thinking that could be interpreted in terms of answer, in terms of program. In one of his last interviews he would also emphasize this: “What I want to do is not the history of solutions, and that’s the reason why I don’t accept the word *alternative*. I would like to do the genealogy of problems, of *problématiques*. My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous.”<sup>120</sup>

Foucault on ‘What is Enlightenment?’”. See also Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000:22-25).

120 Michel Foucault (1984) “On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress. See also Martin Jay (1993) *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought*, p. 416.



This cautiousness in Foucault as to deal with a potential re-materialization evidently depends on the fact that each re-materialization also implies an embracing of the level where change actually is possible. While the gaze allows you to operate on an examining and interrogative level, *matter* calls for another kind of spatial agency; an embodied, applied and adjacent agency, taking into consideration possible events and occurrences, stumbling and slippage, thresholds, forces and counter forces. In relation to the socio-space of the landscape gaze, the material realm constitutes what Lyotard chose to call a *Scapeland*; a suggestive or raw realm of substances, encounters and performances.<sup>121</sup>

From this point of view, there is also a *socio-material* aspect to Foucauldian power analysis,<sup>122</sup> a focus on how formations of power not only govern or finalize functions but also organize and affect matter. This socio-material interpretation is more in line with Deleuze's reading of Foucault, and his stressing of the micro-physics of power. According to Deleuze's analysis, 'discipline' is "a serial space" effectuated through innumerable *points of contact*; a space of contiguity rather than similarity.<sup>123</sup> "Panopticism," argues Deleuze, "is no longer 'to see without being seen', but *to impose a particular conduct on a particular human multiplicity*" (Deleuze's emphasis).<sup>124</sup> This *particularity* may spatially consist in a laying out or a serializing, a dislocating, wedging, or opening etc.; yet always a practice concerned with "unformed and unorganized matter and unformalized, unfinalized functions."<sup>125</sup>

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When I choose the notion of *socio-materiality* to designate this aspect, it is thus not because it would constitute a sensuous sphere in the 'phenomenal' sense, but because it connotes what Deleuze calls *segmentarity*;<sup>126</sup> micro-formations, relational links of embodied utterances, postures, and utterances in mutual contiguity with one another. As socio-materiality, power is not only repressive, but first and foremost *generative*. Furthermore, as Deleuze expresses it (in accordance with de Certeau); at the material level, power "passes through the hands of the mastered no less than through the hands of the masters."<sup>127</sup> The

121 Jean-François Lyotard (1989) *Scapeland*.

122 Norwegian sociologist Dag Østerberg also brings this distinction into attention, however in order to emphasize the *phenomenal* quality of space, in an attempt to formulate a material (rather than ideal, or formal) phenomenology. See Dag Østerberg (2000:29).

123 "...la contiguïté de ses segments sans totalisation distincte: espace sérial." Gilles Deleuze (1986:35).

124 "...du Panoptisme n'est donc plus 'voir sans être vu', mais *imposer une conduite quelconque à une multiplicité humaine quelconque*." Gilles Deleuze (1986:41).

125 "...des matères non-formées, non-organisées, et des fonctions non-formalisées, non-finalisées..." Gilles Deleuze (1986:42).

126 "segmentarité" Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980:253- 283).

127 "il passé par les dominés non moins que par les dominants..." Gilles Deleuze (1986:78).

masters also have eyes and bodies. The socio-material in this sense constitutes a level of *micro-oppression*; a level of reciprocal pressure that potentially also could be of an enabling kind. While the macro-level is the functional stratum, transitive, decompressing, and mediating, the micro-physical and socio-material level is a level of bodily pressure, of *inscription*. Micro-physics should therefore not be confused with miniaturization (it does not indicate a smaller scale), but is the level of innumerable points, the level where affection is materially acted out, and where relations are actually and physically reproduced.

When referring to the example of Christiania, we should understand its composite agency from the perspective of socio-material pressure, as an inscription on the body of the urban landscape. The consequence on a spatial level of such inscription is *territory*. A territorializing (or de-territorializing) enunciation, Christiania in the highest degree brings this composite dimension to our attention. Often conceived of as a non-representational aspect of space, an antonym to the aesthetically grounded and scenographic 'landscape,' 'territory' has clear socio-material connotation.

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Although a more thorough critique of the concept of territory certainly would be motivated within the limits of this work (not least given its military connotations), I will however confine myself to its socio-material implications.<sup>128</sup> Derived from the Latin *territorium* (the Roman designation of an area surrounding or belonging to a Roman city, however also a synonym for the colonies), the concept is two folded. Originating from the Latin *terra*, earth or land, and equipped with an institutionalizing suffix similar to that of *auditorium*, *cogitatorium*, or *oratorium*, territory is not simply a determination of a surveyed and controlled area, but designates an administrative expansion related to the activities pursued within its confines, like listening, cogitating, or orating. The territory may in this sense connote everything from a more loosely defined domain for discursive activity, to an officially submitted piece of land, maintained through administrative praxis.

The central aspect of territory is however its performative and relational dimensions, combining the concreteness of a specific historical situation with a dislocational aspect of agency. Able to be derived from the word *terere*, 'to rub, to grind, or to thresh upon,'<sup>129</sup> the territory, as much as it is a space of control, also constitutes a space for socio-material cultivation of dreams and desires.

The history of Christiania could in this sense be described as a tactical balancing of de- and re-territorializing mechanisms, a consideration in actions both of the potentials to resolve territorial claims and of the means to generate new

128 For a more thorough investigation of territoriality as socio-material concept, see for example Mattias Kärholm's thesis, *Arkitekturens territorialitet (The Territoriality of Architecture)* (2004).

129 In relation to this, I have consulted Notre Dame's On Line Latin Dictionary and Grammar Aid at <http://www.nd.edu/~archives/latin.htm>. See also Mattias Kärholm (2004:35-36).

spatial bonds. An ambivalent territoriality, it has also often been referred to in terms of *heterotopia*.<sup>130</sup> Foucault proposed the notion as a way of understanding our contemporary era, which he describes as spatial. We are certainly living in the époque of space, yet a space neither of places (*lieux*), which filled out the medieval universe, nor of scientific extension (*l'étendue*), which was the Galiléan conception. Nor is our contemporary space simply a subjective, perceptual space charged with dreams and passions, a space of intrinsic qualities, fixated like stone or flowing like running water.<sup>131</sup> What Foucault wants us to take notice of is not such spaces of a cognitive interior, but the spaces of our time, which are *exterior* spaces, spaces of *emplacement* (*emplacement*), concrete spaces “through which we live, through which we are drawn outside of ourselves,”<sup>132</sup> spaces that exert an effect on us through their neighboring function, their relational qualities, their different degrees of contiguity, spaces with territorializing, but also de-territorializing functions.

This territoriality of emplacement could easily be described in terms of network, infrastructure, or demography, depending on the specific ensemble of spaces to which it is attached. The emplacements that Foucault is interested in however are those which, rather than defining certain structures, reflect all other emplacements, either by suspension, reversal or neutralization. These emplacements are utopias and heterotopias. The former are de-territorialized spaces, unreal visions of an idealized Otherness; intentional emplacements with no concrete location. The latter on the contrary, are *realized* emplacements, in which Otherness plays another role. The characteristic trait of heterotopias is in this sense their manipulation and structuration of the relation between the potential utopias and a concrete here and now.<sup>133</sup> A *heterotopia* is a space where utopias may be de- and re-constructed through de- and re-territorialization. Both emplacement and counter-emplacement, the *heterotopia* in this sense functions as a cultivation of utopian imagination in relation to the everyday, as in the case of the asylum, the brothel, the theatre, the garden, or the Atlantic cruise ship.<sup>134</sup>

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130 See for example Signe Sophie Bøggild (2005) “Christiania/*Christiania*,” pp. 55-68, and Søren Holm Vilsby (2003) “En kortlægning af Christianiaområdet fysiske og mentale rum” (A Mapping of Physical and Mental Space in the Christiania Area), pp. 54-60.

131 Foucault here refers to the phenomenology of Gaston Bachelard and his oneiric mapping of spatial qualities, presented in several volumes with the point of departure in the four elements, as in *La psychanalyse du feu* (1938), *L'air et les songes* (1943), *L'eau et les rêves* (1947), *La terre et les rêveries du repos* (1948), *La terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (1948). See Michel Foucault (1994:754).

132 “L'espace dans lequel nous vivons, par lequel nous sommes attirés hors de nous-mêmes...” Michel Foucault (1994:754).

133 See Søren Holm Vilsby (2003) “En kortlægning af Christianiaområdet fysiske og mentale rum” (“A Mapping of Physical and Mental Space in the Christiania Area”), p. 59.

134 The *hétérotopologie* of Foucault embraces six different classes of heterotopias, which I classify according to the following: heterotopias of crisis and deviation (i.e. ritual places, or psychiatric clinics); heterotopias of otherness (i.e. the cemetery), relational heterotopias (i.e. the

From the point of view of this understanding, it is possible to describe Christiania as a heterotopian space, where the heterogeneous, the potentially different, even the utopian, may be not only conceived, but socially *materialized* and *territorialized*. With the point of departure in the utopian idea of a space entirely free from power structures, Christiania has unfolded as concrete as-if space, where utopias may be temporarily tried out and materially contested, provisionally suspended and continuously negotiated. The result is not a space rescued from the web of power, but a performative potentially allowing for concrete and radical re-configuration.

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From a Foucauldian perspective, Christiania is thought-provoking insofar as it acts out what Foucault implicitly suggested; a heterology of power, a differentiating pattern of social reproduction. The position of the Free Town has in this respect depended upon its unfolding as an Otherness, always sensitively and tactically repositioned itself in relation to hegemonic spatial regimes.

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Through its appearance on the urban scene, Christiania has created a double fiction of the urban landscape. On the one hand, the Free Town has brought into attention a horizontally operating power structure, indirectly governing through aesthetically formulated norms of self-regulation. The city as a public space of encounter, of intersection, of intensification and change has through this normative governing to an increasing extent become regulated, penetrated by corrective but non-articulated rules of moderation, temperance and restraint. At the same time, this horizontal regulation has produced new 'outsides' which are now 'in-betweens' – new surplus spaces appearing amidst the outspread points of pressure and de-compression through which power functions.

The official urban fiction that Christiania has counter-acted has been that of domestication; a story with a happy ending, in which the de-industrialized and de-fortified city first and foremost should be turned into a secure household, an economy for a self-possessed public. In the new general plan this has been concretized through a proposed splitting up of the area in functional parts, clearly corresponding to private and public domains, to living-rooms, dormitories, and recreational spaces. The aim with these formal measures has officially been to make the area accessible for "normal exercise of public authority including normal police activity"<sup>135</sup> – to transform the area "for the benefit of all the citizens."<sup>136</sup> The design strategy presented by the *Christiania Committee* has

theatre and the garden), 'heterochronies' (heterotopias of accumulated time like museums, or of cancelled time, like festivals); liminal heterotopias (i.e. spaces of purification or exception); and compensational heterotopias (i.e. intentional communities, colonies). See Michel Foucault (1994:752-762).

135 *Christianiaområdet Fremtid – helhedsplan og handlingsplan*, Christianiaudvalget, 2004, p. 5.

136 See *Christianiaområdet fremtid – Helhedsplan og handlingsplan (The Future of the*

in this sense aimed at a de-politicizing of the bio-political intentions through the implementation of 'landscape' as a naturalizing and aestheticizing force. 'Landscape' has in this respect provided a panoptical framework, enabling its inherent ideas of unity, quality, naturalness and historical authenticity, allowing for the 'normalization' process to operate on the bodily level of each and every citizen.

The unofficial or alternative urban fiction has in this sense concerned the generative manipulation on this bodily level, of a spatial and material redundancy. It has concerned the activation of the multiple possibilities of *deviation* that open up within any normative system at its material base. 'Spatial otherness' has in this respect developed into a social tactics of empowerment in Christiania, a deliberate re-enactment of material dissimilarity, often with playful undertones. This differentiation has been made possible since it has been staged at the material level where power, rather than simply penetrating space, is physically acted out. Here Christiania has functioned as an un-doing or 'bringing down' of formal structures, a performative de-deformation generating new spatial constellations.

What Christiania has unveiled is the fact that although power is operating *through* form, as a governing principle it is itself formless, discursive; a set of performances and practices that have to be continuously acted out in order to prevail. Operating horizontally, these practices can never reach full coverage, but will ultimately produce blind spots, backsides, in between or waste lands; unrecognized socio-material territories. As such, power manifests its vulnerability, its evasiveness, but also its capriciousness. In its formlessness, power constitutes a reciprocal dimension of physical interaction, where a socio-material redundancy may be put into a subversive and re-generative *play*.

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## Playful Counter Tactics

Christiania has to a large extent unfolded as a reaction to an urban space of panoptical stress. A logical consequence of what Vaneigem has described as a *lamenting* civilization – a society of mental crisis and scarcity – Christiania has defined itself rather as an abundance of possibilities; an urban agent that does not play its role as obedient consumer of security, decompression and escape, but chooses to give itself up to an alternative consumption of experiences, an alternative *play* without entrance fee.

The urban play that Christiania has presented has not been 'alternative' in the sense that it has been entirely separate from general urbanity. Instead, it has constituted a tactical and relational play with meanings and norms, with grounds and intentions. A kind of materializing *jeu* in the Bataille sense, it has introduced limits and extremes, utopian visions and heterogeneities into the urban discourse, everything on the same basic, playful premises.

The 'putting into play' is in this sense essential; a creative and interrogative *agitation* of a power structure that otherwise would remain unnoticed. In the following, the spatial and social implications of this 'putting into play' will be discussed, as well as its critical and subversive potentials in relation to an urban situation. The most important aspect is in this respect the empowering dimension of play, its potential as generative of socio-material differentiation and change. The spatial implications of play as counter-tactics will therefore be approached from three different angles. Firstly, play will be addressed from its *responsive* rather than regulative function in relation to urban space. The question will here be how play, as a 'soft law', or an 'art' of adaptation, stages social desires and subjective re-positioning. Secondly, the potentials of play as a collective arena for *narrative drift* will be addressed, its ability to establish presuppositions for reproductive amassment and swarming. And finally, its *disturbing* potentials will be taken into consideration, more specifically its capacity as a de- and re-materializing *jam*.

