Common Spatialities: The Production of the Multitude

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Ah, the multitude, so much pomposity to describe a mass of muddled bodies, a tangle of parts and parts of parts. […] That revolutionary body, yes, but how to set it in motion. How to pull it out of its apathy? That is the science, the new science of reality. The movement of the multitude.

(Karnaval, Juan Francisco Ferré, 2012)[1]

The Gezi Park barricades in Istanbul, the OWS occupation of Zucotti Park in New York City, the tents of the *indignados* movement in Spain, the London Blackberry riots or the seizure of Tahrir Square in Cairo to demand the overthrow of a dictator. As new forms of social coexistence and relationship are being configured, and new spaces for encounter and conflict produced, architecture feels that essential questions concerning its activity are being addressed in each and every one of these situations. And yet, we seem unable to relate to them and grasp their significance as we fall again and again into old metaphors and tools. In this paper I propose the following hypothesis: if the modern architectural discipline – its theories, strategies and tools – emerges along with the modern liberal state (and its particular understanding and practice of politics as the management and administration of life), the recent forms of political action bursting from their confinement and reclaiming a new relation to the sensible, demand – and might help develop – a new understanding of architecture.[2] One that will make it evolve from a technical and disciplinary knowledge towards a critical practice integrated into the action of the multitude.

The common as production of the multitude

Against traditional inert readings of the common as a natural or cultural resource, we understand the common as the production of the multitude, the actualisation of its practices.[3] The common and the multitude must be thought of together through this productive link. In order to understand and awaken the political and architectural potential underlying the common, we need to dive into the spatial dimensions of the multitude. To achieve this, we will look further into these two notions as we try to move beyond the banality and depoliticisation brought about by their recent popularisation.[4]

This movement has led to many contemporary authors – from Antonio Negri or Paolo Virno to Jean-Luc Nancy or Giorgio Agamben – to talk about a 'crisis of the common'. As the concept is hollowed out, ghostly impressions of it fill our everyday world. Once understood as a shared abstract dimension, the bond that gave coherence to our social life, the common is now a meme in the hands of the market, the media or the post-democratic political scenario. The common has been turned into a spectre of what it once was at the precise moment that it has become the core of our new economic system. Many names have been given to this new productive order: immaterial, cognitive or post-Fordist capitalism among others. But all definitions point to the same circumstance: our languages, communications, affects and knowledge, as well as our ability to produce space through their unfolding, are its driving force. And so, just as the productive

and produced condition of the common has come to the fore, so has its seizure. A seizure of the common enacted through the emptying of its meaning. A hollowing out that conceals the processes of expropriation, privatisation and manipulation that are taking it over.[5]

What is the common beyond these ghostly versions? It is first, a dynamic notion that involves 'both the product of labor and the means of future production'. It is then, not only 'the earth we share but also the languages we create, the social practices we establish, the modes of sociality that define our relationships, and so forth'.[6] The common is threaded through our everyday existence, its minor practices and rhythms, and therein lies its deep architectural significance. Even though communication and language are the most usual instances of this shared quality of the common, here we present space as a further prime case of this produced and productive condition of the common.[7]

In order to acknowledge the production of space as common, it must be considered as a constitutive part of the multitude's actions and practices. No longer a static scenario where things simply unfold, but a constituent movement that resides in the relationship between the body of the individual, understood as the generator of one's own spatiality, and the constituent activity, constantly renewed, towards a common spatiality.

One's own spatiality is defined through the body's performativity, and it expresses the complex topological extension formed by the sensible world at every moment, echoing and empowering the crosses, knots, forces, densities and proximities that shape the experiential fabric in which bodies interweave. As this spatiality of one's own resonates with that of others, not by addition or overlapping, but through the characteristic movements of composition and decomposition of the constituent 'doing' of the multitude, a new common spatiality is produced:

'The flesh of the multitude produces in common in a way that is monstrous and always exceeds the measure of any traditional social bodies…'[8] [fig. 1]

Multitude: the many (seen as being many) against the One
So, if the common is the production of the multitude, what is the multitude? The Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza was the first to propose a positive reading of the multitude in his political philosophy.

 [The multitude] indicates a plurality which persists as such in the public scene, in collective action, in the handling of communal affairs, without converging into a One, without evaporating within a centripetal form of motion. Multitude is the form of social and political existence for the many, seen as being many: a permanent form, not an episodic or interstitial form.[9]

The multitude appears as a non-sovereign organisation of individuals. Unlike unitary ideas such as the mass, which implies a lack of differentiation of its parts, or the modern concept of the people, the multitude is defined through a constituent movement materialised in its common production, not by an external determination. The multitude is not defined by what it is, but for what it does.

