RETURNING TO WASTING AWAY

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ABSTRACT: Art and scientific studies have been exploring the role of waste which is no longer regarded as dual, or a shadow of the work, but as space that has the potential to be renewed and transformed. Comprehensive bibliography deals with different kinds of waste and the ways it is produced: waste resulting from regeneration work, empty space which like spots arise from control and project intervention; waste that piles up because it is forgotten.
KEYWORDS: rejected landscape, reserve space, farm diversity, waste, white.

Many of the more recent reflections on cities explain and are based upon two apparently conflicting phenomena: progressive urban concentration and urban sprawl. The criticism, be it architectural or relating to another discipline – from urban studies to socio-political studies – observes the sprawl phenomenon and coins many terms in search of a possible definition for the new structure of the urban system. No longer cities or metropolises: compound nouns such as post-metropolis are used, or even adjectives testifying to the mutations taking place, such as "sprawling city", "city-continent", "generic city", "infinite city", "exploded city", "chaotic city", "urban dust", "ex-city", "sprawltown", etc., are sought. The problem of city growth and concentration came up again at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2006. The title: "Cities, Architecture and Society" highlights, using the study of sixteen metropolises, the problem of demographic pressure on these situations and the need for appropriate urban responses. The rediscovered centrality of cities is seen as another facet of urban sprawl. The centripetal and centrifugal tensions that a city undergoes, determined by economic change and anthropic pressures, point towards a complex, highly structured framework in which global meanings and localisms coexist. As for the European city, one of the factors influencing centrifugal drives was identified in the progressive exhibition in museums of historical fabric. Safeguarding historical heritage through restyling operations has triggered a chain of gentrification processes affecting entire areas in the city. These areas are progressively "emptied" in proportion to the increase in value from building restoration, shifting the housing pressure to more economical areas. Not least, the problem of accessibility is an incentive to build near infrastructural traffic arteries with fast-moving vehicles. The growth then follows the tabula rasa principle, seeking out "empty" spaces to be occupied from scratch. This principle, however, leads to another transforming strategy: substituting parts of the urban fabric, of which there are important examples, especially in Asian "city-territories." Entire settlements disappear in favour of high-density agglomerations or villes radieuses. Using this substitution practice, the city "regenerates" itself with a rhythm that progressively reduces, driven by favourable economic developments. Western and Eastern cultures use two practices that invest what already exists, but in different ways: on the one hand, the restoration of memory structures and, on the other, the total disappearance of entire buildings in favour of "newer" urban models.
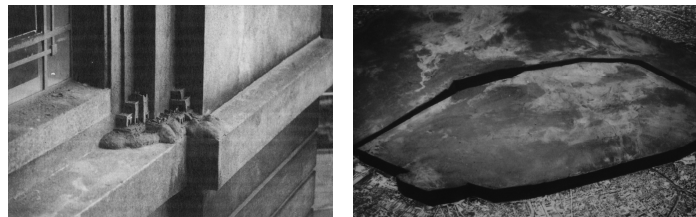

Fig. 1. "The miniature village built by Charles Simonds are in places surprising and vulnerable. Some are destroyed in an hour, some last a few days, but few have lasted up to five years." In Lynch K., "Wasting Away", edited by Michael Southworth, Sierra Club Books, San Francisco 1990.

Fig. 2. Wolf Vostell, "Paris en béton", 1970. Utopias to the ordinary and the radicals encountered in imaginative power that offers the space blank.

Against this background, while parts of cities see their own symbolic role consolidated as exclusive or, in other contexts, the urban system regenerates itself, cyclically substituting its parts, some research looks at the "in-between territories", the white spaces as a possible resource to implement other procedures for use, seeking to develop simple practices, placing them precisely beyond the exception. The terrains vagues, through their uncertain nature, take on an important transforming role. Often seen as an opportunity to maximise property development, they represent possible renewed dialogue between project and city.

Wasting away

Art and scientific studies have been exploring the role of waste which is no longer regarded as dual, or a shadow of the work, but as space that has the potential to be renewed and transformed. Comprehensive bibliography deals with different kinds of waste and the ways it is produced: waste resulting from regeneration work, empty space which like spots arise from control and project intervention; waste that piles up because it is forgotten. Over the years certain areas have appeared and disappeared depending on its appeal. Waste can also arise from a connotation of identity, a condition of being a 'third landscape' defined by Clément as a marginal area which has affirmed itself by cultivating diversity. In considering the etymology of the term waste and its connotations, one reaches the point of reconsidering the role of a project. As Dutch research and events have shown, it is often the first producer that defines areas and borders, and it is also an instrument that is still in conflict with the fluidity of time factor.