### Ludic Responsivity

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Already from its early days in the seventies, Christiania emerged as the *buffoon* of rational urbanity, an offensive but playful deviation from spatial norms. Serving both an internal purpose as a carnevalesque mobilization of engagement (in relation to *action days* or fundraising activities, for example), and a more general critical and mediating purpose in relation to the surrounding world (as in the notorious NATO and Santa Claus happenings), the play tactics developed as the main political means of expression in the Free Town. By turns expressed as Do-It-Yourself architecture, experimental conviviality or political activism, such tactics in a sophisticated way created a discursive pitch or arena where there formerly were none.

The spatial play staged by and through Christiania has in this respect been performed in response to the politics of normalization, magnifying its consequences, reflecting them back in an absurd form. These theatrical attacks reinforced what Christiania as a spatial agent in the urban landscape already was performing on a micro-physical level; the practical turnover of representative spatial regimes, of spatial significations and signs; a de-constructive tactics not focusing on formal appearance but on the exchange of meaning. According to Vaneigem, this ability to playful *détournement* constituted the most important aspect of a revolutionary *savoir-vivre*, a material and passionate fusion giving rise to a "unitary" but not homogenous, spatio-temporality. Similarly, Christiania emerges less as a utopian social formation or a solution to a number of problems, and more as a deliberate play with the asymmetrical relation between power exercise and social desire.

The Swedish sociologist Johan Asplund attempts to discuss the relation between the playful, or ludic, and social formation. For Asplund, responsivity is elementary to social life, an ability bringing into consciousness what it means to approach the world from a 'social' point of view. Instead of simply talking

about 'the social' as subject matter, we should focus on its active form, on "social responsiveness."<sup>137</sup> Rather than a fixed set of relations, rather than a fixed spatial setting, social responsiveness emphasizes the existence of a modality, a double relational setting, that of sociality-asociality, and responsivity-responselessness.<sup>138</sup> To the elementary landscape of social responsivity, answers another equally elementary asocial responselessness; not a negation but another kind of relational and responsive expression.

Between the two modalities, the former a modality of relation and the latter a modality of action, the paradox of 'norm' opens up. In a conventional sense, the human being is not regarded as "socialized" or "adult" until her elementary and spontaneous social responsiveness has been heavily reduced or spatially circumscribed.<sup>139</sup> The responsiveness upon which sociality rests, has to be submitted to a strict disciplining process; a regulation which also transforms responsiveness from exploratory interplay to a coded form of social behavior.

In itself, social responsivity does not have a form, but is rather a question of reciprocity and interdependency – the intersection between relation and action which is constituted by the performance. As such, social responsivity is neither good nor bad. A peaceful and respectful interrelation is neither more social nor more responsive than a quarrel or a fight. Social responsivity is a matter of engagement, not a matter of indifference or lack of concern.<sup>140</sup> As an example, jealousy is intensely social and responsive. While for adults jealousy might be social responsivity carried to its extreme, it is for small children an entirely normal way to activate their social surroundings. To neglect such conflictive expressions of social responsivity would be the same as to close one's eyes to half of being: "The presence of dissonances and discords in a society does not at all have to arouse our social-psychological anxiety. It is rather 'the idea of the ideal Garden' that should make us wary."<sup>141</sup>

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The idea of a space without conflicts should arouse our suspicions; a space where reciprocity is predetermined is also a space where social responsivity has been entirely formalized. While paradise, at least in its Western interpretation, might present such a conflict free and perfected sociality, the playground emerges as its contrast; the staging of a battle field, a social field redundant with potential intrigues. Play is however not to be understood as the opposite of seriousness. Play is often very serious, some even having bio-political implications, as 'life

137 I have here translated Asplund's concept "social responsivitet" with "social responsivity," and equally his "asocial responslöshet" with "asocial responselessness." See Johan Asplund (1987:11-35).

138 See Johan Asplund (1987:31-32).

139 See Johan Asplund (1987:29).

140 See Johan Asplund (1987:42).

141 "Förekomsten av dissonanser och misshälligheter i ett samhälle behöver ingalunda väcka vår socialpsykologiska oro. Det är snarare 'lustgården' som bör göra oss betänksamma." See Johan Asplund (1987:42-43).



plays.’ The opposite of play is instead utility or necessity, which signifies the non-redundant, that which is precisely what it is aimed for, no less no more. Play on the other hand, is entirely superfluous, unnecessary, but nevertheless a foundation of Culture.

This idea of play as formative of cultural reproduction was thoroughly developed by Dutch historian Johan Huizinga in his seminal study *Homo Ludens* – “Man at Play”.<sup>142</sup> The notion has exercised a considerable influence on the critique of representational urban space, not least in its Situationist interpretation. According to Huizinga, play is a deliberate activation of a social surplus, of the inessential and extra, a sphere of activity that produces the laughingly fun, that which separates us from the causality associated with nature.<sup>143</sup> It is furthermore not compulsory but voluntary, free<sup>144</sup> – another aspect of redundancy. Play has its space and its time; it is a historically specific and situated establishing of leeway, of a space of maneuver and reformation – an as-if space of radical make-belief.

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Even though Huizinga in his detailed investigation of play has argued for its foundational importance in relation to human culture, he did not really draw the logical socio-material conclusions as a re-vitalizing dynamic. For Huizinga, the game was the superior form of play; cultivated and ritualized, it constituted the glue of culture. The game follows certain rules, certain continuities, and may therefore be repeated, like tradition, custom or place-bound ceremony. According to Huizinga, only such ritualized games are ‘plays’ in the cultural sense. This is however an opinion that disqualifies more improvised play, implicitly suggesting that creativity or discovery is not a necessary requirement, but rather a transgressive act of the “spoil-sport” who threatens the illusion necessary for the further existence of the play-community.<sup>145</sup>

The Situationists adopted Huizinga’s notion of ludic praxis, although for them, it had an agitating, transgressing, even shocking function. “Play,” argues Vaneigem, “can be conceived of neither without rules nor without a play with rules.”<sup>146</sup> Children, for example, know the rules of play very well, yet they still cheat incessantly, invent tricks or imagine ruses. To them, cheating does not have the adult meaning of treason, but constitutes an aspect of their innovative ‘playing cheating.’ The play is a relational and expansive modality implying the denouncement both of ruler and of sacrifice, as well as of fixed roles. What adults call ‘kids’ banalities’ in fact entail complex, individual realization in relation to a field of fluid and changing social relations.<sup>147</sup> Play is synonymous with the

142 Johan Huizinga (1938/1955) *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*.

143 Johan Huizinga (1938/1955:3-7).

144 Johan Huizinga (1938/1955:8).

145 Johan Huizinga (1938/1955:11).

146 “Le jeu ne se conçoit ni sans règles ni sans jeu sur les règles.” Raoul Vaneigem (1967:269).

147 “La praxis ludique implique le refus du chef, le refus du sacrifice, le refus du rôle,

foundation of a new society of real and reciprocal participation; a revolution of everyday life.<sup>148</sup> Asplund also points to this important, disjunctive function of play: "In everyday language we are certainly designating superfluous or unnecessary activities as 'merely play', but we are as likely to describe as play also the capricious behavior, that which does not follow any discernible rules or even imply contraventions."<sup>149</sup> An activity performed according to a given order, a given relation between stimuli and response, cannot, in any case, be considered a play.

This means that Huizinga's definition must be revised: If the game is organized and formalized play with only a limited amount of freedom, this means that it is no longer play. The game is regulated social responsivity, while play is quite simply responsivity in the social sense. Huizinga may be right in claiming that play alone does not qualify as culturally edifying. However, play supplies the inter-relational socio-matter for cultural formation; the unformed and non-coded relational space. If and when everything turns into an organized game, if and when play comes to an end, 'culture' would be completed, and as such also meaningless. A living culture can never be in that sense concluded or fulfilled, but on the contrary depends upon redundancy as its subject matter. Therefore, it also has to provide for open-ended and redundant play; a 'waste' of relational energy. For, as Asplund claims, "[w]hen one has prosecuted and erased all redundancy through legislation, the only remaining thing to do is to 'drop out'."<sup>150</sup>

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Does this mean that "dropping out" should also be considered a kind of play, that a-social responselessness, or its spatial equivalent, formlessness, also hold certain responsive qualities? Rather than demands for definite answers, these questions actualize the fact that there is also to play a power dimension, a relational spatialization; relational actions of inclusion and exclusion, the questions of in and out, the questions of spatial positioning; if not strategic, then tactical. The tactic is, as Vaneigem points out, "the polemical phase of play."<sup>151</sup> There is not only panoptical calculation, or strategy, but also a hedonistic one, which is tactics. No more than there is an absolute responsiveness is there an absolute 'flipping out' – these are both polemical aspects, aspects of discursive orientation in a spatial situation. This is nowhere more obvious than in urban space, where social responsivity by necessity unfolds as spatial problematization.

la liberté de réalisation authentique, la transparence des rapports sociaux." Raoul Vaneigem (1967:267).

148 "Le jeu totale et la révolution de la vie quotidienne se confondent désormais." Raoul Vaneigem (1967:269).

149 "I vardagsspråket betecknas förvisso onyttiga eller överflödiga aktiviteter som 'bara lek', men vi är lika benägna att som lek beteckna det *nyckfulla* beteendet, det som inte följer några urskiljbara regler eller rentav utgör regelbrott." See Johan Asplund (1987:64).

150 "När man förföljt och lagstiftat bort all redundans, återstår bara att 'flippa ut'." Johan Asplund (1987:64).

151 "La tactique est la phase polémique du jeu." Raoul Vaneigem (1967:267).

The significant trait of the urban landscape is that it puts everything into play, and what it is not capable of putting into play, it tends to treat as non-existent.

It is not the regulated and intentional 'game' of the panopticon Asplund has in mind when discussing spatial responsiveness. Rather it is urbanity as an artful and innovative *máquina*; an artificial play with spatial significance, presence and absence; with appearances and disappearances, with sudden arrivals and abrupt departures, with here and there.<sup>152</sup> It is a play with the intentional and the non-intentional, a play with phenomena and with our expectations, a relational set-up allowing for what Foucault made inquiries for in his critique of the norm, a spatial configuration tolerating or even building upon the interference of chance as a category in the production of events.<sup>153</sup> If urbanity constitutes a spatial play, where 'the social' unfolds not according to a master plan, but as intersecting trajectories, as lines of tension, as expenditure of energy, there must be a spatial 'logic' with a capacity of accommodating also the coincidental.

If in pre-modern or traditional life there were always certain halts and turning points arriving one after the other in a fixed order, in urbanity, the occasion is the ruling principle, the sudden and unpredictable event, generating redundancy.<sup>154</sup> The occasion constitutes an expansive, generative and non-representative spatial principle; a re-productive force; with a Deleuzian expression a machinery of desire rather than of an intentional execution of power. The occasional constitutes an inversion of the panopticon, a space outside of control but within reach, a space that cannot be formally conceived but bodily approached.

Through the notion of consuming play and its function in relation to any pre-conceived regime, we may be able to add to the interpretation of Christiania an important responsive dimension. The "de-urbanizing"<sup>155</sup> of Christiania is not a deconstruction on a formal, macro-physical level of structures and

152 See Johan Asplund (1992:9-10 and 109-143).

153 Foucault (1971:60).

154 This active, labyrinthine dimension is designated by Asplund as "Fortean." The 'Fortean' refers to American journalist and writer Charles Fort (1874-1932), who in the beginning of the last century dedicated himself to the recording of all kinds of odd and remarkable occurrences. **Fort had a certain predilection for things that fell from the sky; fishes, frogs, earthworms, red-colored rain, butter, blocks of ice or stone, and much more; odd, coincidental happenings, which he carefully and insistently recorded.** What Asplund points to however, is not the fantastic dimension of the "Fortean," but rather its critical aspects, its activation of a virtual complexity, an exponential potentiality beside and beyond the range of the rational. Fort published his findings in four books: *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932). In his writing, Fort developed his critical philosophy, the "Philosophy of Continuity," in which everything is seen as intermediary states between extremes, expressed by his dictum: "One measures a circle beginning anywhere." Fort also coined the term "teleportation," and his ideas has generated an entire discourse around the unexpected and redundant, as exemplified by the magazine *Fortean Times*, founded in 1973. Johan Asplund (1992), footnote on p. 144. See also [www.forteanimes.com](http://www.forteanimes.com).

155 See Tom Nielsen (2001:180).

representative meanings, but a turnover on a basic, socio-material level, where also the formless, the meaningless and the response-less constitute important assets in an unprejudiced, playful exchange; a ludic praxis that may not constitute urbanism in its institutionalized form, but a praxis that will always begin where authorized urbanity stops.

### Counter Amassments

The spatial implication of ludic responsiveness in Christiania is not 'vernacular form' but rather a blunt and undisguised pronouncement of the permanent crisis inherent to any system. In this sense, 'Christiania' is not a place or a destination, but a permanent transformation of the old martial drill-ground (the royal capital) into what Vaneigem would have called a *basic banality*, a play-ground where even the most trivial aspects of life may be dramatized and acted out differently, without considering that the expenditure of energy be in reasonable proportion to the outcome.<sup>156</sup> 'Banal' sociality does in this respect entail an enabling and permissive sociality, but also a 'low' sociality, unfolding on the level of debris, of waste, and of surplus. It is a revolutionary dimension of constant negotiation of power relations, a basic form of affiliation, based upon *affinity* rather than identity; upon the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and premises and still make something out of it, a de Certeaudian *faire avec*.

