

Disclosing an architectural object. Settlement 14

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An object: a constituted, contoured, differentiated presence—a phenomenon. A clear, stable presence.

Clear enough, differentiated enough. Stable enough—sedimented, provisorily invariant.

Coherent enough: held-together by all other presences, including those, to whom it is present now, and holding them together—mutual relationships that enable presences to come to be, and to vanish.

Something—a thing, a singularity—something for someone between things. A thing for someone—and both for one another through their manifestations, through becoming present to one another and with one another.

The expression of a thing between things expressing and, simultaneously, creating conditions for other things to come to be as expression, mutually holding one another, making possible one another, ensuring their stable presences—for a while, but without any trace of their processuality, of their flow, of they-as-flow—but appearing instead as if they would have been always there and will last forever as they appear now—as they are, apparently, in their appearance, their expression, their manifestation for one another, being their being nothing but their appearance for us, and, somehow, for one another. Holding each other, actualizing, realizing, reinforcing constantly the plausibility of a common existence, of a common coming to be as the presence each becomes for one another.

And beyond the coherence—but only through this coherence: meaning.

Meaningful appearances, thus, appearing as what they appear to be for one another. Appearing as appearing-as. Inevitably.

Immanent meaning. Not the result of any other epiphenomenal process but the very process of primarily coming to be, of becoming incipiently present, of becoming a-presence-for-someone.

A differentiated presence, a presence with a meaning, we would say, but better a presence-as-meaning—and therefore: meaning-as-presence.

Meaning as the very process of becoming present, of cohering—in itself, eventually, but primarily with and for other presences. And as a constitutive, immanent, ineluctable trait of being-present-for-someone.

An object: a stable meaningful presence for someone—someone that catches what is thrown in front of her.

An encounter, it seems like. But actually, intertwined processes of mutually becoming-present, becoming-meaning—somehow for one another but for sure with one another.

But instead of processes: an object—something to point to, something that is there, we would say, that is not this me, now, pointing at it. Something that is even not for me but, we would say, in and for itself.

“It” is, we tend to say. It: isolated, autonomous, closed—contoured, endowed with closure, singular: present as one form and one meaning.

It, in its coming-to-be-for-me, acquiring closure, autonomy. “It is”, we would say. As a full sentence and as the beginning of all possible descriptions. “It is closed”—enclosing, apparently, its own traits, its own characteristics. Apparently independent of the actions of all other presences with which it comes to be.

The object is closed, but there are evidencies—not only reasons—to think that it is constituted, even co-constituted.

Being an object—appearing as one object—it does not cease to be a node in a meshwork of relational processes—it does not cease to be processual, it does not cease to be process, or better. processes.

Instead—and also instead of thinking the one (the object, its steadiness, its singularity) as categorically opposed to the others (the processes, the transformation, the plurality) and thus excluding the others—the object is, being the object it is—the object it has come to be—the processes and the relationships that enable it to appear— it to be appearance, that is they—the processes, the relationships—to be appearance, to be, thus, one appearance, one presence.

The object is the vehicle for the relational processes to achieve another form of presence: perceptual presence. The vehicle for, we could say, using an spatial metaphor, coming to the surface, for temporarily abandoning their operative presences to come to be “something”—“something-for-someone”: the singular counterpart of a singularity.

The object, thus, as medium—as condition of possibility for the processes that enable the object to come to be, to penetrate the dimension of the perceptual. In an elusive, indirect, or maybe better indexical way—not presenting the processes themselves but rather the trace of their operativity, the vibrant intuition of their effectuality.

The object as surface, as cover, as tag, as sign. Both as presence in and for itself—and as such always and only for others—but also as potentiality, as virtual presence of the processes supporting it, constantly nourishing it—until they bring it to a point at which it is no longer possible, until they claim and force, without possible resistance, its dissolution.

Another power of the object thus: to bring the subject in touch with the processes of coming to be—of common coming to be of objects and subjects: the underlying common flow, the intertwined processes, the enabling indeterminacy, the absolute potentiality of becoming what becomes possible and for this—only for this—actual.

Following this line, I could now try this: the object is—a strong “is”—the very relational processes that enable its perceptual presence. A paradox, we would say—a limit of the medium in, or better with which I am working now: language.

The object being simultaneously its present and its past, its actual presence and the processes that gave rise to it, that enabled it.

This is not the way I would put it, because this assumes to quickly another categorical difference a difference that this entity—the phenomenon—puts in question: the categorical difference between present and past.

So a new trial: the object being simultaneously its current presence—its perceptual presence now—and the operative presences, the potential and actualized vectors that transcend this now—that exceeded it, multidimensionally.

