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PUBLISHER

George Georgiades, Athens
georgiadis.mail@gmail.com

EDITOR EMERITUS

Dennis Cokkinos, Athens

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white European populations are diminishing, and generally the demographic samples are not propitious. In this way "Europe is coming more and more to resemble a hospital", in contrast with migrant formations where the fertility rate is higher.

Thus, instability is a common feature of our everyday life. At present the unprecedented damage caused by Covid-19 requires a new and effective policy response

to the everywhere-present and surviving instability. The pandemic increases, and apparently expands, the already-existing unstable and vulnerable world existence.

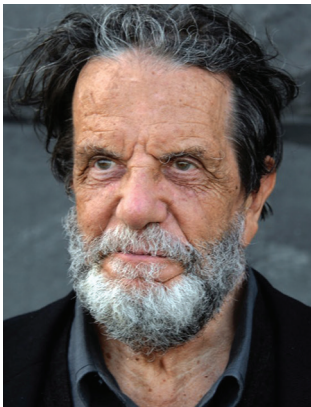


Phase Transitions: Visions of the Future

Massimo Pica Ciamarra

Editor-in-Chief "Le Carré Bleu", *feuille internationale d'architecture*

Email: picaclamarra@pcaint.eu



Massimo Pica Ciamarra

This article is a follow up of "Phase transitions during the second half of the twentieth century" that appeared in Bull Eur Assoc Prof Emer 2020; 1(5)

Two centuries ago, living environments appeared as "second nature aimed at civilian uses", a famous phrase that almost anticipates

that of the late 1800s: "if nature had been comfortable, humanity would never have invented architecture". The Vitruvian triad for many centuries has conveyed building principles suitable for a society that was evolving with some discontinuity, but with substantial continuity, at least until the start of the industrial revolution. Since then, the sediments of human activities have become increasingly important; there is a reduction of biodiversity with progressive homogenisation of many factors; there is an impetuous and unprecedented demographic acceleration: compared to that time the world population has almost increased tenfold. This time - now identified as "Anthropocene": of long duration, though very short on a geological scale; it is characterised, however, by growing inattentions and it is responsible for the strong environmental degradation and the spread of the current pandemic that the world of science does not see as an isolated phenomenon, but considers replicable.

The need therefore emerges for a "phase change" and mental changes that push towards a substantially different

action in view of a fairer, more ecological, social structure. As for the transformations of the territory and living environments, a substantial question is to abandon the era of separation in view of that of integration: Buckminster Fuller considered it impossible to change things by fighting against existing reality: he therefore suggested making reality obsolete through the introduction of new models. (1)

An increasingly essential mutation informs the manifest- issue (2) which starts the current phase of "Le Carré Bleu". For centuries, the autonomy of individual projects has been supported by the triad *Utilitas / Firmitas / Venustas* (Utility, Strength, Beauty). Today every aspect and every component of any construction is regulated by pleonastic and cumbersome regulatory systems, a legacy of the functionalist approach. Whatever the scale - a neighbourhood or a built complex or even an individual building - it is essential to consider each project as part of a whole, no longer autonomous. Any project is only a fragment of the Environment (emergency and planetary question) and of the Landscape (no matter whether natural or artificial. It identifies the culture of the community that inhabits it; and the specific context in which it is included, which - especially in our realities - is a set of physical stratifications and an intertwining of collective or individual memories).

Environment / Landscape / Memory is a triad substantially different from the previous one: it frees

1. Sieden S, A Fuller View - Buckminster Fuller's Vision of Hope and Abundance for all, p.358, Divine Arts Media. 2011.

2. "Fragments / Symbiose", Le Carré Bleu, *feuille internationale d'architecture*, n°0/2006 www.lecarrebleu.eu

the individual projects of any misunderstood autonomy, expresses the prevalence of relationships and immersion logics with respect to internal rules. It has a substantial role in the three basic moments of each transformation: programming (the delicate formation of demand, often underestimated); conception (in which it is essential to distinguish the "armour of form" from specific expressive languages); and evaluation (in which the project proposal is evaluated: judging a competition; authorising the project; finally validating it).