Traditionally, political philosophers before Spinoza had focused on the relation between the 'individual and the state (or sovereign) and the people and the state (thereby collapsing all mass movements into "the people")'.[10] To counter these two abstract juridical oppositions, Spinoza turned to the actuality of experience present in the work of politicians and historians. From these sources he took five terms 'to designate the forms of collective life: *populus, plebs, vulgus, turba, multitudo'.* [11]

Though none of the classical authors Spinoza turned to shared any kind of sympathy for these figures, they accorded them nonetheless a central role in history. They were seen as necessary to

Fig. 1   The monstrosity of the common flesh is both productive and produced. Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, 'Disparate de Carnaval' (1816-1823). Source: Wikimedia Commons.

social life, even if it was through negative and mainly destructive movements.[12] And so, when he began to consider the actions of the multitude as the immanent force constituting every political regime, the pejorative role this term had had in his early political writings was turned into a positive and productive dimension.

The fundamental role of the collective subject in the constitution of our political organisation was brought to the fore by the seventeenth-century crisis and revolutions.[13] While against the background of a failing Dutch republic, Spinoza explored the constituent role of the multitude, it was the fear of the masses inspired by the English revolution that shaped Thomas Hobbes and John Locke's liberal philosophy.[14]

Just as Spinoza anchored the multitude in the agency of the individual body, Thomas Hobbes was writing about another body: the unitary body of the Leviathan. A body in which, as shown in an engraving from its first edition, the bodies of the people 'are turned unanimously toward the face of the sovereign'. Denying any will to the multitude and emptying it of any subjectivity, Hobbes formed 'the bust of the Leviathan through a connection without relationship, in which *multitudo* recalls *solitudo'*.[15] [figs. 2-3]

Facing a State of Nature described as chaotic and confrontational – 'a war of all against all' – Hobbes placed the origin of the State in a civil covenant. A pact that forms civil society, and one through which human beings agree to submit by handing over their individual power to an absolute sovereign. The sovereign becomes, from then on, the guarantor of the social order through a transcendent structure of laws and rights. For Spinoza, however, the collective political subject 'is not created by a contract' but 'is incessantly engendered and re-engendered by a consensus that must be perpetually renewed'.[16]

Two contrasting understandings of the origin of political organisation thus arose: on the one hand contract theory and the modern liberal state; on the other, Spinoza's materialist philosophy (what Antonio Negri termed the anomaly of the seventeenth century). The former gave birth, through the notion of representation, to the idea of 'the people' and thus created a gap between the individual and power. The latter sought to explore the constituent movement of the multitude; a process of negotiation that had to be constantly renewed and which required the presence of the bodies and the recognition of their performativity.[17]

The aforementioned crisis of the common means the emptying of its meaning. The creation of a void filled with commonplaces to conceal the continued process of expropriation and appropriation of the common. If the hollowing out of the term defines the present phase of this crisis, the partition, distribution and seizure of the common has a longer history: one tightly related to this divergent understanding of the collective subject and the exception as Modernity's foundational form of political organisation. Accordingly, and before we delve into the role of presence and performativity in the spatial definition of the multitude, we need to look into the spatial construction of the exception. How the land was turned from a sensible sphere into blank disposable space. And how the individual came to be fundamentally defined by his condition as owner.

Separation and appropriation: the exception

> Wherever modern sovereignty took root, it constructed a Leviathan that overarched its social domain and imposed hierarchical territorial boundaries, both to police the purity of its own identity and to exclude all that was other.
> (*Empire*, Antonio Negri & Michael Hardt)[18]

The construction of the exception as the precise definition of what belongs to the inside and the

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 2: Frontispiece for the first edition of Thomas Hobbes' 'Leviathan' (1651), engraving by Abraham Bosse.
Source: Wikimedia Commons.
Fig. 3: Frontispiece for the first edition of Thomas Hobbes' 'Leviathan' (1651), detail. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

outside of a specific legal and political organisation became one of the founding pillars of Modernity's political order.[19] A condition extended thenceforth to all areas of life in a precise spatial translation.

It was the German political theorist Carl Schmitt who further exposed the connection between modern sovereignty and the exception (as well as its situated condition). In 1922 he coined the deeply Hobbesian formula: 'Sovereign is he who decides on the exception.'[20] The sovereign unitary body of the *Leviathan* was revealed in the delimitation of an 'inside' and an 'outside' of the law (thus, its spatial and grounded dimension). The law could only act where material boundaries had been demarcated, where the exception had been physically built. This statement would have been unthinkable without the developments that, over the previous five centuries, had linked the concepts of land and territory with property through a technical and scientific progress that was making it easier and easier to accurately delineate, map and publicise borders.[21]

The extension of the exception as a political instrument accompanied the transformation suffered by the concept of property between the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Thomas Hobbes' known formula – 'to give to every man his own' – certified in 1651 the conversion of man into owner.[22] Property became a defining part of human nature and a determinant factor in the relation between men. It was the birth of a possessive individualism.[23]

The public/private binary: two ways of appropriating the common of men
As the exception as a political ordering tool extended, emerging concepts such as 'public order' or 'public facilities' pointed to the appearance of a specific kind of separation: the public-private divide. In the following centuries, this division was to gain a fundamental dimension in the production of common space and has, still today, a radical importance for

architecture and urbanism.

