ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL

A TWOFOLD ACT OF LOCATING FROM A CRITICAL DISTANCE: A REVISIT TO CONSTANT'S NEW BABYLON

Ph.D. THESIS

Ali DUR

Department of Architecture

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KRİTİK BİR MESAFEDEN İKİLİ BİR YER-BULMA EYLEMİ: CONSTANT'IN YENİ BABİL'İ ÜZERİNE YENİ BİR OKUMA

DOKTORA TEZİ

Ali DUR
(502122001)

Mimarlık Anabilim Dalı

Mimari Tasarım Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Arzu ERDEM

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Ali DUR, a Ph.D. student of İTU Graduate School student ID 502122001, successfully defended the thesis/dissertation entitled "A TWOFOLD ACT OF LOCATING FROM A CRITICAL DISTANCE: A REVISIT TO CONSTANT'S NEW BABYLON", which he prepared after fulfilling the requirements specified in the associated legislations, before the jury whose signatures are below.

Thesis Advisor : **Prof. Dr. Arzu ERDEM** .....
İstanbul Technical University

Jury Members : **Prof. Dr. Zeynep KUBAN TOKGÖZ** .....
İstanbul Technical University

Prof. Dr. Arda İNCEOĞLU .....
MEF University

Prof. Dr. Nurbin PAKER KAHVECİOĞLU .....
İstanbul Technical University

Prof. Dr. İpek AKPINAR AKSUGÜR .....
İzmir Institute of Technology

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To days, airports, and to My Dad,

FOREWORD

Solitary most seen are, no journey is really ever completed just by oneself. I consider myself lucky, as I should, having encountered many precious individuals upon my path – alongside words, ideas, things and places nurtured me on this lengthy academic adventure. Offering me guidance, excitement, hope and pathways when in need, I'd like to thank in advance to all those individuals and non-individuals, whether or not their names are mentioned here.

First, a heartfelt and special thanks to my advisor Prof. Arzu ERDEM, who has been able to accommodate me as a mostly-disoriented student, blessed me with her endless wisdom, intellect and positivity throughout this journey. I am sincerely proud of what I've been able to accomplish beside her, this work and many others; and that I can call her a lifelong mentor, a dearest colleague and a close friend after all these years. I also wish to thank Prof. Zeynep KUBAN TOKGÖZ and Prof. Arda İNCEOĞLU, who have been in my life for a great deal, for offering their insight, expertise and patience – given my peculiar desire to do everything by myself. Lastly, much gratitude to Prof. Nurbin PAKER KAHVECİOĞLU and Prof. İpek AKPINAR AKSUGÜR for their time and critical contributions for the finalization of this thesis. It's a blessing to be alongside and in front of these people, whatever the reason might be.

In the larger journey that is not only academic but also professional in the sense of my architectural thinking and practice, I'd like to thank Prof. Ferhan YÜREKLİ, along with many of my other educators at İTU, for showing me that our discipline, first and foremost, is an intellectual venture besides making buildings. On the other side of the ocean, I've as well been lucky having worked close with other precious people like Diana AGREST, Lebbeus WOODS and David TURNBULL at The Cooper Union, who all widened my understanding of architecture, drawing and research in general. Both Diana and Lebbeus, may he rest in peace, introduced me to the unseen ways and potentials of architecture as a discursive medium on its own, for reaching and understanding the world at large; while David has been much influential in showing me how our discipline is already connected to many other domains and can be found within the stories outside of it, being both very particular and worldly at once.

Finally, I'd like to offer my heartfelt thanks and salutations to dearest McKenzie WARK, who had taken me as an accomplice in his recent journeys towards the legacy of Situationists and Constant back in New York, while allowing me to pursue one of my own almost a decade ago. Nothing in these pages would come to being without that special project, a revisit to Constant's dream in a medium and continent it had never been – where we've been bestowed with the puzzling but much-rewarding task of tracing his acts, words and spaces in the most uncommon places half-a-century later. I'd like to dedicate this work to McKenzie and to our collaboration, both for unknowingly offering the inceptive grounds of this thesis and meanwhile showing me what academic writing would look and feel like when it's both informative, engaging

and still personal. Additionally, I wish to thank to Carl SKELTON of NYU-Poly at Brooklyn, who had introduced me to McKenzie, supported this idea and opened up a place for a “New New Babylon” in his digital New York City raised in the Betaville platform. They both are, in a great sense, my partners and accomplices in this academic work, too.

I’d further like to thank all my friends, loved ones and my dear family, who have been nothing but supportive in this intrinsically-long and solitary journey. I am grateful for your patience, company and understanding – whenever I was not around, lost in thought or too busy with words on my desk late at night.

On a final note, given what I’ve academically troubled myself with, I wish to thank to all those revolutionaries and dissidents from another century, for welcoming me to their daily adventures, dreams and exhilarating memories. Those who were able to forge a critical theory out of a critical practice, and vice versa, and who expected nothing but life from the life itself. Thank you for allowing me to glimpse another world within the existing one, and to pursue your premises both academically and in person in the midst of my own reality. I only hope that I’ve been able to resume your life-centered agenda and conflict to some extent – providing the necessary *décors* as you’ve put it, and the adequate eagerness for those who wish to follow these faint traces and still believe in an alternative reality.

Here, I merely consider myself lucky for being introduced to this hidden world and its assuring fables, if only visible in certain moments and enigmatic visuals. A world, however momentary it might seem, in which even the slightest chance of dreaming other possibilities and engaging in a critical instance where the world might look different would redeem its recuperation and the time I’ve spent amidst these fleeting memories.

And, thank you Constant, for allowing me to be another Babylonian in numerous moments and almost 60 years later; offering me an intellectual ground and an academic life filled with daring connections, new meanings and excitement. It was the very world worth being lost in – if there ever was one.

It still is. New Babylon ends nowhere. No destination is final.

November 2023

Ali DUR
(Architect, MArch II)

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SUMMARY

This work revisits and tries to recuperate a particular project, holding a significant place in recent architectural history and our imaginary repositories, New Babylon of Constant, completed between the years of 1958 and 1974. Besides other particularities vested in its making and reception, that significance can be traced in the unconventionally-long lifespan of the project, taking many forms and guises throughout its nearly two-decade long journey. While being eager to know the reasons behind its rather extensive lifetime, the thesis finds the grounds for its significance in its often-claimed timelessness and possible afterlives; that it could still be a relevant and valid entity of reference – not only for the current architectural discourse but the world at large in this present timespan.

Besides these claims and prospects, often asserted by its maker, the reasons for choosing this work in the scope a fairly-large academic endeavor were to be found in an earlier engagement with project, which involves the author and his first ever critical sights of Constant's work in line with these prospects. This separate study, nearly a year prior to the thesis' official commencement, attempts to revisit New Babylon's remains and particular spaces, which is often seen as a planet-sized planning scheme filled with mysterious interiors. Venturing for a digital remake in a timespan and medium foreign to its provenances, this endeavor later revealed to be more than a simple remake of certain architectures – as much as the original project entailed much more, and, at times, seemingly lesser than a planning proposal or some eccentric physicalities.

As mostly seen in its rather worded remains and in the firsthand enactments of its makers, what this attempt essentially entailed was a remake of certain mentality and practice, as much as unearthing and performing them in person – a hidden set of traits, lacking any physical form whatsoever by nature, which later revealed to be the most central crux of Constant's legacy. Seemingly, such mentality was also responsible for those architectures and their ever-changing appearances in a fairly-long period; and grounded New Babylon's timeless pretenses that could make it relevant and instrumental as a referential locale to revisit and rediscover today.

Upon these findings and critical sights acquired, courtesy of a digital remake project and the accompanying research; the author inclines to look at these peculiarities deeper and in a larger scope – forming a thesis study, along with a central hypothesis, based on these claims and partially-illustrated potentials. So, the first objective of this study reveals as to unravel these facets of the project and to examine such open-ended, nomadic and so-called instrumental premises on an expanded field – by looking at several sources and entanglements recorded in several histories.

As with this main agenda, there forms another one linked to another complementary hypothesis – which claims that there might be ways and a provisional set of protocols to utilize these potentials for a critical reading of the present timeline. In all of its parts and at its beginnings, this thesis sets out to find the appropriate methods and vantages to read and recuperate this legacy – where it can be revealed as the open-ended seeing-device as it was supposed to be. For its ends, it seeks out to test these claims, through the agency of its interconnected objectives all centered around New Babylon – where a firsthand utilization of this legacy would at the same time require and then contribute to its extended recuperation at large.

Looking for ways and appropriate places to both understand and utilize this project, the thesis chooses a two-phased remembrance as a certain, twofold methodology for its recuperative operations. At the first one, the project is revisited mostly in its own native provinces and accounts in a sort of reversed historiography – cuing from the most recent entanglement that involves the author and first critical sights of New Babylon, then moving back to its official lifetime and further back to its cultural backdrop. It involves a rather outsider and mostly objective reading, where the main purpose is to assemble a theoretical framework around Constant's own craft and its instrumentality. There, while acquiring multiple appropriations and appearances to its part, the project regains its most instrumental and mentality-oriented spirit; becoming an eccentric story without a certain end but one with certain instructions to prolong its lines; mostly resembling its plot in the very ways it was told to its audience.

In the second phase, based on this rather voluntary recollection and critical sights of the project, New Babylon is revisited in rather involuntary and fragmented instances, courtesy of Proustian memory – in which it reappears in the author's own space of memory in relation to other theoretical sources, and also to the current present setting. During the former couplings, it is grasped and assessed as a certain kind of theoretical instrument amongst other similar ones that are mainly used for procuring new meanings – based on the concept of seeing existing things in the light of another alternative. Later, also using such rudimentary protocols to enact such instruments, another revisit takes place in the form of a series of timely alignments with Constant's remains – whether to see it might actually help us finding novel sights of what's already existent.

Here, our objectives are again twofold; where we both revisit the current world and that of Constant – aligning and moving between interconnected parts – based on the same concept of nearing with seemingly-impossible places and looking at things in a double scheme. In the scope of our intertwined agendas, where we employ New Babylon also as a way to expand it, and vice versa; we simultaneously procure new readings of both New Babylon and the present during this second remembrance – looking at one side from the gloss of the other. Here, some of the key concepts and theoretical models introduced at the beginning of the thesis, such as critical alignments and utopian projections, are further expanded and utilized as a referential framework – both as to understand these imaginary spaces reserved for meaning production, as well as to expand New Babylon's instrumentality upon those lines.

In line with the concept of constellations and acquiring new vantages in revisiting a complex legacy as this, the reading positions throughout the thesis are presented as ever-changing and intertwined. That is, in both parts of our remembrance and recuperation, we constantly switch our sources – between the outsider readings and rather personal engagements with the project – based on what reveals in each position.

On this course, in a cloud-like structure that is ever-enlarging around Constant's work, we move from one fresh vantage to the next, according to what reveals and is added to the possible meanings of New Babylon – extending our readings on both accounts and in an intertwined scheme. And that's another connotation of a twofold methodology – proposed as a certain way reading and understanding what New Babylon was and further could be.

For our conclusions, examining our findings in both parts and collating those seen from both of our positions throughout; we were able prove that New Babylon lived up its timeless, open-ended prospects – offering fresh sights and critical readings in the midst of a far and foreign timespan. In its particular place in utopian projections and their constructive purposes, it availed many alignments, albeit and particularly in fragments – those appearing in relation to one's everyday present. The varying instances and contents of alignments also support its rather conceptual prospects that exceed the formalities and limits of architecture – where we able to expound on several subjects like our technologies, creative habits and social practices. Additionally, considering the particular conditions of the present chosen by the author, such faraway stories and seemingly-impossible places become most visible and effective in a reality that is already transforming in rapid and often-fragmented instances – given the variety and scope of alignments we were able to conjure in the first few weeks of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

At the end, the reasons for such instrumentality and still-recurring appearances were found to exist not only in what the thesis accomplished in its final revisit and firsthand enactment; but, as well as in the very particular structure and crux the project entailed and were built upon. Namely, these entail the project's very own mentality and two-world-aligning protocols resided in its own making, bridging what's existent with the further possible that could be derived from it. Given what we've recuperated of New Babylon, such mentality was at once used by its maker to create the necessary atmospheres for its delegation to his audience; and as the firsthand illustration of its true potentials – which makes his world, or any other version by others, all but a possible reality: Another alternative, that could be derived from and within the existing – by the agency of this particular project capable and eager to show places beyond and other than itself.

In respect to the conclusions summarized above, in order to propose a methodology of sorts, however provisional, any visitor primarily needed to recuperate and recollect a certain memory of New Babylon's pieces and its essential mentality, so as to recuperate and utilize it further as an seeing-instrument – rather than seeing it a purely-architectural legacy. For most cases, given what the essential protocols of seeing and remembering deem them as personal endeavors, New Babylon was to live up to its claims and sights largely in the individual memories and vantages of its visitors, if only few in the scope of this work – appearing as a subjective entity from its native beginnings, during our recuperations and up to its final appropriation by the author.

For that, supporting our chosen methodology and subjective positions employed; our memory, with its most natural and particular operations, could be one appropriate medium and agency to recuperate and utilize Constant's legacy. It might just be one place where the project could be further remade and appropriated, and repeatedly and in differing sequences – taking multiple forms and instrumental roles in its open-ended crux. The role of memory here may further be explored on a larger scientific study.

KRİTİK BİR MESAFEDEN İKİLİ BİR YER-BULMA EYLEMİ: CONSTANT'IN YENİ BABİL'İ ÜZERİNE YENİ BİR OKUMA

ÖZET

Bu akademik çalışma, yakın dönem mimarlık tarihinde ve hayali yerlere dair belleğimizde önemli bir yer tutan Constant'ın Yeni Babil (New Babylon) projesini tekrardan ziyaret etmeyi ve O'nu yeniden ele alıp kullanılabilir hale getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kendi özgün yapısı ve ortaya çıkışındaki bir takım özel durumlar haricinde, söz konusu projenin kendine has nitelikleri, ilk bakışta alışılagelinenden uzun bir üretim süresine sahip olmasında ve yaklaşık yirmi senelik ömründe büründüğü çok sayıda form ve görüntüde bulunabilmektedir. Bu durumların sebeplerini bir yandan arayan tez, projeye atfettiği özel durumu temelde Yeni Babil'in kendi kaynaklarında sıkça dile getirilen zamansız potansiyelleri ve olası sonraki yaşamları üzerinde bulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda çalışma, Yeni Babil'in güncel mimari tartışmalar ve genel anlamda şimdiki zaman dilimi için halen geçerli ve değerli bir referans olabileceği savını araştırmaktadır.

Constant'ın kendisi tarafından da belirtilen bu iddia ve potansiyeller haricinde, bir doktora çalışması için bu projenin seçilmesinin bir sebebi de yazarın Yeni Babil ile bu çalışma öncesinde karşılaşmasını sağlayan başka bir araştırma projesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Tezin başlangıcından yaklaşık bir sene önce tamamlanan bu öncül çalışma, genel olarak içini gizemli mekanların doldurduğu gezegen ölçeğinde bir planlama önerisi olarak görülen projeyi, teze benzer bir şekilde, güncel bir bağlamda yeniden ziyaret etmeyi içermektedir. Söz konusu çalışmanın devamında ise, Yeni Babil'in orijinal mekanlarını ve mimari mirasını daha önce hiç bulunmadığı bir zaman dilimi ve mecrada tekrardan üretmeyi hedefleyen projenin, basit bir mimari üretim ve yeniden inşanın daha ötesinde bir takım süreç ve sonuçları içerdiği fark edilmiş; orijinal projenin kendisin de bir planlama ya da mekan önerisinin ötesinde, daha farklı ve özel bir anlatı önerdiği keşfedilmiştir.

Yeni Babil'in nazaran yazılı mirasının ve bu öncül projedeki bizatihi üretimlerin ışığında, Constant'ın projesinin ve O'nu yeniden üretmenin aslen bir mentalite ve zihinsel bir pratiği içerdiği; bu kısmen gizli, doğası gereği bir fiziksel formu gerektirmeyen niteliklerin projenin temel özü ve mirasını oluşturduğu saptanmıştır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, Yeni Babil'in kendine özgü mimarisinin ve de uzun bir süre zarfında sürekli görüntüleri değişen mekanlarının arkasında yatan temel fikir ve sebebin de bu öz olduğu; O'na dair tüm zamansızlık ve bugüne dair referans olabilme iddialarının da bu nazaran formsuz ve kavramsal niteliğine dayandığı iddia edilebilmektedir.

Tüm bu bulgular ve elde edilen yeni bakış açılarının izini süren tez, bu niteliklere ve özel durumlara daha derin ve geniş bir çerçevede bakmayı hedeflemekte; bu iddia ve kısmen keşfedilen potansiyellere dayanan bir hipotezi araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu manada, tezin temel hedefi Yeni Babil'in iddia edilen araçsal hallerini ortaya çıkarmak ve O'nun açık-uçlu, göçebe ve zamansız niteliklerini daha geniş bir zeminde, çeşitli zaman dilimlerinde bulunan farklı kaynak ve de ilişkilenmelerde araştırmak olarak özetlenebilir.

Bu ana hedefin yanında ise ikinci bir amaç daha belirmektedir. Gene genel hipoteze bağlanan ikinci bir savı da içeren bu diğer araştırma, Yeni Babil'i kavramsal bir araç olarak ele alabilmenin ve bugüne dair bir okumada kullanabilmenin olası yöntem ve örneklemelerinin izini sürmeyi ve görünür hale getirmeyi hedefler. Genel olarak çalışma, Yeni Babil'in açık-uçlu bir görme/okuma aracı olarak belirdiği an ve görüntüleri bulmayı ve de böylece Constant'ın mirasını, kendi anlatısı ve iddiasına uygun bir şekilde yeniden keşfetmeyi ve bu esnada O'na dair yeni ve daha güncel bir lokasyon bulmayı denemektedir.

Constant'ın projesini anlamak ve kullanılabilir hale getirmek adına uygun yerleri arayan tez, çalışmanın başlığına paralel şekilde, iki aşamalı bir ziyaret ve hatırlama sürecini benimsemektedir. İlk kısımda, proje çoğunlukla kendi zaman dilimi içerisinde, kendi bütünlüğü ile ve geriye doğru giden bir tarih akışında incelenmektedir. Buradaki okumalar, yazarın proje ile ilk ilişkilenmesinden yola çıkarak önce Constant'ın zaman dilimine ve oradan da kültürel arka planının yer aldığı dönemlere doğru ilerler. Bu bölümde nazaran daha dışarıdan ve objektif bir okuma tercih edilirken; temel amaç Yeni Babil'in araçsallığına dair teorik bir çerçeve ve arka plan çizmektir. Bu esnada proje çok sayıda çeşitli görüntü ve tahsisler edinirken, bir yandan daha araçsal ve düşünce-temelli, daha tekil bir öze bürünür. Yeni Babil burada, kendi değişken anlatımları ve çoğul hallerine de sebebiyet veren, tek ve nihai bir son içermekten ziyade anlatısının nasıl uzatılıp değiştirilebileceğine dair ipuçları içeren özel bir hikaye olarak karşımıza çıkar.

İkinci hatırlama kısmında ise, Yeni Babil hakkında oluşturulan bu çerçeve ve bilinçli hafıza üzerinden, proje daha istemsiz ve Proustian (tekrar-)hatırlamalar ve de parçalı görüntüler aracılığı ile okunur. Burada kaynak olarak yazarın hafızasında ortaya çıkan kendi zaman dilimindeki ilişkilenmeler ve farklı bilgi alanlarında karşısına çıkan Yeni Babil görüntüleri kullanılır. Bu görüntülerde, ilk olarak, Yeni Babil düşünsel bir araç olma niteliği üzerinden başka benzer araçlar ve alternatif gerçekliklerin ışığında mevcuta bakmak olarak özetlenebilecek düşünsel eylem alışkanlıkları arasında incelenir. Buradan öğrenilen bir takım temel protokol ve niteliklerin ışığında ise, başka ve son bir ziyaret daha gerçekleştirilir. Şimdiki zaman dilimini içeren bu nihai okumada, projenin araçsallığını ve zamansızlığını bizatihi test etmek amacıyla, Constant'ın anlatısı ile yazarın şimdiki zamanı arasında bir takım parçalı hizalanma ve anlık yakınlaşmalar kullanılır.

Bu ikili okumalar ve iki dünya arasında kurulan bağlar esnasında gene tezin hedef ve ilişkili yönteminin ikili bir yapıya sahip olduğu görülebilmektedir. Öncelikle, mevcuda başka bir uzak alternatifin ışığında bakma eylemine uygun şekilde, hem Yeni Babil hem de şimdiki zaman dilimi aynı süreçte birbiri üzerinden okunarak, iki düzleme dair yeni anlam ve perspektifler edinilmiştir. Bir yandan da tezin ilişkili hipotezlerine uygun şekilde, Yeni Babil'i farklı bir şekilde okuyabilmek ve O'na dair yeni anlamlar üretmek adına proje araçsallaştırılmış ve aynı anda şimdiki mevcuda dair yeni bakış açıları sunabilme potansiyelleri denenmiştir. Bu esnada ütopyalar ve kritik hizalanmalar gibi tezin girişinde sunulan anahtar kavramlar daha geniş bir şekilde incelenmiş; hem ikili karşılaştırmalar üzerinden yeni anlamlar üretme hedefli düşünsel eylemlerin genel yapısı, hem de Yeni Babil'in bu bağlamda araçsal nitelikleri irdelenmiştir.

Başka bir anahtar kavram olan konstellasyon ve Constant'ın karmaşık mirasına dair yeni görüntüler etme gayesiyle şekillenen okumalarda, tezin anlatısında tercih ettiği temel pozisyonlar sürekli yer değiştiren ancak birbiriyle örülmüş birer kanal/şerit şeklinde yer almaktadır. Okumaların iki aşamasında da yazarın Yeni Babil'e göre aldığı pozisyon ve yakınlık sürekli değişmekte; her yeni karşılaşma ve görüntüde ortaya çıkanların ışığında kaynaklar da (dışarıdan/nesnel ve içinden/öznel) farklılaşmaktadır. Bunun sonucunda Constant'ın projesinin etrafında buluta benzer bir yapı oluşurken; bu bulutun içerisinde her bir yeni okuma ve görüntü ertesinde yapılan yolculuklar ve karşılaşmalar ile Yeni Babil'e dair olası yeni anlamlar çoğalmaktadır. Bu da gene tezin kendine has ikili yapısının başka bir yansıması olarak, Yeni Babil'in ne olduğunun ve de başka ne olabileceğinin araştırmasında kullanılmaktadır.

Araştırmanın çıktıları incelendiğinde, hem iki aşamada gerçekleşen okumaların içeriği hem de karşılaştırmalarına bakılacak olursa, Yeni Babil'in genel anlamda iddia edilen zamansız ve açık-uçlu potansiyellerini ortaya çıkarabildiği; uzak ve de kendine yabancı bir zaman diliminde yeni bakış açıları ve okumalar sunabildiği görülmüştür. Ütopyalar ve onların nazaran yapıcı işlevleri açısından bakıldığında, her ne kadar parçalı bir yapıda ve sekanslar halinde olsa da, projenin yazarın şimdiki zaman diliminde çeşitli hizalanmalara ve yeni okumalara izin verdiği saptanmıştır. Bu hizalanmalar esnasında ortaya çıkan bazı teknolojiler, yaratıcı ve sosyal pratikler gibi konu ve tartışmalar göz önüne alındığında ise, projenin salt mimari anlatısının ve genel anlamda mimarlık disiplininin dışına taşan, daha kavramsal ve yaşantı odaklı özü görünür hale gelmektedir. Ayrıca, yazarın son ziyaretinde tercih ettiği özel zaman dilimine bakıldığında, Yeni Babil gibi uzak ve ütopik anlatıların daha çok pandemi gibi çok hızlı ve parçalı dünyevi değişimlerin yaşandığı süreçlerde belirginleştiği ve işlevsel olduğu görülmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, Yeni Babil'in bu işlevselliğinin ve görünür hale geldiği anların yalnızca yazarın son ziyaretindeki bulguların içerisinde belirginleşmediği; buna sebebiyet veren niteliklerin bir yandan projenin kendi özel yapısı, kendi zaman dilimiyle kurduğu ilişkiler ve de bu esnada kullandığı ve de örneklediği, mevcudun içerisinde başka olasılıkları görünür kılabilen özel düşünce pratiği olduğu söylenebilir. Aynı niteliklerin, hem bu pratiği görünür kılmak adına hem de başkalarına aktarmak için oluşturduğu geçici atmosferlerde de Constant tarafından bizzat kullanıldığı görülmektedir. Projeye dair bir özet ve esas bir özü oluşturan bu nitelikler, yani bu düşünsel pratik ve onun bizzat örneklenmesi, kendi projesinin ya da başka bir yorumlamanın esasında mümkün olduğu şeklinde açıklanabilir. Bu da, tam da Yeni Babil'in kendisi ve varlığı aracılığı ile, başka alternatiflerin mevcudun içerisinde ve onun içerisinden oluşabileceğini öğütlemekte; Yeni Babil'i de kendisinin nihai haline dair bir anlatıdan ziyade, O'ndan başka ve öte yer ve olasılıkları işaret eden düşünsel bir araç haline dönüştürmektedir.

Bu anlatının güncelliği ve tekrardan kullanılabilmesi adına bir değerlendirme yapacak olursak, projenin yeni anlamlar ve yeni yaşantılar kazanabilmesi için, inceleyen kişilerin Yeni Babil'e dair belli oranda bir hafızaya sahip olması ve O'nu salt bir mimari mirastan öte düşünsel anlatısı ve nitelikleriyle de okunması gerektiği söylenebilir. Bunun yanı sıra, tezin belirli bölümlerde incelediği hafıza ve ilişkisel anlam üretme süreçleri göz önüne alındığında, Yeni Babil'in belli ölçüde kendi işlevselliğine ve kavramsal anlatısına öznel bakış açıları ve doğası gereği öznel olan hafızada ulaştığı iddia edilebilmektedir. Bununla ilgili genel ve tamamen bilimsel bir

önerme henüz yapılamazken; Yeni Babil'in denk gelinen görüntü ve okumalarda, hem kendi başlangıcı hem de son yapılan ziyaret esnasında da görüldüğü gibi, esasen öznel bir anlatı olduğu öne sürülebilir.

Son bir önermede ise, tezin yöntem ve tercih ettiği öznel pozisyonları da destekler şekilde, hafızanın kendine has süreçleri ve yapısı ile Constant'ın mirasını kullanılır hale getirmek için uygun bir yer teşkil ettiği iddia edilebilir. Burada, tam da yaratıcısının öğütlediği ve arzuladığı gibi, Yeni Babil tekrardan üretilebilir ve farklı tahsislere uğrayabilir; sürekli ve değişken sekans ve de parçalar eşliğinde yeni anlatılara, tartışmalara ve formlara bürünebilir. Hafızanın buradaki rolü ise daha kapsamlı bir bilimsel araştırmada incelenebilir.

1. INTRODUCTION

> Think of the long trip home.
>
> Should we have stayed at home and thought of here?
>
> Where should we be today?
>
> Is it right to be watching strangers in a play
>
> in this strangest of theatres?
>
> What childishness is it that while there's a breath of life
>
> in our bodies, we are determined to rush
>
> to see the sun the other way around? [1, p. 40]

Whenever there is a connection, you start to move. Or, as in Paul Auster's words in *The Book of Memory* [2], a long-time personal mentor of a written kind with some hundred pages, one is tempted to look for a meaning in a connection. Yet, for him, such excursive endeavor unfolds as a despairing effort to construct a dreamworld inside the territory of the real things, amongst the things that are actually there. He might actually be right, much up to the point where one needs to acknowledge the presence of the connection and all that is beyond would be man-made fiction. Nevertheless, he was to say what he saw for that was a way of occupying the world he lived in [2]. For such imaginary constructions offered him a way of being present amid those that are real – happened or existed.

This, in fact, might be true concerning the nature of most PhD studies, a form of well-narrated and rationally-assembled set of meanings with ties to many connections and several stories, and, in some cases, to some dreamworlds and their respective dreamers. After all, it was more the stories that the world is made of than the atoms, according to the poet Muriel Rukeyser [3]; while the very crux of reality and of understanding it are rooted in dreams, as once voiced by Buckminster Fuller [4,5], a man responsible for many real things as much as of absolute imagination. So that, such an academic study, as with ours, would merely be a more structured record of our very worldliness.

It is a scholarly kind but equally pensive and equally made of dream-matter – being compiled within a world of many stories, apparent or loose connections, and yet of frequent meaninglessness to its part [6]. And to recall Auster again, such attempt would, then, be of an imaginary construction as any other would [2].

For our own imaginary opus, it is about drawing a proposal for making meanings at large and further – with some expansive and discursive intentions reserved at its heart. And, in some of its parts and for some of its ends, it is about charting an imaginary map so to say, or gathering several valid pieces of it firsthand – a travel guide that meanders around several connections, in search of new places to look at certain things in the real world.

The roots and the central agency of our connections, and of further meanings and vantages possible, are to be found not in the present but in a certain past – one that never entirely realized. One can also think of it not really as a past, since it's not lived in the sense of an actual era or timeline, other some arguably small portions and several fleeting instances. So, it also and still consists of a future yet-to-be-lived, and a long-past kind seemingly, lingering amidst our present and in the long history of futures never really arrived but perhaps once glimpsed at, if only by few.

As one of these few, Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys[1], an artist-turned-to-architect, made this future into an entire and fairly-detailed project – crafting drawings, maps, models and paintings for nearly two decades. It had its own people, places, stories, arguments and possibilities worked out with the same carefulness and detail. Shown, watched, heard and read; and amazed, baffled and challenged those who did encounter it; the project had spent its lifetime to make sure that it is seen and discussed by a little more than the few. Regarless of how many had seen it, or believed its prospects and possibilty, the project is well-documented and stored with its countless material in several archives – still open to those wish to revisit after nearly 60 years. The name of this still-lingering future, or this long-forgotten dreamworld, is called New Babylon[2].

---

[1] Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys (1920-2005), widely known as Constant and often referred as such in the thesis, was a Dutch artist with a career commencing in painting, who later became a self-proclaimed architect. He was mostly known for his utopian project, New Babylon, which he worked on for nearly two decades [7,8].

[2] In the notes of Mark Wigley [9], it is told that Guy Debord, a prominent member and founder of a group of avantgarde-artists, the Situationist International, with which Constant had been involved during the early stages of New Babylon, gave the project its official name.

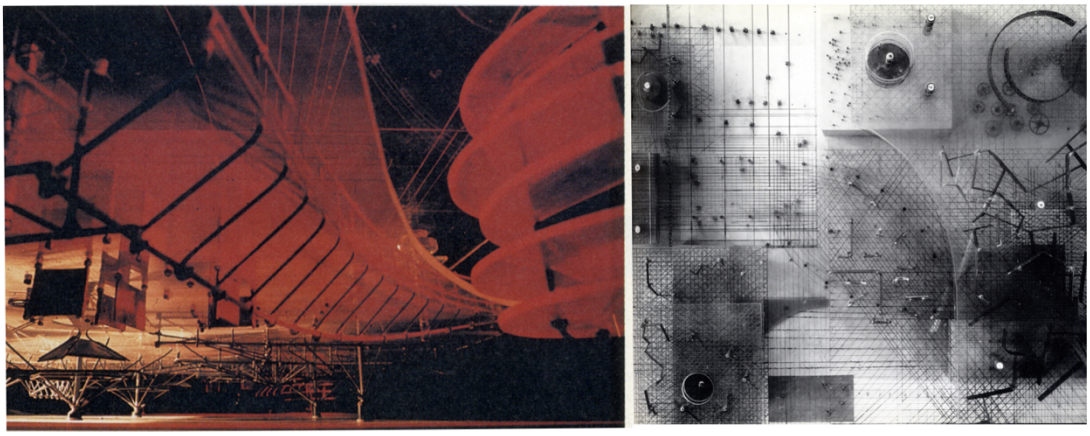

Figure 1.1 : Various images of New Babylon [9].

What this dreamworld entailed, although to be assesed in these pages at greater extents, seemed mostly as a depiction of a different, mysterious environment much different from the reality it was set in – as much as it was from our own. It comprised a certain architecture, furnished with countless and ever-linked interiors and huge chunks of planes raised above ground, reminiscent of movie sets, also linked across continents around the globe [9]. In these seemingly-endless interiors, another type of user and society were set in – taking place both in the construction of these environments and discovering them all the same time as a certain form of lifestyle [8,9]. A new society and a culture coupled with its new architecture, infrastructure and deeds; an alternative reality to our conscience presented in many forms, storylines and in many occasions to those who were eager to hear about places far, if not entirely impossible.

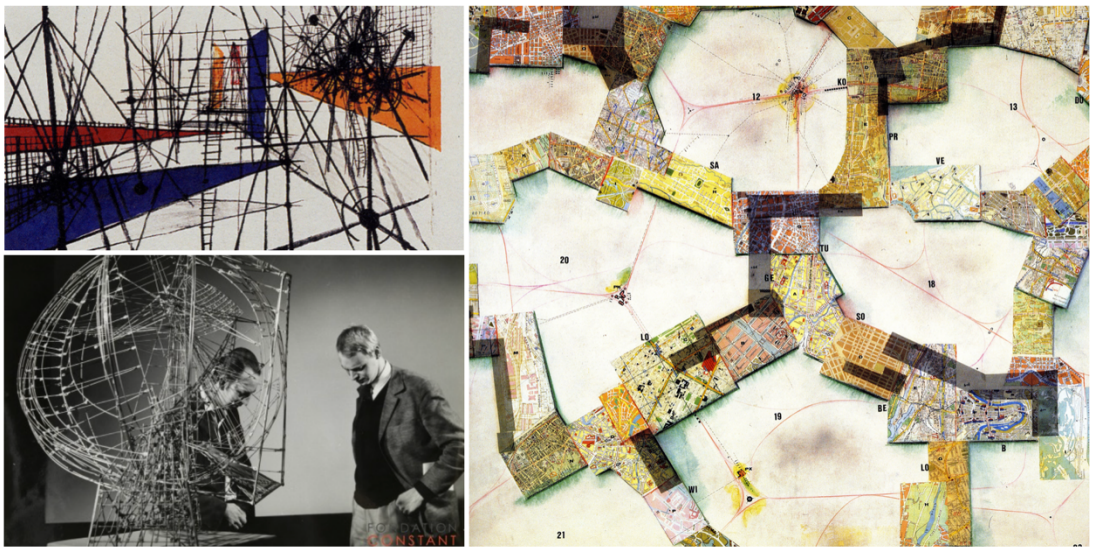

Figure 1.2 : New Babylon had acquired numerous versions, scales and mediums in its lifetime: paintings, models, maps, movies, collages, photography [9].

Here, our endeavor, with a similar eagerness and heed for dreamy constructs, sets out for seeking new meanings and further linkage of critical sorts by revisiting this central and eccentric entity of historical and disciplinary importance, along with and in the light of its own equally-eccentric premises. A revisit which involves both its inception and official lifetime, and also its possible afterlives – in today and future onwards, that is, where we expect to find more connections and further meanings.

One portion of our convenience, and of grounds for choosing New Babylon for an academic work as this, is vested in its very crux – an essence that is no less eccentric than its appearance and legacy. An essence that is not only hidden in its lengthy logs and does occasionally reveal in certain moments of its journey, but also becomes visible to any curious researcher, this author particularly, who happens to encounter it. And what one encounters, other than a collection of eccentric objects of architecture, a vast amount of published material and a peculiarly beautiful imagery, is a set of already-established connections and *bridges*, which appears to span between the parts of its own entity and those of its own present backdrop – that is, the existing reality of its time.

As for making maps for further connections and meanings concerning a rather recent present; it appears only natural to be inclined towards those inherent links and cues first. That is, as much as New Babylon could be read as a place with a map of its own and with a set of *bridges* carefully located in its own present reality; in order to forge another from its pieces, it initially needs our focus and a thorough scrutiny – looking at the ways in which it navigates its own terrain and charts its own connections between two realities. Only then, we could seek to locate our own connections and meanings – those that not only span from our reality to those of this entity, but to possibly towards other alternative realities still waiting to be charted.

In short, what we indulge ourselves is an endeavor not only interested its own *bridges* but also the philosophical and mental practice of constructing them, as much as it is about charting maps in the first place. And this is where we choose to look closely at a certain map charted in the previous century, the work of Constant Nieuwenhuys, navigating and bridging several realities at once – as mysterious and large it might appear to one's eyes. And, at the same time, it is where we also set out to chart a brand-new one – out of the pieces of this entity's remains, and critically by learning from the very practice of charting involved in its own making.

1.1 Objectives

This academic expedition here might unravel in several degrees and meanings. First, it is a structured attempt to remember things carefully, as well as to recuperate what's left from a comprehensive yet lingering past vision, or a utopia as deemed in the eyes of many [7,8]. It would also be an academic Sherlockian labor into what might be hidden alongside all visible and dazzling material and to locate what is to remember, and eventually what is to leave behind. At other brave moments, such endeavor will present itself on a courageous path following the steps of this visionary maker of alternative worlds, claiming to find and recuperate his true legacy, lingering in the piles of nearly twenty years of work.

For the course of recuperating and, if possible, fulfilling past legacies, such claim might sound partially subjective and even idealistic or heroic at one level. However, it still tends to be built upon certain links to what's already been available in the archives for decades. An ambition that appears to be plausible to attain, or at least is worth an attempt – for this visionary's own connections were carefully outlined and personally voiced numerous times in the same archives, stored beside and within his all broad dreams. It is where we see the connections most, thus where we start to move.

Anchoring itself onto those findings and a well-braced hypothesis on the navigational capacities and open-endedness of the work of Constant, as he is widely known in the field; the study-slash-journey unraveling here intends to find ways to better understand, and to better remember that dreamworld through those connections and potentials that it appears to possess – given the proper vantages. In another saying, our main objective, then, is to locate and compile these appropriate vantages, encounters and references to read and recuperate Consant's legacy, where it could be revealed as an open-ended, timeless navigational device, by looking at different sources and entanglements recorded in several histories.

So, as with understanding, remembering and thus with seeing, and through those appropriate angles that since might be missing or forgotten; the thesis also intends to enlarge and better employ this supposedly-timeless story in an expanded field of references and foreign timelines – cuing with the expansive and discursive motives mentioned at the onset.

Likewise, in regards to the opposite direction of our intended expedition towards this specific dreamworld; this study will attempt to draw a proposal not just to locate what was there and where in the timeline of Constant, but also to relocate ourselves in the present by using a past critically relocated – precisely as a particular episode of its understanding and expanding ventures. It is an attempt, then, to find newer meanings of New Babylon and of the present reality together – in an extended revisit reaches to the current timeline. In a way, and as a summation of our objectives, what these pages seek is a new theoretical framework on this legacy and such seminal work of architecture, to the possible extent of rendering it useful for the present setting and discourse.

As for this overall agenda, initially expressed in the somewhat simple premise of seeing things from new places and in depth, then it is not only about looking at whatever it is we are looking at, and our ways of looking, but also about what it might show us elsewhere – outside of New Babylon's official provenances and bit far from its own lifetime. And this makes another, if hidden, agenda sided beside the larger kind – yet practically utilized in the scope of the latter one. Simply put, one might further require to use an object in order to understand an object further – especially when the object is claimed to be more of an instrument than its sole self.

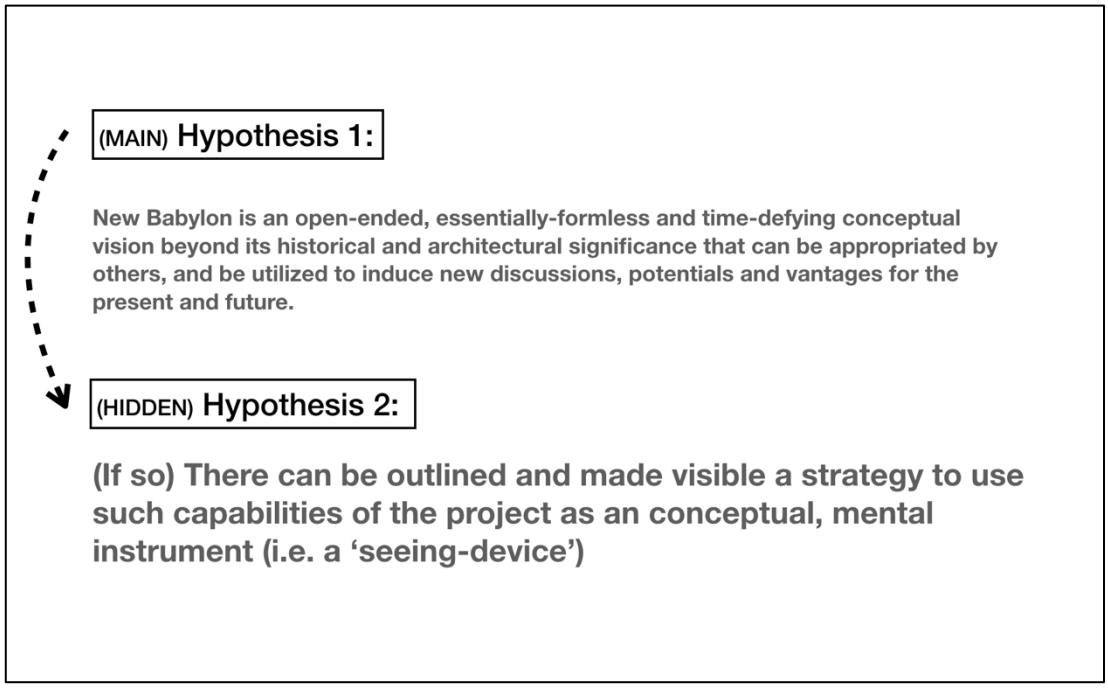

Figure 1.3 : An outline of the two interconnected hypotheses.

Respectively, this marks the twofold and locative agenda present on the main title, explaining our extended and preplanned revisit laid out in a double and cloud-like formation, where we employ different methods of readings and recuperations in a tightly-bound, interwoven scheme. In the premises of the hidden or secondary agenda, this mostly unravels as an act of systematic double relocation transpiring concurrently between two timelines or realities – namely, coupling our own with that of New Babylon. Making a considerable portion of our hypotheses and theoretical backdrop, it would be to say that a present critically read requires a critical past read in the same manner, and vice versa. As Auster exhibited and proclaimed several times in his memoirs [2], many things can be a gloss on many other things: Past over present, present over past.

In all, including its specific recuperative episodes and overall methodology, this academic work follows up on the premise of this particular legacy's timeless and open-ended cues and particular being, formulating a hypothesis both of its own and also one that is derived from its respective subject of interest: Whether New Babylon's own connections and *brigdes* would really assure others, and whether it entails more than its visible self and historical significance, and so it could really have an afterlife or possibly many.

More, in the case if it does, our pursuit on a second hypothesis concurrently investigates the ways by which one could really utilize this legacy, supposedly as a critical and nomadic seeing-device, to make meanings further and elsewhere – namely, some 60 years after its official conception and amidst a different present. That's why, while looking for ways to prove these claims, the thesis also seeks out the very instances and possible strategies to utilize New Babylon's claimed potentials by making them visible on the same course, if in a seperate but integrated agenda.

In all, it is a question of whether it could provide us another map in the end, however imaginary, or at least some rudimentary pieces of it – to be used in our own timespan and possibly for charting our own paths moving into the future. And it all speaks to, and therefore investigates, the hypothetical promises of New Babylon – a dreamy place constructed for the purpose of dreaming further places, a future drawn for the simple promise that other futures might as well be possible [9].

1.2 Limits and Contents

Like we've briefly mentioned, the interdependency of our two endeavors, an expansive voyage directed at the Babylonian stories and conjuring a timely and rather personal alignment with its remains, is first to be seen in the very structure where the latter serves as subpart of the former, grander program. Put simply, the latter is a distinct act, another particular form of recuperation, in which we utilize and expand New Babylon as a particular seeing-device in order to learn *from* it, which then essentially belongs in our expansive and discursive set of operations reserved for learning about New Babylon itself – and to test our main hypothesis focused on its potentials.

On the other hand, from a practical standpoint, in order to conjure a twofold reading upon what is being neared, it is almost imperative to have some acquaintance with the neared realm, the specific past of Constant, to some considerable extent – prior to any sort of coupling or nearing. So, in the other way around, what appears complementary and as a subpart of the first agenda then inherently requires what falls under the operations of its grander counterpart in turn. That the larger whole becomes an eminent requisite and a backdrop for its subsidiary portion at the same time.

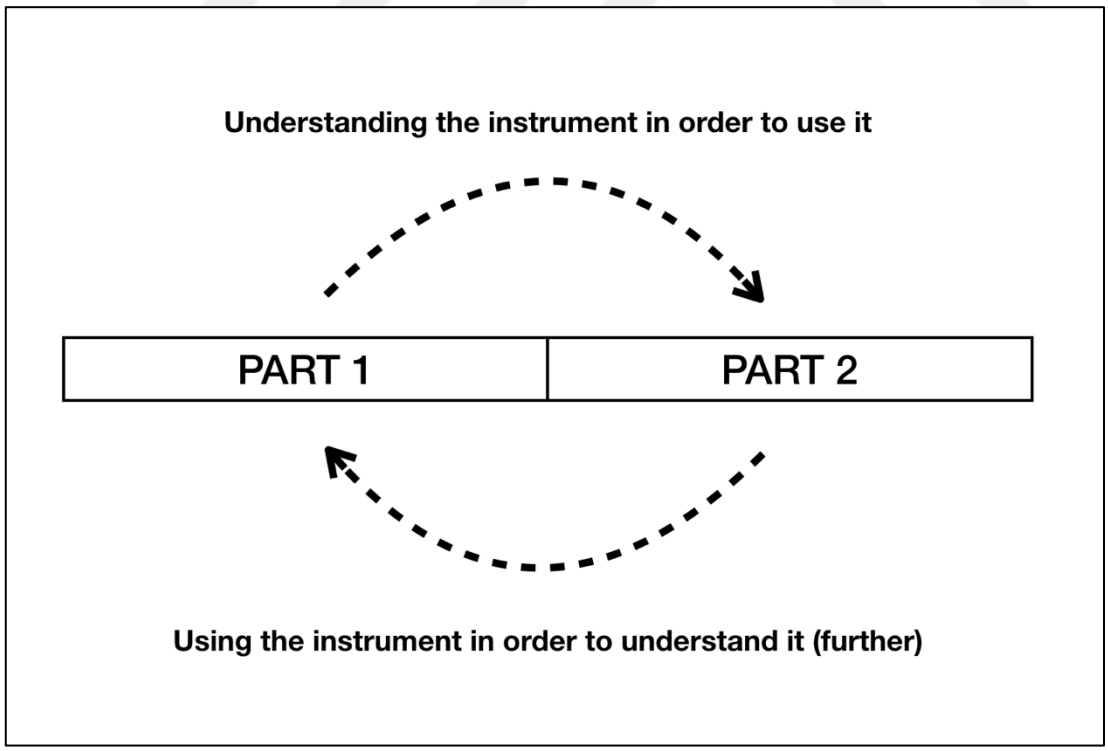

Figure 1.4 : The interdependency of two phases of remembering in line with the overall objective and interconnected hypotheses.

This partially-practical and preliminary glancing, due to our own claims about the project's instrumentality and to our inceptive cues, does also include unraveling of its most instrumental specs, and therefore our subsequent excavations centered upon such features of the project – bringing those facets into light amongst many other guises of New Babylon. That's also why that so-called alternative reading makes large parts the second segment, if not all – an understanding attempt succeeding the others and compiled upon what's been since understood.

At the end, for the inherently-connected agendas embedded in these pages, we would eventually, and hopefully, expand Constant's legacy through two distinct excursions and remembering models, seeing it from new places at each setting – and also in a way that expands it to a version of itself in which it transforms into a critical instrument suited for our otherwise hidden causes. Respectively, for the very crux of New Babylon, and the connections became visible during this study and the very incentives that gave rise to it, are to be founded upon its instrumentality and perceptive capabilities – then it appears much natural to use it for such discursive, twofold-seeing purposes in which we also tend to look outside of New Babylon through New Babylon.

So, there lies a secret program already embedded in the apparent and the larger. And not only for our journey here, but for Constant and his journey of nearly twenty years. A two-decade-long adventure of relentless production, critical thinking and building connections [7,9], courtesy of his own dreamworld and his ingenious dreaming, that leaves us with a rather complex legacy – a theoretical setting in which an agenda seems sort of secret or secondary for us actually appears to be the very rudimentary kind for what is being told and expanded in the very same pages. What to do with New Babylon, in short, is to be found in what actually New Babylon is – and, naturally, vice versa.

Later, as expected from a PhD work, the thesis would introduce its own reasoning and philosophical grounds for its foremost agenda, coupled with the ways, say the very methodology proposed and employed herein, to undertake it. As part of the introduction, which provides a summary of our intentions, basic concepts and cues; there is presented a partially-theoretical, partially-cultural framework pertaining to the existence and informative natures of such imaginary worlds, or such alternative and seemingly-far realities, along with the appropriate outlooks to perceive and make contact with them. These portions, aside from outlining the philosophical foundations

of a methodology, also do contribute to the thesis' own reasoning as well – in terms of its prospective goals and the choosing of its designated instrument.

For a summary, by highlighting their way-finding capabilities, transitional purposes and profound connections with our present world and timescape, this chapter would specifically illustrate why we might bother remembering New Babylon right now and aligning with it to inform our current existence – aside from it being a specific, alternative remembering or revisiting enactment. The reasoning, briefly, is explained both through the project's unique being and origins, and also through its affiliation with such far, imaginary worlds and stories, including utopian projections in general – and further braced with a critical glance into our cultural customs and incentives to revisit or recall these imaginary or impossible places from a wider and humanly standpoint.

After these reasoning, the thesis would expand on the methodology to carry out its intended recuperative and meaning-making endeavors. Here, a particular model and case listed in our literature study would be a central reference to follow – namely regarding the role of a previously-collected memory and some spontaneous encounters that trigger them to re-appear, which would also connect with several seminal models and partially-metaphorical terminology used in the thesis. Bit expectedly, the thesis formulates itself a highly similar method to enact its expansive reading – a procedure which consists of a two-phased remembrance.

