

(n)certainties

The battle of impermanency

Gsapp / Fall 13

Title of the course

Scenario-(n)certainties, the battle of impermanency (Opus 6.3) / **Schizoid 2.0** / Z.O.O.

Preliminaries

The studio will be in the pursuit of the previous Opus (visible on <http://www.new-territories.com/laboratoriesteaching.htm>)

Including materiality of the construction by “computation and robotic process” developed more precisely in this following text and integrating a notion of “life span”, as a protocol of death and life, of “*Eros and Thanatos*”, this new Opus will be the occasion to develop from two novels (High-Rise by J G Ballard, and ZOO by James Patterson, Michael Ledwidge) scenarii and a design process which will stutter between the pathology of an architecture (High-Rise) including the multiple disorder of its inhabitants and the anarchic behavior of the other species from the nature (ZOO). This antagonism, the dilemma, the confrontation (sympathy, empathy, antipathy) between human and animal...will be located in Bangkok, at the place of an existing ZOO (on top of a department store / see pictures).

A trip in BKK on one week (using the studio of New-Territories is planned between the 30th and the 4th of October) / Hotel on Chao Phraya River /

<http://www.riverviewbkk.com/>

Conditions

- Reading or flying in the two novels, at the first week agenda.
- Developing a design scenario as a meeting point between species on High Rise syndrome, symptom, and potential of failure.
- Research within the media culture field about similar dialogue or “malentendu”
- Impermanency of the substances at the base of the emergences, as “things which necrose”...both in the movie and the structure...
- Uncertainty and unachievement (of each individual living part and collective structure), both in the movie and the structure...
- Local negotiation / no global control (on view, on air, on access...) for local adaptation, variability, as a “desirable machine”, both in the movie and the structure...
- Measurement and strategy of colonization (no panoptic references but XYZ positioning /GPS), both in the movie and the structure...
- Strategies of bio-mechanical robot (from low tech to high tech) / strategy of construction...even deconstruction / reconstruction
- Neighborhood protocol (human animal swarm intelligences!)

Situation

Location in BKK ...the site is able to affect the “construction process” or by the specificity of the situation (chemical/morphological/topographical) or by the possibilities to use recycling material of construction from the site (garbage, existing forces and conflicts, transitory substances, anthroposopic exchanges...) or by the (de)-organization of living species, sheltered by the structure. From the machinistic, passing by the chemical to the visceral, some of the processes that the entrant might consider in elaboration of this new Partial-Total Ecology are: screwed, chewed, shat, sweated, swallowed, vomited, pined, secreted, woven, knitted, extruded, staggered, scattered, coagulated, aggregated, welded, pinched, braided, spider-netted, bonsaied, crystallised, calcified, excreted, expanded, branched, pulped, smeared, coagulated, excavated, assembled and disassembled, bended, blended, and their machine picked, spiked, pinched, caressed, embraced, sliced, cut, laminated and loved [list in formation]

Background

The high-rise design projects was a maniac obsessive subject (more object in fact than subject) in the architecture field of this last 10 years. Students, teachers, young architects who pretended to book their posterity were addicted to plan and over design the last Abu Dabi, Dubai, Shanghai, High Rise superstructure, fascinated by the symbolism of the phallic symptom (even twisted, bent, parametrically decorated, with techno windmill on the top, and greenish alibi...).

Could we re-evaluate this naïve “*blind and deaf and mute period*” by questioning the social-aesthetic condition of its own failure, in term of meanings, of “gestalt”, to de-infantilized the temptation to deny the condition of its production (from a kind of childish technoid architect to a Petit Bourgeois-Upper-Middle Class client).

At the opposite, could we negotiate the opening of a Pandora box, from where the design and the disease and the consciousness of the both are contingent, co-substantial? Far away from the gate community delusion, which seems illusionary to protect us against the “savagery” and the alienation of the system, could we protocolize an aesthetic-relationship of antagonisms and conflicts as the substracts, as the substances of the design process?

We will touch a degree of “beaustrosity”, done by co-dependencies, co-relationship, co-pathology between “Mal” and Animal.