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From a spatial point of view, Christiania is a playing out of unexpected spatial potentials, such as the transformative forces of clustering and drift; a socio-material modality rather than a socio-spatial formation. If there is in Christiania a territorial vagueness, it has its social equivalence in the lack of representational structure, the lack of formal hierarchy. Bonding in Christiania is not (or at least *has not been*, to the same extent as in outside society) a matter of history or customs, a matter of accumulated reputation. Instead 'basic banality' has been allowed to unfold – a banality of spatial forgetfulness, commitment and affiliation.<sup>157</sup> As a basic waste of energy, this banality furthermore has functioned as a reminder of the fact that the urban landscape is neither simply a cognitive, mental representational regime, nor phenomenal in the subjectively emotional sense, but a social movement in between fragmentation and amassment, between fluidity and inertia, both of which are subversive potentials.

An early ludic manifestation of these socio-material 'aggregational' potentials was the Paris Commune of 1871. An outburst of urban, social imagination, this

156 See Vaneigem (1962-63/1998) "Banalités de base" (in English "The Totality for Kids"). See also Christopher Gray (1998:55).

157 See Jakob Reddersen (2004) "Self management in Christiania". Here, Reddersen discusses the plastic and "capacious" spatial reproduction of Christiania, which certainly creates unique presuppositions for alternative social formation. From another perspective however, the sub-cultural formlessness of Christiania unfolds as an "ultra-liberalism" oscillating between a total lack of constructive bonding and, in the name of consensus democracy, a superficial unity based upon a denunciation of all conflict.

anarchic or even carnivalesque spatial experiment played a significant role as a source of inspiration for the urban social movements of the 60s and 70s. Rather than an articulate ideal, seventy-three days of revolutionary frenzy in the spring of 1871, 'The Commune' had still survived as a critical spatio-aesthetic discourse, not only combining questions of class, spatial reproduction and political change, but problematizing these issues in terms of reciprocal spatial mediation, as urban space. In the context of the Commune, urban formation unfolded as an aesthetic, expressive practice different from ideology; a will not only to change, but first and foremost to conscious exchange. The Commune concretized what Henri Lefebvre has called "an anarchicizing spontaneity,"<sup>158</sup> a complex attempt to transform the energy of socio-material amassment into a generative spatial power, a non-institutionalized, formless dynamis embracing both sociality and conflictive freedom.<sup>159</sup>

Christiania could be understood as a 'Communal' urban reality of living action, "at the same time *œuvre* and *acte*"<sup>160</sup> – a historical event actualizing the fact that 'space' in a conventional urban context has often lost its social significance and has been reduced to nothing but a regulative, circumscribing framework. What the Commune stood for in this sense was an agitation or even animation

158 Even though the Commune certainly also had its ideologies, its anarchic tendencies were strong: "Distinguons ici la spontanéité et l'idéologie. Spontanément, peut-on dire, la spontanéité est anarchisante." (Let us here distinguish between spontaneity and ideology. Spontaneously so to speak, the spontaneous is anarchicizing." Henri Lefebvre (1965:161). According to Lefebvre, this 'anarchization', inspired by the most individualist and separatist thinking of Max Stirner and Bakunin, often drastically articulated as an activism of destruction, nevertheless contributed to the break with state centralism and the alternative development of a program of decentralization.

159 The historical context of the Paris Commune was the following. After the disastrous defeat of Napoléon III by the Prussians, a dubious group of bourgeois republicans seized power in 1870, announcing a peace for which the working people in Paris, having just gone through the Prussian siege, had to pay. What the communards opposed was thus both the old all-powerful State and a new class of real estate speculators, who came together under the new practice of city planning, represented by the new and rational urban grid of Baron von Haussman. This huge restructuring of Paris, which had started during the 1860's, had, according to Castells, the triple purpose of creating an urbanity adjusted both to new economic criteria, new military demands, and new representative ambitions, all of which aimed at creating a symbolic image of a new, secular power; an image distinct from the politically defined idea of the Republic. Class antagonism intensified, and in March 1871, workers, many of whom were women, revolted. For seventy-three days, a revolutionary government, to a great extent without leaders, managed to reform Paris to an autonomous Commune with a free organization of social life, however only constantly under an indirect threat from the official army, which bided its time at Versailles. In the final week of May, however, the army had mobilized enough to launch an assault, massacring twenty five thousand people, mostly working class Parisians, in a week-long battle. "More people died in the final week of May 1871," writes Kristin Ross, "than in any of the battles of the Franco-Prussian War or in any of the previous 'massacres' (for example, the Terror) in French history." See Kristin Ross (1987:4). See also Henri Lefebvre (1965) *La Proclamation de la Commune*, and Manuel Castells (1983:333).

160 "à la fois *œuvre* et *acte*...", Henri Lefebvre (1965:22).

of the very cityscape, an actualization of its socio-material complexity as an urban 'field' of trajectories and encounters, of contiguity and social intercourse. "[W]hile words like 'historical' or 'political' convey a dynamic of intentionality, vitality, and human motivation," writes literary theorist Kristin Ross in discussing the Commune, "'spatial', on the other hand, connotes stasis, neutrality, and passivity."<sup>161</sup> As the first explicitly urban social mobilization, the Commune deliberately staged a creative disturbance of this distinction, historicizing and politicizing what had up until then exclusively been a question of disciplinary planification, furthermore drastically intensified with the great Haussmannian projects of the 1860s.

While the urban regeneration pursued by Haussmann has often been used as a developmental marker of the creative breakthrough of modernity and functionalist urban planning, a developmental demolition for a new era to unfold, the Commune actualizes the historical, conflictive or polemical dimension of this new economy of crisis.<sup>162</sup> The Commune constituted an interim space, a significant liminality, where destruction and crisis are not masked with light, open space, or monumental formation, but where the crisis is recognized as permanent, socio-material disjunction. It actualized urban space, not only as a competitive game between authoritative powers, but as a play with formlessness, with an unlimited series of alternative social and spatial arrangements. In this sense, the Commune marked what urban sociologist Manuel Castells describes as "the transition between two forms of historical conflict: one pre-capitalist, between the city and the state [...], one proto-capitalist, between the people of Paris and the beginning of a proletarian vanguard."<sup>163</sup> "The proletarian vanguard" is a new playful force of mobilization, which not only challenges the means of production, but which operates on a representational level, on the level of language and aesthetic expression, interfering with the very base of signification; street life, housing, consumption, entertainment – the political force of an emerging urban, popular culture.

Lefebvre's preferred notion for this micro-space of ethical combat was 'everyday life.'<sup>164</sup> This relational, everyday space was for Lefebvre an aspect

161 Kristin Ross (1987:8) *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*.

162 In his seminal work *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, Marshall Berman described the Hausmannization of Paris in terms of what Marx had described as the re-generative destruction inscribed in capitalism; an affirmation of destructive forces as a fuelling of innovation and spatial reproduction. George Eugène Haussmann, prefect of Paris under Napoleon III, blasted a vast network of boulevards through the medieval city structure; a revolutionary gesture that stimulated an expansion of local business, but also, as a giant public undertaking, pacified the masses in that it created jobs. The 'creative destruction' strategy of Haussmannization was further articulated as Haussmann commissioned a photographer, Charles Marville, to photograph the demolition and opening up of the dense city. See Marshall Berman (1982:151) and footnote p. 359.

163 Manuel Castells (1983:332).

164 Henri Lefebvre (1947/1977).

of life emerging in the gap produced by nineteenth century urbanity, in the oppositional rift between a public, institutionalized representational structure and a private and intimate phenomenal or emotional world. Its emancipatory and mobilizing power depended upon the fact that it emerged as a “third term” – activating a mediating and modifiable realm within the most dominating philosophical opposition of modernity, that between the phenomenological and the structural.<sup>165</sup> The Commune was an early example of such an activation, as Kristin Ross points out, not only a political uprising against the Second Empire, but first and foremost “a revolt against deep forms of social regimentation”<sup>166</sup> – against the bio-political attempts to govern life through spatial regeneration. In relation to Christiania and the role it has been playing in relation to rational Welfare urbanist planning strategies, the Commune is interesting insofar as it first and foremost constituted a cultural uprising against rigid spatial, social and rational categorizations of all kinds; against the splitting up of culture in genres, in political and aesthetic realms, in Fine Art and artisan craft, in ‘high’ literature and ‘low’ reportage etc. Rejecting ‘categorialism’, or nominalism, the Commune presented a radical relationalism and trans-activism; according to Kristin Ross a predominantly ‘horizontal’ movement.<sup>167</sup>

Despite its short existence and bloody outcome, the Commune presented a shift in the conception of urban life. Anti-hierarchical and improvisational, it gave rise to a new idea of the urban subject as social agent, as co-player. The prevailing and subversive message of the Commune was in this sense the rejection of conventional subjective virtues like resoluteness, efficiency, sobriety, organizational capacity, and self-sacrifice. These were virtues promoted not only by disciplinary society or the bourgeois state in order to keep the masses in check, but also qualities intrinsic also to revolutionary agency. The virtues of Communal revolution however, were of another kind, encouraging such inter-human capacities as interference, blending, differentiation, and playfulness; virtues belonging to the creative mess, the mass as amassment, as ‘messy mass movement’ – the dangerous and forceful clustering of particularities into an annoying yet enabling swarm. According to Ross, the swarm in this respect conveys a radical view of freedom; a different conception both of individuality and sociality, a freedom inconceivable unless deeply entangled in the desires and actions of the masses.<sup>168</sup>

Spatial radicalism, rather than an edification of alternative spatial orders, for the Communards consisted in activating a horizontalizing force, establishing an

165 Kristin Ross (1987:9).

166 Kristin Ross (1987:5).

167 Kristin Ross (1987:5).

168 Kristin Ross here quotes anarchist Michael Bakunin, who described man as at once “the most individual and the most social of animals.” “All social life,” Bakunin wrote, is simply this continued mutual dependence of individuals and the masses. Even the strongest and most intelligent of individuals...are at every moment of their lives both promoters and products of the desires and actions of the masses.” See Kristin Ross (1987:101).



ambulatory, swarming territoriality of accessibility, encounter, and intersection, often manifested through a concrete leveling activism<sup>169</sup> – early examples of what the Situationists later would come to call *détournement*. The city was in this sense transformed into a socio-material field; a micro-level of socio-material reproduction. An example of this spatial horizontalizing was the building of barricades. While the official urban construction of the emerging modern metropolis were meant to continuously mask the crisis of capitalist economy, the barricades were anti-monuments, temporal structures existing upon and through this very crisis, clogging up the new strategic street grid of Paris. As Ross points out, the barricades constituted a civic architecture, however not designed around the notion of a unique “proper place”,<sup>170</sup> but around the idea of dialogic or even polemical space. Haphazard and make-shift, they were made of whatever could be found – “overturned carriages, doors torn off their hinges, furniture thrown out of the windows, cobblestones, where these are available, beams, barrels, etc”<sup>171</sup> – clearly articulating and making use of an accumulated tense surplus.

Barricades are in this sense tactical architecture, not meant to function as shelter, but as de- and re-territorializing spatial elements, hindering, redirecting, dividing or connecting; an actualization of space as a modality of dissemination and amassment. A tactic is, according to de Certeau, a gesture, which cannot count on a definite place, which does not depend on localization. Distinct from a strategy, a regulative “calculus of force-relationships”, which “assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper”,<sup>172</sup> a tactic operates from an insecure position without a regulated surrounding. Nor can it rely on an overview, in relation to which ‘the Other’, or ‘the Outside’, can be singled out or targeted. “The place of a tactic,” writes de Certeau, “belongs to the other; [it] insinuates itself into the other’s place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance”<sup>173</sup> Dependent upon

169 The toppling of the Vendôme Column was in this respect significant; a demolition not only of a monument and a representation of power, but of the most conspicuous verticality. Another example was the transformation or re-coding of churches to social meeting places; a widespread phenomenon during the Commune. See Kristin Ross (1987).

170 Kristin Ross (1987:36).

171 Gustave-Paul Cluseret *Mémoires du Général Cluseret*, from 1887, as translated by Kristin Ross (1987:36). The exterior horizontalization of the barricades was complemented by an expanded urban interior, a “lateral piercing” of the houses opening up entire blocks, transforming them into a network of communicating spaces and passage-ways. While communard troops guarded the ground floor, others would climb to the next level, breaking through the wall to the adjoining house and so on, so as to create a possibility to move freely in all directions, inverting the intimate interior of the city to a street. See Kristin Ross (1987:38).

172 “J’appelle ‘stratégie’ le calcul des rapports de forces qui devient possible à partir du moment où un sujet de vouloir et de pouvoir est isolable d’un ‘environnement’. Elle postule un lieu susceptible d’être circonscrit comme un *propre* et donc de servir de base à une gestion de ses relations avec un extériorité distincte.” Michel de Certeau (1980:xlvi).

173 “J’appelle au contraire ‘tactique’ un calcul qui ne peut pas compter sur un propre, ni donc sur une frontière qui distingue l’autre comme une totalité visible. La tactique n’a pour lieu

movement, upon sequence, upon potential condensation and dissolution, upon a scheme of possible transformations of relations, the tactic operates rather out of repertory than territory.<sup>174</sup> Such is also the function of barricade architecture. Contributing to the transformation of the city neither as monument nor as strategic economic edification, it is an embodiment of an everyday urban landscape of encounters, of communication, and translocation; an articulation of social urban space

In her reflection on the emergence of social space, Ross finds this alternative principle of cultural reproduction articulated in the poems of Arthur Rimbaud; bombardments of words, “insect-verse” – the verbs having a “crowd effect, the multiplication of voices.”<sup>175</sup> Also the interior is a mobilized and mobilizing swarm; “the white swarm of indistinct dreams.”<sup>176</sup> Rather than a skill-related être-poète, a poetic being, the preferable role model for the poet is a spatial one, the vagabond whose body in itself constitutes a barricade building block – the free yet constructively disturbing agent who through his movements maps the very surfaces of friction. Vagabondage is the answer to rational domestication, an individual yet bonding horizontalizing of life.