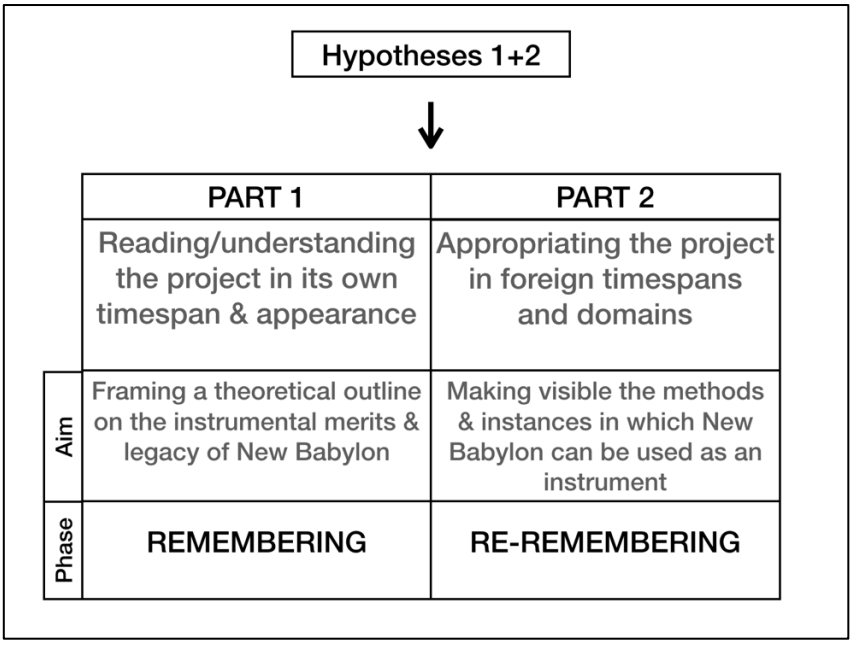

Figure 1.5 : A summary of two remembering phases (parts).

During the first of these phases, so it makes the first journey and the first lengthy text, in an intentionally-one-way revisitation, Constant's work and instrument (also that of thesis) is investigated in detail – with no intended linkage to our current reality and timespan. It is, again, where we only look towards one end of our inceptive connections following their earlier discovery. Here, as rather detailed under the section Methodology, our main source would be other scholars and key personas, both from Constant's timeline and later, who engaged with the project and at times appropriated it on their own terms. Roughly, this will cover a selected literature spanning from the project's own timespan and little before to more recent readings and critical takes shaped within this century.

By laying out its crux and foundations through different stories and timelines, this first chapter both offers a comprehensive background on the alternative New Babylonian realities for the thesis' audience, and as well highlights its informative and transitional natures from within – thus making an inherently-instrumental project more of itself for further enactments. It can be seen as an *interiorized-instrumentalization* phase per se, one that mostly dwells on the findings of other scholars and their entanglements with the project, as well as those of the author, if in seldom instances. And, as we've mentioned, it would eventually provide several preliminary clues pertaining to its proper usage and basic protocols, which the thesis, by the help of the second remembering and the author's own readings, attempts to grasp and employ on its own, too.

After this part, where the main focus is to form a theoretical framework upon the instrumental capacities and far-reaching potentials of New Babylon, there is another journey follows, along with its written and at times drawn logs. What follows is the second remembrance, titled Re-Remembering, where Constant's alternative vision is read through its connections to our present time and to other domains of knowledge when seem relevant. This second revisitation involves the thesis' final journey and utilization of New Babylon as an instrument – say, the very site of the so-called secret or secondary agenda.

Here, our key source would be the momentary and eventually-personal, and thus subjective, entanglements and appropriations of the author – which naturally does go back several years where the inceptive cues of this work came into being, and a little earlier to its unofficial commencement of sorts. These will be presented in the form of

partially-detached texts and memoirs, at times accompanied with exploratory drawings and diagrams – selected and assembled according to the extent they both inform and engage with the relatively objective findings and theses unraveled in the first part. In another saying, they would serve the main discussion, that is the larger agenda, centered around the timeless and instrumental capabilities of New Babylon – all the while of assisting our course of understanding and recuperating this legacy upon its far-reaching and essentially-mental premises.

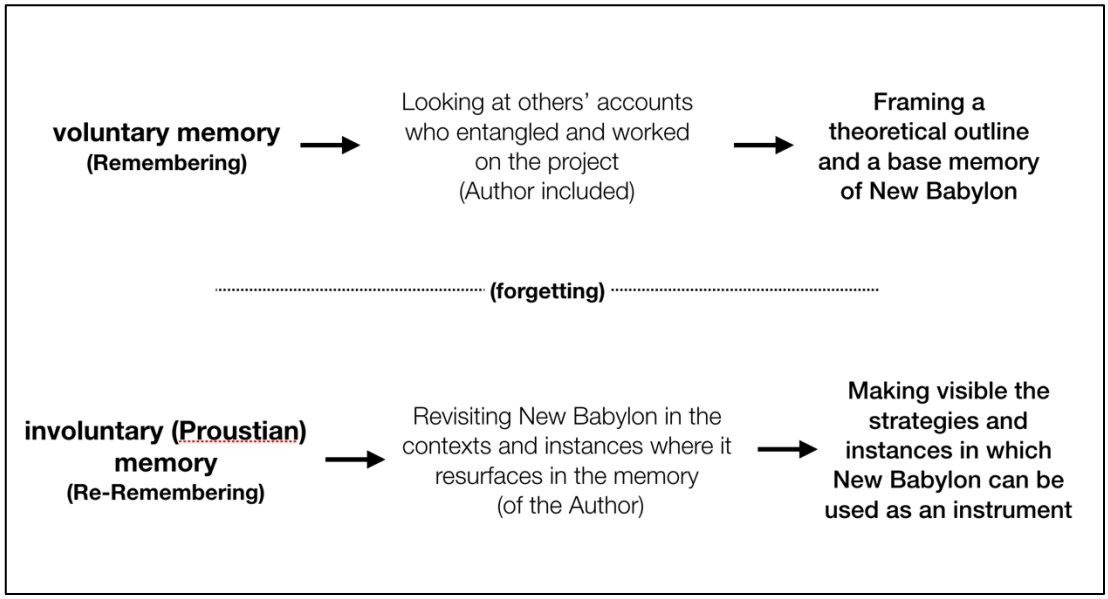

Figure 1.6 : Memory operations, main sources and objectives of two phases.

This crucial and final part then accommodates the very application or enactment of the instrument, courtesy of Constant, that previously recuperated in several extents – sort of a firsthand experiment to assess the thesis' general hypothesis and research questions outlined: That New Babylon was such a mental instrument, and that there could be framed a methodology of engagement to activate it, and maybe for other similar projections, in the course of these purposes and meaning-related activities further referred in our pages.

And, on another and rather far ends, given the premise of learning from other realities and providing fresh perspectives and making new meanings; this conclusive journey and its records can also be seen as an intellectual register which comprises new glances, discussions and ideas that could be visited by other scholars on their afterlife – whether about New Babylon or about our present seen anew by its timely revisit.

And that would be another, propitious outcome of this work, if still less clear and proportionally open-ended.

Finally, as mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, following the first and second remembering acts, the thesis terminates its trajectory with a conclusive appraisal – looking back its own execution in the light of its previous claims, collected memories, proposed methods and grounding theories. The results, including the successes and fallibilities of this entire work and some of Constant's, would be shared therein in the form of a reflective conclusion. And that would mark the end of our experiments – now completed and presented with their immediate results.

1.3 Theoretical Foundations and Key Concepts

This segment would introduce the main concepts, theoretical cues and models borrowed from certain disciplines that are used in the thesis to undertake its objectives. While grounding this work's motives and theoretical background, these concepts and models, some of which are both philosophical but also spatial to some degree, do as well present the particular references and strategies regarding the methodology favored by the thesis. The reason for that, as we've seen in the link between two parts of our objective and shall further see in our own readings of the project, parts of the procedures to assess New Babylon are already embedded in the project itself – as in reading it as a map on its own and as a prospective guide for others. Here and onwards, such procedures are coupled with these additional strategies and models chosen in line with its crux we wish to investigate.

To the extent of our interconnected agendas, they assist the handling of the central subject and the very instrument of the thesis, Constant's New Babylon – providing a theoretical framework through which it would be both assessed and utilized for further assessment. At times, while laying out the theoretical relevancy and reasons for the making of this thesis; these segments already tend to reveal certain instrumental aspects of New Babylon – through revisiting certain parts of its memory in relation to these concepts. This is a procedure, albeit in smaller intervals, that is akin to our undertaking in the second main chapter. Additionally, these passages would also put forward some of the key metaphors and wordage that would be frequently used throughout this work.

1.3.1 Critical alignments

For being an architect and typing these as an architect, parts of our readings may indeed outline a *bridge* of some sort that connects two particular moments in time. A bridge between two timescapes, between today and some sixty years before, according to official registries. So then, what is proposed is a two-way expedition along this *bridge* or along others that may appear further; moving on two opposite directions which, hopefully, will incite a level of creative tension and a fruitful methodology within premises of these pages.

Whereas, this is not just any past – wherever it is we are looking at. The reason for that goes also for this not being any given present, for this is not just any past selected at random. This is where we talk about the *distance* that is critical, other part of the title. Other than outlining a somewhat ambitious headline and framing an imaginary model for us to use and further enlarge, this notion of being at certain distances to certain pasts renders another foundation for the thesis – as well as for its preliminary motivations.

Definitions here might present an unlikely yet a fitting analogy with the subject matter of Archeoastronomy, where scientists point to the arrangements of worldly structures and artifacts according to planetary movements and stellar objects, formed in a non-random layout [10,11]. It is to say that we're in a way, and for long, accustomed to align ourselves to other alignments, to rearrange our world by looking at other worlds however heavenly and far they are. An archaic practice of situating multiple things at once, while connecting our presence to those of greater kinds. This, as a spatial practice and humanly gesture, exemplifies a systematic act of connecting two realms at a particular distance, regardless of their size or speed. One may find such phenomenon in a relational structure manifested in the form of megalithic constructions [12-14], or in micro tablets and drawings, some of which thought to be dating almost 17000 years back [15].

Meanwhile, equally embedded in physics and equally geometrical, yet with ties to more comprehensive assessments, the recent studies of other planets orbiting around other stars promotes a correlational thinking between our planet and the other potentially habitable ones, which subsequently make us think about what constitutes life in general, mainly here on Earth [16,17]. That is, we are a bit more tempted to look

deeper into the galaxy and into the other worlds, but with an inclination and more resources to better understand the mechanisms of what we came to occupy through planetary similarities – through worldly connections or *worldly bridges* per se. In our collection of comparable gestures, it does prove to be another act of constant re-situating, but also of constant re-assessment – taking place within our intellectual horizons at each new discovery. An ongoing and simultaneous reevaluation of the life beyond and the life at hand – precisely unraveling at the same interval.

Between those lie beyond and those that are here, what seems to be *critical*, then, is not the mere distance but what's appearing from or *at* such distance – defining the very nature of the connection that lies between our world and other distant planets or celestial movements. In these pages, including our initial cues, the criticality of the distance operates in a similar way, connecting two distinct universes or timescapes both in a spatial and critical manner, again each not chosen at random – for those appearing in the same distance do connect those initially seem apart. And, it, too, does provide a chance to look elsewhere with the accompanying chance of looking back at our world. In that manner, our work, in a sense, happens to be a hypothetically-astronomical endeavor in the realm of past-futures and yet-to-be-found-presents located at a critical stretch.

Another similar take, summoning a particular past amidst a present deemed to be critical, not looking at distant planets or stars but at whereabouts of storytellers, appears to be very much helpful for expounding the interdependency of two separate moments making up a relational, compound structure, and the critical thinking follows. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), the renowned critical theorist related to Frankfurt School, was keenly looking at the Russian story-teller Nikolai Leskov (1831-1895) at his constant distancing to his (Benjamin's) own present. Yet, in his essay, titled "The Storyteller", Benjamin was somewhat content and consciously operative about this growing distance for it lays the very ground where Leskov's appearance forms a critical importance [18]. Such importance was of a particular location in space-time for him to look at things, or actually to *see* them: The disappearing art of storytelling. He was to say that by looking at Leskov in his own present brings about the very features of him that are now (or actually was) lost:

> Viewed from a certain distance, the great, simple outlines which define the storyteller stand out on him, or rather, they become visible in him, just as in a

> rock a human head or an animal's body may appear to an observer at the proper distance and angle of vision. [18, p. 83]

Here, the compound structure of interdependent timescapes reveals its qualities: It is those features, once existent and now absent, appear to be the very link between his particular selection of moments in time, the present of Benjamin and that of Leskov. What's more, it is again those very features that are only visible at a particular distance between two selected presents. Here, within a reciprocal causality, the distance is not pre-measured or introduced but more like emerged above the then-existent now-absent features of the storyteller, that are critical both for the past and the present selected, and thereby connects two different timescapes.

What's further, like in the case of linking our planet with other potential Earths, when situated next to or on top of each other, two timescapes tend to reveal new side of things in one another. As one can grasp from Benjamin's prose, a much-central exemplar to be further studied in respect to our own theoretical models, some symptomatic characteristics of a given present can only be read through a particular past located at a certain distance to today, with the same distance offers the very sight of comparable characteristics appearing in the past. So, this was, too, not any past for this was not any present – and vice versa.

While Benjamin moves on to tell and tackle his own pitiful everyday experience of the vanishing storytelling practices and the death of "the epic side of truth" [18, p. 87], parts of our endeavor strive for a critical cultural assessment mainly directed to the terrain of 21st century, and specifically to that of current spatial and cultural practices. But before that, regarding the case of two timescapes or entities revealing new facets on each other, we might look into Benjamin's maneuvers following his preliminary sightings and the very first connection he encountered. Maneuvers which, other than allowing him to advance on his journey, appear to constitute a highly imaginary realm of its own – and one with a highly specific spatiality to its part.

Through his own *bridge* spanning the proper distance with the right angle of vision, he proceeds with going back and forth over Leskov and his time, drawing a looping structure to expand his treatise, a structure that grounds our own methodologies here – and paralleling with our own trajectories following our initial discoveries. Further in his piece, Benjamin moves along and between his own literary surroundings and the

genealogy of storytellers, making stops on each timescape, and at times juxtaposing their inceptions and characteristics [18]. His successive motion, in a way, is as much a natural instinct as it is the necessary procedure: Following what has been became visible from his distance and angle of vision to reveal other qualities – and, in effect, to gather more of what has been lost and also of what could be recuperated from that distinct past, if possible.

To exemplify this somewhat briefly, out of first seven segments following the introduction part, there are found two clear texts devoted to Leskov's origins and that of storytelling practice, the second and third, which are followed by parts piercing towards the mechanisms of his own time. At the fourth one, the very first symptomatic bits appear in the form of the scarcity of "counsel" and "wisdom" [18, pp. 86-87] in Benjamin's time which, initially, is described as the true cores of storytelling itself at the beginning of the segment. At fifth, the solitude of the novelist along with the effects of newly-found printing enterprise is introduced, only to meet the storyteller himself, unraveling the key differences between. Later in this part and intensifying in the subsequent segments, juxtapositions of two timescapes proliferate and grow in frequency, and take hold of the writing – acutely transforming the whole piece into a fabric of woven comparisons, relationships and critical takes over various themes.

These sub-themes and several sub-stories, such as the newness of information and timelessness of stories, with successive jumps between two moments in time, emerge over the two timescapes that were initially *aligned* – expanding the assessment on both planes in a unified form. The key characteristics of Leskov and the magic of storytelling is depicted while an expanded criticism of present literary world is being framed. It all happens concurrently. And it is all constructed over or actually *within* a connected, dual or hybrid kind of world whose parts are interconnected by the certain distance of Benjamin and by the initial features, the *connections* he saw, which were present or critically absent, and thus were deemed relevant in both territories. In that sense, following the very first bridge appeared in Benjamin's critical vantage, there were more to appear and to cross as he moved along in this somewhat hybrid and imaginary construction of his literary tenure.

What appears there in the first bridging, or during the proliferation of many others, is an act of aligning in the astronomical sense that brings together, or in a way *nearing*, two distant worlds situated afar – which eventually builds up the interwoven cloud of

sub-themes, comparisons and critical takes upon which Benjamin chose to meander and wander. As with his own journey, this notion borrowed from astronomical field is a phenomenon that is critical for the title of the thesis and its conceptual model we hope to expand and utilize. And not only for hunting down new perspectives to assess a present critically aligned to a certain past, but also to understand that past better and through similarly fresh and opposite or double sights by the help of such imaginary alignments.

In the meantime, far from where we and these long-lost or forgotten pasts are situated, another wanderer out in the deep dark space, making a mileage not only of intellectual but real and fairly-priced sorts, is nearing a decade in a particular mission. This wanderer, Kepler spacecraft of NASA, has been harnessing possible bits of earth-life, or other possible versions of it – peeking into the vast sea of Milky Way stars and exoplanets [19]. Through each discovery of our potential cousins, new alignments with the other worlds, bit more conceptual than geometrical but nevertheless accurate in regards to what we see, tend to proliferate. And, by these ever-appearing connections, we are offered new chances to produce comparisons, insights and an ever-enlarging knowledge to see what the universe and eventually the earth-life had been made of [16,17].

It was indeed a proper phrase when the New Horizons craft, another lonely wanderer crafted by our joint curiosities about others and ourselves, for the first time in history, got to the edge of our known solar system and was ready report back about Pluto along with “clues to the origins of the planets”, and looking back towards Earth for “a cosmic selfie” [20]. Beyond all the excitement imparted to our eyes for our ever-enlarging sights of our galaxy and our smallest neighbor, it was an expansion to our knowledge. It marked a time for reevaluation. A reevaluation of where we stand in the presence of other possibles.

Parts of our attempts here in this thesis, including its inceptive incentives and those of the far possible-life it chose to glance at, can be said to be simple as that. Our world still needs another companion, however utopian and far it might seem to be, for us to see it with fresh eyes. It is simple like the physicist Carlo Rovelli’s sheer excitement on the blistering beaches of Calabria when he first made a sense of Einstein’s Relativity, “the Most Beautiful of Theories”, for it almost opened up a new chapter or a new layer of the universe he knew before his very eyes [21]. He thought that each

discovery was a total emotional encounter for us, a new episode to our understanding of the world – offering us new tools to perceive it:

> It was reality. Or better, a glimpse of reality, a little less veiled than our blurred and banal everyday view of it…It takes a little commitment and effort. But less than is necessary to come to appreciate the rarefied beauty of a late Beethoven string quartet. In both cases the reward is sheer beauty, and new eyes with which to see the world. [21, pp. 9-10]

Aside from Rovelli, for the earthlings of 17000 years before, for Kepler or New Horizons, or even for the journey of Walter Benjamin; it was all about looking for another companion or another reality. Not just a substitute, but a bettered version of the ones at hand – to be found just here or afar. On our journey towards our potential and little less worn-out cousins, we might only better view our very point of departure, and that might be something adequate to work with and towards. Until we find another possible at some place we can actually relocate to, the one we have and the other versions it may acquire constitute the only prospects we still have. In all those ambitious expeditions, whether we are searching for new homes or more meaningful pasts, as much as arrivals, the journey was also about seeing, and of where we currently are – as with our own journey here[3].

As Benjamin moved forward to see more of those absent and what they meant for his own surroundings, or just as Rovelli moved forward with Einstein's new chapters, and just as our astronomical fronts proceed with providing ever-fresh vantages; we are required to carry on with our motion for our own part. We need to carry on with our own journey, and towards wherever it may lead us, in order to construct new alignments, however imaginary they might be, with our own particular past and at our particular distance to it. So that, we may presume to layout those potentials, long-lost or to be recuperated still, and to find other possibles of what we currently have through our own ever-fresh vantages. It is mostly about perspectives, what we're aiming at – as it was mostly about seeing.

In relation to these latter remarks, and before all that navigational knowhow and a Benjaminian sort of travelling between two timescapes, coming back to our initial

[3] See Appendix A

connection, or, yes, the first of the many; the world or the critical past we tend to align ourselves is physically, or at least seemingly, not physically present despite being relentlessly drawn, built and told for almost two decades. Yet this world, despite its distant sights and physical absence, according to its creator, is a kind that almost calls for such alignments and comparative readings in the loudest way possible:

> New Babylon is not a town-planning project, but rather a way of thinking, of imagining, of looking on things and on life…The artist has always tried to represent the image of the world, but more important is to change the world itself and make it more livable. [23, pp. a9-a11]

Well, for some early beginnings, aside from changing where we currently live, now may be the time for a critical selfie – as in an homage to what New Horizons and all of our far-reaching journeys had been always after. That's what we might just begin with – and, like we've mentioned, might as well end up with after all. A prospect, however provisional or dreamy it may seem, sounds promising enough for us to work with and towards.

1.3.2 The legacy

In order to understand a work truly, to attempt a grounded research about its origins and spirits, one would be required to read it in the scope its *episteme* in the Foucaultian sense – in relation to its cultural, intellectual and sociological background, amidst the very world it has born into [24]. Whereas this is one part of our procedures in assessing New Babylon, these studies would be coupled with another one – that is, the across-time affair being formulated in these pages. We certainly do not solely seek what gave rise to a project and to understand it in its own time, but rather what the result holds up exactly now, some sixty years later in a world seemingly well past it. It is also a reading of a past, a particular one, at exactly where we now stand.

Like mentioned earlier, luckily, the project we take into our focus demands such dislocation, or relocation, by its very origins. This desire for a time-nomadic venture can be tracked down in many New Babylonian incarnations; within the calculated blur of its early almost-room-size models or its vividly drawn but continuously hidden fragments of constant play [9]. And, more comprehensively, it can also be found in the very reason behind such problematic visual language, which was continually expanded for 18 years and embedded inside the true genetics of New Babylon which we also

wish to explore. But one more time, prior to all that, we may well recall a moment where its creator has some words to say, on a quite unexpected and highly physical setting as opposed to imaginary places of artists, on the opening of new airport buildings in Schiphol, back in 1966:

> But the airport is becoming an international meeting place, a social space not only for travelers but also for citizens of all kinds, where everyone will sense that special atmosphere, the taste of nomadic life, for which we have been nostalgic ever since we turned to a sedentary way of life…So the airport is not just a utility building for the efficient entry and exit of passengers, but also a romantic décor for the potential nomad that we all are – it offers an escape from the settlement. An airport, because of its opposite nature, reflects better than any other building the atmosphere of the age that is dawning, of automation and non-working man, and hence of the new nomad, homo ludens, the playing man. [25, p. 201]

For a brief introductory and a concentrated glance to our subject matter, New Babylon was executed as a visionary urban planning project and proposed a life, or a future version of it, that is entirely different than its time and, seemingly, from ours. Defining the first descriptive and foundational bits of this new world, one of the earliest seminal texts written at the time of his alliance with Situationist International[4] , from which he took the key genetic and tactical components of his subsequent solo adventure, was titled *Another City for Another Life* [29]. Published in December 1959 in the 3rd volume of the infamous *Internationale Situationniste*[5], announcing a new and relatively more architectural chapter in the pursuit of *Unitary Urbanism*[6] ; the piece,

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[4] An avant-garde collective of mid-20th-century artists, theorists and practitioners that was active during their official period, between 1957 and 1972, and especially in Europe [26]. Also a central body and subject matter of our academic work. Sort of a successor to the Letterist International (1952-57), what the collective sought was a social change, in all domains of life, through the agency of propaganda and various experimental practices such as detournement and derive that sought to undermine the existing structures of culture, arts and cities, and at times to unearth their hidden potentials for a revolutionized, freer lifestyle [27,28]. Constant had been an official member from its inceptive years to his personal resignation in 1960.

[5] The official name of the collective's journal, published in the years between 1958 and 1969, with 12 volumes in total.

[6] Unitary urbanism explained as "The theory of the combined use of arts and techniques as means contributing to the construction of a unified milieu in dynamic relation with experiments in behavior" by the Situationist vocabulary [30] – and according to Wark [28], was more of a critical concept with a tactical value than an actual constructive program. This central theme was also stressed in a fundamental text by Constant and Guy Debord, one of the founder members of the collective and a much-central figure, published in 1958 [31].

along with its lucid title, acutely encapsulates the larger intent and the apparent twofold nature resides in it.

According to Mark Wigley[7], the project was initially materialized in the form of highly crafted models made of steel rods, occasionally movable metal surfaces and colored plexiglas, which was actually difficult to acquire and relatively expensive at the time [9]. Each model was to represent a "sector" of the future city, the essential segments of a universal infrastructure designed to house the future life of constantly-drifting and décor-making habitants [32]. Formed into a global nexus, these segments were to accommodate and assist nomadic passengers in their journeys, including those emerging types Constant had told about, who were waiting for their flights at Schiphol: "The spaces are inter-linked in a labyrinthine network that spreads itself across the entire surface of the earth as one immense building. New Babylon is a seemingly infinite playground" [32, p. 9].

Succeeding years brought out the massive-scaled maps displaying the spread of these sectors forming networks over the globe and especially over post-war Europe, which followed by countless landscape drawings and interior paintings depicting the New Babylonian life from the eyes of one inhabitant, mostly Constant himself [9]. The whole production took more than fifteen years and the pieces were displayed in numerous exhibitions, multi-media displays and lecture-shows which he carefully orchestrated in various locales [9]. And somewhere in the midst of those years, and above all those highly complex and exhilaratingly beautiful body of work, Constant was to speak enthusiastically about new additions in Schiphol.

So, there is a catch, but one that is no hard to find. Constant was conscious and sincere when speaking about the transforming life and the atmospherical qualities of those gigantic volumes of mass departures and arrivals, much because, simply, he saw the bits, or actually, the entirety of New Babylon in there. Or, in another saying, he looked into the present world through Babylonian eyes which were fresh, enlarging and sensitive to the new modes of life taking shape. New Babylon was indeed his own seeing-instrument, like the most beautiful theory of Einstein was to Rovelli [21], if not

[7] Mark Wigley is a New Zealand-born architect and author, and a Professor and Dean Emeritus at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture (GSAPP). His extensive research and written work on New Babylon and Constant serve as a prominent reference material throughout this thesis.

effectively simplifying the world for him but rather, and for the better, pluralizing its possible versions. He had been much explicit about this, saying that his project was an "experimental thought and play model for the establishment of principles for a new and different culture" [9, p. 62]. As we shall further come to realize, New Babylon was essentially conceived as a means for departures, rather than conjecturing a single end for us to arrive at.

In relation to our instrumental exemplar of Benjamin's alignment model, here, in the image of airports within Constant's own present, rather than the absence of certain qualities, what becomes visible is the presence of new qualities and conditions. Conditions which were related to another mode of living and to a different future, namely to the nomadic aspirations of New Babylon, which were then revealed and became operational at Constant's particular *distance* to things. However, at many other sightings, aside from the potentials and the relatively optimistic glances, we shall also be introduced to the absence of certain qualities related to a New Babylonian kind of life in his own present, which would eventually provide the basis for a comprehensive critique on the matters of life and the current state of affairs. Constant's highly complex and self-crafted seeing device was as sensitive to the problematics of his world as it was to the new lifestyles forming at his time. And, as we shall also see, both parts, seen from the same instrument, were very much connected.

In that year of 1966, and for the course of a project with many architectural and planning type of facets, what he saw and then told in some two-thousand words or more was not the physicality of spaces, nor their size and the architecture, but a new spirit – a whole different way of living and thinking. New Babylon wasn't necessarily located at some indefinite future or inside a vast network of sectors suspended over cities like he showed for many years; it is to be found on the very ground we sat foot on, and lived through fragments of unfamiliarity and temporality within a multi-cultural social space – which, at this take, seemed as the airport to his eyes [25]. It was all about a certain kind of atmosphere, and some certain kind of *conditions* to redeem it. And such binary recipe, rooted in the project's heart and cultural genome which we would also take a glance at, was still valid for all those grand-scale models and their ever-extending networks, and as well for a momentary chance exchange occurring at a departure lounge.

In other words, New Babylon, then, by its very creator, was not described in forms but by psychological surroundings and behavioral patterns, and was meant to be dislocated from its own formal grounds for being designed as a practical-cultural tool to see things and life – all at once. It entailed, at the very same time, a certain prescription of nomadic and playful tendencies, and a nomadic cultural instrument to test and further expand our present tendencies. So, for another portion of early beginnings, the instrument we also chose and the qualities it entails could be located in many places, at times without a definite physical form or an exact location. It just could *appear* anywhere, depending both on the conditions and the attitudes we have.

Still, the creator needed forms. And so did every great story. The Benjamin piece mentioned on the first chapter, *The Storyteller*, to which we owe much for our own twofold reading venture and central model, beautifully outlines the key qualities that make a great story. First, Benjamin ascribes a value of timelessness to them. A well-crafted story, a product of ancient craftsmanship that perfected through layers and layers of retelling, has the power to retain its acute narrative against the passage of time and even context, with a capability of "arousing astonishment and thoughtfulness" after centuries [18, p. 90]. And, secondly, that owes much to its "chaste compactness" [18, p. 91] where the listener, or the reader in modern times, is granted with a space to provide a self-explanation – with a prescribed distance to create a personal inference. According to Benjamin [18], a good story is imbued with an openness for the receiver, avoiding any psychological and direct message. And, by its true nature, in its original form, a telling requires a listening act, a memory (of listening), which consolidates the self-attentiveness and the space required to make one's own meanings [18]. It requires and offers experience. It is dry and complex at once.

This openness and a profound level of complexity, coupled with the particular kind of experience, which makes Montaigne muse deeply about a very short Herodotus story after centuries with an inference of his [18], and which can well be paired with many other versions from different readers, is akin to what we are seeing, or at least trying to see, in Constant's work. "To look at the model is to look at a substitute world" writes Wigley [9, p. 50].

> The modern architect's obsession with a radical transparency that exposes all the details of structure and lifestyle turns into an amorphous sense of

> interactions between life-styles too complex and transitory to be simply exposed…The eye cannot even rest in this openness; the floors are transparent. In a sense model can only be looked through. It is kind of a mirage. [9, pp. 50-51]

The same paradoxical nature of disclosing and concealing at once goes for the two-dimensional medium, too:

> Almost all the drawings exhibit a translucence of structure echoing that in the models. Constant continually blur both the play of desire, which cannot be specified without blocking it, and the support of that play, which cannot be represented without it being mistaken for frozen play. [32, p. 30]

Here, the "chaste compactness" [18, p. 91] of Herodotus gives way to the form of "a carefully constructed openness" [32, p. 31], which stems from a vertiginous blur rather than a firm dryness. A visual and calculated ambiguity, that is, Constant's open form, to make meanings of our own:

> I certainly don't want to predict how the world of the future will look like in any detail, for that would be impossible…So I beg you to look on these slides as if you were visiting a new and unknown city and to undergo its specific atmosphere. A sound-tape that I will let you hear in the same time, is meant to suggest the presence of life, and the rest now is left to your imagination. [23, p. a13]

Therein resides, once again, the conceptual and the seeing-instrument quality of the project. The kind of space left to readers, where they could muse about the wherefores of the Egyptian King's crying over the sight of his servant [18], was also intact in Constant's architectural executions. It was another designed opening that gives birth to speculation – posing us not direct conclusions but plural and personal closures to complete the picture, or to conclude the story. And, as in the magical workings of storytelling, such speculation needed a space – a particular atmosphere with a particular experience.

For his ends, in order to make people see the world through New Babylon, Constant first needed to construct beautiful objects of blur and then carefully present them in a mirage-like ambiguity to ignite a preliminary discussion. What was conveyed on rapidly changing slides or in a delicately illuminated room of floating-like models [9]

wasn't the heights, lengths or a traditional spatial organization, which are the sort of information intrinsic of commonplace architectural transmissions. They all served a much bigger purpose. They were the sub-instruments of a grander instrument; the pieces of a critical seeing device offered at the service of many other listeners and the prospective visitors of this "unknown city" [23, p. a13]. And the way they are presented, along with the eccentric way they seem, were all part of Constant's own storytelling procedures.

Once, Constant was to say in a newspaper interview that all were part of a guerilla tactic to "influence as many people as possible" [9, p. 68]. Wigley, from his own angle and distance, too, marks the "polemical value" of Constant's production executed in numerous forms and representational techniques, which bore a great degree of disciplinary controversy [9, p. 49]. In essence, any architectural plan or representational object procures to portray a level of clarity and organization, and a profound notion of order of a spatial kind in general. Instead, Constant preferred speculation over clarity, and a chaotic flow of life over order [9]. A life that can be found within the fortuitous conversations of strangers in Schiphol, of the "modern nomads" [25, p. 200] who probably will never meet again, echoing the stories of interrailing students across European midnights. His overall portraying was, at its best, an architecture of highly vagabond sorts, emboldened with its innately restless nature.

For such nature of events were inherently restive, the true form and the life of New Babylon therefore cannot be confined to any particular arrangement or to some frozen architecture. It was formless, not to be drawn, at least by conventional means [32]. And all that is beyond, say various structural methods or the particular architecture exhibited in models, or the special infrastructure described in texts, were only subsidiary elements which, critically, were subjected to a re-thinking and re-looking process made possible by the critical debate Constant had relentlessly exhorted.

This critical value was also highlighted by McKenzie Wark, the acclaimed media theorist and a mentor/partner of the author in a research project[8] to which the initial idea and central parts of this thesis owe very much, saying that the New Babylon gave

[8] These encounters of the author, a period not many years ago and cited throughout the thesis, both as an inceptive and foundational cue and as an artistic project, particularly refer to the research and making processes of the digital movie called "New New Babylon", produced by Ali Dur and McKenzie Wark in 2011 [33].

us the chance, as opposed to various technocratic visions of its era, of "thinking the possibilities of social and technical transformation together" [28, p. 145]. New Babylon could easily be read as this possibility of a social alternative coupled with its very speculation and required workings, which were only given a material but a highly elusive form for the sake of that very speculation.

For a short recap, in addition to the blurry openness of models and drawings, and the "flickering" effects of multi-media lecture-shows, and above all the quasi-immaterial "paper-like" aesthetics of all Babylonian mediums [9, 32]; this highly formless, twofold and tactical spirit at its heart render the project timeless and nomadic. It is waiting to be sought and found in elsewhere – away from its own provenances and inside the real world, to which it can become the cultural gloss that Constant had initially designed. It may, then, still appear to us at anywhere, not only on the part of our conditions and attitudes, but also on the part of other particular distances we would have to the existing world and on the part of those appearing at those distances. Just as we've outlined for the early premises of our own journey and the likes, Constant's dream was also mostly and primarily about seeing the present, aside from the will and the equipment for changing it.

Furthermore, and in a much general sense, summoning a particular past or a different future would be valid for any moment in time, for the life and the culture, although being in various currencies and guises, are valid constituents of any episteme as they are viable issues of discussion across different timespans. And the possibility of a different future, of any kind, along with its preceding debate, still stands. Parallel to the inscription of these words, the search for another life continues at full speed in the outer space, for the life we have is something we still have and still stands in isolation amidst an ever-expanding catalogue of distant stars and exoplanets [34]. Our life-form, or the form of life we came to possess, quiet and sitting in a peaceful solitude, strives for a counterpart for centuries.

In regards to our current place in history, one should remember that the terminology of *distance* here is not presented in length but as critical connectors of content – including Benjamin, the people in NASA, or the earthlings from some 17000 years before, and surely including the motives behind this thesis. And beyond all the connections appeared at their particular distance to us, and thus made us start moving and work on their implications; our reactionary motion and search for meanings are

also for the same urge embedded inside our apparatus. We are also up for a revisit, not for the sake of architectural history and not randomly, but for the project is all for nothing but constant revisitations. And for surely it was, not only for the sake of its historical origins or its beautiful imagery, but for its very origins that call for nothing but revisitations to all present worlds. New Babylon was not about itself, at least in the long run, but was about all that was present and all that could be beyond – including New Babylon [8].

1.3.3 The transitional object

In order to have a better grasp of New Babylon's inherently transitional origins and its dreamy sights within its intermediary, apparatus-like presence; we might look for other theories and models of visiting other lives and revisiting our own. To summon those beyond Walter Benjamin's cultural prose or those of astronomical sorts, we might turn to a psychoanalyst and to another philosopher who both defined the apparent fallibilities of looking into ourselves directly – along with the alternative ways of doing so.

Originally coined by Donald Winnicott, the term *transitional object* describes an item, a toy, which allows the children to feel safe without the presence of the mother, and letting them explore the world by themselves [35]. An intermediating passage between one's inner provinces and the world at large, that seemingly inconsequential item provides an inadvertent opening on the domain of consciousness with the assuring impulses upon the infant's much natural restlessness and anxiety in an alien world which was populated, for the first time, with *others* – with the "not-me" [36].

Referring to her own transitional objects and to Winnicott's terminology, the renowned philosopher of humanly vulnerabilities and moral ethics, Martha Nussbaum, explains her own inclination to study Greek tragedies at New York University as a way of safely approaching, and rather indirectly, to her own feelings and tragedies, and to those of all society at large [35]. She says that "When we have emotions of fear and pity toward the hero of a tragedy, we explore aspects of our own vulnerability in a safe and pleasing setting" [35]. For her, a critical glance into one's own life first entails a glance to elsewhere, and then by the connections between our lives and others' become visible, we can safely travel into the workings of our own. On the way back, the not-me becomes me, or us – and in a less intimidating degree.

This mechanism of a twofold glancing and reassessment through connections or commons is actually a profound quality of all great artworks, mostly literature and well-told stories, according to the author Hisham Matar. He was to assert that [37], rather than introducing completely new concepts and feelings, books and "all great art" could only urge us to elevate our own intellectual lives, and, in doing so, could "show us how and to what extent we are connected". He also recites in the same piece a much well-known storyteller, Marcel Proust, who we also revisit for his tenures in the peculiar makings of memory, chiming in the self-reflective and twofold virtues of most fables. "Who might read it as my readers", cites Proust, would rather be "readers of themselves" [38, p. 1113]. That these written artifacts often dwell on our already-present interiors and concepts, and on those sometimes forgotten that we do possess – functioning as a sort of recollective and reflective agent with an aim towards humane prosperity and intellectual improvement.

As the power and the very universality of those works emanate from their mutual conceptions that infiltrate to our inner worlds and those could be emanated from within [37]; it is crucial to note that New Babylon was essentially founded on those shared conceptions and on that very connectedness. While Constant's offering was of a completely new life, his project was not to introduce completely new technologies, inventions or practices; but rather sought to urge us in using present ones in a way to elevate our current lives – which was a different *version* that could be derived from the existing [23,29].

Most effectively, in its overall agenda and story-like operations, Constant's New Babylon was to underline those already present and those still missing in our cultural, technological and psychological belongings, which, precisely, were presented as the main ingredients for a freer human life [29,39]. Such prospect, however yet undetermined, was the main commons or the worldly *bridges* between the seemingly far planet of Babylonian origins and our own – connecting us to its seemingly remote tales. The very same tale of the human condition, upon the very same Earth – if somehow, and maybe greatly, got away or simply slipped in the multitude of many other stories one should as well remember.

1.3.4 The utopia

Proceeding further on the progressive models of looking elsewhere, and within the apparent practicality of Nussbaum's transitional objects [35], we would eventually arrive at the vicinity of *Utopias*. This becomes also much eventual for, as told at the beginning, New Babylon – for many times and at many distances to many observers – was conceived as such [7,39,40]. But we ought to be very careful, for its creator was already too cautious and insistent that it was certainly not [8,29]. If anything, he was certainly indulged, and thus believed, in the transformation of the existing world into some other or bettered version – pointing to some places to commence the transformation – as much as in displaying that such transformation was somehow possible, tendered to our considerations in the very image of his otherwise utopian projections and as the entirety of New Babylon itself [9].

Well, in the event that Constant's vision is considered as a purest form of utopia – we then need to distinguish some basic concepts related to such imaginary entities and of their respective production. In fact, according to several prominent scholars working on these non-existing realities; utopias often tend to live on this contradictory nature of their beings. That they are at once unattainable, by definition, yet seem dwell on those still here and could still be attained further – if only by some imaginary labor and within similarly elusive expanses [41].

One of these peculiar origin stories, actually that of the very original one where the term referring of a land that does not exist – "a place that is not" as coined by Espen Hammer [42] – resides in an equally peculiar island. According to China Miéville [43] and the original story of the island *Utopia* as told by Thomas More [44], the inventor of the very diction, that promised territory was in fact very close to the main land, the shores of the existing reality per se – divided only by "the thinnest stretch of ocean" [43, p. 13]. The legend is, and as with the clever literary playfulness of the author, the exact address of the island was somehow lost during the conversation with the sailor More recites of – clouded by a spontaneous cough right at the moment that significant information was to be heard [44].

As it turns out, the illegibility of that piece of knowledge, say the otherwise unknown whereabouts of the island, was not really that significant – strictly much less than its existence. Although we already know that this dreamy country and the stories of its

peaceful habitants were a fiction, courtesy of More himself; such land was never to be reached in a literal sense – say by sailing or any sort of physical transportation – even if it was real. It needed some other forms of travel arrangements, according to what the author intentionally conceals. And the real significance, bit eventually, resides in the stories of this very island and, like those of Constant himself, the appropriate means to get there and somehow tell about it after.

For all we know, More, as he claims in the form of an entire book, if purposefully and satirically, was able to see it, if not on his own but through the accounts of an imaginary sailor once got there [44]. In his work, he further complements his notes with detailed maps, engravings, pseudo legal and social specifications – as if such sovereign entity was real and solid [45]. The *Utopia* was *there*, lived and existed as a whole and within a congenital isolation – only without the exact location of *there*.

Respectively, as Miéville notes [43], the island told in More's fictional travelogue was originally cut out from the main land by physical labor – so was in fact part of the real world, at least once, but now concealed from our horizons by an otherwise unfortunate event. That historical and inherent connection, in fact, was not only physical. It is a well-known fact that More was essentially, however in a satirical form of storytelling, criticizing and reflecting on his own habitat – the Welfare State of the United Kingdom in the 16th century – and dreaming of a bettered state of society and regime for his own kind [42,45,46]. In that sense, the island was already and innately connected with the current state of affairs and the present reality – all by the means of its playful critique and a detailed display of a different possibility [46]. In many ways, the former was born out of the latter – of the real – both physically and mentally.

The seemingly-innate connections between an actual world and its dreamy counterpart, for More's island and many other bettered narratives and uncharted lands, can actually be traced and extended on a much rudimentary level. Lewis Mumford [47], in his relatively early but seminal work on the history and ontology of our dreamworlds, talks about the keen relationship between the actual and the imaginary, underlining a profound account on the latter's effects on the former. And, not as a one-way influence but a reciprocal kind of mental activity playing on both domains. What he postulates, firstly, is that the mankind has always been bound to occupy these two worlds at once. This was the true story of our beings, if one wished to read it comprehensively – with both parts included in its making [47].

Heeding to his own particular and somewhat poetic vocabulary, Mumford defines these two domains as "the world within" and "without" – the latter referred as the one exists "within men's heads" [47, p. 13]. And one level of their keen relationship, and that we are required to take this world floating in one's head as real as the other, is the power that the imaginary part possesses in shaping whatever it is happening on the domain of the real – as much as what exists within the real. In a simple but clear example, he recites how early travelers of the medieval ages had tended to sail according to the "belief" that the world was flat – outweighing the "fact" that it was not [47, p. 14]. It affected their behavior and routes per se, as much as the factual strands like wind or sea mines granted by the physical, material domain of our worldly surroundings.

According to another definition of his, and while underlining that we are indisputably bound to the limits and givens of the material world there is, say to mines or wind patterns; this behavior-shaping collection of *imagined* factors belong in "the world of ideas" – of "all the philosophies, fantasies, rationalizations, projections, images, and opinions" that which plays a major role on our decisions [47, p. 13]. And this is the domain which the Utopias belong in, too. The choice of his diction owes to the concept of *idolum* – a notion that could be traced back to the Platonic state or realm of idealized, imaginary concepts that, almost without cessation, came to exist besides or in spite of the actual state of our lives [48].

So that, for all their contrast with the actual reality or their apparently-man-made origins, we somehow behave according to these idealistic visions and beliefs reside in our heads and innermost provinces – as much as we do according to the factual condition of things that are actually there: "An idea is a solid fact, a theory is a solid fact, a superstition is a solid fact as long as people continue to regulate their actions in terms of the idea, the theory, or superstition," [47, p. 14]. And, indeed, for long ages, we did regulate our actions and endeavors according to our subjective, ideal or perfect visions, alongside what the material environment and current state of things have to offer – occupying two worlds at once, and often dwelling in somewhere between.

In the light of what we could gather from these references, it appears rather clear that the stories of the imaginary or of the so-called domain of ideas both stem from the real, say in the form of a reactionary, reflective critique or an imaginary getaway – all the while of forming the stories of real, meaning what happens here, in greater extents.

This was an effectively two-way relationship, to say the least – in which one is born out of the other, then influencing its very source in turn. In the course of such circular relationship, as outlined by Mumford [47], there were several uses for occupying or constructing these non-existing realities, namely Utopias, all in the terms of its links with the existing and amidst the existing – and in both stages of their profound correlation.

Some of these worlds, situated well away from our habitats, offer a refuge – an escape from the present and the real. In the notes of Claeys [41], most of these imaginary and often-perfect fables tend to provide a narrative that is "comforting" in the face of an unsettling and somewhat relatively brief presents – bridging us, however imaginarily and often mythically, to stories and constructs that seem rather whole and imbued with greater meanings. Many of our creation myths and religious accounts fall in that category, remaking the narratives of everyday and its limited deeds into something grander and deeper. In an idealized past or a perfected portrayal of our future, we find comfort and greater significance – and often in the projections of harmony, social equality and some sort of long-lost fellowship [41].

Meanwhile, what Mumford particularly insists on stands on the opposite side of such purposes. Rather than an indefinite afterlife or a harmonious "golden age" once was there [43], or to retreat from the province of the daily present by yearning for those; he elevates, as with the very focus of his book, a particular use and breed for most utopias: those reserved strictly for "reconstruction" [47, p. 15]. That posists a utopian vision or thinking practice first and foremost offers, and at times embodies, the ways with which one can reflect on the present – the real: A means to compile, to "assort", to "sift" the conditions of the real world [47]; in order to project another version on top of it or a bit far from it – just like what More does. In that view, a utopia never was an escape but instead the very path, a theoretical and mental opening, to arrive back at the reality – if only, and most effectively, from a different vantage.

Mumford's take on utopias were therefore future-oriented – not towards an indefinite or mythical one, but towards a future simply following the present. And such stance is also what falls into our standpoint on the core purposes of Constant's dreaming venture – a carefully-designed means, a somewhat utopian play instrument reserved and devised for "the establishment of principles for a new and different culture", as announced by the respective dreamer himself [9, p. 62]. His distant portrayals were

not just a mirage look at, but also to stare *back* and *through* – as in what Proust suggested [39].

According to Claeys [41], in a much similar fashion, our dreamworlds at large are not of the impossible, non-existent or unreachable. They are to exist and indulge in "the space between the possible and the impossible" [41, p. 15] – in search of some place, some ground in-between; the intermediate. They serve discussion, reflection and a critical mental operation involving the present and the future at once, and, the very *bridges* that might lie in between. They dwell on the possibilities that might lie beyond what currently there is, and might rise *from* what currently there is – all along with the possible ways to reach them. It is the intermediate as a place – if often theoretical – as much an agent, a mental tool: A crucial passage stands and bridges between the existent and the making of its alternative.

As said, that route was no physical nor that easy. It was a rather fitting and similarly poetic saying, included in the foreword of Mumford's book, when Hendrik Willem van Loon, in his letter to the author, said of the utopias as "beacons" [47, p. xii] – the only available reference in our journey towards our unrealized shores. Similarly, Claeys concludes his introduction to his own registry of utopias by likening them to "a pole-star" [41, p. 15] – much like Constant's insistence on New Babylon as something to reflect, to think through about the ways and conditions in which we currently live and wish to do so in the future [8,9]. A transitional toy, if rather complex and dazzling in its imagery, to look into our own existence and stories at large, and preferably to leave behind at some point – for being served its core purpose in doing so.

In the same way, New Babylon makes the basic constructive, if not necessarily perfect, utopia – clearly defined and purposefully devised in their foremost, say the transitional or the intermediary, agenda and meaning. A utopia that openly stands and advocates for its preluding discussion and correlational thinking – resting on the very effect of such imaginary constructs can have on the domain of the real: the very ability and means to reflect on it, and, if possible, to change it.

According to Constant, the body lies between New Babylon and our world was merely our socio-economic customs and cultural shortcomings. All the necessary means, technology and humanly desire were already available – waiting to be implemented

for a different, more playful future [29]. The only obstacle was to be found in our current ways thinking and living – which he hoped his utopia, in its most reflective and reconstructive senses, would serve their rudimentary transformation.

Constant makes another case regarding this, and against the claims of an impossible utopianism. And this regard has to do more with what the classic notion might suggest and less with New Babylon's theoretical and scientific achievability based on its material conditions found in its maker's present [8]. It was the completeness and so-called harmony of such imaginary places that were the least Babylonian: "Utopia is a world without aggression, without suffering, without doubt, without drama, but also, therefore, a world without change, without creativity, without play, without freedom" [8, p. 235]. This very lack of contest, of tension and of much-humanly drives, according to him, separates New Babylon from any absolute or concluded totality – a somewhat misleading concept that also underlined by Claeys as a "desire for finality, absoluteness and perfection" [41, p. 15].

At its heart, the promised land in New Babylon lives on the doubt, the clash, the creative tension of our very souls – all of which prompt a much-chaotic scenery, resulting from the spontaneous decisions and actions of many individuals and their "direct contact" with those of others [39, p. 163]. At its basic definition, by no other than Constant himself, New Babylon was an "uncertain universe" [39, p. 163] to spend a lifetime in, and with a "kaleidoscopic whole" in its image [39, p. 160] – in what one might call a clear contrast to a supposedly harmonious society or a peaceful whole.

As we shall see throughout our readings, this very uncertainty and its links with those in humanly creative activity make much of what New Babylon and its so-called utopia could be. A classic utopia, either as mythical indefiniteness or some impossible locations, seeks for an end – or, at best, a finality to all of our strivings and doubts [41]. Constant's version offers the exact opposite – a world without an end or a final image, and with no consensus whatsoever. In that sense, the debate and the critical operations, that most utopias ask of us and were built for, all seem to persist within premises of the destination, too, if ever reached. The doubt and the discussion in our minds prevail – and only to be enhanced further as a ceaseless, ever-present social activity [8,39].

So, after all, we might as well attempt to read New Babylon as a utopian entity – with apologies to its maker – from the standpoint of Claeys and Mumford [41,47] and of

such narratives' reconstructive, reflective emphases. In the context of the such definition, it is needed to reconsider what a utopia is, or, actually, to reconsider how and where we look at it from – even for its most classic denotations. A utopia, for all we postulated, still exists on the grounds of its non-existence, offers a presence that is defined by its absence – with the adverbs "ou" and "topos" merging, building us "a place that is not" [42]. And for all we postulated, it might still seem as a final, perfected whole – an improbable and singular ending that one can and will never get to.

An alternative and open-ended take on the subject is voiced by Espen Hammer, a professor of philosophy at Temple University, from whom we quoted that witty yet acute phrase regarding these dreamy locales. In his short piece [42], he was to underline the precarious and destructive narratives of utopias when taken as complete ideologies demanding sudden, seemingly distant, and dictated transformations. Unsurprisingly enough, and for most of its textbook definitions, utopias do come with its own failures along with the potentials we've underlined – thanks to their controversial genetics and often large-scale aspirations.

