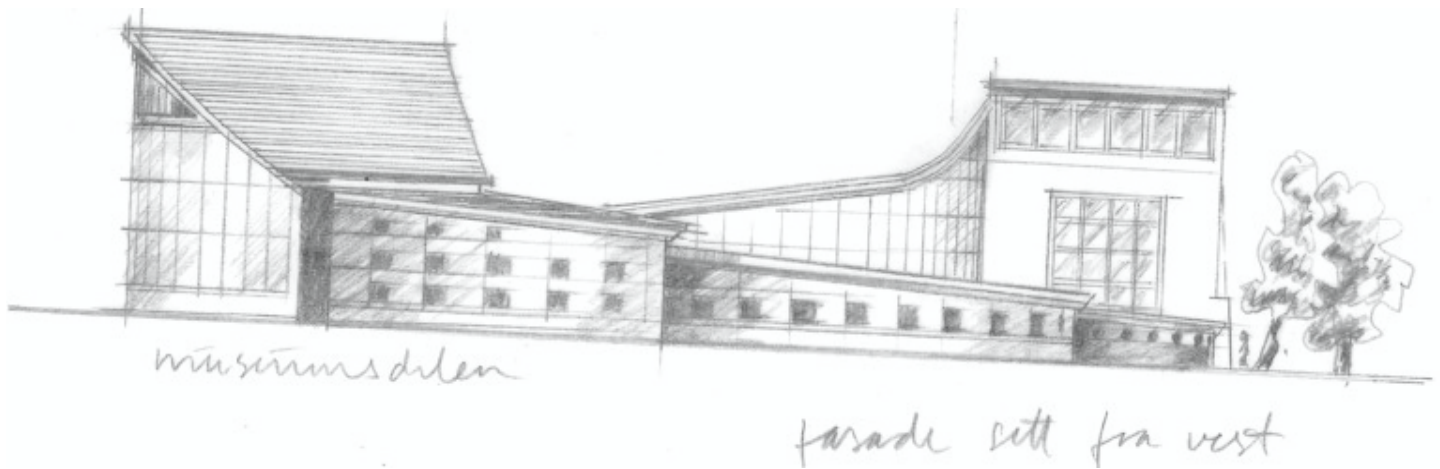


THE KAKOPONIE



001

LUKE SHEEHAN
PATRICK O BEIRNE
KARL WHITNEY
CHRISTIAN WARD
CHARLIE STADTLANDER
john lalor
ANDREA BEDORIN

- *An allegory of the birth of Europe*
- *Tage wie diese*
- *The City, Perec and Play*
- *Three Poems*
- *Feuilleton credibility*
- *void wagner*
- *Two Poems*

and

images from SIMON STRANGER'S Mnem!



Contributors

Simon Stranger

is a novelist from Norway. His books include *Den veven av hendelser vi kaller verden* and *Mnem* and two books for children, *Krusedullen* and *Gjengangeren*. On the front cover, and dotted throughout the issue, are drawings by

Susanne Krövel

an architect, of the fictional city Nem around which Stranger's book *Mnem* centres. Please visit

www.visitnem.com

for more.

Andrea Bedorin

(b.1982) lived in Padova till 2005,

participated in the "Società Dante Alighieri", promoting Italian culture in Italy and the world, from 2003 to 2005; published his first collection of poems *Un folle piacere della voce* (An insane pleasure of the voice) in May 2005; after a year in Dublin published with Luca Donà another collection of poems *L'esile mito* (The Slender Myth)

Charlie Stadlander

is a writer and puzzler who has lived and worked in Seattle and Dublin, and currently works in the outer fringes of the New York City conurbation. His writing has appeared in *Outside Magazine* and *Sixteen After Ten*, a collection of short fiction released in Dublin in 2008. He placed 344th in the 2006 American Crossword Tournament.

Patrick O'Beirne

born in 1972 to a German mother and an American father in Germany. Attended Bayerische Theaterakademie in Munich to learn acting. Has worked as an actor, director, musical director and acting coach in different places all over Germany. Lives in Berlin.

His music can be heard on myspace.com/patricks39beirne

Karl Whitney

is a journalist, researcher and 3:AM editor based in Dublin, Ireland. He has written for the Guardian, the Irish Times and the Belfast Telegraph.

John Lalor

attended Limerick School of Art, Ireland. He has lived in France since 1988 and has exhibited widely in both countries, most recently in Temple Bar Gallery Dublin; Groupe Laura in Tours; Glassbox, and Centre Culturel Irlandais, Paris, along with film-screenings at Centre d'art internationale Vassiviere; La Femis cinema with Pointlignepian, Paris and Temporarycontemporary, London. He was an active member and director of Glassbox, a pioneering artists-run space, from 2004-07 in Paris, and co-produced issue no 5 of the independent fanzine 'Feint' edited by Vaari Claffey. Further links for John Lalor:<http://groupelaura.free.fr> He is currently in pre-production for a new 30 minute short film (BNF/MK2 un incident urbain) and also aiming to publish a book of his writings in English and French (Found in translation). He will be showing in Bolzano in Italy with Yona Friedman and Rirkrit Tiravanija in a project entitled (undefined 09 - new dimensions "add space to space") curated by Germana Jaulin.

Christian Ward

is a 28 year old London based poet and translator. His work has appeared in Diagram and Elimaë and is forthcoming in Ezra, Welter and The Emerson Review.

Andrea DeAngelis'

writing has recently appeared in Dogmatika, Terracotta Typewriter, Salome Magazine, Flutter Poetry Journal, Mad Swirl and Gloom Cupboard. Andrea also sings and plays guitar in an indie rock band called MAKAR (www.makarmusic.com). MAKAR is currently recording their second album, Funeral Genius.

Luke Sheehan

was born in Dublin in 1982. He studied Philosophy and Religion in TCD and UCD, and has worked as a care-worker and editor. This is his first published story

Welkommen

This is all wrong. It's all wrong. We don't care about the language. French, English, Czech, Swedish. We don't translate here, we publish. We listen to each other in a kind of busy bar on Friday night kind of way. We banter. In this first issue you'll find work in Italian, German, English. You'll find work drawn, spoken visually. There's even work in ellipsis, silent, pretending to be important.

What can we not say?

The Kakofonie is dedicated to the experimental, the political, the dedicated, the potential. We're not named after a Boulevard in Paris, we're poor, but that's okay; we're free and you have to print it out yourself

and staple it and DO IT ALL YOURSELF, but that's okay. We're interested in abstract things like a social democratic Europe, and that's okay.

The Kakofonie is not of one particular country. Rather it belongs to the cities we all live in: Paris, London, Dublin, Oslo, Berlin, Tallinn, Belgrade, Barcelona. We belong after all to a Europe, shapeshifting, moving in and out of sight.

This revue is published under Broken Dimanche Press. In November we are publishing our flagship book *You Are Here*, exploring the meaning of a Europe without the Berlin wall, a Europe full of activists, artists

and thinkers who are living in a Europe where the Berlin wall is just a childhood memory, distant, historical.

In the meantime please do consider sending us your thoughts, and more importantly, YOUR WORK. We need it. And remember we want *The Kakofonie* to be where YOU can publish what won't be published anywhere else, in whatever language you work in, wherever you are.

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The Kakofonie

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Two Poems
Andrea Bedorin

Forse in un quadro blu di Picasso
dove il sogno si colora celeste
acquamarina nei suoi occhi vivaci,
sui lembi di tela verità intrise.

Forse nelle parole aspre di Rimbaud
c'è ancora tempo per tornare infanti,
dentro giardini in boccio, per cogliere
petali, espressioni gentili per lei.

Forse nelle tue iridi oltremare, Cocò,
si specchiano i silenzi tempestosi...
i dubbi sfumano, ti guardo, so che è

il solo oceano dove lasciarmi affondare.

U-bahn

L'oggetto morto del mio desiderio
sei tu, lontana, non mia -

l'amore

effimera preghiera
la muta voce tramuta
nella notte sibilante.
Fischi, facce straniere
negli occhi della notte,
mi commuovo e viaggio
su questo metrò, quasi inesistente
la notte comprende la solitudine
e m'abbraccia come se fossi tu,
buona notte è l'augurio,
l'incubo, il desiderio.

U-bahn

The dead object of my desire
that's you: far away, not mine -

love, the

ephemeral prayer
turns the wordless voice
into the hissing night.
Whistles, strange faces
in the eyes of the night,
I move and I travel
in this underground,
the night almost non-existent
comprehends the loneliness
and embraces me as you would:
a good night is the wish,
a nightmare, the desire.

Luke Sheehan

Chapel of Dry Grass

In 1621, the advocate and jurist Hugo de Groot, known as Grotius, escaped from the castle of Loevestein, near Gorcum, in the Netherlands. He was hidden in a chest.

The fabrics on the bed in which I'm dying are good quality, and were not so expensive, although they came from Venice. The wooden floors of the room where I am going to die are pleasant, also, and the open window that shows the river reminds me of the house I lived in with my family, north of here, across the country, near the border and a long time ago. The girl who brings milk in the mornings puts it down to cool on the table, and then opens the curtains and window. The milk acquires a skin on its surface in a flash. The skin is pulled about by the wind like a sheet.

Since falling in the street I feel cold, my skin is pale and I have coughing fits which bring up blood and phlegm together. They told me that the bile had blackened my pillows and the smell of my body so poisoned the air in my room that

visitors were given handkerchiefs to hold against their noses. They had all but measured my coffin, when my mind reassembled to receive the doctor's prognosis in person.

The girl brings the milk on a circular tray with silver handles, with bread and sometimes flowers. She helps me get dressed and waits while I eat, sometimes stitching or embroidering or sometimes simply sitting in a chair in the light from the other window, with her hands in her lap. A week ago she asked me to read a letter.

The coughing rips my lungs. When the liquid is expelled it is replaced by an agony that lasts for several minutes; I wheeze and I close my eyes, and I can't respond when the girl asks if I'm alright. She puts a hand on my back, and takes away the bloody and dampened sheets.

If I can I go downstairs, sit for an hour and meet with people. My nephew, looking for money, comes most frequently. Now he knows I'm going to my last reward, he's more deferential.