Jürgen Habermas began *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, by discussing the terminological difficulty presented by such words as 'public' or 'public sphere'. They 'betray a multiplicity of concurrent meanings', he affirmed. Their diverse temporal and cultural origins mean that 'when applied synchronically to the conditions of a bourgeois society that is industrially advanced and constituted as a social-welfare state, they fuse into a clouded amalgam.' If publicness sometimes conveys a condition of access – a public space is the one open to all – in other instances it may refer to public institutions – their publicness being defined by its relation to the State. A State understood as a 'public authority' for 'it owes this attribute to its task of promoting the public or common welfare of its rightful members'.[24]

This concept of public or publicness has its origin in the political organisation discussed above. A division is created between a public space ruled by the sovereign and shaped by the laws of the State, and a private space in which the political potential of the citizen is enclosed and reabsorbed as a principle of personal freedom. A redefined notion of individual freedom as the fundamental essence of the new man rested on the possessive condition already mentioned.

This direct link between the public-private divide and the modern definition of property has been wonderfully addressed by Judith Revel and Antonio Negri. Through their vindication of the common as production they note how the public-private binary symbolises no more than 'two ways of appropriating the common of men'. When we refer to the private, property appears as 'an appropriation of the common by a single man, that is to say, an expropriation from all others'. Meanwhile, when we refer to the public, the problem of the social contract comes

to the fore:

> [A] problem of the social contract – problem of modern democracy: since private property generates inequality, how to invent a political system where everything, belonging to everyone, nevertheless belongs to no one? […] There we have the public: that which belonging to everyone belongs to no one, which is to say, that which belongs to the State.

And it is here that a redefinition of the common becomes fundamental, for, as Revel and Negri wonder: aren't we that same State? Aren't our bodies the ones giving form to the Leviathan? Accordingly,

> Something has to be invented to prettify [the State's] seizure of the common: make us believe, for instance, that if it represents us and appropriates the rights from our production, it is because this 'we' that we are, is not what we produce in common, not what we create and organize as common, but that which allows us to exist.

And so, the inert readings of the common are created to support this idea:

> The common, the State tell us, does not belong to us since we don't really create it: the common is our earth, our fundament, it's what we have under our feet: our nature, our identity. And if this common doesn't truly belong to us – to be is not to have – the seizing of the common by the State isn't called appropriation but (economic) management, delegation and (political) representation.[25]

The identity of the link between the two elements, public and private, is brought to the fore. Both of them are revealed as just two forms of ownership. Consequently, the division is invalidated and thus inoperative.[26] A space for the possible redefinition of relations between the individual and the configuration of his environment opens up immediately.

Therein resides one of the main reasons that architecture seems unable to find its way into the fields opened up by the recent social urban protests: the architectural discipline and the multitude have been speaking on two different political planes. As the extension of the modern property regime denies the creativity and political potential of the multitude through the division and appropriation of their common production, politics is turned into a complex machine for the policing and management of that production.

The spatial construction of the exception: from territory to flesh

The exception as an organisational device, and its transformation into the concept of property were at the centre of the enclosure of England's common lands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The new techniques for the spatial construction of the exception appeared by means of the surveyor's and the cartographer's tools, as they proclaimed 'the need for every land-holder to "know one's own"'.[27] From the end of the sixteenth century, and as formal estate mapping became a common practice, more narrative or pictorial maps gave way to new representations based on accurate measurements. These maps were not only useful for knowing and working the land but also served as a 'statement of ownership, a symbol of possession such as no written survey could equal'.[28]

'The perfect Science of Lines, Plaines, and Solides (like a divine Justicier,) gave unto every man, his owne.' Thus wrote surveyor John Dee in the prologue to the 1570 English translation of Euclid's *Elements of Geometry*.[29] Geometry was subjected to the already mentioned Hobbesian expression, and along with the newly developed techniques of perspective, was an essential accomplice in this reification and reduction of the lived landscape into

facts and figures. These technical innovations transformed men's perception of the world. They offered a new image of space as an inert or abstract structure 'set before and logically prior to a disembodied viewer', dissociated from either experience or any social or political relation.[30]

These techniques of separation evolved as the spatial construction of the exception grew more and more complex. From the dominion of the territorial scale by means of geography and cartography, they reached the urban and architectural scales as the disciplinary exception succeeded the sovereign one. The emerging field of urban planning and a renewed architectural discipline became part of the set of technical knowledge and procedures at the service of the new biopolitical governmentality.[31] Politics had become the administration of life; its goal, the better optimisation of the population's (statistical instance of the people) productive force. But the evolution of the biopolitical exception did not stop there; it has kept advancing until it has reached the contemporary forms of biopolitical tattooing in which the exception has become engraved right into our flesh.[32]

The connection between exception, property and space in the enclosure of the commons was clear: the act of seizure and delimitation of properties radically transformed the built and lived landscape.[33] When the disciplinary exception ordered the movements and doings of the modern population, the connection was just as straightforward.[34] But nowadays, when the act of partition reaches our flesh and acts within the whole sphere of the sensible, an analysis of the spatial consequences of this process becomes more elusive and complex – but also more necessary for architecture.[35]