Yet, for a change, in spite of all those detrimental ramifications, Hammer recuperates some positive side effects of such grandiose faraway futures, and that we need them anyhow, especially for our own and yet-to-be-decided futures [42]. Moreover, in line with what Mumford or Claeys underlines [41,47], he suggests a way to recuperate those, and in turn, to use their self-reflective and present-assessing capabilities to lay bare what we came to possess – and, maybe, to find out what to do and where to lead with those possessions.

What Hammer offers is a simple suggestion: "So why not think of them as thought experiments? They point us in a certain direction" [42]. In other words, his take is, too, less of an obsession with the destination than embracing the road towards it. And it makes a simple attempt as well. By taking those faraway worlds as merely as possibilities and potential directions, they may then help us in our very humanly and inherently essential gesture as modern beings – that is, "the ability to look beyond the present" [42]. Or, just as we've outlined at the onset regarding our efforts, they could well reflect an attempt of drawing an instructive proposal; a draft map for our travels into the future.

As simple as all those suggestions might sound, they weren't any degrading. Thinking of utopias as mental experiments doesn't mean stripping those futures off their prospects and agendas. It rather suggests to work on their intrinsic spirits and what they offer in relation to our current status; instead of taking them as single, finalized and through realities which we won't be able to realize, or, if we attempt to, would be highly destructive for our own progress. If we could take our eyes off its final destination and grand scales, they can serve as food for thought, and also as preliminary cues for much-needed progressive cartographies – a sort of alternative and rather practical remedy to our present uncertainties.

Regarding those experimental and not-so-destructive virtues of utopias, the more we get into the Babylonian origins, Constant's unique utopianism becomes even more practical, transitional and harmless. In accordance with its innately nomadic and spontaneous aspirations outlined before, the preceding history of the project stems from ordinary and minuscule moments of everyday life where the world was conceived as a more adventurous, more connected and less boring version of itself than it previously was [49-51,29][9]. It surely promised a different world, but not one meant to be built up to the size of a global enterprise on the entire planet, at least not at one take [39].

For that, as being playful and highly-small samples for our forward-looking enquiries, New Babylon's essentially-small-scale utopias offer us thought experiments that could be done within a single instant and in the realm of our day-to-day lives. Hence, such minuscular genealogy casts those experiments all the more intact and Constant's work all the less grandiose. His utopian prospects could all be tested, and, if we are lucky, could be attained in a simple moment – or in a single *situation*, in reference to his original roots [28,30,50].

In all, New Babylon was not "a place that is not" [42], nowhere to be found – but one within reach for it shares the same conceptual grounds with the existing world, for being born of it, and sided with the common humanly topics of discussion, as in what

[9] More on the connections between Constant's work and the Situationist Project, you may refer to firsthand accounts of Constant on the inceptive grounds about situations and ephemeral constructions [8], along with McKenzie Wark's remarks [28]. The references in this portion could also be seen as the fundamental texts pertaining to the key Situationist ideas and incentives, and their relationship with the physical space, as well as with New Babylon. Such were more expanded and scrutinized in detail during the final sub-chapter of our first remembering phase.

most stories could best offer. A neighboring dreamland that, not just to be imagined as suggested by Hammer [42] for our political existence and outlooks; but also to be *realized* right inside the real as suggested by a much-earlier dreamer who is central to our collected stories [49]. On that word, it is also not much of a coincidence that this dreamer, from early on, was talking about sailors in particular – sailing from their doorsteps towards another world almost every morning [28].

On a final reference, bolstering up the project's claimed instrumentality and reality-oriented trajectories, a word from Constant's life partner and biographer, Ms. Nieuwenhuys-van der Horst, heard at a moment in space-time very close to ours, might help to understand Constant's vision and to place it in the large catalogue of imaginative histories, and even in that of utopias. She was to remind that Mr. Nieuwenhuys had been surely a utopian of some sort, but one is interested in possibilities and "realizing things", instead of being hung up on "impossibilities" [52]. As in Constant's referring to his own attempts, the goal wasn't just of portraying distant dreams, but also of changing the one we are in, and making it all part of the story [8,23]. While the method might have been dreaming of it – at least for a start or in fact for an entire lifespan – the ultimate goal was a reality. A reality continually dreamed and continually shaped by dreaming of it.

Speaking of changes, according to the same account of his partner, for a timeless and nomadic instrument as we've claimed it to be, New Babylon was actually somewhere there – and bit closer than most utopias were. It was partially present and already taking place at incremental intervals and scattered instances, and much critically, in the contemporary landscape of cultural customs and new emerging behaviors:

> The vision of Constant that people should change in more nomadic and less possessive lifestyles, in the sense they don't need their houses, cars, books etc., is happening now. See how many young people are sharing their homes, cars, books, furniture, household utensils and prefer to travel around the world instead of only and predominantly investing houses and cars. [52]

So, it wasn't only chance or a one-time optimistic revelation that prompted Constant to see and celebrate the "new nomads" showing up at the ever-enlarging airports [25], and inadvertently transforming the cultural customs of sedentary living. According to Ms. Nieuwenhuys, such prospects were accelerating and taking only different forms

even now; and that Constant was right to believe that at some point, maybe not at the scale of whole world or maybe not at one take, his vision would become a reality – for it had roots in the very heart of society which he had been engaged very deeply [52]. For all he had visited in various domains and practices during his solo adventure, including architecture, planning, science and visual arts; the central story had commenced from a societal discontent and a then-unfolding need of society, and concluded at its ultimate survival [25,29,53]. In regards to telling the same tale of the same society, the co-curator of another recent revisitation attempt in Cobra Museum, Ludo van Halem, notes that other than being an overall artistic depiction of a future, Constant's mysterious makings could well be conceived as "a sketch for a culture" [52].

Meanwhile, in her own way of using his partner's vision and to the extent of her rather quick take on the contemporary possessive practices and accelerated travelling, Ms. Nieuwenhuys-van der Horst was also exhibiting an attitude which was also central to spirits of the same visionary outlook – along with what we've recently postulated of its reflective purposes. As such nomadic tendencies and conditions to redeem them were still lingering in our present landscapes and bolstering up Constant's commencing cues, New Babylon's inherently nomadic and instrumental qualities were still active – making discoveries in the current world and showing us potentials encrypted in it.

Namely, by looking at her present through the lenses of New Babylon, she forms an opening for a critical contemplation; creating a chance to reflect back on our position, and also to measure our distance to some other alternative version. It resembles, however singularly, another act of re-situation and re-assessment by juxtaposing two realities – a critical act that is highly parallel to our academic intentions and conceptual model since proposed. In other words, it makes, again however singularly, an alignment between two different realms in which one can be read differently from the gloss of the other. A crucial and symptomatic instance of what New Babylon is set for, and could be all about.

At the end, such capacity of encryption and the chance for critical contemplation and measurement, as in what Mumford or Hammer [47,42] highlights and what Constant [8,53] often suggests, regardless of what's been revealed, might be the main, if not only, virtue of such visionary projections – including all utopias. For that, these

imaginary shores of our most humanly productions can well be equated to those of other earth-like planets that are practically too distant but all eager to near themselves on the account of their earthly features [17], as well as to some portions of good literature bridging us to faraway places and then back to our own on the account of the commons they *possess* [37] – wherein it becomes rather likely to read ourselves in the safest and most acute way possible.

For a conclusion, other than such analogies and references, by all those we try to excavate from the distances and angles of vision which Constant would prefer; by all those he advised of such positions and of the proper ways to see his project; and by studying all those he crafted and put into words for 18 years and before; New Babylon, all the more and effectively, becomes more of a transitional object – a toy, one with many eccentric and colorful sights and one too many different chapters to look at. By all those seen and excavated, and within all its different facets offering simple thought experiments; it becomes more of a safe passage for our hesitant souls – for those either lost or already too scared by the present turmoils or the overwhelming extent of all grandiose alternatives put before us [6].

And, as an alternative to all those alternatives, as a sort of utopia even to most commonplace utopias, and by all the commons present and the assurances provided; New Babylon, then, surely becomes a chance opening for us to explore our own world, and dare to look beyond it. Chances are, as with ours here in this study, we may see many other worlds ahead of us – floating somewhere not necessarily much far from where we stand.

1.3.5 The journey

As advised by our recent sources and imaginary affairs, the very instrumental qualities of our other possibles do not reside in how far and estranged their sights were, but in what those sights actually meant in relation to our sights here [42,46,47]. Whether it is a utopia, or a place “so fundamentally different from the world in which we live or the worlds we know from history” [8, p. 232], or a literary custom that is already remote and “getting even more distant” [18, p. 83], or a distant planet discovered out there in the deep dark space; the thing actually matters, according this progressive school of thought, is what we could see in them at our exact location – in the vicinity of the now.

As such certain way for gauging those farsighted experiments redeems their distance and altogether impossibilities, including our reasons to glance at New Babylon in order to look beyond this world; it also does offer a perspective on how and why we care to look into practically remote galaxy clusters and search for potential earths amongst them – at the cost of such intellectual effort and massive spending [54]. The balance sheet here is quite simple: As in thinking about utopias or even conjuring one, it is never a matter of reaching those planets right away or making immediate profits; but rather letting ourselves indulge in those indirect outcomes and make use of the sort of side effects which Hammer [42] noted of all distant places – imagined or actually spinning in cosmos. It was never a material cause, but more of a mental expansion.

Speaking of the seemingly impractical turnovers of such farsighted lookouts, Dennis Overbye, a prolific science writer and a frequent reference on these pages, notes of The Cassini Spacecraft's recent dive into the unknown depths of Saturn as a subtle but inspiring effort – which "moved our souls, our minds and our imaginations" [55]. According to him, rather than "moving the markets here back on Earth", Cassini showed us another glimpse of our limited knowledge and how much there is still to know in the universe which we are still a part of, and urged us to "expand our thoughts and dreams" of our rather greater existence [55].

Regarding the process of aligning with Babylonian provenances, some of those connections comes in the form of singular but crucial remarks of Constant and his companions, and in the wordage of couple of contemporary scholars – some of whom we've already paid a visit to. The rest is to be found in the very pieces of New Babylon – theoretical or material – to say, in the form of those commons we've noted of, if not yet entirely. And, upon our particular distance and by the help of these connections, then a *bridge* of our own appears: Another magical and theoretical passage for visiting an alien provenance in relation to our own lives – at its particular distance to our reality. Another chance for both getting to know the limits of ourselves and also for expanding our thoughts and dreams – one alignment at a time. And, for the very objectives of this thesis, a chance to test such open-ended, forward-looking and instrumental potentials of New Babylon itself.

Moving forward, just like Benjamin's decision to delve into that distant past and into the characteristic virtues of storytelling; we first ought to delve into that distant planet of Babylonian origins in order to revisit our own more comprehensively –as in

Nussbaum's inclination to visit others' tragedies in order to face her vulnerabilities more thoroughly and courageously [35]. This is the exact prescription for us to make a contact with New Babylon, or any utopian dream or distant planet, in the most effective and proper manner. And it is also the prescription of our two-part remembering procedure applied in the thesis, one that chooses to visit New Babylon first and then revisits ours after – through the lenses and personal entanglements of one author present in this reality.

In a similar premise grounding one of these relentless endeavors, The Cassini spacecraft is on its way to eventual destruction, waiting to crush on the unknown terrains of Saturn, expected on the 15th of September 2017, while taking pictures of our larger terrains of the unknown, making discoveries and providing knowledge for our intellectual horizons [55]. And Walter Benjamin, despite the diminishing chance of hearing good stories and finding counsel, was brave enough to set foot in the realm of the long-forgotten traits of humanity, if not that of the pure unknown [18]. And, our initial prompter of poetic kinds, Paul Auster was already keen on making meanings over the connections and recurrences of his life, which most likely were products of some chance operations, for they merely offered him a place inside the living world, and within all those happened or existed ever since [2].

And Constant likewise delivered such relentless energy to work on those possibilities seen from his own angle of vision and from his seeing-instrument; cared enough to expand his distant sightings as far as he could – so that we could also care to look *through* those he expanded and could further add on his findings [8]. Or, we might as well draw a different future, for that was, even for him, was undecided and still taking shape as we move on [8,53]. But nevertheless, he cared enough to expand his work for us to get into that discussion preceding our making of a future – no matter where we are in the passage of worldly calendars or how far we are from another future, and no matter what we possess in our present inventories, material or imaginative.

In the light of all those said about the power of timeless stories, specifically their open-ended layout and their capacity for endless revisitations [18], and in the light of all those said recently; we can assert that New Babylon, in its very core and beyond all its architectural remains, was a true and comprehensive artwork. An artwork that is devised to show "how and to what extent" we are far from it, as well as to show how

possible it is to reach it – given "how and to what extent" [37] we share the same founding elements, as in More's otherwise closely-situated island [43].

But such spanning of lengths, as Constant advised us to think and test further through his proposals [8], and just as his life-partner exhibited in her rather shorter remarks [52], required our further movement upon those commons. In a certain sense, once again likening our attempts to those of Benjamin and to our very modern instincts [42]; parts of this academic work, and as with its architectural premises, is of formulating and drafting that particular space that Benjamin had been seeking [18]. A space, which surely is architectural and spatial to some degree, that is devised for making new meanings – but also for seeing beyond the present. Within that space, a theoretical one as much as a spatial one, there would be formed several contemporary alignments with Constant's lifework – especially in our final journey – true to his speculative and twofold wits, and true to New Babylon's essentially nomadic genealogy that calls for constant dislocations [9,23].

And hopefully, as with all the preliminary research and with the ensuing subjective readings; these premises and their firsthand testing would guide many other explorers that are inclined to deliver such effort – either with the utopia of our choosing or through many other past-futures presumed before us. Regarding the expanse of this work, it is also why the parts in which we look into our anchor is relatively of great lengths – a journey where we only look to the anchor itself. Then, as outlined regarding the second remembering, we will also circumnavigate around it in other domains seem relevant, and then attempt to glance at the anchor in a double vision which also involves our reality. For all of its parts, there is an opening for other prospective travelers and curiosities in our study.

For the time being, as a *transitional object* [35,36] of our own study, Constant's alternative reality acts as a kind of assuring presence when we are left, just like a child leaving his mother, with an alien world – that is, our very own. An otherwise unfamiliar realm which is populated with *others* – and with many other flaws but with many other possibles hidden within. In the presence of New Babylon, the not-us becomes us; and we become New Babylon – if not right away, but partially per se, at least in theory. At the very end, we might say that Constant's ultimate dream was an assurance that other futures were possible, and such seemingly impractical journeys were worth making [8,9,29].

In another endorsement of such mental efforts, also with a prominence for (re-)seeing what's already seen, Marcel Proust [56], if mostly for the masteries of artistic vocations for his part, talks about having a new set of seeing-parts or a new set of positions to see, concerning the very nature of most expansive voyages – as well to the essence of discoveries. And, given what we've found out since, such vantages on the part of the possession of "other eyes" [56, p. 291] alongside such sort of travels, which, too, appears rather and often mental, are what was primarily offered by Constant's own utopian land. Thus, in our journey, it is Constant's mysterious planet and the alternative stories of our ever-nomadic, ever-connected and ever-playing cousins – what we are to see and hear. Chances are, for now, all we seem to have.

1.4 Methodology

Here, other than the tactical positions, language choices and a set of adopted strategies favored to meet the objectives centered around the informative and far-reaching capabilities of New Babylon; there is employed another set of opposing stances or modes of remembering – all paralleling with the rather conscious positions the author takes throughout this recuperative research. Namely, for building a considerable and critical memory of the project and then attempting to re-remember it, with some of the parts forgotten eventually; two different modes of memory production, the voluntary and the involuntary, would be enacted during the process. Other than the theories and differences vested in their basic operations, and through the references explained here upon, the thesis attempts to make a practical use of these models – in line with the seemingly-opposing episodes of recuperation and the necessities of employing them for comprehensively assessing this project.

For the parts where we delve into the project's own accounts and those of other scholars' in a rather objective assessment, it involves a directly conscious mode of remembering – where we basically look into the project and its impact in its time, seeking for its potentials from the outside-in, while keeping a critical distance. For the remaining part, where we riffle through our own accounts and expansions in a timely setting, a necessary nearing and entanglement impelled by the so-called timeless and nomadic instrumentality of the work; we exercise or make use of what's called the involuntary and spontaneous operations of memory – which concludes the twofold

revisitations of our thesis, one that materializes in fairly detached encounters and logs of entanglement with New Babylon in the present conjuncture.

1.4.1 Voluntary memory: Remembering

As explained, if briefly; with the excerpts and facets investigated in the first part, all of which may be considered as the plural incarnations of a single dream; we would be visiting and exploring many different Babylons on our path in these mostly written records – versions that seemingly are different from the original and the mostly visual one, while being profoundly linked to its central crux which is concurrently being revealed during such operation. What we tend to employ here is an explorative multiplication process that also singularizes a phenomenon all the more, and vice versa – a somewhat peculiar undertaking ensued by the very peculiar cores of the same phenomenon, which also comprises many other paradoxical natures in itself [9,28,32].

As we run into many other versions of Babylon – occasionally by direct crafting and correlative derivation, and also by splitting the project into all the medias it since acquired – and by adding those to our recollections; we would be commencing our memory-affairs in their first stage. And as in most remembering acts, some things might (and could) not be remembered. That is, other than these new vantages suggested by Constant and the subsequent sights we would be gaining during the interim; the rest would be forgotten, and excluded from our recuperation, somewhat for good.

As for the peculiar workings of memory, a concept that extends well beyond the content of this study, it is like what once phrased by Robert Morris, the conceptual artist and sculptor, that a recollection offers us both “recovery and loss” – somewhat simultaneously – that is “a particular kind of death” one could never seem to avoid [57, p. 92]. A twofold, peculiar process which is applicable to both of our remembering acts, and to whoever attempts to remember – including the author present.

In that way, as in Marcel Proust’s theses on past time and remembrance [38,58-61], and somewhat opposite to his concept, this first phase entails a compilation of a rather *voluntary memory* [62] – a relatively conscious recollection and assemblage informed largely by the notes of Constant, that pertains to the particular ways in which we ought to see and recall his dreamy logs [8]. And it is a recollection which would allow a certain type of memory – for Constant’s work was a product of the past – that in

advance would allow further remembrances and a timeless quality which as well takes part in those further memory operations.

While our whole study being a forward-looking, progressive type of hypothetically-astronomical enterprise, if mostly embodied in its secondary agenda; these preparatory portions of an earlier past make a keen historical excavation as much as a microscopic observation of a particular cultural genealogy. What unravels before us is a much-distinct cultural and mental backdrop which could be summarized as a highly profound distaste of everyday living and the existing cities, coupled with a highly critical and much strategic recoil drafted by a handful of thorough dissidents – a unique group of individuals that framed as a "provisional micro-society" in Wark's wordage[10] [28, p. 62]. These somewhat daily, innately-reactionary fables steer us towards the inceptive motivations and to the early days and locales of Constant's vision – offering a limited but solid reconciliation with its primitive beginnings along with the very era it was born into.

In line with such inverted historiography, which prefers not to start from the beginning but rather chooses to look into it later and according to what is revealed earlier; the first episode of our two-part seeing-slash-remembering experiment begins with the most recent revelations – namely, those occurred long after the official conception of New Babylon. These segments recall several stories from the author of these pages, for the sake of providing what we've previously referred as a phenomenological backdrop to the foundations of this thesis. In any case, every journey, and every movement for matter, requires a starting point – and does usually possess one, and requires its own remembering.

What's more, there also lies a contribution to the theoretical groundwork of our entire enterprise – an expansion and a further consolidation of the reasons of choosing such a project both for a thorough understanding and a critical seeing venture in the first place. Alongside of our *How*, these parts also further prescribe our Why – detailed in the course of a somewhat thorough, interiorized or local, instrumentalization process that takes place during these reversed historiographies in our initial, one-way journey.

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[10] In this reference [28], refer to the chapter *A Provisional Micro-Society* covering the Situationist collective's own backstory and interior dynamics – as well as its political overtones and behavioral tendencies.

In that way, all we came to remember, revisit and derive from several pasts and other courageous journeys of the present, and all the sights we came to discover and trace further and backwards, are to make our claimed instrument more of an instrument – by adding more to its particular facets we've unraveled since the beginning, and extending its inherent legacy to a more effective degree. A legacy which, while being neglected or misinterpreted by many [8], ultimately becomes and bears the essential method and model for employing such an instrument, and as well as for remembering it properly. And that's where, once again, our two objectives in the thesis appear to coincide and back each other up – precisely during their simultaneous unfolding.

At the end, all this preparatory groundwork further unearths those particular meanings of our distant alternative, in which it becomes the sort of utopian vision that is rather informative [41], reconstructive [47], non-overwhelming and non-destructive [42], and encourages us to look beyond ourselves [35]. As you may have heard many times now, it, almost and always, and for a project with so many facets, incarnations and inherent controversies, comes down to how and where you look at things from, and also to how you remember them – other than what they physically are or how they currently look in a museum collection.

1.4.2 Involuntary memory: Forgetting and re-remembering

Regarding the parting of our remembrance and seeing into two phases, there is also a limitation imparted by the nature of most memory workings, as outlined in the previous part through certain accounts [2,57]. For the project we try to remember, according to our primary hypotheses and findings, is highly nomadic and circumnavigated many places with many different guises and versions of itself [7,9]; there are only so much one could recall of it. Yet, this is not just a matter of practicality or of our humanly limitations, but mostly of a scholarly gesture – which appears all the more convenient given the mere record of this extensive legacy.

That is, even though such improbable stretch of recollection is not our aim, method or desire, as Pascal noted [2], it is much natural and helpful, and somewhat moral, to acknowledge one's shortcomings in remembering things entirely – and to make peace with the inherent forgetfulness and loss that comes with recuperation, an unavoidable occurrence as well stressed by Robert Morris [57]. If anything, it is not that we are to remember and retrace this long and diverse trajectory in all parts, but to remember and

retrace the very core, say the mental essence, that resulted in such trajectory. It is therefore not the mere or gaugeable complexity and multitude of New Babylon, what we're to grasp in its past, say not entirely – but rather what it makes it such an entity.

To put this more explicitly, for an inherently nomadic and conceptual project that was devised as an alternative counterpart, a comparative story, to our present beings; then it appears almost natural and compulsory to remember Constant's world within its connections to our present reality – at least for one phase. And that's what the thesis openly prefers by its two-phase memory-procedures: Keeping the rest of memories and their meanings, hopefully with their novel expansions and renewed sights, intact by keeping them near to our present whereabouts – by inserting them into the compound realm of Benjaminian readings that is made of not one but two different, critically-situated timespans.

A similar sort of realm and remembrance, as noted in the previous part and however in a contrasting statute, is largely elucidated in the theses pertaining to a certain kind of recollective event – courtesy of Marcel Proust himself. What we may here refer as *Proustian* or *Involuntary* type of memory [58,59], it is where the past is recollected by the agency of a present event or experience, and therefore summoned back, or *forward* in a sense, into the realm of the present [60,61]. Here, the involuntariness occurs from the unexpected or unplanned emergence of some past pieces, stored in one's memory – as well as that of the act of remembering itself.

Peter Szondi, in his foreword reflecting on the recollective practices of both Proust and Benjamin, explains the source of this phenomenon as some corresponding experiences that belong to multiple timespans, resulting in what he calls "the coincidence of the past with the present" [63, p. 18]. Proust, to his own experience of such unplanned overlaps, defines a particular sort of "environment" where he suddenly finds himself in [38, p. 995] – a hypothetical place that is situated outside of time, meaning not really belonging to any particular and single timespan, and that is even freed from its very existence by the pure encounter of those kindred, seemingly-repeating events. Theoretically, what forms is a hybrid, compound sort of reality, both in its making and firsthand encounter: A particular experience and a temporal opening which appears akin to what we've since referred as an *interconnected realm*.

For Proust's part [38], these instances were to offer him a way of existing and enjoying certain parts of his own life outside of time, or *above* all times for that matter, for the confusion in situating the true origins of that corresponding experience itself along with the feelings, mostly cheerful and dense, that seem to arise with it. While this turns out to be a rather personal attempt of recollecting past in order to overcome history and escape the linear and weary passage of time, and of eluding the most uncertain chunk of it, the future [63]; the notion of being situated *above-times*, or of being in a place made of two coinciding, once again, presents a comparable scheme for our own model – if employed in a more academic manner.

In our own case of using memory as such in our second remembering, namely the memory of New Babylon; several instances, where the actual date or the origin of the corresponding parts does not seem to matter, happen to transpire as well – a process which in fact have been active throughout our entire study and before, and again without any intention whatsoever. Like many other important findings and events that went both into the inception and process of this very thesis, these instances came to offer most of their meanings later on [64].

In these particular instances, then, the curious and time-denying workings of Proustian recollection take on a more particular stance, as well as a distinct sort of purpose. Namely, here the memory, or the products of its involuntary acts, are utilized to create new insights as well as new information – and, again, concerning both parties of our involuntary pairings or *alignments* per se. In that way, it is much parallel to what happens in Benjamin's pairing of a certain past, that is already stored in his memory, with his own present – all alongside the double, *interconnected* readings he made in there [18]. That is, in a simpler saying, here we are more interested in the products of these Proustian, *timeless* instances and environments – rather than the involuntary coincidences or the peculiarity of the events themselves.

On that account, the keen comparisons of Szondi, between the two types of memory-production and their utilization, might further be relevant – to the extent of our own remembrance acts, and what and how we choose to remember. To his case, the main distinction between the two takes on things once happened, that of Proust and Benjamin, is that the latter account chooses to retrieve past as a source of guidance and information regarding the future, as an open-ended plot much like New Babylon itself – yet conceived in the ordinary historical lining of events [63]. In Benjamin's *Berlin*

Childhood, the past conventionally appears as the very counterpart and natural prologue to the future – a narrative that "bears traces of what was to come" [63, p. 18]. Namely, his construction is somewhat a straight line, along which he moves back and forth to make sense of the future, by looking at it from its previous chapters.

While we may see this as a rather linear, if optimistic, reading of history, Proust's version takes on a more personal, if intentional, degree where it is used so as to avoid or deny the very concept of history, which, as noted, then turns into a search for an experience and way of being outside of conventional time and the very notion of past [63]. And while we've already stated that our own model and way of remembering things, especially in the second act, is akin to the timeless instances of Proust; there is also an affinity, if to a certain degree, in what Benjamin seems to bestow on the past – namely, as an open-ended, possibility- and insight-inducing slice of history.

That is, the very memory of New Babylon, as an entity and a product of the past, is a comparable record that could surely be seen as a source of possibilities and notes on the upcoming future – at least in the way we try to remember it. However, the way we employ or recollect this record, and which also is the way it needs to be employed or recollected according to our overall recollection, is still closer to the way in which Proust constructs his *above-timespans* instances.

Simply put, although we conceive Constant's work as an open-ended story that bears clues and potentials for what's yet to come, it is not conceived or utilized in the conventional, straightforward lining of history, say the linear type. If anything, this story particularly offers these clues whenever it is dislocated from its original timeline and paired with, thanks to the operations of involuntary coincidences in one's memory, the present timespan in those genetically-Proustian, naturally-spontaneous, partially-detached, *interconnected* realms and encounters.

What we draw then, with cues to our second chapter where we'd actually attempt to draw and make use of these Proustian environments, is less of a straight line where the past stands in its ordinary place – before the present and the future comes after. Instead, in our theoretical model, the alignments are only temporary and many, occurring whenever a connection is made between the past and the present – an within our cloud centered around New Babylon – thus drawing several faint and detached lines representing those involuntary connections which innately pose an ahistorical

presence. To the extent of looking for potentials and meanings reside in a certain past in relation our future, our undertaking is Benjaminian in spirit, if partially – but much more and effectively Proustian in its operations and spatial pretenses.

According to Lillian Hellman [65], through the agency of such revisits, that is the mere act of remembering, one might consequently, and inadvertently, misplace that distinction and confuse the very edges of what constitutes the present. To her case, this blurry perception still seems different from the timeline-bending or past-free constructs of Marcel Proust [38,63], for one is not entirely negligent of the corresponding parts and the true origin of the things remembered. Yet, as seen in Auster's notes on memory and his otherwise dead-end search for meanings in things took place in different moments of his life [2], one could, whether the memory operates voluntarily or not, easily confuse the past for the present [65] – given the robust impact of the encounter, which partially is the case for Proust [38].

What occurs in these moments, where the line between the past and the present is blurred or they tend to switch places, is more than just a momentary mistaking or an error in comprehending the actual timeline. Such further ramifications are also relevant our case and memory-operations, and they effectively posit themselves wherein the simultaneous occupation of two different timelines could yield to a sort of re-making, that is an active and productive procedure, concerning the corresponding constituents. Which is to say, if not to completely change what once took place, the past can gain new meanings and vantages in these instances – as well as the present to which is linked and by which it reappears.

Furthermore, to its rather distortive merits, yet indeed as a sort of remaking procedure, the memory has the capacity to dislocate or forget things – as we've underlined in the theses of Pascal and Morris [2,57]. Similarly, also included in the notes of Peter Szondi [63], in the recollections of the renowned novelist Rainer Maria Rilke [66], it is stressed that certain aspects of a protagonist of his childhood days are left out – yet not intentionally but as a natural process of the memory itself. Here, it is noted that the author of an otherwise imperfect narrative, "the painter" in Szondi's wording [63, p. 9], is not the Rilke himself but his memory. Nevertheless, it is thus clear that the memory is a producer in its own right which renders new vantages – and not simply a plain, exact record of what once took place. It has the power to reshape, reconstitute and bestow new meanings upon those already had one.

On our part, it is also noteworthy to say that we are not to forget or misplace things entirely – or that we are to exercise a repetitive, meticulously-structured writing. What we're interested here and in these several references is the new sights and meanings that things once happened might gain afterwards – in the space of our memory and amidst a foreign timespan. Which is, in Szondi's wording, a rather new "picture" of those once painted [63, p. 9] – for in remembering and in the space of memory, "everything is both itself and something else", as clearly put by Auster [2, p. 136]. And the latter, where what once was becomes of its else, is what we're certainly after – say the possible new pictures of New Babylon, whether it misses certain parts or are coupled with new ones for the better.

On a final note, one should again take into account the naturally-distorting aspects of memory – that is the forgetting that comes with it. Well, in an otherwise contrasting take on this, Samuel Beckett, with respect to Proust's travels, notes that a person with an ideal memory does not necessarily remember things, "for he does not forget anything" [67, p. 306]. While we're not to directly oppose this great novelist, and as said earlier, that we are not here to remember everything; it would be appropriate to say that we're actually counting on the fallibilities of our memory and its own way of transforming the past, or at least the appearance of it, just as in the theses of Auster and Szondi [2,63]. And, reversing Beckett's postulation, it could be said that for one to remember things, one first needs to forget. And, comparably, one as well as needs to know certain things previously, in order to forget them later.

So, after the required groundwork and those we remember there, we forget. And then, thanks to our own Proustian instances, we are to remember what once was read and then forgotten. A true, productive memory, if not a perfect one, requires forgetting. In that way, the first phase of our remembrance is less of a remembering, and more about assembling a guiding memory per se. And, therefore in the same way, the second part is what entails an actual remembering; for a recollection, at least for our endeavor, first and foremost requires a distance – one in which the memory can freely operate. And such distance, other than measured in timely units, is essentially provided by the present to which a relevant past is linked – or vice versa. And that's where the spontaneous alignments of two timespans, like in Benjamin's readings, come into place.

Comparably, as we shall see in the configuration of our final logs, it suggests us a rather detached, at times discontinuous and inherently-subjective, fragmented recollections with a somewhat spontaneously-shaped trajectory – namely to the extent and order of what's to remember of New Babylon in the light of its links, say in our alignments, with our present world and even further in unlikely domains.

As noted several times now, and regardless of the outcomes and how much we could remember in the second phase; such procedure is not only what we currently and academically intend to exercise, but is the exact way such project needed to be remembered and used – and other than how our minds usually seem to operate. It is the exact way to think of utopias or to investigate remote planets and stars despite their impractical distances, so that they could inform our current existence and acquire new meanings accordingly in the meantime.

So, as in an acute Herodotus fable with many endings [18], our journey surely is of an open-ended kind, which aspires to range deep into the unknown and yet-to-be discovered – but also into the long-forgotten and misremembered. For that, in all, and in the long history of telling and hearing well-crafted stories by ourselves and for the sake of our intellectual well-being and common prospects [18,41,42]; such journey surely entails a revisiting of a timeless story or a forgotten planet after several decades, if not after centuries, in order to make our own and new meanings of it – both on the account of its informative importance and at its critical distance to our present whereabouts.

1.4.3 Position

As partially explained, the first phase of remembering and research on New Babylon would largely be revisiting the accounts and entanglements of other scholars and key personas, including its maker but also the those of the author at certain instances, in an attempt to conceive and make visible the impact of the project in its own time and further in the academic field. The goal here is to sustain a critical distance to the project, say also as a scholar besides an individual observer favoring to stay outside of it, so as to achieve a relative objective assessment of the project's crux and instrumental merits through a respective literature. Whereas, these findings are coupled with the notes of the observer as well, the author himself, pertaining to several new sights offered to him during these revelations.

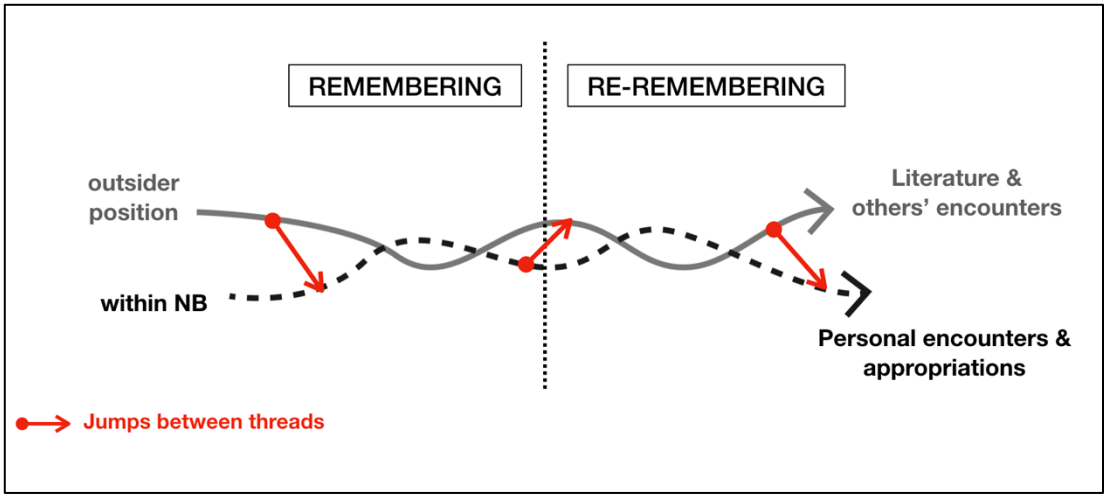

Figure 1.7 : Two interwoven threads of accounts and ever-changing positions.

In effect, these two types of positions and accounts, an outsider one that is critical and a rather personal kind that is entangled and vague at times, are largely interwoven throughout our both recuperative acts – for the given object of our study and its open-ended, open-to-appropriation natures. Grounding our twofold reading methodology on the same accounts, the author constantly changes its position in his readings, both on objective and rather entangled accounts, continually moving around New Babylon – and based on what appears in each outlook. In this cloud-like structure and in a constant movement, gaining sights from both others' experience and his own, the author in effect uses this tangle and twofold assessment with the aim of understanding what really New Babylon is and what could it further make visible elsewhere, both as an entity and potentially as a critical seeing-device.

In the parts where the author would mostly resort to its own readings and entanglements with the New Babylon, ranging from various moments in his academic life and those took place during the making of this lengthy work; the rather subjective and insider position would eventually increase in use – yet still to be linked with the recuperations of the first act and its references. One could say the movement here is much freer and could attain larger distances inside the cloud – a fluid and dynamic terrain that gets naturally larger by the increasing and diversifying connections and readings involving New Babylon, far outside of its official provenances.

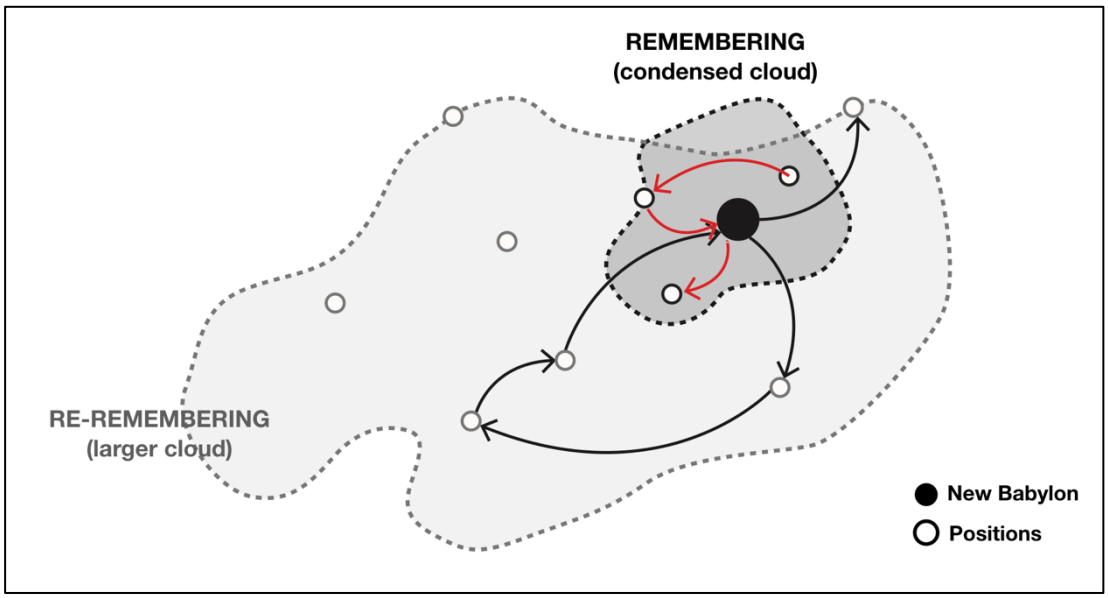

Figure 1.8 : Cloud-like structure of readings done in two phases.

Such change of position, other than to collate these encounters and revelations with those revealed in the first remembrance, is again due to the so-called timeless and nomadic pretenses of the project – one that almost demands first-person entanglements and appropriations by any singular observer in their own time setting and individual outlook. As said, the more we look, both from outside and within, the more of an instrument New Babylon becomes with all the possible chances of appropriation and expansion in most personal and foreign contexts. In a way, the project almost imposes such movement and intertwining of two positions.

With all the facets and pieces becoming free of its historical place and sole visual legacy, and essentially becoming all the more of its timeless and mental capacities; the project becomes only visible and readable when seen from both positions, and acquire new meanings and capabilities – in line with our interconnected agendas that are directly linked to the eccentric natures of the project. Finally, the juxtaposition of the findings gathered from two positions will be included and reviewed by the thesis, both in the specific episodes of the second remembrance and as an overview in the conclusion, so as to see whether these personal findings and encounters support and enhance the claims made by the project.

1.4.4 Strategies

To the extent of *how* to test the far-reaching, mental merits of the project and read its true legacy in the light of these, several other models and theoretical appendixes would

be borrowed and implemented alongside the procedures that are already-embedded within the project and are New Babylonian by nature – both of which exposed by our initial research and theoretical cues. They are to be used in order to expand these inherent procedures and to see how New Babylon could practically operate as an instrument.

Already explained in this introduction, these borrowed strategies would range from the astronomical phenomenon of critical alignments to rather objective chartings, if still and also metaphorical, such as geographical dealings of maps and architectural notions like *bridges*. In fact, such vocabulary and metaphors, like space and movement for instance, or the use of diagrams and spatial representations, are prevalent throughout the thesis – as a direct extension of the author's very profession and inherent understanding of many theoretical matters. On a critical note, the borrowing and introduction of these models and auxiliary concepts are not by chance or of any personal preference, but rather linked to a keen reading of Constant's work and therefore summoned in line with its own critical repository and instrumental claims – all becoming parts and points of enlarging the theoretical cloud around New Babylon.

One of the integrated strategies is storytelling borrowed from literature practices – based on a virtue vested in all supposedly-timeless stories and seemingly-faraway realities that, if told and revisited in a proper setting and format, are capable to usher critical outlooks and context-denying connections with the side of timeless wisdom [18,37]. Seeing New Babylon was mostly delivered and remembered by our central sources as fragments and firsthand encounters; the frequent use of storytelling, in the main body text and often in titles, appears to correspond with a recuperative project focusing on such story – where we sort of align and heed to the delivery of its worded accounts with the most inherent forms of remembering such as memory logs and partial parables. On a side note, this strategy one also shapes our wordage and twofold language as well – namely employed in telling the stories of Constant's own journey, complied both from himself and others encountered it, and some of our own.

An additional borrowed method, as introduced and explained earlier, is vested in the astronomical concept of timely and critical *alignments*, utilized both its spatial and philosophical extents. Not really disassociated with our favoring of stories and heeding to the specific ways and wordage to recall them, such instances allow us to near ourselves with a far reality or a certain past in a double or interconnected vision, if

only brief period of time. On the side of that, a similar concept, the *constellation*, is also borrowed from similar domains where the readings and connections made are innately personal, transitory and dependent on the position or place of a singular observer – especially within those instances.

	Phase / Memory	*Aim*	*Language*	*Structure*	*Main Sources*	*Strategies*
1	**REMEMBERING** (voluntary memory)	Theoretical outline	3rd Person + 1st Person	Cloud (condensed)	Outsider encounters & literature ('50-'11)	Storytelling, Literature Review
2	**RE-REMEMBERING** (involuntary memory)	Illustrate the potentials	1st Person + 3rd Person	Cloud (larger)	Personal encounters & appropriations in foreign domains	Theoretical constellations, drawings, timely alignments

Figure 1.9 : Metholodogy overview: phases, aims, language, sources and strategies.

Naturally, these concepts will be used heavily in the second remembrance, where the author attempts to revisit New Babylon through its affinities with our present setting and other domains of knowledge when seem relevant. As said, some of these closer takes will be founded upon some highly-personal memory pieces and associations, courtesy of the author himself, that were involuntarily appearing in his journey – giving us chances to encounter New Babylon from a foreign location and amidst a larger theoretical cloud.

In all, as with our ever-changing positions, they take part in the making of the necessary theoretical framework both to understand the project's own critical crux and particular practices – namely, that of making connections and bridges with its own present reality. And, in doing so, it is further to utilize the project properly in the course of testing its premises and our main hypotheses bound with those capabilities – the prospective ability of being further appropriated and acting as a timeless guide to find novel connections and *bridges*.

1.4.5 Language and referencing

Regarding the two positions chosen and use of academic vocabulary in the thesis, there might occur several irregularities regarding what is expected from a conventional PhD exemplar. Yet by the virtues invested by the philosophical roots of such academic venture, a making of philosophy requires the necessary forms and incarnations of its

viable dissertation. And for the one presented here is a philosophical narrative that is precisely bound to several stories and accounts, to those centered upon one peculiar story in time, and bound to their particular tethering; the use of language and quoting pattern would exhibit a profound degree of abnormalities.

In terms of their appearance, but not necessarily of content, the passages in the first part will employ frequent recitations and referencing from a couple of sources, yet not as the exclusive selections of the author – who is merely a binder of stories with a certain agenda or two. Those parts, in fact, will employ such irregularities exactly for the structure of the thesis simply demands them: It is for the entire work's inception and philosophical background were based on a critical reading of that particular story, New Babylon of Constant, whose preferred incarnations and particular facets which we are very much interested in an academic manner. Thus, it rests on the author's binding of several outsider stories of other scholars, and often those of Constant himself.

That keen retelling of others' accounts clearing an immanent path for the thesis's undertaking, of its reasons and methodological executions; another account of a more personal type, namely the author's first experience with Constant's heritage, couples the reasoning segments, which are deemed to be crucial in the scale of such academic work. In close up, these parts would, and in a way have to, include the author's very own story – yet not directly of New Babylon, but of the personal chronicles related to the discoveries and preceding research with all the individuals involved, and thus led the present author to indulge in this thesis in the first place. These mostly personal histories, partially as the phenomenological feeds in the making of a theoretical background, are told in side by side with others' reading of the project and with Constant's own philosophical roots – as what our twofold and ever-changing positions assert.

And with that, it will also tell the story, which also adds up to our reasons of choosing, of the very origins and the very inception of this scholarly endeavor. Similar to the hybrid narrational magic of Emmanuel Carrere, the greatest writer of non-fiction in France according to the critic Wyatt Mason [68], with all the other stories selected and tethered together, and with all the reasons for doing it; the first chapter will coincidentally tell the story of making the first decisions and proceeding with Constant's story to create a PhD work – employing "the inclusion of the process" by

which this PhD is being formed. It is highly because anything in these pages would not exist without those early parts, and also because they bring out the first ontological grounds of this very work – opening up the path for other reasonings that appeared along the way and further made this work more compelling. It is a substantial telling of a *Why* – as personal as it is a major one.

For a procedural overview, the entirety of our readings then is presented in the form of a well-intended tangle of personal and outsider accounts, all strolling around New Babylon. Here, there are no intentions for outsourcing the intellectual labor which would be a sort of plagiarism and unauthenticity – while the words put in do not make up a response letter to a question about the author's personal view on the matters of life and world, which a PhD certainly is not. Rather, this tangle is used only to lay down the whys and wherefores of this academic endeavor along with the preliminary *how's* of the thesis – that is the methodology it both chooses and devises at the same time.

So, especially both in our relatively objective assessments and later in our fragmented logs, several accounts of the author will be presented in first-person telling, for there would be no other way, alongside consistent remarks from other references in the third-person – some of which were integral to the author's inceptive perceptions of the project. Meanwhile, the author would have a say in seldom occasions during the course of presenting his own takes – for that is natural for any PhD work, and for the course of saying something new amidst of what's been already said.

On a final note, also highly existent in the work, the perspective and diction of *we* is a descendent of commonplace storytelling and that of novelists, while its frequent use rises from a sense of community being formed by the inception of this thesis. One might as well see this work as another chance wander in the landscape of unconnected stories and yet-to-be-found meanings, but one that is endowed with an agenda and fruitful cues along its seemingly open-ended but equally exciting path.

It is *we* as the humanity, with the same spirit of Auster, in search of meanings and if momentary significance [2]; or with the same eagerness of astrophysicists gazing deep inside the vast blackness of universe looking for clues of life and earthly counterparts [16,17,19,20]; or as the humanity in pursuit of new ideas and perceptions in the most faraway and impossible places [41-47]. It is *we* for not only the author – the *I* – but all

of us, the readers of this dissertation to begin with, looking out towards what is beyond us or might have just past us, and yet still could be a possible of what *we* still have[11]. As said, all this is an experiment, as with its very object, New Babylon itself. And, to some degree, so is for most of our beings circumnavigating a planet that is seemingly-lonely or devoid of an alternative, and yet dreaming that perhaps it just might not be the case [17].

[11] Depicting another imaginary future, where people roam and wander in another flattened, if rather dystopian, barren landscape, the movie *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) ends with a quote in black frame – delivered by "The First History Man", the fictional narrator who recorded the events in the story: "Where must we go…we who wander this Wasteland in search of our better selves?" [69]. So, the wandering, both of physical and mental undertones, is involved in that rather philosophical search of our better versions, an open-ended journey that travelled both towards the outside world and our inner selves often at once – with no clear or rather endless prospects in sight, depending on how you read it.

2. REMEMBERING

Presented here, and assembled in a reversed historical order for the most, are the particular instances, accounts and references that point to the assumed and far-reaching prospects of New Babylon – some of which are already illustrated in the introduction. The writing favors to begin with the most recent engagements, and, from the new sights acquired there, the text traces these meanings and facets of the project in its own lifetime and further back into its cultural origins. In this tracing, several other references would make appearances, other than the author who makes the majority of the first part – such as scholars studied the project in depth several decades after its completion, and certain personas that involved in its early making and as well as in shaping Constant's particular mentality.

Upon this trajectory, often going back as in an archeological excavation, we visit several versions and guises of New Babylon in each sub-chapter devoted to three different timelines – whose inner chapters, in relation to these meanings and guises, are highlighted with a respective title. There, it acquires different names and appearances to its part, all of which, ironically, tend to suggest a rather singular essence and purpose of the project – one that is of highly ephemeral origins despite acquiring many different forms.

2.1 Other and Newer Babylons

These segments, presented in a tangle of both outsider and personal accounts, recall the very first instances in which the project of Constant began to appear as something larger, critical and rather formless than its most known self – namely beyond its extensive visual legacy and place in recent architectural discourse – as outlined in the starting cues of the thesis. Heeding to the most basic proceedings of remembering, it starts with the most recent revelations and entanglements recorded in the author's memory, corresponding with the events and several academic works that involve New Babylon. As much as offering the grounds of this work and of our main hypotheses,

such instances offer the first critical sights, and thus becomes of the earliest and foundational points of our cloud-like reading terrain.

2.1.1 First revisit

One of the most critical, if not first, entanglement with Constant's legacy begins with the research and production phase of *New New Babylon* [33] which the author involved directly – a 21st century reincarnation or a "digital détournement" of the original one in the very Situationist spirit as put in a piece covering this work [70, p. 52]. As mentioned earlier, it is one of the original nuclei that shaped the idea of this research, giving a couple of sub-chapters their title along with its very instrument – by being an elemental model of dislocation that allows us to bridge two distant worlds and move between them. In short, the proposal, was an open-ended, almost-never-done-before and, thus, design-your-own-research type of adventure in the realm of current digital and visual media, to reconstruct, at least that had been the simplest definition of those early intentions, the infamous New Babylon of Constant.

The proposal came from Professor McKenzie Wark and a NYU-Poly resident by the name of Carl Skelton, the director of Brooklyn Experimental Media Center back then. He was responsible for an eccentric project in the works, which inadvertently possessed links with the open-ended and appropriative natures of New Babylon. His project was virtual copy of Manhattan that might be more interactive, if not more sociable, than its real counterpart where anyone can upload their own project or alter some other's, to be discussed and experienced virtually in built form [71]. Wark was a professor of critical theory and media from Eugene Lang College of The New School who authored well-known books of early virtual generation like *A Hacker Manifesto* (2004) and recently completed one on the Situationist heritage, including New Babylon, and what to make of it after 50 years [27].