We will use narration, computation, 3D print, scenario...to finalize the work through a presentation which could borrow the format of an exhibition.

Program of the “urban structure”

A “politic” small community, both collective and individualistic, as a social and fictional experiment, utopian, dystopian, atopian, as a TROPISM.

Blog

<http://new-territories.com/blog/2013GSAPP-UPENN>

name: user

pass: user

References

- Ballard, J. G., “High-Rise” (Flamingo Modern Classic), HarperCollins Publishers.
- James Patterson, Michael Ledwidge, “Zoo”, 416 pages, Grand Central Publishing
- “Twelves Monkeys”, Terry Guillian / “La jetee”, Chris Marker
- “Hapnea”, fiction short movie by New-Territories <https://vimeo.com/70678465>
password/fisherman
- “The Accursed Share”, and “Story of the eye” of Georges Bataille
- Check below...

Extracts

1)

“The party was one of the most successful Laing had attended. Unlike the majority of parties in the high-rise, at which well-bred guests stood about exchanging professional small-talk before excusing themselves, this one had real buoyancy, an atmosphere of true excitement. Within half an hour almost all the women were drunk, a yardstick Laing had long used to measure the success of a party. When he complimented Talbot the psychiatrist was noncommittal. ‘There’s a quickening pulse in the air, all right, but has it anything to do with good humour or fellow-feeling? Rather the opposite, I’d guess.’ ‘You’re not concerned?’ For some reason, less than I should be – but that’s true of us all.’ These agreeably expressed remarks cautioned Laing. Listening to the animated conversations around him, he was struck by the full extent of the antagonism being expressed, the hostility directed at people who lived in other sections of the high-rise. The malicious humour, the eagerness to believe any piece of gossip and any tall story about the shift-lessness of the lower-floor tenants, or the arrogance of the upper-floor, had all the intensity of racial prejudice. But as Talbot had pointed out, Laing found himself un-worried by all this. He even took a certain crude pleasure in joining in the gossip, and in watching the usually circumspect Charlotte Melville put down several more than two drinks too many. At least it was a means by which they could reach each other. However, as the party broke up a small but unpleasant episode took place outside the elevator doors in the 27th-floor lobby. Although it was after ten o’clock, the entire building was alive with noise. Residents were barging in and out of each other’s apartments, shouting down the staircases like children refusing to go to bed. Confused by the endless button-punching, the elevators had come to a halt, and gangs of impatient passengers packed the lobbies. Although their next destination, a party given by a lexicographer on the 26th floor, was only one storey below them, everyone leaving Talbot’s party was determined not to use the stairs. Even Charlotte, face flushed and tottering happily on Laing’s arm, joined in the wild surge across the elevator lobby and drummed on the doors with her strong fists. When at last an elevator arrived, the doors opened to reveal a solitary passenger, a thin-shouldered and neurasthenic young masseuse who lived with her mother on the 5th floor. Laing immediately recognized her as one of the ‘vagrants’, of whom there were many in the high-rise, bored apartment-bound housewives and stay-at-home adult daughters who spent a large part of their time riding the elevators and wandering the long corridors of the vast building, migrating endlessly in search of change or excitement. Alarmed by the drunken crowd reeling towards her, the young woman snapped out of her reverie and pressed a button at random. A derisory hoot went up from the swaying guests. Within seconds she was pulled from the elevator and put through a mock-playful grilling. A statistician’s over-

excited wife shouted at the hapless girl in a shrill voice, pushed a strong arm through the front rank of interrogators and slapped her face. Pulling himself away from Charlotte, Laing stepped forward. The crowd's mood was unpleasant but difficult to take seriously. His neighbours were like a group of unrehearsed extras playing a lynch scene. 'Come on – I'll see you to the stairs.' Holding the young woman by her thin shoulders, he tried to steer her towards the door, but there was a chorus of sceptical shouts. The women among the guests pushed aside their husbands and began to punch the girl on the arms and chest. Giving up, Laing stood to one side. He watched as the shocked young woman stumbled into the mouth of this eager gauntlet and was pummelled through a circuit of fists before she was allowed to disappear into the stairwell. His reflex of chivalry and good sense had been no match for this posse of middle-aged avenging angels. Uneasily, he thought: careful, Laing, or some stockbroker's wife will unman you as expertly as she de-stones a pair of avocados. The night passed noisily, with constant movement through the corridors, the sounds of shouts and breaking glass in the elevator shafts, the blare of music failing across the dark air.