In 1982, in the interview *Space, Knowledge and Power*, Michel Foucault affirmed that architecture had been left behind as master of space. He understood that the architects were 'not the technicians or engineers of the three great variables – territory, communication, and speed'.[36] Together with disciplinary specialisation, architecture had left outside its domain many of its previous fields of competence.[37] From being an organiser of space it had become a builder of boundaries. Form (defined for its capacity to materialise limits), rather than disposition (potential relations and organisations between forms), became the centre of theory and practice. In disposition lies, not architecture as discipline, but an architectural condition as the organiser of space that operates on the whole of the sensible world. A sphere that is read, architecturally, from the body, and no longer understood as an abstract point in a Cartesian grid but as an extension and topological continuity within the world.

The common as actualisation of the political: space as multiple corporeality

How does this body, as the generator of space, relate to the common? To clarify this relationship we need to differentiate between the concepts of politics, the political, and their relation to the common. In the modern era, politics has become a complex assemblage of management and control devices that organise and optimise the lives and production of its subjects.[38] As we have seen above when discussing the public-private divide, these politics work upon the appropriation and distribution of the common.[39]

Meanwhile, the political allows us to think, not of a domain or specific knowledge or strategies, but of a primary condition: where does the original movement towards the organisation of the sensible lie, and how does it link the individual body to the common? From the terrain of political philosophy we move into that of fundamental philosophy. The problem of the political does not lie in the organisation and management of the community but in its original moment, in the articulation between power and act. The political is the potential for action inherent in every individual, and the common, the

actualisation of that potential (the materialisation of a given set of relations between bodies).[40]

The landscape that results from this reading is a multiple corporeality, a field of relations in which we discover ourselves not only placed but enmeshed, and in which the limit turns from the boundary between realms into a common bond, the flesh of the world.[41] A zone of ambiguous definition appears where the spatiality of one's own, produced in the actualisation of the body's political potential, interweaves with others in order to constitute a common spatiality, the political action of the multitude.

We see how different readings of the political imply different understandings of space and architecture. Space as seen from politics possesses a characteristic configuration determined by perfectly referenced coordinates that allow for a view from an outside that is beyond us, the watching stare of discipline and order. The political as potential emerging from the body means that spatial configuration rests in the actions of the bodies, be they human or non-human actions.[42] The relevance of this performative factor entails the abandonment of a codified disciplinary thinking in favour of a practical art. On other occasions, and through specific case studies, we have developed two conceptual tools: the figure of the acrobat (analysis of one's own spatiality) and the multitude-architect (processes of common spatiality composition), which start to outline an architecture as a physics of the bodies.[43] And it is precisely to this notion, with its reasons and implications, that we want to turn now.

A physics of the bodies: the simultaneous relation of the individual and the multiple

Spinoza could not consider politics, ethics and physics separately.[44] In order to develop his political works he had to stop and go back to ethics. And to allow these to unfold he needed physics to fully grasp the movements of the composition and decomposition of the bodies and forces that constitute the world.

In much the same way, to read architecture as a physics of the bodies we need to understand the centrality of the political and the common. The political generates a spatiality of one's own; that is, belonging to that same body. A spatiality of one's own that spreads throughout the perspectival horizon and the material dimensions, and defines the potential field of action produced and activated by that individual.[45]

The possibility of a spatiality of one's own implies its immediate relation to other rights and powers: other bodies understood as forces. The resulting and unavoidable conflict should be understood, not as the 'pathology of the political mechanism [but as] an ineradicable element of its physiology'.[46]The modern contract theory running from the *Leviathan* until the banning of disagreement in our post-political era, proceeds from the illusion that this conflict can be controlled and resolved.[47] But Spinoza's radical realism assumes it as its point of departure. For him, physics and politics cannot be thought of separately because 'human society is not separate from and opposed to nature; it is part of it'.

Spinoza writes in the Part IV of the *Ethics*, 'There is in Nature no individual thing that is not surpassed in strength and power by some other thing. Whatsoever thing there is, there is another more powerful by which the said thing can be destroyed.'[48] Every singular being lives enmeshed in 'a battlefield that occurs, first of all, inside us, but which immediately presents itself in a plural, instantly political dimension'. Because in that battlefield, and 'faced with the changeability and the variety of phenomena that envelop the existence of each individual, the "only" thing one can do is affirm and exploit one's multiplicity'. Multiplicity becomes 'a weapon […] or a strategy for the survival and affirmation of one's being'.[49]

The production of a common spatiality requires this simultaneous focus: on the individual and on the multiple. It is impossible to think of the individual without the dimension of multiplicity that lies in its own ontological definition. The same distortion arises when we reduce the multiple to the one by denying the singularity of its parts. In order to undertake any investigation into the spatial dimensions of the multitude and its production of a common spatiality, we need to explore concepts and tools that work without negating this simultaneous relation. For that, we turn, through Étienne Balibar to the work of Gilbert Simondon. 'The metaphysical doctrines of individuality, which lead to the classical dualisms of interior and exterior [or] a priori and a posteriori knowledge' have always depended on an understanding of the individual as 'an (ideally) stable form'.[50] Against this, Simondon introduced the notion of metastable equilibrium. Contrary to the dominating hylomorphic scheme, individuation is presented not as definite form given to inert matter but as a process of becoming. The separation between subject and object disappears; there are no longer men, objects, animals, societies or machines, only individuations.[51]

Composing the multitude: bodies, dispositions and situations
As we move beyond the subject-object divide, architecture might stop being the builder of the exception's walls in order to regain a broader role in the organisation of space. The notion of form loses its predominant role to that of disposition.