In fact, several years earlier, during my graduate studies, another revisit, although momentarily, took place in the course *Drawing Utopia*, taught by Professor Lebbeus Woods[12]. While we mostly tackled on the imagery, for the class was on drawing utopias, we also kept a glance at its apparent dreaminess for the project's built-in

[12] Lebbeus Woods (1940-2012) was an prominent American architect, artist and educator, with whom the author had the precious chance of sharing a semester back at Cooper Union in 2009.

impossibility and a cultural psyche that, in spirit, defies any sort of order or totality. And in regards to its formless nature, Woods was also intrigued by New Babylon's potential "in spirit, if not form" in addressing today's discourse, respectively for the creative folk [72].

An image shown during a lecture, titled *La Revolte* (The Uprising), was depicting a dark silhouette of people on the foreground, the citizens of New Babylon, indulged in some kind of a revolting act as the title suggests, against a background of Babylonian structures in white, all foregrounding a dark red gloomy sky (Figure 2.1). The drawing piece was somewhat made during the project's completion years, near to Constant's finalization.

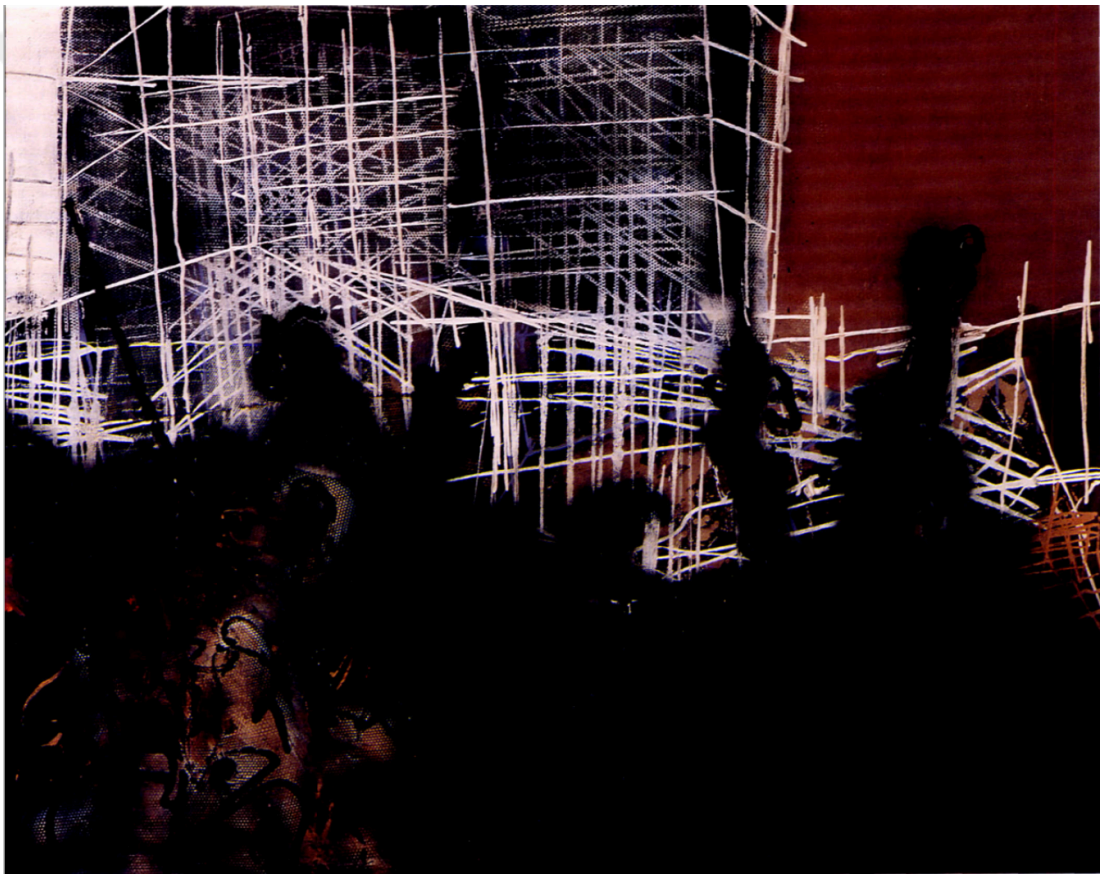

Figure 2.1 : *La Revolte* (The Uprising), oil on canvas, 70x90cm [9].

What we were basically looking at was a shocking but an eventual ending scene of a great story, given the accounts of its own inception. Professor Woods too found this to be very peculiar and important, for that the concluding chapters of Constant's visual story and his late mind had foreseen that even the ever-present physicality of New Babylon was subjected to a riot, and eventually to destruction. The project was made

for and by humans, with those who have the means to build and as well as to destroy. Each was a cultural gesture, as two equal parts of the creative act in the life of *Homo Ludens*, the very citizens of New Babylon [25,39,73].

The piece indeed seemed like a self-imposed finale, staged by its own creator. The built form of New Babylon, following the years of relentless production and numerous incarnations of architectural representation [7,9], had come to an end by the very life and the free spirit it had long been provoking. The people and their lifestyle once made possible were at the leading part, raging and taking over the canvas along with the architecture of a dreamworld, which was destined to fade away in the first place [9]. The life, for being the very subject of the whole project, and as presupposed at the beginning of Constant's story, prevailed over the physical form at its very end, and much literally.

Regarding the general outlines of earlier episodes, not only chaos was favored over the architectural order [9,32], but this time it was to take over whatever had left of it. All the lines of Constant, however blurry and indeterminate they appear before our eyes, which elude any direct inference and defy all static formalities, were to vanish entirely, as suggested by the very psyche behind to those lines. The modern nomad, who transformed the entire Earth into a playground of endless leisure travels [25], now defying all the airports and whatever lines or structures that frame them. For a recuperative excavation of Constant's markings, those which destined to vaporize altogether, it also mostly comes down to how you remember them, along with how and where you look at them from. It really takes more than simple glances, for, most of times including this significant instant, it means to watch a great project taking its leave on its own.

Back at the digital version of New Babylon, and revisiting the concept of *détournement* [30] and what was at stake; it surely entailed an artistic gesture as much as Constant's original execution had claimed to be. It was to show, once again, what was feasible by current technology, desirable by human nature yet constrained by existing socio-economic structures [23]: "New New Babylon, like its predecessor, is a conceptual project, a way of thinking, a medium that provides anyone with a playground or imagination and desire in any medium. Structural principles are just a means to an end" [70, p. 52]. In short, it was just another Babylon, found in another place, and with a form and within a medium out of many other forms and mediums available to

anyone. Nevertheless, as in the Constant's version, the overall effect was likewise strategic, thus required delicate crafting and a strategic use of all related media. And such labor demanded a critical and a deeper glance into Constant's legacy, and not just into his visuals but, more crucially, into his writing as well.

Here, discoveries unfold in two types of entanglements. More to my experience, first entanglement was related to a profound detachment from the visual legacy of Constant, which mostly took hold of entire architectural discourse with mesmerized eyes staring at a beautiful body of imagery, accompanied with a mere criticism of his seemingly modernist forms visible at some infrastructural level [9]. A legacy that is once so subtle and dazzling, it could yield an almost maleficent effect on the viewer who is low on insight, or whose perception was shaped under strict disciplinary formations such as architecture or urban planning.

Retrospectively, at times, Constant seemed defensive against the intellectual reception of his era and the claims of utopianism and technocracy, or when his models were taken solely as aesthetic objects of beauty [8]. In his words, those magical objects, "when not seen from the perspective of an idea" [8, p. 236] lose their very raison d'être; the many years of intellectual thinking and many arguments that led to their making, which were the very same "intelligible content" [8, p. 236] he wished to transmit and circulate through these pieces. In fact, his project was the ultimate embodiment of his oppositions against all disciplinary professions and established artistic tendencies, as we shall try to put forward in the coming passages. Comparably, the following chapters tell the story of this embodiment amongst other things, where his oppositions forming the cues of his grand vision, which lived a much controversial life afterwards, particularly in the realm of his beautiful models.

Meanwhile, by a natural contrast, Constant was more content when the models were put before the eyes of general public where the sense of another life, namely the illustrative and conceptual self of the project and its formless essence, outweighed the built forms and their technical guises [8]. Such perceptual instances often overlap with the positions and proper distances that he would have preferred for reading his project and seizing its innermost story, which was most audible at those particular ranges.

Anyways, regarding my own agenda for a *newer Babylon*, I was already midway across his larger universe made of words. There, away from the well-crafted visual

milieu, and away from the conventional disciplinary criticism or pure artistic reception; I had the chance to spend more time on Constant's written legacy. The journey had been nothing but rewarding – in the most personal and scholarly sense of the word.

2.1.2 Three journeys: 1958-74, 1998, 2011

As with the above, this segment of the first intermission similarly covers the personal accounts of the author; namely more of the particular instances of seeing particular sides of New Babylon in person. Speaking of its unofficial inauguration, my encounter with the written remains of New Babylon precisely registers the exact instance where Constant's utopia became something more and stranger than itself, and for good and all. For that, this also is the exact instance where the findings of a smaller journey made in 2011 [33,70], an exploratory venture with a slightly academic agenda in itself, implied the beginning of some venture larger – one to be pursued afterwards for some six years' time in the light of those earlier findings and the broadened provenances of New Babylon.

To put it more explicitly, within the vicinity of written remains, I found myself wandering in somewhere; and by some serendipitous luck, that somewhere happened to comprise those particular ranges to which Constant had referred personally for seizing the true meaning of his multi-faceted and much complex lifework [8]. It literally took me more than simple glances, what required was may be to look deeper. While the main premise was to find a newer Babylon at the beginning, I ultimately discovered what the original one was all about in that rambling amongst the words; where I was surrounded by that "intelligible content" [8, p. 236] behind the models and the necessary perspectives in which New Babylon is seen as idea, above all else. And, in a way, even in those earlier wanderings, I did find a new one after all.

All that being said, this sub-chapter, as with the next one, is still largely about the peculiar entanglements leading to my generous meeting with the words. What is to be told here is more of a backstory of my unintended yet much fruitful discoveries within the premises of a rather lexical Babylon. And the backstory resides in the story of *New New Babylon* [33], the smaller venture – a second revisit on a foreign continent where the original one had never appeared before, at least according to its visual travel records. Yet, for all the exciting merits of reconstructing a project in a landscape it had

never visited and within a medium that never occurred to its maker; the stories of these two chapters won't be of what a digitalized Babylon looks like or how it was made.

So, let us start from the very beginning. And it doesn't begin with just one journey, but rather with three of them intersecting at a certain moment in time – with one of them being my own. Prior to my involvement with the often-neglected vicinities of a utopian dream, which then partially disengaged from its visual narrations and reappeared in rather literary extents, and which, in a sense, gave way to a deeper engagement with the same dream; there essentially lies three different stories about three different journeys that need to be told, especially regarding the unofficial beginnings of this work. Since everything, including the very first paragraph of the thesis, has started with some connections and their appearance at a particular distance, as it often does; it was the very idea of the thesis that sprang from those intertwined journeys – a prelude with a three-piece storyline and an inauguration without much of a planning. And, while it may still sound all too personal, it actually is. And, in a way, it needs to be – for the fact that seeing is often personal, as are the meanings made over the connections seen.

First one, needless to say, is the legacy of Constant; to say the project itself and its very own narrative, which we've partially covered in the chapter with the same exact title. On that note, these segments can be considered as a sequel to a particular chapter – completing its legacy by all the sights and stories that New Babylon has in its own reserves, which the author happened to discover by his own encounters and then traced them back to their native sources.

The second part of the framework, bit differently, is made of many perceptual narratives and theories of many different fields; to say those same accounts of looking at distant places and so on, in which we attribute different meanings to Constant's work upon the ones it already has in itself. When read within the company of these stories, the project earns further denotations to its credits, especially beyond those of architecture and the related discourse. During these parts, much exclusively, the project regains its much intrinsic intermediary ethos, where, aside from being an idea in general, it transforms into a kind of instrument for generating other ideas [8].

Meanwhile, parallel to these transformations of our subject-slash-instrument, our thesis with an official architectural entitlement, then, transforms into a study exceeding

the limits of architectural discourse; perhaps, a rather philosophical one with rather philosophical questions to its ends. It should still be acceptable on an official level – given the open-ended nature of most research projects, and given the fact that architecture is already too expansive to be kept in its disciplinary quarters, and is already too related with the rest of social sciences and with the life itself, at least in the previous century [9,74].

The final and more personal bits of this threefold structure, namely the search for a newer Babylon on a new continent, is also made of several sub-narratives like the second; with two more independent journeys added to its side, with couple of decades between each. These are what we refer as the *Three Journeys* as appears on the title. But, above all the theorizing and the reasoning, the final footing has more merits to itself – namely in the natural course of events unfolding, or in the very process by which this thesis is being formed in Wyatt Mason's wording [68].

Without those accounts of relatively subjective kinds and with relatively practical motives for seeing things; there wouldn't have been any thesis in the first place, as well as any of the parts of its theoretical background. We are now where we are for a reason, or actually for many reasons, and *New New Babylon* was the first of them, and despite the fact that there had been no intention to make it so back then.

Just as the optical model of Benjamin became the major exemplary for the protocols of our study and its two-part remembering; those tangling journeys play the part where "the necessary distance and angle of vision were prescribed" [18, p. 83] for the observer – if not by an experience in everyday, but by those unfolded during a preplanned research. So now, finally, in the light of all these, and with our general framework outlined, and with the reasons for where and why its parts were included; we may get on with reciting how our preliminary seeing was unfolded, and what was unfolded afterwards.

They come in different forms, the journeys. One of them, the first or the primary one, occasionally has variable guises to itself; an environment and an instrument per se, if not always at the very same time. The second one is a kind of observatory in printed and bound form; a highly instrumental material found in scholarly reserves, whose merits are told during the rest of this chapter. And the third, bit humble than the others, comes in the form of a research folder, whose outlines rather found in the following

sub-chapter. Despite their different appearances and the time they took, each of them was a personal journey in many ways, with different academic impacts. And, as personal as they are, each one was mostly about seeing things from different positions and angles. They, in all, had somewhat perceptual agendas to their origins, just like our thesis ultimately does.

Let us explain each. The first and the primary journey, as in the first theoretical foundation of the thesis, is that of Constant; a story about reading the world with a different eye, or, "of thinking, of imagining, of looking" things in it, in his own words [23, p. a9]. The same story, as we shall see in the coming parts, is also of the future habitants of New Babylon, where the very life they would be living was highly similar to Constant's own perceptive travels. The second, connected to the previous, the third and to the thesis at large, is the one where we find the most essential segments and travel logs of the first journey. For we've already disclosed the second traveler's name and some of the seminal ways he perceived Constant's journeys; we might as well proceed with noting his main title – a journey in hardcover format and with a profound impact of its own.

The seminal book, *Constant's New Babylon: The Hyper-Architecture of Desire* by Mark Wigley [75], another example of binding stories in a particular way, has been the main source for our deeper engagements with Constant's remains, and for our further expeditions on the Babylonian territories. To its secondary place, both in importance and in the actual timeline; Wigley's journey had been the intermediary between the journey of Constant and the third one.

Published in 1998, the book was originally conceived as the catalogue for the occasion of a retrospective display of Constant's all-alternative utopianism, that took place in Rotterdam in the same year, at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art [76]. With the assembly of his large body of work that dispersed into a large number of collections and galleries, and with the contributions of various important profiles that in some ways contributed to his story since; the exhibition was a full-on display of Constant's future, made of many of his futures and their much illusionary physical appearances. The show was a total recollection of a dream in material form, probably the most comprehensive and intact environment ever conjured after Constant's personal orchestrations.

Echoing the event, the accompanying catalogue was a Babylonian bible of some sort, with a clear chronological order of things happened at and around the time of New Babylon, to say before, during and after; and, in it, all those said, published and circulated about the project were catalogued in the same order [75]. With the indication of the dates for each text found in the larger Babylonian discourse, the book too embraces Constant's work as a kind of journey of its own; pursued and lodged in the vicinity of many other discourses, intellectual groups and cities throughout the mid-20th century. And, with its contents allocated by the same threefold time-phrasing, it offers three distinct and collected views of the project; before, during, and after; two from the outside and one from within [75]. Altogether, both the exhibition and the publication are subtle but broad acts of remembering a particular past as well of seeing a bygone future at a particular distance – at exactly in the year and *episteme* of 1998. And, as they are about seeing, they also are for seeing; opened up for other prospective observers wishing to take a look.

Akin to our imaginative collection, at least in the sense of things being published and conserved in library stacks, the publication is still here; offering prospective voyagers the travel itineraries of Constant and the author himself. For that, it had been the exact source in which we were, and still are, able to find all the remains of an almost-half-a-century-old dreamworld, whose spirit was as transient as its exhibiting. In a way, aside from the particular moments and connections we might run into in our surroundings; the book, the very (the second) journey of Wigley, may be the only, and possibly the most immobile place to catch the entire sights of a greatly mobile project; before it takes a leave on its own and then vanishes altogether, just as we've witnessed during the particular moment in Professor Lebbeus' class.

Yet, its soul was still well-preserved in the book, stored alongside its countless footnotes and inherently-ephemeral images [75]. Having all that, almost like a Babylonian portal and a registry, Wigley's comprehensive catalogue indeed provides the necessary logistics for further travels into the distant Babylonian myths for many other scholars, along with the kinds of worldly bridges to its equally distant stories, and with the necessary distances for reading or hearing them [18,37] – depending on what kind of storytelling practices you are accustomed to, if you ever been told one. Regarding such optical procedures, the book can be seen as a kind of observatory; built for surveying the strange planet that Constant once found and later explored by

himself. And, with all the information stored in its repository; it also serves as a kind of preliminary base with a large archive compartment, to initiate many future explorations on that distant planet.

Speaking of portals and logistics bases to conjure exploratory missions, we might as well look into a rather physical example; one that is bigger than a 25cm-to-28cm-sized print, and thus harder to maintain than conserving in a library stack, in order to better understand their workings. As for outlined in the introduction, such places and optical instruments with either numerical or conceptual ranges, and the efforts to preserve them, by allocating millions of dollars or employing an ordinary librarian, were a part of our very humanly ventures of looking elsewhere and knowing more about ourselves at the same time [16,17].

Currently located at relatively lesser distances of Antarctica, McMurdo Station of the United States' scientific research program [77] has similar vibes to its origins and operations, despite being in the form of a camp settlement than a simple book, and having rather unsavory prospects for its survival [78]. According to the supervisors of the program and the operational staff, the base is less of a science center than a "logistics hub" [78]. From McMurdo, teams of ambitious travelers range deep into the ocean or the inner parts of the frozen continent, or make their ways towards the South Pole station where our forward-looking, knowledge-seeking eyes could peek into the depths of the galaxy as well as into the crust of ancient ice formations [77,78].

Clearing the path to such journeys and assuring their safety, the camp was more like "the polar equivalent of a NASA launchpad", as one committee overlooking the research project declared [78]. In a highly similar premise, Wigley's scholarly construction acts as another launchpad; a gateway of our own, and for the others; guiding prospective travelers on their farther expeditions to analyze the long-forgotten contents of New Babylon – assisting them to make rather contemporary meanings of its deeper and wider narratives frozen and still glimmering inside its mostly plexiglass substance. However, while the McMurdo was not the exact place to make science [78]; there was a great deal of discoveries made on the expanses of that publication, which, in turn, makes it more than a launching base.

Upon the dated and well-ordered repository of original texts, which were much helpful for our studies and also coupled with the most and best of Babylonian images in printed

format; the author offers his own readings of the project and of the much controversial and multiple facets it has that we are similarly taking into our focus [9]. That's the science made and kept ready at the base, for those who are curious. In the scope of Wigley's own explorations, there are to be found a great deal about the prehistory of Constant's world-building enterprise; a view of the cultural terrain of his time regarding the respective fields and debates; and several quasi-empirical accounts of Constant's lectures and events, which crucially provide an access to his equally mystical and baffling staging in the form a much-needed phenomenological reading, which we wouldn't be able to have otherwise. In some ways, the latter parts are Wigley's own encounters with the New Babylon itself; which, in effect, makes up the most essential part of the second journey, and providing the material basis for the third – in the course of their much critical tangling.

But before coming to the connections and similarities between the recent two journeys, we need to declare some about the time spent at the 1998-made Babylonian base-slash-observatory. With all due respect to our launchpad and all the observations in its reserves; we should be asserting that our research, at its beginnings and during its unfolding, is more like centered *around* Wigley's book, but not *at* it. Our main source is the one we make our departures from, not the one we are afraid to leave or arrive at constantly. The thesis certainly looks for its own way of seeing the Babylonian myths, and only takes advantage of the science already done in Wigley's personal observatory. That being said, we also need to note that his in-house research was made on the part of the first and the primary journey; where he carefully attached his findings and takes to the firsthand accounts of Constant and other main protagonists, by incorporating their words and visual materials into the plot of his main narrative in the purest form possible [75].

Now let's get back in the facility. Other than the parts where we could correspond and brace our own takes about Constant's highly peculiar representational front; the chapters that draw a history and geography of his time and a little before, we find the statures and acts of other important personas, and the locations of their lodgings to hear their original stories [9]. As for being a sort of registry, the book has all the addresses and the names of other important protagonists in Constant's journey. A journey which, as visible in the effort put in the making of the exhibition in Rotterdam

[76], was that of a vast dreamworld scattered into many other stories in many other places, and into many other dreams and dreamers.

Regarding the entanglements of all three journeys, the connection between the first and the second was apparent: Wigley was looking deeply into the Babylonian worlds and Constant's travels; in order to remember them first, and to make rather contemporary meanings after. But the third journey, in its initial plot, which concurrently looks into New Babylon and Wigley's entanglement with it, didn't have the same motives of the second. It had an agenda with a rather practical aim and with less of an unveiling purpose [70] – at least not to the extent of things being later unveiled.

To put it rather explicitly, the preliminary studies of *New New Babylon* entailed looking at its predecessor likewise; but especially at its visuals, bit closer and from its written footnotes, in order to understand and decode the all-but-obscure pieces and the all-but-obscuring methods used in their making. And the remaining part of the agenda entailed the recreation of those pieces in a much different and contemporary medium with similar obscuring effects [70]. In all, both were a part of natural procedures of any reenacting venture; that is, simply learning from the master and reapplying his principles in a different venue. It still was a scientific act, however partially; not with a distinct hypothesis but a subject to study, and not with a prescribed openness to itself, at least in its early stages.

Correspondingly, for the exact same reasons and all that practicality; a making of a newer Babylon at a newer locale, both geography-wise and medium-wise, did not necessarily entail a detailed cartography of Constant's entire journey. Comparably, it did not entail a distillation of the project's whole spirit as in Wigley's studies [75,76]. *New New Babylon*, the second revisit on the other side of the ocean, didn't possess such intentions of a much grander scale; but arrived at similar premises nevertheless, precisely in its afterlife on this side. In that sense, what we've found without knowing, and then reinitiated back here with more theoretical reasoning and methodologies, was a by-product of the third journey; and of its tangling with the other two, exactly in the year of 2011. A total chance discovery indeed.

Now, we can note down the connection between the second and the third journeys and conclude the trilogy. We can note it down right upon what we've found, exactly at the

scientific repository of Wigley's otherwise optical base, which also supplied the much critical and necessary seeing devices for us to find what we've found. Again, from this chance discovery and onwards, and thanks to all the optical equipment and specific coordinates Wigley provided for the observation of the Babylonian planet in its altered states; nothing about Constant's dreamworld ever seemed same to our eyes. In another saying, there was no other way to see New Babylon, after what we've seen in it. More the unknown became known; the more and stranger New Babylon became – and for good and all.

2.1.3 A new, new babylon

According to Hisham Matar [37], regarding the magical distance-crossing protocols of all good stories and books; the more foreign the environment we were introduced, then the more effectual the experience of "stumbling upon ourselves" elsewhere becomes. For that, the stranger New Babylon is, then the more profoundly we can associate our lives with it. Comparably, it works for the thesis as well; namely for its theoretical storylines, those that essentially grounded on such estranged perceptions of New Babylon. In terms of what we've seen initially, and thus changed our perception of Constant's reality; now would also be a proper time to talk about the contents of the research leading to *New New Babylon*, and what they mean on this side of the ocean.

The physical pile contains of the assessments done on Constant and around the complementary observatories into a single volume, and with some appendixes about its relatively newer afterlife. It consists of several bundles of manuscripts of letter-size; several other bundles of copies, mostly from Wigley's book and his other publications; and of several colored prints of Constant's illusionary pieces. On top those, several other thin, colored file-holders holding other thinner bundles with many notes attached on them. Looking closer to the ingredients of the manuscripts and the copies, one can note the marks that surround them, beyond occasional highlighting, page-numbering and the rewritten portions – emblematic of most research work.

A relatively large portion of the sketches are not of new designs or forms, as for half of all sketches usually are; but rather of some explicative lines and study drawings related to the original material. Occasionally surrounding the copies, if not more, and often denser in the manuscripts; they tend to analyze the written accounts and correspond them with the visuals, or vice versa. It is a simple procedure of

reproduction and further interpretation of what was written in the copies or transcribed into the papers, in the light of original models and drawings. The bundles, seemingly, represent the very practical procedures of the precluding journey; namely those of understanding and decoding what was seen, or once tried to be seen, in Constant's original version.

The markings are almost present in every content of the bag; accompanying words and sentences, those of Wigley or of Constant; proliferating on the bundles that relate more to the design and basic outlines of *New New Babylon*. And throughout the period they had been drawn, lesser in the latter bundles; the sketches tend to stand in the vicinity of the words and sentences, as if trying to maintain their proximity with the written material, as opposed to the project's earlier and well-circulated, mostly maleficent and marvelous sights known to most parts of the academia and the general public [8,9].

Looking closer, one can also note that, within that critical proximity, the drawings and the notes tend to exchange roles of transcribing; where often it is the explicative markings that does the decryption of the words, and sometimes the opposite – with the copied sentences and phrases reintroduced around the scribbles and diagrams. Within that tangling, for rather practical and initial agendas of the project; the formal basics of the *Visual Babylon*, as it were, become more tangible and penetrable – while the methods and the resulting effects, which were previously employed by the master [9,32], becomes clearer to list down for a digital reenactment.

Meanwhile, for rather unintended and less practical premises, there appears something else on those pages, and thus about Constant's whole work, which appears to be much different than mere methodologies and their listings, or than the design details of some specific kind of plexiglass-made architecture [9]. Following the highlighting of Wigley's readings about the project and their transcription into blank papers, namely the bundles that explain the tricks of Constant's obscured depictions and the meanings behind them [9,32]; there appears other meanings about the origins of their visual counterparts aside from their practical backstories. Deeper in the copies, there lingers something much more crucial about Constant's staging and the mysterious items staged; and the actual reason of why they were conjured the way they did, besides arousing curiosities of the attendees.

"Plexiglass produced the effect of an abstract volume glowing with indeterminate life" [9, p. 50]. Now that's some optical magic, found on a page clipped to one of the earlier bundles, courtesy of Mark Wigley. Taken from the same parts of his observations about how that seemingly expensive and seldom found material transformed a conventional medium of architecture "into a polemical object designed for exhibition and discussion" [9, p. 50]; we then reach beyond the pieces' tactical meanings, and come to understand what they had essentially been representing all along, and above all else: A *life*.

And that actually explains a lot. In all those mystifying sights and a two-decades-long production, first and foremost, there was an entire model for living on the display, rather than a mere architectural model or its technical details. Therefore, it was a model for living we were supposed to decipher from all those sights and relentless production, and eventually failed like the most did, at least until that note caught our eyes. As far as our seeing attempts go, Constant's physical work was the right place to look at; but with a wrong presumption about what it actually was that we were looking at.

As simple and spontaneous as it might sound, that perceptual discovery was on the part of the built-in openness of any exploratory venture, as we've noted, and even when not intended to have any open-ended merits to its ends. So, as with this openness, and the rest of the revelations to be unfolded after; that single note in the transcriptions might as well indicate the very moment where we are required to drop our own hidden hypothesis at the beginning of *New New Babylon*: Our early assumption that the original one was a project about architecture. As it turns out, it was not – at least not in the conventional meaning of the term. It was rather something else, almost entirely.

Well, it actually might have been hard to see Constant's pieces as any of those from early on, given their highly enigmatic and kaleidoscopic appearances [7,9,32] – considering a traditional architectural medium and the traditional ways of conveying architectural information. Regarding those peculiar sights and what they do and do not represent, here is some more magic to shift your perspectives, found during the course of the third journey which was retracing the second:

> The traditional logic of a clearly defined set of walls enclosing an empty space that may be occupied gives way to the sense of dense activity defining an amorphous volume. The project is nothing but interior, yet it is not an interior

> that can be simply looked into; it is an interior that can only be experienced from within…The model is designed to be looked into, yet nothing is revealed other than the polemical indeterminacy of the floors. [9, p. 50]

For all that spatial indeterminacy and those that were not revealing; there were other things being revealed at the same time for us and for what it was that Constant was not revealing. For the course of unknown things being known, there occurs a strange operation in these models: The things that were essentially hidden, then were being revealed at the very place they were hidden – for the very fact that the indeterminacy of the floors and volumes is actually that of the lives lived inside New Babylon.

From that ingenious duality of the models, we can clearly distill the central plot of Constant's distant world; which, in effect, makes it less about architecture and more about a certain way of spending our lives – perhaps differently. And, thanks to that revelation, and to the phenomenological entries of Wigley and the transcriptions made; the built-in mystery of the models, and the rest of Constant's legacy, was solved. The unknown New Babylon, or the previously misknown, then became much less unknown. As we range deeper to the manuscripts and copies where Constant takes the floor; we likewise uncover that New Babylon's general prescriptions had little design work to them; and, when they did, they only had that of a very limited kind.

The prescriptions were mostly about practices, nothing more. Aside from those little we find, namely the details of "the environment" of those living practices [39, p. 160]; we realize that Constant's model fundamentally was a total living concept; without any formal, disciplinary outlines or certain technicalities. An all-encompassing, form-free concept with several sub-chapters to itself – rather detailed with the prescriptions to create things, to make spaces, to mind our surroundings, to consume time and so on [23,39]. But, for all the sub-chapters, it prescribes the readers, who are curious enough, only one thing: An alternative for ordinary, everyday living. Similar to the phrase used by Ludo van Halem [52], the co-curator of the exhibition in Cobra Museum, and as in the exact wording of the title Constant had chosen for a seminal text in 1965 [39]; all the labyrinthine lines and the flickering blur and the materialized chaos, merely, were to outline a culture.

While that cultural spirit of the project was somehow discernable, if not always, in the eyes of the general public [8]; more details about its outlines were to be found in the

Written Babylon, with much wider extents. For the rest, and for a rather rapid and on-site transaction; nothing was more effectual than flooding their eyesight with all-dazzling and all-puzzling images at the service of a life-centric polemic [9] – for "the speculative representation is every bit as important as critical analysis" [8, p. 236], as Constant himself noted. And before a critical analysis of the existing life, or at the side of it; there needed to be a curiosity about a possible alternative to the existing; prompted by an alternative future speculatively represented – that is the *Visual Babylon*, as we might now call it.

In fact, that was the main purpose of all Babylonian images presented in many venues; in many different forms and in many different assemblies [7,9]. Recalling it as a powerful story, then, in those visions and their underlying stories, that is, the sum of the *Written* (or, at times, the *Audial*) and the *Visual*; we might stumble on ourselves, our current versions or potential future cousins as in the case of astronomical expeditions [17], and start making associations and comparisons. That's the true and basic magic of the Babylonian storytelling. And, for the same reasons, it required a particular telling of that story; in the form of a well-disguised display, where much of the chapters were partially hidden, and with the intention of the storyteller.

But there was necessity as well, beyond the intent. A rather commonplace and direct exposure of design details gives way to "an amorphous sense of interactions between life-styles too complex and transitory to be simply exposed" notes Wigley [9, p. 50], to re-quote from a previous chapter. They were hidden, for the fact that the life of New Babylon was already too restive and complex to be revealed openly. For the life was completely different than it was before, so was the way to communicate it to the audience. The very content of the medium, eventually transformed it in turn. Just as there was no other way to see those models after what we've revealed in them; for their maker, there was no other way to represent such relentless, completely new way of life by the old ways and means of traditional architectural representation. It is about practicalities, if not entirely, even for Constant – the unorthodox architect and the provocateur artist.

Discoveries carried on, spreading through other provenances of the collection. What was unfolded deep in the written remains, then eventually reappeared in the visual ones; subsequently transforming their appearances and true meanings, along with our very understanding of them. With that change of perception, the project becomes both

more and less of itself, to say its early and solely visual self: The seemingly enigmatic kind of architecture becomes less of an enigmatic kind, while the project becomes of something wider and more complex than a mere architectural proposal.

With those discoveries, further recalculations were eventually required as well. All we've taken for granted as an ordinary design work and plans turned out to be something very different and, actually, very ordinary – pushing the boundaries of our renowned, much-distilled profession per se. As for all the lines and the blur and the chaos of Constant were to outline a different living culture [9]; his images were simply some photographs taken from an ordinary living – anytime of any day, and anywhere in the world.

"And now I want to propose through a series of slides and a soundtape to show you a fixed moment in New Babylonian social life," Constant insisted in a Berlin lecture, in 1964, regarding his pieces' essential and non-specific, non-technical meanings [9, p. 58]. Recalling another event in Konstanz in the same year, "They were…*tentative* in the sense of being just *space-time* moments in the continual rearrangement of New Babylon," Wigley asserts [9, p. 58], quoting Constant again; referring to that fixedness, namely the one-out-of-many aspect of the images shown during many lectures. Throughout his speculative representation, the more Babylonian forms appeared; the less formal, or more formless, New Babylon was becoming [9].

Parallel to things changing their course and meaning, the bundles within the zip-bag succeeding the earlier ones also tend to change in their contents. While the first couple of pages tend to decrypt the rather practical methods in Constant's blur and strive to learn the mysterious architecture of the visual pieces; the rest then start to accommodate decryptions of the nature of the Babylonian life and learning of its necessary principles. As with the project itself, our research subsequently becomes that of a life than of some architecture.

Speaking of those principles, some of "the minimum conditions" [23, p. a12] of this life still did involve some kind of architecture; which was surely distinct but not all-predominant or all-visible in the life of New Babylon, as they were often absent or carefully concealed in Constant's visuals [9,32]. As we've noted before and shall see further, there was only a limited amount of architecture in New Babylon, which was

also limited for a reason. In most parts of its narrative, and also in the visual counterparts; the main role was given to the very practice of living.

More to the formless premises of the project, the constant re-arranging of interiors and the spatio-temporal instances recorded in a system, "whose only feature is relentless movement" [9, p. 58], prescribe the only life there is to live in Constant's dreamworld. There was no other life in New Babylon, and the only available was the social, interpersonal kind, which was equally and already creative: "But this new reality must cover the social space we are living in. The *homo ludens* of the future society will not have to make art, for he can be creative in the practice of his daily life" [23, p. a11].

For that, there was no other space, at least one that actually mattered, other than the ever-present and ever-changing social enclosure:

> Not the home can be the main element of this environment, but only the extensive social space people move around in, on search for adventurous circumstances that must stimulate their life-activity, the social space where people will meet, will influence each other, and where they actually will realize their lives. [23, p. a11]

On these accounts, as its central narrative was mostly about different ways and meanings about creating, living and so on; the project prescribes us a unification of all those in the form of a single, and of a very daily practice. It, then, does not only propose alternative models for those acts, but also offers an alternative for the social space and social interactions; which does involve all the renewed acts of creating, minding-of-surroundings, time-consuming and space-making. With a hint of its inevitably formless nature and symbolic meaning; Constant further insists that his project is only, and principally, "a symbol for the integration of creative and social activity, whose form is necessarily clear" [9, p. 67]. In New Babylon, all our humanly activities are transformed simultaneously and in unison; both confined and also extended into a single and highly social way of spending our lives at one single take – but not with any single form to it.

Also parallel to things changing their course and meaning, the architecture, too, becomes both more and less of itself. While being solely a supportive element in the overall Babylonian system; it achieves a vital importance in this very living, which already appears very surrounding-sensitive as it was very social:

> For the people, circulating in this enormous social space, are expected to give this space its ever-changing shape, to divide it, to vary it, to create its always different atmosphere, and to play their lives in the variety of these surroundings. [23, p. a12]

In other words, while the whole project was lessened, if metaphorically, to a way to spend our lifetimes; the architecture, not as a distinct profession but as a daily practice, becomes something quite ordinary and ever-present; always taking place in the everyday life of Babylonian citizens. Hence, in a Babylonian version, not only our humanly and ordinary practices were transformed; the more specialized kinds, say architecture to begin with, seem to change their previous meanings and conceptions. As for it was a total concept, Constant's version of the future entails a total transformation about almost everything we knew and practiced ever since – both on a mundane and on a professional level.

This actually appears to be a strange kind of mixture, also for things changing their initial meanings. For all that we noticed about the project being more than just an architectural proposal; we also uncover that it essentially proposes something highly architectural – as architectural as "being engaged in a dynamic relationship with our surroundings" [39, p. 160], or shaping, dividing and varying them could get. The thing is that the mentality of New Babylon rather chooses to play with the notion of what architecture essentially is and could further become – rather than the forms it might merely draw.

By freeing the architecture from being a professional domain which maps out some frozen environments for the others; Constant's model reshapes the discipline in the form of a generalized practice of being-related with all there is to environment; something public, available and necessary for every living soul; a common enactment performed outside of the rigid limits of the established disciplinary jurisdictions. And, in effect, along with other artistic domains, architecture becomes something very human and fundamental as well. It is a transformation tends to elevate both departments, where the life changes along with the architecture; and then becomes one of the same thing, as Wigley also noted [9]. There was no distinction: The professional was now the mundane, and vice versa.

While all that was to change and what they changed into will be discussed in depth in the coming portions, much of the discoveries outlined here critically correspond with some of the crucial moments where New Babylon becomes more of a transitional toy; the kind of safe portal opening towards our lives – to recall the accounts of Nussbaum and Winnicott [35,36]. For all its massive-scaled outlooks and ambiguous pieces hovering above the ground [7,9,32]; the deeper we look into it, the whole work essentially becomes of a story about living – appended with a large collection of alternatives to our current ways of doing ordinary things.

Along with these much-worldly chapters and associations we could make with our world; there also comes several questions in Constant's story – not necessarily about itself but rather concerning all that is beyond. That's exactly where the project becomes highly instrumental; a kind of mirroring device, in every sense of the word. From all that collection of alternatives, we might as well make a questionnaire of our own; with inquiries about the subjects that were also present in our lives: How do *we* consume our time? How do *we* make our spaces? How is the creativity involved in these practices or where does the creativity *now* reside? How much do *we* mind our surroundings, and how and by whom are they designed? How does the social life occur in the meantime? How do *we* use our resources and for what purposes? What are our cities made for? So much to think, and rethink, really; just as Constant had himself done, and asked his listeners to do so throughout his solo storytelling career.

To their much instrumental and mirroring qualities, with the questions above and those to be listed further, his alternatives entail many contemporary comparisons and measurements; corresponding with our goals in the scope of this thesis, which was, just as in New Babylon, more about all there is beyond New Babylon. All the proposals and prescriptions listed by Constant are for our thinking experiments [42] – those that embracing the roads before them and helping us in our future travel arrangements and our own prescriptions. Whether it will look like New Babylon or something else – we just don't know it yet.

But before knowing what our future would look like, we could at least be involved in the debate preceding that future; which might as well start with those comparisons and measurements with another possible of ourselves. As Espen Hammer noted [42], a thinking experiment is much easier than an actual construction, and surely is more productive than being overwhelmed of something we don't know anything about yet,

that is, the future itself; or more assuring than simply staring at something that looks all the more beautiful yet impossible in the context of today, that is, Constant's version of the future.

At the end, regardless of what we could make of his alternatives and where they could lead us; all the Babylonian chapters are for making critical alignments with another version of our lives. But that's not only on the part of what the original chapters say; but also of a recent addition which proved to be as productive and assuring as reading the originals. And that's where the third journey introduces itself, and not just for its preluding research and the chance discoveries we've told. While all these qualities were to outline the main premise of the thesis; they were also proven as the ultimate result of *New New Babylon*, that is, a possible other chapter to the original, and of what it could achieve – that is, a possible other version of our lives, found in a different medium and context, found and performed by some reenacting-architect.

In that sense, as this whole thesis is about what to do with all those uncovered and being remembered 60 years later; it also involves a story about that research and bringing it all the way back after the making of a newer Babylon; a story about what to make of a collection of notes about the original story; a story about the afterlife of an afterlife. At the end, all these questions of what to do with whatever it is we brought, then became those of the whole thesis.

And the question is, in its simplest wording, that, if there could be a *new* New Babylon in a new medium provided with the necessary equipment and imagination; could there also be others in many other places and with many different forms? That, if Constant's story, even to my half-prescribed intentions, had offered a different ending and a personal inference of my own after more than half-a-century; could it as well offer different endings and inferences to other readers – whenever and wherever it is carefully read?

With these hypotheses and all that theoretical outlining, and all these contemporary questions could be asked and the answers that could be given; there raises a question that is central to all these, and to all that we brought in the form a research folder. It involves a simple question, and is very central to our very being: What if there were even more alternative ways for living the lives we were given, just as there could be many other Babylons out there, other than the one the author had discovered and spent

a portion of his life in? What if there could be a route and a preceding debate leading to a bettered, or at least a different, future as Hammer or Mumford insisted [42,47]? Or, what if, just as McKenzie Wark asked [28], there might actually be way out of this century; a freeing journey for ourselves and travelled at large, before we go deep and stuck into its one-way route with all the controversies and turmoils ever-surrounding our souls [6]?

Again, so much to think, and rethink – but all for the better. And not just for a bettered future or a bettered way of making sense of all those happened or envisioned in the past; but exactly for the fact that all these thinking experiments [42] are often possible and free, to say at the expanse of some mental spending and a little more than just few simple glances – for that's usually all it takes for making critical alignments.

In the meantime, as we've mentioned recently, before all these preparations for a larger academic work and the revelations about larger and deeper subjects with wider test fields; the rather practical research for a newer Babylon on the other side of the ocean carried on as well. For a digital space has its own workings, visual protocols and apparent fallibilities, and given Constant's long years of labor and careful calculations to prevent any misleading impressions about his project's true spirit [8]; the digital version indeed required a careful and tactical use of the tools and mediums of a much immaterial reality. A making of a digital Babylon, too, involves a process of trial-and-error, if not for two decades, just as Constant's process involved many attempts and terminations throughout his careful staging record [9].

Wigley notes such an encounter, courtesy of Constant – the master of provocative concealment and non-technical display. By indicating that the exhibitions were mostly of Constant's very own process of making New Babylon [9], and that it might never have a single form for its ever-restless life could not; he states that some of the models took ten years of making and remaking, and that some changed their appearances throughout his ever-changing staging.

Comparably, this was a similar process present in the ever-changing surroundings of the future Babylonians and their constant-rearrangement involved [23]. What's more, aside from speaking to the project's spirits, in a rather tactical sense; the more and diverse the models got, the better they were to give the impression of an ever-changing, form-less living; for the fact that each piece was merely a prop for a reenactment of a

life as in theatre works, rather than some technical information as in some ordinary architectural representation [8]. And, other than remaking and constant modifications, there was some destruction work in Constant's calculated theatrics as well.

Speaking about a piece that was resented after, Wigley notes that a model "was cut into three pieces and thrown out of the window of Constant's studio" [9, p. 51]. It floated for a while in the river beneath, then eventually sank down. The reason for its relatively wet and brief life after the studio space, aside from the basic physics, was that it "looked too technical" to be a part of Babylonian stage-works [9, p. 51]. The technology of the models or any other resources used was never important as the living they make possible; they should not outweigh the sense of life secretly lived inside the plexiglass [8,9]. Being the maker of all there is to New Babylon, aside from its future makers, did not exclude him to have a critical distance to his own work; a distance that is necessary to render all he put forward before the audience "more as illustration than as a basis for construction" [8, p. 236]. His unconventional theatrics were only to give a sense of a different life, and to "suggest possibilities" – nothing more [8, p. 236].

And, that's also why there were many pictures in the New Babylon storybook: "The aim was to create a maximum of variety precisely so people would not get the mistaken impression that it was being offered as a technical solution" [8, p. 236]. And with that being the exact precaution of *New New Babylon*, too, the reenacting-architect went on experimenting with various mediums and different techniques; making sketches of the many possible forms New Babylon could take in a digital world, both in paper and in computer. The rest of the journey was equally experimental, and actually, regarding rather empirical parts of my entanglements and the rest of my discoveries, was very similar to the time Constant had spent deep in his own future.

2.1.4 The written babylon

The written mateiral produced by Constant were innumerable – both in quantity and in terms of their inceptive forms. Constant had sent out various manuscripts to various institutions; presented them in lectures and recorded audio instructions to back up his illusionary showcases; wrote pieces for books and magazines; produced essays on parallel subjects and sub-themes to be included in exhibition catalogues; had given interviews to newspapers and radio broadcasts, and even interviewed himself [9]. The inventory of subjects was abundant as well. Into his written canon, one is surrounded

with definitions, oppositions, projections and critical takes on various matters that all, at varying degrees and angles, connected to New Babylon itself.

As we've noted of Wigley's assemblies [75,76], Constant's dream was made of many ingredients; from many other dream pieces. Be it the lifestyle it promotes or the role of designers and planners, or the historical accounts for art, technology and society [23]; there are plenty of clues and a multitude of perspectives, however scattered they seem, and which are often free of exact formal definitions, for building up Constant's kaleidoscopic mirage made of rectangles of plexiglass and ever-weaving steel rods [7,9].

As studied during the previous parts, those foundational bits were largely based on various conceptual outlooks, mostly detailed in essays and speeches, devoid of formal definitions, and they included mostly strategic narratives when things got rather physical and about the future and its anticipated construction [23,39]. And other than those they exhibit about the project's claimed formlessness and its life-based genes along with its multifaceted quality; the high quantity of Constant's typed definitions embraces those claims.

More, and to their specific setup, they often start with an extensive assessment on the existent affairs of culture, technology, everyday life and creative practices [9,23]. There are to be found critical pieces about the conceptions of space and the city [29], and our very protocols for interacting with them [31]. And there are others on the whereabouts of artistic production and their role in forging a different reality along with a different society [8,23,53], among other subjects. More often than not, especially in the pieces at the time of New Babylon's official conception, those critical takes tend to meet with the alternative models and strategies in the same pages [23,39]. So, as much as they were to sketch out a new way of life and the conditions to redeem them [23,39]; they also provided their necessary components, material or conceptual, which in fact had their origins within the existing realm.

Constant, in many of his remarks, was clear about his motives for starting out his adventure, which was the "cultural situation" of his time that led to the birth of New Babylon [23, p. a9]. And he was to declare that, ten years after finishing his production, "it was based on facts" [8, p. 236], on social ones as well as scientific ones – on those deciphered from his own perspective, and then interpreted into his proposal. Regarding

our allegations of New Babylon's instrumental beings, all those sketched out in the written legacy, say the existing conditions that "prevent the development of meaningful ventures in life and culture" [29] or the inventions could overcome them, was a sort of Babylonian component to be used in its construction. And while all the building elements were to be found in his own surroundings, they needed some Babylonian kind of gloss to be seen to begin with.

In fact, we've already found this eccentric and highly crucial aspect of the project in the same worded chronicles of its creator, at the exact locale of the Institute of Contemporary Art in London; where he declared that New Babylon was more of "a way of thinking, of imagining, of looking things and on life" than a mere planning proposal [23, p. a9]. And in that same lecture, another aspect of the project appears, or rather, the one above reveals itself more clearly.

Starting from the current condition of the art world and the present conception of the artist, and making stops on the whereabouts of working society and their cities, Constant gradually and smoothly arrives at the rather materialistic descriptions of his project. But, also in between, right after his assessments ended, he starts to draw a different being who belongs to a different life, who happens to live in a much different world [23]. Seemingly, all his critical takes on the current culture, including the latest technological developments or the link between the mechanization and creativity [8,23,39] yields into the conception of a different living creature, *Homo Ludens*, whose early, real-life precedents could be seen in the then-transforming Homo Sapiens of the Schiphol [25].

On the side of that, we may also recite another discovery of our own, to say, that New Babylon was essentially of a distinct atmosphere paired with the necessary conditions to sustain it. Bit ironically, until the very last part of his lecture, except from that vital remark we re-quoted above, Constant never refers to the name of this new world. The first time it was used was when he starts to explain the particular environment that such different living would take place, to say when he starts to define its "necessary conditions" [23, p. a12]: "New Babylon represents the environment of the *homo ludens* is supposed to live in" [23, p. a11].

Whereas, for we, aside from Constant himself, have already outlined that it was also a particular way of seeing things; there was an instrumental quality to such definition

beyond its rather conditional or environmental meanings. And yet, the former quality, in effect, made way for the latter:

> For it should be clear that the functional cities, that have been erected during the long period of history in which the human lives were consecrated to utility, would by no means suit the totally different needs of the creative race of the homo ludens. [23, p. a11]

So, aside from seeing the many forms and meanings New Babylon could take; here we see another and a very clear critique, which tackles with the limitations and origins of the existing city planning. But what we also see, or getting ready to see, was the city that the new human species, whose very life "consists in constructing the reality he wants" [23, p. a11], would inhabit. In the same critique, we find the alternative, to say, New Babylon *the environment*. However, relooking to his overall lecture, and to his overall written work for similar occasions; we also find that it was all result of the same perspective, to say, that of New Babylon *the instrument*, besides its similarly environmental implications. Be it the exceptional place of the present artist [23], the true meaning of freedom [39] or the premises of the recent inventions [8,23,29], if not entirely feasible; they were all products of a highly critical and mental practice – that is, a particular perspective placed upon this world to make a new version out of it. The critique and the alternative, while being in plural quantities and being the components of Constant's plexiglass future, were one of the same thing.

For both parts were to appear in the same pages of his speech, and in most of his writing, a different world was then clearly to be found within the existing. New Babylon, as a story, clearly assures the closure of its own distance – not only by its possibility once heightened in the visuals, but also by its very particular seeing protocols that allow us to see its necessary components within our existing surroundings. It becomes, suddenly, something very close – not only for the illustration of its possible destinations that could be arrived by a singular individual, where one could erect countless atmospheres with "a relatively small number of spaces with simple standardized elements" [9, p. 58] – but also for the points of departure which were already here within this world, and which only needed a different way of looking, thinking and imagining the things in it [23].

Regarding a story with many endings, and for the fact that all those seen and located as foundational bits belong to Constant's individual thinking and his own perceptual, and thus subjective position; we may as well come up with our own critical assessments and, if needed, a list of necessary conditions by using the same critical thinking. And aside from the fact that this prescribes the partial agenda of our academic work; it also does the project's very openness for its readers, beyond its life-based formlessness. Regarding this latter and equally-crucial aspect of New Babylon, we might, for one last time, recall Constant's words heard in London, on November 7, 1963 [23].