Ballard, J. G. *High-Rise* (Flamingo Modern Classic), HarperCollins Publishers.

2)

I SAT BENT over in my chair for a few minutes of therapeutic seething. I listened to an uptown train blasting by my window, then a downtown one. Then I crossed the room, picked up the pad again, and went back to work.

HAC: Human-Animal Conflict. This was the theory I was working on.

Basically, it was my belief that all throughout the world, animal behavior was changing. Not for the better, either. Not even a little. On every continent, species after species was suddenly displaying hyperaggressive behavior toward one particular animal.

The enemy was us. You and me. People. *Man*, man.

The facts were undeniable. From Romania to Colombia, from the Pyrenees to the Rockies, from St. Louis to Sri Lanka, there'd been an exponential increase in animal attacks on humans—by wild leopards, bears, wolves, boar, all kinds of different animals, you name it. In fact, the worldwide rate of wild animal attacks in the last four years was double the average of the previous fifty. For emphasis, I repeat: double.

It wasn't just wild animals, either. In Australia, injuries from cats and dogs had swelled by 20 percent. In Beijing, it was 34 percent. In Britain, nearly four thousand people had needed hospital treatment for dog bites in the previous year.

For some reason I hadn't pinned down yet, some kind of concerted transspecies evolutionary backlash against *Homo sapiens* was underway. Or, to put it in other terms, something was driving animals to go haywire, and the time to do something about it was running out quicker than the plastic wand supply at a Harry Potter convention.

I know how it sounds—wing-nut city. Different species of nonhuman animals working in some sort of collusion against humans. It's absurd. Insane, impossible. I used to think it was a big, strange coincidence, too. Just lots and lots of totally unrelated, isolated incidents.

Initially, it was just a goof among my colleagues that I'd started to track the phenomenon on my tongue-in-cheek blog, *Man Against Nature*.

I stopped laughing when I started looking at the evidence more closely. Nature, actually, was at war with man. And our side wasn't even noticing.

The expression “between the devil and the deep blue sea” is a nautical one. The devil is what old sailors used to call the seam between two hard-to-reach planks on a ship. In order to caulk it, one had to be suspended from a plank held over the water. If you fell into the ocean, it was certain death. If you didn’t caulk the plank, the ship might sink. Either way was dangerous. Either way, you were screwed.

That’s exactly where I was now, out on a line, suspended between bad and worse. I felt like I was out there caulking the devil, hanging above the deep blue sea.

If I was wrong, I was crazy. If I was right, the world was doomed.

I’d been doing my best to get the word out, but was getting nowhere. I’d maxed out all my credit cards and those of several sympathetic relatives, speaking to anyone who would listen. My trip to Paris was for the purpose of attending an animal rights conference that I’d fibbed my way into in order to get some speaking time. I only got about halfway through before I was laughed off the stage.

No, people weren’t getting on board in the slightest. You’d be shocked and dismayed at the amount of intellectual intolerance directed at people who favor red lumberjack hats and wrinkled pajamas.

The L.A. zoo thing I’d just seen was the topper. The report had said that the cats had been born in captivity. Why would a pair of zoo lions one day just decide to start killing people and rampage through a city? Because there are two hundred channels and nothing is on? It didn’t make sense. Zoo lions don’t just go out berserking. There’s simply no reason for them to. Until now.

I speed-dialed my press agent to try to get on Fox. As usual, I got kicked immediately into voice mail. Even she thought I was nuts, and I *paid* her. Not a good sign.

After I recorded my latest plea to her, I decided to do the only thing I could think of. I plugged myself into my iPod and blasted some Motörhead to get some much-needed mental juices flowing. Help me, Lemmy. I slurped more Red Bull and tried to think while watching some more of the world’s unfunniest videos.