The etymology of the Italian term for waste, "scarto", refers to an action capable of defining a space: by placing a part outside you create an inside, an outline excluding a shapeless mass, a boundary, a rule giving rise to exceptions. The two spaces resulting from the separation between what is superfluous and what is necessary have antithetical characteristics: while the former is indeterminate, the latter is distinguished by the planned order or form. The term kosmos refers to an order that also has aesthetic qualities, and, by definition, whatever has been excluded from it assumes disqualifying connotations. The white spaces discarded by the project assume negative connotations resulting from difference and not from the acquisition of a status or identity. "Scarto" is also a synonym for "swerve", "gap" or "deviation".

Various studies in the field of observation and projects describe the nature of "debris spaces" as the result of the construction of a precise plan. They describe a series of phases culminating in the operativity of waste.

In the 1960s Edward Ruscha published "Thirtyfour Parking lots in Los Angeles", a photographic investigation of the city's parking lots. His cataloguing activity produced an atlas of empty places, wide expanses within the city plan constantly awaiting occupation. Ruscha documents these presences, objectively restoring them, and this detachment, combined with the emptiness of the spaces, turns into a critical comment expressed by a simple exploration of the construction mechanisms of the urban system. In this work waste is no longer merely the negative form of an affirmation but takes on the "value" of an element to be read in terms of its repetitiveness: the sampling of parking lots rejects an explanatory approach, reproposing a "typological" vision of the theme. By framing and isolating the subject the photographic interpretation intensifies its anonymity while, at the same time, exploiting the serial nature of the shots to create different, fictional variations on the theme.[1] These spaces without a history, with little forethought or planning, represented objectively, in an almost abstract manner, in their condition of disoccupation, offering themselves up as evidence of the ordinary: repeated intervals raised to the level of words in the tale of a city. In 1967 Gordon Matta-Clark documented "gutterspaces" left over by zoning in Queens; these real residues, real in spatial and legal terms and therefore in economic terms, are the subject of "Reality Properties: Fake Estates"[2]. The American artist builds up his own art object out of the documentation resulting from the purchase of these slivers of land: deeds, land register maps, and photos. The assemblage of these materials expresses the "non sense" of the ordering process that gave rise to "useless" strips of land resulting from division and subtraction operations that nonetheless have a market value. The work highlights two of the

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[1] See also the project by Bernd and Hilla Becher "Grundformen. Industrielle Bauten". This collection of photographs catalogues various types of abandoned industrial building in Europe and North America.
[2] For a more detailed study of the work of Edward Ruscha and of Gordon Matta-Clark see (amongst others) Bois Y.-A., Krauss R., "Formless: a user's guide", New York, Zone Books, 1997.

main planning instruments dealing with waste: regulations and projects. The intensification of planning both within the city and in its hinterland, the double exposure that they may experience, is reflected in the fragmentation of land, the generation of residual zones or of meaningless 'leftovers'.
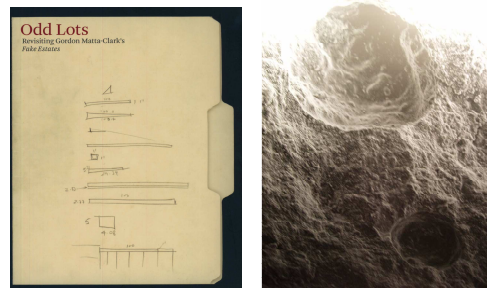

Fig. 3. Kastner J., Najafi S., Richard F., "Odd Lots. Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's Fake Estate", New York, Cabinet Books, 2005.
Fig. 4. "Dust Room", Latvian Pavilion, Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2008. The authors of the project, the artist Reinis Ēriks and the architect Božis Liepiņš, have the room through a splinter of wood, a fragment of plaster and a few grains of dust gathered randomly. All these elements were brought to Riga to be examined and photographed at the Institute of Physics, University of Latvia with a 200-1000x magnification electron microscope. To obtain images of the grains, the splinter and fragment magnified, before shooting, the authors have bombarded them with atoms of gold and platinum.