The object, therefore, showing—itsself-as-singularity—and occluding—itsself-as-processes—although allowing them to be present as well: veiled, masked, foggied.

The object, therefore, enabling the perceptual by becoming perceptual.

The object, by virtue of its objectiveness, inaugurating an open field of operations—operations with the object—and reducing its own operativity—by occluding operative presences, the presence of a multiplicity of interwoven processes—without neutralizing its agency but rather transforming it.

Transforming but not excluding—maintaining the processual as potentiality, the same way that the potentiality of objectiveness is carried by the relational processes involved in the emergence of the object.

And that is why, by virtue of the immanent processuality of the objectiveness of the object—the object can be dis-closed.

Disclosing: opening in a dis-/di-/de-way—disturbing, differentiating, destabilizing.

Disclosing not as opening in spatial terms. Not as creating an opening. Not as opening a door or a window. Not as an operation on the element that connects and separates two spaces—one interior and one exterior, one in which the one who opens is and another in which she is not but will be able to be by opening, by activating the connective potentiality of the element that actualizes its potentiality of separating, of isolating.

Disclosing not as an operation on the contour, on the outline, on the membrane but on the current state of the entity to be disclosed. Disclosing an object as an operation on the temporary objectiveness of the object by virtue of its temporariness.

Disclosing, thus, more specifically, as an intervention in the temporality that regulates the reciprocity between the objective and the processual—the stable and the fluid, the contour and the dissipation.

An intervention with a vector: from the objective toward the processual—from the steady to the unstable, from the constituted to the available for new constitutions (or simply for vanishing), from the actual back to the potential, from the perceptive back to the operative.

Disclosing as destabilizing—as disturbing the unambiguousness. Or maybe better, as per-turbing it—as going through it, as dis-covering the occluded vagueness, the hidden fragility by penetrating the apparent immutability of a perceptual presence.

Going through instead of substituting or adding.

Enabling a trans-formation, or even a de-formation to happen, to come to be.

Prioritizing, thus, the reverse direction: from clear to unclear, form being—as appearance, being-present-for-someone—to not being—to not-yet-being, to no-longer-being, but rather to operate—without entity, without selfness, without being a thing but, instead, thinging (without intention, without objective, without object).

Enabling the performative—the power of moving-through-a-form—to unfold its agency.

Reactivating the processuality of relationships—the immanent potential generated in and through a field of shared agencies, only by virtue of the inner structure of the sharing, of the way in which the agents relate to one another.

Disclosing, thus, as a condition of possibility for the object to potentially become another one—to potentiate its intrinsic capacity of alterity, of otherness.

Disclosing the stream of emergence of sense, releasing it from its crystallization as meaning—as a specific meaning.

[2]

So now: what if the object to be disclosed is not clearly an object? What if it is not so unambiguously and steadily determined—neither in regard to its outline in a given moment, nor in its presence throughout the period of time in which it is observed? What if the basic condition for something to be disclosed—its closure, its closeness, its objectiveness—is not so unequivocally given?

What if—as it is the case by the Settlement 14—one of the most determined and, specially, determining component of this phenomenon is a name—the name given to it, in this case in advance, before it began to exist—to be present, to exist-as-presence?

The name pre-exists—we could say, accepting implicitly, that the object is its perceptual presence, what is given to our sensing body in the current experience.

The name is, in this case, not the result of the observation of a perceptual presence. Instead, it precedes its arising. It anticipates—speculatively, we could say, trying to see what is not (yet) to be seen, or may be projecting (wishes, desires, hopes, memories, conceptual constructions)—a

perceptual presence. It circumscribes through a very specific organization of signs—visual signs if printed or shown on a screen, phonetic signs if spoken—possibilities for perceptual presences—infinite possibilities, maybe, or no longer infinite, due to the constraining agency of a name and of the performative act of giving a name.

The name—the election of a name, which implies the previous existence of multiple possible names, or the generation of a name, which might be the result of an observation of something not yet determined, of something in a state of becoming, of a not-yet-some-thing—begins to delimit, to differentiate—to specify and thus to prevent not only other names but other processes from coming to be, other future actualizations of the ongoing processes of emergence of what is named, of what begins to emerge through naming—or maybe better: of what is coming to be modulated by the presence of a name.

The name—a name—thus, is a beginning—the beginning—the very first phenomenon I encountered when I encountered the object to be disclosed—meaning “object” here rather an “entity”, a “Gegenstand” (something that stands in front of me, against me). “Settlement”—one specific settlement, the number “14”.

