Bunker Conversion and the Overcoming of Siege Mentality.

Illustration 1: Bunker at Anhalter Bahnhof, Berlin, B.R.D.: *"Wer Bunker baut wirft Bomben"* (He who builds bunkers, throws bombs).

1. Introduction:

> 1818 Scott Heart of Mid-Lothian viii, in Tales of my Landlord: "No seat
> accommodated him so well as the 'bunker' at Woodend" (Oxford English Dictionary).

Today we rarely associate 'bunkers' with welcoming and comfortable 'seats', 'benches' or 'banks in the field' as suggested by Scott as cited in the Oxford English Dictionary[1]. Nowadays they usually conjure up warfare[2] Their very appearance can strike one as menacing, even if they themselves are maybe more symptomatic of a defensive attitude. They characterise a siege mentality[3]. They are literally concrete responses to a perceived threat, whether real or imagined. In a post-war situation, bunkers remain enduring testimonies to historical trauma. These distinctive blots on the landscape embody the dilemma facing us about how to work through the legacies of the past, so as better to engage with the future, in ways that are more creative, sustainable, positive and peaceful[4]

In his famous analysis of Klee's painting, "Angelus Novus", the philosopher, Walter

Benjamin, describes a traumatized angel. Whilst being irresistibly blown into the future, this angel fixedly looks back at the pile-up of catastrophic events which give the lie to linear temporality, otherwise known as historical continuity and even as "progress"[5]. It would seem that only further disasters await us in the future. As a way of countering such a fate, Benjamin advocates a "brushing [of] history against the grain" by focusing on pockets of unactivated utopian potential in the past which can form dynamic "constellations" with the present, thereby reinvigorating our sense of agency (Benjamin 2003, 392)[6] . For him only this radical shift in approach to temporality can produce the changes that are needed for a less destructive epoch finally to open its doors.

Coming from another domain, that of professional peacebuilding and reconciliation, Jean Paul Lederach weaves into his seminal analysis of "the moral imagination" the African proposition that we "walk backwards into the future" (Lederach 2004, 136)[7]. This stance is not presented negatively, unlike Benjamin's scenario with Angelus Novus. The challenge to "our"- i.e. "Western"- conventional ideas to temporality is made clear in the following passage:

> What we know, what we have seen is the past. So it lies before us. What we cannot
> see, what we cannot know is the future… so the past we see before us. But we walk
> backward into the future (cited in Lederach ibid).

This conceptualisation of the past obliges an engagement of what "has been" as still living and actively present. Rather than just recognizing that the past affects the present and the future in various ways, in this other world view the past is also the future. This way of conceiving and experiencing temporality means that the course of events "does not flow forward". The problematic Western notion of civilisation's "progress" is here redundant[8] . However, this absence of temporal linearity does not as a consequence lead to cultural "backwardness", but instead necessitates an engagement with a more sophisticated, because more convoluted, sense of the spatio-temporal course of one's life. Grounded in a "deep understanding of human place within creation" as a whole, "the African" is situated within a "multidimensional" and "polychronistic" spacetime, whereby the effects of individual and collective actions resonate with greater intensity and consequence than is ostensibly the case in the "Western" world (Lederach ibid 137). For instance, for the Mohawk people the "active present" extended across fourteen generations, hence "an expansive space of time […] connected the voices of a distant but very much alive past with a distant but very much present future" (Lederach ibid 133). This world-view provides a structure for a more sustainable sense of communal belongingness, by emphasizing the individual's responsibility

for, and accountability to, life forms, "past", "present" and "future". It also better helps to explain the malignancy of conflict and injustice, how their traumatic effects can continue to send shock-waves across time, long after the events themselves have ostensibly ceased to exist. Hence Lederach concludes that a serious engagement with this other, more expanded, sense of human situatedness in this world is necessary if peace initiatives are ever to be effective in the long-term. Given this critique of "Western" temporality, Lederach, like Benjamin, offers us a form of "historical materialism"[9]. Only this conceptualisation of the world and the events that take place in time on its diverse surfaces can provide the "critical yeast" from which effective peace may yet arise (Lederach 2003, 100).

Putting an end to a war is no guarantee for peace. As Kant pointed out in the "Perpetual Peace" essay, the fixing of a conflictual situation with more or less coerced compromises brings about mere truces, temporary suspensions of hostilities. Hence Kant provocatively suggested that the term "perpetual peace" is "almost a pleonasm" (Kant 1994, 93)[10]: 'Peace' could only ever mean the definite end of all wars. A truce cannot somehow grow into peace; it rather prepares the terrain for the next war as it does not "nullify all existing reasons for a future war". Truces tolerate, and therefore in effect nourish, the secret "mental reservation", or holding back, of the contracting parties (ibid 94). A truce is a forced compromise to which one does not have to commit absolutely. In "Critique of Violence", Benjamin also identifies the reasons why initiatives for conflict resolution undergo such vicissitudes:

> …the effort towards compromise is motivated not internally but from outside, by the opposing effort, because no compromise, however freely accepted, is conceivable without a compulsive character. 'It would be better otherwise' is the underlying feeling in every compromise (Benjamin 2004, 244, citing Erich Ungers)[11].

As it is not the affirmation of an affirmed moral principle, a truce provides fertile ground for future warmongering. In contrast to a truce, peace would have to be uncompromising. It is backed, at least for Kant, not just by a "material principle'- which would tie it to "its end, as object of the will"- but by a "formal principle", that is to say it "rests on man's freedom in his external relations and which states: 'Act in such a way, that you can wish your maxim to become a universal law (irrespective of what the end in view may be)'" (Kant 1994, 122 emphases in original). It therefore has "absolute necessity" and is a duty, at least for a "moral politician", if not for a "political moralist" who deals in peace as a set of merely "technical tasks" (ibid 118, 121-122 my emphases).

Lederach in effect adds to Kant's and Benjamin's analyses that it is precisely for the reasons they draw our attention to that peacemaking cannot be left in the hands in any sort of politician, whether moralizing or moral. The political realm tends to regard war as a technical problem to be "fixed" so that peace can be[12]. By contrast with this conventional, binary approach to war/peace, Lederach suggestively offers a different definition of bellicose and pacific relations[13]. He describes conflictual situations as symptomatic of a state of play wherein "narratives" have been "broken" and are therefore in need of "restorying" (Lederach 2005, 140). Narratives constitutes our sense of self and belongingness to a social group, a recognition more alive in some cultures than in others as Lederach points out:

> As the indigenous world view suggests, social meaning, identity, and story are linked through narrative, which connects the remote past of who we are with the remote future of how we will survive in the context of an expansive present where we share space and relationship. The space of narrative, the act linking the past with the future to create meaning in the present, is a continuous process of restorying (Lederach 2005, 146 emphases in original).