As said, the opening half of the text was devoted to a critical take of the present landscape and to the properties of a new, adventurous and ever-creative human being; while the properties of the necessary environment of his living made up the other half. And for that first half grounds the second, in content but also in all other written essays in the world; the lecture's main focus was in the first part, where we learn the bits and everyday affairs of *Homo Ludens*.

According to Constant, he was merely a freer man with all the time in the world, and all the world, literally [23]. And according to Johan Huizinga [73], the Dutch historian, who also was mentioned in the same lecture; the previous version, including the previous artist who merely was in denial of all the "unsatisfying circumstances of his actual life", and the previous working man "captured in their utilitarian" lifestyle [23, p. a11], was already endowed with the same capacity of endless creativity – but only the latter being short of the necessary freedom. In the new version, one that lives in Babylonian worlds; those two become one, with no exceptions for the so-called free artist. And with no exceptions, "the new homo ludens of the future" [23, p. a11], the society of all-but-artists, will be creating his own surroundings in the light of his birthright creative instincts and at will. Through these instincts and for being freed from timetables, he will be circumnavigating as he wishes, changing and enlarging the area of his living [23,39]; and, in effect, yielding an all-but-different kind of social sphere, along with its all-but-renewed living protocols.

Precisely, up until this point in the lecture, there are no words of formal prescriptions or an architectural proposal whatsoever. And for the case of architecture, as we've outlined before, it is mostly of its absence or rather of its highly chaotic version, when it comes to that of New Babylon. And from the same point onwards, regarding the

physical environment of *homo ludens* and its necessary workings; all that comes henceforth in his speech does in the form of merely planning strategies [23]. However, these are, at least for the time being, not our area of concern. What actually matters for us is that the models, those of planning as well as of architecture, do not entail certain forms or any specific kind of formalistic requirements. And, although, especially in the final segments of the lecture, Constant carries on with defining "the formal characteristics of New Babylon" [23, p. a12], those were still mostly of principles. And just like models, principles do not entail any certain or finalized forms.

In a very brief sense, the main principle outlined was to assure the constant freedom of ever-strolling citizens of New Babylon with the least kind of outlining: "The project of New Babylon only intends to give the minimum conditions for a behavior that must remain as free as possible" [23, p. a12]. The rest, say the size of the sectors or the various structural methods to bear them above ground [39], was again Constant's individual theories. And, just as suggested by the major mental perspective, which yielded those models and principles; they all could be taken to different ends by different explorers, with different outlines and sizes. It was all open – both in design, and both for further variation. There were always other Babylons – depending on your position, and on what you see and do with what you see in that position.

But the point we are trying to make here exceeds the formless qualities of Constant's minimal conditions, even though they tend to support our point. The real content of New Babylon, that is, a whole new way of living, was to be found in the very fact that the very life, along with the descriptions of its new livers, preludes and overweighs its necessary conditions. The real formless quality of the project resides in that first half, on which the main focus of his lecture was placed. Constant's future was simply about a new chapter of our lives, which is more adventurous, more connected and more creative than it was before [23,29,39]. It was primarily about a different living culture, that of the new *homo ludens*; but not about the sectors or their forms or their models, or any other "minimal condition" [23, p. a12] put forward by Constant. All those components and models were open to discussion and alternation; and including the meaning of adventure, creativity and being connected, or even what it means to be a human or an artist.

From this, and from all these we've visited in Constant's critical perspective and all those he found in his critical sights; we arrive to another crucial aspect of New

Babylon. But, for the same reasons and for the length of our travels, we might as well here need a recap: To summarize all the different forms and virtues New Babylon could take, we first reinstituted that it essentially was a seeing-instrument, but it could also acquire a much more physical meaning for surrounding our new living habits in the form of some required conditions. More, it also meant living inside New Babylon, namely occupying the Babylonian environment, in the guise of a whole culture that involves an incessant exploration and enlargement of the same environment, and shaping it at will in the form of an incessant social-creative act.

Additionally, what we could easily notice is that sort of living, say, to be in direct relation with our surroundings [39] and exploring it from our subjective perspective, was quite akin to Constant's own mental practice which we've outlined at the very beginning. The life spent inside New Babylon was highly similar to the one its creator was spending here and inside his own creation, where he was making discoveries and locating the necessary components of his grand dream – conceptual or material. And here is our recap, along with our cue to continue.

As a consequence of these acquisitions, New Babylon, at the very same time, can be said to be its own way of seeing itself. In that eccentric way, it was its own *raison d'etre*. Comparably, regarding all the forms and meanings it may acquire, in texts or visual depictions; the very multitude and open-ended essence of the project stem from its inherently-critical self. Either as an extended assessment of our cultural practices, including those of artistic, urbanistic or humanly kinds [23,29]; or rather their altered versions that was used as theoretical or more materialistic components in Constant's own construction [8,39]; it was all produced by Constant's own "way of thinking, of imagining, of looking on things and on life" [23, p. a9].

Namely, for the construction of Constant's own version, or for the other Babylons we may reach from all those products and components; it was all to begin with such particular way of seeing things, that is, a highly critical and mental practice as clearly as we've previously explained it. Inside or outside of it, or rather before or during its construction; it needed that very particular and Babylonian way of thinking. It all starts with acquiring a Babylonian gloss for our own seeing ventures, and begin looking at our surroundings.

Now, we can start to think about how and from where we could acquire those much-needed instruments. Luckily, the answer to that second question of ours in this part is to be given the recently-asked question of what the final crucial aspect of Constant's dream might be. And, by some another good fortune, that answer is already given by Constant himself inside the *Written Babylon*, and in another loudest wordage:

> For it was this aim I had in mind when I started on the first models and plans: to give visual shape to an idea by building a model, a model against which this idea could be continually tested and further elaborated. [8, p. 232]

And in that answer, we find our next cue for displacing our perspective from his written legacy, and ranging deeper into the dazzling world of his enigmatic visuals, where we could take a rather longer glance to his daring attempts in a more material realm.

2.2 A Singular Babylon: The Mental One

In this chapter, we can hereby start looking for the final, and may be the most essential virtue of Constant's *both-instrument-both-environment* creation. The reasoning behind this wording, too, is a part of seeing things from different positions; and in a different context and lineup, especially when it comes to its infamous, wide range of visuals.

Here, as we attempt to see Constant's dazzling and beautiful legacy within the scope of their appearance over several locales of Europe [9], and within their momentary and much ambiguous sights projected; we also do attempt to close the gap between its instrumental and environmental meanings uncovered in the previous parts. And aside from their embedded commixture outlined, especially in the coalescence of Constant's mental enactments and that of his future citizens; it also was to be found inside a particular artistic wizardry, enacted by the same Dutch storyteller.

2.2.1 The atmosphere

Regarding the enchantments of art, from our cue taken from Constant's words for explaining his all-but-courageous attempts [8, p. 232], we might as well join the discussion of what it means to be an artist. Not surprisingly, Constant made his own contributions to the matter; reflecting his criticism of the present creative class, and as well as his long engagement with our species that Ms. Nieuwenhuys-van der Horst noted of [52] – coupled with his strong belief for our possible transformation: "For

those who believe or think that another kind of society is possible, we must not interpret the world but change it, speculative representation is every bit as important as critical analysis" [8, p. 236].

Therein we meet Constant the (new) artist and the speculator, beyond Constant the planner. As we shall see, similar to the many meanings and forms New Babylon takes, he was of many personalities, at least during the course of his own Babylonian adventure. But beyond all that, there appears a particular agenda succeeding his all and mostly worded criticism; and with that, through his preluding disapproval of the creative division, there appears an alternative version of artists – one that applies as well to his very self.

That quote above was taken from a piece written a decade after the completion of his dreamworld, a piece exactly titled *New Babylon - Ten Years On* [8], one of the fundamental texts in the *Written Babylon* on which we base our excavations. For the piece was situated in the *after* part of Wigley's directory [75]; the project had a different look – if not in content, but rather as a possibility. Not that he was drawing a different criticism than his earlier tenor, but the overall feeling of the text was rather unsavory when compared to those transcribed several years earlier.

Given the ten years and the unpromising condition of the world, ten-years-older but all the less courageous and frailer for its promised revolution [8], Constant might have sounded bit less enthusiastic within his Babylonian glosses. Yes, the world has changed, the technologies has grown and advanced; but the life we have was still waiting to be changed, and was not even challenged by some other possible, at least not by a more adventurous one, other than New Babylon itself. As seen from the same perspective, all the premises of his project, a more playful society indulged in a "collective creativity" [31, p. 87], seemed all the more distant; and the necessary conditions, especially the social ones, didn't seem to be changing "for the time being" [8, p. 236].

But this was all Constant's subjective position in his own timescape, as the one in London was 17 years ago [23]. From what we've learnt so far, things have different appearances and assurances depending on how and where we look at them from. And as every position of observation comes with different facets of those observed, our outlooks and beliefs might change accordingly.

Likewise, Constant sounded bit more enthusiastic and determined about the prospects of New Babylon in that ICA lecture [23], and placed more belief in his duty as an artist to reach those prospects. And that duty, to put it in rather optimistic and 17-years-older words, entailed the preparation of "a new exciting reality" [23, p. a11], beyond all the portrayals of discontent with the present living. With the task of not solely representing an alternative or criticizing the present, but "changing the world itself and making it more livable" [23, p. a11]; Constant the new artist got on with his succeeding speculative action – placing his all critical polemic and the discussion about our lives and their future possibles into a much more intact and sensuous realm, to say, right in the midst of that new and exciting reality.

So, again with our indebtedness to the *Written Babylon*, it all becomes bit easier to make sense of a story with many meanings, appearances and endings; and it all becomes bit clearer to read a project with an inherently formless spirit and with seemingly countless visual depictions [7,9,32]. Those conveniences also serve our search to pinpoint the last quality of New Babylon, and our attempts to close the gap between its a-way-of-seeing and an-environment-to-live-in meanings. And we may well put it briefly, for we've already disclosed it in the lining of our chosen stories and of Constant's personal remarks.

First, other than the "polemical value" noted by Wigley [9, p. 49], the "guerilla technique" devised by Constant [9, p. 68] or the notion that every story needed a suitable form of telling [18]; Constant was to clarify the reasoning of his much controversial visual pieces along with his proposed models, including those in written form. Simply, they were to assist and expand the critical debate he himself had started about a different life-form, a more adventurous and playful version of the previous; an idea about life which, in turn, "could be tested and further elaborated" through the same models [8, p. 232]. In shorter words, his visual pieces were directly of that "exciting reality" provided by the artist [23, p. a11].

Furthermore, we also were able to note that all these parts, including the proposed models or their base arguments about our culture, were subjected to testing; and were open to further discussion, or even to further alternation [8]. And, in regards to the bi-directional excavation work we've outlined at the very beginning of the previous chapter, one that simultaneously goes back to a story's beginnings and to its possible and multiple endings; there were always other and many Babylons hidden inside the

grander one, and that we might as well pursue them in the reality of our own world. And, finally, we may reassert now that New Babylon was mainly about a discussion after all [9].

He was to keep that aspect of the project, by linking his preluding analysis and the theoretical overture to his models and strategies afterwards. In the scope of written and voiced episodes, as we've studied depth in the ICA Lecture [23]; the discussion around a different life-form strange to our knowing but not to our insides, the always-present and always-creating version of Huizinga's *homo ludens* [73], always precedes the physical models and paves the way for their subsequent exposition [9]. The life, both the current and another possible, was, and had always been, the real focus of his overall polemic. And in the realm of his visually-enhanced theatrics, namely during the exhibitions and lecture-shows, he was to attain that continuity and the expansion of his argument by his own methods of disclosure, and of conscious concealment [9,32] – all executed at the same time.

So, that artistic mastery was of keeping the mystical atmosphere of the lectures, which Wigley noted of [9], along with the very mystical making of its visual pieces. Besides the lectures that amplified with the speeches of Constant, that discursive aspect includes the exhibitions as well. According to Wigley, no single exhibition had the same setting [9]. Various models came and went for each occasion, and often changed their locations and altered in their displaying. In its most physical incarnations, too, the project remained highly nomadic. In all, and even for Constant, the necessary conditions and New Babylon *the environment* could acquire different forms, for that it didn't have any distinct form or a singular type of architecture. The openness and the formlessness at the project's heart were retained with such multiplicity, other than the pieces' own intentional ambiguities.

Whereas, for all that multiplicity and the indistinct qualities of the forms and conditions, the project had a distinct spirit of living – one that belonged to the new life taking place inside the models and in the overall environment of New Babylon. As the structure of his lectures placed the focus on this spirit; a similar emphasis about our lives and the possible forms it may take was to be found inside the models' mysterious appearances and their ever-changing arrangements [9]. And in a significant remark of Wigley, we find out that there was more than the openness of the story being told – namely for the openness of the place where the story is being told: "The experience of

the exhibition gallery was meant to simulate the experience of New Babylon" [9, p. 51]. And, just as we've discovered, the experience of New Babylon, or of its particular environment, was no different than that occupied by the exhibitor himself.

More on the theoretical guerilla-warfare, starting from the mid-60s, Constant was to invade the polemical atmosphere of his exhibitions by various drawings of similarly enigmatic guises, those occasionally came in the form of a bulletin and often accompanied with texts [9]. Meanwhile, as indispensable parts of the lectures, to say in the second phase where the multimedia-blur kicks in; the flickering stills of Babylonian worlds and daily living were to add further polemical force into the atmosphere by expanding the various forms and momentary instances the project could attain [9].

The inherent ambiguities of the models were multiplied by various photographers through different angles, lenses and compositions [9]. The reproduced images and the original models were reunited in collages, sometimes with drawings projected onto the shooting frame. Later came the photo-collages of his son Victor, amongst others', where the parts of Babylonian sectors seemed as already constructed in wastelands and highway intersections [9]. With each technique and experimentation, the "exciting reality" of the artist [23, p. a11], a reality innately connected to the polemic and the overall politics of his cause, had expanded and became more exciting [79]. And with the contribution of different photographers and collaborators, the task Constant gave himself had extended to other artists, who, in a way, became the early pioneers of this new, thought-provoking artistic division devoted to his rather revolutionary agendas.

Certain films were also important elements of provocation and acted as powerful agents of imaginative-stimulation [9,80,81]. And not just for multiplying and diversifying the images and thus for preventing their reception as "technical solutions" [8, p. 236] of an otherwise realistic project. While a time-based media could enhance the mystery and the glimmering effect of these projections; it could also embed sound and words to enhance the preluding, central discussion commenced by the narrator.

In a movie made by Carlheinz Caspari [82] another thought-provoking collaborator, the final scenes showing bits and pieces of the Babylonian everyday life was accompanied by a recording of Constant's lectures [9]. In that version of the project, one that could be reproduced and expanded with many different versions as in a

Heredotous story [18], the first and the second parts of his texts were overlapped within same portion of the same story being told; and the central polemic about our lives were kept rather literally alive during its visual expansion, and took hold of the whole visual experience.

The way that Caspari and Victor or others modified the storytelling was again speaking to the same openness of the story, as well as to its form-free essence. Another photographer, Bram Wisman, was to go even further to make an exhibition of his own, by using his own photographs of the models [9] – for there was always more than one way to see them, and as well as to show them – and thus elevated his documentation "to producing it (New Babylon) as an artist in his own right" [9, p. 52]. Paralleling with Constant's emphasis on the illustrative meanings of the pieces and the instrumental presence of the project, and bit like our own digital version; Wisman was to make a Babylon of his own – provided with the necessary imagination and technical means. In a way, as he was to produce a Babylon in his own right, he indeed was to became a Babylonian in his own making.

In detail, this kind of an outsourced illustration of the project's symptomatic genealogies worked in two levels. The first degree of openness enacted was similar to the way all other artists involved: For there was no single form or version to the project, other than a single spirit of living; many other versions could be produced, and thus the story could be told in many different ways. And the second degree is found within the illustration of this very spirit; that the project, first and foremost, was about practices and perspectives, about thinking and making. For Wisman or others, there were always other Babylons to make, and other Babylons to reach – from the one that Constant had presented. For there was no single form but a single spirit to the Babylonian living; the story could also be lived in many different ways by different individuals who are eager to explore it further.

Examining the lectures and screenings in terms of their complementary visuals, there was a similar kind of multitude and obscurity present, emblematic of the gallery space. Wigley also notes of their atmospheres as equally enigmatic and visually stressed moments that prevent one to make clear distinction of what one was seeing: "The qualities of the particular spaces remain unclear; only a general sense of diversity within a more or less regular but labyrinthine system can be perceived. The image is there for just a second. Another plan appears" [9, p. 10].

Here, the wizardry of provocative aesthetics is enhanced by the rapid lining up of already-too-ambiguous images of already-too-ambiguous models and drawings. And, at times, in this media-frenzy, even the latter two mediums often were inseparable:

> If anything, the labyrinthine quality is accentuated by a sense of transparency in the plan. All levels are compacted onto a single surface…This layout now reappears as a bird's eye photograph of a model, an even closer view. The model still looks like a plan because it is built out of transparent layers of plexiglass. [9, p. 10]

Couple of another, and, for us, very crucial accounts of those mystical encounters were provided in Wigley's equally crucial phenomenological-observatory [75]. And, like in the case of exhibitions, the content of the preluding talks and the selection of images stormed after were often shuffled and edited for different events [9,32,79]. Again, for there was no single form to New Babylon, but a single spirit and central discussion; the plot of the storybook remained essential and thus unchanged. As accentuated in our chapter *The Story*, it was only coupled with different images, words and durations of telling, along with different ways of telling. And again, just like the exhibitions, the plot and the way it is told, although the latter always being shifted and modified, were inseparable [9]. In each setting, in each lineup, the discussion of life and the provocative reality of the artist were expanded by different samples, and reenacted through different experiences offered to the audience.

In a similar fashion, as we've seen in the ICA Lecture, one of the key elements of his theatrics was to be found in that setup, meaning, in that exact lineup where the images ensued the theory [23]. Wigley, again, underlines that "the key moment in each lecture" was when Constant switched from theoretical arguments to the slides: "The polemic created a specific atmosphere for the reception of the forms, a mood that was enhanced with the accompanying soundtrack" [9, p. 58]. That shift marks the first exact moment where the theories about the present and other possible life could then "be tested and further elaborated" through those following, to requote from the original maker [8, p.232]. And before all kinds of elaboration, criticism or envy; the following material was to assure, or at least attempting to assure, what was preluding was somehow possible, or was at least something legit for further discussion.

And, for further elaboration purposes, in a rather tactical level, Constant always insisted on the conceptual and illustrative meanings of his slides or films – and that the rest is, now and always, "left to our imagination" [23, p. a13]. That we could and were meant to imagine even further Babylons or other ways of living, just like Wisman [9] – if we were eager to explore it, just as Constant did so in his own two-decade-long journey. New Babylon, as mentioned in the introductory parts, was only a means for departures – only coupled with a possible destination and with the necessary courage and imaginative equipment to make the trip.

And the way to arrive at New Babylon, Constant's version or another, was again to be involved in that preluding discussion in the first place. The rest was merely its enhancement; providing the debate some potential points of further discussion, as "props for the imagination of a future world" [9, p. 58]. And the way to involve is to get those Babylonian glosses and start looking, start questioning, and to start dreaming through what we read, hear and see. And that's where we get to that final and most crucial aspect of the project, and find out where exactly those highly-critical glosses were to be acquired. Eventually, we are going to have another recap.

Well, this one should be shorter, and already clear by now: New Babylon as an instrument, or as a gloss, and New Babylon as an environment were one of the same thing. We've actually arrived this idea when we realized that the way Constant approached his own cultural era and surroundings were almost identical to the way the future Babylonians were supposed to be living. Likewise, regarding his rather material props, we've also seen that when he'd spent years on modifications or when he'd thrown a model out of the window for looking too technical [9]. It is the same attitude of constant re-arranging and mixing present in the Babylonian social life, which too was employed in his provocative orchestrations and displaying. Each act was of the same attitude, of the same way of thinking and making – one that is central to all Babylonian living, prevalent in Constant's own time or in some otherwise-near future.

Comparably, such was the same attitude which then could be engendered within a particular atmosphere or a particular environment per se. What that means is that we've arrived this identical nature of two Babylons many times already; that this way of thinking and making needed a particular environment, or a particular atmosphere, which was already present in the lectures, the films and the exhibitions. A particular atmosphere, or "a mood" as noted by Wigley [9, p.58], other than being occupied by

the storyteller, his collaborators or the future actors of the story, which, first and foremost, was intact within the gallery space, the lecture room and the movie screen.

It was an atmosphere extended to the audience, in rather enhanced episodes and in ever-changing durations and versions [9]. An atmosphere that was made of the new artist's very own, and often shuffled and always tactical reality [8,9,23]. And for all those various lengths, altered visuals and different techniques; the plot being exchanged with the audience was to remain the same.

These atmospheres, carefully scripted and staged, were merely the expansions of the other world where he, for almost two decades and almost by himself, had been occupying all along. An expansion and a rather direct enactment of the conditions and attitudes he had not only been telling about and making models of, but those he had been personally using in his own journey.

Well, parallel to all these, we may as well find another clue from those recently discovered: Just as the plot of Constant's story comes with that particular way of its telling, then the instrument Constant had devised was only to appear with its necessary environment. Like the former coupling, they were simply inseparable: If the instrumental qualities entail a particular way of looking, imagining and thinking; then, it also entails a particular environment, a place where those mental activities can happen. There were no divisions. As the project was its own way of seeing itself, as a critical perspective and mental practice; it, as an environment or an atmosphere, also was exact the place where it could be seen. His very legacy, New Babylon, however fragile and momentary, was present, if not only but mostly, during the exhibition, the lecture and the movie – as nothing less and nothing more. Well, if there was more, the audience was again to find it henceforth.

So, this part ends with a recap that actually makes its way back to its own title. That is to say, the very essential type, namely that singular one, of Babylon was the mental one; made from both the instrument and the environment, which actually were all the same. Or, in other words, the *Mental Babylon* is where its inherent instrumental and environmental meanings converge and make a complete whole in the form of a certain kind of space.

And that newly-discovered type of space, or an epitomic Babylonian environment in that manner, did not necessarily entail a physical kind. It primarily meant a mental

space – a mental occupation. A space that could be found within a single moment during the ICA Lecture [23], or in a moment in which Constant sought for another way of modifying his "exciting reality" [23, p. a11] in his studio or an exhibition, or in our own way of interacting with our surroundings and changing them at will within Constant's floating sectors [9,41].

The three moments or the spaces they take place in were of the same kind. The plot, the individual practices of the plotter and the atmosphere the plot is exchanged had identical implications – those all speaking to the project's essential being and message: That the very life and atmosphere of New Babylon were present whenever that critical thinking and the accompanying particular mood become possible. It, again, and for all its different incarnations and numerous telling, was a simple procedure.

For that, New Babylon could also be found in a single moment when a single question pops up inside the mind of a prospective reader of Constant's stories – or, hopefully, that of this very thesis. It, after all, was all about our atmospheres, as it was all about a discussion. In other words, New Babylon was its own discussion along with the very atmosphere in which that discussion was possible and present – just like a story needed its particular experience of listening to really get the story, in respect to Benjamin's theses [18].

So that, New Babylon was to and could further be found in anywhere – thanks to its inherently-critical, often-momentary, always-formless and thus forever-nomadic self. That's why, in his much crucial remarks, Wigley was to note that the design of New Babylon was to start with that of the lectures, for the very fact that it essentially was "a place defined by atmosphere" [9, p. 58]. For the same reasons, the instrumental qualities of the project, which was its main premise, were most active when Constant switched to the slides and the mental atmosphere is completed within a lecture, which, in fact, was simply a momentary portion of all there is to a true Babylonian environment.

Similarly, that mental atmosphere was a mutual component of essentiality – found both in the plot and in the way it is told. It was both found in the way the future *Homo Ludens*, that is the future-us, was supposed to live; and in the way their stories were told to the current-us – within all the stirring and polemical atmospheres constructed. We find that same momentary mental portion in its different appearances again in the

logs of the second traveler [75], when he equates the experience of each exhibition or the ever-changing life of each model with the future life that would be lived one day inside those very models [9]. Inside or outside of them, it was the same kind of life to be lived, and the same kind of atmosphere to be occupied.

So that, there wasn't actually an inside or an outside of New Babylon – at least not in a theoretical sense. In that way, the separation between the phrases *before* and *during* New Babylon's construction is also not relevant; for the very fact that the construction starts with the imagining of a different future, whether it is called New Babylon or something else. It starts with that very particular and Babylonian way of thinking, just as the lectures were an impeccable example of the overall Babylonian environment – as well as the path to its full version shown and assured by the narrator.

As long as the mental atmosphere was present, New Babylon was too, and if only for a single instant. We see that in another note by Wigley, where it is again underlined that Constant was already acting like a Babylonian in his exploration and rearranging his own models afterwards, and that therefore he was already employing that particular attitude and immersed in that particular atmosphere [9] – both of which were offered to the prospective citizens of his creation, if only for a single instant, or rather, for an entire lifespan.

This also explains why we could find the same portions of a Babylonian environment and Babylonian living within a departure lounge amidst the transitory atmosphere of an actual airport [25]. Or, for that matter, within any moment in our ordinary lives – at least as a possibility. However fragile and transient it is, just like the lectures and films, and for that it needs to be; it was all a mental state – fragile, transient and always critical. A state where the world, if not the whole of it but at least a single instant of our lives, seemed more adventurous, more exciting and more connected than it previously was. Just as it was all about atmospheres, New Babylon also was about seeing things *within* those atmospheres.

2.2.2 The props

The first apparent virtue of Constant's models, written or physical, was their tactical presence: the way that they'd been used in the momentary real-world incarnations of Babylonian environments. For the instrumental seeing-and-thinking impacts, they worked as props for imagination [9]; as some tangible substance to reflect upon and as

cues to assemble a future in a reconstructive manner [47]; or, for a thinking experiment [42], to dream about that future or another. This was rather clear and easy to understand, including their not-much-revealing guises [9,32,79] and the effort, as intentional as was crafty, put by their maker.

For the fact that each piece was merely an illustration, "nothing but a suggestion" [9, p. 67] of how that future might look like; they were rather dreamy, many and eager to leave our sights within an instant. But one needs to remember that there was also practicality beyond the intent. And, also beyond the practicality, and actually at the heart of it, there was the contributor – Constant the planner and the Babylonian, beyond Constant the speculative artist and the multimedia-provocateur. For that, we may as well take another closer glance to these models and the not-much-revealed information they tend to provide, or rather to withhold.

From a contributing point of view, we may surely assert that all those chaotic layouts, which were intentionally and practically prevailed over an ordered taxonomy of activities and took over the spatial clarity of commonplace architectural plans [9,32], were indeed a result of that particular mental practice. That is, in each piece, other than a tactical role assigned by the speculative artist; his own critical gloss was also intact in their becoming. In other words, there wasn't any artistic tastes or disciplinary preconceptions preferred or applied by the contributor. And if there were any, they were too a result of that critical affair, which, as we've also outlined, provided the alternative within the same process. An alternative which has to do the with a preluding criticality – a criticality that is first and foremost directed at the living ways of the present [8,23,39].

Looking closer to Constant's critical gloss, we see couple of inner, micro glosses in play. During the lecture in London's ICA, the criticality starts with the "present condition of the art and the artist" [23, p. a9]; with a reallocation of their positions by examining the exceptional circumstances bestowed upon by the centuries-old production culture, thanks to the efforts of the so-called "non-creative" – the ordinary human striving to survive [23, p. a9]. But that was all before the so-called era of machine-production [8,23,39,83]. Now there was no exception for the creatives of the previous centuries, and all men were one –with all the time, energy and creativity.

The second critical gloss is applied upon these arguments, this time stressed with a question: “How the free man of this future will use his unbound forces, in which way he will realize his freedom, what his life will be like?” [23, p. a10]. And the imminent answer was the conception of the ever-present *Homo Ludens*, and with an appendix proposing the conception of his ever-present social activities; his endless creativity materialized in the continuous transformation of his surroundings according his wishes and needs [23,39]. In the end, this becomes a whole alternative model for social living and practices; and eventually, as we’ve noted, that of a different social space – for every living eventually required its necessary conditions that would surround and sustain it.

Following these critical think-tanks, there comes another model for that social space itself – namely for its design and daily operations it would and should make possible. And this is the exact place where we reach the most physical and official sense of New Babylon, as the environment which the ever-present *homo ludens* is “supposed to live in” [23, p. a11]. And, again with an alternative, we proceed towards other critical assessments. These latter are directed towards the present planning of cities and their spatial conditions [23,29,83]. And from their critique, and actually from their almost direct opposite, we make our way to the details and workings of his new physical reality; say, to the ideas for sectional allocations, or the models for the optimal implementation of “the material conditions” with “the maximum development of each person’s sense of initiative” [39, p. 161].

From the first question about what makes an artist, or what happens to the non-artist when the machines take over all humanly-production; we make our way to the various methods to bear Constant’s sectors afloat, to the ways that the air-conditioners could be used for “any wanted climate” [23, p. a13], or to the list of other technical amenities added to the “vast network of collective services” needed by a society on constant travelling and space-adjusting [39, p. 160]. And through the same flow of critical thinking and posing direct alternatives; we then make our way to the flickering sights of the models, and to the enigmatic crafts of photography and editing [9,79] which make a model seem like a plan with endless labyrinthine lines and with “an extremely dense overlapping pattern” [9, p. 10]. From Constant’s own thought experiments and his own chain of glosses, we reach to the magical vantages of Babylonian blur in their most materialized forms.

So, it wasn't just some conscious concealment or a mastery of careful exposure performed by the artist. Other than being intentionally obscured to provide space for making meanings and to keep the polemic open and intact [9], and other than the practical reasons of displaying a life with an innate restlessness; that resulting blur was all part of one's mental exercise. An exercise which, like we've brought to light many times now, was similar to that of the same relentless, ever-social, ever-connected living would take place in Constant's future world [23]. The project performed before the audience by Constant was no different than the one supposed to be performed by many others in the future. There were no inside or outside of New Babylon: There were only atmospheres, and things to think and rethink.

For the same reasons, we may then re-underline that there were no artistic tastes or distastes, nor a favoring of any disciplinary style in his proposals – despite all that artistic craft and the disciplinary detailing we've witnessed so far. Well, there were some, and actually very clear sorts of artistic distaste; but not for the artworks themselves. It was rather for the very *practices* of art and the overall conception of the so-called exceptional artist [23,53]. Comparably, the discontent with the present city and general town-planning were not for professional or personal reasons.

The fact that our cities were boring, limited and thus inadequate was for the conception of the new free man emerging; that his new life would demand a completely different kind of planning and spatial practices [23,29,53]. It wasn't a matter of any aesthetic preference, but rather of how and from where you look at the existing places of dwelling. And Constant's main gloss was that of a different human being – who is eager "for playing, for adventure, for mobility" [39, p. 160]. To elaborate more on that, we might as well take another closer look to Constant's thought experiments in their criticism-to-alternative fashion.

Recalling the nomadic life taking shape on the accumulation of airports and frequent travels, once a nostalgic venture but now all the more possible [25], we see that his seemingly optimistic take was of that same critical reflection. A reflection that is directly related to a social tendency towards a new allotment of our lives, one that opposed to sedentary kinds: "Starting from this freedom in time and space, we would arrive at a new kind of urbanization. Mobility, the incessant fluctuation of the population – a logical consequence of this new freedom – creates a different relation between town and settlement" [39, p. 160]

That the whole physical concept of New Babylon was a natural outcome of the Babylonian living, thus by no means was a formal predilection. And eventually, from the same critical perspective of Constant, the new relation between ourselves and the places of our dwelling would require a new model of spatial organization and planning, alongside those demanded by a new living practice which is comprised of nothing but passing and unique moments:

> If, in addition to this, one proceeds from a conception in which life represents not continuity but a succession of moments, moments that are incessantly changing their nature and orientation, so that each moment disavows and erases its predecessor, if one proceeds from this dialectical view of life, one cannot continue to see the living environment as a settlement, a fixed abode. [39, p.160]

Thus, Constant didn't see it that way. Instead, he saw the subsequent living sphere in the image of an incessant fluctuation played at large; one that is rendered inside "an artificial, wholly constructed environment" in which "every human being engaged in a dynamic relation with his surroundings" [39, p. 160]. In short, and in its very realistic and scale-free essence, that environment was called New Babylon, including that particular entanglement it makes possible. An environment without any single or distinct form but with a clear distinction from one: A place "that has nothing, or almost nothing, about it of a town", in the traditional understanding of the word [39, p. 160]. A new version of life, regardless of its duration or scale, that is more intriguing and less boring than it previously was: A life that the town certainly couldn't offer or manage to sustain any further.

What this means is that the old concept of town was disregarded not for the way it looked or its aesthetics; but directly for the new culture it won't be able contain. And that's the perfect simplicity, along with the creative capacity, of occupying a mental state and making comparisons or measurements – regardless of one's conditions or the timespan one inhabits. And, upon this, we can re-introduce that final quality of the *Mental Babylon* and see where to find the bits, if not the whole, of the grander and global version.

What it suggests is an address with simple directions, an address which actually and already visited by Constant for plenty of occasions: Given the fact that New Babylon

was already present where it was shown and told, where its discussion was possible; the life out of and other than that of the town was initially to be found within a lecture given in a European town. The very entanglement in the heart of Constant's future, that dynamic relation with our surroundings [23,39,53], were to start from that momentary locale with a particular atmosphere. As told earlier, New Babylon was to start from right here; right from any existing town at the time of its very discussion sparks [9].

Not surprisingly, those matching addresses were all for the same critical affair; a rethinking of existing conditions in the light of a something not yet existed or in its early beginnings – as in the case of escalating air-travels [25]. It was that twofold thinking we've outlined at the very beginning – that is, to think about all the artistic and disciplinary knowledge, or any means present, in the light of a new living culture. It was a perfect example of New Babylon performed and lived firsthand, and much mentally, alongside the creative abilities vested in such performance.

For all the physical materiality or the disciplinary information we could trace in the models, Constant, as one individual, merely was to put together couple of principles for a different set of conditions by using a gloss of a different possible; principles that which were retuned according to our new living habits along with new procedures of relating to cities [23,29,39,53]. And, in the long run, when such dynamic relation and critical thinking were stretched out to longer periods and to other citizens, the life being transformed would transform the city in turn; not the planners, nor the architects – including Constant himself [9]. He was, after all, merely the messenger and, at times, an ambitious promoter of such revisions with a list of their possible and necessary workings.

With these various guises of the project, and with those different roles Constant acquired throughout his adventure; we can reinstate the twofold workings of his models and visuals, as well as his dual persona enacted during these affairs. In a brief summary, they were both his personal contributions developed with in the mental expanses of New Babylon, which then could be elaborated or altered by others [8]; and also were tactical and stimulative props to keep the debate intact and tangible [23]. What that means is that the two meanings of his models and visual pieces work within the same structure; that is, to keep the polemic about the life we currently have and the one that we may have another day, which was the essential virtue of the *Mental*

Babylon, in other words the New Babylon itself, wide open. He, at the very same time and through the very same critical practice, both used and occupied this mental place but also kept it open and extended for others in doing so.

And, even in that tactical degree, there was again two enactments in play. At a personal level, it was a direct illustration and articulation of such critical thinking, that is, looking at the current ways of living and conditions from a different location. That's the New Babylon performed live. At an interpersonal level, it was for his polemic's sensuous augmentation in the presence of a wider audience; composing the atmosphere required for that critical thinking which, if only for a single instant or more, could be conveyed and extended to others. In all, his twofold enactments served the same discursive, guerilla-like purposes [9] – without any conflict between.

In the scope of such purposes, again at a personal level, Constant used the mental virtues of New Babylon to expand his thinking by constantly applying glosses and making critical comparisons to craft the theoretical components of New Babylon; and as well as to expand the material front by constantly applying new techniques [40], storylines and inviting new collaborators to join in his mental occupation [9,79-82]. It was all for the construction of that mental space, however fragile; for the making of a transitory atmosphere to exchange his plot – especially regarding the latter visual expansions.

Speaking of these indispensable parts of the *Mental Babylon*, we may revisit the additional virtues vested in the project – those essentially stressed during the introductory parts of the thesis. Regarding an artwork or a distant story offering innate connections with our lives, that foundational critique and the preluding theoretical overture were the first part of the commons in Hisham's outlining [37], which connects us to the social necessities of New Babylon beyond its technical feasibilities that are also rooted in our planet [8,39].

As New Babylon was to start from here, our current conditions were already to indicate its birth, when observed from a different position: "The crisis in urbanism is worsening. The layout of neighborhoods, old and new, conflicts with established patterns of behavior and even more with the new ways of life that we are seeking" [23]. Again, the very simplicity and mental capabilities of making comparisons and

measurements within a two-world-aligning moment. From an alternative to a criticism and then to another alternative – right in that order.

So, Constant had as well started from here, and kept going. In the same both-tactical-both-personal manner, from the same critique and that very conflict, which was made of many sub-critiques and sub-conflicts compiled along the way; Constant proceeded his making of a planetary-sized playground – all by himself. By all the societal references and rather material potentials found, he, as a living Babylonian from early on, if not the first of his kind, finalized and also augmented that initial discussion into a potential, attainable reality by his own making. But for all that world-detailing and realistic prospects, he kept the focal discussion intact and at the heart of his planet-sized ambitions; by that same way of detailing and yet by presenting a blurry, highly-undetailed reality [9,32] – at least to our untrained or rather disciplinarily-well-trained eyes.

In all, New Babylon was at once completed and was yet to be completed [8]. And, in all, the distance once introduced by the strange imagery and mysterious transmissions in a European town was then crossed within the same story and in the same locale, by all those commons present, critical and potential – courtesy of Constant's own glosses, his own optimism and his magical means of storytelling. A storytelling, first and foremost, required his almost-impossible representation of a nothing-but-exciting blur [9]; and one that executed in many experimental and other seemingly improbable ways for 18 years, against all the impossibilities of doing it.

Constant, for numerous times, placed the emphasis on this tactical agenda and the mental shifts he himself used [8,9]. A shift that could be endangered by a mental dislocation, or a relocation, in our mental geographies – prior to our relocation into his kaleidoscopic, artificial, wholly constructed city [39]. While the latter was posed as the upmost and somewhat possible stage of those nomadic tendencies and as the ultimate survival for our long-bored society [29]; the road to that end, or to another alternative, was to start from our own nomadic interiors – that is, from our very selves.

It all was to start by getting involved in that critical affair; by indulging in a practice of seeing existing things from a non-existing point of view – which was the essential virtue of the *Mental Babylon* and of the critical glosses where they become active. A new way of living and travelling, and also of building a new city for our long-neglected

desires, first and foremost, necessitated a new way thinking. A non-existing sight of the existing inventory of worldly things, of our disciplines, technologies and artistic practices, aside from the words, could be found within the whole materiality of New Babylon presented and within its blurry sights glimpsed by its first maker – as if he was sending us postcards from the future, or from a possible different one.

Lastly, in the name of crossing the distance, if not literally or immediately; it was that multitude of possibilities hidden inside this mirage that acted as the complementary parts of the two-world-connecting commons [37]. The theoretical provocation and the societal commons were coupled with the assurances on the other end. For New Babylon was somehow possible on paper or on screen, it may then be possible here within, if not right away. For the sake of retaining that multitude and the prospects of all other Babylonian fronts and endings for us to trace and find some day; these possibilities were intentionally obscured on paper and on screen [9,32] – against all our efforts to see them clearly, and against all our established, disciplinary tendencies to take them as concrete givens, and often without all the mental efforts Constant had asked of his audience and us later [8,23].

2.2.3 The story

Upon all that we've reassembled from Constant's own remarks, staging and definitions; our primary reference for tracing his steps does also contribute to the primarily mental premises of New Babylon, and does so in rather clear assertions. Mr. Wigley, too, underlines that particular way of seeing things within a particular atmosphere as being the true core of the project, by saying that Constant's agenda was of "a mentality rather than a set of forms" [9, p. 59] and that its goal was less of an aesthetic one than a conceptual kind.

That all his intended provocation was more for a conceptual perspective than a formal proposition; and rather centered around a mental state, a non-existing perspective, whose fresh products were presented in the form of his texts, models, movies and drawings. Therefore, aside from his overall tactical agenda and the superior meaning of such pieces, it exposes us once again the very formless essence and sheer desire of his project: The Babylonian life he tirelessly strived to show and emulate in his acts for almost two decades was primarily of a mental kind; one that meant to be lived in

our intellectual surroundings first – before engaging in a continuous interplay with our physical surroundings [23,41].

In that sense, by being involved in the critical discussion and putting on the glosses offered by Constant, during a lecture or elsewhere; one was to set foot in this entirely different universe, if not entirely building it. For that, all the lectures, bulletins and exhibitions, other than being singular enactments and firsthand products of *the Mental Babylon*, also acted as gateways to the grander, global-scale version – and, in essence, to its very particular mindset to which Wigley was often referring [9].

This in fact was already visible in our earlier findings. The particular experience engendered by the enigmatic atmosphere, as the central constituent of the project's visual and theoretical openness, was, too, an experience of the project itself [9,23]. An experience, a first of its kind, which was of a strictly mental sort – besides all the visual vertiginousness or astonishment comes with it.

Comparably, if we were to take the storyteller's words on the matter of the social life of the grander Babylon, we see a similar dazzling environment along with the mentally-triggering workings of such dynamic, constantly-occurring engagement: "Every moment of life in New Babylon can have the quality of brainwashing in so far that the intensity of each moment destroys the memory normally paralyses the creative imagination" [23, p. a13]. Just like in the movies shown or the images passing swiftly before Wigley's eyes [9]; it was the same kind of unsettling experience and atmospheric assault, courtesy of all Babylonian realms – well intact in a European town, or, in the future, somewhere beyond or on top of it.

Inside or outside, or actually for the entirety of New Babylon to put it right; we were to be challenged by new exciting realities the atmosphere provides, and triggered to collect new components, theoretical or material; and as well were to be challenged to find new mental-stimuli to keep on discovering and building, theoretically or physically. Within a lecture, exhibition or a single text, or in any part of the global Babylon; there were only more discoveries and more mental exercises for us to make.

Therefore, at the end, just as the project was its own way for seeing itself, including all the various facets, forms and scales it could attain; the critical gloss it requires was the most prominent, if not the only, substance it could offer henceforth. There were only more and other glosses to look through, if one was able to acquire one for a

beginning. This mental item was the main promise of the whole thing, first offered at a real-world incarnation staged by Constant the First Babylonian: A mere chance to see the existing from a non-existing point of view, just like Nussbaum's Greek studies [35]; and a chance to reflect on the present as framed by Mumford [47], and one to look beyond it as Hammer stresses it [42] – over and over.

As Wigley himself noted, for the central spirit of the project could be found in any Babylonian incarnation [9]; the multitude of its possible forms only served the overall atmospheric effect, namely to the mental damages needed to be made on the audience, along with the open and formless self of the project. The more pictures the storybook had, its central plot and its formlessness only got more potent; with more courage and with many possible endings [18,35], as well as with the heightened openness that could yield many other closures by different readers – like in the photographic version of Bram Wisman [79] or the digital version of *New New Babylon* [33]. For it was open and plural both in form and spirit; there were almost no single ending to that singular Babylon.

Constant, as we've mentioned recently, used this eccentric, open-ended crux of the project during the enactments of his multiple personalities. And both of them were to serve the superior and most essential Babylon we were able to unearth so far. The story became the way it was told, or vice versa; both by a firsthand illustration of a different living and thinking, and by the atmosphere constructed by that illustration where that living and thinking could be spread to others, if only for a single instant. He both used the gloss he devised, and enhanced it for others to use, all in the same process. At the very end, Constant, both the provocateur and the Babylonian, merely asked for other Babylonians to come forward [8,53]. His message was of a mantle, other than being illustrated for 18 years personally, to be taken up by other travelers.

It appears as, for all the comparisons we make, and the new perceptions New Babylon gains during the interim; there are, and will always be, dualities that remain inside the project and the journey of its multi-persona maker. And that actually is what makes the project so unique; as something to use, somewhere and something to live by, and some place to construct and to occupy, however momentarily – all of them at once.

It once served as a gloss, but also offered others in itself in return; it was devised as a gloss but used all those seen from it for its devising. It told us a story but also became

the way it is told; for it entailed both the attitude and the atmosphere to redeem it. More, it was the first of its kind, as an attitude and an atmosphere, and so was all those to come henceforth, if in spirit and, crucially, not in form. It was at once completed, but only to remain yet-to-be-completed. It once had a singular enactor, but only to encourage multiple and other enactors – and for them to enact in multiple and other ways. It had a beginning but possessed not one single ending for those encountered its beginning. And it only offered, at the very end, its very own beginning – almost as if never to be completed. For that, there was, and will always be, other Babylons *inside* and *beyond* it, those which could only be seen *through* it. It remained that way – as a different sort of whole that is made of repeating pieces and could at best be of those pieces – back then, meanwhile and today still.

And that actually is what makes it an object to study, a project to reenact, and a story to remember almost 60 years later. All those dualities, controversies and often impenetrable guises of the project are what make it a case for a PhD work in the field of architecture – even though it essentially pertains to much more than architecture. For all that we've excavated and multiplied from its crux, and for all that we simplified and unified in its hidden fables; it appears as enigmatic as the first time we saw it – but, perhaps, now more instrumental and meaningful than it did earlier.

Yet, for all our attempts here, those that seem to shrink and enlarge Constant's story at the very same time; the still-remaining dualities and paradoxes of the project, as we've mentioned before these chapters, render it as distant and exciting as they make it assuring and something very close by. And that could be most important, if not only, duality of the first journey noted in these pages, Constant's New Babylon – as with the most of timeless stories one needs to revisit [18].

2.2.4 Carefully-constructed alignments

For the premise of this part, there are some endnotes to make. And they are mainly of the mental expanses of Constant's journey; that every piece, act and saying inside and around it, till now, served and heightened those same expanses. And for the project was mostly about the road before it and the places beyond it, for it was only a means to reach other means which may lead to other ends, New Babylon surely was meant to mean more to us than to its first citizen, Constant the provocateur and the Babylonian, as it was meant to mean more than its completed self, Constant's own Babylon – a true

"transitory object" devised by one, only to be left behind by many [35,36]. For those many, the rest of future Babylonians and potential provocateurs, and in the light of all Constant's staging, crafts and speeches; it then surely was meant to entail more of the same sort of a mental-place; and, in effect, of a particular seeing-event than a network of color-radiating sectors or a collection of mysterious photographs from another planet [9].

So, we may come to grasp one more time why the introductory parts of the picture and the story were only conceived as nothing more than suggestive props [8]. Within the scope its superiorly-mental, ending-in-its-beginning and gloss-after-gloss type of operations, and within that tactical spirit of its maker; New Babylon retained its essential purpose and also lived on that: A critical-cultural device to see things which we've been not able to see; an intermediary object to discuss what we've been not able to discuss; a momentary *bridge* to get us to places which we've not able to go by ourselves, if not literally.

More to its eccentric, distant-crossing operations, the *Mental Babylon* had some particular protocols – regarding the particular perspective it provides to make itself seen in its particular atmosphere. In the true spirit of all good artworks depicting a far, imagined reality [41,42,47]; but one that also was endowed with the commons and one in which we stumble on ourselves [37]; this critical-optical operation unfolds in two different stages and through two different constituents – wherein both performed and perceived all at once.

Namely, the viewer, say any member of his live audience or us as the readers of his story decades later, becomes entangled both with the fragments of another life and with several perspectives upon his own – looking towards a mirage and mirror in unison. A seeing-event in which a double vision set forth before the same audience; two versions, lined side by side, of the same world and of the same tale regarding its habitants – as in the case of all timeless stories heard. What the audience was invited to see and hear wasn't just a "substitute world" [9, p. 50] or an acute story; but all the preparations were for a pre-planned trap into an intellectual blur – courtesy of the precious *Mental Babylon* constructed. It was an invitation to a much stressed, peculiar intermediate realm – a theoretical territory situated between what is already existent and could further be possible in our very own reality.

As we shall easily remember, this optical structure, was apparent and prevailed in all Babylonian incarnations, and in their binary-image, critique-to-alternative structures. In all of them, the examination of the present conditions almost intertwines with the subsequent definitions of an alternative living *model* within the same body of text. There was no distinction between what was already present and those that can be derived from it. In fact, this tangle wasn't just embedded in the form of essays and scripts, but was a direct result of the central idea behind the project. That critical perspective directed at the present world, which can start by any gloss or any momentary comparison, was the very source which New Babylon would be built with, and was the very first step in the journeys towards it. Where one would reach, at the end, was up to "how and to what extent" he could critique; and to "how and to what extent" he could move forward in doing so [37].

The peculiar atmosphere constructed, consisted upon a theoretical tangle of both visible and further possible parts of the same world, was a spatial augmentation of his nearing attempts and thus of his *practice's* and his project's worldly origins. The pairing of criticism with all the subsequent Babylonian models, and the rather direct superpositions of collaged maps that literally link the existing with the imagined [9], were to open up his pairings so that the audience could inhabit and experience them sensually.

So, other than the instrumental traits of the project, as an environment to inhabit or a trans-realm *bridge* to cross; New Babylon, and as its entirety, was a heavily-crafted, carefully-calculated and often-momentary intermediate realm to be occupied by the visitor. A well-stressed theoretical space that should be experienced thoroughly but also mentally, one in which, without a specific degree or scale, the visitor is offered a path towards a different lifestyle, or, at times, merely the level of excitement to take it. A lifestyle, regardless its current distance to us, that was inherently located and thus could be found in the very same Earth. Therefore, the very experience of New Babylon involved the switch towards it – for it entailed its own way of seeing itself, both as an instrument and as an actual place, however momentary and fragile it might be.

In accordance with our theories, such momentary realms we are also after, or those highly enigmatic atmospheres we've been examining, were indeed made of the two main parts of the commons: the existing potentials and the prospective lives we could make out of them. And, just like in Constant's written or staged pieces, those two parts

were intentionally and inherently connected, and offered us the very ingredients of a freer life [29,39] – whatever that might imply. As in the case of all good literature [18,37], for all the distances shown, those spaces and atmospheres were to point the exact place where the distances were to be covered.

Thus, here, we also arrive to another familiar conclusion that, however far they initially seem from each other, an alternative world would mostly be found within the existing –simply by starting to see it from a non-existing position, parallel to the theses of Mumford amongst others' [47]. Similarly, a different world could only be constructed from and over the existing pieces of the present world, as we've learnt from Constant's personal exercises.

One other conclusion makes itself visible, given the same ingredients of a different world found within the existing one. For all those claims about an impossible utopianism [8,9]; it once again appears as the conceptual location of his project overlaps with the existing world which he intended to leave behind – as echoed in a much earlier anecdote of a much earlier traveler [28]. We were to leave this world behind only to arrive a new version of it, back in the same spot. Similar to the thesis' early proceedings in decrypting New Babylon, a new version of the existing world then mostly comes down to how and where you look at it from. And Constant believed that a new version or many others could be seen from his project, rather than as his project [8,9]. New Babylon was merely a device for seeing things – which makes it much more than the things he'd seen.