A series of projects implemented at Leidsche Rijn[3], a vinex location near Utrecht, made it possible to overturn the meaning of the ordering process described above. A few years after the completion of the residential housing there were discussions about the lack of public spaces and, more in general, of places whose function or role had not been defined by the general plan. The absence of urban blurring, of unstable open spatial situations available for shared use, was resolved by the temporary occupation of empty spaces due for construction or areas not included in the project. The case of Leidsche Rijn is not a one-off in the Dutch panorama but the result of a widespread reflection on the construction criteria underlying the planning of new settlements. The fifth national spatial planning document (Architectuur Nota), issued as a white paper by the Dutch authorities in 2000, contains three guidelines responding to the continued population growth forecast for the country: at least half of new settlements should be constructed next to existing settlements; new urban projects must include mixed use developments; incentives must be introduced for the transformation of under-used areas of towns. The rethinking of the Leidsche Rijn settlement took place in this context and responds to the lack of services and of spaces whose use is undefined. These initiatives are rethinking the planning processes introduced by the previous document which led to the construction of vinex, predominantly residential development sites. In fact, the clearly defined plan for this settlement, built, like the others, on the boundaries of private properties, involved a delay in the construction of public spaces and buildings, which were nevertheless undersized. The municipality responded to these "absences" with the temporary occupation of areas due for construction or excluded by the project, the only spaces without a plan or function, to provide the settlement with the "indeterminate" or simply public spaces that usually separate the "city" from zoning. Buildings without foundations occupied these lots to compensate for the lack of "white areas" in the project and supply locations for collective events. In this case "empty spaces" took on the role, albeit temporary, of public areas interpreted as spatial reserves to be used according to daily needs. With their inherently unstable purpose and availability for occupation and transformation, these "exceptional" spaces have proven capable of dialoguing with "planned" spaces, promising fertile encounters between the needs of the urban system and responses of architecture.

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[3] The various projects taking place in Leidsche Rijn are the work of Beyond, an organisation that grew out of an initiative of the Municipality of Utrecht, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DMO) and the Property Development Leidsche Rijn in collaboration and with the participation of the Foundation of Art and Public Space (SKOR). Some of these projects are documented in Allen J., Ibelings H., Koekebakker O., "Parasite Paradise. A manifesto for temporary architecture and flexible urbanism", Rotterdam, Nai Publishers, 2003.

Leaving the white as it is while equipping it with links, relations, significations, mainly means saving land and using what is there: the existent. This approach allows urban planning and architecture to discover a possibility for dialogue where procedures and times regain the upper hand over the plan.

The presence of wasteland and abandoned buildings in ruins represents much more than a mere problem of open space reserves. In fact, it requires prefigurations for a tomorrow that seems particularly distant.

"C'est d'ailleurs ce que fait l'un des peintres, Hubert Robert. Il peint La Grande Galerie du Louvre en ruines, annonçant le devenir qui est inscrit dans le monument, à savoir sa disparition. Comme si le peintre qui occupe le centre du tableau avait la privilège de voir et de nous montrer l'inapparent, qui, néanmoins, travaille le monument, l'amoindrit secrètement."[4]

The abandonment envisaged by Hubert for the Grande Galerie of the Louvre involves a capacity for projection that was erased by modernity. Now that climatic change and various extreme events have shown the total inability of local contexts to cope with such sudden transformations, this image may evoke the need to operate not only by fine-tuning definite data but also by constructing scenarios clearly founded on scientific hypothesis. Thus a ruin, a vestige of the past not brought forward to the present, reminds us how the period of abandonment causes the construction to disaggregate and lose its structural logic. It alludes to the possibility of using a new project to build upon these remnants of meaning and discover new rules of systemic organisation. "La ruine vaut comme une sorte d'héritage inconscient, car elle est là en situation de latence, disponible comme le fil rouge d'une vie passée qui fait signe vers un futur possible."[5]

The ruins of significant pasts inspired a vast body of literature, texts and essays on memory and the melancholy of passing time; now as we move around we can encounter abandoned buildings, spaces awaiting constructions that failed to be built, ruins of an extremely recent past without a role, without a potential use.[6] The evidence of transformation, discontinuity, makes way for the second interpretation of waste as the result of an oversight. In the first interpretation the experiences gathered which read white spaces as the result of an ordering concept made it possible to draw attention to analytical and cataloguing tools and to verify the correspondence between codes and reality. In this second interpretation the project recalibrates and resignifies the interaction between use and time, which is the customary interaction between forgotten places and buildings. With regard to these marginalised realities the project operativity takes the shape of revised transformation processes, of changed perspectives reading waste as an opportunity. In "Junkspace" Rem Koolhaas uses a journalistic approach to describe the difficulties encountered by the "generic city" in its process of decay, delineating scenarios of everyday catastrophes and highlighting the problem of the wear and tear of the diffused city, a topic that has so far been somewhat neglected.