De ene z'n dood is een ander z'n brood.

Death for one man means bread for another.

I pretend to have another fit of coughing and the girl puts him out on the street.

I like her.

Yesterday, I looked at my reflection in the window and saw her sobbing into her sleeves.

I was wearing a black felt hat -- strange, the hat, I had forgotten I was wearing it.

I asked her what was wrong.

A boy to whom her name had been attached to for some time, the one whose letter I had read for her before, he had invited her to walk by the river, had gone away in the summer and come back in the autumn, had brought her to the river and given her a bundle, a box in the bundle, a ring in the box, a pretty plain ring inside that, and made a bed out of his coat, and put it down on the grass and turned her over on it, and then told her to stop crying, told her that she was not ruined

at all, that he loved her most of all, that they would marry in the winter.

Predictably, then, he put on his hat and boots and ran back to Amsterdam, to climb on a Company ship and work an eastern route where he would play the same cruel tricks or worse on mixed-race women or the servants of Company men.

I foresaw him arriving in settlements where any sane or eligible girl only wanted to leave on a ship, where savage women were enslaved as whores and their children converted to the True Reformed Faith.

The girl was padding the water off her cheeks. To distract her, I told her about Andreas.

+++

Strange to have been born, as I was, into a subject Kingdom, and die in a free Republic. My family, and its estate in Groningen, had endured the war with Spain, but I had been raised through a temporary peace. In 1617 the peace was beginning to break. The peace of my body was suddenly broken as well, like a bud splitting open for a spring flower to flower.

That's the way life is for men and women alike on God's earth.

We remained Lutheran, as the rest of the country turned to Calvin. After the fieldwork was done some of the men would stand around beside the door of my Grandfather's store and listen to him teaching a little about the word of God. Standing by the open storehouse door with his arm upraised, Grandfather would say that his father had said that Luther had taught that Saint Paul had preached that Jesus had said that God's love

would keep and save the lowest man, if his faith in that love was sufficient. But if, for one instant, a man trusted others or himself more than God, he would put himself into the deepest pit, and no prayer could save him. Because god was the truth and spoke the truth and revealed it to his disciples, and other men.

"Spoke shit," said Father, raising his beaker and pointing his pipe, "And the pope in Rome is a donkey that speaks shit and writes shit and makes others get down in it to worship, while wrapped in silk and fed with the milk of reptiles."

While all of the talking was going on, Father would sit, sceptical, drinking, with his beaker on his bad leg. The bandages he boiled in horse-piss, I remember.

He wouldn't see a doctor: he had learned about that kind of thing when he fought against the Spanish.

As Grandfather was talking, he would turn to me and slap one fist into the other and say, "That is all that the peasants can manage - beating, not killing. Peasants aren't soldiers." Just like him to talk war while his father was repeating the old promise of God's love beside him.

If poor father had lived long enough to hear about how it all ended?

Here my milk-maid agreed that he would have had a lot more to complain about.

Father spoke a language I didn't understand, although I know it now, it was the language of men who have been to war. I have always tried to forget it, and back then I had it in my head that not partaking in it meant I was beloved of God. I was able to forget it entirely when I met Andreas.

Who made me know friendship as a sickness of love.

This last recollection I did not share with my milk-nurse-maid. Who stitched very beautifully in the light.

+++

There was a lustre added to my name because of successes in school.

I read the bible out loud, under the arms of the windmill.

I would mend the estate. I was paraded about.

I would, said Father, be Burgomaster, run the whole province.

Grandfather said I would go to Leiden to study the word of God.

The Spanish, it was said, would invade any day. The whole country panicked, remembering the crimes of the Duke of Parma.

Mother wanted me to marry.

+++

The girl I walked with for a while was well selected for me by my mother, she was my height and her hair was white and her red lips I now know must have turned the married men around her to disgraceful thoughts. We never got married.

Her name was Baertje.

When we walked out first, it was after service on a Sunday, and suddenly our families were blended together. We all were coming out of the town. In the shade beneath a tree there was a man working patterns of leaves

into the wooden back-board of a bed and singing out loud, his knees all covered in golden wood shavings and the shadows of actual leaves overhead. The two of us were left alone. Our families seemed to want this to happen. So we enacted it, for them.

When I put my hand on her hand she took it away.

Later on while we sat beside a hump in the bank of the river where the roots of a willow were peeled from the soil she gripped my hand in both of hers and brought it to her lap. She released it then as time had passed and it was already late.

We both turned our heads to follow a sound that was approaching us, a cart and a strange voice that repeated a single word in a sighing call in time with the breathing of the animal pulling the cart and the sound of the wheels. It was the bookseller.

We watched the shadowed shape of the man and the horse and cart until they were hidden by trees. ¶

The bookseller came from somewhere in Germany and he wore a heavy cloak, even in the hot weather. He had long hair that was full of sweat, which formed the hair into black and shining hoops that clung about his neck and ears and beard.

Over time the bookseller had realised that the peasants of our village only cared about the stories that the books contained, and not their bindings, and he began to slice the volumes into smaller sections, which he rebound and sold at a profit.

Small New Testaments in German and in Dutch and Latin, and letters by Luther he also sold,

and sometimes stranger, more expensive volumes of philosophy, which he kept inside a locked chest and would only show to learned or to landowning men. ¶

The next day, in the evening, there was a wedding party. The bookseller set up a stall beside the main enclosure and showed the peasants and the people from the town his new displays, allowing them to look at the drawings inside.

"On Chinese paper!" he kept repeating, rolling up his sleeves to turn the pages, bringing a lamp to hang above the crowd on his long stick, to enable them to see the prints and the paper they were printed on.

"Look at the paper!"

"Is it fine paper?"

"It's Chinese!"

"Chinese paper?"

"Chinese paper, I told you."

Others passing there would see the light that hovered near the fascinated faces and be lured in towards the stall. ¶ Suddenly, putting down the lamp and stick whenever the assembled people tried to read out loud, he would snap up the book and put it behind him, bringing out another and holding it above his head to keep their attention. ¶

I was standing with my family on one side and Baertje, with most of her family, on the other, when he pulled out the big chest. It was heavy and he asked for help in bringing it before the stall. He quietened everyone then tapped on the box. The box opened. A small man with a white face jumped up and stepped out before us, holding a book in the air. ¶

"My newest Bible!" said the seller. ¶ The Bible was placed on a stand. Then the bookseller stood up on his table and began to recite, like a preacher, the early stories of Genesis, and as he did so the helper ran about, performing. He wore a wide-brimmed hat that was tied to his head. Collars and cuffs of worn and broken lace hung down and jangled as he moved about. We watched him act out: ¶

Abraham's wandering. Hagar and Ishmael.

Jacob's purchase of the birthright of Esau, the hairy man, with a bowl of porridge.

Not long after that the whole crowd returned to the rooms of the brothers Beecx. Beer spilling from their faces, they keened with laughter like cockerels chucked alive and crowing into morning bonfires. The seller's helper was sitting on a bench.

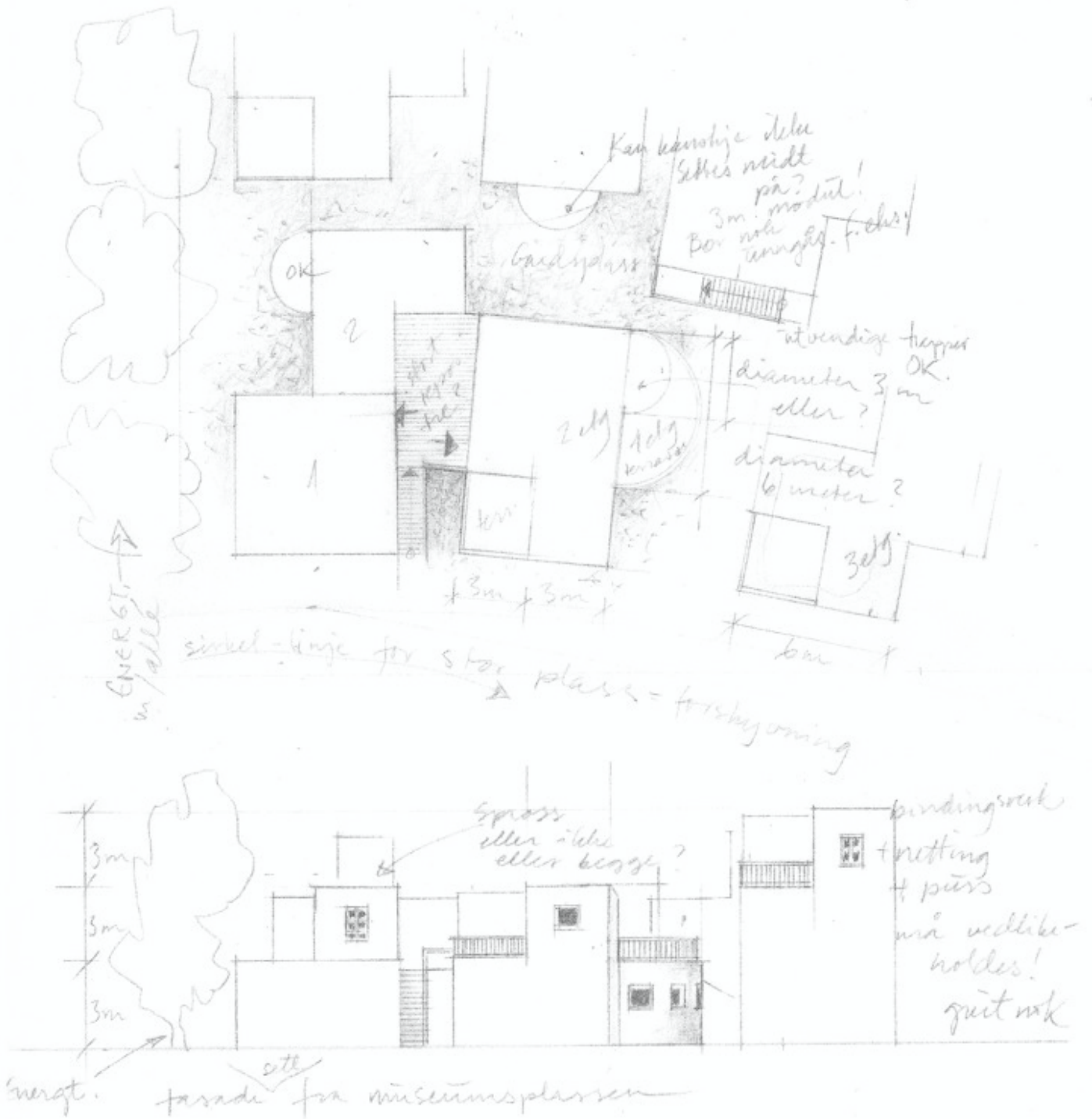
"Where are you from?"

