

## THE IMPACT OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION The relationship between visual messages with places and objects of everyday life over time

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### Abstract

*Messages, in particular Graphic arts, both a form of communication and a type of applied arts coexist with architecture as a communication of images and symbols. This type of communication has been taking place since the prehistoric cave paintings and the age of plinth houses in the long history of human creation, even until today, in the contemporary world of big cities. In this context, "communication" means:*

*"... the mechanism through which human relationships are created and developed – all the symbols of the mind, combined with their means of transmission in space and of preservation in time."*

*Through their communicative function, the messages transmit elicit responses, initiate actions brought about major changes also in certain forms of social organization.*

*Because the social response is similar to that of the concept of the nation, advertising becomes the protagonist and turns into a sign-symbol of the values reflected on the physiognomy of the city today, causing a qualitative change in character. The projective plane of advertising in the city is the structured space-location of human activities; that is a social space that mirrors human society.*

*The growth of modern cities is mostly based on many individual business activities. In everyday images there is an obvious absence of forethought as regards advertising within the city, on the part of both the authorities and private initiative. Moreover, vivid collective expression of dislike is illustrated ubiquitously and in every possible way: uncontrolled expressions of aggressiveness, pleas for help, appeals articulated clearly, or less so, that, in any case claim, demand... That is, they reproduce deprecation, indifference and misery, as assumptions of assimilated derogation and violence ... Thus, through the aesthetics of "resistance", people imprint their feelings of alienation on the environment of the modern city.*

*The lack of structure not only creates a distorted image, but also suggests that the civilization advances in a crooked and precarious manner.*

- In what way could the cultural environment evolve into a hub to support recovery, elimination of the allure, sadness and violence; to prepare for an emotional, as well as rational, participation to a social dialogue – an exit from the "desert" of the assets accumulated in the past?*
- How is it possible for the contemporary world of cultural and social diversity to be the core of a liberated human life, free of humiliating preset patterns, but with selected-desired concepts?*

*The symbolic dimension of interventions is the integral quality of the social values that produce these mediations, and guide their structuring, if any. Diversity within societies is reflected and impressed on the landscape of cities and countries, leaving its markings on every civilization, an observation we make when we study our object. That is, when we investigate the conditions under which messages became part of everyday life, environmental circumstances, social explorations and financial conditions at different times, places and cultures.*

*Finally, it is only the society that, through its living desires "may 'paint' the city around us, in its own colors".*

Keywords:

Communication, visual communication, visual messages, communication of images, graphic arts, applied arts, symbol, sign-symbol of the values, structured space, urban environment, landscape of cities and countries, human society, national cultural asset, civilization, alienation, social liberation, education, symbolic dimension.

## THE IMPACT OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION

### The relationship between visual messages with places and objects of everyday life over time

Visual messages are associated with the preparation and part of the production of advertising promotion. They come under the wider umbrella of graphic arts projects<sup>1</sup>, that process and organize the presentation of verbal and visual messages, individually or in combinations of forms and concepts.

Graphic arts, from the earliest printed communication to the most recent multidimensional electronic media, have done outstanding work in our society and civilization. They help disseminate ideas, they pass on knowledge, they broadly inform and explicitly educate. Their products dominate modern social practice, functioning and participating in mundane daily activities as well as in more complicated social processes.

Forms, just like objects and events, persons etc., that are integrated in the messages, expressly and directly reveal — or indirectly and less openly represent — forces, with the help of symbolism<sup>2</sup>, which gives them added value. This varies among societies, locations and eras. Each version is nourished and defined by empirical, but also theoretical and metaphysical data. In addition, it can be identified in the perspective of

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1. Concerning the rich communication capacity of the Greek printed matter in the social, political, economic and cultural life, see the comprehensive three-volume work of the printer, historian and author Nikolaos Skiadas; see also the work of the architect, book historian and publisher Konstantinos Staikos, who examines the degree of engagement of the Greeks in publishing and typography art:

SKIADAS, N.E., "Το χρονικό της ελληνικής τυπογραφίας" (The Chronicle of Greek Printing), Gutenberg Publications, Athens, 1976, 1981, 1982.

STAIKOS, K., "Χάρτα της ελληνικής τυπογραφίας. Η εκδοτική δραστηριότητα των Ελλήνων και η συμβολή τους στην πνευματική αναγέννηση της δύσης" (Charter of Greek Printing. The Greek publishing activity and its contribution to the intellectual renaissance of the Western world), Kotinos Editions, Athens, 1989.

2. The Romanian historian of religion, fiction writer, philosopher, and professor at the University of Chicago Mircea Eliade, presents in his essay "philosophy prior to philosophers", the tendency to theorize, the result of the effort to interpret and reaggregate. He argues that: "(...) symbolism was interpreted, "experienced" in various ways, to be degraded, in the end, to superstition and to the economic-aesthetic value it represents in our era."

ELIADE, M., "Πραγματεία πάνω στην ιστορία των θρησκειών" (A treatise on the history of religions), Translation: Elsi Tsouti, Chatzinkoli Publications, Athens, 1992, p. 409, (Original work: *Traité d'histoire des religions*, 1964).

experience; it coexists and collaborates with human practice. From primitive to advanced societies:

"... symbols continue to play a significant role in all societies ..."

"... Their mandate remains unchanged: to turn an object or an action into something different from what (the object or the action) appears to be in the perspective of the public experience."

also because the symbol: "... identifies with, assimilates, unifies heterogeneous levels and seemingly unaltered truths", symbolic thinking "... , makes it possible for man to have free access to all levels of existence."

This possibility changes human experience: "... mainly on account of the symbol, the authentic existence of the archaic man is not limited to the fragmented and alienated existence of the civilized man of our era."<sup>3</sup>

*Messages, in particular Graphic arts<sup>4</sup>, both a form of communication and a type of applied arts<sup>5</sup> coexist with architecture as a communication of images and symbols.*

Several artists as well as schools and trends of contemporary art, such as Bauhaus (a school of architecture in Weimar, at the beginning of the previous century) attached greater importance to applied arts than urban painting. In 1922-23 the founder, W. Gropius tried to make a shift to the socially oriented design and other corresponding activities.

The distant origins of graphic arts also include script (writing), a conception that transformed human consciousness substantially, and the press. This led to:

"(...) The new noetic world opened by exactly repeatable visual statement (...)", which transformed the world. Capitalism ensured the circulation of printed matter. Nations were built on printed languages.