In Germany provisions limiting new constructions had fallout in the architectural debate, also echoed by the curators of the German pavilion at the 2006 Venice Architecture Biennial with the "Convertible City"[7] exhibition. Here too, as in the Netherlands, the transformation of the approach used for local areas influences all construction plans at every level of the project: the focus on re-using existing resources responds to the problem of land use. New functions are created using buildings from the recent past or introduced to them, or in more simple terms, new needs are answered within and thanks to them, and the continuous cross-references between planning of urban growth and architectural reflection bring about a long-neglected synergy between planning tools and the responses requested by circumstances. These transformations are carried out upon forgotten architecture, survivors usually observed with indifference because they do not belong to an "important" history and represent a recently interrupted everyday existence. The planning encounter with these minor realities whose typology are not always compatible with the new functions requested takes the shape of new, clearly recognisable structures. The lack of mediation between the two co-existing realities highlights their articulation and temporal distance. Often, the descriptions of these projects – as in the case of the Kunstbunker project by Index Architekten – state that the decision not to demolish, even when this was possible, and build from scratch, was dictated by economic considerations rather than a desire to confront the existing reality. Once the decision has been made to maintain the object it becomes a source of reflection: the aim is not merely to conceive a selfreferential piece of architecture but to bring

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[4] Lacroix S., "Ruine", Paris, Éditions de la Villette, 2008.
[5] Ibidem.
[6] Augé M., "Le temps en ruines", Paris, Éditions Galilée, 2003.
[7] The exhibition is documented in Gruentuch A., Ernst A. (ed. by), "Archplus", No. 180 (2006).

about and construct connections, to arrange the found space, filling in gaps and exploiting the opportunities present.

Waste becomes an urban implementation device as well as supplying material for new architectural creations without implying linguistic revisions, confirming itself as a "residue", simply readmitted to the space as a case history. The project transforms time into matter describing change as well as into a tool used for construction and to determine the life-cycle of an object, of an environment, making it possible to update the static scenario of contemporariness – static in the repetitiveness of the scansion of its moments (production-consumption-elimination) and in the habitual determination of meaning (positive/negative) – transforming it into a continuous process of evolution. The instrument triggering a revision of the processes that leads to the reconsideration of the role of time and use in the re-interpretation of local contexts and, consequently, of artefacts, is the regulation, the matrix generating waste and the possible survival or transformation of a place.

In fact, not only does the definition of the regulation give rise to waste, this parameter is also the basis for reviewing the meaning of what is residual. The manipulation and re-interpretation of space in both the Dutch experiences and the German "Convertible City" find an element of dialogue or confrontation, or reference, in the regulatory framework.

A weak economy based on "making do with what you've got", against use that often translates into wear[8], can allow you to see waste from a new angle, interpreting it as an opportunity, together with the architectural structure, interpreting it as a device experiencing continuous transformation. A fil rouge runs through and shortcircuits the critical culture interested in the consequences of the final product, in waste as a necessary by-product but not a carbon copy of the work, as well as the panorama of transformations that can be brought about by fine-tuning the regulations.

The final interpretation of waste as an identity factor resulted from the amendment of a regulation. In 2006 the European Landscape Convention ratifies a new definition of "landscape": no longer a lens allowing us to recognise culturally homogeneous areas but a term capable of representing all that is real, including, it is underlined, degraded areas. While the re-signification of existing architectural structures arises from reflections on urban growth and resumes the longinterrupted dialogue between spatial planning and architectural strategies, the new definition of landscape inspires us to rethink the nature of places, and of their construction, and to re-interpret the modifications that they undergo due to the daily activities. Once more a changed code, a rewritten definition, shifts the perspective involved in reading that which is real.

Historically, the concept of landscape, the delimitation of what is landscape 'formally' implied an enclosing process, a frame selecting and isolating the scene, a process of artificialisation whose aim was to contain the indeterminate character of nature. A subsequent phase saw the role of the frame changing: the abstraction of the urban plan enacted by the showcase of Mies Van der Rohe's Neue Nationalgalerie gave the city the chance to modify itself. The immobile architecture in the Miesian "scenes" witnesses and records the transformations of the city which acquire representational value because observed from within. Freed from the rules of pictorial composition the object hovers and changes beyond the glass, the only filter remaining to decline the meaning of landscape. Today the definition of 'landscape' has come to coincide with that of 'area' and the window frame or horizon no longer defines and delimits inside and outside.

We are once again studying constructions, rather than representations, the structures that identify spaces and the actors that qualify them. The role of interpreting 'area', declined by the term 'landscape' and acquiring urgency in contemporary society, describes the meeting and contradictions of points of view and the needs of those using what is real. When looking at cities, citizens, tourists, and technicians require them to assume the appearance that coincides with their own vision, whether "mother" or "tool"[9], thus giving rise to multiple levels of interpretation: "thousand plateaus" multiply everywhere.