"Parchwitz, in Silesia. The forest."

The seller's helper's name was Andreas and his father had been a minister and he had been well-educated and then orphaned. He had gone to Dresden and been standard bearer in an army division of Johan Georg of Saxony, until he woke up screaming with a soldier biting his fingers. He held up a hand.

"He was trying to get my ring. Or perhaps he was hungry."

He had travelled alone through the forest and across the Empire, and had found the bookseller bookless and broken in Aachen, in a rat-filled room.



Sketches of Nem by Susanne Krövel courtesy of Simon Stranger and Gallery 46 (Sirletwo 46,Nem)

+++

He had come so far across the German Empire, it made me afraid to ask him any further questions, but I remember feeling that his whole person emanated a deep difference and difficulty, and suggested the effects of harsh and

wounding experience on his soul and body. The bookseller, with his helper, moved on.

+++

Not long after I met Andreas I thought of him again, on a trip, with my Grandfather, to the Wartburg, in Thuringia. I remember, as we left the

sea and the lowlands behind, I saw the mountains beginning to form, and I knew I was in Germany. The language was a hot soup which they expelled from their mouths before it could burn them. It got deeper in the throat, and quicker, all the time, like the flow of the Rhine when we crossed and re-crossed it. My

Grandfather taught me Greek in the day, in the carriage, and Luther's bible, and I would hear the words in the mouths of peasants and burghers and soldiering knights that Luther had taken and put into the mouths of the apostles. Andreas was there in the figures outside inns with wide hats and dark clothes, smoking pipes or drinking in silence. One of these figures slowly lifted up a bible as we passed him, we supposed it was to greet us, but who knows what he meant by it.

The strangest of all was at night, upon the roads, the mountain roads, when I should have been asleep, the carriage creaking up at an angle that punished the horses, the driver perhaps looking for somewhere to stop, and I was awake, in the lurching cabin, under furs, hearing my Grandfather wheeze and the horses whimper, hearing the rain begin, and very quickly, once, a storm with it, a powerful storm, and I leaned out the window and looked down into the emptiness, an emptiness that was nonetheless full of an obscure movement, and I saw, from above, the lines of lightning jabbing down into the chasm, and in the silent beat before the thunder, in the flash of light that pulsed across the slopes, disclosing to me the details of each tree down to the needles, before Grandfather woke and told me it was God that did that, I saw ~

Here my stitching-milk-nurse-maid asked me to elaborate on my Grandfather's motives in bringing us so deeply into Germany.

It was to leave the estate in case the Spanish armies trampled through it, and to prepare me for studying in Leiden.¶

+++

But I never went to Leiden. Without money to study, or any guarantee of safety whether I stayed at home or travelled, it was decided I should go to Rotterdam and help a man with his accounts, Johan van Asten en Hildegard.

In Rotterdam, which I reached with a lot of difficulty, I met with this man early in the morning at his home. He offered me a drink which he said the Spanish had brought back from the Americas. Chocolate, it was called. It was supposed to become as popular as Coffee, before long. The maid stirred it with a small whisk. The cup was silver but the taste was bitter and foul. I couldn't drink it. He spoke so much that it did not matter. He had no work for me, but if I went to the VOC, the East India Company, and asked to see Hugo de Groot, I would be offered something.

Before meeting Hugo de Groot, I met with a friend of my father's, a metal trader called Pieter Geluk. Pieter Geluk said: "Johan van Asten is lying to you. He wants you at the VOC for reasons of his own." That turned out to be accurate, and useful, also.

On the way to the chambers of the VOC to make my introductions, I saw a small figure under the lintel of a butcher's, being listened to by a woman whose hand he held. The woman was laughing and the figure, with hat removed, looked sincerely and beseechingly to meet her eyes. It was Andreas, with a carefully assembled but faintly ridiculous set of clothes, like a country soldier dressed up for church.

+++

Before all this, in 1618, in Bohemia, in a diplomatic feud over succession to the throne, the Catholic King Ferdinand's councillors had been thrown from a window.¶They

survived the fall.¶In the Catholic version, they were carried off by angels. In the protestant one, they landed on a pile of manure. Angels and shit: in the conjunction of these two ideas, the history of Europe was condensed. Now the world would be torn apart, and the Holy Empire was the site of the tear.

+++

In Rotterdam, I saw Andreas again on the street, and asked him to come for a drink.

In the rotten-aired beercellar the sailors rolled their tongues and screamed. Every tool and spear carrying fool in Europe was going to be trapped by the butchery to come, and they would be safer at sea.

Andreas had let the bookseller move back to Germany on his own and had remained in Rotterdam, worked for a printer, saved his money, and hoped to be married to the woman I had seen him with. She was the daughter of the head of the metalworker's guild, whose father beat the breastplates of the Stadtholder's guards. I asked Andreas to help me make accounts books for the VOC. He agreed. The sailors had ripped up a tablecloth and were playing at soldiering.

The flag of the Bavarian Catholics, the Virgin's tablecloth, was dragged in the shit.

And the flag of Bohemia was a blood-sticky fishwife's rag.

And the flag of Johan Georg of Saxony was horse piss and sheep-shit.

It was true: every kingdom in Europe would be ruined, would

lose money without any means to recoup it, except our own, entirely thanks to the VOC. The Bezants, Ducats, Louisdors, Guineas and Escudos and Doubloons, we weighed and counted them and converted them to Guilders.

+++

When I met with Hugo de Groot, not long after that, he was seated on a low saddled seat in a tight coat that seemed to be sewn around his chest. He liked the sound of his own voice. He addressed me like an audience. I thought that this showed his integrity, that he was the same with everyone he met. We drank French wine. We spoke about the Company, and about Spain.

"Spain," he said after a sigh, "wants to possess the whole world."

But the Spanish did not see that the weight of their own fleets would sink them. As we drank and spoke I could imagine their ships, jostling and ramming each other, pushed down together by weapons, treasures, slaves, priests... by decoration and display, like their cathedrals swarming with obscene cherubs, like their courts crawling with sycophants, like their cities alive with secrets and squalor.

We drank more wine.

The Spanish did not see that their system was already making itself obsolete. For eighty years they wasted their energies on the absurd and failed adventure of bending a Protestant people to the same rule of subjection that they imposed on American cannibals. That was the old way, taking the world into the corpulent, decaying body of Spain and the Roman Church, when all that was ever universal was God's scripture, God's love and God's law, God's law and its insufficient,

indispensable approximation in the form of human justice.

I poured out more wine for us both.

That the private interests of men were only waves on a sea of providence which belonged to all: this was Hugo de Groot's most penetrating insight. He stood up and refilled our glasses, and spoke about the Emperor Augustus.

The Emperor Augustus, in his will, according to Tacitus, said: do not expand the Empire. Consolidate, reinvest. Mend your armour, and your morals. But instead came Nero and his golden house built on the ashes of Rome. Likewise King Philip, enclosed in the Escorial, his monastic palace and labyrinth of stone, was impossibly far from the wars being fought by his own armies.

My nurse-maid friend raised her needle here and asked if I had really been a friend of Hugo de Groot. No, I spoke to him once, and never had the privilege again. Very soon after our meeting, Maurice of Nassau ordered the arrest and confinement of Hugo and the death of John of Oldenbarneveldt, the founder of the Company.

+++

Andreas and I would talk in the late evenings as well. Andreas always mentioned the Anabaptists, who were chased and killed by both sides.

"But the Anabaptists are misguided," I said. "The breaking of the Roman spell should not mean the rejection of the world. Not when there is more of it to discover, since it is the entitlement of each man to partake in the providence ordained him by God. And to defend it by waging war."

"That is exactly what a Dutchman would say," said Andreas. His jaw, without any beard or hair, looked bluish in the candlelight, an arrogant smile on the thin lips.

I pressed the point.

"And the Catholic idols, could we not have taken the idols and sold them back, rather than shatter them?"

"You are a proper Netherlander."

+++

My life now: the price of cinnamon.

The sailors say you can smell it from miles out at sea, growing in Ceylon, the way God intended, free and abundant.

When the cinnamon was brought back to Europe, when it was ground to a powder and added to chocolate, or used to make spiced wine in winter, was it any longer how God intended it to be?

Strange that we find cinnamon to taste good, that we like the feel of silk.

That we make diamonds and gold and silver more valuable than copper and lead.

That we loathe Armenians, Gomarists, Anabaptists, or Jews or Muslims more or less than Catholics, from one moment to another, that we pay more for cloves or pepper than for cinnamon from one day to another.

+++

At this time the fields and the valleys and the forests of Germany were full of burning villages and barren fields and ruined churches and the walls of German towns were capped with severed heads that ripened in the sun, the eyes and ears and mouths of the soldiers and peasants pouring with maggots like barley in the mills of Saxony and Groningen and Silesia and Thuringia, before the war.

Each time Andreas would visit me there were new happenings to talk about. He had written the metal worker's daughter a letter, he had spoken for hours with her, walked with her to the city limits, talking her towards confronting her father again. Andreas was so happy that he changed colour – his skin became pink and his black hair, filthy before like the bookseller's, was now light-brown and gold in the light of day. He wore red silk, a hat with a feather and a ribbon that dangled down. Yet his health revealed anew, by an effect of contrast, the used and broken skin around his eyes and the old trouble of his first life in Germany. I would ask him questions about Germany but he would not answer – he spoke of it only when I mentioned my own trip there.

We were walking together, leading two horses, following a company of armed guards from the VOC who accompanied a carriage full of books and equipment. It was a fine dry evening with no wind. We were on the road to Utrecht. I told him about the dream I had had, in Germany, on the mountain, in the holy castle, in a room with wooden walls, the wooden cot where I dreamt of a man running naked from a hunt with dogs.