Traditionally, architectural form has materialised through the relationship between an inside and an outside. The inside being 'the position assumed by an acting subject', and the outside, 'the state of things in which the subject acts': a relationship where the fundamental role of form is to define 'the limits that constitute related, but different, parts'.[52] Thus, maintaining the separation between a subject and an object, between the action and the situation in which it takes place, this notion of form reaffirms a reading of space as an empty void or scenario. A limitation picked up by Keller Easterling when she notes how 'spaces are rarely considered to possess disposition'. The situation or state of things in which the subject unfolds his action appears as an inert assemblage of 'objects or volumes, not actors with agency or temperament'.[53]

We must take into account that these actors – the bodies that produce a common spatiality through their agency – are not just 'passive clump[s] of matter rusting in an otherwise vital universe'.[54] They are force-full entities whose existence configures 'a world that would not have been the same without [them]'.[55] Animate or inanimate, human or non-human, these entities 'are defined by their affects or their capacity to act and be acted upon'.[56] Or, to use our previous terms, they are defined by the political potential underlying their material being.

The built environment no longer appears as an assemblage of lifeless parts but as the common production of a multiplicity of bodies: humans, animals and vegetation, but also objects or built forms. Objects and built forms that must also be considered as actors with a potential for action and reaction, holders of 'dispositions, tendencies, propensities, or properties that interact with other factors'.[57]

Bodies – and thus forms – possess agency, 'a quotient of action that exists without the need for the actual movement or event'.[58] Disposition operates and relates through agency, through the latent potential of all the individuals that compose a singular spatial configuration. If disposition appears as the spatial configuration of the political, the situation through which it becomes actualised can be described as the materialisation of the spatial common. Situations are understood as immanent and self-organising event-spaces composed of bodies, practices and discourses.[59] This process

Fig. 4: Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 'Netherlandish Proverbs' (1559). Source: Wikimedia Commons.

of actualisation 'is always poised for compositional variation – subject to reorganisations and disorganisations – as its inexhaustible "virtuality" or potential continually rearticulates itself'.[60] This simultaneous and productive relation between bodies, disposition and situation, takes us back to the fundamental role of presence and performativity in the production of the common.

There is no need for new tools and/or metaphors to provoke yet another twist in architectural formal representation, but ways to bring this material presence to the centre of our practice.[61] What we are looking for is the instrumental to seize on this interwoven spatial complexity, as the minor practices of the everyday unfold in the production of a common spatiality. The knowledge and instruments to place us, navigate, and operate within the spatial production of the multitude.

Orientations within the common production of the multitude

We have established three fundamental concepts for understanding the multitude's production of space: the *body* as generator of a singular and common spatiality, *disposition* as the potential holding configuration of an assemblage of bodies, and *situation* as actualisation of that joint potential, and thus, as common. Now we want to put forward a set of strategies that might help us explore, navigate and operate within this spatial production of the multitude. These three concepts – exploration, navigation and operation – conform what we have termed, counter to previous concepts of the project, projective interpretation.[62] A practice that recognises the potential of one's own spatiality and which, through a deep understanding of the situations in which it is embedded, enhances the range of possibilities opened up in the production of a common spatiality.

Exploring the situation through an enhanced role of experience. The body understood as 'a polymorphous musical instrument saturated by natural and invented interacting periodicities […]; a shifting and dynamic manifold endlessly generating *structure* (that is, desire) on the run, a system whose possibilities have yet to be fully posited, or, at best, a field of experimentation without limits…' Against 'the mysterious, subjective genesis of the drawing/idea', the body as tool for knowledge, tuned to the everyday productive practices and producer himself.[63] Minor practices, habits, routines that help us keep in mind that the common is not result, but a permanent production that cannot be reduced to any kind of episodic form. This permanent condition of the multitude is defined through two main temporal dimensions. We can talk, first, of a background time. A temporality founded in everyday life habits that form 'a nature that is both produced and productive, created and creative – an ontology of social practice in common'.[64] And second, we have *kairos* or opportune time: 'the opportune moment that ruptures the monotony and repetitiveness of chronological time [and] has to be grasped by a political subject'.[65] Likewise, in the spatial configuration of the common, we can talk of a background spatiality and the need to detect, invent and build the right spot or spatial *kairos*.