The dialectics between determining space, the presence of its boundaries and the continuous accumulation of 'matter' (architecture and humanity) project these realities towards scenarios where the suspended areas awaiting definition, marginalised or trapped between two definitions represent an area of exchange: neutral territories.[10] "Wasting Away"[11] is an unusual book by Kevin Lynch; unfinished at the

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[8] Galimberti U., "I vizi capitali e i nuovi vizi", Milano, Feltrinelli, 2003.
[9] Cacciari M., "Nomadi in prigione" in "Casabella", No. 705 (2002).
[10] See, for example, the "Artificial Arcadia" by Bas Princen describing the search for and occupation of undefined spaces in the Netherlands. Groups of people are shown making use of land where zoning

author's death, it was completed by Michael Southworth, a former student of his. It shuns consolidated structures and contents, and refuses to be enclosed in any kind of specificity because its task is to expand the way waste is treated. At the beginning of chapter six he suggests that the de-development plan could act as an operating strategy for territorial transformation, overturning the idea that projects are necessarily synonymous with increase and considering waste as the "living matter" of the project, an occasion for looking ahead to imminent futures, for planning givenness through operations of subtraction. These theory was put forward by Ungers in the Seventies for the city of Berlin[12] and took the shape of a new green archipelago redesigning the city; the new clear design would come about by exploiting the 'useless' areas. The palimpsest becomes an active surface capable of accommodating temporary programmes and on-going changes to promote the diversification that has always represented the meaning of urbanity as well as of landscape.

The neutral nature of waste and the white colour connoting it endow it with identity given by the sum of the colours that many other places distinguish or choose. White spaces are all those elements that can easily absorb new relations despite their precise nature. Often locked in their lack of logic.

Waste: minor stories and remains

In "The Condition of Postmodernity" David Harvey describes how exposure to microhistories and the right to diversity decreed the end, or possibly the crisis of the modern era. Many of the consequences of this change were revealed in the constant revision of to which the role and structure of the project has been subjected over the past decades. Once again there is a mingling of terms like randomness and practices in response to the great modernist design.

"Once the new architectural practices began to admire randomness, randomness became their essence. The future of architecture takes shape in the intensive needs of living, or in objets trouvés, and it is there that it 'dissolves'. According to Deleuze and Guattari: 'only what is minor is great'."[13]

The modification of the project's scale of reference remains a fundamental issue: the difficulties involved in controlling and transforming the whole clash with the needs dictated by the single individual that are often excluded from all forms of negotiation. In contemporary society the microscale identified by Gordon Matta-Clark with its paradoxical implications – scraps of land continue to have economic value - is an object of attention and of negotiation in the construction of the rules governing local areas.

I believe that "advancing 'by means of discrete objects, minimal movements', by means of 'continuous modifications', is a logical reaction to the utopia of the 'current infinite' characterising 'the project', to its proud claim to be able to conceive – all together and contemporaneously – the elements of defined wholes."

In his essay "Un ordine che esclude la legge" (An order that excludes the law) Cacciari suggests that we operate by means of minimal movements to respond to the difficulties involved in controlling the whole. The title of this text alludes to a text by the same author, also published by Casabella, in 2002, titled "Nomadi in prigione" (Nomads in prison) that ends by hoping that the city may have "orders capable of generating heresies".

"The fact that no organisation is ever completely data (that is, reducible to a datum), that it cannot be considered a closed horizon, like 'withered nature', leads to an essential modification in our idea of 'law'. It thus abandons all deterministic and substantialist aspects to express a range of constructive possibilities, the procedures (or 'rules') of the projection of the organisation in a dimension of possibilities, probabilities and interactions."[14] Cacciari concludes this passage referring to a phrase by Heisenberg "The world thus appears as a complicated tissue of events, in which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby determine the texture of the whole."[15]

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regulations are weaker or not applied.

[11] Lynch K., "Wasting Away", edited by Michael Southworth, San Francisco, Sierra Club Books, 1990.

[12] This project "Cities within the city" developed in its general lines with Cornell University during the Sommer Akademie in Berlin in 1977.

[13] Tzirtzilakis Y., "Verso un'architettura minore", in Scardi G. (edited by), "Less: Strategie alternative dell'abitare", Milano, 5 Continents, 2006.

[14] Cacciari M., "Un ordine che esclude la legge" in 'Casabella', No. 498-499 (1984).

[15] Ibidem.

The vision of the whole, determined by overlapping connections, allows us to see the system as flexible and the rules as areas of interaction permitting constructive possibilities. At this point Cacciari expresses his own anathema based on the construction of orders acting beyond the rules, the structures of the system should become self-governing.

"At this point the 'challenge' facing us (from various disciplinary points of view) could be defined as follows: to build an order excluding the Laws."[16]

In another essay Massimo Cacciari looks at the relation between the whole and the parts, terms for which he again raises issues of codification and regulations as well as focussing on the role of the minimum in the construction of the total.