The running man was a monster: there were antlers on his head. He ran through ferns, his ankles chopping the shallow water of a stream. He ran up slopes and fell through bushes. He climbed from a ditch and ran across fields, where he dropped to his knees under the harvest sun and the dogs came to rip at his hands and face.

"When I woke,' I said to Andreas, "in the wooden cot, I knew that the man with the horns had been Christ."

"Did he die?"

"He died. The dogs had eaten his tongue. When I told the dream to the women at dinner I was sent from the table to my room to pray to the spirit to prevent my mind ever granting habitation to such thoughts again. From the window of my room I saw a party of hunters make their descent into the forest, and I heard the horns. Although they grew more distant as the evening turned to night, I could still hear them. I tried to sleep but I couldn't. I knew that I'd have the dream again, and that now it would be me that the dogs would destroy."

Andreas told me that dreams like mine were common before or after a hunt, and were a sign of disaster for the house in which the dreamer lived.

He told me that, as he had travelled through the Empire, more and more people were having such dreams.

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In Rotterdam, in my rooms at the Chambers of the Company, the visits from Andreas became less frequent, and the new colour went from his skin.

What had happened?

No answer. Andreas vanished from his workshop.

But soon, according to Pieter Geluk, the head metal-worker was putting out letters, and worse, the girl's brother was saying to his friends in private that Andreas would be killed and cut into sections, fed to the dogs for unnamed offences done in private with his sister in their Father's house.

Andreas visited me in the night, he was panicked and shivering and would not look up from the floor. I wanted to send him away, to work in other chambers of the VOC: in Amsterdam, Delft, Enkhuizen, Middelburg or Hoorn. Or to one of the foreign outposts in the Indies: Batavia, Flores, Molukka, Hirado. We put place-names into a box and pulled one out: Ceylon, where we fought with Hindu kings and Portuguese for control of the Cinnamon. I would put him on a ship, with sealed letters, in the morning.

But Andreas went bereft back into Germany, swallowed by the snaking train of some Protestant army. I myself was married and never left Rotterdam.

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Love is as terrible as an army with banners, says Solomon in his song, but Solomon, if he had come alive and seen the soldiers off Tilly and Pappenheim enter Magdeburg, and the protracted evils done to the inhabitants, the soldiers charging, entering the city, raping and butchering under the sign of the Queen of Heaven on their blue and white checked flag, he wouldn't compare the sight to anything.

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From the metal-worker's daughter, years later, via someone else, came a dark accusation: that Andreas was not a man, that he was a monster with characteristics of each sex combined.

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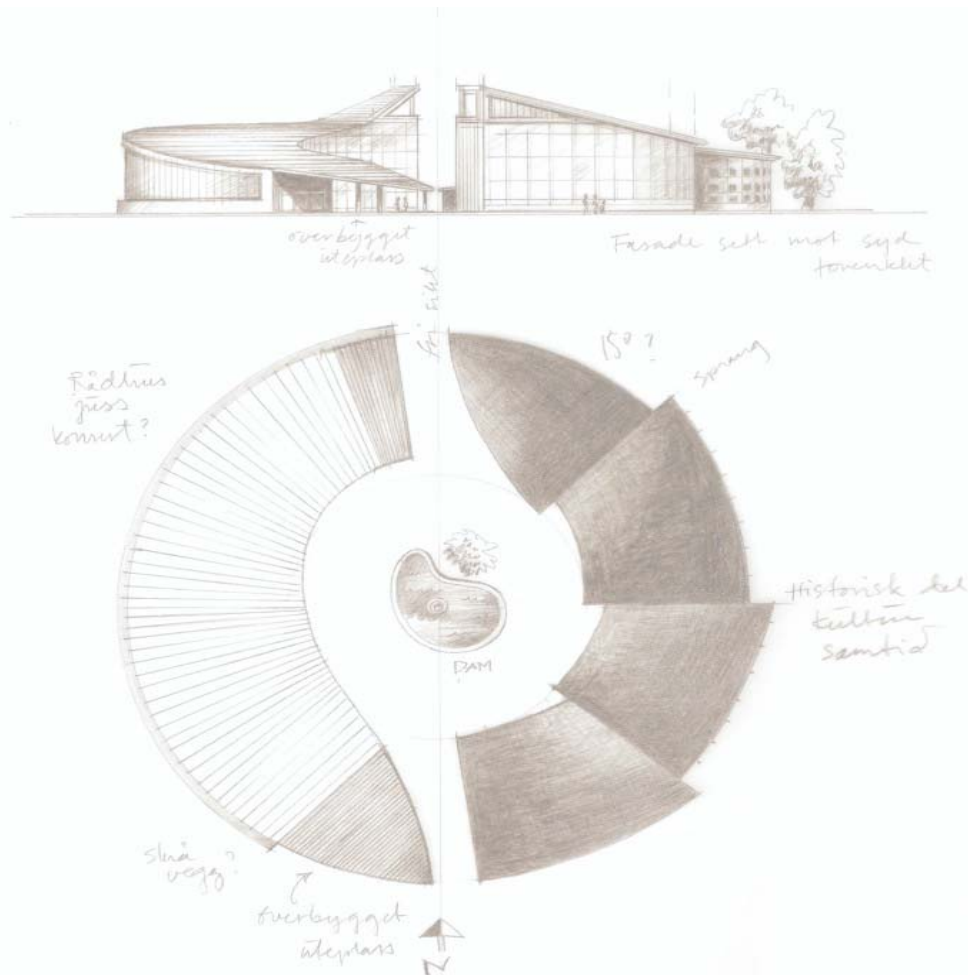
In Groningen, a German army recuperated on our estate. Armies at rest can be as dangerous as armies charging. Many girls were brought to the fields by force. Baertje was one. And my Father was found wandering in the long evenings with his sword drawn, looking for the

Spanish, saying the Spanish had returned, saying that he had to expel them from the Provinces in the name of Christ and William the Silent. But it must have been a Protestant soldier on top of a local girl that he burst in upon, that chased him to the road with bare buttocks quaking and killed him there with a dagger that Father would have called a cheese-knife.

Ten years later, in Munster, across the border from Groningen, the generals and the Kings brought the whole thing to a close with a feast and a fireworks display. After thirty years of slaughter, starvation, rape and degradation of every kind, they toasted a new world, and we in the

Netherlands, with our freedom, our church and our Company, knew that we would thrive in it.

I was laughing as I said this, then I was coughing again, twisted forwards with my eyes bulging. The girl jumped up to the bedside to stand there, until it subsided to wheezing. I moved to a chair by the window and watched the water. I was thinking of my wife, who was dead, and my mother, dead also, and Andreas, whose flesh was most likely dissolved and whose skeleton was spread across miles of earth and mixed with the roots of the grass and the flowers, somewhere in Germany. ■



The Musuem seen from the west by Susanne Krövel courtesy of Simon Stranger and Gallery 46 (Sircletwo 46,Nem)

Void

Walking

then, on your way back to work, you can't help but notice the supermarkets vast *fruit and vegetable* stand. A right spread on to itself. And by no means a surprise. You would only have to look at the sector's balance sheet (on the up and up) these last twenty years, in order to weigh-up with a fine tooth comb this relatively recent ongoing monopoly like omnipresence. A genuine urban phenomena by all accounts, particularly noticeable within highly populated newly rejuvenated affluent inner-city zones.

This outcome alluding quite subtly to the influential sectors, secretly desired Californian *pipe-dreamlike* ⁽¹⁾ independence.

Fruit and Veg: Breaking away from the rest of the pack might be, here, a **driving factor** - a force certainly to be reckoned with if push came to shove.

Amid all this you couldn't help but notice the tomatoes.

Centre stage.

The by now Neo-Post Modern generically driven red tomato.

Day in day out. Paris, London, Berlin and further afield, Tokyo, Sydney, Algiers, Los Angeles. Global. Appearing continuously, effortlessly even. Without surprise. Nature's *four seasons* (immortalized by Vivaldi) once immensely significant cultural speaking, would have been finally brought to its knees. Yes the bigger they are then, the harder they fall.

Nature's seasons no longer causing the slightest of problems when it comes to confronting : *vast global distribution*.

- The tomato up there, perched, redder than red.
- Redder than ever before. All this having happened right under your nose.
- Upwardly stacked. Impeccably arranged. One by one. The overtly cosmetic type of attention as if they were all heading out on the town. Dressed to the nines.

So
then,
snooker's
eight red ball
set-up springs to
mind in heralding its
infamous pyramidal form

and if not then :

A flat
stack
of red
shirts
folded *in-extremis*, outrageously on a seemingly smart (2) Benneton shelf.

A_t

this point in time and without wanting to lose the plot in any way, what if one then started to think momentarily about (3) Robert Wagner?

Robert Wagner.

Might it be at all possible, that Robert Wagner could just enter into the picture here.

Robert Wagner along with his very own private artistical trajectory germinating as a cinematographical actor around the early fifties. Wagner's immediate peers, (4) Brando and Dean, would have been championed as artistic beacons.

Dreams to clutch on to deep in the night.

However, in Wagner's case as time went on technically speaking, a sort of *hyperbolic industrialisation* regarding his professional career might have inevitably followed him down through the years. Gnawing away. Causing its own particular type of erosion. Eating away at him, constantly. This possible diagnosis combined with its almost tailored needs, *life's very long and sometimes ravaging effects or just simply a chap's truly hard graft then, over in televisionland.*

(5) Evidently these factors could also be aligned with other different pressures, professional or otherwise, cropping up continuously along the way. And finally but not least of all,

an individual's reaction to it all.

With this in mind, would Robert Wagner in his own right, have become then *Void* of his initial Cinematographical substance?

His very own private *(es)sence*, in itself?

Equal only in statue or in Neo-Post Modern Industrial terms (and using Jean Baudrillard's 'Le systeme des objets' as a means of quantification/measurement in order to articulate the very limit to what an individual could end up becoming) to one of television's industrially finest hours from the mid to late seventies: *The loveboat.*

Effectively at this point two simultaneous supposition's would seemingly make their way to the surface, coming under the form of sub-headings.