"Restorying", a form of historical reinscription, is an essential ingredient for healing the injuries of conflict. It is also a creative "process" that has somehow to be put into place but then has to take on a life of its own. Lederach draws our attention to the sensitivity required for this situation to arise:

> The challenge…lies in how, in the present, interdependent people, 'restory', that is begin the process of providing space for the story to take its place and begin the weaving of a legitimate and community-determined place among others' stories (ibid 140)

To be sustainable, peacemaking requires something more than signed treaties: creative imagination is necessary for reconciliation, defined by Lederach not as "forgive and forget", but as "remember and change" (ibid 152). Typically artists are solicited to celebrate a peace treaty, or to represent the destruction of war. However, this is a reductive view of the vital contribution artists and artistry generally can make to the peace process. Lederach describes the "aesthetic imagination" as "a place where suddenly out of complexity and historic difficulty, the clarity of great insight makes an unexpected appearance in the form of an image or in a way of putting something that can only be described as artistic" (Lederach ibid 69). Enabling us to "see the whole" rather than focus on "parts", appealing to capacities and pathways than are more "intuitive" than cognitive, the "aesthetic imagination" provides a rich means to transport us beyond a predetermined situation wherein history is regarded as just

repeating itself inexorably, violently, over and over again[14]. In order to overcome such fatalism, it needs to be more widely recognised that artistry is situated within the very process and discourse of peacemaking itself. Only artistry can open up ways of addressing present needs and projecting different- less reactive, and maybe more pacific- prospects for the future.

As we have already seen, crucial to a transformative engagement with what could be a traumatic past, is an expanded and more convoluted sense of temporality than linear notions of "progress" into a better future allow for. To encompass such non-linear time, equally complex relational spatialities that can serve as, what Lederach calls, "adaptive platforms" are required. These "relational spaces" have to sufficiently flexible to be able for "multiple coordinated and independent connections" to be fostered (Lederach 2005, 85).

Following in Lederach's wake, I wish to examine cases where war bunkers have been demilitarized, converted into places of cultural experimentation, ludic activity, spiritual communion, as well as being incorporated into everyday life. Once demilitarized, bunkers might become examples of the "spaces of narrative" Lederach suggested are needed to give people the time to resituate themselves in relation to areas of conflict (Lederach ibid 146). They might even be able to present us with alternative visions for living together in the future. Rather surprisingly, given their off-puttingly defensive and retrograde appearance, they could nevertheless feature as forms of critical resistance to the current promotion of isolationist individualism, bolstered national identity and protectionist border-controls.

2   Examples of Bunker Conversion.

a)
In Bunker Archaeology (1991), Paul Virilio gives us a bold appreciation of the cultural, including architectural, significance of General Todt's Atlantic Wall built during the last years of the Second World War [15]. Going against the grain, Virilio disarmingly associates bunkers with what he calls vitally important "cryptic architecture" (Virilio & Parent 1996 Issue no. 7).[16] For Virilio, bunkers- together with Mayan temples, catacombs, the subterranean constructions of the Cathares, the hermetic house of Faust- are revelatory of something "permanent, without memory". They contain an energy charged with "the survival instinct of life forms" (ibid). He points out that Todt's bunkers are "anthropomorphic; their shapes

resemble those of the body". Their organicity is heightened by the reinforced concrete which is all of one piece. Unlike stone or brick buildings, they have no intervals or joints. These constructions are a cohesive whole. They are intent on survival (Virilio 1991, 13 & 46). Virilio draws our attention to a vital intensity immanent in bunkers to which we are usually impervious.

Illustration 2. An Atlantic Wall Bunker, Le Front Todt, France.

Virilio and Claude Parent reinscribed the Atlantic Wall bunker, and thereby ecclesiastical architecture, with their scandalous Sainte-Bernadette church [17]. Built just after the Cuban

Illustration 3: Paul Virilio/ Claude Parent, Exterior of the Eglise Sainte Bernadette-du Banlay, Nevers, France (1963).

missile crisis (1962) - described by Kennedy as "not only the most dangerous moment of the Cold War but the most dangerous moment of human history"- its form evokes a nuclear bomb shelter, but also the grotto of Massabielle, wherein Saint Bernadette sought sanctuary in 1866 (Joly, Parent & Virilio 2004, 7). The outside strikes one as a bellicose and defensive carapace; by contrast, once inside we encounter a different quality of space, more serenely contemplative, if austere.

Illustration 4: Paul Virilio/ Claude Parent, Interior of the Eglise Sainte Bernadette-du Banlay, Nevers, France (1963).

The Saint Bernadette church put into practice what Parent and Virilio called "the oblique function". The church presents a critique of the dominant architectural regimes of both the verticality of Gothic-inspired high rise buildings, and the horizontality of vernacular, traditional constructions. By introducing the inclined plane into their project, Parent and Virilio aimed to: "redefine the relationship between the human and the ground" (Joly, Parent & Virilio 2004, 28). In its elevation the floor explicitly interacts with a human body in movement (rather than remaining self-effacingly under his feet)[18]. The inclined plane solicits our attention in ways that are different from a flat surface; the predominance of the eye – complicit with the reduced world of "information"- is overcome as the tactility of the slope valorizes the effort of the foot and the knees (Parent 2004, 33-35). Our sensuous perception is thereby displaced from its habitual economy focus on the visual and expanded in its encounter with rough and compact materiality of the concrete. Parent makes it clear that, rather than claiming to have introduced an original feature- the « oblique function »- into architectural practise, they are in fact, maybe more modestly, re-introducing it back into its vocabulary. He writes : « Since the Turkey of 7,000 BC through to the villages of today's southern Algeria, the oblique function's past exists» (Parent 2004,5). Consequently, Parent and Virilio's

interventions, that struck the architectural world as being so challengingly new, are, possibly more interestingly, to be considered as an interrogation of conventional ideas of temporality and the place of cultural re-inscription within it. They actually aimed at « imagining in the past [an] « archeology of the future » (ibid). In effect echoing Lederach's proposal for a more sophisticated understanding of our spatio-temporal situatedness, Parent boldly exclaimed : « WE MUST READ THE PAST AS A FUTURE TO BE DISCOVERED » (Parent ibid, capitals in original).

