

Introduction

The masterwork [chef d'oeuvre] is unknown, only the work [œuvre] is known and knowable. The master [chef] is the head, the capital, the reserves, the stock, the source, the beginning, the abundance and is in the intermediate interstices among the manifestations of the work. No one produces a work if he doesn't work in this continuous flow whence sometimes comes a form. One must swim in language, dive in as if lost, for a weighty poem or argument to arise. The work is made of forms, the masterpiece is the unformed fount of forms: the work is made of time, the masterpiece is the source of time; the work is in tune, the masterwork shakes with noises.

Michel Serres¹

We know of so many books about the city, in so many veins: engaged, theoretical, demonic, utopian, fictitious, idealistic, dystopian, green, self-reverential, misanthropic.... Our book is none of these. The only thing our book has in common with all of them is a fascination with The City itself. But we are convinced that each era—including our own—has to reinvent *its* City. Our relation to The City is never immediate, it depends upon the indefinite article ‘a’ and a characterization of this indefiniteness. The essence of The City does not resolve itself in urbanism. Cities embody political and economic values and thus—albeit never immediately or directly—also the spiritual values of our cultural identities. Urbanism, by contrast, turns into something akin to a landscape—an increasingly global landscape which doesn't settle around different ecological compartments where correspondingly it articulates itself according to relevant climates, but arranges itself in such a way that everything circulates within it, creating a dislocated, over-powerful, faceless centre: what some people have called a lone singularity. Urbanism proclaims itself in terms such as ‘green city’ and ‘urban farming’, promising a satiate land of plenty in return for geo-engineering. Sustainability is to become the uniform characteristic of everything urban. A paradise. Globally adjustable, tuned to the given parameters, free of any particular quality, uneventful and lasting.

This book seeks to invert the perspective and to learn to see, instead of an empty centre, a centred void. Because what are these cities? Once we spend some time reading and travelling, we are surprised to realise: cities are—and have always been—places where the gods reside. Where the infinite manifests itself, where the immeasurable finds hospitality. Where there is opportunity and the spirit for comedy and tragedy. Today we don't want to hear this any more. It's uncomfortable. It challenges us. Because: cities welcome you—as long as you follow their rules. The City does not express itself by mimicking the continuous cycles of nature. It pronounces its own laws mediately, in articles and paragraphs. Discretion is its principle—if only to preserve a kind of natural continuity that can always make room for the immense. It is

not necessarily benign. Cities transcend the familiar rhythms of the countryside. They are neither conservative nor modern—rather: they are both. They are reasonable and unreasonable, they squander that of which they wish to have plenty. It is a generosity of this daring and speculative kind that they preserve for their own sufficiency. The reality of The City is never just factual. Nor is it ever just fictitious. In a city, nobody can know what the next steps are in relation to what is happening. Instead, these steps have to be learnt and fought for: gained. Each time. Only thus can cities and therefore also the country be cultivated. Cities are the embodiment of our cultures.

And so we look around and we are outraged: about the cultural angst, about the theoretical foreshortenings and the economic needs that are being talked up in despondent tones. About the anonymous demand that ignorance be credited with innocence and expertise be liberated from responsibility. About the contempt for intellect and the absence of any celebration and appreciation of intellect, by and large, in our settings of urban convenience. About the power we give to machines and about simplistically assembled statistics; about the factual, the suggestive, the persuasive. About the lack of research, in favour of development.

At the same time though this book is fascinated by a new world that opens up to us through our technologies, and therefore our skill and, in tandem with these, through globalisation. It is fascinated by the breathtaking speed with which our planet is being urbanised: by the possibilities and freedoms that now, as a result, become available to so many more people than ever before: being healthy, growing old, not having to work too hard, being allowed to learn, to travel, having a say...

We do not believe that Cityness—and with it an indeterminate political, economic and spiritual life—is constituted in the flagging up of injustices, in identifying problems, proposing solutions and implementing optimisations. All these are part of an urbanisation that hopefully makes good and rapid progress. Cityness factors in a development which Rem Koolhaas—with sarcasm or humour?—characterises as the interplay of a generic city and a junk space. In doing so he formulates in an overdrawn figure: one can't develop a city by improving it. To us, this sounds just like quantum physics: neither particle nor wave, or rather both. It, more than anything, demonstrates that measurableness, and everything we associate with it, has to be considered an intellectual achievement. Quantum physics shows us that we create our reality in the way we see and measure it. The urban is systematic and balanced, however complexly it might be engineered. But our cities are architectionic. They do not take measures for granted, they challenge them by re-articulating their units, and the magnitudes those units support.

Thus we have put together our anthology, for which we have jauntily and perhaps also somewhat unashamedly picked from the richnesses of our world. We avoid clichés or drastic imagery, we bypass the new or unfamiliar. The book has no concern with completion. It postulates no theory and it proclaims no truth. It is not instrument to everybody's fear. It does not aim to convince, to teach or to persuade. It seeks no following. It's not economical.