Given all our recaps, there eventually lies an operative conclusion: By all those optical protocols of Constant's both-personal-both-tactical constructions and by the accompanying theories in our thesis; we can clearly see that each Babylonian event was kind of an astronomical happening, an *alignment* per se – both exemplifying and spatially enlarging Constant's personal thinking for us to inhabit them in person; and, in turn, further offering us chances to making critical assessments and measurements between two realms in our own rights. That each act of Constant marked a critical moment, however fragile, transient and puzzling – one that provides the observer a particular position with a particular kind of distance and angle of vision, as in Benjamin's much operational optical model [18].

And from the same position, we are then introduced to the very ingredients of this new world; and as well as to those neighboring images appearing in the distance, within their critical, relative inter-connections: either those lingering away in Constant's future, or those appearing right here in relation to that future's location. From the same position, and especially for the latter things appearing on and about our world; it was then all up to us, and all about what we could see henceforth – present or still absent – all depending on our very own, subjective position.

What that means it that, the project, other than the things it enabled Constant to see, was more about the things we could see – *through* and *beyond* New Babylon. It also means that, other than the alignments Constant conjured and enabled us to see, New Babylon was more about the alignments we could further conjure. We've seen such transitory value of New Babylon when he was to declare that all the further episodes and rather physical incarnations of his project were only to examine and further expand the ideas, meaning, to assess and to proliferate his set of personal alignments [8]. So, in that way, all the Babylons we see in the lectures, movies and exhibitions and we read in the essays, were only some *intermediary objects* [35,36], as some transitory parts of further alignments – other than being a set of personal alignments in themselves.

So, one could also see each piece of New Babylon, a single paragraph or a drawing, as a single piece of alignment in itself – for at each take Constant the Babylonian was to bring together the existent and possible parts of the same world. While being profoundly strategic for Constant's polemic and often equally physical in the sense of archaic constructions [10-15]; each collage, each drawing or model, to various extents, was an instance of a systematical bridging of two distant worlds situated afar – one that we've known and one that we're yet to construct, or yet to imagine. So, in each image of New Babylon, say in each postcard, we always see two worlds actually juxtaposed, given his critical methodology which essentially derives the possible from the existing. That's the basic mechanism of the infamous *mirage-mirror*.

In line with the superior agenda of the project and its mysterious presence baffling us even now, as a mental place or as a seeing-instrument with doubled and opposing sights; New Babylon was all about triggering such habit of looking and reflecting back – the very or much-utopian promise of all reconstructive utopias as noted by Mumford [47]. We were only invited to Constant's highly-calculated orchestrations, which can

be referred as some lively instants of *critical alignments*; so that we can procure our own alignments and move forward in doing so. While his own seeing attempts could offer a glimpse of such momentary linings, say an alignment or two; the hidden agenda was to make this into a continuous mantle, a *practice*, of seeing our world differently – within many recurring and different linings, over and over.

In other words, what was put forward by him for 18 years, carefully staged and showcased for numerous times and with an equal degree of magical conundrum [7,9], was merely a call to others to step into that theoretical realm and join him in his critical-sightseeing. So that, we might, for own sakes and from our subjective positions, see more of what has been lost or still missing, like in Benjamin's own courageous maneuvers [18]; and as well of what could be taken as potentials, those which can be derived from what's already available around us – just like Ms. Nieuwenhuys-van Der Horst or his partner did when they were examining how we were already spending our time differently than earlier generations [52]. As Wark also asked himself, was that call too much to ask of us? [28] For that, at least for the prospective merits and recipients of this study, we will have an answer or two.

Regarding the space where such questions might arise, as somewhere to live and occupy and as something to use and see through, was indeed based on worldly connections [16,17] or the commons referred by Matar [39], which span the theoretical and much operative *distance* explained earlier at the introduction – regarding the planetary discoveries that the sleepless Hubble or the ever-wandering Kepler make [16,19]. Constant, although not revolving around Earth's low orbit or strolling towards the depths of Milky Way, was drawing, building and collaging models; charting us some specific forms of *alignments* with another kind of life at some unknown theoretical distance. Again, what was actually critical in his alignments, then, is not our distance to that another life but what was visible and possible *at* such distance. And New Babylon was built upon those that were visible. As it entailed its own way of seeing itself; the story was its own closure.

Here, for our understanding, *alignments*, as temporary mental territories and instruments for looking at things, while being raised upon *distances* that are physical or conceptual, and through oppositions or opportunities, would then surpass the distance by the new facets, perspectives and potentials that bridge what is possible to what is already present. Just as in Hisham Matar's reflection on the books' strange

operations of universality and humanly connections [39], when a distance widened, it then becomes covered by our very interrelatedness with the same distant story.

So, our distance to things was to connect us to those things; to different realms or alternatives, rather than favoring a fixed fracture or an impossible nostalgia between. And Constant, in most of his acts and sayings, was rather keen on nearness, not distances: “If the project we have roughly outlined here risks being taken for a fantastic dream, we insist on the fact that it is feasible from the technical standpoint, desirable from the human standpoint, and indispensable from the social standpoint” [32]. New Babylon was possible, and near – despite all its built-in distance which in fact assures its covering.

Between and across those which first appear by the presence of New Babylon and those that could further be revealed, if we were to continue on moving between and across two realms, we could multiply the reflections of the mysterious magic-mirror. So, as we shall further see in the chapter following our lengthy proceedings to see our very instrument; as much as it was of charting maps, it is also of moving, and in a constant manner: For there is a connection, one starts to move; as for many connections ahead, one simply keeps on moving.

At the end, given the seemingly endless, gloss-after-gloss or alignment-after-alignment genealogy of the project; and the curious dualities of being a place to occupy and inhabit, a life to live, and also an instrument to see-through; New Babylon as a life and as an instrument were, too, one of the same thing. A life that is more connected, more adventurous and creative than it was before, and, with a critical undertone to its creativity, even these virtues were open to further discussion – open to anyone’s subjective position in their own living.

What that means is, other than a way of different living and a different way thinking were identical, that the one would always result in the other – a gloss offering a different living, if only for a single instant, that would further offer another gloss in return. One that seems like a result was also the method; and thus, one that seems like an end was also the means, or vice versa. There was no actual separation between what is an end and a means in a Babylonian lifestyle, and there actually no need to be any.

Therefore, this lifestyle, other than involving and forming a continuous chain of glosses or a consecutive series of alignments, was indeed a chain of consecutive living

acts. The very life of New Babylon was that *practice*, which simultaneously offered and became of that very living; a practice of not only seeing world differently but also living it differently in doing so – over and over. Therefore, it is actually all about moving in New Babylon, if not all physically – but, more importantly, in mental units.

In this thesis, by these accounts, we surely are up for such undertaking, despite all the built-in paradoxes and still-remaining dualities of the first gloss ever produced. Our hopes are that, other than the more potent outcomes related to this world and the more enigmatic guises of the other world that we are aligning with, only more connections would appear upon the first set of connections we saw. So, our travel arrangements also are similar to the ways New Babylon, the very first journey, once operated – aiming for the very things it offered at the very end: Alignment after alignment, finding other glosses after another. So that, we might only see more of what is imaginable and what is already at hand – from other certain distances and other angles of vision offered by this highly-personal, highly-enigmatic and highly-ingenious dream: A critical rundown of our very worldly belongings, and a critical measurement to another alternative.

That double vision, or the *twofold thinking* we've mentioned, or the mere ability make momentary-yet-critical comparisons and measurements, was the only yet most decisive trait of the gloss we've been writing about so far – both as an instrument, as a place and as a life. A gloss, a theoretical instrument, both as the forever-means and the forever-end of Constant's lifework, immensely worked out and changed appearances and locations across various rooms in Europe [9]. An instrument which was put into a great amount of words and speeches, or built as highly evasive models and movies for almost two decades with one single purpose: to see the same things differently, and in a repeated fashion [23].

2.3 Babylon in Context

Tracing the project's instrumental origins, a very similar kind of seamless mechanism explained since was to be found in Constant's own intellectual background prior to his official Babylonian adventures. This mechanism entails the connection or the identicalness between the critique and the alternative, where it becomes most visible in a physical work; the simultaneity of living and thinking; and the coupling of a certain attitude with the necessary atmosphere.

Similarly, the founding roots of an intermediary and temporal realm that incorporates the already-present and the further-possible within a single event, one that makes way for others and to be succeeded by others, could well be tracked down to Constant's immediate past – one that is situated couple for years before erecting beautiful models and drafting highly-calculated alignments for us to witness. Here also lies the much life-centered, instance-based and rather small-scale incarnations of Constant's project – embedded into its genealogy in the form of a specific, practice-based critical theory.

2.3.1 The situationist babylon

Looking back to Constant's original roots in the Situationist group [9,28,40], and earlier in the tales of Letterists[13], it is no surprise that certain connections and a theoretical seamlessness exist. These groups had lived in the same world that Constant also imagined to leave behind, and their living, the way they *practice* life, was the very criticism of it as much as it was the alternative to the old world [28,87]. As Constant, immersed in his own Babylonian seeing-instrument, was sensitive to certain aspects of present or emerging lifestyles and to certain conditions that redeem them [23,25,39]; these life-practitioners were sensitive to certain aspects of present cityscapes, and with that, to certain feelings that aroused by those spaces [49,85]. Much comparable to the two constituents of all Babylonian environments and meanings, their agenda too was of an interplay and coupling of atmospheres and moods, and personal attitudes emerge within them [50,85,86].

Whereas, rather than highly intellectual and mostly profession-populated locales, these individuals, lacking a designated profession or unfavored the concept altogether [27,28], applied their sensitive instruments onto the actual geographies of actual cities – namely, onto the one they had personally dwelled in, and in their own everyday lives. And just as Constant had dared to draw what he had seen and further predicted on large-scale visions, the Situationists, from the very early days, also attempted to draw their individual alternatives – but on more brief grounds: Also on paper, if not on expensive models or carefully curated exhibition rooms, and with a drawing material

[13] A collective of theorists and artists, named Letterist International, essential forebears to the Situationist International, formed around Paris in the mid-20th century. The group is largely associated with the invention and theorization of particular practices and concepts like the *Dérive* and *Pyschogeography* – an investigation of the physicality of cities according to their emotional impacts and one's intersubjective experiences [28,39,49,85,86].

fashioned from some highly singular memories [9,28]. The result seemed like the pages of a very unorganized vacation album, but with a similar degree of conundrum and dazzlng mystery found in New Babylon's travel logs.

A famous set of examples, the maps of *Guide Psychogéographique de Paris* and *The Naked City*, can be said to draw the first visible cartography of a world that is different than what we came to have, couple of years before the first sightings of New Babylon (Figure 2.2, Figure 2.3). These can well be considered as the first pictures taken from the Babylonian life, as well as some preliminary examples of critical alignments regarding our thesis. To their own credits, these eccentric maps were at once escape routes in visual form and recordings of a particular practice with certain instructions [9,28]. That practice was called *dérive*, as in drifting but not all aimlessly [30,86]. It was defined as a structured and conscious exploration of the physical landscape, primarily that of cities, as an alternative charting of its commonplace cartography, charted by its own habitants [28]. And as we shall further see, these maps were, too, founded on connections, on very particular and momentary kinds, and were drawn to move between and across many others.

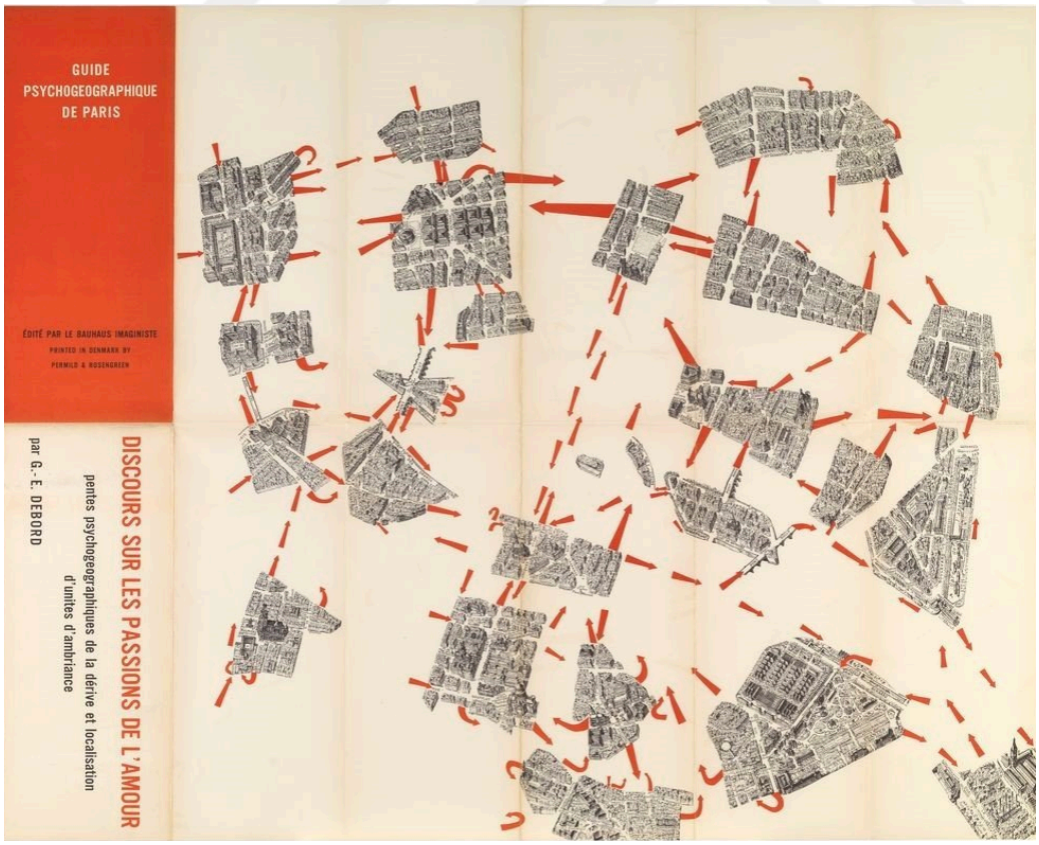

Figure 2.2 : Guide Psychogéographique de Paris (1957), Guy Debord & Asger Jorn. Adapted from [9].

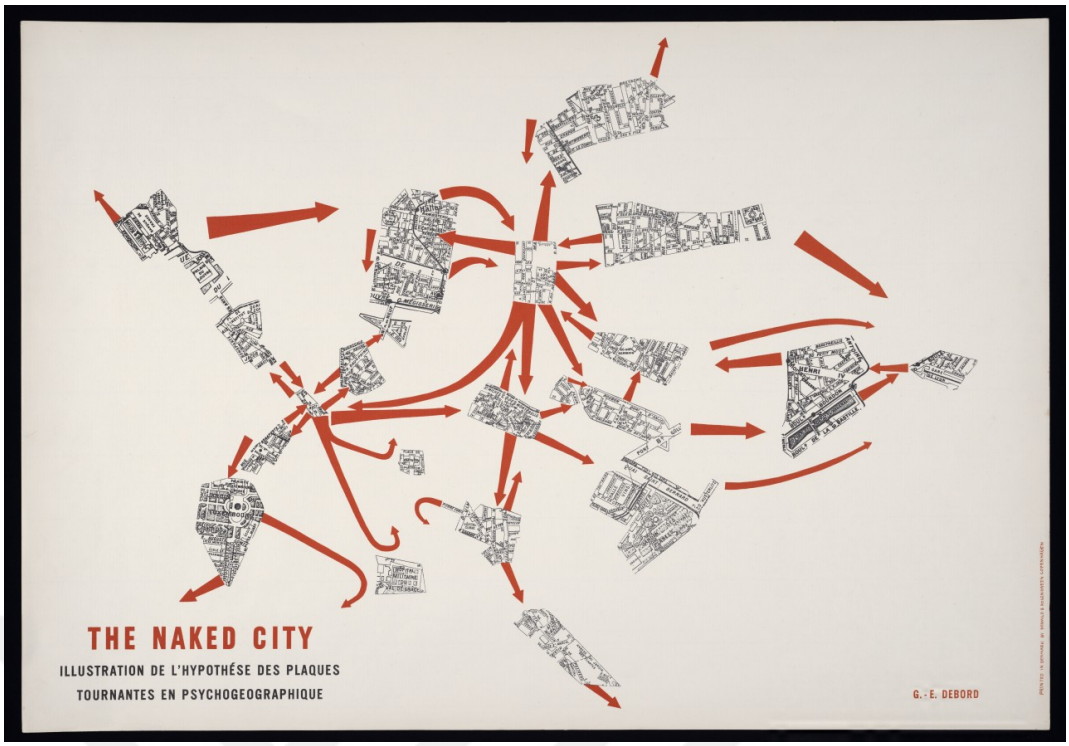

Figure 2.3 : The Naked City (1957), Guy Debord & Asger Jorn. Adapted from [9].

In their charting duties, the drifting agents, who were both the users and the authors of these maps, were required to explore both the physical constituents of a distinct environment and "the effects of their influence on human feelings", within an interplaying structure [30]. That exploratory kind of double-recording was a particular seeing-instrument in itself, a sort of device directed towards the actual city and what it could offer to our inner expanses – as a more micro and in-situ examination of these interplaying constituents. What's more, it offered a chance to study the interactions occurring between the two elements within their compound structures [50,85]. It was a study of life, right through and within its very pieces – an excursive, direct and "dynamic relationship" [39, p. 160] which is emblematic of the ordinary Babylonian life.

Yet, such exploratory duty wasn't merely a form of research to weigh up ordinary daytime living. At the very same time, it acted as the straightforward channel of the group's critique of the existing ways of living [28]. Again, just as Constant's proposed models for life were the extensions of his own critical stance, the Letterists also elevated their daily problematics into some forms and models with an aesthetic of their own, if not exactly into those of physical kinds. Here, the devising of a proposal, or of an alternative, in the form of a critical act; or, the devising of a critique through a direct

action, that is, in itself, a counter-action, becomes all more the visible in these nomadic Parisians' works – as with their implicit links to Constant's own [9,28].

As Wark acutely puts it, by this straightforward counter-action, the early Letterists were to form a "low theory" of their own, which in itself "dedicated to the practice that is critique and the critique that is practice" [28, p. 3]. At its ingeniously low and theoretical altitude, it was a highly peculiar, synchronized making of a knowledge, of a practice, of a critique and of a proposal – all at the same time. Seemingly, much of the dualities and multiple meanings of New Babylon had their origins in those of Letterists practices.

Technically, the *dérive*, as put by Guy Debord and also by the collective, was a "technique of swift passage through varied environments" [30], in favor of unearthing their distinct qualities by "studying a site" [86, p. 78], in order to make further use of these qualities. The dérive, at heart, was, too, all about moving, and in a very literal sense of the word [28,86].

The Letterists personally applied this highly kinetic technique on their own city, in order to unearth its potentials of *psychogeographic* kinds [85,86] – to see what it could offer to human experience and excitement in the scope of ordinary living [28]. The visual result was a personal and momentous Paris, reconstructed from its own pieces, according to psychogeographical currents and zones that affect drifters who are eager to explore these hidden vortexes of distinct urban atmospheres [86]. And as in the visual incarnations of New Babylon, these maps had their own beauty with a peculiarly enigmatic aesthetic.

But the more profound and relatively lasting result was about the meaning of such enterprise, other than how beautiful or dazzling they looked in records. This new practice of charting urban-lands, as with the notion of *psychogeography*, was to track and expose the city's rather fluid and psychological layers other than those pertaining to natural forces recognized and charted by conventional geography [28,86]. And other than the city's static built environment and frozen plans, it was to draw a new type of information on its equally fluid and moderately uncertain kind of "changing architecture and urbanism" [86, p. 85]. As in Constant's impossible drawings, the very content was to transform the medium, alongside the very notion of the city. So, in regards to conventional customs of disciplinary representation, the psychogeographic

maps were indeed a particular type of drawing; an alternative drawing of an alternative type of architecture and urban form.

Furthermore, along with the new knowledge and a new drawing practice, there comes a possibility – and, thankfully, it comes in drawn form. As in Constant's personal illustration of the *Mental Babylon* and the founding origins of his different world, those maps were to illustrate that a different city could be found in a walking distance, if not in the most conventional meaning of the saying [28]. Most importantly, it could be found, and also be exposed, by just walking in the same existing city.

According to McKenzie Wark, what was laid on paper was a series of "intersubjective space(s)" [28, p. 28]. So, the *psychogeography*, in short, was the science and charting of these spaces – located somewhere between our inner world and the one on the outside. These intersubjectivities, or the momentary connections and real-time alignments that the Letterists were after in our terms, were made by the presence of the encounter-seeking individual and the space surrounding, the *décor* in Debord's vocabulary, as the momentary results of their interplay: "(A situation) is composed of actions contained in a transitory décor. These actions are the product of the décor and of themselves, and they in their turn produce other décors and other actions" [50, p. 110].

Here, in a very clear definition, Debord was outlining the type of connections and alignments the Letterists and Situationists were seeking, along with their always-successive and peculiarly twofold inner mechanisms. Such were some connections or momentary constructions, leading to other connections and constructions, in a constant manner – as also recited by Constant in his ten-year-old assessment [8]. More, much critically, explaining the ingenious and peculiar workings of all Situationist projects, the same definition was to point out that these intersubjective life-bits were seen as both the products and also as the necessary conditions of the next production, within a hypothetically-seamless flow – a chain that we've already outlined in Constant's own alignments and mental practice. A chain in which a means was also the end which was also the ensuing means to reach another end, and so forth.

For some introductory definitions, a *constructed situation* was simply consisted of a real constructing activity, "of temporary settings of life", and involved "their transformation into a higher passionate nature" [51, p. 94]. It, in a tri-fold setting, was

formulated as a counter-product as thoroughly-lived experiences; and, also as a "material for propaganda"; and a form of (counter-)research, devised for nothing but the "most liberating change of the society and life" [88]. The seemingly thinnest of agents was to transform the everyday life we came to spend, and right through very pieces of the same life – both as a personal act, an intersubjective event and a rather generalized research method.

In its highly fragile and restive structure, both as a product and a research format, and as a hype-inducing stunt for revolutionary agendas [88]; a constructed situation involved and interested in the interaction between our surroundings and our feelings with the resulting reactionary behaviors, within an ongoing and fluctuating pattern. Therefore, in rather Babylonian terms, we might say that each situation was the basic unit, and as well as the transitory stage, of such continuous dynamic engagements Constant had mentioned in several accounts [23,31,39,83] – as much as being portions of his Babylonian, mental practices.

But, given the previous description of the shifting roles of *décors* and particular kinds of activities during the unfolding of other constructions [50], not one situation was significant, at least for the transformation of whole society. What mattered was their continuity, or their succession over one other, and the "perpetual interaction" [51, p. 94] of environmental and behavioral contents that needed to be explored and studied simultaneously [50,51,86]. For the case of *dérive*, memories recorded on the urban terrain, with all their depth and unexpectedness, were meant to die and succeeded by others. For the case and the scale of New Babylon, this was the core idea where "the intensity of each moment destroys the memory normally paralyses the creative imagination" [23, p. a13]. Constant's version was the *dérive* taken to the extreme. Non-stop and spread to the entire face of earth; stretching well beyond the streets of Paris, and at times, literally right above them.

In terms of some recuperations, there are some crucial components mentioned above – those with somewhat crucial links to Constant's ensuing extremes. First is the eagerness and the awareness of the drifter who intentionally set out to disrupt his own everyday life, and meanwhile reshape, or *détourn* in Situationist definitions, the functionalist city of Paris or another terrain alongside its conventional cartography [28]. *Détournement*, the second key ingredient, was a key behavioral model and a tactical move that ought to be generalized into all domains of life and creative activity

[51] – an attitude which was in fact both employed by Constant the Babylonian, and offered by Constant the provocative promoter to the future travelers in doing so [8].

The simple meaning of the term meanders around hijacking and appropriating any necessary substance; making use of the entire collective memory and cultural products of mankind, by correcting or mixing as desired but again with a progressive manner [28,30,70]. Thus, it defies any sense of copyright and private ownership, for all cultural memory makes up our collective reserves and therefore belonged to every individual – as echoed in the open-source and remix cultures of recent history [27]. Everything available was available for everyone to use freely. But in Situationist compasses, the goal was grander than freely mixing music or openly advancing software, if not less relevant.

In the maps of Debord and Jorn, it was the city of Paris along with its ordinary plan that were *détourned* in a conscious and tactical act, for it belonged to every citizen, including the Letterist dissidents. And, as a product, the new city, or a new Paris, was to be found in its very making; in a conscious exploration of its unconscious potentials [86]. Here, what was intended to be made wasn't much of a new invention for city plans, but a critique of the old ones and what they used to offer, as pointed out by Wark [28]. And the critique likewise resided in this making; in a highly outsider but systemized living practice, one that aspired to exist outside of "commodified time" [28, p. 28] and outside of its very space along with its commodified cartography. The alternative of Letterists, as told, was to be found in their critical and counter-form of living *practice*, that is, the conscious *détournement* of the existing life.

So, in short, the *détournement*, a somewhat generalized version of the *dérive*, was both the response to the existing reality and the essential method to surpass it. It contained and forged the critique and the proposal in itself, in the form of a conscious practice with endless potentials, both of which were available to anyone. In a sense, it was the gloss we've been referring to, or, rather, referred to the very ways of using it. And as with the seeing, the *détournement*, too, was a highly personal encounter.

In a practical level, it offered one the ways to find the components of another world within the existing, or, rather explicitly, the ways to convert components from those existing. It was the switch between the fisher village and possible other worlds found

in a daytime distance[14] [28]; a method of reaching to what's possible from what's already available. For that, it was another *bridge* of some sort, made of a certain kind of mentality and direct action besides all that is used freely; a passage of a highly improvised and a highly fragile kind. An ephemeral structure that needed to be succeeded by others – by perpetual interaction other mentalities and direct actions of all citizens.

Indeed, in the greater revolutionary program, *détournement* was a method to be practiced by many individuals, and for early beginnings, by the Situationists [50,88]. An early member of them, Constant, bit later and on his own, was to apply this method to not on art or literature, or not simply on existing cartography, but on the means of architecture and planning, against the very disciplines themselves [9,28,70]. His was a gloss applied in rather larger expanses, and in rather mental units – in order to make an alternative world of larger stretches.

What he showed was a glimpse of only what it might look like to stir up our own musings and for us to come up with our own methods, and find whatever *everything* we might need to use freely in the making [8,23,39]. As proclaimed several times, the elemental components of another world, however large or small it is, were already present in the current one. The Situationists, along with Constant, had lived on and by this very possibility.

Whereas, Constant's or these Parisians' discontent wasn't merely born out of urban forms or the city itself. As stated in the previous chapter, it had nothing to do with the aesthetics or disciplinary preferences. The actual problem was the everyday life granted to its citizens and all the amenities that were present yet squandered for the sake of a functionalist city of jobs, smooth vehicle traffic and comfortable interiors [29,49]. It was discontent mixed with boredom. And to evacuate their day-to-day exhaustion, Situationists, or actually in their earlier proceedings in the Letterist movement, looked for non-existing sights of the existing city, right in the same locale

[14] A unique and somewhat emblematic parable, referred in many chapters, is to be found in McKenzie Wark's notes [28, pp. 21-22] – reiterating the children story written by Lev Kassil (1905-70) which tells the adventures of two brothers that were keen on finding a promised, more adventurous world just outside of their doorsteps and within the expanses of their daily surroundings. The goal, as told in *The Black Book and Schwambrania*, was both to locate and construct a dreamland by taking every single day as the site of discovery and sailing every single morning – all from the scratch – over and over. A new world, or an escape from the old, wasn't that distant. Such attitude was central both to Letterist and Situationist mentality and their daily practices.

within their *dérives*. It was indeed an art of seeing possibilities, and within those necessary atmospheres constructed – an art of conducting *critical alignments* on a daily basis.

Debord was highly insistent that any alternative posed by Situationists, or namely the intentional loading of "the market" with "a load of desires", should not outstrip "humanity's present means of action on the material world" [85, p. 61] – but rather ought to exceed and challenge their established social customs. In another remark, he said that a "provisional opposition", courtesy of the Situationist International and their almost-always-provisional stance, needed to configure new desires "in relation to present possibilities" [88].

Here, once again, as in the entire program and geography of New Babylon, it points out the sources of further-possibles within those that are already present, and that their addresses were all the same. Once again, all that was required was a new mentality – our very own minds, and a little bit of incentive. And, for Debord and his bureau of propaganda, such stimulus, and a little bit of courage, could be presented in the form some exceptional stunts and pre-configured situations filled with new desires, in order to shake the existing mentalities, and give the individual and social transformations a go [50,88]. Once again, as in the makings of New Babylon or *the Naked City*, it was of illustrating first, then hoping others would accept the invitation. And, hopefully, the party, in both two senses of the word, would grow bigger.

Now we may attempt for a recap – given all the similarities between the Situationist agendas and practices and those of New Babylon, and given the one-too-many personas of Constant surfaced ever since. Similar to the tasks assigned by Debord to Situationists, those which involved "setting up, on the basis of more or less clearly recognized desires, a temporary field of activity favourable to these desires" and those which implied a "director" role in the collective preparation of a situation [50, pp. 110-111], Constant the provocateur and event-maker did too have a simulative agenda for his own ends. Needless to say, he was a true Situationist in that sense, or a *pre-situationist* in a directing role – also assisted by other artists, such as the various photographers, moviemakers or model assistants contributing to his enigmatic stage-work [9,79-82].

Therefore, each Babylonian event was a consciously constructed situation – with a particular atmosphere of its own, which had been constructed by a conscious situationist practitioner: As an atmosphere to see things, as a certain mood makes its discussion possible; each Babylonian gathering or media-display offered the very incentives to evoke desires and critical-thinking-slash-different-living attitudes of the audience – and strictly through "present possibilities" [88]. In Debordian terms, each Babylonian happening, that fragile, temporarily available place of commons, was consisted that "temporary field" [50, p. 110] which were favorable for the development of potential desires of its visitors, if only in mental expanses in the short run.

Altogether, in each seeing-event staged by Constant, we were invited into a particular situation, both consisted of these potential desires and attitudes to be evoked, and the particular atmospheres redeem or evoke those impulses. Each were a momentary construction with different storylines, lengths and props – travelling across different towns in Europe; a nomadic *décor* that coupled with or longing for the emerging actions of its occupants. A nomadic temporary field of activity, that is as enigmatic as visiting another planet [23], which brings the present and the possible together, and bridges two different worlds situated afar at each staging.

From the definitions provided by Situationist vocabularies above, we may also grasp why such highly-crafted, carefully-calculated situations only offered others in return. As these actions or behaviors were the product of those *décors* and themselves [30,50]; they could, at best, produce further *décors* and further actions – as in the case of glosses offering only further glosses to look through. As for a single alignment, to say the one we can infer from New Babylon itself, could yield others in its next step; a situation was only to be succeeded by another situation. There were no actual means or no actual ends; each situation comprised both of them – as a temporary bit of living, to be succeeded by further bits.

Likewise, as New Babylon was to end in its very beginning, a situation was to end in another situation to begin. Because of all that, the project could be seen and lived as one situation at a time. So, in all, the very power of a singular and mental Babylon offering many others through and inside itself, and their fragile state as something to leave behind, stem from the ever-ephemeral, always-succeeded nature of situations along with the ever-occurring, and much-inseparable, both-product-both-method loop of its constituents.

Comparably, because of such ever-succeeded-and-succeeding loops in its setting, if we consider the further development of New Babylon, all there is to live and construct was again further situations, and thus further glosses to see things differently in our terms. That by the transitory *décor* and atmosphere of a Babylonian event, we can develop further mentalities and critical attitudes which in turn could develop further *décors* and atmospheres. And from those temporary fields, either physical or again mental, there could be formed other attitudes and chances for thinking differently – and, perhaps, for living differently.

Just as the way we could continue to line up such sentences; the overall discussion and these consecutive, binary constructions can go on forever – so can a life of Babylonian sorts. And, for all that we've learnt, it actually meant to go on forever: from one momentary situation to the next, and from one liver to a bigger population [23,39]. It was all about moving, either in physical or mental units; or, rather, for what we've learnt from the *dérive*, in both units at the same time.

Regarding where these consecutive living acts could take us, it was again up to the audience present – up to their seeing abilities and their own subjective positions. It can lead to somewhere not exactly similar to Constant's story but maybe akin to where it's told – a life of constructed situations with rather polemical decors and an ever-present intellectual discussion. Or, it can be somewhere completely different, for any individual is different than the other. It was all up to us, and to what we desire and keep in ourselves – to who we can be or we wish to be [8,50]. As in the question raised by Wark, as New Babylon was a test for our future prospects on a larger scale [28]; it also was a test for our very souls – that if we could become Babylonians or come near to think like one.

Before the results to such grand-scale experiments and questions, from all these written above, we can also gather other and very strong type of similarities between two revolutionary programs and their distinct vocabularies. And it makes a simple equation: The very Babylonian pair of attitudes and atmospheres to redeem them was exactly the Situationist pair of desires and the "temporary field of activities" favorable to these desires [50, p. 110]. That Constant's world was exactly a Situationist world, in its essence, emergence and in its operations – as his practice was completely a Situationist kind reaching for the same goals.

2.3.2 Babylon in practice

Looking back at Situationists, another associate of more artistic and formal origins, too, points to the worldly origins and practice-based makings of another living. On the accounts of Asger Jorn, the Danish painter initiated to the collective, it is told that the real progress of culture, including that of a revolutionary kind, was imbedded in the "continual elaboration and transformation of pre-existing phenomena" [89, p. 54]. For him, and also for any formal alternation, it was all about transforming the existing "functional program" [89, p. 54]. What it means that rather than alternating forms, it was all about how we perceive and utilize those forms, and transforming those *how's* – as in the spatial alternations of New Babylon that sprang from the perceptions and processes pertaining to spaces, and from the very ways we live inside them. Again, and as we've learnt from the *détournement* [30,88], it was all about individual practices and perspectives – rather than the things practiced or perceived.

According to Jorn's perspective, the switch implied a mental dislocation than a formal one [89]. And for Debord, the central transformative agenda aimed to "make practical use of the everyday processes and cultural forms" that already existed –converting our present inventories into further potentials [88]. In a similar but partially alternating way, or in his own *détournement* of the Situationist perspectives and their rather direct seeing-instrument; Constant widened his perception to seek potentials beyond present cities and formalities [9,28]. And, at the same time, for also being a situationist stunt-maker in his own right, he orchestrated straight-up inquiries towards his contemporaries; the actors and disciplinary practitioners of his time, and towards the domain of technology that shape a century which, despite all its potential, was devoid of a "richer and more fulfilled life" [29]. In the same way his Babylonian manners served his rather Situationist purposes; his proposals transformed into a larger inquiry, and a larger *décor* for that matter, concerning a larger audience.

The examples of his personal inquiries were of many. As outlined earlier, several of his lectures and essays were used to start with a profound criticism of the planning practices and a general inspection over the limitations of an urban-land rationally divided into chunks of work, home, transportation and recreation [8,29,83]. According to Aldo van Eyck, a mentor and an architect friend of his, such city was "miles upon miles of organized nowhere" [90, p. 66], one that does not communicate to the human

soul which inherently was yearning for adventure, meaning and creativity according to Constant [39].

Another personage of the Situationists and Letterists of great importance and one of the founders of the *dérive* alongside Debord, the infamous dissident Ivan Chtcheglov was to say that Le Corbusier, the much-acclaimed father of modern architecture and inventor of the functionalist conception of modern cities, was responsible for the loss of "any remaining joy" within the urban terrain – of "love, passion, liberty" [49, p. 35]. The city was drained of meanings, and thus came to be non-human and simply boring. And it wasn't just because of the physical setting of facades, boulevards or the deserts of organized nowhere; but that none of those spoke to us [29,49]. There was no connection, no interaction, and eventually no feelings or memories for us to produce in the city. So, a new city had to be invented.

The concept of *Unitary Urbanism*, a descendent of the Amsterdam Declaration co-written by Debord and Constant in 1958 [31], was mostly centered around that gap between the citizens and their surroundings, and stressed ways to reinstate the lost connection: The encouragement of an "ongoing activity which consciously recreates man's environment according to the most developed conceptions in every domain" [31, p. 87]. Apparently, this was the very core of Constant's mass-scaled kaleidoscope of "dynamic relations" conducted by every human being on the planet [39, p. 160], as well as the basis for all Letterist interventions on the urbanistic department. The *Unitary Urbanism*, even in that single description, seems to dwell on processes rather than on forms; on processes of integrating with our surroundings and shaping them in turn. A distinct type of urbanism that offered action, but certainly not any distinct forms.

In parallel with our previous discoveries, this central concept of a unified urban form did not entail a physical alternation of the existing cities or a new planning scheme top down, but an alternation of how we could use and perceive them – by transforming the present "functional program" rather than the present forms as advised by Asger Jorn [89, p. 54]. The protocols for such transformation was already outlined in the practice of *détournement*, and as a more specialized version of its antecedent, in the form of *dérive* – both as the way to live an alternative life and the way to chart an alternative city, all at once [28].

In the spirit of *détournement*, according to Chtcheglov and later rephrased by Constant [29,49], all available means, from the most advanced tools of construction to various architectural components, were to be employed in favor of composing distinct moments in life – memories and ambiences that are amenable to our desires and also are products of them [50]. The goal beyond some new music and openly-advanced software was a city made of situations and feelings, in the simplest Debordian sense. A city that is constructed not just by the *détournement* of cultural products but also of tools and apparatus of any kind within our reach. A greater remix of life, in the scale of our everydays, made from whatever we happen to possess.

Likewise, Constant's emphasis was also inline but his questions were to reach a wider spectrum. Another chapter in his subjective but systematized inquiries was directed on the technological depository of the century. Namely, he was calling for a reevaluation of the modern advancements in cybernetics, communications and transportation systems [8,23,39], all of which may contribute to mankind's eventual escape from a life where young couples were forced to place their desires into garbage disposal units [49] and "masses of population are condemned to die of boredom" [29].

For him, those realities were already signaling the dawn of a new age, of the modern nomad; the coming of a new society which, for the first time in history, has the chance to realize its liberty and existence [39]. Thus, forming new alignments with the existing resources was necessary, as well as making new *détournements* in the light of a more playful, integrated culture. Technology, along with the culture it subconsciously generates and makes possible, could not be ignored and therefore was subjected to a critical examination, and further needed to be *détourned* for the sake of constant creation of our surroundings and the fulfilment of our humanly desires.

Prior to Constant's remarks on technology's potential for endlessly altering decors and on the dawning culture of mobility, Chtcheglov, as early as 1953, was outlining the necessary recipe besides the technical means, for us to achieve that potential in the everyday cityscape and in the scale of moments, if not in that of the entire planet [49]. And his recipe included something very central to the disciplinary origins of our thesis, something that we've already examined during Constant's notable ICA Lecture [23]:

> The latest technological developments would make possible the individual's unbroken contact with cosmic reality while eliminating its disagreeable

> aspects…Architecture is the simplest means of articulating time and space, of modulating reality and engendering dreams…It will be both a means of knowledge and a means of action. [49]

Here, along with the latest technology, architecture, in its very disciplinary essence, was détourned for situationist purposes. And it was *détourned* in order to be *détourned* further – from one micro gloss to another, and by each individual.

Retrospectively, this may indeed account for Constant's equally tactical and eventual subversion of architecture's innately static spaces and representational regulations [9,32], before he attempted to do so in his displaying of New Babylon. But here, much critically, beyond the means of representing architecture, the very means of interpreting and thus utilizing architecture had been subverted. This subversion again pertained to its very protocols and processes, to those of producing and consuming spaces, rather than to its mere physicalities or aesthetics. It was all about the question of what a city is for, or what kind of a life it should contain.

In Chtcheglov's rather early and much radical outlining, architecture was, too, not a detached practice anymore as in the social life of New Babylon, one which Debord would otherwise oppose at the highest order for there would be "no situationist painting or music (or thus architecture) but only a situationist use of those means" [30]. Instead, it was implemented as an all-encompassing, ordinary discipline; one would produce the necessary effects on the human psyche and also be the subtlest expression of this adventure-seeking new civilization [49].

As with the *dérive*, this highly personal and practice-based type of architecture would serve as the means and the very medium for research at the same time, and as well as an eventual manifestation of such binary living practices – as in the way the life would transform the city, rather than the other way around [9]. The complex nexus of future Babylonian living, a living manifested within and through the architecture [23,83], and in which the critical act results in the alternative product, and in which the process is merged with the outcome, was already established as early as 1953 – a decade before its rather official clarifications in London [23].

According to Chtcheglov's decade-old prospects, such expression could not be manifested in the monumental and immobile locales of the "emotionally still-alive past" or in the pure abstractions of present story-less-ness, that is the "already dead

future", built by the already-dead-in-spirit modernists [49, p. 35]. By contrast, it could only be perceived as a kaleidoscopic fairground; an indeterminate multi-image of ephemerality produced by the ever-changing desires of citizens and by their endless modifications of space and time [49], a blurry picture of this perpetual experiment – as echoed in the ambiguous densities of a zestful life visible in Constant's models and drawings [9,39]. As with the unique and almost-impossible aesthetics of New Babylon, the new culture would be read as an image-less image of an "experimental" and mobile civilization [49, p. 36].

For all the virtues invested in the field of architecture, and in-line with the secretariat Guy Debord of no-doctrines and yes-to-perspectives [28]; there was no mentioning of architects as specialists, although they were invited to take part in the making of this new civilization as any other citizen. In the Situationist agendas, too, architecture would be used for all, and needed to be used by all. And in its execution, it would simply be an agent to alter decors constantly, in search of an "ephemeral beauty" [49, p. 36], which concurrently carries out a psychological triggering task for our inner locales – unlike the function-craved, convenience-based formalities of the modernist spectacle. It was an architecture without formal preferences and pre-determined objects, rather filled with momentary psychological effects and an ever-changing guise and altering components given its open-ended and ephemeral executions.

By those major *détournements* pertaining to its core, the new architecture had become more of an experimental testing field in its operations and overall image; both as an agent and a medium for constant research, that was available to anyone who was up for testing and experimentation, including the existing architects. It was a new architecture, or rather an architecture furnished with new protocols – reinvented in the form of a social, through and sort of a psychoanalytic act. Addressing the critical sources of such reinvention, Jorn was to say that the functionalists essentially failed in the recognition of "the psychological function of our surroundings" beyond the mechanistic ones [89, p. 54] – cuing the invention of the psychogeographic seeing and charting instruments of early Letterists. And what to reconsider and bring back into the field was these functions long disregarded by modernists. Once again, the critique was coupled directly with the alternative – a psychological and intersubjective city against a machine-like one – and with the protocols of constructing it, which was later elaborated in the theses of *dérive* [86,88].

But, more importantly, according to the primitive definitions of Chtcheglov, during these experiments and with the experimental use of architecture; the creation of ephemeral moments, of "various *ways* for time to unfold" [49, p. 36], was essentially keen on some foundational rearrangements in our conceptions of space, time and behavior. That the eagerness of these momentary complexes was of a set of mental dislocations on our own perceptions besides those pertaining to architecture. So, the situations, and their urban counterparts constructed during a *dérive*, too, were aiming for our perceptions and practices, rather than the things perceived or practiced. That they were mostly about the resulting actions, rather than the decors surrounding them. It was all about what may happen and be reconstructed in ourselves – at least for the initial part.

To rephrase this in Constant's primary agenda, the prospective evolution of our future living and travelling arrangements, first and foremost, required an evolution of our thinking habits; a transformation which could be attained and evoked within those ephemeral compositions [9]. A transformation of how we perceive, produce and consume space and time; and of how we live in or *through* these essential variables [23]. And given all that we've recuperated, as these momentary life-bits were aiming for our mental dislocations, they could only be attained and evoked by the same mental transformations. So that, even in his initial theses, and even without saying it directly; one of the earliest and formative *low theoreticians* of Letterists [28] was as well to indicate the binary structure of situations and the reciprocal nature of their constituents – in which a thing looks like an end also becomes the means, and vice versa.

This duality, along with such overall intent, is in fact one that we've already came across for several times. Just as New Babylon both entailed and yielded the instrumental atmospheres to see itself within itself – as a requirement and outcome; any situation and the experimental architecture used in its construction also assured or aspired for the mental dislocations needed for its construction. So, in that way, any situation, as the necessary atmosphere for temporal and personal developments [50], at the end, aspired for the same mental expansions resided in its construction or for those that could be developed and further used in the next one – focusing mainly on the practices and perspectives [30,89], just as in New Babylon.

Therefore, other than sharing the same minuscule means and the same grand end, it is easy for us notice that the experimental and perpetual form of Situationist living was

retained at the heart of New Babylon. There was almost no real distinction between what Debord and his companions had been practicing and promoting, and what Constant had been telling in his story several years later. As any situation was more of a means to make a different culture possible, if only for a single instant; any sort of Babylonian future was essentially resided in its own mental and social culture.

To put all these in rather Situationist terms, as "both the products and the instruments of new forms of behavior" [50, p. 110], a constructed situation "of a unitary ambience and a game of events" [30], elementally, envisioned a total transformation of our mental landscape of thinking and making things. Here, we can again grasp the ultimate objective and central plot of all Babylonian and Situationist stories, that is an open-ended mutation for the ways we behave and think; and the very agent and inner structure of such development, that is the situations consciously constructed and succeeded by others. That, at the very end, their supreme ambition was a direct assault on our mindsets, on how we think "on things and on life" to put it again in Constant's words [23, p. a9]. And the key to such mental transformation was nothing but that of the practice and perspectives – as in the triple equations of Letterists where the critique was the practice and was also the alternative [28].

For all we could reorder the latter equation in different linings, a program that is of practice and seeing corresponds with the one told in Constant's seemingly distant story. As it seems, with all these other native stories added to its side, it wasn't that distant after all. It was promised to exist somewhere close and within our physical perimeters, but only a bit farther than our present mental margins. Any alternative to our lives was to be found in our own lives but also in our own interiors and mental potentials, other than those posited by our material reserves [29]. As Debord himself noted, the revolution of life, first and foremost, was depended on the livers and their immediate culture: "*Dérive*'s difficulties are those of freedom" [86, p. 85].

2.3.3 The everyday babylon

By the basic definitions, within a *constructed situation*, through the perpetual interplay of its constituents, in which a surrounding *décor* would affect our behaviors which would also produce other *décors* and so on [50], the simultaneous creation and research act would eventually overlap and blend with the shifts in our conceptions, and with the discovery of our deepest desires and their triggers. Parallel to the constant-remaking

and testing of our surroundings, there occurs an expedition also in our psychological expanses. In each stage, there were multiple transformations and expansions unfolding simultaneously, inside and outside, and always in forward direction – ambitious for the next transformation on both ends.

One could also see the binary development reflected in the experiments directly made within the cityscape – in the highly disorienting yet constructive excursions of early Parisian drifters. The same drifters who, above all else, concurrently found new ways of living alongside a new kind of city to live in during their conscious meanderings [28] – all the while of discovering new ways of their own nature, and what other natures and desires could be found onwards [86]. This very conscious but highly-disorienting practice, an intentional disorientation per se, entailed both a mental and a physical reconstruction work on the go: A seamless and simultaneous process of learning, evolving and building altogether – all the while of being situated outside of the commodified world as individuals [28]. A multiple set of revolutionary agendas, executed in a single act and on a daily basis.

We can also see this in the twofold meanings of their maps; and from that, we may attempt to comprehend how this new kind of city could then be charted and constructed. From what we've learnt about Letterist cartographies, they were the first to show what an alternative, more connected and psychologically-induced city could look like [9,87]. Besides, they were meant to depict some escape routes drawn upon the present city, and by using the very pieces of the same city – displaying the hidden circuits and pathways for us to get out of it [28,49,86].

More, other than illustrating that a new city was only to be found within the existing, and that it could entail a collage of its various temporal-zones and the experiences we have within them [85,86]; these maps also entailed the live recordings of their escape – as the very tracing of their experimental living. For that, there was a strong and direct connection between those meanderings and the city being constructed and explored – for there is always a direct connection and interplay between one's surroundings, namely the *décors* and one's behaviors.

That is to say, by the basic interplaying schemes of perpetual situations [50], there occurs a constant interplay between one's feelings and surroundings within a *dérive*, as outlined by Debord and other Situationist theses [85,86]. That's the very summary

of *psychogeography*, and that of a *psychogeographic*, rather fluid type of city in which our behaviors and reactions are shaped by the surrounding cityscape. That, by subsequently changing our directions or the time spent in any temporal zone, the traveler sculpts the markings and pieces collaged upon the map which therefore renders us the new city upon the existing.

So, in that scheme, the indispensable *décor* becomes the city, and the subsequently developing modes of behavior take the form of our movements and reactions within the city. And within that seamless and binary experiment, the process becomes that of the drifting act, while the result becomes of a brand new, fluid, temporal and intersubjective urban-form [28,86]: A city shaped by our interiors, which are as well shaped by the same city.

For that, these maps were of a highly-personal Paris, as much as of a momentous one – depending on all that we could find both in ourselves and in our surroundings. And, for the same reasons, this new urban-form was meant to be found and constructed somewhere between our insides and the world outside, in the form of a log or a collage of those temporal intersubjectivities [28] – much adjacent to the exact whereabouts of New Babylon. And, as well for the same reasons, we may say that these maps merely were an illustration, but with double implications as in the tactical presence of all Babylonian depictions [9]. It was an offering of a possibility much similar to the way Constant offered to his audience on paper and on plexiglass models. If New Babylon was somehow and somewhere possible, so was its early progenitor – *the Naked City*.

By all that, we can once again see how Constant's story already assured its closure. Not only the individual, practice and perspective-based methods, or the worldly origins of its necessary components; but as well as the formative, cultural genealogy of his project found in the chronicles of Letterists and Situationists who as well tend to assure its feasibility. That it could be found somewhere close to where we already live, and within the very ways we already live – only with a couple of tweaks on the living department [86,88].

With that simple method again in the spotlight, Wark's central question again makes itself visible, and at various degrees [28]. First of all, such living practice or its ephemeral bits and agencies – the *situations* – was to proceed on a binary path and in opposing directions, one that is both travelled within our interior desires and mental

reserves, and also towards the unknown places waiting to be discovered on the outside. For being a binary and simultaneous experiment, as it was a test of who we can be, it also was of what we can or wish to create according to our desires about our future personalities. A precatory construction and exploration venture to say. And, according to situationist theses, those questions were highly connected, as with their answers.