Practices materialise in trajectories and tactics.[66] Trajectories that go deeper than the trace of a singular movement in order to bring together the manifold relations tied to the body as it threads the possibility of a common spatiality. Tactics operate within it, always on the move, without a place to call one's own, but with the capacity to create the set of relations that configure a spatiality of one's own. Tactics playing with the possibilities opened up by this spatial production, by chance and events in order to turn them into opportunities and right spots.

While analysing the differences between the spaces of politics and those of the political, we noted that when the performative factors come to the fore, the codified disciplinary theories fall behind

in favour of a practical knowledge. Controlling the capabilities or disposition of forms, codifying them or technically optimising them is impossible. They demand, on the contrary, an art of doing: 'Disposition, as the unfolding relationship between potentials, resists science and codification in favor of art or practice.'[67] When we deal with nothing more than 'working concepts, derived from experimentation in contact with the real', we need to pay closer 'attention to the operations of making' against more abstract theoretical descriptions. And as we discover the field as 'a material condition [and not as] discursive practice',[68] we need to look for 'a new materialism for architectural practice'.[69]

We want to finish with one image analysed by Laurent Bove to unfold his definition of a common politics: a politics that rests in the immanent workings of the body's power and affects rather than in 'its external manipulation'. [fig. 4] The image is the depiction of the *Netherlandish Proverbs* created by Pieter Bruegel the Elder in 1559. The proverbs are singular practices that materialise a folk wisdom: 'life strategies […] that come together, in a non-controlled way', and thus, in common.[70] Practices brought together by anonymous individuals producing the multiple assemblage of a common space. This image helps us to move away from the clichés that, in recent times, have entrapped the notion of the multitude and its production of the common. Far removed from reductions to episodic forms such as the swarm or the crowd, and its description as carnivalesque explosions, we see, within this image, the deep spatial and social complexity of the common.[71]

Such an object of research compels us to wonder about research itself. For '[t]he concrete – life itself – is partial and irremediably inapprehensible, incoherent and contradictory.' There is no longer an object of research. This common production, this unfolding of minor practices, 'cannot be reduced to a description' or an abstraction.[72] It is within the entanglement of doings, enmeshed in its trajectories and tactics, that knowledge is conformed.

Notes

1. Juan Francisco Ferré, *Karnaval* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 2012).
2. Taking as the point of departure the extraordinary investigation of Sven-Olov Wallenstein, *Biopolitics and the Emergence of Modern Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009).
3. Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt describe them as 'a relatively inert, traditional notion that generally involves natural resources. Early modern European social theorists conceive of the common as the bounty of nature available to humanity, including the fertile land to work and the fruits of the earth, often posing it in religious terms with scriptural evidence'. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 139.
4. As shown, for instance, in many of the references to the common made throughout the different pavilions of the 2012 Venice Biennale 'Common Ground'.
5. Peter Pál Pelbart, 'Una crisis de sentido es la condición necesaria para que algo nuevo aparezca', in *Fuera de lugar: conversaciones entre crisis y transformación*, ed. by Amador Fernández-Savater (Madrid: Acuarela Libros, 2013), pp. 45-61.
6. Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth,* p. 139.
7. 'We can communicate only on the basis of languages, symbols, ideas, and relationships we share in common, and in turn the results of our communication are new common languages, symbols, ideas, and relationships… the common is produced and it is also productive.' Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), p. 197.
8. Hardt and Negri, *Multitude.*
9. Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude,* trans. by Isabella Bertoletti, James Cascaito, Andrea Casson (Los Angeles, California: Semiotext(e), 2003).
10. Warren Montag. *Bodies, Masses, Power: Spinoza and*

His Contemporaries. (London: Verso, 1999), p. 75.

11. Ibid., p. 76.

12. Ibid.

13. 'The Dutch Anomaly', in Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics,* trans. by Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 3-21; Eric J. Hobsbawm, 'The General Crisis of the European Economy in the Seventeenth Century', *Past and Present* 5, 1 (1954), pp. 33-53; and Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, 'The General Crisis of the Seventeenth Century', *Past and Present* 16, 1 (1959), pp. 31-64.

14. Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power,* p. 90-124.

15. Filippo del Lucchese, *Conflict, Power, and Multitude in Machiavelli and Spinoza: Tumult and Indignation*, (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 118.

16. Alexandre Matheron, quoted in Montag, *Bodies, Masses, Power,* p. 92.

17. For an extended analysis of the idea of constituent power and its workings through the modern era, see Antonio Negri, *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State,* trans. by Maurizia Boscagli (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

18. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

19. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

20. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 5, quoted in Stephen Legg and Alexander Vasudevan, 'Introduction: Geographies of the Nomos', in *Spatiality, Sovereignty and Carl Schmitt. Geographies of the Nomos*, ed. by Stephen Legg (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 1-25 (p. 6).

21. In 1984, Michael Walzer adopted the term 'art of separation' to refer to this relation between the new forms of state organisation and the appropriation and distribution of the land. The liberal State born in the seventeenth century required a ceaseless process of 'drawing and policing of boundaries'. For, if 'the old, preliberal map showed a largely undifferentiated land mass, with rivers and mountains, cities and towns, but no borders', the liberal theorists 'drew lines [and] marked off different realms' that created the socio-political map we inhabit today. See Michael Walzer, 'Liberalism and the Art of Separation', *Political Theory*, 12, 3 (1984), pp. 315-30.