b)

Another instance of a converted bunker is to be found in the Pallasstrasse, Berlin (B.R.D). It was built by forced labourers, who were housed with their families in the nearby school (now called the Sophie-Scholl Gymnasium). It was intended to accommodate the long-distance telephone exchange but was not completed. After the war (1945-6), the U.S. army, in whose sector it was situated, attempted at several occasions to dynamite it. To no avail. Between 1986-1989 the Western Allies had the four floors divided into rooms. With a capacity of 4,809 persons, it is the biggest civilian shelter in Berlin. It has since been used for various cultural purposes, for instance as a location for Wim Wenders' film "Der Himmel über Berlin" (1987) but it otherwise remains empty. In 1977, social housing for 2,000 people was built around the bunker according to plans by Jürgen Sawade. Thereby the bunker was adroitly incorporated into the Brutalist social housing project, or rather the 1970s housing complex commodiously formed itself around the pre-existing Second World War bunker. This example of bunker "restorying" is a good instance of new growth being delicately grafted onto lasting evidence of past trauma. Thus distinctively combined, the bunker and the housing complex helped to form the bones and fibre of the regenerated walled-in city of West Berlin.

Illustration 5: Pallasseum Sozialpalast, Berlin-Schöneberg. B.R.D. built 1977 by Jürgen Sawade around Bunker.

c)

The Reichsbahnbunker Friedrichstrasse (illustration 6) was built between 1943-5 by forced labourers mainly from the Soviet Union. Its surface area is 3,000m2 over five stories. It was designed in a neoclassical style by Karl Bonatz in 1941, under the general direction of Albert Speer, to provide shelter for 2,500 rail passengers. It was occupied by the Red Army in 1945 and used as a prison. As it is situated in Berlin-Mitte, it came under the jurisdiction

Illustration 6: Boros Sammlung Bunker in Berlin, B.R.D.

of the Soviets. The DDR used it as a warehouse for textiles and then, from 1957 onwards, for tropical fruit. The East Germans called it the "banana bunker". Bananas became particularly charged with symbolic and political significance around the Fall of Berlin Wall. They featured prominently in the media debate about the respective merits of the capitalist West and the communist East[19]. The West delighted in stories of ordinary DDR citizens venturing across the lapsed border avid to stock up on the "luxury goods" (notably bananas) hitherto denied them. Bananas featured prominently as a sign of their failed economic model, their subsequent consumerist hunger, as well as the loss of any form political idealism or any alternative to global capitalism (in the form of a "third way" as attempted by Neues Forum). Bananas were used by West Germans to ridicule their newly refound brothers and sisters as was demonstrated in the many jokes that circulated at the time. One such joke runs as follows: "How does one double the value of a Trabi [the main car manufactured in the DDR between 1964-1990]? By filling it up with petrol. How does one quadruple its value? By putting a banana on the backseat!"… As a way of debunking the myth of the stereotypical East German, the satirical magazine "Titanic" published a story about a certain "Gaby" who, at the age of seventeen (when one could be anticipating more exciting experiences) is gleefully about to taste her very first banana (in the guise of a peeled gherkin). The hidden joke was that this woman actually came from Rheinland-Pfalz (West Germany). The magazine was

Illustration 7 Cover image of the German *satirical magazine "Titanic" (November 1989).*

interested in drawing attention to the clichéd representations of East Germans as misguided consumerists. After 1989 the Reichsbahnbunker Friedrichstrasse bunker took on various other uses: as a venue for Techno-music and Fetish and Fantasy Parties, thanks to which it developed the reputation of being "the hardest club in the world", and as a venue for other types of cultural activities (for instance the Deutsche Theater performed Simon Donald's "Lebensstoff" there in 1994, and Olafur Elliasson exhibited there with other artists in 1996). In 2003 it was bought by the Polish-born, but Wuppertal-bred, Christian Boros, who runs a successful Advertising and Communication agency. It is now called the Boros Sammlung Bunker-Berlin as it was converted by the architect Jens Casper into a luxury penthouse flat for the Boros family and gallery spaces for their private collection of 500 contemporary art
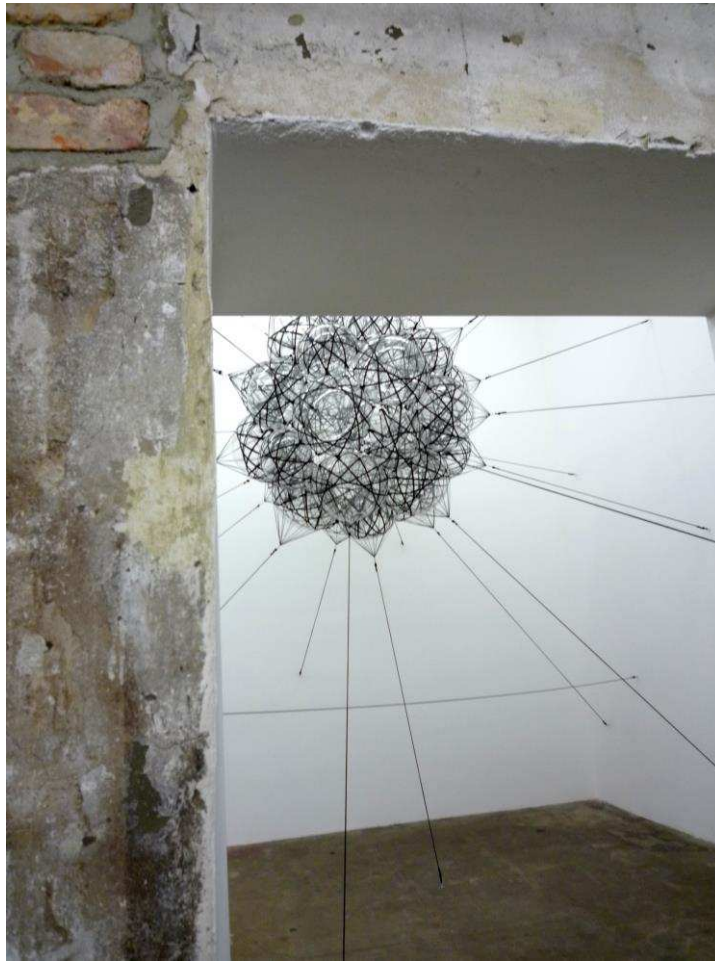
Illustration 8. Inside of the Boros Sammlung Bunker (Art Gallery), Berlin, B.R.D..

objects (including works by Ai Weiwei, Olafur Elliasson, Wolfgang Tillmans).