As these binary questions were incorporated within a single research program, the list of possible answers was still open-ended on both ends – all depending on who we are, who we wish to become and what sort of resources or surroundings we could find that would shape our interior paths, or what sort of situations we would further craft according to these personal, precatory questions and their imminent answers [8,39,50,53]. In a sense, The *Naked City* had no single end, for there was no end or any pre-charted path to the becoming of our naked selves – if theoretically.

Unsurprisingly, the particularly open-ended and binary structure of these experiments owe to the reciprocal, both-means-both-end or both-cause-both-effect loops of the ever-appearing-ever-vanishing decors and behaviors; and to the ever-succeeded-ever-succeeding nature of situations – as also recited by Constant other than Debord years earlier [8,50]. And, according to the same theses, the essential key to all that structure and questioning, where a means becomes an end and where a method or a process becomes the product and vice versa, was the renowned spatial discipline of architecture – *détourned* and stripped off its official disciplinary implications by the Situationist perspectives [30,49].

Whereas, for all the *détournements*, its essential spatiality endures – but only to be recast as some livable, encompassing medium of research. Within the scope of binary Situationist expeditions, it transforms into an ever-present playing field for our mental developments and their reflected surroundings in their perpetual interplay – all the while of producing the very outcome of these expeditions in the form of momentary, consecutive constructions. This could well be the very sum and core of a Situationist experimental city – one that was first and openly outlined by Chtcheglov [49], only to be reinstated by other travelers further.

In other words, as this kind of architecture was the very agent of Letterist conscious-drifting; it also was the very product of such experimental living measures – producing the alternative city where the future *homo ludens* supposed to live [23]. Just as we've

told, the new city would rise above the very alternative ways we live within the existing, and upon the ephemeral situations and seeing-events we are to construct during the interim. So, in that way, the city was, too, at once the product and the process; a rather large-scale binary complex of the research and the outcome – that is, the *interim* itself.

As with the new architecture, and with the new living; the new city was conceived as an entire test field with much open ends, and an eventual outturn of our perpetual testing – a compound image of the experiment and of its direct outcome. And, as with those others, in a theoretical level, there was no end-product in its making for there was no end to the process of those binary questioning above; and for there was no end to the perpetual and reciprocal interplay of decors and behaviors, or of atmospheres and attitudes emerging through one other – over and over [50]. As our interiors were to be constantly shaped and remade at each stage, these constant experiments were to produce a city which is in constant-remake.

Therefore, for there was no theoretical end to those experiments and to any Situationist city; we might assert that there was no real end or one final form to New Babylon – for it could be present as long as its discussion could. And from all those we could recuperate from our earlier findings; its primary discussion, as with the central plot of its story, was all about a different living culture sided with its complementary debate and assuring potentials present. It wasn't about the forms or the sectors or how high they would be standing above the ground. They were only momentary decors, and a matter of where we choose to look towards the existing means, structures and practices from – a matter of what sort of a life we can or wish to live.

We may all have different answers and proposals in respect to these shown and told for many years and in many venues and settings, for we have different natures and desires in our selves – as also noted by Constant for several times [8,39,53]. Indeed, for all those different responses could be given, New Babylon was, and have always been, this very discussion and interiorized questioning – to be resumed in the forward direction. We only needed to find the next Babylon, as a mental place and an atmosphere, both within ourselves and within our surroundings – for it essentially resided somewhere in between, and, ultimately, as some place that is truly our own.

2.3.4 The utopian babylon

For all the theoretical endlessness explained, there might be some limits to these perpetual adventures – rooted in our very own mental capacities. But these are the limits we are required to find by ourselves as well. Again, where one would reach at the end was up to "how and to what extend" one could go on, to use Matar's phrase [37]; to "how and to what extend" one could reach in his interiors and to the things can be discovered in there. It was a matter of endurance, in a way, if somewhat tested on personal level.

For that, we could see how New Babylon was highly and innately personal, too, but also potentially terminable – on the part of our own seeing abilities, our optical positions and our very own inner reserves. It was essentially contingent on ourselves which could be the exact limit to such aspirations. Ultimately, for us to enquire those limits, we actually do not need to go somewhere far other than our very interiors and everydays. And that's where the second crucial virtue of Wark's question, one that pertains to the limits of our very beings, makes itself visible [28].

It makes a simple virtue, along with a simple testing field. By all the Letterists' and later the Situationists' emphasis on the already-present resources and the ultimately direct, everyday-oriented practices; we can actually attempt to make an experiment in any moment in any given day. And it doesn't have to be physical, nor does require our actual steps. We can actually make one just from any parts we've read, visited or studied in the Babylonian chronicles or in the Situationist vocabularies.

True to the curious yet universal operations vested in all good literature [37], even its essentially-singular and almost 60-years-old tales; each Babylonian component or episode provides the reader a décor, a rather mental one with a rather shorter lifespan, in which our two-world-aligning impulses can be evoked – thanks to the very simplistic but powerful merits of the *Mental Babylon*. A version that we've mostly unearthed during the previous historiographies – through a compilation of its numerous other versions serving the same purpose of its own discussion and worldly inquiries, while being the direct products of same kind of mental practices.

For the parts we've covered in the previous chapter and before; and given the daily adventures of Debord and Chtcheglov [49,86], or Jorn's emphasis on the transformation of what is already existing and of how it is used meanwhile [89]; a true

Babylonian life was meant to be lived from one ordinary moment to another – and in the very space and resources of everyday. The life could and should be changed in a single moment of it, and through that same moment – from one living instant to another. And, for we already know from Constant's own Babylonian manners; outside or inside the grand Babylon, meaning, in any moment of the project's mental incarnations; it was the same sort of transformative and experimental living – whether it transpires before or during its actual construction, and whether it is a mental or physical transformation, or both.

Speaking of our prospective habits to be taken up in the future, one may as well remember that the only life to live in New Babylon was the social kind, which was equally creative, and, given what we've recently covered, was equally experimental [23]. And again, because such experiment, besides its eventual outcome as an experimental city [39,49], was to start from our inner territories; it therefore can be executed at any ordinary moment of our ordinary lives – as long as we have access, and the courage to access, to our innermost places.

According to our findings, especially in the Situationist textbooks, the test and the prospective evolution of our beings did not mean to transpire somewhere other than where and how we live [50,85,88]. There was no gap between the test and the daily life; for the latter was the former's exact material, agent and medium as with its very objective – employed all at the same time. And, because of all these, it is rather easy to see why we've named these parts, especially the previous sub-chapter, with titles pertaining to the much-convenient and daily origins of New Babylon and its central question.

In parallel, by the seemingly-convenient locales of such experiments and New Babylon itself, the major question of who we can be, or how far we can think and live differently, was to be answered within that very life – not outside of it. The test about our wider prospects in the future, or an imminent inquiry about if we could think like a Babylonian for a single instant [28], could be done in the perimeters of our present lives prior to those occurring in Constant's future. And that's where we could revisit to the assertions of Espen Hammer, and to his advice on where to stand on the seemingly-impossible and often-destructive terrains of utopian imagination [42].

What we can easily grasp in such revisit is that the principal inquiry of New Babylon, or its core question directed at our very beings as raised by McKenzie Wark [28], is almost identical to what Hammer referred as “thought experiments” [42]. To rephrase his thesis, along with those underlined by Mumford and Claeys [41,47], by taking such imaginary places as possible destinations and as guides to fine-tune our future courses; we can then involve in the highly urgent debate preceding that course, and can enact our highly modern necessity of looking beyond our present setting, which is located somewhere upon that course leading to our coming days [42].

In other words, each utopia was mostly about the road before it – if we choose to see them that way. Or, in other words, in the case of More’s impossible island [44-46], it was mostly about the other islands that might lie between our shores and that *no-place*. And, essentially, in the light of all we’ve covered, New Babylon had inherently been about the very road, namely the discussion, preluding itself. It was already devised as an undamaging, much instrumental utopia, a typical kind in Mumford’s reconstructive categorization [47] – only offering and aspiring for the debate and the critical glosses to see it, and only furnished with couple of sights seen by its first user, as some food for experiments ahead [8].

And given the gloss-after-gloss operations resided in its nature, or the daily, situation-by-situation experimentations unfolded in the stories of its cultural antecedents; it was inherently made of many micro-utopias, and thereby of many small and daily thinking experiments. And, according to what we know, it was not only built on such small experiments, by Constant the Babylonian experimenter per se, but was also after other miniscule events, still undecided in their prospects and authors, to be enacted by future experimenters.

As stated during the respective parts of our introduction, the more we got into its cultural origins and backstories found in the journeys of several Parisian dissidents; the less detrimental and the more instrumental Constant’s utopianism becomes. And that’s why we got into those chronicles and pursued the so-called *Mental Babylon* down to its very roots and formative workings – which could be summarized as some daily and highly-convenient mental experiments that simultaneously look for what sort of potentials could be derived from the existing, and raise the essential question of what kind of a person we wish to turn into after our previous selves during the course of these singular enactments.

That is, as New Babylon was all about its preceding road and its anticipated construction, a *constructed situation* was all for the mere chance and the impelling means to raise such a question – bit like in Winnicott's theses on the purpose of our childhood toys [35,36]. In that way, again in Situationist terms, then every single constructed situation was a micro-utopia and a small thinking experiment in itself. A minuscule utopia of daily life that is only in pursuit of the next one – that is the next subjective experiment coupled with a prospective mental expansion.

From another perspective, in the terms rather pertaining to our thesis, each of these small and daily utopias, which could be achieved or tried out in a walking distance or by simply looking around at any moment of our ordinary lives, were also some small *critical alignments* that could be conjured within the scope of everyday. What referred as "thought experiments" by Hammer [42] were then what we refer and formulate as those hypothetically-astronomical endeavors, now rather minimized in their extents, in the realm of past-futures and yet-to-be-found presents located at a critical distance.

Indeed, as in each conscious lining, we were to pair two different versions of ourselves and our environment – the current and another possible – just as Letterists had done in their own momentary drafting of cartographies; and just as Constant himself had done in each displaying of New Babylon with many more and on bigger-scaled maps [7,9,32,40]. And within those alignments, what Constant or his antecedents had asked of us was to do the experiment: to think, and to look.

So that, for one, by looking we might come up with other things to look and think about, by venturing from one little experiment or utopia to another – as also practiced and catalogued by Letterists, if in real cities. But, in all those versions, whether it is a mental or a physical proceeding, the binary structure – the decors and the emerging actions – was to remain; which, in all, only aspired for the development of new actions, to say for the cultivation of new ways of looking and thinking. In other words, it was all for the questions, and the courage of asking them, rather than the answers which essentially were ours to give.

That, in a way, constitutes the whole agenda and purpose of all the journeys we've since covered – including Hammer's or Mumford's perspective on utopias [42,47], or the magical distant-crossing merits of all timeless artworks [37], or the central motives and the upmost outcome of all our cosmic ventures [17,54,55]. And, yes, although it

required little more than just a few simple glances, and, at times, building and financing remotely-controlled outer-space seeing facilities [16,19]; all that could be done in our present lives and present days. It is, indeed, a simple test field – if not for an equally simple test.

So that, for two, we might as well find a small utopia to think about or a momentary alignment to conjure just outside of our door – as echoed in the earliest memories of a young Letterist [28]. And by thinking, it makes a direct try-out, and, if we are lucky, a direct constitution of a utopia – a different world constructed at a short-walking or brief-thinking distance, however small and lasting for a single instant. Yet, one also needs to remember there wasn't any bigger one in theory, and if there was, it could only be achieved by advancing from one alignment or experiment to the next – there was no pre-drafted, grand plan for all the massive plans we've seen in Constant's journey. In another saying, such consecutive, piece-by-piece progress was the only way to *prolong* a New Babylon, or to make it into a global enterprise or else – for it could only be present as long as its discussion was. For a bigger utopia, called New Babylon or else, we just needed to keep its discussion intact, and our interiors open for expansion.

So that, for three, other than the experiments lingering just a little farther than our doorsteps; we might also find many small utopias to test and to try out provided in Constant's much timeless, inherently plural, intentionally open-ended story. Besides the necessary courage to ask those vital questions to our very beings, all the necessary equipment and preliminary decors were already included in the story – but only with a few other requirements: Our attendance to the story being told, along with the obtaining of the proper ways to listen or the right angles to see it for what it essentially is – which, after all, was an idea for living [8,9,23,52]. A model, different in its spirit and rather open in its form, yet with the same location as ours.

When these requirements are met, then the project offers its very self as a seeing-instrument, along with the exact procedures to use it, and with the extra material provided by its first user to widen our vantages and the prospective collection of our own inquiries [8]. As his dream was made of many other and smaller dreams; and as his foundational components we've unearthed also implied the other Babylons that could be found elsewhere in the other direction, namely in and beyond our present; we can find some evocative decors and some small hypothetical-planets to align ourselves,

and find chances to make critical comparisons and measurements in the vicinity of the present just like the early Letterists.

Given what we wish to accomplish in this thesis and how, it seems as we are directly borrowing our cue and methodologies from Constant and his project's consecutive, two-world-aligning operations – all the while of taking its enigmatic substance as objects to work on, and its own genealogy as a major reason for all that we are currently up to accomplish. So, New Babylon is not only our primary *Why* and object of study, but also becomes our primary *How*.

In other words, just as the project was a combination of its own discussion and all those Constant himself had contributed to the discussion; it also entailed its own seeing protocols within itself – for Constant or any other observer. If anyone is up for taking the project and use it as a lucrative utopia for "thought experiments" or reconstructive agent [42,47], just as Constant had described and just as we are inclined to; one needs to *align* his own persona and his surrounding world, along with all those personas and worlds shown and told in his story. And, while indulging in such critical *locating* acts, then one needs to move forward – for that's what New Babylon or any Situationist living had been all about, besides what we've initially outlined in the maneuvers of Benjamin [18,84] or those of our much-costly devices voyaging the outer space for acquiring sights of two things at once [16,17,19,20,34,54,55]: making connections and moving in doing so.

More, in the light of all that, it is also *how* we could start looking for answers to that central question raised by Wark [28], and, in effect, by Constant several decades earlier [23,39]. The question of who we can or wish to be still stands, as with all the other possible life-forms out in the deep dark space [17]. And it still is waiting to be coupled and challenged with a prospective counterpart, which, in our own thesis and proceedings, appears to be Constant's New Babylon.

In order to break from this seemingly-eternal solitude, and amidst all our costly efforts to locate a worldly-cousin in the outer space [16,17,19,34], or the efforts of revisiting a particular past to retrieve what was lost and still could be saved [18], or all the utopian-thinking our modern minds and eagerness exerted for drafting our paths ahead [41,42,47]; we are to summon New Babylon back from where it was first conceived,

and from its own solitude – resting quietly in several museum collections and academic commonalties, if not in some remote place in the unknown heavens.

By summoning, it also makes a bridging to a seemingly distant land whose tales are told by an ingenious storyteller, just as Hisham Matar prescribed [37]: A re-listening of an inherently-nomadic story, nomadic in its plot and in the way it ought to be listened and thought about; a retrieving of a magical object with many mysterious guises emblematic of "African sculptures" [8, p. 236], and with many controversial, and often highly aesthetic and disciplinary postures to its accustomed viewers [8,9]. A summoning of a past-future to inform and accompany our yet-to-be-challenged present and yet-to-be-charted future; and as well as to remember that past carefully, but in the way it ought to be remembered; and therefore, as well as to leave some of its parts behind.

Only then, as Hammer and Mumford suggested [42,47], we may get a sense of where we stand in the face of our coming days, and have a glimpse of what those days might look like. It's free and much possible, by all that Constant advised and told, and for all that we yet do not know. The experiment is there, and still open.

For the prospective merits of this thesis, aside from the methodologies outlined and the imaginative maps will further be charted; we might have a few things to know, and few things to say about the future – for the very fact that, just as Constant proclaimed, "The true builders of New Babylon will be the New Babylonians themselves" [53, p. 213]. It was all up to us make the future, whether it will look like Constant's depiction or something else. Chances are still all we have – as much as what New Babylon was built upon and could offer in return.

2.3.5 A digital Babylon

As proclaimed before, it was the actions that mattered within a *constructed situation*, as in Constant's well-stressed focus on the living culture rather than on the redeeming conditions [23,39,53]. And, for all we already know, that living culture, or the actions and behaviors expected to emerge, was mainly centered on our daily practices and worldly perspectives – our habits of making and thinking, so to say. The utopia was mostly of how we live, but only secondarily of where we live. Speaking of new behavioral forms anticipated by Situationists, our revisit to the Babylonian lands on the lands it never existed, the so-called third journey of *New New Babylon* [24,70],

could be considered as the very first utopia we've encountered in rather personal extents – and without actually knowing what we were encountering at the time.

To the extent of its unintentional but fruitful contributions to our thesis, a year before its official commencement, there was actually more to *New New Babylon*'s much-effectual credits that we've told couple of chapters earlier. Other than the empirical testing it propounds to our claims, those which pertained to the central and instrumental guises of our principal utopia; and besides the highly positive outturns of this testing, which then became the proof that the project was singular in its essence and plural in its execution, that, there could be found other and further Babylons inside and through the original one; it now illustrates a firsthand record of those anticipated behavioral forms in their wake, alongside the alternative ways of using the present means, as once underlined by Jorn and Debord [85,88,89].

To the extent of making and thinking habits, during my experiments in paper and digital media – those which comprised of many trials, modifications and terminations as in Constant's studio works – the central task, as with the initial problematic of such venture, was to reenact the ingenious, often-perplexing, built-in mystery of the original substance in a relatively sterile and quantified environment. The main task was to preserve "the veil that Constant drew over social relations yet to be realized" [70, p. 51] – in a medium that was essentially conceived for the visualization of things before they are realized.

Given such definitions about our contemporary virtual platforms, the essential purpose of this medium was no different than that of New Babylon itself, at least rudimentarily – which simply was an imaginary realm visualizing what could be realizable but not yet realized, if not in its full picture. And this might be applicable for most architectural depictions by nature [91,92]. However, as also stated by Wigley several times, Constant's original pieces and the overall visualization of New Babylon differ from the conventional workings of architectural representation, which these digital platforms are currently a part of [9,32].

Precisely, they differ in their purposes, namely for New Babylon's polemical purposes: For an ordinary architectural project to be realized, all the beforehand material inclines to display a realistic frame of the constructed version, or provide the overall details, through drawings or models, to be used for its complete realization [9,32]. There is a

profound distinction between the medium and the final product – where a showcase, much naturally, precludes the actual work of architecture.

Whereas, in New Babylon, there was only showcase. In another saying, there wasn't any architectural project to be realized in a real sense, nor any of its construction details for that matter, as many times stressed by Constant himself [8]. There was only a project represented beforehand to provoke desire for itself – as with its provocative, highly non-technical details [32]. What is on display was a deeply controversial project which, despite having countless architectural models and drawings [7,9,40], was never meant to be constructed as it is shown – but only offered its mere suggestion as to assist others to construct it in different ways [8,53]. It is a project which certainly defies the commonplace representational procedures, other than the very conception of architecture itself – by becoming one with the place or the mediums it is represented in. There was no distinction between the two. It was all made of the *beforehand*, but with no actual or any single *after* to follow.

Revisiting his original orchestrations, between the studio and the lecture or exhibition rooms, there were many additional filtering phases employed – such as the peculiar lighting or photographing techniques yielded the desired guises of open-ended, perplexing ambiguities [9,79]. Whereas, given the limitations and internal workings of our singular medium, we didn't have any space or filtering plane in between so to say. It was a direct route from the digital studio to the digital exhibition, or no route for that matter.

Apparently, a *digital* Babylon had many problematics to tackle, and as well to make use of like the original: Not only the showcase and the actual product needed to appear in the same realm, but the space of showcasing and of its preparatory fabrication were also unified. Well, ultimately, despite such inconveniences of digital platforms for visualizing polemical and plural realities, we found the necessary resolutions in Constant's practice, which needless to say is truly Babylonian – other than in his peculiar decors which we used as referential material [70].

To explain these solutions in rather shortly, as in the way he incorporated other artists and their techniques [79-8w], or the experimental methods he invented in his own studio [9]; I was able to come up with several inventions by experimenting with the tools and medium itself. Like Constant, I did too *détourn* the respective media for my

own purposes – by using and pushing the means for the outcomes they were never used for. Similar to the ways in which he treated his models and made use of the inherent visual effects of plexiglass plates [9]; I took advantage of digital planes and their programming features, which could be hacked in order to yield the desired guises of a glimmering, self-concealing, ghost-like presence. It took me a considerable amount of testing and tweaking, but, as stated by all Situationist revolutionaries, it didn't necessarily exceed our present means [85,88].

Whereas, for all its initial successes, such digital *détournements* only served the prescribed, rather practical objectives of my research – that is, simply learning from the previous concealer, and playing with the present means, and recreating the effects in a foreign reality. Besides, there were other problems to solve in this practical agenda – such as the integration, or the previous disintegration, of various scales explored and occupied by Constant in different medias, and exerted in different periods throughout his visual journey [70]. Namely, such task implied the unification of all these mediums and all the snapshots of his project – such as the city-scaled maps, the models depicting the sectors in somewhat of a mid-scale, and the interior drawings showing the Babylonian atmospheres from the vantages of a single citizen – in a single, "unitary digital form" [70, p. 51]. A form in which, with a single click, one can proceed from an aerial view to an interior space within an instant, and without ever leaving the medium.

As with the previous problematics, couple of innovative experiments had been helpful. The case is that there needed to be an omnipresent level of ambivalence in each scale, meaning, a similar amount of blur present in each frame the visitor is flying through[15]. At the end, I was able to get some of the desired effects within the visual limits of my own medium, and, especially, by the hidden fallibilities and visual bugs of the software – which in turn served my tactical purposes. So, as it was an exploration of what a *digital* Babylon could look and work like; it also was that of what our present means of digital design and crafty architectural renderings were capable of. And, as it turns out, there are many things one can do with such practical tools beyond their practical

[15] *Flying through* a digital model or a *fly-through animation* often is associated with the works of architecture and built environments present in virtual format, where the user can move around and fly over a given environment as if it has been created and realized by the means of a 3D visualization software [93,94].

uses. That's one other lesson, now tested and verified to some extent, belongs in our respective revolutionary guidelines.

Indeed, given what we've learnt from such theories, that appears as an exemplary way of Situationist learning and making, taking place in a unified pace: Constantly testing the elements and the outcomes, all the while of acquiring an alternative knowledge as we drift along – this time, within the expanses of a virtual city [70,71]. To the extent of what a counter-research or counter-activity might imply, such *détourning* acts and the transformation of existing functionalities of the existing means were nevertheless of a Situationist perspective. Whereas, to the extent of the discovery of new thinking habits and unknown places in our interiors, say the actual ends to which these means and acts actually are; there wasn't much happening on that department.

Yet, just as we've noted, there are always unexpected results and turns in any exploratory journey. And, luckily, this did apply to mine as well: Similar to ways in which I was able to acquire the essential meaning of New Babylon for what it actually was from the written chronicles; a little after I started to work on the interiors, some of the similar, core meanings of New Babylon began to surface [70]. And, in a way, the revelations were more straightforward than those of the readings, if not more effectual: They appeared right in my *practice* – if not at the first sight per se. That is, rather than running into a key sentence or solving the mystery of *Visual Babylon* within the *Written* one; what I was offered was a firsthand, directly-lived experience.

In fact, that firsthand experience was in a way a follow-up, a kind of sequel, to what I'd previously read and later acquired extra meaning: It was an experience of a particular activity, much particular to that of New Babylon, which once was underlined and transcribed into my notes with the phrase of "an abstract volume glowing with indeterminate life" [9, p. 50]. What I had been offered, or had personally yet unknowingly enacted then, was that sort of an indeterminate life, if only a small portion of it.

In other words, mine was the same sort of culture, which is now being reenacted by a different individual, and in a very different medium some 60 years later, however only for a couple of months. A culture, as we've underlined several times now, that is the very essence and promise of Constant's project – with not one single or prescribed form but only with a single spirit. And, ultimately, that can be said to be the exact

proof and incentive provided by *New New Babylon* for those we now seek to find onwards, as long as our theoretical incentives and prospects go.

While being an indispensable part of my personal entanglements with the project, such phases of directly experiencing what was told in the lexical provenances, which, in a way, meant to be directly living the project's spirit, also contributed to the process of rendering the mysterious Babylon bit less of unknown – by steering me towards the necessary points of observation to see the project as its maker would have wanted [8]. I was able to acquire New Babylon for what it actually was by directly living and experiencing it – and without any pre-intention to do so.

To make another comparison between two encounters of mine, while the many months of reading and transcriptions unveiled the hidden story behind the controversial models and drawings, which was a particular mentality and culture that were intentionally and practically concealed; during the interior constructions of a *digital* Babylon, I was able to undergo that same culture, and experience that same mentality as one individual. As we've mentioned several times now, the key for any cultural transformation or making of an alternative world was resided in the *practice* – how we live, and how we spend our time and resources [29,39,89].

Moreover, this also meant that I was, too, getting another persona for myself – just as Constant had acquired different roles throughout his own journey [9]. After Constant the provocateur and event-maker, or occasionally parallel to it; there arrived Constant the planner and architect, or, in other words, Constant the first Babylonian. In the same way, after the reenacting-architect of *New New Babylon*, the *present-means-détourner* and the digital-bug-finder; there arrived the first *digital Babylonian* – living, exploring and constructing a Babylon of his own, provided by the necessary knowledge and imagination, courtesy of the first, original Babylon [70]. In many ways, it appears much kin to the photographic version and practices of Bran Wisman [9,79], but built as a rather virtual variation, regardless of the decades past of this reenactment.

In the actual chronology of my encounters, this new persona of mine arose at some point during interior modelling phases. After reenacting couple of chosen micro-climates drawn by Constant, and again by employing many experimental methods and techniques [70]; I found myself filling and occupying rest of the sectors – first by different versions, or *détournements*, of the original micro-climates; and then through

my own will and interior impulses, with the help of the experimental knowledge I acquired from my previous technical *détournements* (Figure 2.4).

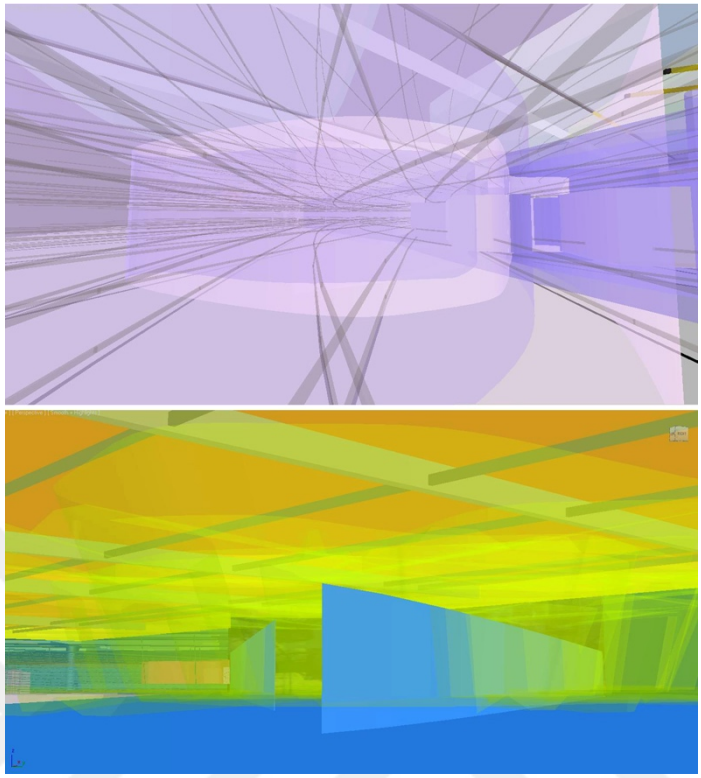

Figure 2.4 : A couple of novel micro-climates created in the digital realm by the author, in 2011.

In all, it was a rather smooth and inadvertent transition, and, according to the Letterists and Situationist theses, it was meant to be as such [50,88]: Advancing from the pre-constructed situations and pre-assembled *décors*, which were of Constant's physical Babylon for my journey, towards those of my own – proceeding towards my own *décors* and interior territories all the same time, within their perpetual interplay. And, in the end, it, too, resulted in an open-ended experiment and a lively, much-playful practice within the confines my own means and daily deeds.

It appears as, compared to the first stage of inventions and rather practical *détournements*, such interiorized journey of twofold sorts renders a rather full version of Situationist exploration and learning protocols [88]– a both creative and transformative building act, however exercised in virtual extents, that takes place within the world surrounding and the one within at a binary pace. Speaking of such protocols and the actual chronology of my discoveries; it is indeed not actually clear when I began to craft my own climates and started my own *dérive* per se – and it is not important.

What's really important is that, somewhere in the midst of my constant looking, constant modelling and constant *détournements*, I was able to go into a phase where the decors chosen for reenactments did not really matter, and were then all left behind. Beyond that point, I was simply performing a life told in Constant's story, but different than the one he'd shown – advancing only by my own desires, tools and decor-making abilities. To our own narration here, all three journeys in our theoretical foundations already seem to be aligning within a straight storyline: A very personal and experimental way of life enacted in a much different era and medium, which was also told in all the Letterists and Situationist fables, and those which much retained at the heart of Constant's own travels.

In another sense, beyond that same point, I was reenacting not merely the effects nor the necessary atmospheres where Constant's story was told; but reenacting the very story being told – in my very own right. And, beyond that same point, what actually mattered and was being discovered, other than the new techniques tested and explored meanwhile, were my personal reactions and imaginative repositories – which in turn became of the necessary components for the upcoming virtual constructions. It all unfolded as the Letterists had once prescribed: no actual means or ends, but only a thorough, consecutive and seamless *practice* of experimenting, living and wandering.

What these encounters and their profound links to those of Situationists further mean is that, paralleling with my first-person experience of Babylonian realms following the digital construction of its sectors on a somewhat macro-scale; the actual meanings and premises of New Babylon seem to occur on the scale of daily, personal and somewhat micro-sized encounters [70]. The very experiment of *New New Babylon*, however by chance, then concedes to our primary theses in this academic work. And the main part of our theses is of nothing but the daily, mental and practice-based merits of the original Babylon. That it could be found elsewhere and be present as long as one wishes to explore it, and uses it as a seeing-instrument and reflective material – as a magical intermediary object or a reconstructive utopia – to seek for other Babylons ahead.

And, the rest of our theses, as with those of Constant himself, were that the project also served as an illustration of this possibility – as being just one version of itself that could be found in our already-present surroundings and a little outside of our cultural and mental boundaries [29,86]. Like we've underlined in many examples, New

Babylon was foremost an assurance of itself, and of its daily, mental and practice-based merits – closing its own distance by its own, self-concealing, discussion-centered design.

And, so did the *Naked City*, and so does the *New New Babylon*. Just like the other Babylons or the daily adventures and utopias of Parisian drifters [28,87]; in its afterlife, it was to show and stress that any different future, or an alternative version of the present culture, could be achieved by simply seeing things from a different location – and by practicing this seeing as one individual on a daily basis. As New Babylon was somehow and somewhere possible, on plexiglass and on paper; so was another one, on digital planes and in a virtual sphere – or on any substance or in any medium available to anyone. The latter were only means to a greater end, if not always to a distant one.

In the light of our previous findings, besides those means, the key to that end was our seeing abilities, and employing any necessary parts when and if desired – and in any desired way. It proves that a critical practice and playful perspective, one that belongs to Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* [73], and a free appropriation of our cultural reserves that defies any ownership, were all that was required [70].

This key mantle was called and so far explained as *détournement* – courtesy of the Comte de Lautrémont the French poet; Paul Nougé the Belgian poet; and the Letterists dissidents who *détourned* the term in that order for their own purposes, and then expanded its limits beyond literature as a highly personal, all-inclusive practice in everyday life [28]. And, in their version, and in ours as well, it propounded the essential daily and worldly switch between what's already available and could further be possible – in the form of a practiced mentality or a *perceptual* bridge, materializing on the observer's position and individual desires.

What was *détourned* in the digital version were the substance and stories of the original Babylon, along with those of Letterists and Situationists – all of which were previously *détourned* from our cultural reserves with a critical and progressive perspective [70]. As a critical act, the digital advances along the same direction. And, for the fact that a critical act also meant a critical knowledge and a critical theory in any Situationist venture [28]; it was both to exhibit its own capacity and methods, along with the meaning of such activity. The *détournements* the digital Babylon exerted, and even its relatively smaller and partially practical expanses, were merely to exhibit what they

could achieve in an age of ever-present appropriations – that is all the more intact with the invention of internet and its ubiquitous, personalized use – and only by the abilities and present means of a single traveler [70].

As a product, *New New Babylon* used the original pieces as a *décor*, at times as literal parts and also as mental compartments, to proceed further – and then terminated its virtual journey at some point, if not its mental drift which still appears to shape our current academic endeavors. And, given all the double meanings vested in each *détournement* or in each Babylonian piece, as both means and ends, and as both personal and tactical acts; this digital *détournement* was as well to illustrate the possibilities these journeys lived on and by: The mere probabilities of a simple revolutionary recipe – a critical thought, that is also a critical practice, sided with a dream of a more connected, exciting, playful human-being [70]. Simple as that. The utopias mostly are of how one lives.

Additionally, in the scope of these probabilities and double meanings of all its previous antecedents, a digital Babylon was only to evoke other dreams further – by providing the necessary provocative decors and imaginative material to its viewers, to other eager or long-bored travelers [70]. Just like Constant's finer pieces and versions, it all yields to the original gloss and its illustrative, tactical purposes which made itself seen in the first place. It becomes just another part of Constant's grand instrument and discussion, added to its collection – as just another finer Babylon with a similarly-elusive form, serving the formless, primary one and enhancing its core message and discussion in further extents.

Speaking of sequels, another much-recent version was also complied from that recent version. In a final *détournement* to its own self, the digital model was recreated as a short movie, in the form of a virtual travel log, echoing the fragmented memoirs and enigmatic photo-work of earliest drifters [28,87,95]. Accumulating less of a story but more of a fractured documentary, the movie records the third traveler's drifts and momentary encounters within an environment that is emblematic of the grand Babylon [70] – showing and exploring what it would be like to live inside in such place, other than the snapshots provided by the first citizen.

In order to keep up with the original self-concealing techniques and the critical level of controlled mystery, a virtual camera curiously revisits fragmented journeys and

paralyzed engrams of the drifter – as much as one can remember in such rapidly and constantly fluctuating environment, as once defined by Constant himself [23,39]. The resulting montage is consisted of non-definitive and precisely brief pieces that are altered by sight, speed, behavior and duration – partially revealing and concealing the mood of each ambience [70]. For all the Babylonian stories that could be lived in different ways and could be told by different ways, for there was a single spirit but not any single form to it; the telling of *New New Babylon*, too, hews to the particular ways and the inherent openness of the original story that had been told by its first liver. So, the movie works in the same progressive manner and experimental mentality, seeking for further possibles and experiences from all there is – and also for the same binary purposes.

At a personal level, this latest *détournement* offers the traveler another drift in his own constructed utopia and his own hybrid dreamworld. At an interpersonal level, it offers the viewer a glimpse of what a different future found in our present belongings and practices could look like. Just like the original and the *digital* comes after that, the cinematographic *détournement*, too, becomes another mental gloss; a stimulative *décor* for its audience – and only makes a suggestion in the meantime. The rest of the movie, or the life at large for that matter, is as well left to the viewer's own imagination – as it once did in ICA, London, several decades ago [23].

Lastly, seeing all these experiments and daily adventures captured from where we currently stand, this collection of highly-distorted engrams also documents the favorable atmospheres and decors where the liver's thinking and making mantles took a different turn. Other than these rather prominent components of behavioral activities, and besides the digital surroundings crafted and the present means used [70]; the movie also stands as a compilation of tested and attained utopias in the scope of daily life and available resources – as long as Babylonian and Situationist definitions go.

In altogether, it also depicts a very personal and binary experiment, emblematic of the Letterist urban drifts [28] – a record of the third traveler's escape routes found in his existing reality, both as a method to surpass it and as a critical response to it, and both as the counter-knowledge and the counter-theory needed. In that way, it takes the form of a somewhat time-based version of the original Paris maps.

Like the original version and the maps preceding, the fractured stories and hazy decors of the *digital* Babylon are stored somewhere safely for those who are curious, if not in a real collection but in a virtual place we call the Internet – a mutual museum with a rather disorganized layout and longer access hours. The movie is strictly licensed under *Creative Commons* – a somewhat current-day extension of the Situationist pedigree, which lets others to use the material freely and as desired, true to its cultural mantle [27,70].

The final version also comes with another interpretative *détournement*, not to its spaces but to their accompanying sounds – as an extension to its audial *décors* and overall experience. Complied by Paul Miller aka DJ Spooky – an artist who is academically involved in the remix culture and works on remixes as a profession – it exerts another appropriation of the original Babylon, or another making of another Babylon from the one he had seen in his own right and his individual take [33].

For those who are curious or eager to make further versions and mixes, the potentials and futures *New New Babylon* presumes are still there to peek at – with nothing but a fragile, puzzling and phantomlike presence as in those of the original Babylon, flickering like the ideas and phrases levitating on the surface of a Twombly painting [96]. Again, the more ambiguous and distant the story that the audience encounters, the better the imaginative purposes are performed – and can the greater distances be covered [37].

At the end, as with all the other *détournements* and Babylons constructed or visited; the so-called third journey and its dreamy recordings, besides all the implications of its counter-activity and experimentally-collected knowledge and *détourned* means, were to vouch for a simple statement – alongside some encouraging incentives found in a much-recent medium and by a much-recent traveler. That is, still, we don't know if (or do not even try to assert that) the future would look like the one in *New New Babylon*; but surely it need not to look like as the present [70]. And, ultimately, that could as well be said of the very statement and presence of Constant's grand version, and of what we've tried to assert of its imperative, far-reaching and open-ended legacy since.

Such promise, however theoretical to some extent and made much of dream-matter as are these pages, was the ultimate, simplest statement of the most recent Babylon – as

simple as such statements go. And, as with all the other momentary, fragile and daily utopias constructed or visited; and with all the other alignments and thinking experiments done in the scope of our mental limits or cosmic aspirations; that single statement and the possibilities it implies, regardless of their yet-to-be-decided outturns, tend to conjure us something adequate to work with and towards. Bit eventually, so does our final journey ahead – alongside prospective others to be made.

3. RE-REMEMBERING

This part comprises certain encounters where the memory of New Babylon, namely the intentionally-recuperated certain appearances and pieces that point to its instrumental facets, makes a re-appearance in regards to the author's personal encounters. They include some theoretical expansions, if fragmentary, to its instrumental qualities and inherent nomadic capacities; and as well as the instances in which it tends to re-emerge in its fragmented portions and stories – and aligning with the present setting of the author. The chapters here divided into two parts – presenting these theoretical expansions in one, and the timely, interconnected readings in another.

Indeed, this particular angle emerges from what's been unraveled in the first phase of our understanding, and is to establish our second agenda per se. Namely, what has been remembered until this part, if voluntarily and systematically, through many examples and references is to unravel New Babylon mostly as a mirroring, intermediary theoretical device – a seeing-instrument in our wordage; it is then the instrumental aspects and guises of the project we will be focusing on further, and with a profound vantage reserved for the respective model – which is both theoretical and spatial – in which such properties become ever more clear.

In the first recollections, we are to compile a set of basic protocols for our respective device, in order to see how it actually operates in the scope of the auxiliary models and theories presented at the introduction, and to the extent of its own reflective, mental traits. We will glance deeper to these sights unearthed during our initial remembering phase, and to what resonates elsewhere – in places lie outside of our revisited pasts. Respectively, we will be looking at foreign places, say to other fields and theories, in regards to a particular model, one that is mostly of making meanings across aligned or neared entities – and also as a way of looking at New Babylon itself, if only, and precisely, from such particular vantages.

For the second part, as mentioned earlier, we will be moving back-and-forth, between our world and the one in New Babylon, but in a progressive manner, as outlined by the first builders of two-world-aligning bridges [86,88]. Likewise, we will also be

proceeding with our thorough scrutiny about our present whereabouts – all the while of measuring how distant we actually are from all these Babylonian tales and dreams at each pairing. And, as in the same binary and open-ended expeditions of Letterists, we will be changing our directions according to the decors and our critical reactions to them, and the length and depth of each momentary alignment would eventually alter.

As noted earlier, including the spatial expansions and the theories coupled with those of New Babylon, the reasoning behind such fluctuation is to be found in that of the meanderings and pauses which are also embedded in the reciprocal nature and constituents of all Situationist expeditions [50]. That is, not only the chosen or arrived decors would affect our path, but the relative position of the observer, along with the things he could see from that position, would also shape the travel decisions. The key model here is the constellation – in which, as opposed to the objective and mostly static chartings of geographical maps, a subjective observer assembly the parts and references of his entanglements depending on his own position and the connections he can see from these temporary locales.

For both parts, given which piece of New Babylon re-appears in author's memory, the author will move forward towards what these pieces tend to connect – building another cloud-like theoretical space, in connection with the first cloud, through these connections. Meanwhile, from these connections and new readings, New Babylon would gain new meanings at each sight and pairing; and the author would continue his movement both in respect to these new meanings of New Babylon and what they connect and show elsewhere. Respectively, considering the two parts presented here, New Babylon will first acquire extra theoretical appendage as a far-reaching mental instrument, and will also be used as a direct instrument – all the while testing the premises of its peculiar making, and those of the thesis as well.

So that, the final journey is also contingent on who the traveler is, and on his personal outlooks on life and theoretical terrain surrounding – after his deep entanglement with the stories of New Babylon. It all depends on his own inner reserves, mental capabilities and the things he would henceforth be discovering in his outlooks, if not only personally in himself – at the presence of ever-changing decors and his reactionary thinking practice. So, as with being an open-ended journey in itself; it proves to be a highly personal kind, too.

3.1 Architecture of Meanings

As one might except from a title as such, this part surely refers to the cartographic and spatial implications of the mental journeys where Constant's work is the main instrument for navigating. Whereas, as one might also expect from what has been written until this part and about the other journeys preceding this; there cannot be any map or any pre-drafted, introductory material regarding any venture as ours – certainly not before we begin our journey. This critical absence is naturally due to the fact that, as it recently told, it would be charted *during* the journey – as a simultaneous and spontaneous disposition to be conjured by the traveler and the traveling itself. So, what does this title imply? Well, for early beginnings, it pertains less to the exact specs of the map itself than to those of drawing it. It pertains to the *activity* rather than the resulting material, so to say.

Aside from some directions on how to proceed *within* such imaginary terrains or a conceptual model of our making, whose several parts we've already underlined; any motion requires a space, as much as imparting one – as the place where such movement does or could transpire. So that, aside from some additional theorization and listing of specs for our upcoming maneuvers, these parts do expand on the spatial implications of such space – one that we are not that foreign to.

Whereas, for all those dispossessions and the fact that our thesis eventually becomes of something more than just about architecture; this chapter and the theoretical dispositions it entails might balance out all that by their architectural implications – namely by the detailing of the very imaginary space of our imaginary alignments. That's the main sort of architecture, if not the only type, found in the thesis – in its most official and general sense.

The architecture here, as with the title this sub-chapter and contents of the rest, is regarded as more of a theoretical medium – specifically regarding a model of thinking and meaning-production, which are researched and expanded in an architectural level. That predisposition and specific handling are not only for the fact that the author had a formation in such field – so that, the using of architectural metaphors and terminology like *space* or *bridges* is frequent – but also for the capacities vested in that field beyond its accustomed uses and meanings. It is an architecture in a much more

expanded sense – as a way and *practice* of looking into things, and elaborating on their inner specifications by *drawing* their spatial implications.

This approach and view of architecture as an investigative and critical agent, where any matter could be understood and studied as an architectural one, is in fact not that foreign to the discipline. It is a custom and methodology found in the well-known analytic drawings of Wigglesworth and Till and also of Louis Kahn [97,98], or in the imaginary ones drawn by Lebbeus Woods [99] – where even an ordinary activity like dining or daily traffic, or a destructive, major terrestrial phenomenon like earthquake could be a case of architectural drawing (Figure 3.1, Figure 3.2, Figure 3.3). More recent examples to such practices could be found in the works and methodologies of Forensic Architecture, a multi-disciplinary agency, that is specialized in investigative projects concerning cases related to human rights and socio-political sphere, and using architecture's own mediums and particular vantages as analytical and explorative agents in studying these cases [100-102].

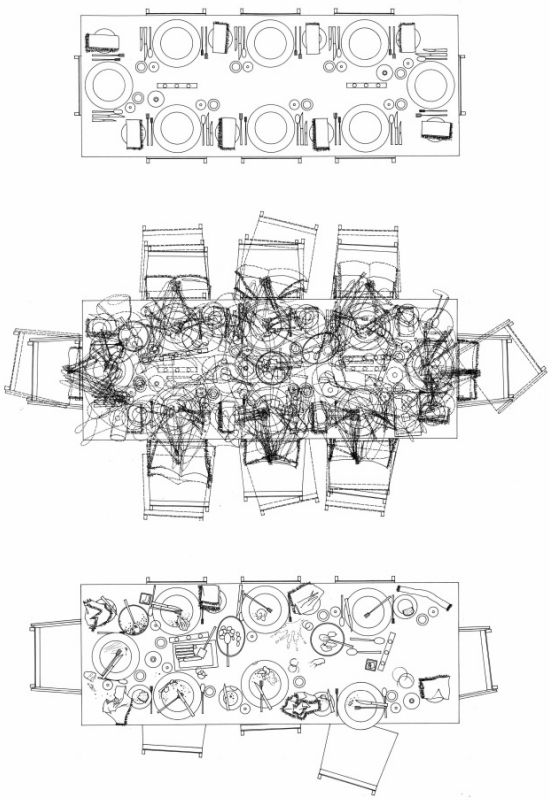

Figure 3.1 : Drawings of a dining table by Sarah Wigglesworth & Jeremy Till [97].

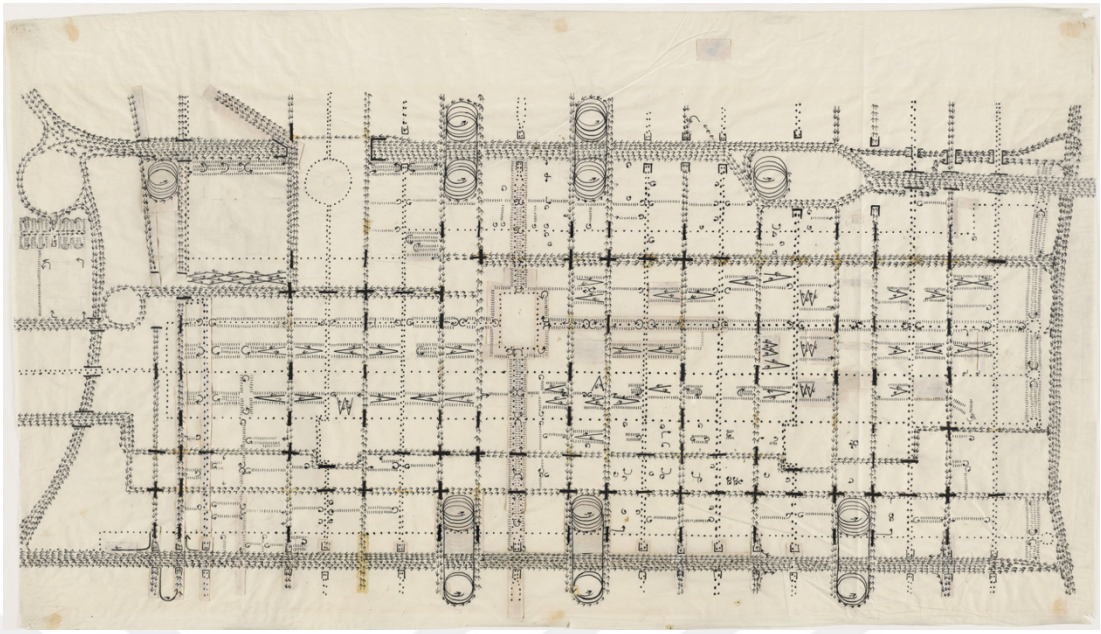

Figure 3.2 : Traffic Study project, Philadelphia by Louis Kahn (1952) [98].

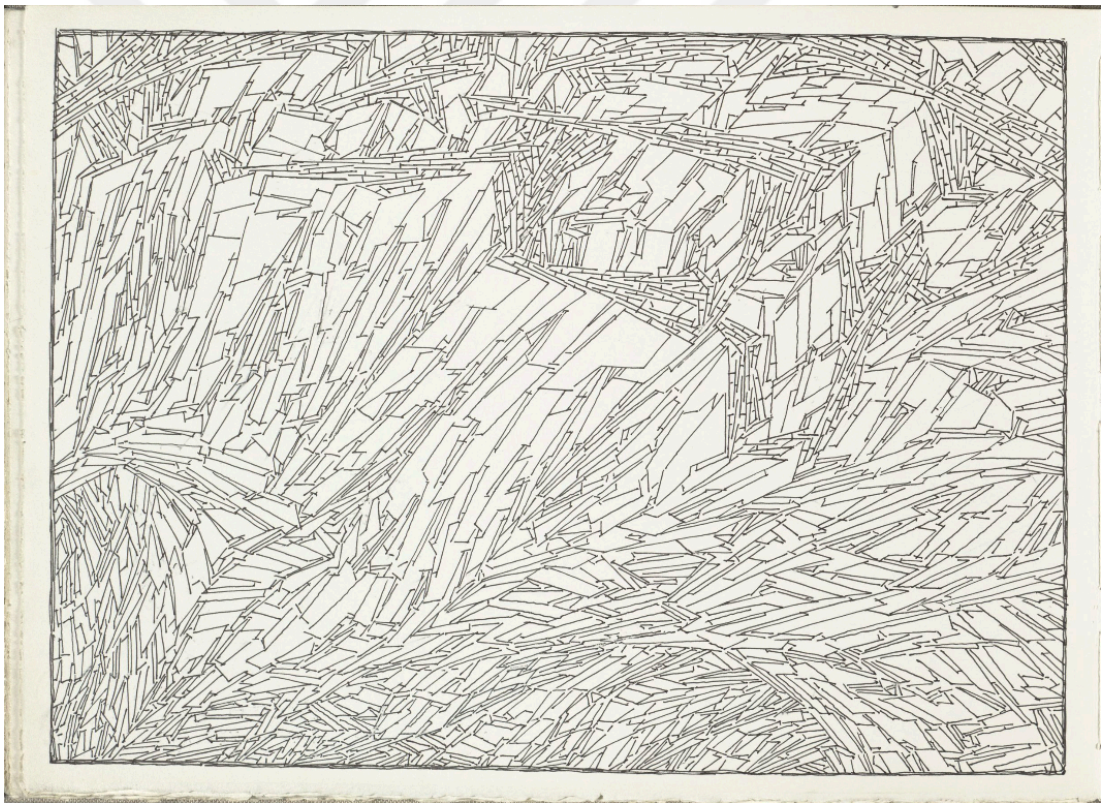

Figure 3.3 : A drawing by Lebbeus Woods (1995) [99].