I sat up when Attila yanked my earbuds out.

“Yo, Attila,” I said. My roommate held out his hand for a low five. I gave it to him. “Look at this craziness. Every time I think things are going to calm down, the activity doubles. Sarah won’t call me back. Boy Who Cried Wolf, I feel your pain, you know?”

“*Heeaagh! Heeaagh! Heeaagh!*” said Attila.

Then he made a few panting hoots and scrambled into my lap and gave me a sloppy kiss and hairy-armed hug.

Attila, by the way, is a chimpanzee.

James Patterson, Michael Ledwidge, *Zoo*, 416 pages, Grand Central Publishing

Dairy

Department store and zoo on the roof



ZOO / Peter Greenaway / A Zed & Two Noughts (1986)

Twin zoologists Oswald and Oliver Deuce (Brian Deacon and Eric Deacon) are at work studying the behaviour of animals at a zoo, when their wives are killed in a car accident involving a large swan.

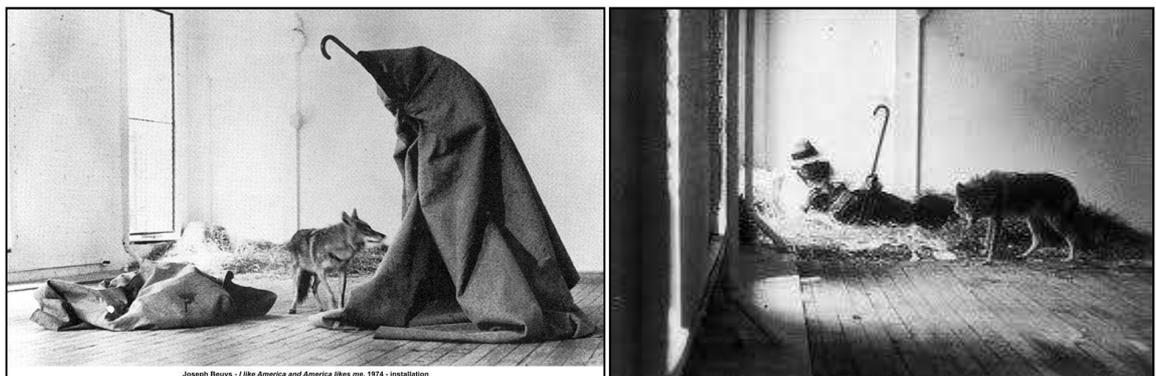
The zebra is the movie's most symbolic animal. In English the word starts with the last letter of the alphabet that Alba's little daughter, Beta (Agnes Brulet), recites throughout, as she relates every letter to the names of zoo animals. Van Hoyten asks Venus de Milo (Frances Barber) if the zebra is a black animal with white stripes or a white animal with black stripes. Catherina Bolnes wears a slip that imitates the zebra's skin. The final decomposition we see is that of a zebra. However, this idea was already present at the beginning when, in the accident scene, the car is behind a zebra crossing. So the zebra, physically, is a combination of the beginning and the end, life and death, black and white.



I Like America, America Likes Me / Joseph Beuys / 1974

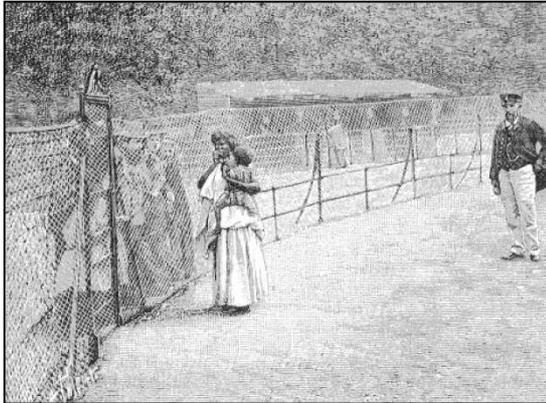
Beuys's most famous Action took place in May 1974, when he spent three days in a room with a coyote. After flying into New York, he was swathed in felt and loaded into an ambulance, then driven to the gallery where the Action took place, without having once touched American soil. As Beuys later explained: 'I wanted to isolate myself, insulate myself, see nothing of America other than the coyote.' The title of the work is filled with irony. Beuys opposed American military actions in Vietnam, and his work as an artist was a challenge to the hegemony of American art.