This anthology is a declaration of love to thought and the dignity of thinking. It honours the fount, the well of thought that is universal in nature, free of ownership and privileges; thought that belongs to the Earth. It hails both practical and theoretical mastery. It responds to how their challenges do not cease to address us. It maintains that we can learn to understand the forms their values take—by measuring up to them. This book is open, curious, disturbed, outraged, fascinated. It knows a lot, experiences a lot. It is like a citizen of our digital world—a sheaf of intelligible probability and delicate sensitivity, a quantum of City.

The book came about in 2013–2014, during our research residence at the Future Cities Laboratory of the National University of Singapore and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule, ETH) Zürich. Architects and PhD students **Diana Alvarez-Marin** and **Miro Roman** collated the majority of the book's contents. The character and narrative of Orlando was developed and set down by writer and filmmaker **Sebastian Michael**. Our most heartfelt thanks for their fruitful labours towards the realisation of this book.

Ludger Hovestadt, Vera Bühlmann, Zürich, February 2015

¹ "Noise", transl. by Lawrence R. Schehr, in: Substance, Vol. 12, No. 3, Issue 40: Determinism (1983), pp. 48–60

Editorial Note on Text

The texts cited in this book are of the widest variety and consequently stem from a vast array of different sources. In each case, the source is given at the end of the corresponding excerpt, often as a link or web address. Where that is the case, the link will have been active at the time this book was assembled, but obviously no guarantee can be given that this remains so. Faced with so many styles, periods and writings addressed to such diverse original audiences, one of our chief concerns was to honour and respect the authors' individual (or, in some cases, collective) voices, while at the same time presenting the material in a way that is kind enough on the eye and makes for a coherent, if multifarious, reading experience.

To this end, we have taken what one might term a 'soft' editorial approach: We have left spelling and grammar mostly intact, especially where it is clear that the author has made some stylistic choices, or where in the course of publication history a text has acquired a generally accepted, now effectively standard form. The latter applies particularly, of course, to the *Foreword of Masterpieces* section, which, by definition, contains mostly texts of this precise nature. In some of the other sections, especially *Welcome to a City*, we are dealing with many texts that have never before undergone any type of editorial process, and while not wanting to blunt their directness or dilute their inherent charm, some of the idiosyncrasies that on a blog or personal website are simply part of that platform's character, on the printed page and as part of a larger collection can become tiring and quite disorientating. For this reason alone, some careful emendations have been made.

In doing so, we have applied the following principles:

- Irrespective of how titles appear in the original, for the purposes of this publication we have standardised them throughout to Title Case, in which all words are capitalised except for articles, prepositions and conjunctions, unless the title is given in all capitals.

- Double dashes -- (most commonly still used today in North American writing) have been updated to long em-dashes — throughout.
- Obvious formatting errors such as allowing no space after a full stop (...*sentence* *New sentence*...) or two words being strung together without a space (*this wordand that*) have been corrected.
- Where required, conventions have been standardised to the one most prevalent within a text. For

example, where an author uses both / and / when referring to themselves, or starts sentences sometimes with, sometimes without a capital letter, or mixes American and British or International English, emendations have been made towards the most recognisable usage already in place.

- Punctuation also has been corrected and standardised to the author's preferred convention. So, for example, if a word or phrase is opened with double quotation marks but lacks the closing pair, this will have been added in the same style, whereas if an author sometimes uses double, sometimes single quotation marks, without denoting any hierarchy, then the most prevalent style has been applied.

- Except for recognisable stylistic choices, simple spelling and grammar errors have been corrected. Typical examples, depending on context, would be: *there to their*; *it's to its*; *you're to your*; *dependant to dependent*; or, less commonly but equally obvious, for example: *street buggers to street beggars*; and also cases such as: *he think to he thinks*; and cases where a word is superfluous or used twice, such as in: ...*to who you're talking to*, which would be given as: ...*who you're talking to* (but not, incidentally, more strictly corrected as ...*to whom you're talking*).
- In a small number of cases where very obviously a preposition was mistaken for another (rather than a point being made), this was replaced, for example 't' by 'to' where the verb clearly demands 'to'.

- Where words have been added to make sense of a sentence, this, in line with common practice, has been done in square brackets []. It is worth pointing out, however, that some of the texts cited already contain their own editorial emendations, similarly indicated by square brackets: the presence of these should not, therefore, be taken as a certain indication that the text was changed at the point of inclusion in this book.

- Spellings of names or specialist vocabulary have generally been left as found, except where there was either discontinuity (different types of spellings being used within the same piece—for example an author may write *Cosplay* sometimes with, sometimes without capital letter, in such a case the prevalent mode within the piece would be employed, whereas another author might spell the same word consistently lower case, which would therefore be left intact) or incongruence (a type of spelling that seems out of place with the rest of the piece—for example in a description of Paris where *Théâtre-Français* was spelt as in the French language, but without accents, these were added, whereas in a composite text, using various translations, of which some have the spellings *Gorgones* and *Medousa*, and others *Gorgons* and *Medusa*, the names will have been anglicised).