"Part and whole are phenomena, and the term 'whole' can only be applied to phenomena in a conventional or instrumental manner (like Aristoteles when he defines pan, whole, the quantity in which the position assumed by the various parts does not produce a difference; the term pan underlines the connection between the parts, the harmony of the several, but the concept remains one of quantity or form.)"[17]

The essay aims to show the need for the integrity of the single parts in order to give rise to a whole; the value of the cell in the tissue is vigorously supported in order to substantiate the need for the scale of the project, considered in its widest sense, to begin by defining the smallest of the elements in order to produce the whole. Cacciari concludes by demonstrating, drawing upon passages of now forgotten cultures, that remains can be compared to the exceptional, to the particular, but at the same time to what has been abandoned, so far from the order of form as to be incomprehensible; but for that very reason they represent an occasion for the construction of alterities that go beyond the concept of form.

In his "Simulacres et simulation" Jean Baudrillard dedicates a chapter to remains. This author draws attention to a further aspect of waste that can have consequences as far as the project is concerned: as Michel Serres observed with respect to the relationship between parasite and host in "Le parasite", the relation between remains and the entity that produced them is ambiguous. This is yet another interpretation assumed on the basis of pre-established codes whereby a part is read as a text by virtue of a difference with respect to the project; Baudrillard also underlines that the word "remains" has no antonym. If this relationship is ambiguous then the rest assumes the ambiguity of a mirror, reflecting the characteristics of the surroundings while concealing its own. "Le reste renvoie ainsi beaucoup plus qu'a une parties claire à deux termes localisés, à une structure tournante et réversible, structure de réversion toujours imminente, où on ne sait jamais lequel est le reste de l'autre. (…) dans ce sens on peut parler du reste comme d'un miroir, ou du miroir du reste. C'est que dans les deux cas, la ligne de démarcation structurale, la ligne de partage du sens, est devenue flottante, c'est que le sens n'existe plus."[18]

As he draws attention to the way the line of meaning between the remains and the thing that defines them as such ends up by fluctuating, Baudrillard eventually outlines a scenario where the non-sense of the remains takes over and causes the whole to become indeterminate. Faced with the structure's fluctuating meaning the possibility of summing the parts is forfeited; the monadology described by Cacciari turns into the system's infrastructure. "Or, nous sommes devant une situation beaucoup plus originale: non celle de l'inversion pure et simple et de la promotion des restes, mais celle d'une mouvance de toute structure et de toute opposition qu'il n'y a meme plus de reste, du fait que celui-ci est partout, et se jouant de la barre, s'annule en tant que tel. C'est n'est pas quand on a tout enlevé qu'il ne reste rien, mais quand les choses se reversent sans cesse et que l'addition même n'a plus de sens."[19]

Another point of view is offered by François Dagognet's text "Des détritus, des déchets, de l'abject. Une philosophie écologique" whose subtitle clarifies the position of the author. In these? philosophical writings, the question of the discard and the reduction of the sense of the whole and of the knowledge of what has neither form nor structure describes a geography where some authors compare the shattering of the territory to the proliferation of liberism while others underline the fact that the spaces of non-order are bio-social pockets of freedom, less controlled places allowing the annexation and the cultivation of diversity.

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[16] Ibidem.
[17] Cacciari M., "I frantumi del tutto" in 'Casabella', No. 684-685 (2001).
[18] Baudrillard J., "Simulacres et simulation", Paris, Galilée, 1981.
[19] Ibidem.

Dagognet suggests giving a depth of meaning to what lacks form for the sake of knowledge and to substantiate the ecological value of these real and mental spaces.

This author emphasizes the importance of art in the construction - from Duchamp onwards, but there are earlier trickles of resistance to the construction of beauty - of an epistemology of the discard, in having drawn attention to these other presences and in having experimented various forms of expression.

Dagognet recalls how the cleavage between the incorruptible and the deterioration of matter goes back to Greek thought and how the foundations of the comparison of the place to geometric perfection were laid there and then.

"Le Grecs réservaient le logos à l'incorruptible – aux astres. Aux cieux, aux figures intemporelles de la géométrie.

L'infra-lunaire était déconsidéré, soumis aux changements et à la désorganisation (la perte de soi-même)."[20]

In the essay the mix is suggested as a type of relation between the different elements; this relation, inferred by materials and experimental science, binds together the components by means of relations that are not fixed, in such a way that every element remains recognisable.

"Le tas rejoint « le mélange », - le pêlemêle qui, lui aussi, associe dans sa solution (jusqu'à un seuil de saturation) des composants différents, sans vrai lien entre eux. Et nous reconnaissons cette « mixture » au fait que ses constituants varient et n'obéissent donc à aucune relation fixe (la loi des proportions définies). Nous demeurons encore dans l'univers de l'indéterminé, ce qui retire, ipso facto, à ces assemblages la qualité et le caractère de la maintenance (l'être se définit par son identité avec lui-même, donc sa permanence)."[21]

The author refers to Nietzsche's unfinished work but, above all, demands the centrality of matter and of its rules such as the cut of the material, its imperfection and its metamorphosis.