(a) The penultimate in a new *genre* - *industrially hyper-bland.*

(b) Robert Wagner ending-up then artistically (6) - *functional in status.*

Conclusion.

Presently the generically driven Neo-Post Modern tomato (overtly red and by all accounts rounder and rounder), two essential points would seem to make their presence felt:

- (a) A constant almost niggling need to ameliorate its roundness/form.**
- (b) (7) Under then such a regime of sorts, what is lying in store for the species?**

Might these contributing factors when combined, have rendered the tomato equally *Void* of all its significance?

Time spent within heavy industry draining it of all it's very (es)sence?

Such would seemingly be your ordinary, on-going hazards, lingering around the ever needy demands, of a Neo Post Modern hyperbolic-industrialisation (a form of supply and demand increasingly on the up and up) and at this point, one might say ;

gone into extra time

Effectively a system pushed almost entirely to its (8) paroxysm...

Footnotes.

(1) Considering for a moment the rather overtly pragmatic idea implying that the North American State of California would be capable of striking out at any moment from the rest of its fellow American member states. Going it alone. This would have been indeed considered or at least hinted at on several occasions. The idea would have been made public. It would have seeped out. Partly due to its quite visibly overwhelming however by now established long term wealth. Mentioning but a few examples ie. New technology, Computer technology, New media, Tele-communications and more classical communications in its wider sense. This would naturally enough include any recent developments within the computer industry throughout the last decade ie, games, a very vast sector on to itself. Internet too with it's ever expanding spin-off's and its new marketing territories and strategies in constant evolution ie; advertising, events etc. Not forgetting classical industrial cinema. One might add that both *industrial cinema* as Jean-Luc Godard would say and *independent cinema*, both fields providing a very large margin economically speaking, by way of it's potential counterparts or closest rivals within that specific sector. Finally added to this already relatively long inventory, one could also mention agriculture, which should not be undermined or in any way. This in itself metaphorically speaking; *beginning from the ground up*, providing the basis or foundation for any kind of desired cultural independence, (as has been regularly the case throughout history). California's very own envied soil then, providing food for the table. This form of production being the oldest form of capitalism or primary trade in the world. And right at the very centre of this given context California's ever developing wine industry. Adopting with a very dashing similarity, methods or aggressive strategies to that of it's by now older brother the aforementioned film industry metaphorically speaking. This in no small way by pure coincidence, one only has to think of the film director Francis Ford Coppola who has been developing on a very serious and ambitious level his own wine for the last thirty five years. These elements then when re-assembled not withstanding in any way, the clear desire in relation to a very enviable form of expansionism.

(2) A *Benneton shelf* in appearance aptly chic. Aping naively and rather aimlessly beyond it's wildest dreams *miimalism*. Funnily enough Benneton's rather strange idea of total order. This in its re-presentation, re-defined as it is within the rag-trade industry. Meaning to say : a rather confined if not artistically limited area within the retail sector. It is quite blatantly obvious on entering a Benneton boutique the rather odd way in which those heavily pressed cachmere type jumpers in appearance are always folded and stacked. Whereby one under normal circumstances, might stack ten jumpers on an ordinary shelf in any other boutique, Benneton seem to have the knack, to be able to stack three times that amount. However opting for omission. Each time stacking the least amount of jumpers, enhancing the idea; *less is more*. The shelves in themselves arranged in their verticality evoking tall columns exaggerating to the limit, the very geological idea of all things sedimentary in structure. However the latter would have taken centuries upon centuries to realise. Eventually finding its form. Manifestly it is almost as if the raw material used for these jumpers would have been in actual fact chosen beforehand because it can be folded so thinly and finely. The idea here that presentation itself, while quietly translating, (after years of trying), undertones of communication, would then in reality ultimately prime over form. The cachmere type jumpers in appearance must really be left for long periods of time under very large heavy weights in order to achieve the desired effect. Benneton the mark seem to be trying to say something here at this moment in time. They seem to be trying to make some sort of artistic statement. However not forgetting to mention at this precise moment, fashion's extremely *middle of the road* tentative. Quite simply a very very late artistic petit-bourgeois, (and by sheer economics) type of endorsement with regards to an already existing 1930's revolutionary utopian architectural interior design aspect.

(3) In as much as whatever skills, one could possibly have had, or maybe even picked up along the way, within one's own past lived experiences or childhood and no matter what the social context (one has simply to consider television's sheer presence from the early black and white days and later on to colour, within nearly every household from the 60s onwards) and by whatever means if necessary, a distinct possibility might just spring to mind. In that each and every individual within their own right and once again particular social group, might be potentially brought around to a similar conclusion, be that as it may, relevant to the final round-up or final inventory regarding Robert Wagner's not always glittering career. Furthermore the plus's and the minus's regarding, analysed if at all possible down to the last detail (implying eventually a charting-up with the inclusion most probably of diagrams), Robert Wagner's final artistic outcome.

(4) On closer inspection Wagner might be considered somewhere along the line, more comparable to the likes of Paul Newman. The two actor's would have started out at roughly the same age? Both appearing at a very particular moment in cinematographical history. Mentioning momentarily just one, however important factor in order to underline the periods particularity. In as far back as 1952 following on from colour and later technicolour, the very invention and eventual marketing of the highly excentuated wide screen termed then as *vista-screen*. This highlighting the specific periods very own declared ambitions, implicating what one could term as a Post War technical prowess. Both of these actors at the very centre of this Post War splendour but also its ever growing, what one might call; *Post War expansion plans*. Therefore within this very specific environment or maybe even industrially orientated cultural structure, the two actors professionally speaking, fulfilling a necessary gap regarding the structures ever increasing and by all accounts similar needs. Consequently the pair might possibly have had somewhere along the line, similar artistic ambitions to say the least within that specific or previously mentioned, cultural structure. Or more to the point, they might certainly have been aware of each other's work professionally speaking and if not, then more than likely their paths may have crossed again professionally speaking via the movement of the sectors highly organised circuits of the day ie; casting agencies, production houses, agents, etc. These being but a few of the vital elements, they would have themselves as actors or *rising stars* utilised).

(5) Consequently the very problems that might arise somehow from having begun very early on, as one might say, nourishing : a thoroughly lavish Hollywood *lifestyle* along ones way. This initially wonderful yet in the long term hard reality, must surely come into the picture at some point or another. Meaning to say, what were the effects exactly of all that money and finance generated through Robert Wagner's early film-work. And at a certain point from there on in, alluding thus to the very special requirements needed in order to support this particular *lifestyle/desire*. A rather clinching factor one might add, embedding itself where necessary right from the start. Establishing its roots with extreme care. Having well and truly incusted itself into its subjects life. This would have consequently developed and in doing so, might very well have played a crucial role in actually defining or fashioning the actor's very future person. Establishing then from very early on the very person he would somehow seem to become. But also this embedded factor might help in defining more clearly the kind of

physical or economic needs regarding Robert Wagner from the sixties onwards. In mentioning here but a few examples, houses, cars, more houses and more cars, designer clothes, expensive Richard Burton like jewellery, tennis courts, heated swimming pools both indoor and outdoor, private planes, helicopters, etc. All these elements in fact part and parcel of the Modernist suburban dream factor marketed with tact around the world at that particular time. All rather over the top in spite of themselves, in actual fact a bunch of luxurious mod cons stemming from the end of the Second World War. Not forgetting either to omit, concerning the actor that is, any kind of dabbling or involvement with narcotics, which would have been possibly at the time par for the course. Whether hard or soft or maybe even alcohol which would seem almost inevitable due to the circumstances. This in part due to once again the very strains and without exaggerating in any way almost craving needs, of this particular way of living out ones existence or aforementioned *lifestyle*. But once again each of these examples, when brought under closer inspection, would also be among the elements vehicled and so belonging in a very precise way or playing out their role, to the *luxury easy listening classes* or otherwise termed *upper suburban middle class set* of the day. Among these elements too by all accounts would have been, a very large drinks cabinet (and very probably containing some old favourites in mentioning here but a few, Martini's, Cinzano's, these in themselves being strange and also heavy on the sugar attempts at one might say, wine making of sorts and very very rampant at the time for those who certainly didn't want to work too hard at their wine) or private bar and thrown in for good measure, an *ensuite* pool room and last but not least the idea of electric windows, effectively the list goes on etc etc. This all enhancing the very speed at which the aforementioned *lifestyle* would eventually evolve or navigate. These elements when combined with all sorts of different popularity polls, which would have by the way, themselves been by that time, clearly on the up and up and therefore vehicled via the different types of existing media which were available at the time. It would be without doubt then in hindsight quite clear that these elements when thrown together, would have played a central role in possibly modifying in some sort of way the interior or artistically and quite possibly at that moment in time, could one go so far as to say, the economically driven personality or heart of Robert Wagner. *Business as usual*. These factors when totted up would clearly have taken their pound of flesh or toll, along the way. Revealing ultimately in spite of itself the very fragility of it all. Hence following suit the need for, one might say 'anti-depressers' which would have been by that particular time clearly fulfilling their very own roll as a veritable side-effect of Modernism. Consequently in hindsight this particular pseudo para-medical sector would indeed develop in its own right, into a growing and ever expanding socio-economic market from the sixties onwards. Whereupon at that moment in time, all of these elements when finally thrown in together, as indeed they were, would eventually begin to manifest themselves, in force, as only they could and from there on in striving towards their desired global socio-economic effect. Each and every one of these elements accompanying along the way then Robert Wagner in some sort of manner and of course each and everyone nicely tucked up for their part comfortably, at the very core of the newly found consuming middleclasses or in otherwords the *petit-bourgeois buying* sector that was to follow.

(6) A hammer would in general be considered by all and sundry to be strictly a functional object. In that, it has a particular role to play in its exact everyday existence. Its very own form evoking at all times this particularly well mapped-out utilitarian function. One can find it always when one needs it. Hanging on the very wall where one left it or lying waiting in that very tool box equally where one left it. By this, it can really only play one role. The one that it has been well and truly designated to play out. Responding faithfully to heel its manufacturers very design, if not wishes. It can never then transcend this specific utilitarian role at any given time. Neither can it ever in its wildest dreams surpass its user's or putting it another way proprietor's very own personal ambition. It serves then in this light its employer, at the very mercy of its own restrictions or exacting limitations. Only to remind one at times of its users very own capacity or maybe even incapacity, whether positive or negative. It might even be considered, one of the utilitarian implements *par excellence* of which it remains entirely prisoner. And in this it always at every moment enhances the idea of pure functionality.