In other words, giving priority to relationships means making sure that the sector no longer prevails; it means opposing both the platitudes of the "terrible simplifiers", and self-referential projects, expressions of the selfishness of the clients and / or the narcissism of the designers. Prioritising relationships also tends to avoid urban planning tools whose rules favour isolated interventions and encourage land use; they are expressed through volumetric and useless surface indices; they point to density and social relationships. A new, virtuous model requires that the basic choices of a design -which leave ample room for individual expressive languages- derive from participatory processes: the "real designer" cannot but be a widespread being. All this summarises the principles of a change, of a mutation capable of producing substantial benefits if translated into practice. It will be a long process: it requires actions on training, performance standards, and decision criteria and so on.

The current pandemic will produce a new "phase change". It is necessary to scrutinise its signals, even if weak and without clearly distinguishing what will be suggested by it. The city of the future must privilege again the non-built, spaces of relationship, public spaces available for everyone: spaces interpreting morphology and natural conditions, which strategically use the plant world intertwining its life with that of the inhabitants, bringing agricultural activity back to the urban environment, not only on a larger scale, but also through "urban gardens" and systematic green

coverage of the buildings. At the same time and in the future, every citizen must be guaranteed to be able to easily reach at least one point of the network of "places of social condensation" usefully supported by newly designed schools. Perennial ambitions: for Aristotle – quoted by Bertrand Russell (3) - the ideal city is one that can be looked at from the top of a hill; while for archaeologists (4) cities were born when the space between buildings took on meaning, or rather when this meaning began to prevail over that of the individual buildings that surround it.

Public space is the essence of the Mediterranean and European city: today, in addition to being invaded by parked cars, it is still not infrequently designed with the primary purpose of circulation. Berlin's message from *Internationale Bau Ausstellung* (IBA 1978-87), which among its objectives also had to erase these signs and redefine public space by favouring other factors, seems to be ignored. Of course, the "city of five minutes" is no longer a mere slogan, it is starting to materialise even in large urban realities. Therefore, alongside the theme of the public space - with its ability to promote identity and places of social condensation - there is a need to experiment with new requirements for the built environment which, moreover, under the strictly economic profile, determine significant added values. Even for housing - over 80% of the global build - spaces without constraints in the internal organisation are to be hoped for, highly modifiable perhaps even in the facades or in the position of the, now indispensable, loggias. Maybe making it possible for

the car to reach the floor, even if not with the futuristic hypotheses launched by Edward Grinberg in the 80s / 90s. (5)



Magazine Cover: *Fragments / Symbiose*, n°0/2006
www.lecarrébleu.eu



Magazine Cover: *Criteria for Urban Spaces*, n°1/2015
www.lecarrébleu.eu

3. Russell B, *Wisdom of the West: A Historical Survey of Western Philosophy in Its Social and Political Setting*, ed. Foulkes P, London Macdonald.

4. Whitehouse R, *The First Cities*, Phaidon Press Ltd; 1st ed. 1977

5. Grinberg E, *Le projet voiture-ville* in *Le Carré Bleu*, feuille internationale d'architecture, n°3/1988, pp.42-53 www.lecarrébleu.eu

A “phase change” will concern the very idea of periphery, synonymous with something different, not a geometric question. What is a suburb if not something that has been thought of as a separate part, often characterised by mono-functional enclosures and the absence of monumentality, sometimes equipped with superabundant equipment and services compared to other parts of the city - deprived, however, of the ones rare on an urban or metropolitan scale - in any case, an area which in the end, in its entirety and in its components, presents itself as the sum of monads without relations between them and with the system as a whole. The current issue is to regenerate them, ensuring densities such as to guarantee intensity of social relationships, co-presence and an acute mix of different activities, expressive diversity of the built, space for stratifications, multiple identities of the parts and giving characters to places, to the non-built, avoiding the boring alignment of building units and homogeneous typologies.