For this author, looking at what remains, at discarded matter, fundamentally means freeing oneself, elevating those concepts of deterioration that science has always fought against to mainstays, and recognising the role of contemporary art in keeping alive a debate, severed in many fields, concerning the dynamics of the living.

"Pour les artistes contemporains, le déchet signifie moins le résultat d'une décomposition (le nauséabond, le corrompu, le pourri), qui met fin à l'existence de l'objet, que le surgissement des unité dont l'univers est formé. Nous serions en présence d'un spectacle non de mort mais de libération."[22]
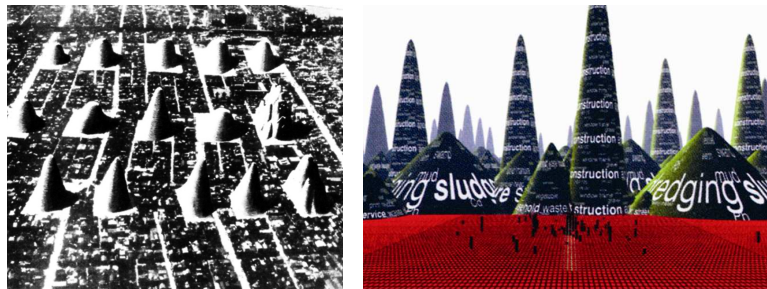

Fig. 5. Archizoom, "Colline di spazzatura per città di pianura", 1969.
Fig. 6. MVRDV, lanscape waste in "Metacity Datatown", 010 Publishers, 1999.

Lynch tackles the problem of the life of objects and of places, ending up by examining the problem of structure and fixed-time use. He reflects on the role of designers and on the fact that they have not only to consider the realisation of the project but also have to demonstrate its flexible use. He goes on to identify spaces which are easy to re-use and those which are harder to adapt to new functions because of their architectural features; open-air parking lots would fall in the first category while multi-level ones would be comprised in the latter.

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[20] Dagognet F., "Des détritus, des déchets, de l'abject. Une philosophie écologique", Paris, Institut Synthélabo, 1997.
[21] Ibidem.
[22] Ibidem.

Although Lynch does not directly deal with the question, the issue of the regulations governing the construction of the architectural structures also arises. The minimum standards for floor heights established for the construction of parking lots as well as the layout of the structural frame designed on the basis of car dimensions - which have in time become rules that are considered economically advantageous for the realisation of buildings - define the marked difficulty involved in accommodating a different use of these objects. The ideal object put forward by Lynch as being suited to a more flexible use has features that are diametrically opposed to those characterising typical buildings in local environments. The presence of abundant open space comes into conflict with a building culture that sees the maximum exploitation of the cubage as the main objective. Moreover, he identifies structures built on seriality and repetition, those closely reproducing the layout laid down by law as not fit for re-use.

Lynch underlines another fundamental question related to the problem time/construction; by highlighting the great re-use potential of large structures and infrastructures, he reveals another discriminating element, that is the scale of intervention. The re-use of large systems is presented as easier if compared with the possibilities of reconfiguration of single objects. This passage allows for two considerations: the first draws on the contemporary problem of tackling major transformations purely for economic reasons; the second question regards the fact that while large abandoned systems are rare, the urgency is represented by ordinary spaces, which are more widespread and silently more invasive in terms of structure. Buildings and abandoned spaces are awaiting new roles and new procedures inviting a reflection on these presences.

Fig. 7. Tony Matelli, "Abandon", Palais de Tokyo, Paris 2009. The work consists of two empty rooms inaccessible in which she grew up, more or less spontaneously, the "mouvaise herbe". Explains the artist: "L'herbe est à la fois une réussite et une erreur (...) Il s'agit de la célébration de l'indésiderabilité".
Fig. 8. "Vides. Une rétrospective", curated by John Armleder e Mathieu Copeland, Centre Pompidou, 24 february- 24 march. "Un musée pourrait etre consacré aux vides en tout genre [...]. Les installations devraient vider les salles et non les remplir" Robert Smithson, 1960.

White

White is the colour of fear, says Melville, and often this fear and this colour coincide with something we know little about, the unknown. White is oblivion, omission. And white can also be silence, a moment of reflection, a pause that is not inaction.
There are three characteristics of white: it is ignored and, as such, it is not governed; it is the forgotten; it is the space between two noises or sounds, the space that acquires an identity, which tells a story and is put forward as a place of potential action.