And after the name—and after descriptions and definitions: conceptual specifications, outlines, of what Settlement 14 is (as a concept) and how it will possibly be (as a space, as a dynamic, as a network of dynamics, as an environment, as an intervention in an environment)—a process, or better: a network of processes, a dynamic or interweaving individual actions with one another and interweaving the resultant collectivity with the individual actions, the actions of each participant—each settler.

Touching materials—reacting, sometimes. Exploring what is there—leftovers, wooden plates and bars, strips, threads, tubs, pieces of fabric. Inquiring, sometimes silently, their agencies, or simply, possibilities of combination, of construction—of structuring-with, of generating structures collectively, in a field of shared agencies.

Letting mater lead.

Or else: conceiving functional artifacts and manipulating mater in order to realize them, to fulfill, to materialize an idea, a pro-spect—eine Vor-stellung: something which is there (mentally, we tend to say, imaginarily) before it is there (materially, perceptually), before it occupies a space, as surface, a volume—before we share space, surface and volume with it.

Something someone needs, maybe. Or maybe something someone desires.

Not necessarily something conceived in order to be possessed or, simply, to be used in a predefined way, to fulfill an expectation, to fill an imaginary outline—a form, a function, a meaning. But rather something formed by the power of desire: a strongly driving force mobilized by a vague but only sufficiently outlined object, a blurred but sharply precise entity that demands, inexorably, to be realized—to be made, possessed, used, touched, grasped, manipulated, or simply (we tend to say) regarded, observed, be taken care of.

To care. To take care.

In your hands, with your hands.

Of matter. Of others. Of yourself with matter, with artifacts, with others. Of matter and others with yourself.

Of a process—a shared process. And of yourself—and of others, and of matter, artifacts, and a space: a collectivity, a common processes, a process of commoning.

Disclosing a process. Disclosing interlinked processes.

Maybe possible.

Disclosing what is, per definition and in its actuality, open.

Yes, it is always changing, it is unstable. But it is, nevertheless.

Disclosing “from the inside”: being part of the processes. Observing them, describing them.
Touching, from time to time, their fleeting and flowing molecules.

Disclosing, thus, specific micro dynamics and moments of stabilization. Grasping the graspable
and letting it go.

[3]

The whole space as one complex smell—someone is cooking. Not the whole but its basis, its
basic layer.

On top of it, or maybe embrace by it: sounds of drilling and voices.

Calm, suspended. As waiting, expecting.

The scaffolding connected with yellow and black threads to other elements.

Islands of concentration—of concentrated but light work. On the very background of glimpses of
the snowed city. Also waiting, expecting.

Now are the voices—increasing in volume and in variety—that embrace the smell.

Movement—increasing too.

Laughings.

And the heat is on—blowing, interfering, cutting, blurring.

No expectation anymore but more incisive forms of action, explicitly relating to one another.

Islands—still. More populated. And some bridges, sometimes or rather provisory displacements form one to another.

Instructions, comments, jokes, embraces. Greetings.

Still islands? Still some but dissolving their contours, merging, somehow, in a common space—in a shared flow.

Bonded structures. Provisorily. Unstable, even fragile—but steady, nevertheless.

(Hard to renounce to images, to produce images, to compress or consolidate through framing, through selecting, through cutting out a section. Instead, touching with my writing eyes.)

Intersections in depth, with depth generating or at least reinforcing depth.

Artifacts—materials, I would tend to say but actually artifacts—mirroring, blocking, occluding, attracting—my curiosity, my sitting body.

Suspended. Everything suspended, weightless. Weightlessness endowing each object with a similar weight, with a similar presence, significance and relevance.

They are all there, suspended. Absolutely motionless. Waiting—as waiting. Pointing, thus, more to what is going to happen—uncertainly—than to the actions that brought them here, that

brought them to occupy the very specific position they are occupying now with absolute precision yet, at the same time, as if abandoned.

And each object—also, simultaneously, breaking the categorical contradiction—endowed with the infinite weight that confers to occupy its own specific position, to materially specify a specific spot, a particular area which in turn acquires the weight of being the-spot-of-and-for-this-particular-thing.

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Threads. Of different colors. Of different forms.

Linked to one another—and to other elements: wood sticks, metal joins-in different ways.

Suspended and suspending. Hanging and hung.

Displayed—and displaying: themselves, what they hold and what holds them.

Sculptural? Kind of, I could say, since they do not seem to fulfill any other function but being here, being present—but to offer their formed presence to be seen.

Or this is a kind of tent. Another function thus? Maybe only its promise, like the promise of meaning of a shared, maybe even senseful gesture.

A gesture, may be. A concatenation of gestures calling for further gestures, further manipulations of threads.

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