In this article we are looking at how bunkers can be culturally reinscribed in creative ways with potentially disarming, pacific effects. Generally it has been often been argued that aesthetic appreciation can have an "utopian" function and that art objects are gifts with transformative properties, certainly not ultimately commodities to be bought and sold[20]. However, it remains to be seen whether this conversion of a bunker into an enormous art space (3,000m2), open to the public by appointment since 2008, is capable of continued engagement with the intriguing, if residually traumatising, complexities of its past. In time it might just stand as a symbol of the new capital of the unified B.R.D and as a testimony to the buying power of certain individuals who were financially able to take advantage of the alternative spaces of exception that used to be in West Berlin and, post-1989 subsequently also became available in the former communist East. Pre-1989 West Berliners were neither for West Germany, nor really against the East. Indeed the younger population who resolutely

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"exiled" themselves there, precisely defined themselves against everything (including military service) that they had rebelliously left behind in conformist West Germany. However, they also tended not to know that much about what lay beyond the Wall. Life in West Berlin at that time had its own rules and there was enough that was extraordinary going on within its walls to get on with. This "exceptional" status is now arguably losing its ground. The site of this bunker, Berlin Mitte (formerly in the East) barely retains its alternative edge as Western commercialism takes hold. It will be interesting to see whether this conversion of a bunker into a contemporary art forum can resist such changes and keep on re-visiting its past in the name of alternative futures, or whether, at the end of the day, it is just homogeneously complicit with capitalist "market forces".

d)

The "Kegel" bunker (skittlebunker) is also in Berlin (Friedrichshain). It was built for the Berlin Reichsbahnausbesserungswerk (RAW) the maintenance unit of the state railway where the fire service was located. A periscope was installed in the tip permitting the detection of fires during periods of aerial bombing. The bunker is one of 200 built by the firm Winkel & co. of Duisburg who patented this model in 1936. The steeply pointed roof was designed both to reduce the surface space exposed to attack and, if nevertheless hit, to force bombs to slide downwards thereby avoiding the tower's destruction. It is now used by climbers who, in defiance of gravity, navigate their way upwards[21]. The rough materiality of the structure is thus appreciated as a sporting challenge. It creates a communal meeting place for those who share a passion for climbing. By edging their way across its surface with the ambition of eventually reaching its very top, the climbers in effect transform the bunker into an objective terrain that produces a sense of achievement and gratification, that becomes a source of health and pleasure. Whilst an activity such as climbing is indeed a sport, requiring discipline and skill, it also contains a creative "play-element".

Illustration 9. Bunker in Berlin-Friedrichshain, B.R.D. known as « der Kegel » (the skittle).

Illustration 10. The Kegel-Bunker in Berlin-Friedrichshain, B.R.D. now used as climbing tower.
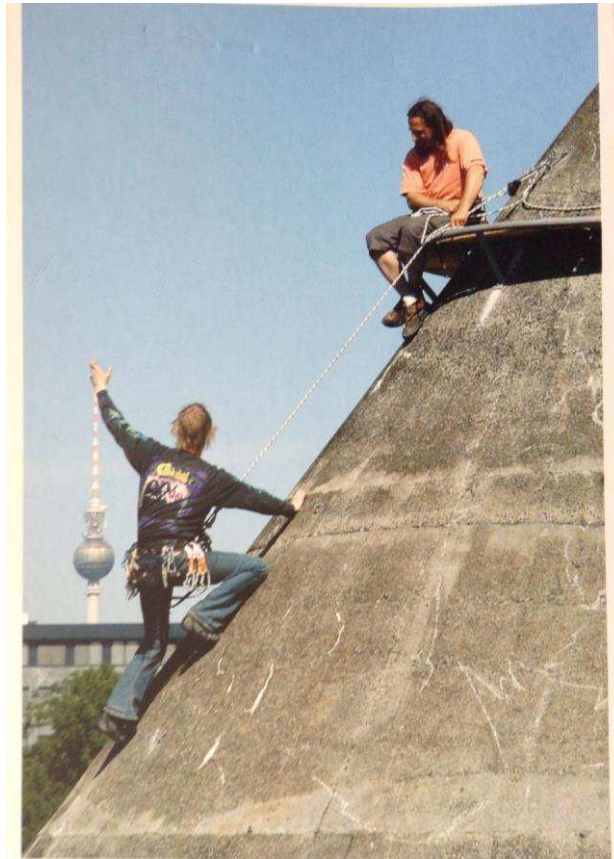
Illustration 11. Reaching the top of the Kegel bunker (the Fernsehturm at Alexanderplatz is in the background).

In Homo Ludens Johann Huizinga underlines the originary importance of play. Older than "culture", play is constitutive of our- human and animal- identities he tells us that[22]:

> …play is more than a mere physiological phenomenon or a psychological reflex. It goes beyond the confines of purely physical or purely biological activity. It is a significant function- that is to say, there is some sense to it. In play there is something 'at play' which transcends the immediate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play means something…the very fact that play has a meaning implies a non-materialistic quality in the nature of the thing itself (Huizinga 1970, 19).

Play offers us the possibility of "stepping out of 'real' life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own" '(ibid 26). It permits us to detach ourselves from our immediate material concerns. Play is synonymous with freedom itself as it creates an alternative space, wherein we can actively give meaning to our world and existence (ibid). Huizinga emphasises that:

> Play marks itself off from the course of the natural process. It is something added

thereto and spreads out over it like a flowering, an ornament, a garment (ibid 26). Despite thus being an essential addition to our lives, "play-space" is fragile and precious[23]. It can easily not be respected; playful activity runs the permanent risk of being suddenly interrupted or indefinitely deferred. Conventionally it is something one is supposed in time to "grow out of". However, if its significance is duly recognized and the opportunities for its occurring fostered, "play-space" can function not only a "training ground" for the steady and confident development of the individual, but as a laboratory wherein entirely new, or even "utopian", ideas can emerge for society as a whole [24].

e)

Even in children's playgrounds, such as the one found in Herzogenriedpark, Mannheim, the bunker motif can appear[25]. Instead of presenting itself as a forbiddingly homogeneous mass, here the "bunker" becomes an open invitation to explore, by crawling and climbing, its different shapes, textures and scales. When one comes across the unexpected apertures in the ceiling, the sun-lit penetration of the outside world into the cavernous darkness of the bunker bestows an almost magical quality to the experience of these places. They become "enchanted".