- In an exception to the above, the abbreviations *cm/pm* and *mm/cm* have been standardised to lower case throughout.
- Where an author has clearly made a decision on, or where publishing history indicates as accepted, a particular spelling or convention, this was of course retained. A typical example of this might be T. S. Eliot's

Waste Land, which consistently renders *HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME* without any punctuation/apostrophe.

- Elisions are generally marked (...) for paragraphs or larger sections of text, and ... for shorter sections within a paragraph or sentence. Note, though, that here too some of the cited texts already contain their own elisions, which may follow slightly different rules and may on occasion use, for example, square brackets [...] or similar.

- Certain types of text, specifically screenplays, as well as some song lyrics and poems, ordinarily require, or have originally been published with, centered formatting. A design decision has been taken, in our case, to render all texts either fully justified or aligned to the left margin. This will, in some cases, lead to an unorthodox appearance and possibly in one or two cases also to some inauthentic line breaks. For these we apologise.

- We have omitted some references that appear in source texts, for example to figures, pictures, tables, other chapters or footnotes, unless the referenced content is also reproduced in this edition or otherwise accessible.

Deserving of special note are three excerpts:

In the Kubrick/Raphael screenplay *Eyes Wide Shut*, Szabo says: “*It was the only way they could lose their virginity’s and be free to do what they wanted with other men.*”—This has been emended to *virginites*, although one hesitates to correct Stanley Kubrick, especially on such a subject...

The excerpt of *Macbeth*, as always with William Shakespeare, presents a particular range of textual difficulties, since there are innumerable editions of this play, and none officially approved by the author. Our source is a transcript of the generally highly respected First Folio edition, but creditable editors have since suggested some significant emendations and introduced typographical conventions, which we have partly aligned ourselves with. So rather than numbering the witches 1 through 3, we have given them character names *First Witch*, *Second Witch*, *Third Witch*, as tends to be common practice now. While we have generally retained the early 17th century spellings, we have employed contemporary use of *u* and *y*, again as is mostly applied today in words such as: *Yoon (the Heath)*, or *Houer (through the fogge and fithie ayre)*, which are therefore emended to *Upon and Houer*, as examples. Finally, on this point, we have adopted some of the line allocations and line breaks that have been suggested by later editions, namely the New Penguin Edition of 1967, and others. A similar weight of responsibility comes with James Joyce, *Ulysses*: The excerpt used here is from Chapter 10. Our first source text, in common with many other viewable editions online, in the sentence:

At Bloody bridge Mr. Thomas Kernan beyond the river greeted him vainly from afar

has no full stop before the text continues:

Between Queen’s and Whitworth bridges lord Dudley’s viceregal carriages passed and were unsaluted...

But the capital B of ‘Between’ and syntax both suggest that there ought to be a full stop after ‘afar.’ Furthermore, three printed editions we consulted, namely Penguin Modern Classics 1960, Penguin Modern Classics, Corrected Text, 1986 and Oxford University Press Worlds Classics 1993, also, much as we propose, put a full stop there.

While this seems straightforward enough a case to resolve, it points to a particularly contemporary issue on textual integrity: it’s evident that many of the source texts that one would ascribe to world literature or otherwise consider of significance have suffered corruptions through copying and pasting or, more illicly, more often and more seriously, through scanning.

These involuntary falsifications often percolate and propagate themselves and can then be found in various online renditions. In some cases getting access to an authentic version is comparatively easy and involves no more than a quick search, but in others we went through a considerable number of versions before finding one that verified an original wording that makes sense.

Most of the time, the textual problems caused by scanning are relatively minor. In some cases, though, it can lead to grave misrepresentations: our initial (and referenced) source text for the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*, for example, in Article 17, has:

“Property being a sacred and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it, unless illegally established public necessity evidently demands it, under the condition of a just and prior indemnity.”

when very clearly—and fortunately confirmed by many other available sources—it must be:

Property being a sacred and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it, unless a legally for: unless legally established public necessity evidently demands it, under the condition of a just and prior indemnity.

It is fair to say that, where classic texts are concerned, most, possibly all, of the questions we have come across have been considered at length and probably answered by, and to the satisfaction of, literary experts, whereas, owing to the scope of the task in hand, we have merely tried, wherever possible, to find the most plausible and authentic rendition for inclusion here. And that means there is and remains an inescapable margin of error.

So, while the utmost care has been taken to render the texts in this book faithfully to their spirit and their authors’ meaning, this is not a scholarly edition and it therefore makes no claim to textual authority, nor can it purport to provide absolute integrity, other than in our own endeavour to do all of these texts, irrespective of source and content, justice.

We sincerely hope that this anthology will give you, the reader, at whichever level and to whatever extent you engage with it, the thrill of joy, challenge and discovery that is intended.