(7) Canned tomatoes often known as tinned tomatoes, for example are sold everywhere in the world. They can in actual fact be found today in every type of retail outlet both big and small. The shop across the road, in the middle of nowhere, on the outskirts of town etc etc. Everywhere. At every possible moment in time. Twenty four hours a day. Ranging in prices, depending of course on its branding, (This in itself being yet another particular specificity within what one could rationally term developed capitalism). These simple factors in themselves however when totted up, must have somewhere along the line a very straining effect or indeed some sort of major long term impact at some point on the original species or furthermore on future of its very origins somehow.

(8) (Photosynthesis : *a process by which energy obtained from direct sunlight on green plants can create complex substances*. (Pocket Oxford). The lack of direct sunlight including the effects it creates (incidentally becoming more and more of a pre-occupying factor or anxiety driven problematic for the 21st century within Western Capitalism) on the tomato species after a given moment, generation after generation, might have possibly produced at a certain point, the beginning of what one could only name, a long term or on-going *emptiness*. Metaphorically speaking, if one was to look at the idea of cinema and its stars. Cinema's very idea of *stars* on the big screen originally. This very very enigmatic idea of *stars* would have been considered and so engendered by the paying public. The *players* as once said theatrically speaking, would have been transformed in some way chemically or by way of physics even (through the medium's very properties) along the way into transcended beings like astral stars. Night after night chemically transmitted. This particular factor occurring then prior to the invention of television. They would have been perceived to have been like extremely bright moving lights. Beacons lighting up like veritable astral stars in the sky. Jean-Luc Godard said while speaking about the idea of television: *one has only to look down at the tiny screen there next to you in the room with no effort at all to see it, but cinema according to him, one is very much obliged to make the effort to look up at a giant screen in order to see/grasp it*. Would television effectively through its very very vast economically driven industrial emphasis, quite simply lack this necessary artistic type of *photosynthesis/direct light*? Due to its very nature television being : a zone of heavy industrially orientated production. As Godard says once again : a place that just never stops. Then by all accounts would it be comparable to the glass covered greenhouse and its aforementioned long term effect. In itself the glasshouse being an extremely vast zone of vast industrially orientated production. A place which produces without inspiration. There is effectively no direct sunlight. Production there continues at an ever increasing rate without stopping. *Producing goods lacking in direct light and so lacking in essence*. The seasons have little or no impact on what happens within the glasshouse. It is a place of continual massive production. Acres upon acres. Prairies upon prairies. Producing with the passing of time what it eventually produces : a very beginning of an ongoing *emptiness*.

Mussolini's minds

In Mussolini's minds, the trains all run on time
In Mussolini's minds, the clocks all shudder
to their next minute stop,
letting out long breaths of an emptying moment
In Mussolini's minds, the replacement people
do not wear clock faces but digital,
In Mussolini's minds, people jerk nervously about
their hands and eyes always shout command-wise—

what time
what time
excuse me, what time
excuse me, do you have
what time
excuse me, do you
hold the time?

In Mussolini's minds, the trains all run on time
because they have no choice not to.

Patrick O'Beirne Tage wie diese

Rabe

Als Georg am Morgen des 27. März in sein Badezimmer trat, sah er im Spiegel auf seiner linken Schulter einen Raben sitzen. Sonnenlicht drang durch die Milchglasscheiben. Federn, Augen und Schnabel des Vogels waren von dem matt schimmernden Schwarz eines Briketts. Auf der Schulter selbst fühlte Georg kein Gewicht, sein Schulterzucken erwiderte der Vogel mit der fließenden Eleganz eines Raubtiers: eine sachte Welle ging durch das Gefieder, weiter nichts. Georg machte einen vorsichtigen Schritt zurück, wobei seine Augen auf denen des Raben im Spiegel gerichtet blieben. Nun streckte sich der Rabe, hob mit unhörbarem Flügelschlag von der Schulter ab und tauchte im Spiegel ab wie ein Kieselstein im Teich.

Georg maß dem Vorfall nicht zu viel Bedeutung bei, tat ihn als Tagtraum ab und hatte ihn erfolgreich verdrängt, bis er am Abend wieder in seiner Wohnung stand und nach der Kälte der Badezimmerklinke griff. Die Hand stockte kurz, dann trat er mit energischem Schritt durch die Tür. Während er noch nach dem Lichtschalter tastete, suchten seine Augen schon im dunklen Spiegel nach dem Raben. Zweimal flackerte die Neonlampe über dem Toilettenspiegel, dann beleuchtete sie das Bad, und im Blinzeln, mit denen sich die Augen an die Helligkeit gewöhnten, erkannte Georg, dass er alleine war.

Kein Rabe.

Nur Stille und ein erwachsener Mann, der sich dabei ertappte, dass er - für eine Schrecksekunde - an Gespenster glaubte.

Im Weiteren ging Georgs Leben wie gehabt seinen Gang

Schmutz

Ecken und Kanten sind besonders anfällig. Ich liege auf den Knien und putze mein Badezimmer. Mit Kraft scheuere ich Schmutz und Schmodder von den Kacheln hinter der Waschmaschine und bereue. Bereue derart lange nicht geputzt zu haben, dass mir nun pelzige Staubkolonien entgegen sehen. Im Augenwinkel scheint es, als würden sie sich selbstständig bewegen und davon krabbeln. Die Wolle geht noch aber das Festgebäckene und Klebrige raubt mir den letzten Nerv. Weil es immer noch ein kleines bisschen länger dauert, als man dachte und dann noch eins. Zum Schluss bin ich dann wieder stolz. Wenn alles fertig und sauber ist. Aber da sehe noch etwas, das ich übersehen hatte. An der Seite der Badewanne residiert ein Grauschleier mit Charakter, der sich von keinem Mittelchen beeindrucken lässt, welches die chemische Industrie für ihn bereitstellt.

Grauschleier ist ein Arschloch.

Stolz

Im Goldrahmen der im Quadrat vierzig Zentimeter maß, befand sich eine Zeichnung aus dem Jahre 1954. Eine Tuschzeichnung, die einen Stier im Sprung zeigte und von Picasso am 24. Juni unterschrieben worden war. Leonhard Reichelt, ein Antiquar und Kunsthändler in der Universitätsstadt G, hatte, als er ihr das erste Mal ansichtig wurde, gelächelt und war innerlich vor Stolz geplatzt. Die Zeichnung war ihm in einem Nachlass untergekommen und er hatte es nicht geschafft an sich zu halten, als die Erben der Professorenwitwe B. ihn durch das Haus führten und er im Augenwinkel die Zeichnung an der Wand entdeckte. Er sah sich gezwungen, für einen Moment den Raum zu verlassen um auf der Toilette zur Ruhe zu kommen. Den Rest des Nachmittages behielt er, trotz pochenden Herzschlages, eine angestrenzte Kühle in seinem Gesichtsausdruck und erklärte den Erben - Witwe B. stammte ganz offensichtlich aus schlichten Verhältnissen - seine Bereitschaft, den künstlerischen Nachlass, gesondert zur Bibliothek, für Tausend Euro zu übernehmen. Auf der Rückfahrt spielte er mit dem Gedanken die Zeichnung unverkäuflich in seinem Kellerantiquariat aufzuhängen, dann aber erschien ihm der Vorgang, einen Picasso zu handeln, als ein kunsthändlerischer Aufstieg und er verkaufte die Trouville noch in der folgenden Woche für viertausend Euro, ebenfalls an einen Professorenhaushalt. Picassos Stier sprang von der Kunstgeschichte zur Molekularbiologie. Nun also sah er den Goldrahmen, der zu einem Werk der Moderne nicht passen wollte wieder, allerdings im Büro der Kriminalpolizei, wo der gefälschte Picasso, achtlos abgelegt zwischen Schreibtischutensilien, zum zweiten Mal auf ihn wartete.



Sketches of houses by Susanne Krövel

Loch

Ein faustgroßes Loch im Blechzaun kurz über dem Boden gab den Blick auf die donnernde Stadtautobahn frei und beantwortete die Frage, was mit dem Hamster Gustav passiert sein könnte. Martin biss sich auf die Unterlippe, als die Zwillinge an seine Seite traten.

- Hast du ihn Papa?

- Nein. Hier ist ein Loch im Zaun.

Mareike, die schnellere von den Zweien, kniete, ohne Rücksicht auf ihr Kleid zu nehmen, ins nasse Grass und sah durch das Loch. Mit fragendem Gesichtsausdruck erhob sie sich wieder, als erwarte sie von Martin einen Hinweis bei einer Schnitzeljagd.

Martin wich dem Blick aus. Lisa krauchte nun ebenfalls in den nassen Rasen und steckte ihre Hand durch das Loch. Martin wollte sie davon abhalten, da die scharfen Blechkanten Befürchtungen weckten, doch da zog sie schon den zitternden Gustav durch das Loch herüber.

Noch Jahre später war sich Martin sicher, in Gustavs Gesicht, das langsamer mampfte als üblich, etwas Ähnliches wie Dank gelesen zu haben.

Elfmeter

Der Mittelstürmer Balfour M., ein Hüne ghanaischer Herkunft, versammelte einen Elfmeter wenige Minuten, nachdem er sich bei einem von vornherein aussichtslosen - also überflüssigen - Kopfballduell auf die Zunge gebissen hatte. Der Schmerz brannte derart säuisch, dass ihm beim Abschuss des Elfers der Fuß schlackerte. Als er die Gelassenheit sah, mit welcher der gegnerische Keeper - ohne Eile oder Anstrengung - den Ball vor der Brust annahm, dotzen ließ und unbeeindruckt in die Tiefe des Raumes zurückschlenzte, fühlte sich Balfour wie der letzte Depp.

Der Schmerz war verflogen.