Illustration 12. Herzogenriedpark, Mannheim (B.R.D).

Illustration 13. Herzogenriedpark, Mannheim (B.R.D).

Illustration 14. Herzogenriedpark, Mannheim (B.R.D).

The psychoanalyst, Bruno Bettelheim, stressed the importance of "enchantment" in his classic work on fairy tales:

> Radical transformations in the nature of things are experienced by the child on all
> sides, although we do not share his perceptions. But consider the child's dealings with
> inanimate objects: some object- a shoelace or a toy- utterly frustrates the child, to the
> degree that he feels himself a complete fool. Then in a moment, as if by magic, the
> object becomes obedient and does his bidding; from being the most dejected of

humans, he becomes the happiest. Doesn't this prove the magic character of the

object? (Bettelheim 1991, 72-73)[26].

Bettelheim demonstrated how vital the belief in and experience of enchantment is for the growing child if past trauma is to be overcome, so that the future can be bravely encountered as something to be ventured towards without fear of exposure to failure and danger[27].

The belief in such possibilities needs to be nurtured so that the child can accept his

disillusionments without being utterly defeated… (ibid 73).

Similar to the enchanted worlds of fairy tales, playgrounds can also "point the way to a better future" by nurturing "the [creative] process of change", rather than "describing the exact details eventually to be gained there" (Bettelheim 19991, ibid).

f)

In Albania actual historical bunkers are, amongst many other imaginative "restoryings", also used as ludic objects[28]. Within this context, the play-element increases its significance as a capacity for negotiating difficulty and inhibition, and working-through trauma. A reappropriation of these vestiges of a period of totalitarian repression could be an important aspect of the move beyond the violence of the past, into more positive spaces in the future. As Freud pointed out, even if playing with these concrete symbols of terror might be deemed to be unhealthy, only leading to the reinforcement of distress, the activity could be transformative:

It is clear that in their play children repeat everything that has made a great impression

in them in real life, and that in so doing they abreact the strength of the impression

and, as one might put it, make themselves master of the situation (Freud 1984, 285-

286)[29].

Even if they did not actually live under dictatorship themselves, today's children can still replay on-site the historic events that haunt older generations thereby engaging the latter in memory work. Benjamin suggested that "the task of childhood" was "to bring the new world into symbolic space". Children see things that adults do not; they tap into the enchantment of this world that is no longer appreciated by the tired eyes of "experience".

The child, in fact, can do what the grown-up absolutely cannot: recognize the new

once again…. Every childhood discovers these new images in order to incorporate

them into the image stock (Bildschatz) of humanity" (Benjamin 1999, 390)[30].

Playing is a way of replenishing our "image stock" so that it provides a fertile source for

representations of our pasts, presents and futures. In his seminal account of how playing is

Illustration 15: Albanian bunker converted into playground equipment in Tirana.

constitutive of our reality and the "search for self", Donald Winnicott wrote:

> We find either that individuals live creatively and feel that life is worth living or that
> they cannot live creatively and are doubtful about the value of living. This variable in
> human beings is directly related to the quality and quantity of environmental provision
> at the beginning or in the early phases of each baby's living experiences
> (Winnicott1991, 71)[31].

Traumatic past circumstances and experiences can atrophy the creative "play drive", indeed
occasions for playing might have been rare. The retrospective injection of the ludic into
environments that not only symbolized, but even incorporated, the siege mentality of the
totalitarian regime, could be part of the creative process evoked by Lederach as an intrinsic
aspect of peacebuilding[32].

Illustration 16. Albanian bunkers converted into beach huts along with parasols in Dhermi.

Even if the creative products are supposed to be different from commodities (see footnote 20 above), the commercialization of bunkers as souvenirs could also be a way of putting to work the negativity of the past with the hope of gaining something more positive for the future. Playful miniaturization reduces the imposing presence of bunkers to a scale that is almost ridiculous. It can also invite a hands-on appropriation of these vestiges of the past in the form of ad hoc art works.

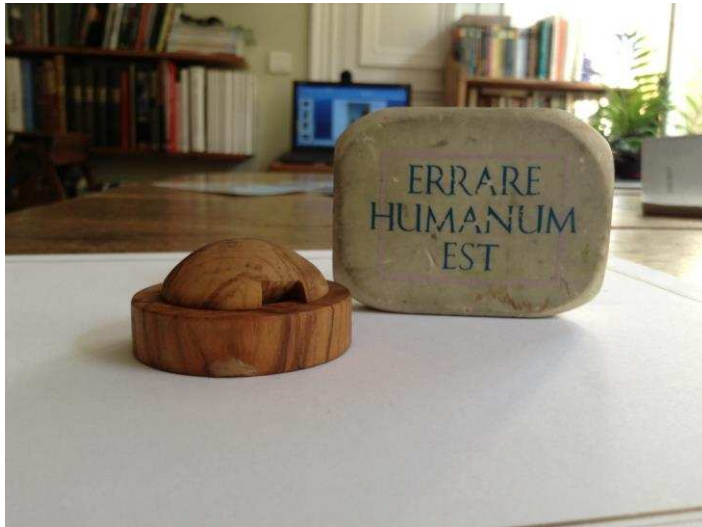Illustration 17. Albanian tourist souvenir: mini-bunker.

Illustration 18. Albanian tourist souvenir of mini-bunker as take-away, forget-me-not, D-I-Y art-object.

g)

The 6,500m2 bunker ARK complex (Atomska Ratna Komanda) in Konjic,Bosnia-Herzegovina, was built 280m underground by the Yugoslavian army between 1953-1979. It was intended to save Tito and his nomenclatura from death in the eventuality of a nuclear war. It is now home to Project Biennial of Contemporary Art D-O ARK who describe it as "a nontraditional framework of art both from a psychological and intellectual point of view". The curators describe their UNESCO-supported project as:

> a multifaceted institution that symbolizes how a Cold War product par excellence is transformed into an artifact of freedom and peace, creativity and critical thinking through an innovative partnership between civil, public/military and corporate sectors. http://www.biennialfoundation.org/biennials/d-0-ark-biennial-bosnia-and-herzegovina/ (accessed 7/3/2015).