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The Commune constitutes a historical example of the same kind of problematization of the urban field as that provided by Christiania; a polemical counter-amassment actualizing the playful, redundant potentials of modern, urban space. Without romanticizing the frantic and consuming disorder of spatial ‘anarchization’, we may through the historical example of the Commune see to its important function as an actualizing of spatial complexity. The great asset is in this sense not only its bringing into consciousness a spatial problematic in order to swiftly and rapidly make it over, but its direct embodiment of conflicts, power relations and social formation, not through monumentalization, but as mobilizing playful *event*. As Henri Lefebvre has pointed out, in order to understand or explain the transformation of urban space, it is not enough to point to a logic based upon economic conditions, historical circumstances, or social structures. Instead, as exemplified by the Commune and in our case by Christiania, urban mobilization and revolution has to be seen from the point of view of spontaneous linguistic action; as a socio-material event continuously devaluating ideological superstructures such as representational structures, symbols, justifying institutional images, and ‘culture.’<sup>177</sup>

que celui de l'autre. Elle s'y insinue, fragmentairement, sans le saisir en son entier, sans pouvoir le tenir à distance.” Michel de Certeau (1980:xlvi).

174 “[...] ce sont des répertoires de schémas d'actions entre partenaires.” Michel de Certeau (1980:42).

175 Kristin Ross (1987:105).

176 “l'essaim blanc des rêves indistinct.” In the poem *Les chercheuses de poux*, “the child's body becomes the site of a crowd effect.” Kristin Ross (1987:105).

177 Henri Lefebvre (1965:408).

What is emphasized is thus the ongoing and responsive spatial formation of the urban landscape, to an increasing extent driven forward not by production, but by consumption,<sup>178</sup> by a waste of energy, in relation to which the 'proletarian vanguard' unfolds as the force of alternative expenditure. This is the new and contradictory urban landscape, which, as Manuel Castells has expressed it, "in a direct way politicizes the urban question, and transforms it into one of the axes of social change in our societies."<sup>179</sup> "The urban question" has in this situation become the field of a new form of 'governmentality' in relation to which urban planning, not least in its post-Haussmannian form, has emerged as the privileged, representational regime; the tool not necessarily for directed social change, but for *regulations of contradictions*.<sup>180</sup> What Castells points to is the paradoxical fact that in such a contradictory system of passive governmentality, the veritable sources of social change and urban innovation are not to be found on the level of authoritative planning, but on the micro-level of alternative uses, of counter-amassment and counter-consumption. As a disjunction of the contradictory logic of the urban landscape, the urban social movements have, if not the revolutionary power of profound social change, then a considerable, and to a certain extent necessary, potential to agitate, mobilize and disturb the general logic of production and consumption based upon need and request. This is a potential of temporary change and partial subversion, which, in a contradictory logic, may have as great an impact on living conditions as a more fundamental seizing of power.<sup>181</sup>

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## Culture Jam

As we have seen, in the gaps and crevices of disciplinary spaces and formations of power, leeway unfolds. Not least has this been important as systems of control have grown, expanded and disseminated over larger and larger areas, permeating more and more of the activities of the social field. A reaction to an unfolding global economy where the entire urban space to an increasing extent is becoming regulated by the super-highways of generative destruction,

178 See Manuel Castells (1973) *Luttes urbaine et pouvoir politiques*.

179 "Mais, [ces] contradictions urbaines [...] a toutes ses niveaux politisent de façon directe la question urbaine et en font un des axes du changement social dans nos sociétés." Manuel Castells (1973:17).

180 Manuel Castells (1973:18). See also Manuel Castells (1972) *La question urbaine*.

181 Castells (1973:19). Already in his early works, Castells focuses on the internal dynamics and contradictions of capitalist society, especially through different studies of alternative, collective consumption. Rather than conventional Marxist studies of structural, class-related struggle, Castells turns to a composite study of particular urban situations where "a liaison between class struggle, urban struggle and political struggle has been established, resulting in a diversity of situations and orientations, whose richness allows for an advancement of hypotheses concerning social conditions as they unfold in between these contradictory fields." (...la liaison entre lutte de classe, lutte urbaine et lutte politique a été établie suivant une diversité de situations et d'orientations dont la richesse permet d'émettre des hypothèses quant aux conditions sociales d'articulations entre ces différents champs contradictoires.) Manuel Castells (1973:21).

Christiania's encroachment should not be understood simply as a local and isolated event but as an answer to a larger, global *-scaping*, in relation to which the counter-amassment or 'swarming' play of Christiania has to be understood. Addressing an informal and ubiquitous power, that of trans-national capitalism and its buffering systems of social welfare, Christiania's seizing of place is a clogging up not only of the local or regional environments, but also of a larger context of urban and recreational values. As we have seen, and as Christiania has actualized, today's disciplining systems have no definite location; they are webs of forces pervading space, fragmenting, yet simultaneously suturing the fragmented, continuously transforming reality. These structures of power produce a situation in which the alternative cannot be articulated in terms of *form*, as every form, also the most peripheral and marginal, would soon be subsumed by the system of exchangeability and commodification. Nor can it be articulated in terms of *crisis*, or revolution, as revolutionary crisis is the very foundation of this new Empire.

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Turning away could be an option, refusing involvement altogether, which ultimately would mean to refute also the potentiality of a multiple present, as well as the singularity of a being acted out here and now. Even though Christiania to some extent might show the attributes of such a refusal, and even though this has certainly at times been part of its own rhetoric, its entanglement with the surrounding city, its "responsivity," is still its most significant trait. Rather than a secluded enclave, Christiania is a kind of embodiment of reciprocity, of spatial tactics; an activation of all those systemic vectors that make up the city. Instead of participating in an ever more intense exchange of forms, past, present, and future, Christiania reproduces itself through what I would like to call a spatial *jam*; a dislocation of spatial power relations and an interference with social rhythms.

The notion of the jam is in this sense a polemical reinforcement of the responsive play, further emphasizing its trivializing tendencies of 'bringing down' or leveling. When I suggest an understanding of Christiania in terms of an 'urban jam', I am also doing so in order to relate its unfolding as an urban social movement to present-day, less localized disturbance tactics, such as *culture jam*.<sup>182</sup> A polemical response to the economy of 'flow' and free movement, 'culture jam' entails sluggishness, yet of a very floating, socio-material kind. Operating not only through squatting or seizing of circumscribed physical locations, but deliberately targeting also the media- and techno-scapes of

182 Kalle Lasn (1999) *Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America*. In his book, Kalle Lasn, the publisher of *Adbusters Magazine*, pays tribute to the cultural critic Mark Dery, author of *Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing, and Sniping in the Empire of Signs* from 1993, but also to the San Francisco audio collage band *Negativland* and their *Jamcon '84*, a tribute to ham radio "jammers" who clog the airwaves with "scatological Mickey Mouse impersonations and other pop-culture noise." (Lasn, *Culture Jam*, note on p. 217) See also Naomi Klein (2000) *No Logo*, and Åsa Wettergren (2003) "Kulturjam – nya vägar till politiskt motstånd i informationssamhället" (Culture Jam – New Ways to Political Resistance in the Information Society).

today's economy, 'culture jammers' constitute important landscape agents. Acting through graffiti, re-coding of billboards, pirate radio, or re-arrangement of products on supermarket shelves, culture jammers may appear wherever power and potential aesthetic expression intersect, thereby continuously actualizing new points of translation and mediation, but also of negotiation and change. They may also act through different forms of civil disobedience or massing in urban spaces, thus actualizing spatial relations of power through the staging of carnivalesque re-appropriative events.<sup>183</sup> It may be staged in terms of more sophisticated media pranks, hoaxes and provocations, but it may also be acted out as spatial manifestations of a consumer empowerment, like social marketing campaigns, Buy Nothing Days, TV-Turn Off Weeks, or Car Free Days.<sup>184</sup>

Christiania could in this sense certainly be understood as a culture jam, not so much arresting the flow of capital as "un-cooling" it, "un-commercializing" it, subverting its messages and adverts, de-formalizing its mendacious syntaxes, replacing them, not necessarily with more authentic ones, but certainly, often through irony, with more revealing or telling ones.<sup>185</sup> Even though often spatially undefined, contemporary culture jamming coincides to a quite considerable degree with the blocking or retardation that has constituted part of Christiania's effect on the surrounding society – an active stuffing of a rationalized urban landscape that more and more willingly has submitted itself not only to the controlling and planificatory gaze, but also to the speculative economy which is the other side of the same coin.

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The English word 'jam' in this context provides several clues to understanding the tactics of representative formlessness as practiced by Christiania. Signifying 'to press' or 'to cram,' 'to crowd' or 'to become stuck,'<sup>186</sup> it represents not simply a mass that prevents individual movement, but an explicitly relational congregational constitution; an intensified cluster of encounters or confrontations. It furthermore expresses an intensely bodily or physical formlessness; messy, sticky, difficult to resist and to avoid, difficult to get rid of.

183 This is for example the tactics employed by the "Reclaim the Streets"-movement and other Situationist and Provo-inspired contemporary urban activist movements.

184 Kalle Lasn (1999), footnote on p. 217.

185 Kalle Lasn (1999:128). In his "Culture Jammer's Manifesto," Lasn clearly expresses a will to bring "the image factory to a shuddering halt." I have nevertheless chosen to put an emphasis on the activating rather than the curbing trait, which I consider, despite a passionate 'arresting' rhetoric, the core of the message.

186 jam (n.) - fruit prepared by boiling it with sugar into a pulp, 1730s, probably a special use of *jam* (v.), to crush fruit into a preserve. Jam (v.) - to press tightly, also to become wedged, 1706, of unknown origin, perhaps a variant of *champ* (v.). Jam also appears in the sense of "to cause interference in radio signals," and this during the first World War. There is also the noun sense of "machine blockage" observed from 1890, which probably led to the colloquial meaning "predicament," first recorded 1914. See <http://www.etymonline.com>, Collins Concise Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> edition 1999, and *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1989, Oxford University Press.

As corporeality, as bodily secretion, the jam expresses a reproductive capacity resisting the modifying and disciplining attempts of bio-power, a 'bio-activist' and thus unpredictable capacity, like the spittle (or other more erotically loaded emissions) of surrealist practice. The jam is in this sense at the same time provocative and playful, a formless principle of desires and pleasures. This playful regeneration comes through even more clearly in its musical connotations. As a composite of improvised passages or movements, the jam is not only provocative inertia, but a generative principle of empowerment. Originally a jazz term signifying a short, free improvised passage performed by the whole band; 'jam' is a vociferous interplay in peripheral spaces,<sup>187</sup> a staged use, a common consumption and a de-composition of leading themes, allowing for a creative mess of singular contributions.

More than a delimited otherness with a fixed location, Christiania then unfolds as a kind of urban jam; urbanity not as ordered, but as moldable; a stirred-up praxis of how landscapes and cities potentially could be not formalized but *embodied*. For me, the metaphor of the jam has fulfilled the function of materializing this topological dimension, the 'body' as the common, performative and potential entity of continuous transformation. The jam is highly physical; messy, sticky, colored, sweet, or sour, difficult both to resist and to avoid, but not necessarily visually self-contained. A corporeality answering to the modifying attempts of the control society in its highly unpredictable way, the jam is rather self-deforming, provocatively formless, yet with bodily pulse.

My use of the jam metaphor certainly also refers to the anti-procedural and sluggish tactics of Christiania in a more specific planning context. Against the rationales of the categorizing plan, Christiania as a collective settlement subsequently has insisted upon the anti-order of the jam – a joint improvisation built upon voluntary, individual and often contradictory, yet highly expressive contribution. Christiania is in this sense a bio-political corporeality, a critical matter, a body without form; a sticky matter, irritating and persistent. As representational critique, the jam is inventive and repeatable, related to the visual collage, the anthropological bricolage, and the cinematographic montage; all of which are different ways of dealing with the multiplicity and continuity of a reality 'beyond measurement but within relation.'

While the aesthetic practices of bricolage or montage still constitute structural, over-arching attempts to deconstruct hegemony, the jam instead operates from a bodily level. As embodied interference, it has a both (in)formal and political side. As inert and material, the jam fills out every cavity, every gap, thus transforming negativity to embodied potentiality. This gives to jamming a parasitical character of exploiting the room for expansion of a given function, a differentiating dissemination beyond recognition. Being anti-authoritarian,

187 This use dates from an article in *Melody Maker* of 1929, later yielding the expression *jam session* (1933); a session where the players vie with one another in hot solos. See *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1989, Oxford University Press.

jamming is an activity beyond control, an alternative to representation or notation, to every form of hierarchical governing, resulting in deviation and delay of governing processes. Rather than a montage, jamming may be equaled to the sampling of contemporary popular music; the scratching recycling of melodic sequences and passages, turning them into a beat; or to the activity of hacking; an intrusive re-coding of a disciplinary field, a reworking of a territorial surface.

A body of interaction and manipulative counter force, yet without self-evident form, Christiania has unfolded as jam; a generic term for a new kind of interceptive and collaborative spatial protest. Different from 'grass-roots' and 'swarms', the 'jam' might have the potential of covering also for a higher degree of mutuality and reciprocity, a socio-materiality of a very plastic kind, a dynamic responsivity, embracing also the asocial and responseless. If responsivity is the abstract idea of an active disposition, the jam is its materialization in spatial practice.

\* \* \*

The jam, or jamming, may perhaps also function as a metaphor for how I in this chapter have tried to approach the notion of power. As an aspect of space, not least of space in its manifestation as urban landscape, power may be understood as both an incarcerating and enabling force. In both cases, power appears as the possibility or ability to affect spatial events or relations. In Christiania, the more or less explicit question evoked by the notion of power is the question of legitimacy: How does a relational, spatial setting acquire acceptance? Through what actions is it motivated? Is power to be understood in terms of a representational 'form' referring to an essential, natural, or normal harmony? Or is it rather a set of agreements that may be, or should be, continuously renegotiated in order to 'work'?