*This type of communication has been taking place since the prehistoric cave paintings and the age of plinth houses in the long history of human creation, even until today, in the contemporary world of big cities. In this context, "communication" means:*

*"(...) the mechanism through which human relationships are created and developed – all the symbols of the mind, combined with their means of transmission in space and of preservation in time".<sup>6</sup>*

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3. See footnote 2, pp. 413, 422, 423.

4. The transition from orality to literacy is analyzed and explained by the American Jesuit priest, professor of English literature, cultural and religious historian and philosopher Walter J. Ong.  
ONG, W.J., "Προφορικότητα και εγγραμματισμό" (Orality and Literacy), Translation: Kostas Chatzikyriakou, Crete University Press, 1997, pp.167-198, (Original work: *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, 1982).

5. English art historian, poet, literary critic and philosopher Herbert Read mentions: " **Pevsner wrote: The gigantic constructions of the modern world, the prodigious discoveries of science have changed the face of the world, (...) It is not irrational to think that the era following our own will again mark a period of large collective works in the history of mankind, an era of impressive constructions in open spaces within big cities. Such a synthesis of all the plastic arts, in which the traditional Renaissance categories disappear in a new architectonic complex of constructive activities, has also been the ideal of the great architects of our period: Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier (Charles Edouard Jeanneret,(...)).**"  
READ, H., "Ιστορία της μοντέρνας ζωγραφικής" (History of modern painting), Translation: Andreas Pappas and Giorgos Maniatis, Ypodomi Publications, Athens, 1978, pp. 230, 231, 232, (Original work: *A Concise History of Modern Painting*, 1959).

6. Excerpt from "Η σημασία της επικοινωνίας" (The significance of communication), by the American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley:  
COOLEY, C., "Το μήνυμα του μέσου" (The Message of the Medium), collective work, Translation: Lefteris Anagnostou, Amika Lykiardopoulou, 3rd Edition, Alexandria Publications, Athens, 1991, p. 30.

The images<sup>7</sup> below show the relationship between space and messages over time. Specifically:

- a. Indicative references to the relationship of architecture with representations of images and symbols over time. (page 3)
- b. Spatial elements: bas-reliefs and inscriptions.  
  
Household objects: engravings on gemstones, stamps, coins, medals, jewels, vessels and inscriptions on various materials. (page 3)
- c. Advertisements, inscriptions, sculptures, pavilions and labeling in the urban environment. (page 4)

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7. The images are reprinted from:

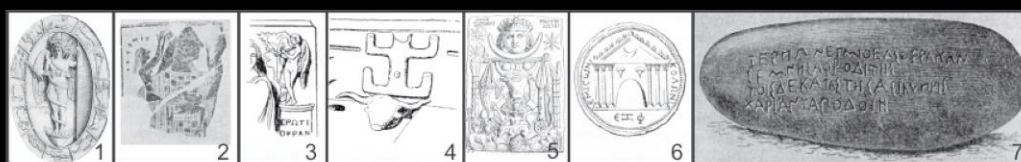
- a. A study by Panagis Lekatsas, first published in 1963. The author conducted research on archaeology, religion, ethnology, sociology, art and in particular ancient drama:  
LEKATSAS, P., "Ερως, Ερμηνεία μιας μορφής της προϊστορικής & ορφικοδιονυσιακής θρησκείας" (Eros), Kastaniotis Editions, Athens, 2003.
- b. The rich in documentation and illustrations work of Bruno Ulmer and Thomas Plaichinger:  
ULMER, B., PLAICHINGER, Th., "Les murs réclames, 150 ans de murs peints publicitaires", Alternatives, Paris, 1986.
- c. The work of the American graphic designer, professor, historian and author of books on graphic design Phillip Baxter Meggs:  
MEGGS, P.B., "A history of graphic design", Viking, U.S.A., 1983.

### Indicative references to the relationship of architecture with representations of images and symbols over time

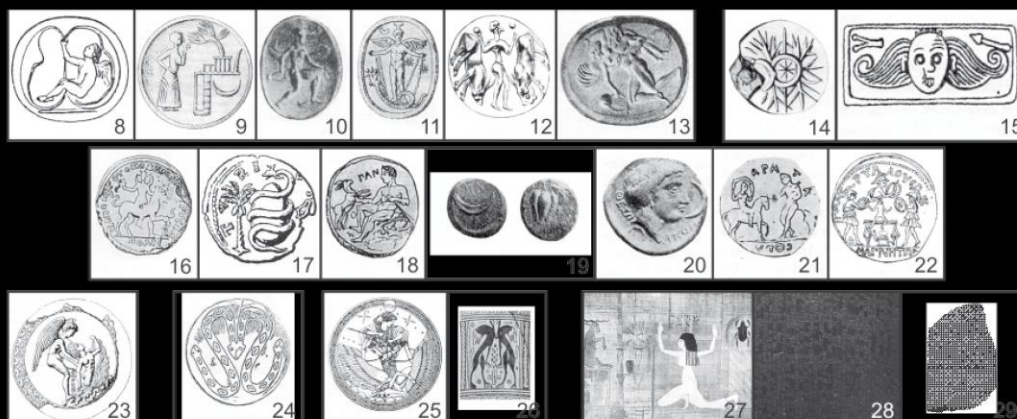


1. Cave painting, Lascaux, 15,000-10,000 BC. 2. An alabaster bas-relief from the palace of King Tiglath-Pileser III, at Nimrud, 500 BC. 3. The votive stele bearing the Code of Hammurabi, 1930-1880 BC. 4. Votive stele with 4 figures, 5th Century BC. 5. Bas-relief from Trajan's Column, 114 AD. 6. Inscription from wall in Pompeii, 1st Century AD. 7. Gravestone Epitaph of Uberto Decembrio, St. Ambrose cathedral, Milan, 1427. 8. Titulus from Cloisters Cross, Metropolitan Museum, N.Y.