Beuys's felt blankets, walking stick and gloves became sculptural props throughout the Action. In addition, fifty new copies of the Wall Street Journal were introduced each day, which the coyote acknowledged by urinating on them. Beuys regularly performed the same series of actions with his eyes continuously fixed on the coyote. 'You could say that a reckoning has to be made with the coyote, and only then can this trauma be lifted', he said.



Zoo of Vincennes / Paris

1931 / "Shameless confusion" Human-Animal
Colonial Exhibition



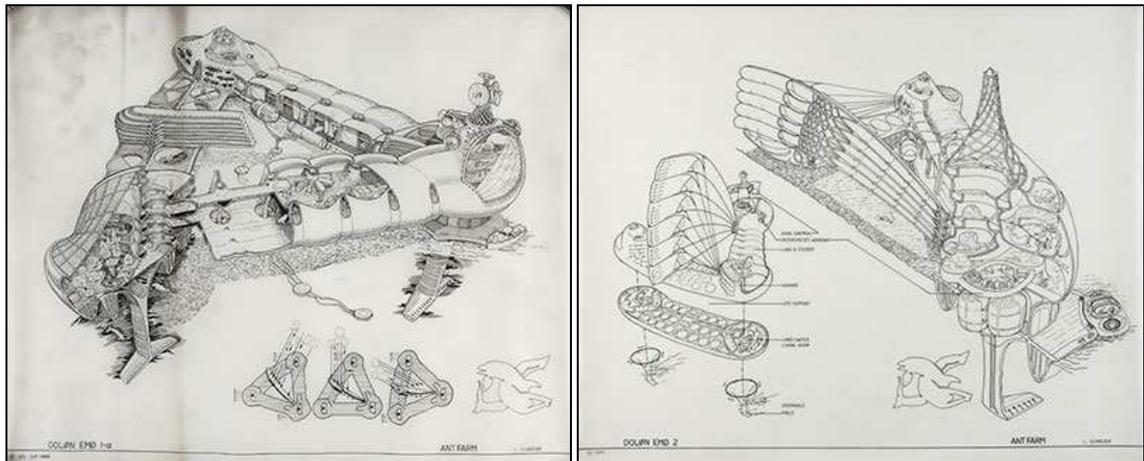
Zoo of Vincennes / Paris

1951 / Confusion Human-Animal
The Meal of monkeys



Dolphin Embassy / Ant Farm / Architect / 1974

Dolphin Embassy is a project dedicated to a research center for communication between Humans and Dolphins.



Rules for the Human Zoo : a response to the Letter on Humanism / Peter Sloterdijk / Philosopher / 1999

In this response to Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*, Sloterdijk poses the basic question about the purpose of politics, governance, and civic solidarity. On the one hand, since Plato, politics has been conceived in part as concerned with the necessity of `taming' humans into being good citizens.

Sloterdijk thus follows Nietzsche and Heidegger in portraying humanism as one side in a ``constant battle...between bestializing and taming tendencies". It is in the Hobbesian state of nature that humans are `wolves' to each other; but who turns the wolves into friendly, loyal dogs? Humanism has claimed, according to Sloterdijk, that it is ``reading the right books" which ``calms the inner beast". It is the great books, the ``thick letters" from one great thinker to another, that provide the ``model presented by the wise", which enables ``the care of man by man". At the present, Sloterdijk argues, we appear to have been abandoned by the wise. It is no longer the humanist but the archivist who bothers to look up the old, thick letters. Humanism thus gives way to archivism.

Ancient humanism can be understood only when it is grasped as one opponent in a media contest: that is, as the resistance of the books against the amphitheatre, and the opposition of the humanizing, patient-making, sensitizing philosophical reading against the dehumanizing, impatient, unrestrained, sensation-mongering and excitement-mongering of the stadium. What the educated Romans called humanitas would have been unthinkable without the need to abstain from the mass culture of the theatres of cruelty.