This initiative is a prime example of how bunker conversion can interact with the past as a means of both engaging critically with the present, and providing possibilities for alternative action in the future. For example, when it was first launched in 2011, the curators issued the following declaration on the web:

> The first edition of the Biennial will be realized under the title NO NETWORK. The title came out of a simple observation: the bunker is a secluded and isolated space which prevents us from using contemporary means of individual communication, such as mobile phones, which inform us that there is "no network connection" available

there. In such physical and psychological isolation, this space becomes a space of anxious reflection rather than a space of unhindered communication. This does not imply that an exhibition as such is not essentially a form of communication between the artists, their works and the space itself: the works will not "compete" with the space but initiate and keep a conversation with it. But, by emphasizing the ability of art to generate knowledge and emotions that mutually reflect each other, we would like to re-think the omnipresence of the rhetoric of "networking" as very often devoid of concentrated subjective solitude from which the artistic endeavour transpires. The artists invited to participate in the project are primarily those whose work is concerned with different aspects of "artistic research" and other "non-disciplinary" modes of inter-subjective production in the field of contemporary experience, which is otherwise increasingly being emptied of forms of reflexive communication in a "common language.

http://2011.bijenale.ba/upload/documents/Bunker-English_web. pdf, (accessed 7/03/2015).
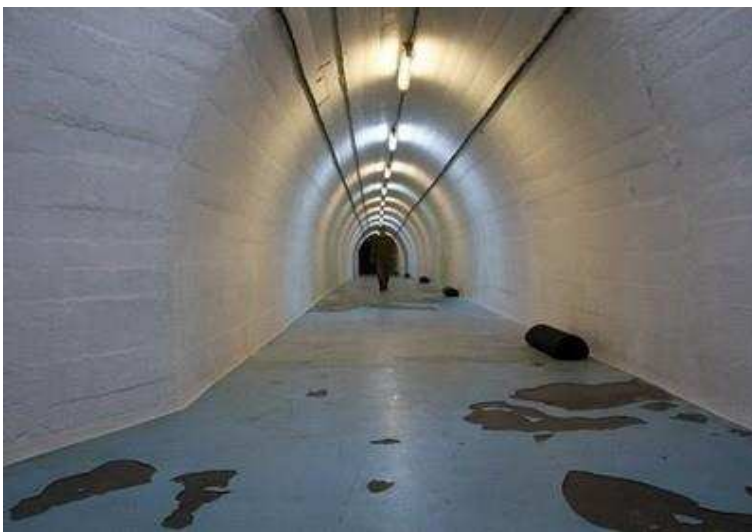

Illustration 19. The atomic shelter of Konjic, Project Biennial of Contemporary Art D-O ARK. Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In this clear-sighted and far-reaching project the bunker becomes a site soliciting reflection about, and putting into practice, new, or even almost obsolete, forms of communication. It is thanks to its recalcitrant impermeability that it can become, despite itself, a "relational space" (Lederach 2005, 85 cited above). Its historical hostile exclusiveness is converted into a contemporary opportunity for creative encounters. The critical distancing the bunker shell

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provides from the outside world fosters a form of resistance to today's dominant ideology of "social networking". It is claimed by multinationals that mobile technology puts us more in contact with each other, but it could be said that our lives are largely saturated with "information" and superfluous chit-chat. The Konjic project engages incisively in this important debate. The bunker itself is reconfigured as, to use Lederach's term, an adaptive "platform" for rewired social relations (Lederach 2005, 182). Additionally the site itself – a military secret until the 1990s- is publicly put on the map.

3. Conclusion.

Knowing the world around us, documenting, mapping and demarcating it, are all forms of appropriation largely controlled by those who have political and economic power, i.e. the state and its apparatuses (including the military) but also companies, national and multinational. Geography, its theories and practices, play a central role in providing information that serves to control the population. In his seminal book (first published in 1976), Yves Lacoste went so far as to suggest that "geography's prime purpose is to make war". He identified the neglect of geography by the French education system as a grave social crisis. For him it contributed to an increased sense of disorientation in this world, an inability to organize individually or collectively, necessarily bringing about a decline in political resistance (2012, 215-232[33])

Cultural reappropriation (or "re-mapping") of, for example, military bases such as bunkers, is crucial aspect of any form of political resistance[34]. However, whilst probably still having currency in a nuclear scenario, the very concept of strongholds has been undermined by recent developments in military technology. In his analysis of the Israeli army think-tank OTRI tactics, Eyal Weizman informs us that the very walls within which "private lives" are led and that provide the structures whereby individuals define themselves in relation to other bodies and institutions, are apparently susceptible to sudden penetration (Weizmann 2013, 68-69). According to Weizmann the OTRI defy not only conventional military practice but also our habitual assumptions, by going through walls[35]. Walls are no longer obstacles to manoeuvre around or go over. The shock-effective "art" of going through walls is made possible by complex radar technology that liquidates them and detects human presence (or rather "biological activity") by the means of emanating body heat. The living target is located, or rather betrayed, by its "thermic marker" (ibid 64-5). In such a world of, to cite Weizmann, "inverted urban geometry", the traditional oppositions between solid/fluid, inside/outside,

private/public are overturned (ibid 40-42). Boundaries, even those we take to be most concrete, become temporary and vulnerable to violent infraction. They are dematerialized. The creative re-appropriation of bunkers, whilst they can still physically withstand such changes, might thus be, not only forms of historical "restorying", but also one minor way of trying to set the limits to these unsettling developments in state power. Once re-inscribed, they could indeed make a contribution to what Virilio and Parent had called "cryptic architecture". Instead of standing as steadfast symptoms of a siege mentality that only shelters and protects life reactively, they enliven and provoke our sense of ourselves with their obliquely destabilising interventions into history (Joly, Parent &Virilio 2004, 29). However, any "defence" of bunkers has of course to be reinforced with a radical critique of other types of boundary controls and the dualistic exclusions they produce[36].

Endnotes.

[1] My article wishes to « debunk » the bunker. The O.E.D. defines « to debunk » as « to remove the 'nonsense' or false sentiment from » ; to «expose (false claims or pretensions) »; hence, « to remove (a person) from his 'pedestal' or 'pinnacle' ». Reminding ourselves that bunkers started out in life as comfortable seats is part of that process.

[2] See illustration one, « Wer Bunker baut, wirft Bomben » (He who builds bunkers, throws bombs ») for the dominant association of bunkers with warfare.