### Spatial elements: bas-reliefs and inscriptions



### Household objects: engravings on gemstones, stamps, coins, medals, jewels, vessels and inscriptions on various materials



1. Marble relief, Modena, 2nd century A.D. 2. Dedication from the Acropolis, Athens. 3. Inscription from monument in Smyrna. 4. Western wall, shrine in Çatalhöyük. 5. Bas-relief from Attica with inscription. 6. Coin from Emesa in Orontes, with the inscription "EMIZQN KOΛΩNI(AΣ)" 7. Phallic Stone of Terpon, Antibes, France (the ancient Antipolis), inscription, 5th century BC. 8. Engraving on gemstone, drawing, Muller-Wieseler and Daremberg-Saglio. 9. Engraving on gemstone, drawing, Evans. 10. Engraving on gemstone, photographic drawing, J. Boardman. 11. Engraving on Gnostic Gem: Gerhard. 12. Late-Minoan engraving. 13. Engraving on gemstone, Cyprus. 14. Minoan stamp-seal. 15. Stamp-seal, 2nd middle-Minoan age, Crete. 16. Antonius Pius coin, Nicaea, "ΙΠΠΟΝ ΒΡΟΤΟΠΟΔΑ". 17. Representation of coin from Tyros. 18. Coin from Messina. 19. Coin from Melos. 20. Coin from Thespieae. 21. Copper coin, Roman settlement, Patras. 22. Coin from Magnesia, Caracalla era. 23. Silver medal, found in Galaxeidi in 1887. 24. Copper jewel, pre-Columbian America. 25. Red-figured kylix, early 5th century. 26. Amphora neck, mid-7th century BC. 27. Papyrus, XXII, Murray Dynasty. 28. Detail from the Code of Hammurabi, 1800 BC. 29. Hieroglyphics from ancient Egypt.

### Advertisements, inscriptions, sculptures, pavilions and labeling in the urban environment



1. Rue de la Colombe (Paris, 1850). 2. Place Saint Andre des Arts (Paris, 1850). 3. Place Saint Andre des Arts (Paris, 1910). 4. Design for an "Industrial City", T. Garnier (1901-1904). 5. Postal Savings Bank building, Otto Wagner (Vienna, 1904-1906). 6. AEG turbine factory assembly hall, Peter Behrens (Berlin, 1909). 7. Façade of Café de Unie, J.J.P. Oud (Rotterdam, 1925). 8. Bauhaus building, W. Gropius (1925-1926). 9. Outdoor sculpture, A. Hofmann (Lyceum, Switzerland). 10. Movie posters, W. Evans (Washington, 1936). 11. P. Rand poster (N.Y.). 12. Tennessee Williams: Alvin Lustig cover (1952). 13. American pavilion, Brussels World's Fair (1958). 14.15.16. Signposts, pavilion, labeling for the urban environment, P. Murdoch (structure), L. Wyman (graphics), (Mexico City, 1968). 17. A creation of Ph. Druillet, (Angoulême, 1985). 18. Wall covered with advertisements on Rue du Renard (Paris 1986).

*Through their communicative function, the products of graphic arts – as is also the case with the works of architecture and art – contribute to the exchange of information and ideas, the stimulation of senses and the creation of emotions among the people. The messages transmit elicit responses, initiate actions. These messages – intentionally or not – brought about major changes also in certain forms of social organization. Because the social response is similar to that of the concept of the nation<sup>8</sup>, advertising becomes the protagonist and turns into a sign-symbol of the values reflected on the physiognomy of the city today, causing a qualitative change in her character.*

8. The *nation* was initially associated with the capacity to change the society. It has been used in the structuring of Word in many different ways, depending on the reference framework of the term, such as:

The leader of the Soviet Union Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin attempted to define nation in terms of territory: **"A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. (...) It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation."**

STALIN, J., *"Ο μαρξισμός και το εθνικό ζήτημα"* (Marxism and the National Question), Mari & Korontzi Publications, Athens, 1945, p. 9, (Original work: *Марксизм и национальный вопрос*, 1914).

People make up nations:

The Austrian Social Democrat Otto Bauer defined the nation in terms of the people: **"The nation is the totality of human beings bound together by a community of fate into a community of character."**, he argues in "The Nationalities Question and Social Democracy":

BOTTOMORE, T., GOOD, P. (rev.), *"Austro-Marxism"*, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 107-117.

In " 'Nation' against the 'People' after 1940" Nikos Alivizatos – Greek jurist, academic and politician and constitutional law expert, currently a Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Athens – argues that, according to the dominant ideology in Greece during the years after 1940, any reference to the Nation had a transcendent character, compared with any reference to the People, which had a synchronous character. Contemplations on social issues are included in:

TSAOUSIS, D.G., *"Ελληνισμός-Ελληνικότητα"* (Hellenism-Greekness), Hestia Publications, Athens, 1983, pp.79-90.

The historian Nick Svoronos explains that the nation is neither a transcendent entity out of space and time, nor a notion characterized by the common will of the individuals who constituted it. In his perception, this common will is consistent with the historical necessity and depends on social factors.

SVORONOS, N., *"Το ελληνικό έθνος, γένεση και διαμόρφωση του νέου ελληνισμού"* (The Hellenic Nation, Birth and Development of New Hellenism), Polis Publications, Athens, 2004.

The philologist, writer and teacher at AUTH, Venetia Apostolidou, associate professor of Neohellenic Literature analyzed the argument of N. Svoronos, who associated Nation with modernity and the People with timelessness, in:

APOSTOLIDOU, V., *"Λογοτεχνία και ιστορία στη μεταπολεμική Αριστερά. Η παρέμβαση του Δημήτρη Χατζή, 1847-1981"* (Literature and History in the post-war Left. The Contribution of Dimitris Chatzis 1947-1981), Polis Publications, Athens, 2003, p. 120.

About the criterion of common ethnicity, Max Weber – German sociologist, philosopher, jurist and political economist – wrote that:

**"(...) we shall call 'ethnic groups' those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent (...)."**

WEBER, M., *"Economy and Society"*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1968, p. 389.

On the issue of black emancipation, Leon Trotsky – Marxist revolutionary and theorist, and Soviet politician – argued that:

**"(...) much more decisive is the historical consciousness, their feelings and their impulses."**

As regards the Marxist approach, see the work of French-Brazilian Marxist sociologist and philosopher Michael Löwy. He explain the relation between cultural phenomena by situating them in precise social and historical contexts.

LÖWY, M., *"Το εθνικό ζήτημα από το Μαρξ μέχρι σήμερα"* (The National Question from Marx until today), Translation: Tziatzi Marianna, Stachi Publications, Athens, 1993, p. 109.