The suburbs are inconveniences to overcome, they need profound transformations, that is, a specific “phase change” capable of bringing them back to new centralities or integrating them into the urban and metropolitan system. In this climate, it is no longer possible to consider the peripheries as stable realities. The suburbs deny the “right to the city”, they are a pathology of the territory, a product of the “culture of separation”, as are the blocks at a building scale, as is any transformation of the territory that aims at direct answers to complex problems, independently of overall assessments and of a systemic vision.

The new “phase change” requires a profound change in the way of approaching the theme of the formation or transformation of living environments. It must undermine stale and outdated beliefs, such as the one that there is a distinction between architecture and construction, dangerous because it leads to justify differentiated interests. Any physical transformation of the space affects its quality and it makes no sense - above all it has little interest - to be pleased with the expressive values of a building if they do not affect the relationships that an individual project establishes with its surroundings.

A substantial “phase change” will therefore occur when, having abandoned the pathologies of contemporary building, living environments will no longer transform on the basis of buildings and objects, but will transform using immaterial rather than material relationships. For the historians of the future, we could also be the ones who started an epoch-making turning point: changing mentality, abandoning sectoral views, spreading the systemic vision. Acupuncture is not enough to transform what exists and what continues to be generated improperly: archaeologists, interpreting fragments, try to understand the meaning of what existed; the designers of the future will have the almost impossible task of making sense of sets of fragments that have never had a meaning.



The Past – Building Material for the Future

Lucija Čok

Koper-Capodistria, Slovenia

Email: Lucija.Cok@zrs-kp.si



Prof. Emer. Lucija Čok

As the first rector of the young university in the Slovenian border area and former minister in the Slovenian government, who has been recognised at national and international levels for the development of standards in higher education and one who is committed to the

preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity in the wider region, I was entrusted with responsibilities that cannot be limited either by age or by my actual position. Dynamic interventions in social life, heuristic approaches in research and mentoring young colleagues, provided a positive input and attitude towards the current situation in the world, particularly in Europe. The democratic systems in Europe are currently facing new challenges. Innovation and scientific progress are accelerating and offer great opportunities for economic and social development. Decision-making is therefore becoming increasingly difficult and requires

■ INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

The Bull Eur Assoc Profs Emer is a multidisciplinary journal fostering the idea that the vocation for research and teaching is for life and protecting full use of the human capital of professors emeriti.

The Bulletin adopts the Vancouver style. Authors are invited to visit the website of the Association and read the last issue.

Manuscripts shall be in good English in Word, font 12, with good illustrations and shall be emailed to the editor in Chief, Natale Gaspare De Santo MD.

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Original manuscripts (Word file) around 900-1100 words shall include affiliation(s), email and phone numbers of the authors. A portrait of the 1st author is required. 1 Figure and 1 Table (emailed on separate sheets) and a maximum of 6 references and a minimum of 3 are allowed. References must be numbered and ordered sequentially as they appear in the text. When cited in the text, reference numbers are to be in round brackets.

Manuscripts related to news about emeriti and their associations shall be limited to a maximum of 500 words, and up to 3 references; no portrait of the author is required, but 1 Figure or 1 Table can be added.

All manuscripts undergo editing.

At the end of the article number references consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. For articles with more than 6 authors, list the first 3 authors before using "et al."; For articles with 6 authors, or fewer, list all authors.

JOURNALS

1. *Journal article published electronically ahead of print*: Authors may add to a reference, the DOI ("digital object identifier") number unique to the publication for articles in press. It should be included immediately after the citation in the References.

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2. *Standard journal article*. List all authors when 6 or fewer; when 6 or more, list only the first 3 and add "et al." Abbreviate journal titles according to *Index Medicus* style, which is used in MEDLINE citations.

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