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Through Christiania, the potential answers to these questions have been articulated in 'situational' terms, as a relational, furthermore predominantly urban problematic. As a spatial field, urbanism cannot be separated from a power discourse. A decisive issue in relation to urban planning practice and urban design is subsequently how we describe power. The point of departure has in this respect been that there is no given formal structure or principle in relation to which an absolute or positive power could be defined. On the contrary, in order to maintain its influence, power has to be enacted and performed, in every situation a relational practice. Accordingly, power cannot be directly attached to visibilities like architectural form, monumental buildings, military barracks, or geometric street grids. Instead, power is dependent upon its functioning, its more or less artful ways of working, its operating as expressive discourse, materialized through a specific, situated medium.

In this sense, power is in itself formless. Instead, power has to be understood as a relational dimension in between on the one hand the particular and free-



floating, and on the other hand what is usually referred to as a whole, but what should rather be described as a non-reducible multiplicity. Yet, exploring power as a potential formlessness is not simply a negative way of legitimizing power as anti-formation, or as meaningless atomistic oscillation. What the formless expresses in relation to power is instead a fundamental potentiality, power as activated potentia, a potential which is not symbolically represented, but associated with action. Rather than forms of power, we should talk about embodiment of power, or simply empowerment. As for Christiania, this dislocation of power from formal structures to embodied action has been most present, acted out directly on a basic material level of locality production.

In the writings of George Bataille, the formless appears as an embodied critique of representative form, of lexical structures of presupposed meaning. To escape form is for Bataille the same as to break away from power. The formless constitutes not only a total decomposition or decay of meaning, but a decomposition of the purposeful; a horizontalizing of the elevated belief in a naturally legitimized, intentionality. Instead, the formless actualizes the aesthetic surplus produced by every representative system, the exclusions effectuated by every formation of power. A surplus beneath authoritative formation, the formless constitutes the expressive base material, the empowering source of creativity. It is this essential, material level of urban formation that Christiania, through its formlessness, has activated. Unfolding as a space for non-finalized ways of living, for performative identity production and informal social interaction, Christiania has brought into question the very fundamentals of an urban planning relying on the idea of reducing urban life to a set of specified norms.

To some extent, Christiania articulates its radical rejection of representational grammars and architectural doctrines in line with the Bataillean formless. A free and organic unfolding, this libertarian a-morphism at times comes very close to that which it tries to avoid; an absolute idea of authenticity, not very different from the spiritualist mirage of a natural genius loci. However, the decisive difference is in this respect the radical materiality promoted by Bataille, a materiality that also in Christiania is oriented towards the low, the wasted, that which under other circumstances would have been considered 'shit.' Bataillean aesthetics here develops into an alternative ecologism of material forces, and desires – factors that have been equally important as for the unfolding of Christiania.

In Situationist terms, this materialist ecologism of forces and desires was described in terms of an urban *savoir-vivre*; the art of living in a contemporary situation of constraints, representative manipulation and decompressive seduction. In the writings of Raoul Vanéigem, the *savoir-vivre* unfolds as a series of tactical moves with the aim to counteract this authoritative spatial organization. These performative approaches, formulated as participation, communication, and realization, explicitly address a naturalized, de-politicized power, aesthetically articulated as urban planning and design. What Vanéigem and the Situationists unveiled, and what Christiania similarly has actualized,

is the political significance of a seemingly neutral planning practice, the consequences of which, on an everyday urban level, are nothing but a total elimination of creative potentials.

Foucault's theorizing of power in this respect presents a forceful metaphor. In the Foucauldian sense, power should be understood as a non-localized, non-attributive web of normative, subtly governing and often aesthetically framed values. This power is a force that, like the voltage of an electric field, holds fragmented space together as the unified conception of a (panoptical) landscape. From the point of view of urbanity, this is the 'multi-layered fiction' that Foucault mediates: power may be understood as architectonical 'form', as visible, yet abstract idea. The understanding of this formal structure is meaningless, however, unless experienced in its effectuation at innumerable basic points. Even though power is fundamentally disseminated, it is operating locally, always affecting matter.

Foucault calls this power bio-power; a power that does not need institutions but is exercised through norms, moral values or ideological ideas; a power that interferes directly with our lives and encroaches upon our bodies. Articulated in terms of an architecturally conceived and spatially distributed ubiquity that one cannot escape, Foucauldian power analysis has been criticized for producing nothing but a self-regulating and defeatist, ultimately alienating and abstract awareness of the relations between space and social formation. However, by virtue of this spatializing, it has also given rise to a new sensitivity as to inherent loop holes, gaps, and redundancies on a more basic level. As such, Foucault's thinking gives us the possibility not only to understand power passively, on a structural level, but also to take notice of its operations on the material level of everyday urban life. It might even explain the perseverance of Christiania as what Vaneigem would have called a *banalité de base*; a trivial socio-materiality, disturbing enough as to counteract disciplinary power at its points of attack.

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Obviously inspired by Situationist thinking, Foucault in his later writings also develops a more socio-material approach to power. Against the powerful and all-embracing plan, stands the situational play; the active exploration of subject positioning in relation to regulative regimes. In *Bataille a Dionysian jeu*, in Vaneigem a participatory *savoir-vivre*, this theme in Foucault develops as the care of the self – the re-positioning practices of the subject, performed in relation to others and expressed through sexuality. Play is thus neither simply a reactive move on a field of power, nor a therapeutic re-enactment with recreational effects. Rather, play should be understood in the sense of Huizinga, as the very basic reproduction of human life, a reproduction furthermore playfully re-enacted throughout the cultural arena that constitutes the urban field. As opposed to the plan, play is a non-reductionist cultivation that has to be acted out as expressive, human interaction.

Redirecting our attention to Christiania, it is interesting to note how the Free Town, through its reflective interference with forces in operation, over the years



Fig. 23

Work in progress, Christiania, 2004.



Fig. 24

Nemoland, Christiania, 2004.



Fig. 25

Manifestation in support of Christiania, May 2004



Fig. 26

Play tactics: "Privatize Society". Christiania, 2004.





## VI. Discussion: Tactical Formlessness, Critical Aesthetics, and the Dilemma of Planning



Fig. 28

Reflections, potentials...Pusher Street 2005.

## VI. Discussion: Tactical Formlessness, Critical Aesthetics, and the Dilemma of Planning

Even though the fate of the Free Town is far from settled, my discursive roaming has to come to a halt. Looking back, I see a diverse, urban exteriority, scattered with lived events, architectural structures, historical remnants, and individual movements. At a closer look, this exteriority has become even more multifaceted, broken up by agitated voices and experimentation, by questioned norms and faltering regulations – by attempts to stir up the whole, to redirect its development, or to simply understand.

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With the point of departure in the Free Town of Christiania, the present study has tried to cover what has unfolded as an urban *-scape*; a propagating *formlessness*, which, in order to be comprehended, has to be *performed*, re-enacted, realized. Actualizing this *-scape* of mediating performances, through an ambiguous ‘do-it-yourself’ community, the study has also sought to problematize what has been referred to as a more general process of urban *aestheticization*. Historically understood as the modernist tendency to obscure political conflicts by appeals to ideal form, it has in a more ‘post-modern’ urban context been associated with commercial exchange – the obscuring of political conflict through commodification. A short-sighted furnishing or face-lift of reality,<sup>1</sup> it has first and foremost connoted the most superficial aesthetic values – pleasure, amusement, harmless beauty – all that which we associate with ‘place marketing’, ‘city branding’, or ‘Disney-fication.’ However, as an aberrant urban expression, Christiania has managed to put this ‘thematization’ of urban space to trial. Asking how the Free Town has been articulated has therefore provided a venue for interrogating also the aesthetic presumptions behind contemporary urban planning and design, as well as the more deep-seated consequences of aestheticization in relation to a general understanding of our situation in a changing world.

In my approach to the unruly Free Town, I have first and foremost focused on the way the community, through different kinds of actions, expressions, and mediating events has contributed to a general urban discourse. I have in this regard retold its story as a discontinuous undoing of aesthetic conventions of form. In the Christiania manifesto, this undoing was originally expressed as the activist claim for the individual’s right to ‘freely unfold.’ In my study I have therefore related this claim firstly to the de-centering or displacement of the subject as unambiguous form, and secondly to its situating in relation to a likewise amorphous and ‘displaced’ space. Thirdly, more explicitly reflecting the emancipating ambitions of the Free Town, I have discussed the aesthetic implications of powers, forces, and desires, thereby also interrogating the



aesthetic presuppositions for empowering resistance and spatial change. As these ‘unfoldings’ have shown, aestheticization has to be understood as a double process, on the one hand connoting a re-centering and stabilizing formalization of reality around certain identities, themes or norms, around symbolic forms that despite their presumed ‘pre-given’ nature may still be exchanged and commercialized. On the other hand, there is what could be called the ‘critical aestheticization’ actualized by Christiania, which constitutes a more deep-seated and fundamental agitation of the subject as well as of space.

In relation to the de-compressing strategy of a *formal* aestheticization, critical aestheticization constitutes what I have chosen to designate as a *tactics of formlessness*. Inspired by Michel de Certeau, I have defined *tactics* as the composite of actions unfolding despite a lack of a ‘place proper.’ A *tactics* is an *informal* way of navigating or advancing within a given form or a given representative order. It is the kind of agency that in every instant has to take the surroundings into consideration – positions, relations, patterns. Answering to a given arrangement, it unfolds as a *move* – an illegal catching of a prey by trespassing onto the other’s domain,<sup>2</sup> an illegitimate decoding of imposed patterns, an unsanctioned use of a neglected surplus. A *tactics* is in this sense formless by default; a dynamic set of actions developed in opposition to a static system in order to continually ‘re-make sense.’

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In a similar way, Christiania has operated within the confines of a given order, a given urban form. As such, Christiania has exemplified what de Certeau would have described as an urban “art of the weak”<sup>3</sup> – an intermediary activity that, making use of that which formal edification has left aside – the surplus and the scrap – actualizes the expressive and mediating potentials that otherwise would remain unnoticed.

## The Subject Undone: An Outreaching Aesthetics

In my study of this ‘alternative’ community, the positioning of the subject has constituted an initial point of departure. As a reaction to a formal aestheticizing of the subject – the attempts to fixate the individual in relation to a given representational regime such as privatized real estate orders, individualized psychological orders, or rational orders of knowledge production – Christiania has proposed different means of expansion and re-positioning of the subject, thus aestheticizing being in an alternative way.

2        Discussing reading as a tactical undertaking, Michel de Certeau suggests the metaphor of *poaching*, in French *du braconnage*; an anti-disciplinary practice opposing the pedagogic pretension to “*inform* a population, that is to ‘give form’ to social practice” (“la prétention [...] d’*informer* une population, c’est-à-dire de ‘donner forme’ aux pratiques sociales”). Michel de Certeau (1980:239-240).

3        “un art du faible” Michel de Certeau (1980:61).

The tactics of subject re-positioning developed in Christiania have been of different kinds. First of all, with a point of departure in libertarian or anarchist ideas of conviviality, Christiania developed on the basis of a non-representational and embodied participation of 'one person-one voice.' The significant trait of this direct-democracy as it has developed in the Free Town, has been its situational character, its emphasis on direct encounter and embodied orality, which has resulted in what could be called an urban aesthetics of *voicings*. Rather than being submitted to regimes of signification, the subject transforms into a vociferous agent, continually expressing itself, leaving its concrete and material traces in space. This situational positioning of the subject in relation to a surrounding should in this respect not be understood as a return to an original state of natural communication, but as an activation of the material abundance, the yet formless surplus of drifting meanings and potentials, that formal representation has left aside. As such, the situational aesthetics of Christiania is also more confrontational – according to Walter J. Ong in every instant “agonistically toned”, unveiling the fact that embodied spatial being situates knowing “within a context of struggle.”<sup>4</sup>

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The second tactics of subject repositioning that I have seen actualized in Christiania could be understood in terms of *re-staging*. Challenging the representational setting of urban space, its publicly accepted, often 'face-lifted' *masque*, Christiania has actualized the implicit *scenographia* at work. Deliberately using not only action theatre, political manifestations, and aesthetic happenings, but a general discursive expressivity, the Free Town has managed to question the passive role of the subject in a conventional urban setting. Employing an out-reaching, 'in-yer-face' tactics, Christiania has rejected the fundamental 'interiorization' of the subject inscribed in the Cartesian idea of the *cogito*. The result has been a fundamental re-configuration, not only on the level of new family constellations or social interaction, not only as a predilection for the carnivalesque, but as a re-staging on the personal level, realized as a widespread interest in spiritual experimentation of all kinds. Having presented an opportunity to open the secluded chambers of the rational psyche, Christiania has shown to be not only degenerative, but de-familiarizing in a quite emancipatory way.

Thirdly, Christiania has undone subjective aesthetics through what could be described as *bewilderment*; a critical re-orientation of the subject's situation in space. In Christiania, this has been a question of rejecting reductions, of defending the largest possible degree of differentiation. As an alternative *common*, a public space outside the regulated urban grid, its implicit ambition has been to embrace disorientational confusion as an abundance of creative potentials. Questioning spatial consistency, such as cognitive regularity, street numbers, or schematic street grids, Christiania has also rejected the more fundamental principle of a distant beholder controlling a spatial whole. Practicing a labyrinthine rather than projective logic, Christiania proposes

through its bewildering structure a performative approach to the question of the subject's positioning in relation to a societal space.

The fourth tactical aspect I have designated as *interceptive*. In relation to a surrounding urban landscape, the tactics of Christiania has had an interfering, agitating and critical function, actualizing the shortcomings of a normative subjectivity also in an ethical sense. A transgression of the limits imposed on the subject does not necessarily entail an abnormal manifestation of hubris or egotism (as stated in the critique of Christiania). Instead, it is also an actualization of the Other as a potential – not only constantly present, but even acute. With the point of departure in an undone subjectivity, Christiania thus re-enacts what Wolfgang Welsch has called an *aesthet/hics*;<sup>5</sup> a spatial aesthetics of expressive interference with Others and Elsewheres.