Closer to these arguments, the Irish Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson – Professor Emeritus of International Studies, Government & Asian Studies at Cornell University – is occupied with the mental and emotional processes conducive to the creation of a community that constitutes a nation: **"A Nation, that is, is a consciousness and an emotion of co-belonging to a community, the members of which have never met their fellow members, which is defined neither by kinship, nor by the place of origin, nor by a network of interests, nor by a common religious faith."**

ANDERSON, B., *"Φαντασιακές κοινότητες. Στοχασμοί για τις απαρχές και τη διάδοση του εθνικισμού"* (Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism), Translation: Pothiti Chantzaroula, Nefeli Publications, Athens, 1997, (Original work: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1991).

The concept of the Nation supports ideological mechanisms of isolation, xenophobia, conventionality and the preservation of established perceptions. S. Triantafyllou – writer, historian, scholar and leading member of the modern generation of Greek writers – and I. Ioakeimoglou – science advisor to the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), scientific associate to the Cyprus Labour Institute (INEK-PEO), researcher, regular columnist of the daily financial newspapers "Ημερησία (Imerisia)" and "Εθνος (Ethnos)" – summarize nationalist phenomena and the collective fantasies accompanying them. They question the perceptions about history and racial supremacy. They attack the myths of the domestic version:

**"(...) the sacrosanctity of our origin, the alleged noble descent of the Greeks, the alleged historical continuity of Hellenism and the glorious pages of its heroism, its cultural or biological homogeneity, as well as all paraphernalia of national ideology."** They focus on family, which produces individuals that: **"(...) feel aversion to change, evolution, innovation and, even more, subversion."** They identify intolerance and conclude that: **"The Nation, according to both the Right and the Left mentality, equals a type of femininity. The homeland is a fertile mother that has to be protected and**

*Advertising turns the city into a strikingly "difficult" space, with a "distorted" physiognomy and complex characteristics, which reflect social relationships, however: The projective plane of advertising in the city is the structured space-location of human activities; that is a social space that mirrors human society.*

*The capacity of a class to play a hegemonic role can build a community, form a nation.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, outdoor advertising is an intense and authoritative intervention to*

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**glorified by the men: soldiers and football-players. The women are constrained into the 'sacred', backroom role of reproducing citizens who, in turn, shall serve the nation in battles, parades, and football fields."**

TRIANΤAFYLLOU, S., IOAKEIMOΓLOU, I., "Για τη σημαία και το έθνος" (For the flag and the Nation), Melani Publications, Athens, 2007.

9. Contemporary thought, however, inclined towards the intentional and oriented composition of a nation:

Walter Bendix Schönflies Benjamin – German Jewish philosopher, cultural critic and essayist – presents the nation and national history as a political choice with a pedagogical and at the same time commissioned dimension, i.e. how to be and how to behave and appear as a nation.

According to the theory developed by the Italian Marxist theorist and politician Antonio Francesco Gramsci, a nation does not arise spontaneously due to the concurrence of certain characteristics, but is rather: "(...) **created, built, and constructed by social classes which aim at social (and, therefore, also cultural) domination.**"

GRAMSCI, A., "Λογοτεχνία και εθνική ζωή" (Literature and National Life), Translation: Christos Mastrantonis, Stohastis Publications, Athens, 1981, (Original work: *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, 1950).

A similar opinion about the nation, in the contemporary sense, is supported by Nicos Poulantzas, Greek-French Marxist political sociologist. He explains that progress in trade and the need to integrate the market transforms societies into nations, and it is production that organizes human relationships. The concept of the nation is associated with that of the state; specifically he wrote that: "**The modern nation thus appears as a product of the State: the nation's components (economic integration, territory, tradition) are modified by the State's direct actions within the materialist organization of space and time.**"

POULANTZAS, N., "Το κράτος, η εξουσία, ο σοσιαλισμός" (State, Power, Socialism), Themelio Publications, Athens, 1984, pp. 132-173, 142.

Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist, philosopher, revolutionary, and writer Frantz Omar Fanon referred to the reorganization of the national culture and argued that it depends on the values and the dynamics created during the national liberation in anti-colonial struggles.

FANON, F., "Της γης οι κολασμένοι" (The Wretched of the Earth), Translation: Angela Artemi, Kalvos Publications, Athens, 1982, (Original work: *Les Damnés de la Terre*, 1961).

French philosopher Étienne Balibar claims that the national state composes the nation either through already existing institutions – the function and significance of which the state inherits and transforms – or through newly-created institutions: "**The nation-state "produces" the people that call upon and legitimize the nation.**"

American sociologist, historical social scientist, and world-systems analyst, Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein also appears to converge to this opinion: "(...) **statehood preceded nationhood, and not the other way around, despite a widespread myth to the contrary.**"

BALIBAR, E., WALLERSTEIN, I., "Φυλή, Έθνος, Τάξη, οι διφορούμενες ταυτότητες" (Race, Nation, Class, Ambiguous Identities), Translators Angel. Elefantis and Helen. Kalafati, Politis Publications, 1991, (Original work: *Race, nation, classe. Les Identités ambiguës*, 1988).

Radical criticism, which is necessary for a modern democratic ideology, was provided by German-born, Jewish American political theorist Hannah Arendt: "(...) **the nation through its identification with the state acquires all these qualities and claims expansion now as a national right, as a necessity for the sake of the nation.**"

ARENΔT, H., "Essays in Understanding 1930-1954", Harcourt Brace, N.Y., 1993, p. 208.

Anderson was criticized by the representatives of the post-colonial approach that saw the composition of a nation in the colonial world as a reflection of the difference between dominant nations. The main representatives of this approach, Homi K. Bhabha (Indian Professor) and Partha Chatterjee (Indian scholar) investigated the concept of the nation based on the manner in which it was instrumentally used to deconstruct political supremacies. In addition, H. Bhabha raises the question of the capability to combine two vantage points, e.g. how Albanian or Kurdish immigrants perceive the Hellenic nation. These considerations reflect his interesting view on history, for which he believes that it is the Word's innuendo on what has happened, not in terms of events already past, but as a component of a consciousness that formulates the present.

BHABHA, H., "Nation and Narration", Routledge, London, 1990,

---, "The Location of Culture", Routledge, London, 1994.

CHATTERJEE, P., "The Nation and its Fragments, Colonial and Post-colonial Histories", Princeton University Press, 1993.

Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben believes that the nation functions as a vehicle of exclusions: "(...) **the nation is put together as a race, an origin, a community of ancestors and descendants.**"

AGAMBEN, G., "Κυριαρχία εξουσία και γυμνή ζωή" (Sovereign Power and Bare Life), Translation: Panagiotis Tsiamouras, Scripta Publications, Athens, 2005, (Original work: *Homo sacer. Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*, 1995).



*spatial functions, the structure of the form and significance embodied in urban space that undermines human substance, with its presence subjecting it to ideas, thoughts and experiences, and actually forcing them upon humanity.*

*The projection of messages is a national cultural asset scattered throughout the city and the countryside.*

*With the random allocation of its media, advertising participates in shaping both the image of its landscape and the experience of its place. It raises its "flags" and "banners" in open spaces and arterial streets of the city-colony, which yields some "national" environment and territory to its uncontrollable and unaccountable activity; that is, the exercise of symbolic power.*

"Symbolic power is a power of constructing reality, and one which tends to establish a gnoseological order: the immediate meaning of the world (and in particular of the social world) (...)."10

*We could say that, in this manner, advertising creates a "new nation", depending on the identities of the standards projected through its messages.*

The aesthetics of "resistance" as the social imprint on the image of the city

*The growth of modern cities is mostly based on many individual business activities.*

The result created in this manner is a sum of individual initiatives with no previous documentation: interventions are not investigated beforehand; no draft designs are prepared; no educated decisions are made concerning land-use planning or the location of embedded elements that promote the identities of companies, products and services etc.

The effect is a mishmash of built space, various types of pollutants (cars and other automobiles, advertisements, posters, signs and traffic signs), as well as the remains of the natural landscape and the history of the place.

It is a trite expression of aesthetic, operational and symbolic confusion. This is what we call "kitsch":

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French political scientist and academic Pierre Manent focuses on the relationship between nation and democracy, investigating the axis around which the contemporary world is organized and developed.  
MANENT, P., "Απλά μαθήματα πολιτικής φιλοσοφίας" (Simple Lessons in Political Philosophy), Translation: Dimitris Sotiropoulos, Polis Publications, Athens, 2005, (Original work: *Cours familier de philosophie politique*, 2001).

10. According to the point of view expressed by Pierre Bourdieu, French sociologist, anthropologist, philosopher, and renowned public intellectual, in:  
BOURDIEU, P., "Γλώσσα και Συμβολική Εξουσία" (Language and Symbolic Power), Translation: Kiki Kapsampeli, Kardamitsa Publications, Athens, 1999, p. 239, (Original work: *Ce que parler veut dire*, 1982).

"an expression of the pathology of taste usually evolving in periods of great aesthetic confusion. It is precisely the opposite of the strength, depth, intensity and originality that characterizes a work of art." <sup>11</sup>

An unruly, complex, erratic, dynamic and impulsive image that consumes and insults its "petty" and "disoriented" inhabitants. Its onslaught on the inhabitants' inner world oppresses, offering them no help to meet their everyday needs and expectations.

"(...) Reality, this monster, has lost its meaning and advances relentlessly."<sup>12</sup>

*The lack of structure not only creates a distorted image, but also suggests that the civilization advances in a crooked and precarious manner.*

*In this framework, any innovation which raises feelings of aversion, revulsion or fear, rather than satisfaction and pleasure, feeds people's alienation and disarray.*

*In everyday images there is an obvious absence of forethought as regards advertising within the city, on the part of both the authorities and private initiative.*

*Moreover, vivid collective expression of dislike is illustrated ubiquitously and in every possible way: uncontrolled expressions of aggressiveness, pleas for help, appeals articulated clearly, or less so, that, in any case claim, demand...*

*That is, they reproduce deprecation, indifference and misery, as assumptions of assimilated derogation and violence ...*

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11. About the term "kitsch", see the art historian, archaeologist and professor of European art at the University of Athens Stelios Lydakos and Takis Vogiatzis. They also inform us that the term, of unknown origin, first appeared in German literature at around 1900.

LYDAKOS, S.-VOGIATZIS, T., "Σύντομο λεξικό όρων ζωγραφικής" (Concise Dictionary of Painting Terms), Melissa Publishing House, Athens, 2001.

The French sociologist, anthropologist, philosopher and renowned public intellectual Pierre Bourdieu refers to issues related to the judgment of taste, as well as the depravity permeating the style that characterizes these choices. He reiterates all traditional queries about beauty, art, taste and culture and analyzes the complex link between culture of power and identity in modern societies. About this approach, see:

BOURDIEU, P., "Η διάκριση, κοινωνική κριτική της καλαισθητικής κρίσης" (Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste), Translation: Kiki Kapsampeli, Patakis Publications, Athens, 1999, (Original work: La Distinction, Critique sociale du jugement, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979).

12. This excerpt refers to the notions analyzed in a scholarly article by the British polymath and academic philosopher Michael John Scriven:

SCRIVEN, M., "Paradoxical Announcements", Mind 60, Oxford Journal, 1951, p. 403.

**Absence of care on the part of the competent authorities and  
vivid collective expression (of dislike?)**



Neglect, political worthlessness and  
impulsive rejection, renunciation, deviation . . .



... aggressive statements or pleas for help?  
Expectations, claims, demands, rights-signs of freedom



*The above photos illustrate everyday images from the city of Athens that have captured my interest from time to time, so much that I stopped to note and review them, analyzing their messages and gaining a better insight into their initial impression on me. I would say that they express:*

Absence of care on the part of the competent authorities and  
vivid collective expression (of dislike?) (page 9)

Neglect, political worthlessness and  
impulsive rejection, renunciation, deviation . . . (page 10)

. . . aggressive statements or pleas for help?  
Expectations, claims, demands, rights-signs of freedom (page 11)

*Thus, through the aesthetics of "resistance", people imprint their feelings of alienation<sup>13</sup> on the environment of the modern city.*

13. *Alienation*, estrangement, distancing. Its etymological interpretation is that: "(...) **alienation is the action or the result of the process through which objects or persons become (or have become) estranged.**"

Developing the concept of alienation, K. Marx notes that man, besides parts of himself: "(...) **also alienates other products of his intellectual activity in terms of philosophy, the healthy human mind, art, morality etc. He alienates the products of his economic activity in terms of merchandise, money, capital etc.**"

According to other researchers, the concept of alienation is characterized as economic or political or sociological or moral concept. Many authors associate alienation only with persons and consider it a purely psychological concept. That is, they claim that this condition of a person is characterized "by feelings of foreignness". Specifically: "**The personal disorganization refers to a disruptive behavior stemming from a person's internal conflicts.**"

Various opinions have been expressed concerning the *elimination of alienation*. To mention some of them:

It is possible to eliminate alienation in relative terms: "**it is not possible to eliminate all alienation (...) but it is possible to create a basically non-alienated society that would stimulate the development of non-self-alienated, really human individuals.**"

Conquering alienation, as an individual's moral effort is: "**a revolution within the self.**"

Curing alienation which is attributable to a neurotic process is the result of a mutual friendly relationship "**between the physician and the patient**" that offers the "**greatest healing factor**".