[3] The cartoon film, « The Croods » (dir. Chris Sanders, 2013) provides quite an amusing analysis of such a « siege mentality » and what it can lead to. In the story, the father's dictum is : « Never not be afraid ». Being open to what is unknown entails a certain risk. In the name of security, he therefore forecloses what is new. This defensive attitude to life paradoxically ends up jeopardising the family's very survival ; the environment they have known up to now is being destroyed by climate change. In order to carry on living, they have to leave their cave and venture forth into the wider world, thereby taking a chance. The father's defensive approach to life is portrayed not only as joyless, creating conflict within the family itself- especially with the daughter who wants to live intensely, to explore the world, to discover new things- but also as counterproductive ; his fatalism unintentionally endangers the family's very existence.

[4] This article was originally given as a paper at the Cultural Memory conference in Skopje, Macedonia (2013) where the legacies of totalitarian regimes and war in former Eastern Europe were of principal concern.

[5] The « Conflict, Time, Photography » exhibition held at the Tate Modern, London (November 2014-March 2015) took as its point of departure Kurt Vonnegut's reflection on his novel Slaughterhouse Five, which was based on his experiences of the Dresden bombing in 1945. Vonnegut declared that : « People aren't supposed to look back. I'm certainly not going to do it anymore. I've finished my war book now. The next one I write is going to be fun. This one is a failure, and had to be, since it was written by a pillar of salt ». The curators wanted to take up « the challenge of looking back, considering the past without becoming frozen in the process » (Tate Modern Exhibition leaflet 2014-2015). This article also explores ways of confronting past trauma, re-engaging with the present, but also imagining alternative futures through re-creative inscriptions of what was.

[6] Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" in Selected Writings Vol. IV 1938-40 ed. H. Eiland & M. Jennings, (Harvard: Belknap Harvard U.P. 2003).

[7] We might balk at J.P. Lederach's confident use of the terms « African » and « Western » in The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Peace-making (Oxford: Oxford U.P. 2005).

[8] Again, Benjamin (2003, 392) reminds us of the violent myth of « progress » when he writes : « [t]here is no document of culture which is not not at the same time a document of barbarism».

[9] For Benjamin (2003, 396) the « historical materialist » is he who « blasts open the continuum of history ». I note that this section of « On the concept of history » reveals Benjamin's dubious sexual politics (see the references to he who is « man enough » to resist the temptations of «the whore called « Once upon a time »»). « Even » Benjamin, whose ideas about « cultural memory » are otherwise so useful and interesting, « forgets » himself and uses socially and politically reactionary terms when he feels the need to give his analysis an extra rhetorical boost…

[10] See I. Kant Political Writings trans. H.B Nisbeth, (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P 1994, 93):"'No conclusion of peace shall be considered valid as such if it were made with a secret reservation of the material for a future war'. For if this were the case, it would be a mere truce, a suspension of hostilities, not peace. Peace already means the end to all hostilities, and to attach the adjective perpetual is already suspiciously close to pleonasm". For analyses of this challenging definition of peace, see: D. Morgan "Why Perpetual Peace" is almost a pleonasm" in Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice ed. D. Morgan & D; Webb, Vol. 25 2013a: no. 1. p 9-16; D. Morgan « The Camel (ship of the desert)": "Fluid Geography", Globality, Cosmopolitics in the Work of Immanuel Kant" in The Epistemology of Utopia: Rhetoric, Theory and Imagination" ed. Jorge Bastos da Silva, (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2013b); D. Morgan *Globus Terraqueus*: Cosmopolitan Right, "Fluid Geography" and Commercium in the Utopian Thinking of Immanuel Kant and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon" in Law and the Utopian Imagination, Amherst Series, (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2014).

[11] Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence" in Selected Writings Vol 1, 1913-1926, ed. H. Eiland & M. Jennings, (Harvard: Belknap Harvard U.P. 2004).

[12] For the inappropriate heavy-handedness of this approach to something as delicate as peace, Paul Watzlawick's expression comes to mind: "When the only known tool is a hammer, every problem is considered to be a nail » Watzlawick cited in P. Chabot Global Burn-Out (Paris:

Presses universitaires de France 2013).

[13] For the reductive effect of thinking of peace as just the opposite of, or absence of war, see Morgan (2013a, 10-11). For binary thinking as itself a form of violence, see Lederach (2005, 35): "Cycles of violence are often driven by tenacious requirements to reduce complex history into dualistic polarities that attempt to both describe and contain reality in artificial ways".

[14] Milcho Manchevski's film « Before the Rain » (1994), that depicted the Yugoslavian war, was criticised for exactly this type of fatalistic representation of time. According to R. Salecl «Balkan » culture was portrayed as an ultimately inescapable repetition of the same acts of interethnic violence, see her "See No Evil, Speak No Evil: Hate Speech and Human Rights" in Radical Evil ed. J. Copjec (London: Verso, 1996, 158-161).

[15] See P. Virilio Bunker archéologie (Paris: Les éditions du Demi-Cercle, 1991).
I suggest that Virilio's appraisal of the Atlantic bunkers was "bold" because at the time- and maybe still now- they simply represented enemy occupation to the French public. They were not generally perceived to be worthy of any sort of critical redemption, but rather were thought just fit for dynamiting.

[16] P. Virilio & C. Parent Architecture principe 1966 et 1996 (Besançon: Les éditions de l'imprimeur, 1996).

[17] For an account of the scandal that arose around the project, see C. Joly, C. Parent & P. Virilio Eglise Sainte-Bernadette à Nevers (Paris: Jean-Michel Place éditions, 2004, 4-6).

[18] Parent explains the challenging dynamism of the "oblique function" in the following passage: "The oblique function is the ARCHITECTURE OF EFFORT that wakes up and catalyses the human. It is the opposite of the enervating comfort that puts him to sleep and leads his mind to its death. A place for living in has to be listened to, looked at, touched ; it is to be invested in. It affrontingly lifts itself up [*s'enlève à l'assaut*] like an ancient fortified site» (C. Parent *Vivre à l'oblique* Paris: Jean-Michel Place éditions, 2004, 47 capitals in original). I note the appropriation and reinscription (for «utopian » ends) of military terminology in this passage.

[19] Indicative of the advertisements of that time was that of the cigarette manufacturers "West". They seized the opportunity to proclaim "West is best!" as a corroboration of the superior quality, not only of their product, but also of the whole capitalist way of life.