Christian Ward
Three Poems

Pereiras Dam, Portugal 2005

Drought has turned it into a bed
of hooves. Clouds have not run
like horses in months. Birds
pick at the gaps, miners digging

for seams of undiscovered metals.
Farms turn to waste; animals
start to resemble their stuffed
counterparts. The farmers' wives

drop plumb-lines into the empty
wells of their lives. Buckets clang
with the sound of lost hope,
each note clambering up the sides

like animals desperate to taste
air thick with dissatisfaction.

Flood

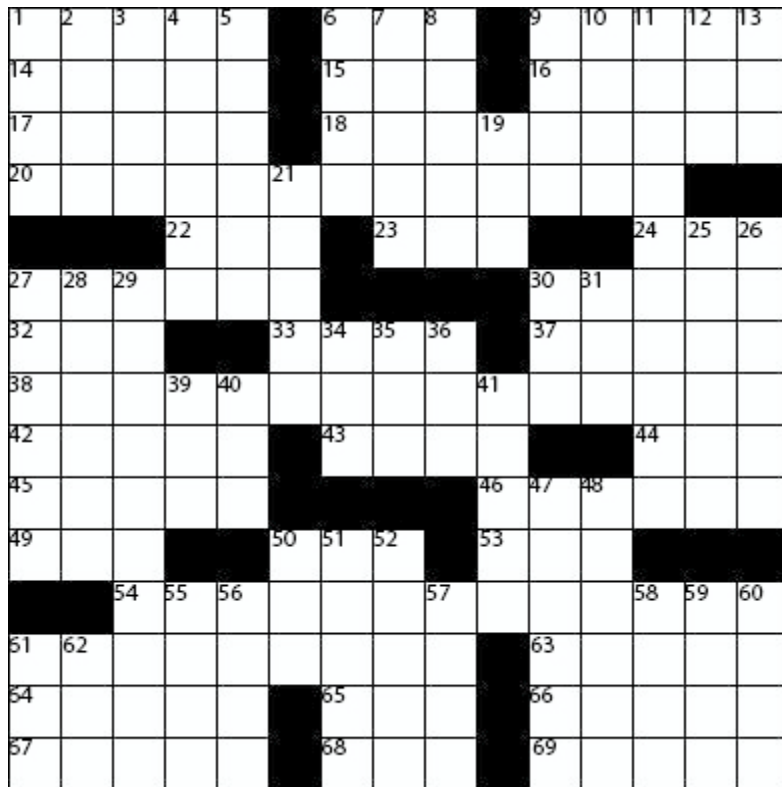
The solitary vehicle
trickles down the road
like the first word
from a flood of language
I am expecting when my son
starts to speak. I look
forward to feeling the weight
of every dada and mama,
each vowel and syllable
heavy like iron; holding him
to the earth. When these words
dry up, he will slowly start
to lift himself out of my arms,
out of my life. I clench him tightly
each night anxiously, eager
to avoid that day.

Astronaut

The astronaut you married
looks nothing like the photo.
His head, for instance,
is elongated like a horse's.
Perhaps it's the way
he toyed with the Earth's
gravitational field during
spacewalks that stretched
the bone like silly putty,
desperate to be dragged
down so he could circle
your body once more
and rediscover its topography

Charlie Stadlander

Crucial Verbiage



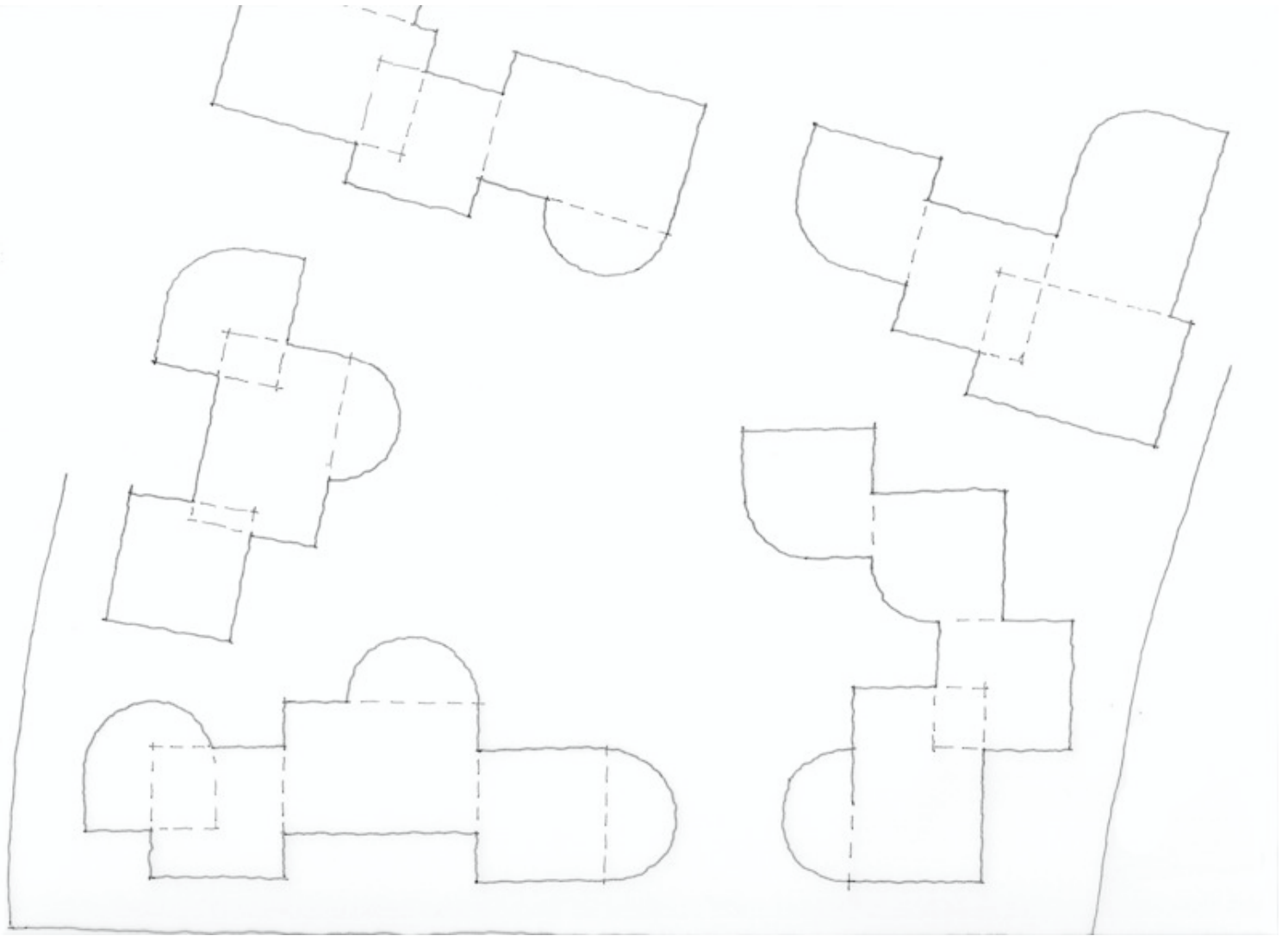
ACROSS

1. Alternative energy choice
6. Ebenezer's exclamation
9. Home to Tom and Catherine-Zeta Jones
14. Wipe clean
15. It can be white
16. Drives a getaway car
17. Happen again
18. Forgetful ones
20. Fresh fruits for filling pies
22. Ambient musicmaker Brian
23. Turn red
24. Apogee
27. Let borrow
30. Chant at a peace rally, perhaps
32. Alternative folkie DiFranco
33. Bolt of inspiration
37. _____ worse than death (2 words)
38. OCD, depression, and agoraphobia
42. Ending after C- or Eth-
43. Without this, game hunting could be difficult
44. Uno più due
45. "It's true!"
46. Laid _____ (2 words)
49. When repeated, a deadly African fly
50. Auto's statistic in the UK or the USA
53. Chilled precipitation, for short
54. Volcanic spouts

61. Scavenger of cloth
63. Comparatively sick
64. Move slowly across
65. Put away
66. Monarch's duration
67. Politician's support staff
68. Railroad stop (abbr.)
69. Greek muse of love poetry

DOWN

1. Certain Balkan resident
2. Famed cookie sandwich
3. Decorated with frills
4. Example of function, in a phrase
5. Let out again, as property
6. Talk at great length
7. Set sights on
8. One of a line of English kings
9. What _____ saying? (2 words)
10. Famed Vietnam War protestor Hoffman
11. Smallest amount of refuse
12. And so on...
13. Sound emanating from a coiled snake
19. Prior to
21. Without fat, as in a salad dressing
25. Old cowboy films
26. Like some stations on a car radio
27. Rue or regret
28. Months in Madrid
29. Like a spider using a cane, so to speak
30. Scottish denial
31. Plural of a location preposition
34. 24 horas
35. Victim of a devastating Dutch disease
36. Donation to the poor
39. ____-Chi
40. Pub pint
41. "It isn't true!"
47. Needing to be extinguished
48. Alternative to a brush, in housepainting
50. Catchall category, cut short
51. Members of a Chinese breed, colloquially
52. Better than not bad
55. Fencing blade
56. Sounds from 51 downs
57. Young lady from Toledo (abbr.)
58. Word after inter
59. Cucumber or broccoli (abbr.)
60. Tuscan river
61. Maker of TVs and Radios
62. Name that is Hebrew for "Lion"



Sketches of houses by Susanne Krövel courtesy of Simon Stranger and Gallery 46 (Sircletwo 46,Nem)

Karl Whitney **Walking Rue Vilin**

I walked up the hill to Rue Vilin twice – once on my own, and the other time, quite recently, with my girlfriend. Although I’ve only walked the Rue Vilin twice, I’ve thought about that street a lot over the past few years.

Rue Vilin, in the Belleville area of Paris, is only half the street it used to be – something that’s obvious if one searches for it on a map. On the Plan de Paris, Rue Vilin appears as a stubby offcut: an abbreviated laneway, almost as wide as it is long.

Rue Vilin used to run from its junction on the Rue des Couronnes all the way up to a dead-end at a steep cliff-face, against which a staircase led vertiginously up to the Rue Piat and the Rue du Transvaal, both balanced precariously on the crest of the hill. Now, however, my map showed that Parc Belleville had replaced the top half of the street.