Human freedom is neither given nor imposed: "**An individual can become a free being only through his own activity.**"

For a detailed presentation of the concerns expressed by the philosopher and professor Gajo Petrović (*Η αλλοτρίωση και η κατάργηση της αλλοτρίωσης – Alienation and De-alienation*), the economic and social scientist and professor in sociology Werner Hofmann (*Εξαθλίωση – Degeneration*) and the German philosopher, sociologist, and composer Theodor W. Adorno (*Στοχασμοί πάνω στη φθαρμένη ζωή – Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben*, 1969), see:

PETROVIC, G., HOFMANN, W., ADORNO, Th., "Αλλοτρίωση, Τρεις μελέτες για την αποξένωση, την εξαθλίωση και τη φθορά του ανθρώπου: Δοκίμια" (Alienation), Translation: Giorgos Vamvalis, Epikouros Publications, Athens, 1973, pp. 9, 12, 15, and 28-30.

The German-American philosopher, sociologist and political theorist Herbert Marcuse wrote that: "(...) **reification tends to become totalitarian (...).**"

MARCUSE, H., "Ο μονοδιάστατος άνθρωπος" (One-Dimensional Man), Translation: Bampis Lykoudis, Papazisis Publications, Athens, 1971, p.60, (Original work: *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 1964).

In his analysis he expands the concept of alienation throughout the social, political and cultural sphere of contemporary society.

MARCUSE, H., "Δοκίμιο για την απελευθέρωση" (An Essay on Liberation), Translation: Nikiforos Aiginitis, Diogenis Publications, Athens, 1971, (Original work: *An Essay on Liberation*, 1969).

MARCUSE, H., "Αντεπανάσταση και εξέγερση" (Counterrevolution and Revolt), Translation: Anthoula Athanasiou, Papazisis Publications, Athens, 1974, (Original work: *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, 1972).

Generalizing on Marcuse's concept of alienation, Georg (György) Lukács, Hungarian Marxist philosopher, aesthetician, literary historian and critic, one of the founders of Marxist aesthetics, proposes the theory of realization in his monumental work:

LUKÁCS, Gr., "Ιστορία και ταξική συνείδηση" (History and Class Consciousness), Translation: Yannis Papadakis, Odysseas Publications, Athens, 2001, (Original work: *Geschichte und Klassenbewußtsein: Studien über marxistische Dialektik*, 1923).

In the future, utopia might be able to steer towards de-alienation, at least in theory. About this, see the studies of the German Marxist theoretician Karl Korsch, the Hungarian Marxist philosopher and Professor Emeritus at the University of Sussex István Mészáros and the French Hungarian-born sociologist and philosopher Joseph Gabel:

KORSCH, K., "Από τη διαλεκτική του Χέγκελ στη διαλεκτική του Μαρξ" (Dialectic from Hegel to Marx), Translation: Manolis Lampridis, Erasmus Publications, Athens, 1975, (Original work: *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, 1972).

If we accept the possibility of freedom from alienation as a result of social action, then in a free society<sup>14</sup> it may be that:

"(...) the space of aesthetic forms and memories should dominate against time."<sup>15</sup>

In order to deal with its problems<sup>16</sup>, this utopian society might have an advanced ability to touch the naked, unveiled present with a healthy drive, through positive expressions and actions of self-respect and love for the "hows" and "wheres" of life<sup>17</sup> and its continuity.

However, as also in the past, there are now members of the society who operate in a liberal manner, with feedback ability<sup>18</sup> and the capacity to participate in social life with a healthier and bolder attitude.

We understand the concept of feedback as:

"One's ability to regulate one's future behavior on the basis of one's previous experience."

The attitude of these people towards the challenges of everyday life suggests that they are spiritually and morally<sup>19</sup> emancipated:

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MÉSZÁROS, I., "Η θεωρία του Μαρξ για την αλλοτρίωση" (Marx's Theory of Alienation), Translation: Eleni Kostantelou, Rappas Publications, Athens, 1981, (Original work: *Marx's Theory of Alienation*, 1970).

GABEL, J., "Η ψευδής συνείδηση" (False consciousness), Translation: Ioanna Efstathiadi-Lappa, Akmon Publications, Athens, 1977, (Original work: *La Fausse Conscience: Essai sur la réification*, 1962).

14. In line with the visions of Herbert Marcuse about a society, where "labor will be replaced by an aesthetic type of play which should defy the power of death's momentum." It is the society that should put an end to the excessive oppression, by eliminating the alienated labor, and urge towards a versatile satisfaction and liberation after abolishing genetic dominance. MARCUSE, H., "Κριτική, Ουτοπία, Απελευθέρωση" (Criticism, Utopia, Liberation) (collective work), Translation: Panagiotis Zoumis, George Mitropoulos, George Sakriotis, Stachi Publications, Athens, 1999, pp. 97-127.

15. For a detailed presentation of the assumptions of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, see: AGAMBEN, G., "Χρόνος & ιστορία. Κριτική του στιγμιαίου και του συνεχούς" (Time and History. Critique of the Instant and the Continuum), Translation: Dimitris Armaos, Indiktos Printing & Publishing, Athens, 2003, p. 54, (Original work: *Tempo e storia. Critica dell'istante e del continuo*, 1978).

16. In line with the opinion of the Roman stoic philosopher, statesman and dramatist Lucio Anneo Seneca, who argues that: "This is "the final hand" dealt every time to life, which radically removes man from servitude to quantified time, (...) a wise man is his own master (...)." SENECA, L.A., "Ad Paulinum De Brevitate Vitae XV5." We should also bring to mind the words of the major stoic philosopher who wrote to his friend Lucilius: "I do not wish you ever to be deprived of gladness (...) if only it be inside of you (...) it will never fail you." SENECA, L.A., "Letters to Lucilius 23.4".