[20] For instance, Kant thought the aesthetic judgement that "this is beautiful, isn't it?" was a disarmed (his term is "disinterested") and hopefully disarming, but nevertheless still risky, gesture toward others. We are "suitors for the agreement of everyone else" (I. Kant The

Critique of Judgement trans. J. C. Meredith, Oxford: Oxford U.P. 1998).

1998, 82). We venture to propose our aesthetic judgment as being universally valid. Indeed the aesthetic judgment, as it is not governed by concepts or determined by principles, is an adventure which boldly proposes to 'move' us from the realm of the subjective to that of the universal with little to guide us. It is this liberation from our usual egotistical, instrumentalising aims and objectives that opens up a utopian potential for the aesthetic experience. For the aesthetic object as belonging to a different space from that of the "noisy market place" with its bought and sold commodities, see F. Schiller On the Aesthetic Education of Man trans. E. Wilkinson & L. Willoughby Oxford: Oxford U.P. at Clarendon Press 1982,7) and L. Hyde The Gift: How the Creative Spirit Creates the World (Edinburgh/N.Y.: Canongate:1983).

[21] The Kegelturm is part of the Urban Spree project. Here 1700m2 of disused railway land has been given over to art and urban culture. Some say it is one of few remaining bastions of alternative re-creation in the redesigned city.

[22] J. Huizinga Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play- Element in Culture (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1970). Written in 1938, during « dark times », Huizinga had every reason to question the primacy of « culture» and the definition of humans as homo sapiens.

[23] To be more precise, Huizinga stresses that it is the very « superfluity » of play, its « disinterestedness », that makes it essential (Huizinga 1970, 27). Kant and Schiller would agree. See, for instance, Kant on «the purposiveness without purpose » of aesthetic judgment, the « free play of the powers of representation » and its fragility (Kant 1998 op cit; 62 & 88-9). See Schiller (1982 op cit, 97- 109) for whom one is « only fully a human being when he plays ».

[24] See Benjamin (2002, 111, 117, 127-8) where film is presented as the medium that gives the greatest range to "play-space" with its double functionality. For critical engagements with Benjamin's « gamble with cinema », see M. Hansen "Room-for-play: Benjamin's Gamble with Cinema" in October Vol 109 Summer 2004, 3-45; D. Morgan Spielraum et Greifbarkeit: Un acheminement vers une architecture utopique" in Spielraum: W. Benjamin et l'architecture ed. L. Andreotti, (Paris: Editions de la Villette 2011, 291-304); D. Morgan "The Distractions of the Built Environment: Architecture as a Collective Work of Art" in Interculture (online journal) ed. P. Allmer & J. Sears issue "Reconsidering Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction" Reconsidered" (2008). However, unlike Hansen, I shift the utopian potentiality of play-space away from film towards architecture, hence my interest

in bunker conversions.

[25] The Herzogenriedpark also features Frei Otto's fantastic wooden grid-shell Multihalle (1971).Otto's light-weight structures (such as the Olympic Stadium Münich (1972) stand, along with the work of Buckminster Fuller and Santiago Calatrava, as prime examples of optimised « organic architecture ». Light-weight structures do more with less. This approach to construction has critical and even « utopian »potential in accelerated consumerist times such as ours.

[26] Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1991).

[27] To return to the « siege mentality » as depicted in the film « The Croods » (see footnote 3 above), the child risks becoming an « empty fortress » according to Bettelheim (1967) if they feel constantly under threat.

[28] From 1967-1986 over 700, 000 bunkers were built in Albania under Enver Hoxha (1908-1985). The hard-line Stalinist Hoxha started breaking off relations with the "lax" Khrushchev as from 1956 and his break with China occurred in 1978 after Tito's visit there the previous year. Hoxha regarded "the great honours" bestowed upon Tito in Pekin to be "height of infamy". He considered the Chinese regime to be "downright revisionists who prostrate themselves infront of Tito" (Hoxha cited by T. Schreiber Enver Hodja: Le sultan rouge Mesnil-sur-l'Estrée Editions: Jean-Calude Lattès, 1994, 216 my translation). Hoxha's policy of bunkerisation was a sign of his increasing paranoia and ill health, Albania's diplomatic isolation and the population's suffering under totalitarian rule. Although in recent years, these bunkers are becoming increasingly less evident, sufficient survive for them to feature as a distinctive national characteristic. Depending on their location, they are used as monuments, shelters, housing for sheep, goats or humans, storage spaces, bars or (see illustrations), as beach huts and playground equipment.

[29] Of course Freud then goes onto complicate his analysis : the « pleasure principle » turns into the « death drive » with its demonic « compulsion to repeat » in S. Freud "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" in On Metapsychology Pelican Freud Library Vol. 11 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books 1984, 311-312).

[30] Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project trans. H. Eiland & K. McLaughlin, (Cambridge Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard U.P., 1999).

[31] D. W. Winnicott, Playing and Reality (London & New York Tavistock/ Routledge: 1991).

[32] Injecting the ludic, in the form of humour, into sites of terror might have its limits. For me

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the line was crossed with Roberto Benigni's « Life is Beautiful » (1997). This so-called a « comedy » about life in a concentration camp, a fiction staged in order to protect a child from trauma, maybe went too far.

[33] Y. Lacoste, La géographie*, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre* (Paris: La découverte, 2012).

[34] However, there are no guaranteed forms of resistance to be used as tried-and-tested recipes for a successful outcome. Even the most radical forms of cultural expression- such as Situationism's reconfiguration of the city into varied psychogeographical ambiances and their dérives ; Deleuze and Guattari analyses of smooth and striated spaces and rhizomatic growth- can be co-opted by powerful state apparatuses. See E. Weizmann A travers les murs: *l'architecture de la nouvelle guerre* urbaine Paris: La fabrique, 2013 43-46, 65-69) for how the OTRI were not only inspired by precisely these ideas, but how they explicitly put these ideas to use in their military practice. For an excellent collection of essays and artworks on how space is reconfigured through changing technologies of warfare, and for references to Lacoste and Weizman's writings (op cit), see Topologies de la guerre Exhibition catalogue, text J-Y Jounnais, Paris: LE BAL/ Steidl 2011).

[35] For a different form of mural transgression, one that nevertheless has petrifying consequences for the individual concerned, see Marcel Aymé, Le passe-muraille (Paris: Folio Gallimard, 2013).

[36] The binary distinctions drawn between the inside(r)/ outside(r), friend/enemy are evidently constituted through boundaries. See endnote 13 above for Lederach's critique of binary thinking and its repercussions for peacebuilding and all of Virilio's work on war and technology.

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