Christiania has in this respect not simply constituted a refuge, sanctuary or absolute alternative in relation to a surrounding modernity. On the contrary, it is itself an integral part of this modernity; its own inherent borderline or *liminality*. As such, it constitutes the integral fringe at which a radical contestation and reconsideration of urban fundamental values may be spatially manifested and openly performed. The re-positioning of the subject thus becomes an active reflection of the fact that it is only on the level of human agency that the urban landscape, as a human propagation, may be represented and reproduced. As in Christiania, 'the aesthet/hic' turns out to be anything but a vision of ideal harmony or disinterested beauty – rather an out-reaching aesthetics of a non-finalized *inter-esse*, an in-between being, transforming the subject into a performing agent.

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## Place Undone: Landscape Activated

The polemical tension caused by Christiania over the years could be understood as a tension between spatial paradigms. Rejecting a 'space logic' that prioritized universality and predictability, it would be possible to see Christiania as a stealing of a 'place' for itself, thereby creating a sensuous foothold in an increasingly cerebral world. Having developed from unique and historically specific 'placial' circumstances, the Free Town could still be seen as a place with an easily recognized 'face' or a circumscribed form. In the west cut off from the city by an extended brick building, and in the south and south-east largely delimited by moats and sculpted ramparts, its defined contours have sustained its forceful fight to establish a humane and characteristic place, complete with a village co-op, a village green and lots of quite innocent and even bourgeois enterprises and activities.<sup>6</sup> In the midst of a hostile and geometric world, Christiania has

5 See Wolfgang Welsch (1997).

6 This is what I formerly have referred to as a "normalization from within," and which has also been commented from an aesthetic point of view by among others Merete Ahnfeldt-Møllerup (2004) in the essay "Christiania's aesthetics – You Can't Kill Us/We Are Part of You". I

constituted a recognizable and genuine place with a clearly articulated form and a firmly rooted identity.

Even though employed as a tactical figure in the debate, such an interpretation of Christiania would be a simplification. It would fail to spot the important problematization of locality production that Christiania, as an intermediary spatial agent within an urban planning discourse, has evoked. In respect to the Free Town as “a somewhat organized anarchy”,<sup>7</sup> I have instead wanted to emphasize the ‘agonistic’ aspect of Christiania. This inherent conflictiveness opens out between on the one hand an aesthetic framework based upon the idea of a grounded and intentional place, and on the other hand a spatial aesthetics that takes as its point of departure a performative and narrative –*scape*.

I have chosen to discuss this spatial tension in terms of *phenomenological interiors* and *polemological excursions*. Considering the general inclination to simplify the space-place discussion in strict oppositions, this might seem a bit hazardous. My intention however, has not been of the simplifying kind, nor has it been to bring forward Christiania as an ideal. Instead, I have seen the Free Town of Christiania as a telling example in a discussion about how spatial issues have been and may be articulated, in relation to a historically-situated urban discourse.

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My point of departure has in this respect been the fact that the discourse on Christiania has complicated the image of an existentially grounded place as representative of commonality. Repeatedly contested and re-enacted, unfolding as a thought provoking ‘Elsewhere’ rather than an authentic ‘Here’, Christiania does not fit into the role of an intentional place with an identifiable form. Instead I argue that Christiania has developed according to a discontinuous tactics of aberrance and disobedience, dramatizing its own waywardness – a tactic that has certainly at times also worked against its own best interests.<sup>8</sup> However, constantly exploring its own narrative potentials, Christiania has brought into consciousness the fundamentals of locality re-production, which are not simply a matter of a geographically circumscribed ‘place’. Even though the idea of an existentially defined ‘place’ certainly has constituted one of the articulated ‘intentions’ behind the Free Town, its discursive entanglement has tattered the image. Rather than a plain recuperation of place as a natural

also want to thank my former advisor Kenneth R. Olwig for comments on this point.

7 See Jakob Reddersen (1991).

8 In an article in *Information* with the title “Planen handler om mere en koteletten,” or in English “The Plan is About More Than the ‘Chop’” (referring to the chop-like shape of Christiania from above), the Danish architect Jens Arnfred expresses the opinion that one of the biggest threats against Christiania is its potential “self-normalization” – a normalization from within where an unengaged attitude towards its spatial reproduction is combined with an increasing convenience, a kind of stupid self-sufficiency that step by step will undermine the area’s legitimacy as a free town. See Ulrik Dahlin “Planen handler om mere en koteletten,” *Dagbladet Information*, April 15, 2005.

category of unified identity and wholeness, Christiania has twisted its nostalgic content and put it into play.

In my discussion of Christiania, I have therefore chosen to describe how the Free Town has emerged, not as a reaction against, but as a direct function of urbanization and spatial aestheticization. On the one hand, Christiania appears as a direct consequence of the early critique of urbanity as an intensified but interiorized *nervous life*. On the other hand, Christiania produces a rupture also with such a critique. Given its emphasis on the desire to “freely unfold”, it constitutes a space that generates a more out-reaching intensification – a heightened awareness also of an explicitly social life of embodied action.

Following Christiania’s discursive undoing of place, I have chosen to frame my spatial discussion in terms of four aspects of critical aestheticization. These aspects, all of which touch upon the totality of representation and reproduction that characterizes human spatial agency, are designated as *unsettled grounds*, *disseminating reproduction*, *narrative consumption* and *liminal -scaping*.

Firstly, the ‘unsettling of grounds’ refers in this sense to the critique of a phenomenologically defined concept of place and its repression of the role of the political. As placial *theft*, Christiania has contested the normative idea of a ‘place proper’, and the idea of a natural ‘belonging’ related to a cognitively given ‘dwelling place.’ My critique has in this respect first and foremost addressed the academic function of this idea, especially as expressed in the notion of *genius loci*, ‘the spirit of place.’ This idea of a place grounded in a transcendental *sensus communis* has here often resulted in a reactionary aestheticization and a manipulative psychologizing of illusion, veiling a political situation of conflicting interests.

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The second unfolding takes place through a re-interpretation of the linguistically-oriented phenomenology of Heidegger. In this context, this re-reading functions as an intermediation between a transcendently grounded ‘place’ and an idea of ‘space’ as an extension cleared for reproductive practices. Through the *disseminating* movement inscribed in the Heideggerian notion of ‘thrownness’, a different conception of space unfolds, one that places human action in its origin. This dissemination leads on to the designation presented by Henri Lefebvre of space as the everyday propagation of representational practice. Rather than space *a priori*, this is a space repeatedly *produced* through discursive practice. The Lefebvrian analysis of urban space thus answers to a critical ‘undoing’ of existential place that concerns its status as physically-defined geographical location as well as transcendently-derived eidetic image.

The third spatial aspect is perhaps the one most explicitly exemplified by Christiania. A further development of the Lefebvrian theme, place here opens up onto a space of *narrative consumption*. Consumption should in this respect

be understood as 'use', as an alternative production making use of a spatial surplus, all that which is not defined by a 'meaningful' place. In Christiania, this has more concretely been articulated as the performative tactics lacking a 'place proper' – the informal uses developed 'despite all' – a narrative recycling of an urban surplus, a development of hybrid spaces, a consumption of architecture as event. These 'telling' uses also describe a shift from a phenomenology of place to a *spatial rhetoric*, to a logic based on continual *spatial articulation*. Designated by de Certeau in terms of *enonciations piétonnières*,<sup>9</sup> a 'wandering rhetoric', this articulation constitutes a composite of spatial figures or *tropes*, which reinforces a *phatic* character of space, its unfolding first and foremost as mediating extension for its own sake; a participatory and communicative *faire-avec*.<sup>10</sup>

The fourth tactical aspect is constituted by the composite –*scaping* of Christiania on a more imaginative level. As I have repetitively emphasized, Christiania is not only to be understood as a physically manifest, geographical place, but perhaps as much as a discursive propagation with more extended ramifications. Extending *phatic* consumption to a wider media-scape, Christiania also plays an important role in an imaginative locality production, which, in a global and transient economy, takes place 'against all odds'.<sup>11</sup>

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Unfolding as a *liminality* in the city, a borderline area or a polyvalent zone where unintentional transformation can take place, Christiania has contributed to a radical dissolution and displacement of identities, positions and properties. I argue that this displacement has had a reflective and activating effect not only in the local context, but on urbanity as such. Through the spatial agitation caused by Christiania, the royal city eventually transforms into an urban field, a mediating land-scape. This is a landscape that defies superficial 'landscapization', or what de Certeau has called the "political freezing of the place,"<sup>12</sup> instead unfolding as "the imaginary landscape of an inquiry"<sup>13</sup> – a discursive landscape, which restores what may be called 'popular culture', the propagation of everyday narrative practices, which continually transforms the historical matrix of places into "an infinity of mobile tactics."<sup>14</sup>

That urbanity should acknowledge within its confines a liminality such as Christiania is perhaps not all that controversial. However, what Christiania has made clear is that such acknowledgement not only concerns the circumscribed

9 Michel de Certeau (1980:148).

10 Michel de Certeau (1980:50).

11 Arjun Appadurai (1996:181).

12 "...il [in this case *le récit*] travaille au gel politique des lieux..." Michel de Certeau (1980:188).

13 "Le paysage imaginaire d'une recherche" Michel de Certeau (1980:67).

14 "une infinité mobile de tactiques" Michel de Certeau (1980:67).

legitimizing of an exceptional 'Free Town', but requires a rethinking of urbanity as a whole. Rather than a distinct association of physical and cultural *forms*, the urban landscape is constituted through situational agency. In this respect, Lefebvre's spaces of representation, de Certeau's *narrative consumption*, and Appadurai's imaginary locality production, all constitute attempts to articulate a spatial approach that embraces also the active, non-finalized and formless, rendering to this superfluous dimension of space an intermediary function.

## Power Undone: Towards an Empowering Urban Jam

A spatial conflict of interest, Christiania most certainly constitutes an actualization of the urban landscape in terms of *power*. As an illegitimate re-appropriation, it already initially staged a critique of subject positioning in relation to representational regimes. It questions the validity of ideologically formulated notions of 'common grounds', and it develops subversive modes of uses 'against all odds.' Furthermore, as a social experiment deviating from the general norm, it has also, which is no less important, interrogated the decompressive and aestheticizing strategies of the modern Welfare State.

In my discussion of Christiania and its disturbance of urban geography, I have taken as a point of departure the relation between aesthetics and power. Here the aesthetic challenging of power as articulated by Surrealist Georges Bataille and Situationist Raoul Vanéigem constitutes an important point of departure. Actualizing a subversive *formlessness* of recombinant meaning, Bataille's thinking in this respect provides an undoing of power from an aesthetic point of view. In his polemical poetics, Bataille furthermore revealed the incarcerating effects of normative aesthetics, its functioning as a 'lexical prison' mutilating human expressivity. The alternative for Bataille was an aesthetic activism 'bringing down' or *horizontalizing* the edifices of power, further a basic *materializing* of representative form, and finally disturbing a governing intentionality through the staging of *transgressive play*.

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During the urban uprisings of the sixties, the Situationists further emphasized this aesthetically formulated critique. In his polemical *Treatise for the Young Generations*, Vanéigem targeted not only an emergent market economy, but also the normative life-politics of an aestheticized welfare state, primarily as expressed through urban planning. With the point of departure in a threefold analysis of repressive power as *constraints*, *manipulation*, and *seduction*, the Situationists developed a triple strategy of *savoir-vivre* building upon the abilities of (impossible) *participation*, *communication*, and *realization*. Emanating out of a similarly expressive critique of normalizing power, Christiania has likewise aimed at differentiating stereotypes and imposed norms. With parallels both to the *base materialism* of Bataille and the *savoir-vivre* of Vanéigem, Christiania has developed through concrete realization of exchanges, forces and desires, thus challenging the idea of a unified common place and a normative sets of values.



When Christiania takes shape in the early seventies, it consequently aims as much at a differentiation of the unifying and governing idea of commonality as it targets an all-embracing capitalist economy of seductive 'spectacle'. In Denmark, the idea of a common ground as a basis for a common economy furthermore historically originates in the idea of *fælleskab* or *folkelighed*<sup>15</sup> – a natural and popular, political community closely related to a national 'Danishness'.

A community seen in terms of exchanges, forces and desires, furthermore reacting upon a representative regime of popular commonality, quite logically becomes an object for analysis in Foucauldian terms of power. In this respect, Christiania has been as important for the understanding of Foucault's concept of power as has Foucault for the understanding of Christiania. Power, for Foucault, is exercised, yet in our contemporary society not necessarily through physical violence or explicit laws, but through discourse, through representational regimes. The 'normalization' process of Christiania in this sense represents an apt example. A leveling force working through the imposition of historically and aesthetically motivated matrixes, it unfolds as a *bio-political* praxis, a regulatory composite of actions with the implicit aim of governing social and cultural reproduction. In his analysis of power, Michel Foucault used the metaphor of the *panopticon* in order to discuss how the bio-political governs space. As the invisible and surveying eye, power is incorporated with our own lives through the representational system to which we are subjected. Spatially distributed and ubiquitous, power still operates on a material level of particular bodies, with the explicit objective to keep everyone in their proper place.

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In my approach to spatial power, I have tried to show the influences in Foucault from aesthetic activism, and similarly how Foucault's further development of this aesthetics of power in turn inspires activist movements. The Situationist understanding of urban planning as repressive prevention is in this sense closely related to the panopticism of Foucault. Similarly, the construction of *savoir-vivre* as an activist program for resistance is a parallel to Foucault's development of "the care of the self" where the body appears not only as a locus for repression, but also for creative opposition and empowerment.

In this way, Foucault's thinking constitutes a link between the aesthetic activism formulated by among others Bataille and the Situationists, and the urban activism of Christiania. Never explicitly articulated or resolved in Foucault's own thinking, the undoing of power finds a 'solution' through the development of the aesthetic category of *play*. The ludic principle constitutes a socio-material counter-tactics, a social set of actions operating on a basic, material level in relation to the horizontal politics of bio-power. A deliberate navigation in relation to power, Christiania has similarly developed playful and manipulative tactics of responsivity/response-less-ness, spatial amassments or material disturbances.