17. Life, same as any "transaction" with others, is not our own possession; "we have to borrow it and then return it to Time, the creditor." argues the Greek scholar and Professor Emeritus of the University of Palermo Salvatore Nicosia. NICOSIA, S., "Το σήμα και η μνήμη. Ταφικά επιγράμματα από την αρχαία Ελλάδα" (The Sign and the Memory. Ancient Greek Epitaphs), Translation: Evripidis Garantoudis, Polytypo Publications, 1994, p. 181, (Original work: *Il segno e la memoria. Iscrizioni funebri della Grecia antica*, 1992).

18. The person's feedback, as defined by the philologist Argiris Matakias in: ΜΑΤΑΚΙΑΣ, Α., "Λεξικό Εννοιών" (Dictionary of Concepts), Pelekanos Publications, Athens, 2005, p. 57.

The feedback is a key element of the educational process and of a person's everyday activity and social relationships. According to the Professor Emeritus in Social Policy and Social Anthropology at the Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences Dimitris G. Tsoulos: "Feedback is a key element in determining behavior in the context of developing a SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP." as he noted in his dictionary of sociology terms: TSAOULIS, D.G., "Χρηστικό λεξικό κοινωνιολογίας" (Dictionary of Sociology), Gutenberg Publications, Athens, 1989.

19. This goes beyond the narrow limits of conventional morality and its virtual level of doctrines and prejudices. *Morality*, for us, is defined as the relationship of an individual with the world, which calls for order within each and every one of us, which is what our nature offers as our way of function. Concerning the issue of the individual's relationship with the society, see study by the Canadian philosopher and Professor Emeritus at McGill University Charles Margrave Taylor: TAYLOR, C., "Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity", Harvard University Press, Cambridge M.A., 1989.

Medicine has always been a significant moral guide. Physicians combined medical treatment of pathological symptoms stemming from cultural anxieties etc. with teaching moral rules. For a more general discussion on the issue see study by the French philosopher, historian of ideas, social theorist and literary critic Michel Foucault:

"individuals liberated from all propaganda, indoctrination, and manipulation, capable of knowing and comprehending the facts and of evaluating the alternatives."<sup>20</sup>

The capacity for social liberation<sup>21</sup> is achieved by cultivating critical thinking and judgement through knowledge and education. It is actually part of the service that education might be able to offer to society through its work. Possible changes in the content of human and social practices<sup>22</sup> are also part of this effort, aiming at a positive interaction in each and every level of communication.

— *In what way could the cultural environment evolve into a hub to support recovery, elimination of the allure, sadness and violence; to prepare for an emotional, as well as*

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FOUCAULT, M., "*Ιστορία της σεξουαλικότητας*" (History of Sexuality), Translation: Glory Rozaki, Rappas Publications, Athens, 1978 (Original work: *Histoire de la sexualité*, 1976).

The study of British author Jonathan Barnes is related to this problem. In Book 9, Chapter "Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics" he mentions that Aristotle expresses his opinion on sociability and human life. He believes that those are guaranteed by a reality beyond human social arrangements, a metaphysical reality that supersedes humanity.

BARNES, J., "*The Complete Works of Aristotle*", Princeton University Press, Princeton N.J., 1984, pp. 1849-1850.

The notion of morality as self-command was devised in Enlightenment theories. It was argued that all humans share the same moral ability and judgement. Morality was identified with obedience. The American Professor Emeritus of philosophy Jerome Borges Schneewind claims that the concept of morality as autonomy is attributable to philosopher I. Kant.

SCHNEEWIND, J.B., "*The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy*", Cambridge University Press, Cambridge U.K., 1998, pp. 6, 9.

20. MARCUSE, H., "*Ο μονοδιάστατος άνθρωπος*" (One-Dimensional Man), Translation: Bampis Lykoudis, Papazisis Publications, Athens, 1971, p. 250, (Original work: *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 1964).

21. The representatives of the Frankfurt School investigated the potential of the freedom of the individual, through the triptych of philosophy, sociology and aesthetics.

The German philosopher, sociologist and composer known for his critical theory of society Theodor Adorno reflected upon the difficult issue of liberating society from the negative situation it has placed itself in. In his view, the capacity to achieve real liberation is investigated by a type of thinking which is free from philosophical tradition, through the dialectic of finding non-identity and non-conceptuality.

ADORNO, Th., "*Dialectique négative*", Payot, Paris, 2003.

Regarding the pessimistic viewpoint (of T. Adorno, among others), note that: "(...) **pessimism presupposes precisely the elements it denies: the beauty of the world, the glory of life.**" as noted by the German philosopher and sociologist Max Horkheimer.

HORKHEIMER, M., "*Φιλοσοφικό σημειωματάριο*" (Philosophy Notebook), Translation: Zisis Sarikas, Ypsilon Publications, Athens, 1988, vol. 2, p.9, (Original work: *Notizen*).

During the 20th century, apart from philosophy, the artistic vanguard also supported the quest for liberation, as is analyzed further on, in the INTRODUCTION, 3.5. *The aesthetics of space*, p. 103.

Modern liberation theories erupted from feminist organizations and pop-culture Translations, promoted by the alternative culture of the 1960s. See studies of the Polish American psychoanalyst (colleague of Sigmund Freud) Helene Deutsch, the professor of Psychoanalytic Studies at the University of Essex Robert Douglas Hinselwood, the New Zealander-French psychoanalyst Joyce McDougall.

DEUTSCH, H., "*The Psychology of Women*", vol. 1, Gruen and Stratton, N.Y., 1944;

HINSELWOOD, R.D., "*A Dictionary of Kleinian Thought*", Free Association Press, London, 1991;

McDOUGALL, J., "*Theatres of the Mind: Illusion and Truth on the Psychoanalytic Stage*", Free Association Press, London, 1986.