22. Antonio Negri. 'Pour une définition ontologique de la multitude', *Multitudes* 9 (2002), pp. 36-48.

23. C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962) and Pier Vittorio Aureli, *Less is Enough* (Moscow: Strelka Press, 2014).

24. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT press, 1989).

25. Judith Revel and Antonio Negri, 'Inventer le commun des hommes', *Multitudes,* 31 (2008), pp. 5-10.

26. We are thinking here of Giorgio Agamben's notion of *inoperosità* as developed in *Homo Sacer*.

27. Andrew McRae, 'To Know One's Own: Estate Surveying and the Representation of the Land in Early Modern England', *Huntington Library Quarterly,* 56, 4 (1993), pp. 333-57.

28. Paul Dean Adshead Harvey, *Maps in Tudor England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), quoted in Nicholas Blomley, 'Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* 93,1 (2003), pp. 121-41.

29. Blomley, 'Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence', p. 127.

30. McRae, 'To Know One's Own', p. 341.

31. Throughout this process, architecture would lose 'its role as the bearer of traditional orders and aesthetic hierarchies', and thus, 'its traditional authority as a symbolic form' in order 'to be a node in a network of knowledges and practices through which individuals were formed and a modern social space emerged'. (Wallenstein, *Biopolitics,* pp. 14-15). For an extended explanation of the concept of governmentality and its relation to the biopolitical state, see Michel Foucault,

Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78, trans. by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

32. Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on Control Societies' in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)*;* and Giorgio Agamben, 'Bodies Without Words: Against the Biopolitical Tattoo', *German Law Journal*, 5, 2 (2004), pp. 168-69.

33. As studied in: Blomley; McRae; Matthew Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism.* (London: Blackwell, 1996); and R.A. Butlin, 'The Enclosure of Open Fields and Extinction of Common Rights in England, circa 1600-1750: A Review', in *Change in the Countryside: Essays on Rural England, 1500-1900,* ed. by H.S.A. Fox and R.A. Butlin (London: Institute of British Geographers, 1979), pp. 65-82.

34. It was then that the modern notion of the project was configured: a projection of an idea or model organisation of the world to be laid out onto the fabric of the real (a working very close to Hobbes projected contractual fiction). This phase in the development of the architectural discipline can be defined by the problematisation of two key elements. First, the perfecting and mastering of the new representation tools (the construction of space no longer becomes a question of interpretation and adjustment produced on the go) that will turn architecture into a powerful technique that accurately dominates space partition; and second, the development of a specific authoring figure, a single mind capable of generating a whole new configuration of things.

35. Jacques Rancière formulated the concept of the 'partition of the sensible' to describe the consequences and meanings of this process: 'I call the distribution of the sensible the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts. This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution.' See 'The Distribution of the Sensible: Politics and Aesthetics' in Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. by Gabriel Rockhill (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). p. 7.

36. Michel Foucault and Paul Rabinow, 'Space, Knowledge, and Power', in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Random House, 1994), pp. 239-56, (p. 244).

37. Stan Allen, 'Infrastructural Urbanism' in *Points + Lines: Diagrams and Projects for the City* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), pp. 48-57.

38. Commenting this definition of politics, political thinkers such as Slavoj Žižek, Jacques Rancière or Chantal Mouffe have baptised our time as a post-political era. Experts, technicians and social engineers neutralise all form of disagreement through the non-stop flow of consensus.

39. Revel and Negri, *Inventer le commundes hommes*, pp. 5-10.

40. Negri, *Insurgencies*, mentioned in Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, pp. 29-33.

41. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible: Followed by Working Notes*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968) and the analysis of Marina Garcés in the prologue to Maurice Blanchot, *Escritos Políticos: Guerra de Argelia, Mayo del 68, etc.: 1958-1993* (Madrid: Antonio Machado, 2010), and Marina Garcés, *Un Mundo Común*, (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2013).

42. Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (Chicago: Open Court, 2002); Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); John Paul Jones, Keith Woodward, and Sallie A. Marston. 'Situating Flatness', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 32, 2 (2007), pp. 264-76; Levi R. Bryant, *The Democracy of Objects* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2011).

43. Lucía Jalón Oyarzun, 'Acrobats in the Rooftops of Tehran', in *Think Space Pamphlets,* (Zagreb: Zagreb

Society of Architects, 2011) and Lucía Jalón Oyarzun and Pedro Hernández, 'Arquitecto-multitud', *La Tempestad,* Mexico, September 2013.

44. 'To produce a new metaphysics, the philosophy of the world and the physics of the mode must insert themselves in the world, appreciate and exalt the ethicality of the singular and plural mode.' Negri, *Spinoza*, p. 84.