15 See de Certeau's comment on N.E.S. Grundtvig in Michel de Certeau (1980:195). See also Signe Sophie Bøggild (2005) "Christiania/Christiania".

The performative effect of the tactical play with the horizontal, the bio-political, and the material, is the *urban jam*; the improvised yet reproductive formlessness of power understood as empowerment. The provocative and transformative reciprocity of the *jam* should in this respect be related to other contemporary kinds of local yet formless and temporary disturbance tactics; practices that in a similar way have unfolded as reactions to changing formations of power. These are all tactics of *base materiality*, tactics of 'bringing down', clogging up or disturbing an all-pervasive economy of flow. Nonetheless, staging a sluggishness of a very moldable and dynamic kind, culture jammers, like the inhabitants of Christiania, are conscious and discursive agents, not only restricted to local squatting or seizing of circumscribed places, but using a broad range of externalizing, spatializing and intermediating practices in what could be seen as a mass-mediated *-scaping* that entails also global mobilization. Like an urban jam, the modifying mess and message of the Free Town has emerged wherever power has left a vacancy for potential re-appropriation.

The metaphor of the urban jam is in this context first and foremost polemically related to the governing and homogenizing structures of a conventional planning discourse. Playing upon gaps and crevices in the aesthetic formation of power, the urban jam of Christiania entails a bringing into consciousness of the spatial workings of power, turning them into empowering potentials. As in the musical jam, playing explores what planning has left out; the composite of improvised passages, of singular achievements, of particular happenings in a space of potentials. An intensified and informal interplay, the urban jam, as staged by and through Christiania, constitutes a creative composite of singular contributions, furthermore with the potential of displacing and entirely consuming the leading theme.

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The urban jam staged in and through the Free Town of Christiania has consequently constituted a counter-movement, a creative sluggishness, but also a generative force in relation to the city as such. The jam is an urban tactic reinforcing the performative qualities of the urban landscape, thereby transforming the city from a subject-object constellation to a *situation*; a performative, spatial event, releasing both subjects and objects from their submission to a given form. The urban jam is thus a figure establishing an intermediary space, realizing a shift with repercussions also on urban aesthetics, from cognitive *form* to performed *embodiment*. In a more specific planning context, the strategic rationales of the *plan* are thereby countered by the ludic tactic of the *jam*; an engaging and consuming means to deal with a multiple reality – a means beyond measurement but somehow within the range of imaginative and physical reach. And even though this is on one level without doubt an aestheticizing posture, even (to a certain extent) an irrational and romanticized fantasy, it is on another level a fantasy that cannot, even with the most efficient methods or arguments, be excluded from the human multiplicity that constitutes contemporary urbanity.

With this study, my aim has been to introduce a 'critical aesthetic dimension' into the urban discourse, and this with the help of a contested 'Free Town'. What I in different ways have asked throughout this work is a composite question: What can an improvised squatting initiative tell us about the role of expressive, aesthetic action in relation to such an intentional practice as that of urban planning? My answer has been that it can tell us a lot, not least through its simple actualizing of the fact that there is always a 'more', an even greater 'lot', a horizontal, material and discursive abundance that we, as practitioners and participators in an intentional field of practice, should, and must, acknowledge.

The reader looking for unambiguous solutions and categorical formulas will however probably be disappointed. If there is a general elucidation in this work, it is the one that 'urban solutions', just like the everyday urban landscape, should have few general rules, but much specific potential. This also raises the principle dilemma of urban planning: as a practice oriented towards projective overview, it has difficulties handling the abundance and unpredictability of a performative reality. What Christiania has made clear is the fact that in the in-betweens, surplus spaces, passages and vacancies, there is a profusion of life that cannot be submitted to planning but that, nevertheless, constitute a necessary leeway for creative reconsideration. As such, these relational spaces become public spheres in the deeper, non-proprietary sense; spaces that have no properties and no forms and therefore, on a very direct level of action, are experienced as *free*.

A subsequent dilemma is thus that planning, in its conventional interpretation as a 'strong' program, ultimately constitutes a barrier to the development of a planning *practice*, a practice which, like the activism of Christiania, unfolds as open discourse, as dialogic undertaking. In order to become 'strong', planning ought to 'weaken' or 'un-do' itself, to become a soft *art-de-faire*, with its sources or codes of decision making open for scrutiny and modification. Such a 'planning' practice would not lean on epistemic truths, eidetic images or formal solutions. Instead, it would be confident in its function as a basic cultural play.

Another dilemma, one that is also relevant in relation to a symbolically influential Free Town, is that there is no unbiased, non-political planning and design. Even though planning is a public service, there is no objective planning, no normal planning, no neutral planning, aside from those who actually plan. As such, planning is by default an expressive performance, an aesthetic, discursive practice, operating through the representational forms it has itself created. Facing an increasingly complex, spatialized and aestheticized media-scape, an issue such as this needs more attention. The problem of planning and urban design is in this situation not that they are redundant practices that have lost their relevance, but that there is considerable confusion as to their roles

and functions in an aestheticized world.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the problem is not so much that planning produces and organizes positive forms, which certainly also constitutes an expressive potential, but that, as expressive practice, it remains so insensitive to its own aesthetic presuppositions. This is a thoughtlessness that, as we have seen, strikes the very ability to handle and understand its own secondary products – the abundant surplus, the ‘negative’ formlessness, that, paradoxically enough, constitutes both its own critical and creative reserve.

What Christiania, as the *as-if* space of urban narratives, has clarified, is the fact that urbanism and aesthetics are two aspects of the same human exteriority. Releasing aestheticization from its strictly representative duties in relation to the urban landscape, it transforms into an expressive potentiality, a context-generating excursion, an empowering play with Others and Elsewheres. ‘The urban landscape’ is not simply a question of how ‘reality’ should be interpreted, represented and adapted to societal standards, but, more importantly, a question of how – on a basic, everyday level – it is practiced, consumed, performed and transformed.

In this respect, I have seen Christiania as an experimental realization of an alternative *aesthetics of tactical formlessness*; in other words, of a relational and aesthetically informed ethics, an out-reaching and interfering practice that will not let itself be reduced to one or the other representative ‘property’, ‘identity’ or ‘form.’ It is my conviction that Christiania’s ‘undoing’ of a normative aesthetics in this way has seriously actualized the dangers associated with a natural and ‘intimate’ normalization of common, urban space. The Free Town plays an important role as an active reminder of the simple fact that, in order for a vital urban landscape to unfold, there has to be room for a ‘more’ – more than residents, more than forms, more than monuments. What this ultimately calls for is an even wider recognition of superfluous spatial narratives, of drifting wanderers, of redundant players and deviating thieves – all of whom will contribute to the articulation of an unpredictable and heterogeneous future-present.

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# Appendix I

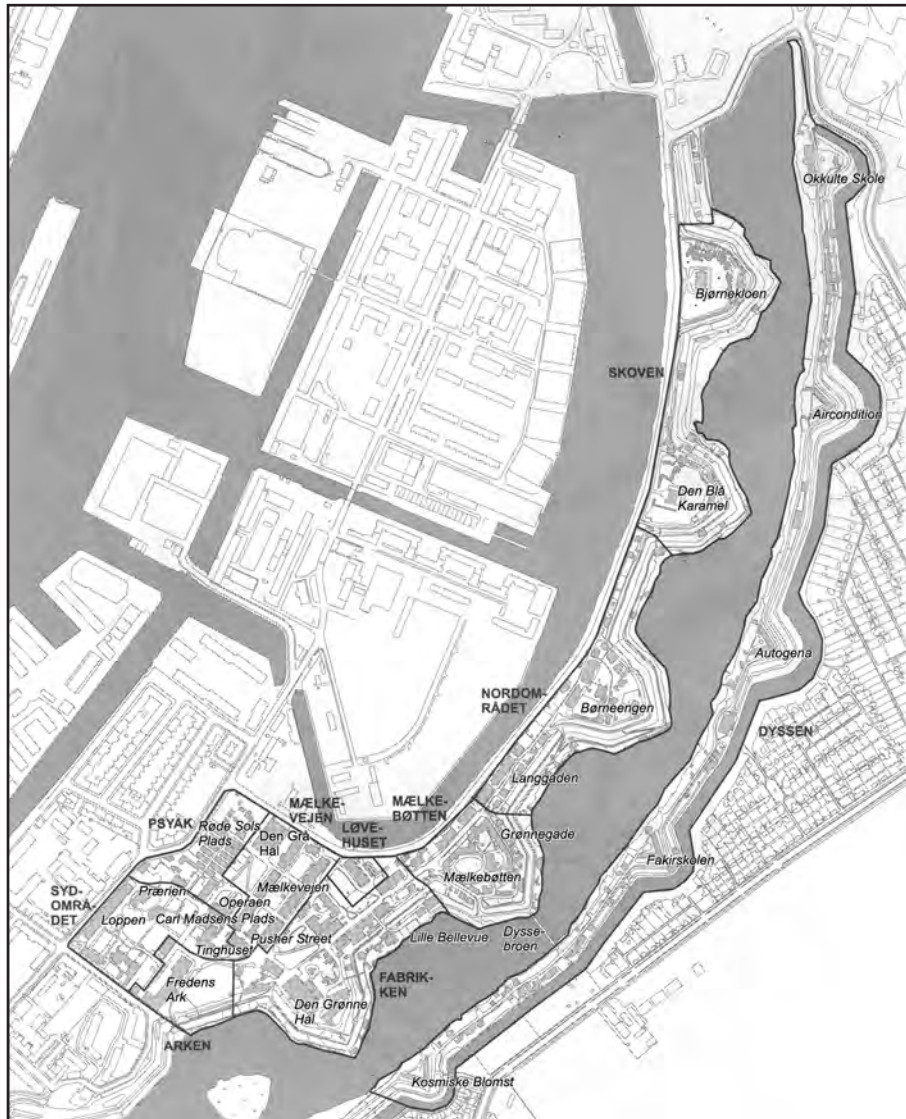


Fig. 28

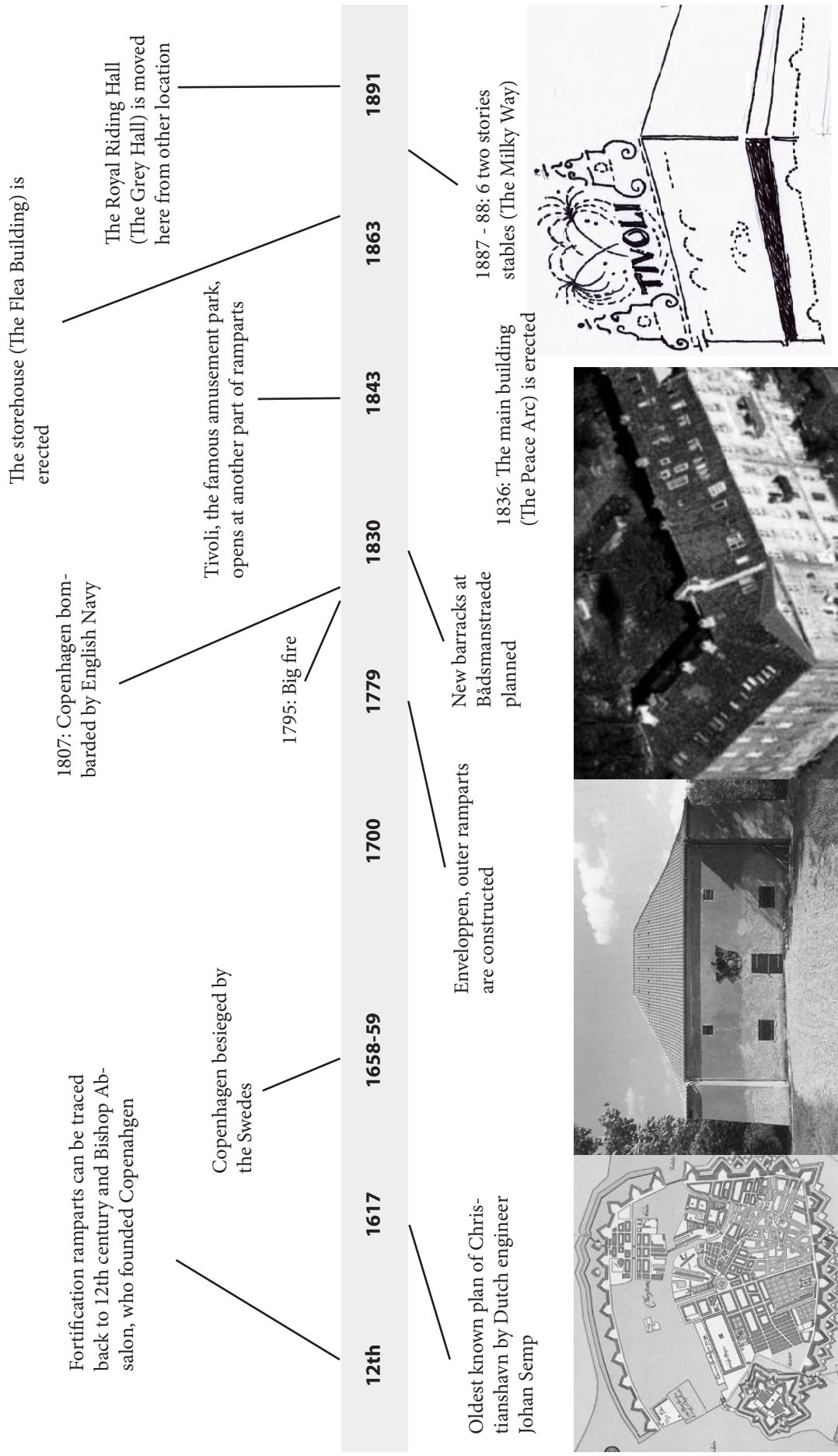
Map with current Christiania names (from Helhedsplan for Christianiaområdet/ General Plan for the Christiania Area, Christianiaudvalget/The Christiania Committee, 2003.)