But to actually get there – to walk the street and see that none of its buildings had been built before the late 1960s – was to realise that Rue Vilin, and the area immediately surrounding it, had undergone an apparently catastrophic process of

urban renewal sometime in the not-so-distant past. Urban renewal was a phrase that, to me, automatically suggested urban destruction: a process by which the past is wiped clean, and a vision of the future is imposed in its place. Rue Vilin: not half the street it used to be; in fact, not the street it used to be at all.

Rue Vilin was physically undamaged as a result of the war, but the heart had been ripped out of it. It had been part of a Jewish quarter of the city, housing recently-arrived immigrants from Eastern Europe. One resident was the mother of writer Georges Perec, who lived and worked there, running a hairdressing business. In 1943, she was arrested by Parisian police and deported towards Auschwitz; she never returned. She had already sent her son away to safety in the south of France. Perec, whose father had died fighting for the French army in 1940, and who was an only child, was an orphan before his seventh birthday. The young Georges was formally adopted by his aunt and uncle, and lived with them in western Paris. But he later returned to Rue Vilin and walked the street for the first time in nearly thirty years.

Georges Perec was the reason I was first climbed this hill in north-eastern Paris, tracing the line of the old street, looking for a Rue Vilin that no longer existed.

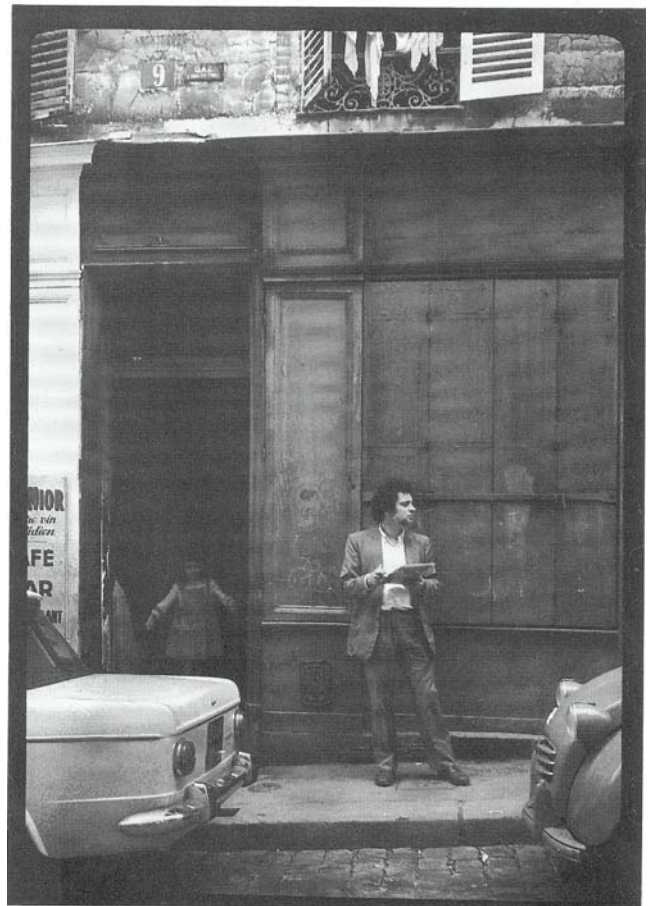
The area around the street had long been marked for destruction declared an *ilot insalubre*, or unhealthy block, as far back as the early 1900s. However, little was done until the late 1960s, when a process of demolition and rebuilding reached Belleville.

Perec heard news of the impending demolition from his friend Pierre Getzler. On a walk with Getzler around Paris, when Perec mentioned that he hadn't returned to the Rue Vilin since he was a child – how he wasn't even sure where it was located – his friend informed him the street was mere metres away from where they were standing.

In 1969, following the traumatic break-up of a relationship, Perec threw himself into an ambitious project which, he planned, would last for twelve years: the ongoing description of twelve

places in Paris which were important to him. He utilised a 12 x 12 mathematical grid to structure the order in which he would visit each place. Every month, he would go to one of the twelve locations and note down what he saw there, and in addition, at a different location would write a memory of another place. Rue Vilin was one of these places, and was arguably the most personal of them.

Perec wrote that the description was 'meant to be as neutral as possible [...] walking in the street, notebook and pen in hand, I do my best to describe the houses, the shops and the people that I come across, the posters, and in a general way, all the details that attract my eye.'



Georges Perec while writing the description of the street (early 1970s)

The cold precision with which the street was described was the product of a severely constrained observational discipline, which had developed as a result of Perec's membership of novelist Raymond Queneau's Oulipo group – an organisation which investigated the creative possibilities of literary constraint, drawing techniques largely from science and mathematics.

On the afternoon of 27 February 1969, Perec found himself, clutching a notebook, standing at the foot of Rue Vilin, at the point where it branches off from the larger Rue des Couronnes. Across the street new council blocks had recently been erected (they had ‘something old about them already’, Perec wrote).

As he walked up the street, against the slope of the hill, Perec recorded in his notebook the function of each building: several empty shops, a paint shop, a dry cleaner’s, a shop selling buttonholes, a restaurant, a laundry, a tailor specialising in trousers, a residential hotel.

The upper half of the street was pockmarked by gaps, indicating where houses had been demolished. Concrete fences masked derelict sites from view. Of personal significance to Perec were no. 1, the building where his mother’s parents lived; and no. 24, the house where he lived as a child, and where his mother’s business was located – where the now-faded phrase ‘Ladies’ hairdresser’ was still visible on the wall.

On his first visit, he climbed the steps at the end of the street; at the summit of the hill he noted that ‘there’s quite an extensive panorama to be seen: churches, tall modern blocks, the Panthéon.’



View of Paris from Parc Belleville, photo Karl Whitney

It was this I wanted to see when I first got to Rue Vilin: if I couldn’t see the street as it was when Perec walked it, I at least wanted to find out if this view across the city persisted.

Having made it through the dense undergrowth of the Parc Belleville, a vista identical to Perec’s greeted me.

I sat down, and looked at the city unfolding below me – the Eiffel Tower and the Panthéon the most visible, but by no means the only, landmarks. I thought about the paradoxical destruction that had been wrought to turn what had been streets and houses into green space; to reclaim nature at the expense of the bustling, complex and contradictory life of the city. This process made nature seem most unnatural. I considered the generations of families who had lived on the street now covered by the park. Most of all, I thought of how part of Perec’s own history had, somehow, been erased with the destruction of the street.

By the time Parc Belleville was inaugurated in 1988, Perec was dead. He passed away, on 3 March 1982, just days before his 46th birthday. At the time of his death, Rue Vilin, as he had once known it, was completely gone. His last description, written in 1975, recorded that an entire side of street was lined with concrete fences, the buildings destroyed.

The transience of urban space, how the city’s only constant seems to be irreversible and tragic change, has long been a preoccupation of poets and thinkers, from Baudelaire, who declared that ‘the form of a city changes, alas!, more quickly than does the human heart’, to Marshall Berman, who adapted Marx’s phrase ‘all that is solid melts into air’ to describe the destruction wrought on the urban fabric, and on human experience, by the processes of modernity.

As I sat, for the first time, in Parc Belleville, these arguments weren’t far from my mind: the destruction of the street, the clearing of houses, the departure of the population – all these lamentable effects of 20th century urban planning seemed to extend before me. I left, making my way back down the hill, distinctly melancholy. It had been a solitary, moving, experience.

I returned there quite recently, almost exactly three years after my last visit. My girlfriend and I made our way towards Rue Vilin. At the foot of

the street, I turned to look across at the council blocks that Perec thought old before their time – they stood: bright, undimmed. The street itself is now truncated and pedestrianised, leading past five- and six-storey residential buildings, curving up to the gate of Parc Belleville.

The park itself is lush, tree-lined, and well-used by people from the surrounding area: its open-air table-tennis tables, its tunnels of ivy arching over rows of steps, and, near the summit of the hill, its peculiar museum, the *Maison de l'air*, make it both pleasant and unusual. On the night we visited, the park was just closing up, and people who had come to eat bread and drink wine while the sun set pleasantly on the horizon gathered their things to leave.

And at that point, part of me admitted that the park, installed at the expense of the old street, was in many ways a good thing, and by no means a manifestation of problematic functionalist urbanism – something I had convinced myself of on my previous visit. The city, rather, is created through everyday use, and killed through its over-visualisation; the visualisation of a certain type of urban planning, certainly, but also in the kind of gaze that wallows in a nostalgic rejection of the contemporary.

For one thing, the new apartment buildings, derided by Perec, still formed part of a dense urban fabric, in which the street and the local shop had roles to play. Conversely, functionalist urbanism wished to completely remove the apartment block from the street, and place it in a blank and geometrically-arranged open space. This was something that had been achieved elsewhere, in the *cit * suburbs of Paris, with largely lamentable results.

I could see now that, although the area had long been earmarked for reconstruction, Parc Belleville was more the product of another process, originating in the 1960s, of French planners learning from the mistakes of post-war construction: the large, isolated residential buildings, the lack of services, the vast and dispiriting open spaces. Green space didn't have to

be like that: in the 1970s small neighbourhood parks began to spring up all over Paris, largely as a result of debates about what kind of city Parisians actually wanted.

Although the destruction of Rue Vilin struck Perec as, literally, a noteworthy event – something intimately tied up with his own memory, or lack of memory – I don't think he necessarily saw it as a tragedy. His pragmatic view of human history made him sceptical towards any nostalgic notions of lost community. To live in a city meant one constantly undergoing changes large and small. To record this was to know the city, one's own surroundings, and oneself, better.



Stairway at top of Rue Vilin, Michel Sfez, 1984

In the city, the past is always present in some small way, whether in the physical layout of a street, the slope of a hill, or written in the pages of a notebook. The form of a city constantly changes, but past impressions still remain. This is true of most cities; this is true of Paris.

But, it seemed to me, the possibility of reimagining the city, or of recording it for oneself and others, or of delving into its past as a way of explaining the present, cannot be stopped either. These were the thoughts running through my mind as we descended from the hill, turned down the Rue Piat, and reluctantly made our way back towards the heart of the city. ■