White coincides in territorial and city design with the space between things, with the space between the lines: it represents the indoors and the outdoors, everything that is not represented by a sign. Two opposites, inside and outside, meet: white absorbs the inexistent dichotomy on the page. Perhaps white is simply space: that liquid entity capable of filtering through and invading any container down to the most minute of interstices.

Some things on a map are white; places in cities or territories with no information provided, assimilating buildings and "empty spaces", white because they are unoccupied, excluded from the design or difficult to portray, discarded. Rendered white by all the colours running together and many designs that are difficult to make out. Spaces shunned by an ordered structure, awaiting reinsertion in the production process.

Some of the residual areas Vasset points out on a map of Paris are white[23]. The author of this diary of the city, entitled "Un livre blanc", examines the possibility of attributing meaning to the lack of information for

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[23] Vasset P., "Un livre blanc", Paris, Fayard, 2007. The map analysed by Vasset is No. 2314 OT issued by the Institut géographique national and covering Paris and the Parisian "banlieues".

these areas; he asks if the colour white found on the map refers to an absence or a reality so pronounced that it is difficult to depict. In order to clarify the meaning of this coding, Vasset explores these vides, or empty spaces, returning to them their complex reality and providing a methodological framework for reading their nature. The relationship that he establishes between the design and experience of the place explains the necessary coexistence of many levels of interpretation in response to the lack of information. Areas being privatised and awaiting new construction, unused public areas: the unstable nature of these discarded urban areas, these residual spaces, requires non-hierarchical archaeological action that can expose the fabric of equivalence and distance, of possibilities, and a system of symbols capable of representing suspension, lack of frequent use and even the lack of attention that is implied. Restoring the stratification reveals the gaps in the evolutionary line, the shifts, the jumps, the moments in which the object changes meaning, thus providing evidence of the transformation.

An oblique look, based on approved parameters on pathology, at the exception or beyond the rule, reveals not the scene but the sequence and logic of construction processes.

"The eye of the archaeologist rests on the discontinuities, the ways in which a culture abruptly thinks differently to how it thought up to that point. When a new episteme bursts in and imposes new rules upon the thinking game, acting as a universal system of reference for its time, it ends up comparing itself to the preceding era but only in terms of difference."[24]

The proof of transformation brings into play the second feature of the colour white and is a condition of temporal suspension, of oblivion: specifically white spaces due to an omission. Vasset, using his experience of empty spaces in Paris, understands the transitory nature of the stratifying uses. He notices illegal activities or activities that are simply deemed abnormal because of their urban context, different ways of life because they are temporary, linked more to precarious structures than the solid foundations of citizen constructions. Spaces in which it is possible to reconstruct other situations, more typical of open spaces, areas where un-designed green lends itself to anybody's design, transitory landscapes.

Oblivion, undefined by definition, emphasises movement, wandering: what is important is no longer moving from one place to another but the state of suspension in the present moment, like in the numerous islands painted by Arnold Böcklin. "Oblivion does not love being, it flows and becomes, passing over the sand and rocks like the hiss of a snake."[25]

These spaces are errant in the sense that this is where time and practice meet and find a common logic in "non-regulation". The pace of the mileage and construction in these areas is so varied, complex and laden, not with formal but with substantial hybridisation. White absorbs all colours without recording the memory of any of them: it encompasses them in a unique nuance.

"I tried, a few years ago, to distinguish three forms of oblivion (return, suspension and beginning), which seemed to me to attest as much to ritual activity as to fictional literature. It is meaningful that these three forms of oblivion have everything to do with movement in space and with travel but that they can also define or put into practice the 'narrative configurations' Paul Ricoeur speaks of".[26]

In the extreme form of this movement, there is the impossibility of return; expulsion. The contemporary condition makes it impossible for us to pause, to be in one place, Nomads in Prison but in a clear contradiction of terms. There is a progression, therefore, from radical suspension to exclusion or self-exclusion to exile. White places, unknown places, fields or seas, such as those scoured by Achab, seeking with no hope of return that same white of the whale, are a marginal condition for establishing new housing, for accelerating change in the system. They reveal themselves like those leaks, those holes, those weak points where practices can exert their own power and request change. In pursuit of Moby Dick, Achab reads the maps of whale movements, studies the sightings of others, traces possible routes, and then he changes them, rewrites them. Like an archaeologist seeks the point of succession between past and present, the layering of events that enable him to identify the new course.

[24] Porro M., "Canguilhem: la norma e l'errore", in Canguilhem G., "Il normale e il patologico", Torino, Einaudi, 1998.

[25] Brusatin M., "Arte dell'oblio", Torino, Einaudi, 2000.

[26] Augé M., "Rovine e macerie. Il senso del tempo", Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2004.