## **Appendix II**

### **Timeline**

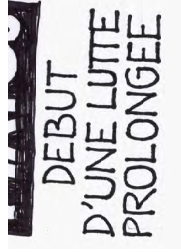
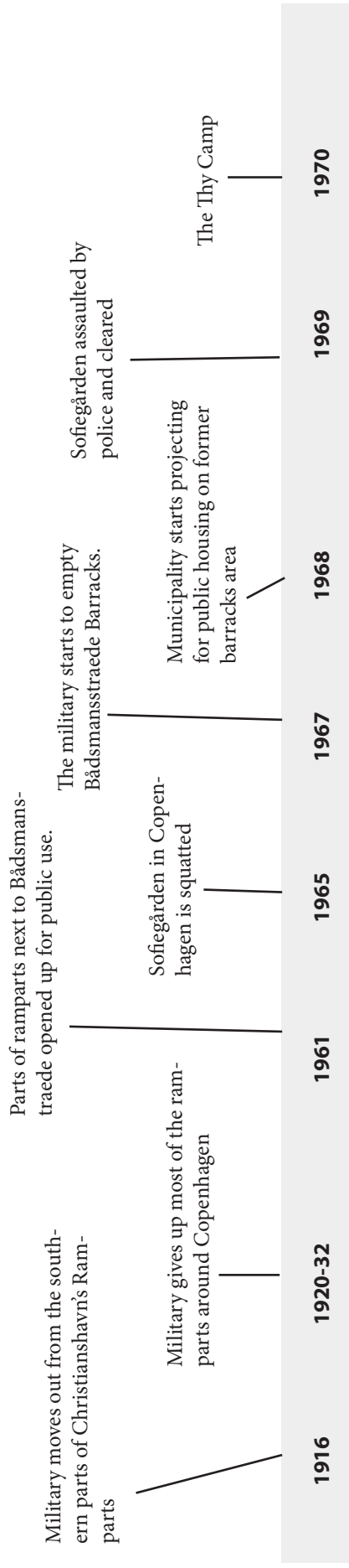


# Timeline Christiania

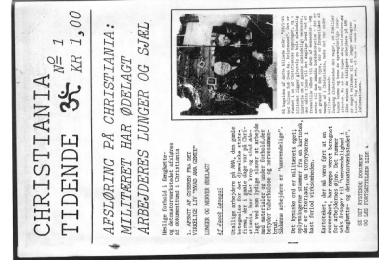
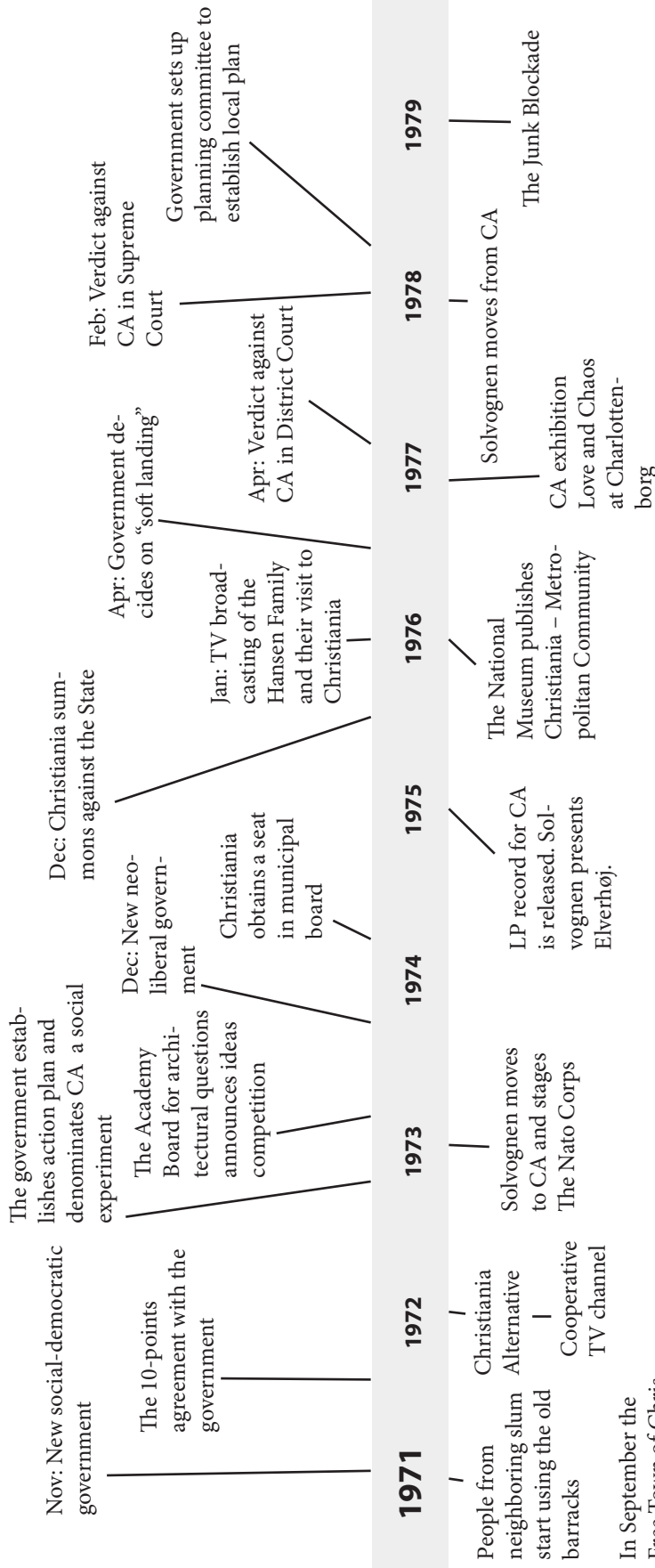




# Timeline Christiania 60s

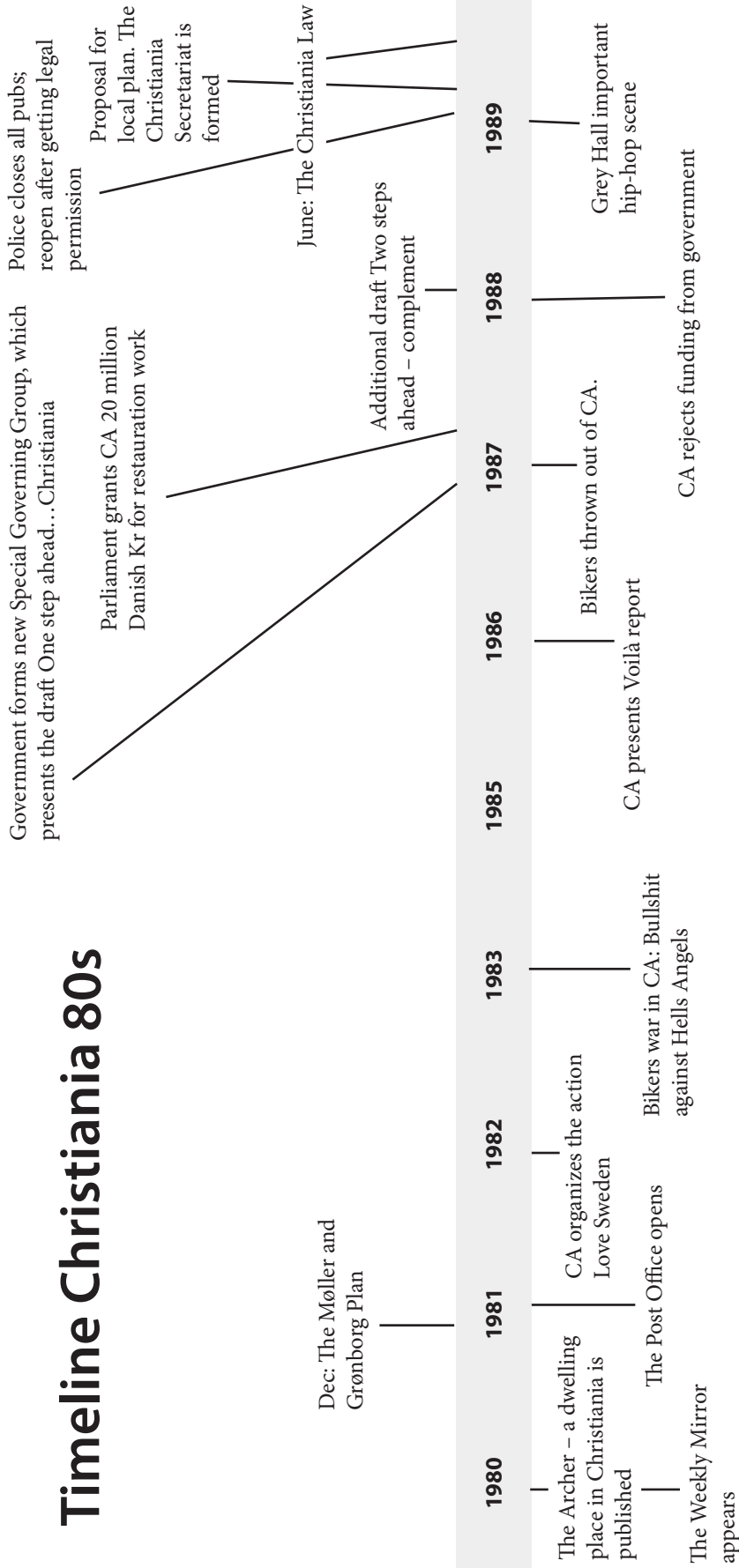


# Timeline Christiania 70s



3-days music festival, first publication Christiania Times, followed by The Word Splitter

# Timeline Christiania 80s





# Timeline Christiania 90s

The National Archive establishes  
Christiania archive

Police campaign against hash  
market

CA and the Ministry of Defence  
present joint developmental plan

The Local Plan presented

1990

1991

CA presents The Green Plan

CA's Girls Corps is founded

The movie Christiania you have  
my heart

1992

1993

CA publishes additional  
Developmental Plan

The first new common  
building is erected in CA

1994

1995

Flourishing cultural life:  
huge concerts in the Grey  
Riding Hall

CA's own currency  
1 LØN ≈ 5 Euros

1996

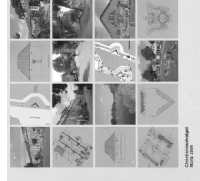
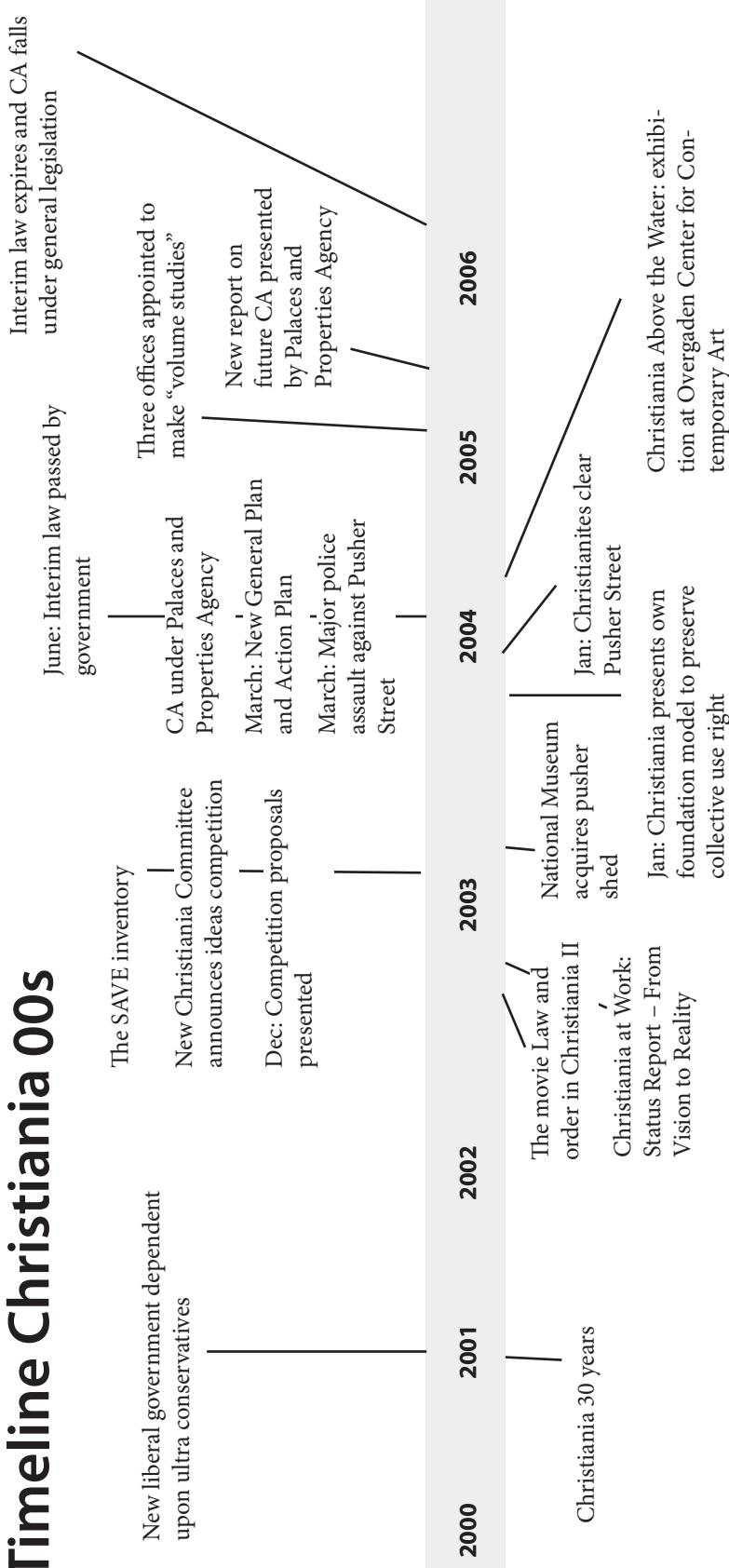
1997

New bridge over the  
moat built by German  
craftsmen

1998



# Timeline Christiania 00s





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