22. The Romanian-French playwright Eugène Ionesco refers to the beauty of human dignity, and the freedom of the individual to develop. He explained that: "**Culture is the blossoming of the individual. Whether one wants it or not, whether one feels related with or alien to one's cultural environment, the individual is dependent on it. (...) The individual is an agent of values, the primary creator that allows the renewal of the society in this composition of collectivism and individualism.**" See the collection of essays:

IONESCO, E., "*Η ελεγεία ενός παράλογου κόσμου*" (Elegy on an absurd world), Translation: Mirka-Maria Skara, Collection of Essays, Roes Publications, Athens, 2007, pp. 48, 49, (Original work: *Notizen*).



*rational, participation to a social dialogue – an exit from the “desert” of the assets accumulated in the past?*

- *How is it possible for the contemporary world of cultural and social diversity to be the core of a liberated human life, free of humiliating preset patterns, but with selected-desired concepts?*

Processes were created to represent concepts, psychic trends and dispositions, operational forms and spatial relationships based on individual and social needs, in the context of human communication and activity, within a broader cultural environment – a reactor where changes occur.

Spatial interventions are imprints of actions, but also the stage on which change happens, to senses, emotions, expressions and other activities. They allow or prevent human thoughts and practices while, as mediators, they define human behavior in public space and its function, in every possible way.

*The symbolic dimension of interventions is the integral quality of the social values that produce these mediations, and guide their structuring, if any.*

*Diversity within societies is reflected and impressed on the landscape of cities and countries, leaving its markings on every civilization, an observation we make when we study our object.*

*That is, when we investigate the conditions under which messages became part of everyday life, environmental circumstances, social explorations and financial conditions at different times, places and cultures.*

*Any qualitative improvement in the image<sup>23</sup> of the current reality calls for a deeper understanding of the contemporary Greek society in terms of mentality, consciousness, relationship structure and communication;<sup>24</sup> it is only the society that, through its living desires "may 'paint' the city around us, in its own colors."*

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23. Although arbitrary, the forms are symbolic and socially determined. P. Bourdieu reminds us that: "**Durkheim (...) lays the foundations of a sociology of symbolic forms (Cassirer was to say expressly that he uses the concept of symbolic form as an equivalent of form of classification). With Durkheim, the forms of classification cease to be universal (transcendental) forms and become (as is implicitly the case in Panofsky) social forms, that is, forms that are arbitrary (relative to a particular group) and socially determined.**"

BOURDIEU, P., "Γλώσσα και Συμβολική Εξουσία" (Language and Symbolic Power), Translation: Kiki Kapsampeli, Kardamitsa Publications, Athens, 1999, p. 238, (Original work: *Ce que parler veut dire*, 1982).

24. In the effort to construct forms of communication, the aim is to achieve an organic composition of cultural elements. Moreover, it is essential to combine the social aspect of the works with civilization. This exchange is deemed necessary.

GRAMSCI, A., "Οι διανοούμενοι" (The Intellectuals), Translation: Thanos Papadopoulos, Stohastis Publications, Athens, 1972, (Original work: *Gli Intellettuali*, 1949).

Passing criticism on the ideology of modern industrial society with the aim to rouse it from its current state of narcosis is a key concern throughout the work of H. Marcuse. Generally, his field of research is part of the contemporary movement for a human science. His philosophy confirms the need for contestation, which takes on the form of political and cultural negation.

The issues of ideological and artistic communication touch the revelations of Marcuse's thought on the potential of human existence, in parallel with the oppressive obstacles associated with its realization.

MARCUSE, H., "Κριτική, Ουτοπία, Απελευθέρωση" (Criticism, Utopia, Liberation) (collective work), Translation: Panagiotis Zoumis, George Mitropoulos, George Sakriotis, Stachi Publications, Athens, 1999, p. 220.

Regarding the effort to achieve happiness and its refutation in modern society, as well as the status of Man and his public existence in modern society see:

MARCUSE, H., "Ερως και Πολιτισμός" (Eros and Civilization), Translation: Iordanis Arzoglou, Kalvos Publications, Athens, 1970, (Original work: *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, 1955).

*Ultimately, this denotes a significant cultural step forward which, as such, in our opinion, could only come as a result of appropriate conditions, awareness and maturity, rather than as a preset outcome of decisions and directives.*

The need to focus on the quality of life has been established and in multiple ways confirmed today.<sup>25</sup> It also integrates the question of the projected messages. This issue requires research into spatial behavior and the re-location of services in the urban fabric. It is directly associated with redefining the means and the purposes of spatial interventions, perhaps even of certain institutions.

That is, we would say that this issue should be placed under the immediate care of the political and institutional hierarchy of this space, which is also officially responsible for these choices. Substantial changes are required so as instead of allowing for the current effect of selfishness and self-interest modeled by a minority of parties interested in the city's landscape, to define "priorities" as a function of the effort to arrange the needs of the citizens and the place in order of significance.

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<sup>25</sup> For the Belgian writer Raoul Vaneigem quality means the presence of spontaneity; that is, the practical realization of creation, the precondition of poetry, of the impulse to change the world. Specifically, he argues that: "**The qualitative exists wherever creative spontaneity manifests itself. It entails the direct communication of the essential. It is poetry's chance. A crystallization of possibilities, a multiplier of knowledge and practical potential, and the proper modis operandi of intelligence. (...) Poetry is the organizer of creative spontaneity to the extent that it reinforces spontaneity's hold on reality. Poetry is an act which engenders new realities; it is the fulfilment of radical theory, the revolutionary act par excellence.**"

For a presentation of the theories and practices he proposes, see:

VANEIGEM, R., "*Η επανάσταση της καθημερινής ζωής*" (The Revolution of Everyday Life), Translation: Tzeni Mastoraki, Akmon Publications, Athens, 1977, p. 231, (Original work: *Traité de savoir-vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations*, 1967).

How is it possible for change to occur in a society that totally controls the consciousness of its members?

It is this corrosive effect of total control that H. Marcuse has been trying to prove:

**"the very idea of qualitative change recedes before the realistic notions of a non-explosive evolution."**

The rationale of this radical scholar of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory is a consistent approach to the problems of our contemporary society that vacillates between two contradictory hypotheses: on the one hand, that industrial society is capable of containing qualitative change for the future; on the other, that forces and tendencies exist which may break this containment and explode the society. The philosopher's views are extensively analyzed in:

MARCUSE, H., "*Ο μονοδιάστατος άνθρωπος*" (One-Dimensional Man), Translation: Bampis Lykoudis, Papazisis Publications, Athens, 1971, pp. 26, 28, (Original work: *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, 1964).

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Pages 81-82

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Pages 87-89

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