45. The use of 'own' or 'belong' does not imply the possessive quality discussed before but the restoration of the notion of property as right (and thus, as power). As Nicholas Blomley explains: '[P]roperty theorists and lawyers have long argued that property itself has little to do with things, worrying at the analytical confusions that arise when we conflate property (a set of relations) with objects. As Macpherson puts it, "Property is not things, but rights, rights in or to things."' Nicholas Blomley, 'Making Private Property: Enclosure, Common Right and the Work of Hedges.' *Rural History,* 18, 1 (2007), p. 1. Also interesting is the materialist description made by Spinoza when he denies the 'world of juridical transcendence […] that remains by definition external to what actually exists'. See Montage, p. 91.

46. Del Lucchese, *Conflict, Power, and Multitude,* p. 78.

47. Erik Swyngedouw, 'The Zero-Ground of Politics: Musings on the Post-Political City', *New Geographies,* 1,1 (2009), pp. 52-61.

48. Benedictus Spinoza, *Complete Works,* trans. by Samuel Shirley, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub, 2002).

49. Del Lucchese, *Conflict, Power, and Multitude,* p. 116

50. Étienne Balibar, 'Spinoza: From Individuality to Transindividuality', lecture delivered in Rijnsburg on 15 May 1993 <http://www.ciepfc.fr/spip.php?article236> [accessed 08 January 2014]

51. Pablo Esteban Rodríguez, 'Prólogo. Individuar. De cristales, esponjas y afectos.', in Gilbert Simondon, *La individuación a la luz de las nociones de forma y de información.* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Cebra y Editorial Cactus, 2009), pp. 11-20.

52. Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*. (Mass: MIT press, 2011), pp. 29-30.

53. Keller Easterling, 'Disposition', in *Cognitive Architecture: From Bio-Politics to Noo-Politics: Architecture & Mind in the Age of Communication and Information,* ed. by Deborah Hauptmann and Warren Neidich (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010), pp. 250-65.

54. Katharine Meehan, Ian Graham, Ronald Shaw and Sallie A. Marston, 'Political Geographies of the Object', *Political Geography,* 33 (2013), pp. 1-10.

55. Harman, *Tool-Being*, quoted in Meehan, et al, 'Political Geographies of the Object', p. 3.

56. Meehan, et al., 'Political Geographies of the Object', p. 3.

57. Easterling, 'Disposition', p. 251.

58. Ibid.

59. Jones, Woodward and Marston talk of 'site' and the necessity of a 'site ontology'. This definition of *'site'* as an *'event-space'*, a term filled with temporal dimensions that links a given spatial configuration to a precise moment, leads us to propose its change to that of 'situation'. If 'site' helps us anchor the concepts to the raw materiality of the territory, *'situation'* helps completing the idea with its temporal dimension. John Paul Jones, Keith Woodward, and Sallie A. Marston, 'Situating Flatness', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 32, 2 (2007), pp. 264-76.

60. Ibid. p. 265.

61. In 2009, the architect François Roche warned about the risks of reductive analogies that turn the multiple into a formal metaphor: 'Swarm intelligences cannot be reduced to morphological toolings or computational exercises. It has to be a part of the research, but it cannot be the core of it, still less its technoid alibi.' Léopold Lambert, '# SWARM /// Interview of Francois Roche', *Boite a Outils (The Funambulist)*, 17 September 2009 <http://thefunambulist.net/2010/12/23/interviews-francois-roche-swarm-23/> [accessed 08 January 2014].

62. See note 34; and Pier Vittorio Aureli and Manuel Orazi, 'The Solitude Of the Project', *Log* (2006), pp. 21-32.

63. Brian Boigon and Sanford Kwinter. 'Manual for 5 Appliances in the Alphabetical City: A Pedagogical Text', *Assemblage,* (1991), pp. 30-41.

64. Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, p. 198.

65. Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, p. 165.

66. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 35.

67. Easterling, *Disposition.*

68. Stan Allen, 'From Object to Field', in *AD Profile,* 127 (Architecture after Geometry), *Architectural Design*, 67, 5/6, (1997), pp. 24-31.

69. Boigon and Kwinter, 'Manual for 5 Appliances in the Alphabetical City'.

70. Laurent Bove, 'Peinture de l'ordinaire et pensée politique du commun. Machiavel – Bruegel – Spinoza', in *L'ordinaire et la politique*, ed. by Claude Gautier and Sandra Laugier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006), pp. 87-98.

71. Claire Tancons, 'Carnival to Commons: Pussy Riot Punk Protest and the Exercise of Democratic Culture', *e-flux,* 37 (September 2012) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/carnival-to-commons-pussy-riot-punk-protest-and-the-exercise-of-democratic-culture/> [accessed 02 May 2014]; and Claire Tancons, 'Occupy Wall Street: Carnival Against Capital? Carnivalesque as Protest Sensibility', *e-flux*, 30 (December 2011) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/occupy-wall-street-carnival-against-capital-carnivalesque-as-protest-sensibility/> [accessed 02 May 2014]

72. Colectivo Situaciones, 'On the Researcher-Militant', *eipcp - European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*, (September 2003) <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0406/colectivosituaciones/en> [accessed 02 May 2014].

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