In all examples, the idea is to examine how these seemingly-non-architectural activities or notions operate, and to expand their inner mechanisms by simply exposing them through architectural modes of representation – by studying their *spaces*, as they were. According to Diana Agrest [103] – a prominent academic who has been involved

in such studies and expanded uses of architecture both in the level theorizing, pedagogy and practice – one could employ the discipline's representational means as critical instruments so as to look into concepts and cases beyond its established subject matters – as a way of "seeing with different eyes", which might then be a channel for new knowledge.

Such investigative venture, whether it is used for criminal events, vehicle routes or for understanding natural phenomena, is a binary kind per se: It at once reveals the hidden relations and operations in those matters, and also attempts to generate or distill a new architecture out of their critical expositions. In Agrest's theorization [104], this is a transformative process in itself, as much as an explicative one. To her theses, where she refers to such drawing attempts as *readings*, a cultural phenomenon, that is not necessarily of a design product but of social one, could also be read as one – so that one might disclose and retrace their underlying "mechanisms" by which these "social texts" [104, pp. 48-50] – in the case of cities and built environments, real or imaginary – were produced.

In that particular view, there is found a clear distinction between an ordinary architectural work and a cultural one – the latter being a hybrid product of complex social interrelations and hidden signs, codes and processes of the unconscious and many ideologies – what she refers and separates each as the "Design" and "Non-design" [104, p. 48]. And this distinction imparts another alternation for the ways we are required to read them.

For her take on these "semiotically heterogeneous" social products, there is proposed a "productive" reading rather than a complete reproduction, that prefers "cuts" or "fragments" over "deciphering" – where a "cut" rather operates on a momentary "space of interrelations", in which these several non-design-originated codes and factors could be studied in their native interactions [104, pp. 50-54]. And they could be read in a way that is not limited by the perception of disciplinary boundaries which rather indulge in the final products than the processes that produce them. Such reading's rather productive virtues originate in the sense of the "expansive" [104, p. 52].

In one example of such expansive readings, Agrest refers to the way the Russian filmmaker Eisenstein studies the drawings of Piranesi, where he applies a

"cinematographic reading" and disentangles the layers and elements take part in an otherwise singular work [104, p. 52] (Figure 3.4). In that explosion of various elements and codes in Piranesi's prisons, his mysterious architecture and the hidden codes and meanings vested in his ever-expanding prison come to surface; and put forward as a set of elements and protocols once utilized by Piranesi as a reflection of his opposition to his cultural era, and especially as a critique of an obsession with typology regarding the future of Western cities [104].

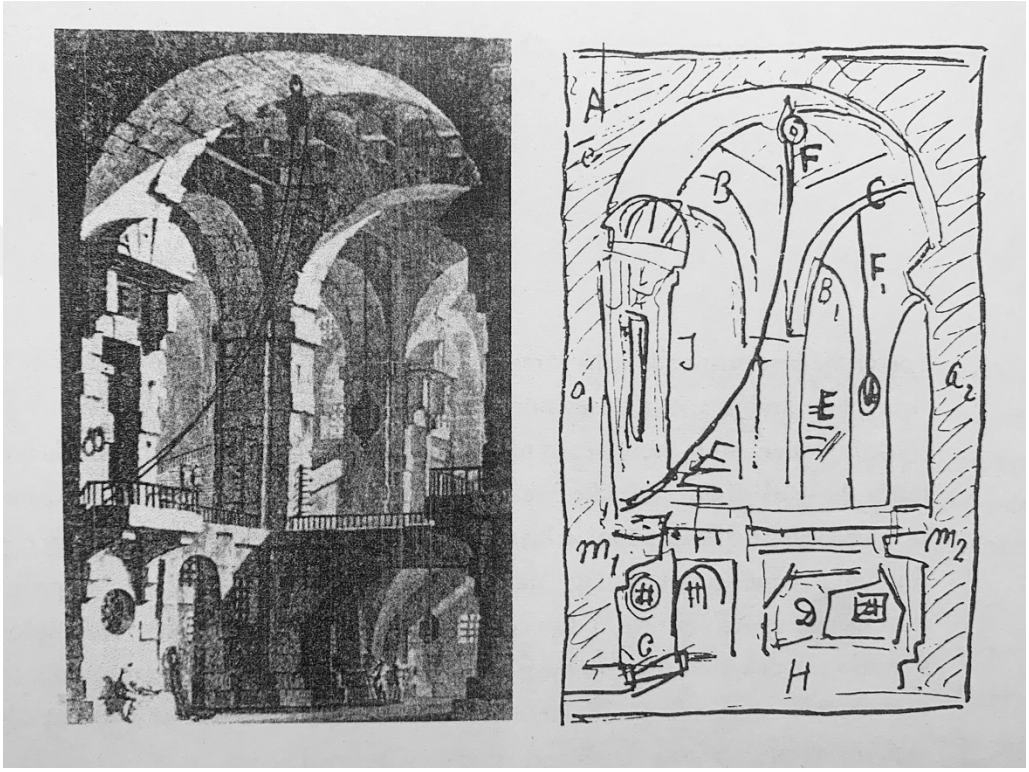

Figure 3.4 : Sergie Eisenstein's sketch of Piranesi's *Dark Prison* [104].

According to Agrest, especially in his second reading, Eisenstein discloses the exploding qualities of the Piranesian architecture, that the second is only an exploded version of the first one; and makes these elements and their non-architectural codes and implications – a critique that is further stressed by "the explosion in form" – visible through their explicative and displacing drawings [104, p. 54]. What's more, not only the non-design cues and motives behind Piranesi's work reveal themselves; but an architecture is exploded through such investigative and momentary study of the non-design – resulting in what she calls "an explosive transformation of design" [101, p. 52].

In the drawings of Woods, a similar oppositional signification and an expansive transformation of architecture transpire as well. Compared to those of Piranesi, concerning the markings of the seismic forces below earth's crust, the critique is rather found in Woods' own remarks about his project, if not only in the way he approaches the matter. According to curator Joseph Becker [105], the work of Lebbeus Woods in the wake of the earthquake in Loma Prieta, in 1989, chooses to tackle this seemingly destructive phenomenon as a creative force for architecture and as a chance for reconciliation between the nature and the man – rather than as a chaotic and merely negative event. Indeed, the title of his project, exhibited in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art where Becker was an assistant curator at the time, was *Inhabiting the Quake* [106].

The commission involved several panels depicting architectural drawings of those otherwise detrimental forces of nature, studying their spatial beings and inner systems; and, at the same time, looking for ways to *invent* an architecture out of them [105,106]. As in what Agrest calls [103,104], these explicative studies and markings of a non-architectural case – which were also coupled with three-dimensional models – also do provide an expansion for the architecture itself – by inventing and exposing potential forms and new protocols to make spaces, along with new ways to inhabit them or to break them apart during those terrestrial episodes of our restless planet. What was then exhibited in the museum is a study of a non-architectural phenomenon as an architectural matter, elevated by countless drawings and with a different theoretical perspective – so that it subsequently becomes one.

Moreover, in terms of inhabiting these unexpected and seemingly uninhabitable spatial potentials, according to Becker, the drawings offer a mental reallocation, too:

> He is suggesting that we embrace or acknowledge the fact that we are responsible for the effects of the earthquake…So he's encouraging us to inhabit the mindset of the nature, inhabit the moment of the earthquake and, instead of being passive, to be an active participant in the process. [105]

In this remark, we can also trace the political or social critique prodded him into such radical view and the drawings that followed – which, at its heart, originated from a societal and self-conscious critique of all human beings in their affairs with the *Nature*,

other than a critique of the ways we rationalize our spaces and their geometries ever since:

> There is however, a deeper structure of resistance to investing in the invention of new architectures of and for earthquake, and this is formed by the most venerable belief about the relationship between the human and natural worlds, which are considered to be hostile to another…But, while Cartesian thought and method succeeded in freeing science, and therefore technology, from the grip of religion per se, it maintained the adversarial Biblical relationship between the domain of the human and the realm of 'Divine' nature. Nowhere is its fragility in this regard more clearly demonstrated than in earthquake regions. [107]

Lebbeus, just as Constant, further carries on with his critique through a proposal demonstrated by a physical and imaginative work, saying that, "Once new spatial models that extend the forces of earthquake into the dynamics of private and social life have been proposed, we can look forward to a post-Biblical reconciliation of the human and the natural" [107].

So, as with such view of the discipline as an investigative agent to understand the surrounding world, and even its most daily, politically-concealed or extraordinarily destructive episodes [97-107], and also as a transformative agent to craft disciplinary potentials from all those around it; it offers an expanded field and knowledge for the architecture – which happens to be our official domain of academic research. It is told that, again by Diana Agrest [103,108], there is actually more to the object and content of architecture than the physical environments and time-scales we inhabit – and that there is an architecture found in other things, and, for that, there could be an architecture of other things.

By her own remarks about her teaching work [108-110] – which the author was a part of for almost a year – where the studio is assigned with the task of expanding the limits of what architectural studies might entail and of elaborating on the kinds of architectures can be derived from these new limits like Woods did; this approach keenly seeks a contribution to the discipline itself – by making it, or in attempt to make it, a territory encompassing more than the study and design of human spaces. Although it is mostly about the *Nature* which inherently exceeds the established senses of

humanly time and space, and also about other worldly but rather un-humanly or invisible operations such as technological developments or global cultural issues; the studio work and the theories behind it certainly posit that there could be an architectural universe beyond the official limits of the discipline [103,108-110]. And one may *read* the things that are themselves not officially architectural, or those which do not pertain to our ordinary spaces and scale relations.

In the scope of those expanded boundaries where several other and rather invisible things could be considered and analyzed within the understanding of architecture [100]; in our own disposition and the subsequent extension of architectural representation and analytic means, what we propose and would detail henceforth is a study and exposition of our critical alignments and the imaginary territories in which they would transpire.

In the fragmentary *cuts* of these imaginary spaces [104], which are themselves momentary by nature, we would attempt to investigate their spatial beings and also the *interrelations* of their non-architectural or non-design elements and notions – such as the comparative thinking and critical seeing operations we are seeking to expand and theorize. Whereas, for we've already included some rather spatial and geometrical models as early as in the introduction – like the terrestrial structures built or the correlational models exerted by the likes of Kepler spacecraft [12,16,19] – we would also summon these inherently-physical models into our theoretical dispositions.

In terms of the function of such spaces and their architecture, there is a purpose reserved for those imaginary realms that is not physical as inhabitation or dwelling but that surely appears humanly. It is the function of moving upon connections and making meanings; of thinking about ourselves and other possibles of ourselves in a double vision, as in what offered by the Babylonian mirage-mirror. The architecture *of* and *in* these parts posits and involves an imaginary but particular space for all the Babylonian lives and for a highly humanly operation, and also for a highly humanly necessity.

For a quick overview of this chapter's outline, the first parts are centered around the essential mechanisms and structure of such temporarily-available spaces in which we would meander for the purpose of finding connections and making meanings. Meanwhile, the remaining portions pertain to the ways by which we might exert those

maneuvers, alongside with the nature and theoretical basis of those mental events and motions.

As this is a function (of movement) reserved for our minds, then this same duality imparts a space *of* and *within* the mind – at least to the extent of the thesis' reservations for our intellectual compartments. When we are done with those postulations and theoretical expansions, we may then begin our actual journey in those momentary realms, which are reserved for our most modern and crucial necessities as human beings with a deep cosmic solitude, and with eager eyes ever-tempted to look at what we are not and where we are not [17,111,112].

3.1.1 Interconnected realms

"The sky is not a glass of anything; / it winks, it's a parable, / the kind your mother told whenever / you'd been "wicked"—intense / but vague. The night sky swerves / to its seat, the show begins:" [113].

It is told that, by the British author H.G. Wells, our beings are furnished with an ever-present tendency to wonder and conquer – with "no rest and no ending" on the acres of our planet and minds, and in the planets that around and looming far beyond our tiny existence [114]. And even in the case of their conquest, it still would merely stand for a beginning. It is a bit like what Carl Sagan said about the ratio of what we currently know about our universe and place in it, and of what still lingers as undisclosed – that the Earth could possibly be "the shore of the cosmic ocean" [112, p. 2]. An ocean, standing before us with its great deal of mystery, of those we still don't know. Yet, with such tendency to peek at this vastness, and with a water "seems inviting" enough [59, p. 2]; we were quick to begin our conquests as the generations of lonely wanderers – to reclaim "a little more land" of this "unknown infinite", as T.H. Huxley once put it [115].

This tendency along with the traces of our intellectual conquests also manifests itself in our collective attempts of staring into heavens, some of which we've mentioned earlier, and in the ways we recorded them ever since. An extensive exhibition in the Library of Congress, in US, sheds a light on our intrigued attempts and their visual recordings – long before the acquisitions and transmissions of our most advanced cosmic seeing-devices [116]. Visible in the material and findings of the exhibition and other sources, the gravitation of our minds towards the questions of how we came to

being as humans and what else is there in the heavens above goes back as early as to our ancient calendars, and illustrated in many different cultures through various forms of drawings and maps [116-118].

A prominent and recurring item in the Library's collection, an important piece of our curious cartographies of the unknown, the *star maps* in particular offer an epitomic case, and with a visual structure relating to our extraterrestrial aspirations – as well as to the spatial implications of the imaginary spaces that we are to occupy and explore in this study. These maps, also known as *Star Charts*, are to depict the astronomical objects like stars, constellations and galaxies – as seen from the surface of the Earth [117]. The earliest of these two-dimensional chartings date some 32.000 or 10.000 years back [15]; and with more accurately detailed ones found in the early works of Babylonian and Chinese astronomers [117,118]. It seems as the question *what else* is a recurring one in our cultural evolution, as well as in the scopes of our "visual sensemaking" of the universe – as Maria Popova, a writer and well-known cultural blogger, frames it [119].

Figure 3.5 : A star map charted in 1896 [120].

In their own specific and beautiful layouts, changing appearances and aesthetics in each culture and era, there are couple of elements to their particular making that seems to be fixed, and thus essential to the cartographical information and meanings they put

forward. In their two-dimensional format (Figure 3.5), a circular boundary stands for the horizon of the observer – according to his current hemisphere of the Earth – an image of what is called the *Celestial Sphere* – a mode of reading the extraterrestrial objects and the rest of the cosmos as a massive dome enclosing our earthly sights [117].

What is also included around this conceptual sphere are some information regarding the time of the year and even the dates and hours, and the name of the hemisphere the observer is in – the north or the south (Figure 3.5, Figure 3.6). What these figures and notes indicate is that the image of the night-sky is contingent on our position, and also on when we care to look above – so the resulting image of a given sky is all but temporary.

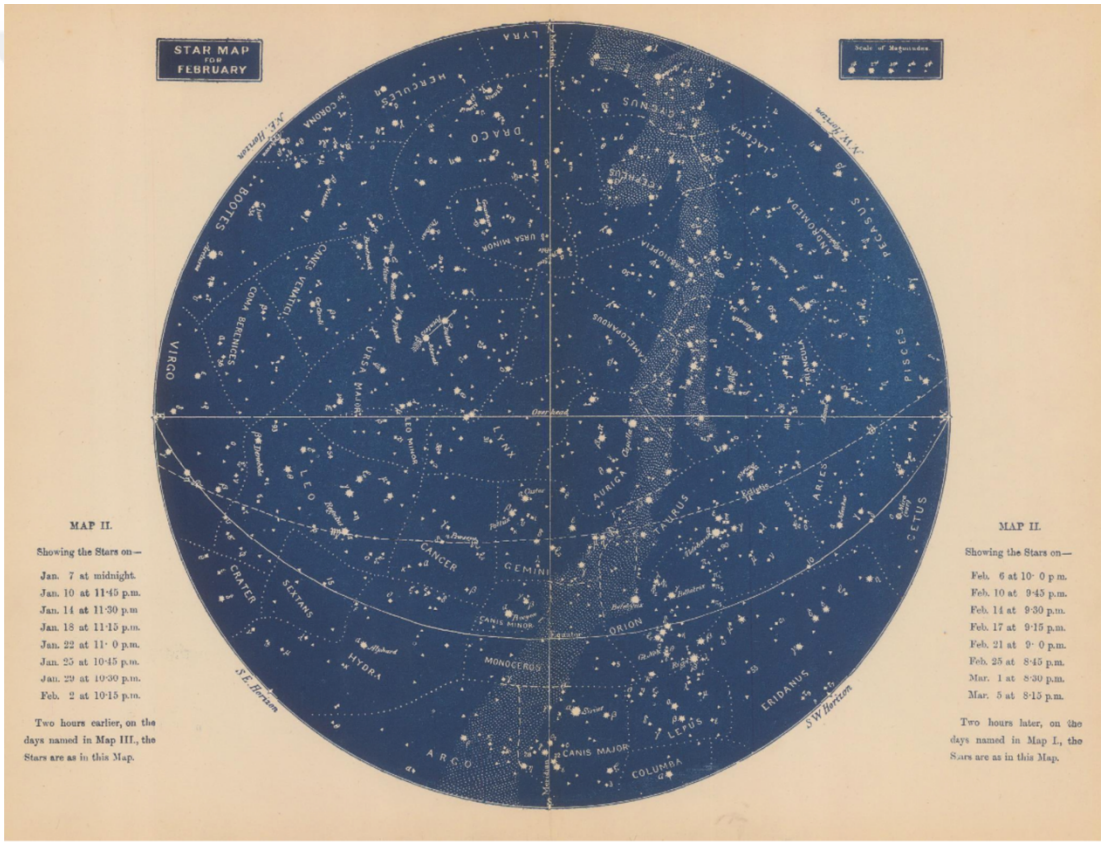

Figure 3.6 : A star map charted in 1884 [121].

What is also important, not only to their observer-centered and space-and-time-specific structure but also to our interest in them, is the little plus-shaped figure placed on the center of the projected celestial sphere – visible in Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6 – a visual sign stands for the *Zenith*, a coordinate which refers to the point directly overhead [117]. For practical purposes, this little plus assists the observer to locate his position and employ the right vantage according to a specific star map – so the chart

is synchronized with what the observer sees of the night-sky. To our interest, it simply indicates the presence of the observer – that is us, the earthly wanderers gazing at all there is beyond our existence.

Comparably, other than the indication that our sights of this unknown infinite is temporary and fluid – for not only we but the stars and planets do move – this tiny notation does indicate a twofold relation of somewhat philosophical importance. It, if figuratively, stands for the correlational structure exerted by our seeing-attempts, where, on a flattened spherical surface, we are represented alongside and amidst our potential counterparts and parts of the unknown – overlapped within the temporarily-available portions of the cosmic ocean. Another "cosmic selfie" [20], in other words, with us at the very center of the frame.

In this twofold and correlational layout, and by recording our temporary sights in the first place, we seem to exert a binary operation as well – both practically and culturally. Just as in the case of our monolithic constructions upon the face of the Earth [11-14], this particularly refers to an act of resituating our presence according to a larger system, or to a larger presence so to say – in a partially-symbolic manner. One may call this an act of synchronizing with what all there is about the universe – a simple but perfect case of a twofold locating act.

To the extent of our borrowed terms and metaphors from the astronomical fields and tenures, such binary registries point to what we call as *alignments* – an attempt of a *twofold locating*, however and once again momentarily, which links ourselves to other beings and realities. For that, in each star map, or even in most of the chartings displayed in the exhibition by the Library of Congress; there is a connection established, if metaphorically and philosophically, with our unknown parts – and, with that, there occurs a chance for a re-assessment for our own current beings in the light of those *other* and distant places.

Even now, one may discern the similarities between these attempts and meanings they impart with what we've told about the essence of New Babylon, or thinking of utopias in general. While all these astronomical gestures and heavenly maps stand for something seemingly miniscule in the face of the vastness of our cosmic darkness [17,59]; it appears as we are not only furnished with a tendency of wonder and conquest [114], but also with an ability and cultural inclination to *align* ourselves to

someplace other and, at times, to something bigger. And what all these maps or the structures studied by archeoastronomy [10-14], or the thinking experiments exerted by the makers of New Babylon or some other alternative place [41-47], imply is that we often happen to find ourselves in a dual reality – an *interconnected realm* so to say – and that we somehow incline to dwell and travel inside it, if not always in physical units.

In fact, we have seen several instances of such dual, interconnected worlds and our ever-aligning impulses – especially in Walter Benjamin's gazing at a specific past from his own present [18,84]. What is also quite similar in that optical endeavor is again the presence of the observer, and that the sight of another world, and its subsequent registry according to another, is contingent on a specific time and location the observer is in. In the star maps, we find the indication of a momentarily-interconnected realm in a small plus sign and couple of dates and coordinates [117]; in travels of Benjamin, we find its presence mainly in his opening remarks – specifically in those referring to a "proper distance and angle of vision" which makes an object appear specific to one's point of view [18, p. 83].

In the scope of star maps, we may detect a similar sense of motion – if not in a single map, but rather in the way they are conjured. By their location-and-time-specific nature and singular existence [117], there is almost a countless number of maps one might draft – proliferated by the movement of the observer and the celestial beings above. In other words, a star chart, despite being of a specific moment in space-time, almost tends to imply the existence of others; and thereby insinuates our movement to acquire further sights of our celestial counterparts – similar to Benjamin's own mental mileage.

While all these indications – namely that the realms that are constructed and the way they did define the subsequent motions in them – relate to the keen relationship between a map and its mechanism; let us now stick with the formation of a singular event and alignment in these peculiar, twofold structures. And, for that, let us bring in a less literary sight of a more recent device – which has a rather rapid chart-making ability. Given the speed of its charting and alignments it makes possible; it does offer us another and a much recent example of a particular thinking experiment for our own compilation here.

The famous Kepler spacecraft's official mission, as explained by the sources of NASA, is to find and study other planet systems orbiting around other stars in our adjacent parts of the Milky Way [19]. Amidst the large amounts of data pouring every hour of every day since its mission began in 2009, there are couple of filtering inputs and specs to make sense of all the sights and exoplanetary bits it acquires – especially for the purpose of a specific case deemed important to our own beings. While Kepler automatically hunts many planets and stars in the neighboring parts of the cosmic ocean, it particularly seeks for what is called "terrestrial planets" – which are sized within the similar limits of our own planet, somewhere between twice and half of its size, and those that are floating in a "habitable zone" of their respective stars [19,34]. In other words, our most-advanced seeing-device looks for our potential cousins, the "Earth-like planets" as Lisa Messeri puts it, deep in the expanses we are yet to travel but able to peek at [17].

The potential candidates are given names with specific numbers added to the device's title, and ordered according to their kinship with our very own planet [16,34]. There are, in fact, rather ambitious motives behind Kepler's restless hunt and catalogue-work, and the excitement it propounds for the citizens of the current Earth. According to Messeri, the apparent premise is of another "celestial refuge" – so we might relocate when our planet is no longer inhabitable – alongside the possibility of bridging between various Earths – with the indicative aspirations for our future interstellar-travelling days [17]. And, there is of course the age-old, highly exhilarating inquiry regarding the existence of other life-forms – which might have been accommodated by our extraterrestrial cousins somewhere, sometime during the seemingly-eternal days of the cosmos [17].

Whereas, according to her piece, there is another, and much subtler motive behind our ever-expanding exoplanet-rundown. In line with what we've underlined during the introduction, aside from all these dreams and ambitious plans, all these discoveries primarily tend to offer an insight about our own planet and the liveliness it makes possible. Regarding the recent findings of the European Southern Observatory, Messeri says, "This discovery, more than offering a connection between life-forms, is much more about us connecting with what Earth is, as a place and as our home" [17]. It is as if in each picture of the universe and in each numbering of our potential cousins

and twins, we are to gaze at a partial mirror – as in the mysterious sights of New Babylon – and are able to find clues about our own past and future.

For the same reasons and rather impractical but informative implications of these exoplanetary excursions, any discovery is deemed almost as important as another. For instance, in that recent finding of the European researchers, a probable candidate orbiting our nearest star Proxima Centauri, with a proper distance to its celestial beacon, is thought be exposed to a possibly high radiation and making a full run around its star 11-times longer than our Earth does [17]. Yet, despite all those dissimilarities and the uninhabitable conditions the planet might possess, it still makes of a compatible object, a possible alternative, to look at and align ourselves with.

According to Messeri [17], the planet's viability is retained within the same, seemingly impractical but horizon-expanding virtues of any alternative-sight and alignment – namely the connections it has, offering similarities and dissimilarities, with our own planet. At the end, this planet or another Earthlike being does offer a chance to examine our life and the conditions that sustain it – with so much information to gather.

Such outlook appears very similar to what Dennis Overbye noted of Cassini's closing, courageous expeditions around Saturn, and the pictures it sent of our unknown expanses [55]. Like in this highly-radiated planet or any candidate Kepler discovers in the vastness of space, any long-distance charting or cosmic picture is never just about a possible relocation or finding another life-form. Instead, it is mainly about what we could make of what we find elsewhere, for expanding our knowledge about our own beings and the universe at large – which we are a part of.

In the view of Messeri, this is also a highly moral tenure – that any claim to call another planet as Earth-like is to claim that we know, in one way or another, about our own home [17]. And for Overbye [16], regarding the restless planet-harvest of Kepler, any analogue to our life could provide "an opportunity to understand and reflect upon Earth's evolving environment" – a case for comparative thinking and learning. Simply, for not only all celestial beings and their cosmic canvas are moving and evolving, but our planet also does; a cousin, first and foremost, could learn from another – despite being too far to meet in person, at least for the current time being.

In the light of these indirect outturns and rather philosophical overtones vested in our heavenly expeditions [55,112], recent or archaic, we might take a look at an example

other than those of star maps – where, crucially and visually, another snapshot of an interconnected realm makes its appearance. A diagram provided by the NASA (Figure 3.7) depicts a somewhat profound correlation between our own solar system and that of candidate *Kepler-452* – which was also mentioned by Overbye in his piece about the 9-year-old mission [16]. What is illustrated is a simple scale comparison – a case in which the respective stars of each system are aligned, and the size comparisons are displayed between the habitable zones and member planets.

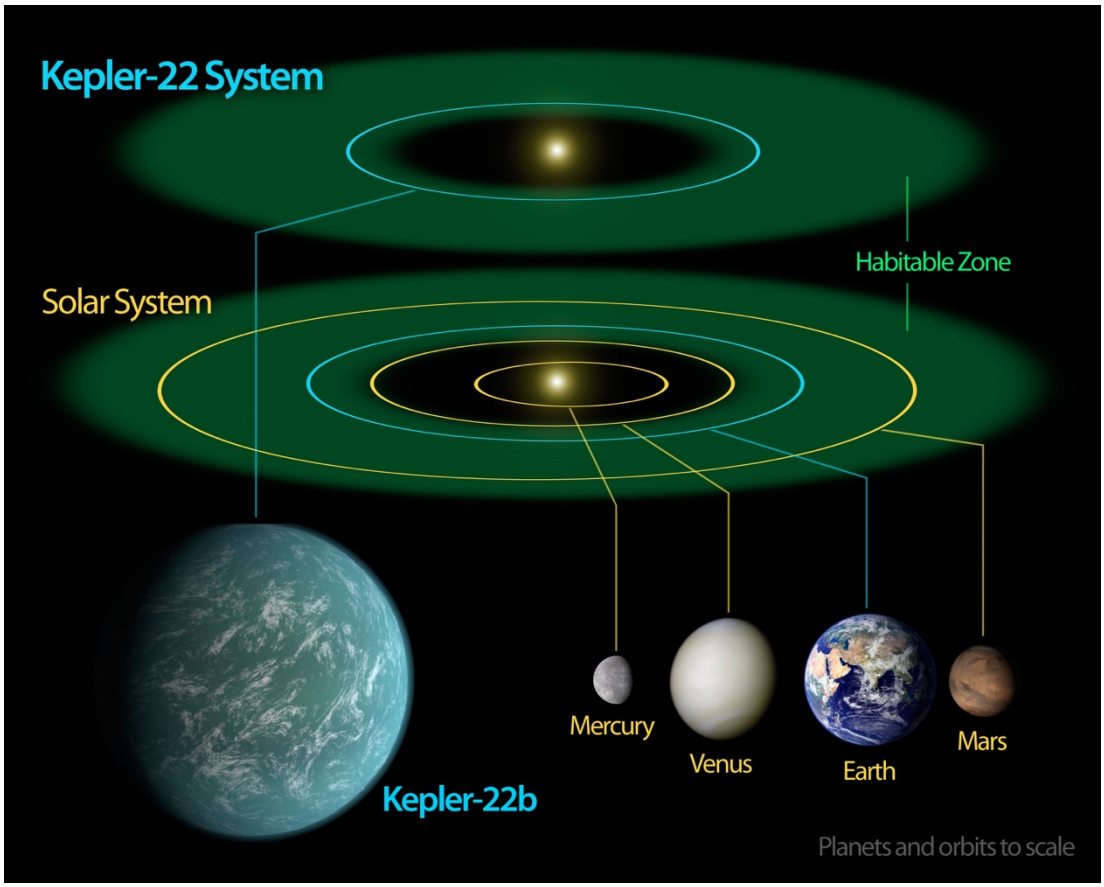

Figure 3.7 : A comparative diagram of our own solar system and Kepler-22b [122].

What we see in this image, other than a visual alignment and an informative diagram, is a subtle but clear form of *nearing*. In the scope of our philosophical standpoint and claims, in a single image, it is a nearing of two distant worlds and systems originally situated afar – both of which then neared and aligned by the *worldly connections* they deem to have.

In a brief comparison with a star map, now the presence of our world and present existence is introduced in rather fuller extents. Rather than a simple *Zenith* mark, we are literally in the picture, and seem to have crossed our previous distance as in a

timeless story [37] – if not exactly in a planar layout. This is a relatively abstracted diagram, of course, which vertically juxtaposes our system to another one. Yet, the implications are almost the same – that the image before our eyes is of an *interconnected realm*; made of our current reality and an alternative one, in which the two variants are bridged in a snapshot.

Just like star maps, this image stands as a temporary pairing – a fragmentary instance of an alignment – and is a truly human, mental product. What's more, by all the information and critical comparisons it provides, it represents a small but perfect thinking experiment as in what Hammer would call [42] – a hypothetical conversation with another possible life-system, if not its exact whereabouts are unknown [43-45].

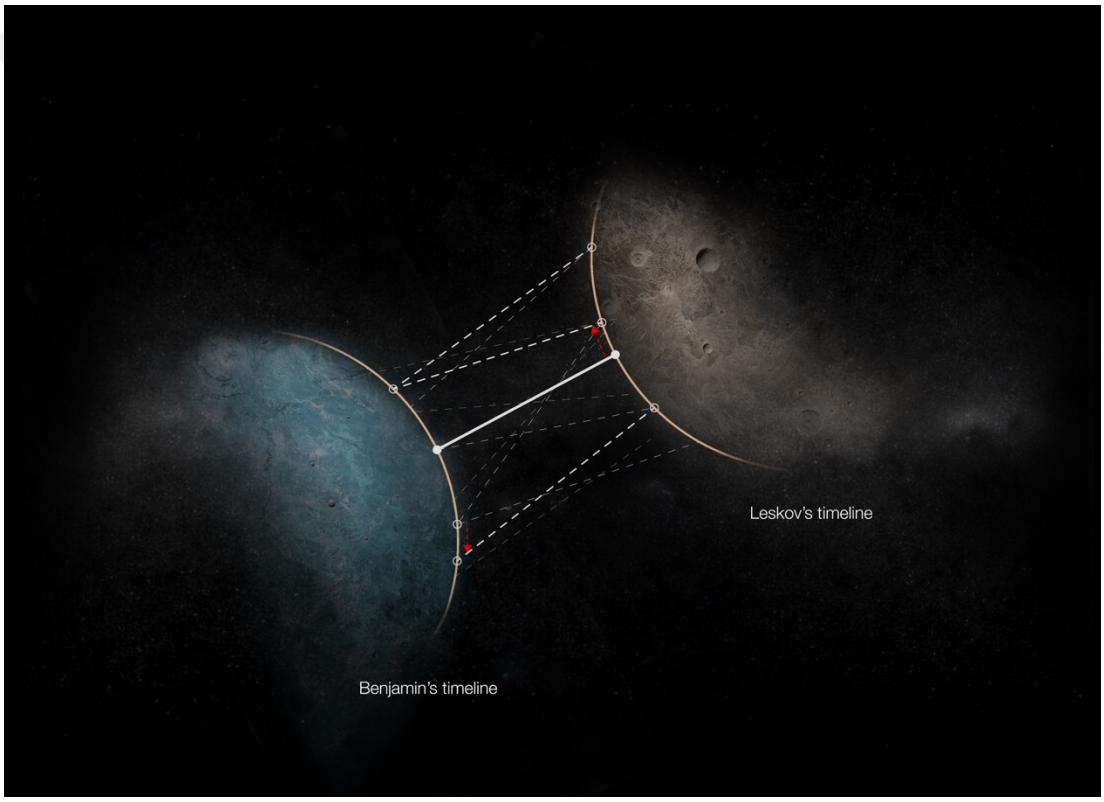

Figure 3.8 : The nearing (alignment) between the timespan of Walter Benjamin and Nikolai Leskov.

From this analogy, that both works on a spatial and philosophical level, one may also visualize Benjamin's own nearing or conversation with another world – which was a specific literary past summoned and placed adjacent to his own present, again by the connections the other world entails in relation to another. And, in the particular way the singularity of a star map imparts, one may draw the very first instance where Benjamin's initial alignment is formed – as the very first scene of a correlative thinking

experiment, which would henceforth bring about the others that Benjamin is indulged throughout his critical prose (Figure 3.8). This derivate drawing could also be coupled with another one, in respect to the further readings and connections that could made in the *interconnected realm* formed between our solar system and that of Kepler-22b (Figure 3.9).

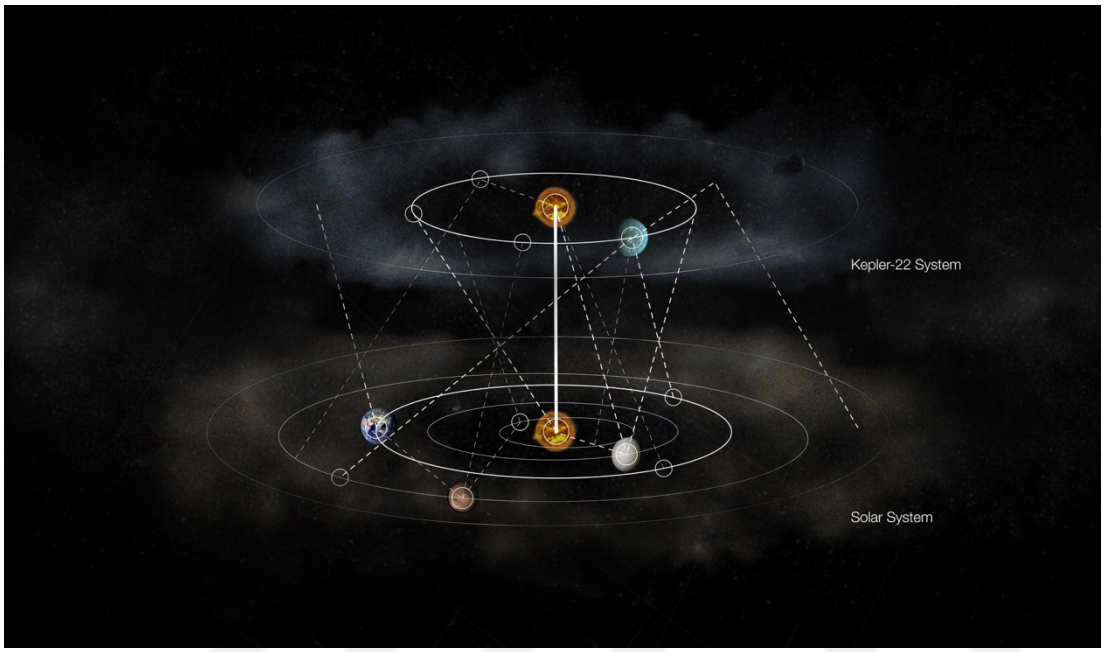

Figure 3.9 : The nearing (alignment) between our Solar System and Kepler-22.

What we see in these analogous series of drawings, in the form of straight and dotted lines, are the connections and the vantage points established – the latter are in particular visible in Benjamin's diagram. Amongst them, the boldest represents the first connection established – which eventually makes way for the others, especially regarding Benjamin's further travels, which are represented by dotted markings (Figure 3.8). Here, the characteristics of our temporarily-available, interconnected, critical-thinking realm hereby seem to be revealed – and in a somewhat spatial configuration. And, in altogether, these consecutive images stand as the very first visual examples of the imaginary spaces, along with their specific architecture, referred in our thesis – the ones reserved for making meanings over connections during such momentary constructions.

Given all these lines accompanying the layout of these spatial cases, we might once more discern the keen relationship between a certain type of space or cartography and its inner operations – namely the motions and events that the space makes possible. In

fact, one may also see that these temporary spaces are in fact formed and defined by these optical events – namely by the first one.

This was already apparent in Benjamin's interconnected universe, where the very emergence of this adjacent world was on the part of his initial revelation: The very experience in his own present was to bring about the specific qualities of Leskov's storytelling and his past back in his (Benjamin's) own timespan [18,84], and consequently the first alignment was established along with the first entanglement between two different worlds. To trace this in our recent drawings, the bold line stands for the primary link, a momentary and rudimentary foundation per se – and the rest of dotted lines, and the whole interconnected structure, were contingent on the presence of this primary line.

Comparably, the alignments in Kepler's vantage do not occur in the pictures it initially took in the outer space. Only after the earthly algorithms are applied, and the bulk of exoplanets and stars are filtered according to their similarities with our living system; then the critical, comparative thinking occurs [16,19,34] – as with the comparative diagrams NASA displays on its website. That any meaningful alignment is dependent on the connections to be established first – in other words, on the very first *bridge* spans between two realities. And, only then, as in the diagram of Benjamin or Kepler, we might start to draw other comparisons and establish further links – upon the initial connection established.

What this reciprocal necessity and twofold structure further imply is the eventuality of what we refer as *further motion,* or further travels. In another saying, the profound relationship between how a space is formed and also used asserts a profound necessity and causality of conjuring further alignments following the initial one – so that the observer may carry on with making further meanings, and meanwhile sustain this highly fragile, binary realm.

That is, beyond the presence of the observer, what is also required, and also ensued by this very structure, is the constant movement of the observer. So that, like Benjamin or Constant in his own consecutive thinking experiments and pairings; one might continue bridging two different realities, over and over – and could carry on with the highly philosophical and humanly operation of constant resituating and re-assessment, all in the light of another possible life or of a distant cousin of earthly features.

In summary, all these constructive specs are basically of how these imaginary realms work or could be used, as well as of how they are constructed. The function we also seek to perform like Benjamin or Kepler Mission team is strongly tied with its respective space and cartography – where the latter could only emerge by an initial connection and alignment, and does impart a further motion upon the same connection and alignment in search for others. One might as well note that these are the same protocols used in Constant's own travels we've underlined – those that pertain to the ways by which New Babylon becomes possible, as a temporarily-available place of commons and connections; and also, to the ways by which it is travelled and prolonged onwards.

In a similar fashion, just as in the way Letterists and Situationists built and encountered their daily utopias [28,87,88]; all that marks a straightforward, consecutive act exerted through temporary alignments – beginning with the very first situation constructed. And, only after this first correlative construction, as any assessment of Benjamin comes after the one before, or as any further comparison starts with an initial exoplanetary nearing; one may carry on with other thinking experiments – which might otherwise mean to prolong a utopian space, however temporarily and at times constructed mentally, where we might otherwise be able to see our own world and reality from a different position.

And such position, as a provisional chance for critical-thinking or as a small trace of utopian origins, and against all the odds and sometimes much-costly ventures [55], still makes of something adequate to work with and towards. Or, it is what Carl Sagan refers as something "compelling" – for any other world, or any possible alternative, is deemed "precious" [112, p. 3] in a seemingly-lonely universe [34]. And, however alone, we are still here – and still keen to look elsewhere.

3.1.2 Space of the mind

It appears as, given what we've visited in our cloud formed around New Babylon and its cultural antecedents, an exit from our apparent loneliness is found in nearing towards to another possible – even when it is some-thousand-light-years away [16,17] or even when it is not present, but perhaps once imagined. For that, and especially in crossing our distance to an imagined reality, and to one that seems impossible enough; a departure from our current life happens to be mostly of a mental venture.

Comparably, what the lessons of Letterists and their everyday dreamworlds suggest is that those expeditions, although encompassing our literal and cultural surroundings, were essentially to be occurred inside the mind – as a highly-subjective, perceptive practice bestowed on the citizens of our planet [29,49]. The idea was to look closer, and a bit differently, to our own place; and to draw closer another in doing so – and our personal utopias were there, slightly at hand, and with some of its parts inside the mind.

Whereas, in our own denotations and *détournement* of the postulations of these bored revolutionaries, we do settle for a rather small, if simpler, definition of a utopia. That even the smallest chance of such closer and critical outlook, aside from what the alignment reveals or the connections we might spot and potentials we might *détourn*, is an exceptional *situation* – as in what the original terminology suggests [30,50].

So, and again despite the suggestion that some resources and means are to be found in our physical world, it all begins inside the mind and in our perceptions – say in our mental repositories and altered vantages. That being the case, it might again be wise to remain within the scopes of a single alignment for the time being. There, we could as well look into a single, temporarily-available space, which is, again, a truly-human and an imaginary product – one that is reserved for our rather costless, mental operations.

Reading this mental function as a humanly activity, there is, in fact, a bit more to its necessity and natures than the keen relationship it has with the structure of these interconnected realms. Beyond the fact that such activity is defined by its particular space and while also forming it, the tendency of spotting connections, upon near or faraway places, and making sense out of them is a very natural kind – something very special but also rudimentary to our everyday living. According to Benedict Carey [123], this is, for most of the time, how our minds actually seem to work – whether during a utopian agenda or staring into far heavens and some night-sky, or just when trying to make sense of the things happened during an ordinary day before we go to sleep.

What he says of these cognitive operations in general is that our minds are often occupied with finding links between separate things – like facts or any sensual stimulus recorded – and crafting a meaningful narrative through these collected inputs [123].

Our mental compartments, and even when in their sleep, happen to be very busy – in search for connections and significance; inserting context and meaning, while avoiding "randomness" and "nonsense" [123, p. xiii]. It is a whole natural enactment – forming networks over what one receives or sees in order to craft meanings. And, other than this is how we naturally think and make knowledge and sense about the world; there is another similarity present, especially for the case of forming networks and links between things, in a biological level, too.

From what we know from the respective fields, the task of this network-formation and making of meanings, and also of memories, is assigned to the brain cells called neurons [124,125]. What they produce, in the form of a memory or a perception to say, is a temporarily-available chain called *synapse* [125] – a network formed at the instance or the immediate aftermath of learning, or during the experience of learning, especially in what's referred as "episodic or autobiographical memory" [123, p. 9]. In Carey's fruitful analogy, they act as a net of lights, where each light represents a single neuron – flickering momentarily in different linings in respect to different memories or thoughts [123]. By the same pattern-work, we record and recall things after, and make sense of them in doing so. And these momentary formations, specifically the space they transpire in, seem to be analogous to those we've recently examined in the scope of rather astronomical and so-called utopian linings our beings also exert.

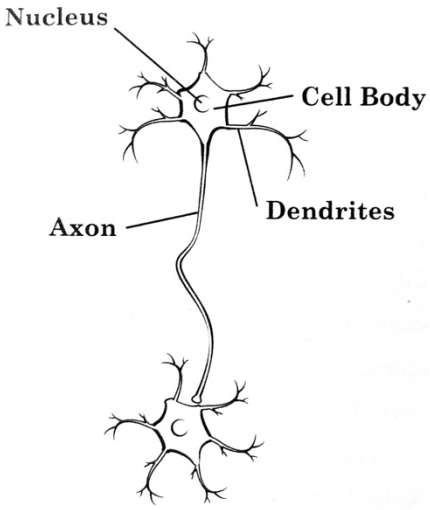

Figure 3.10 : A simple neuron conduction [123].

The two images here (Figure 3.10, Figure 3.11), one representing a simple neuron signal conduction and a rather augmented diagram illustrating many synapse

formations in brain, are also consisted of points and lines – similar to those we've presented little earlier. When compared with those earlier examples, and with the one we re-drew next to them (Figure 3.12), we can spot several similarities beyond some differences.

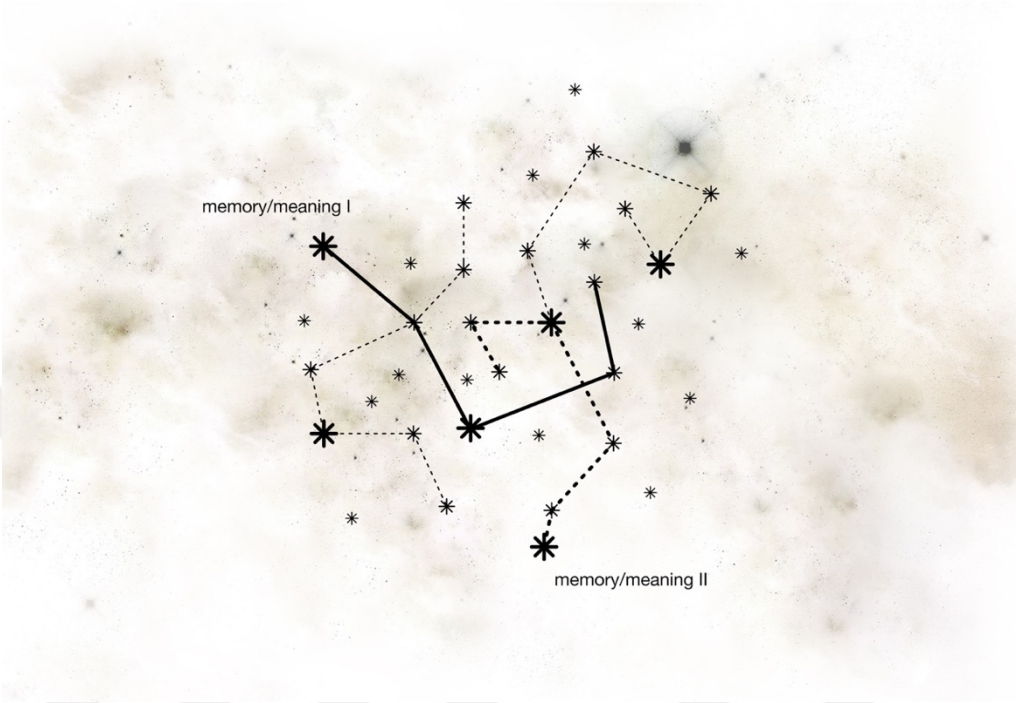

Figure 3.11 : Illustration of several synapse (meaning or memory) formations in our brains.

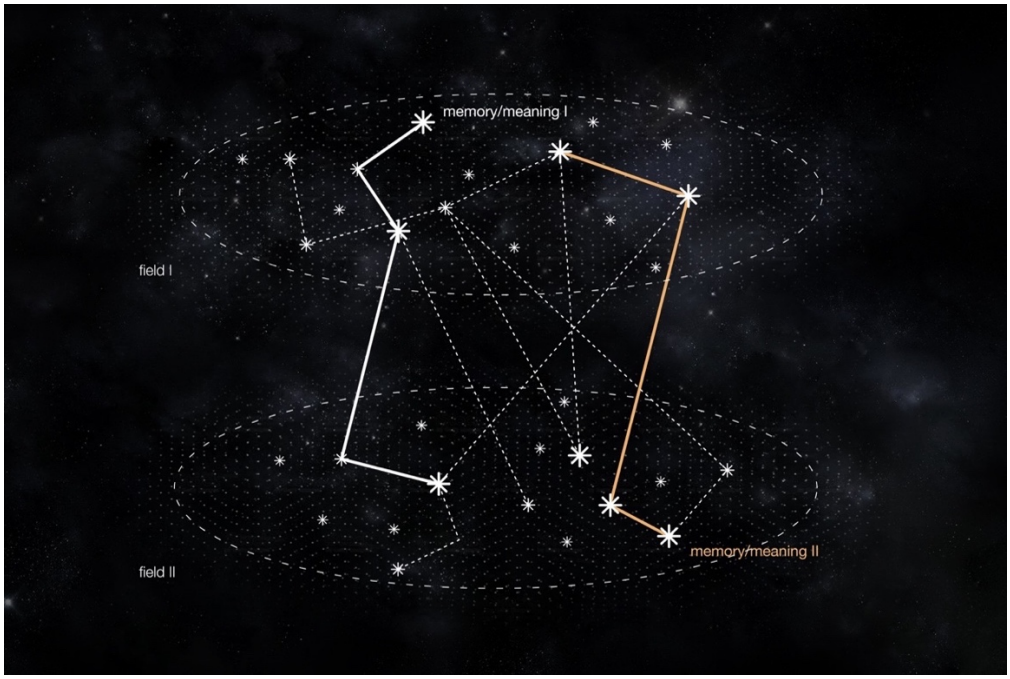

Figure 3.12 : Meaning or memory (synapse) formations across two distinct fields (realms).

To start with the latter, the main difference is that in the third drawing, there are two fields or realities to say – where dots or pieces of each world allocated to their respective quarters. To their similarities, the links in that drawing are formed between two worlds – as in the case of Benjamin or Kepler-452 (Figure 3.8, Figure 3.9) – whereas the other image of a neuron-network has such momentary connections all over, representing a uniform space of the mind.

What these series of images tend to portray is that the making of meanings and memory in general is based on a series of temporary network formations – as a mental product and process. Either in the case of a single learning act, or when we tend to dwell in imaginary, binary worlds and make comparisons; it is a highly similar sort of spatial operation, if on a figurative level. And, seemingly, from the same spatial similarity, we may assert that the space of the mind in general, the space of making meanings and memories to say, is somewhat akin to those of our imaginary, interconnected realms – where we perform the same operations in a particular case and between the things that are particularly aligned, with the case being acquisition of new points of view and learning from another possible world, or a system of worlds.

In a way, this set of drawings, then, tend to further expand the spatial configurations of these realms and our central model we chart here, if for a single event of meaning-making – all aside from drawing a kinship between their activities, which happen to be much identical to how we make sense of things at large and much naturally as human beings. It seems as, after all, we are accustomed to draw associations and knowledge by bridging between different bits and pieces collected from the universe. Other than the memories embedded in our personal experience and into the neuron-linings formed at the time, this operation is of what we often exert in the production of "semantic memories" [123, p. 9]. According to Carey, their temporary networks are based on facts, on associations between various knowledge or inputs, rather than some scenic linings [123].

Whereas, for all that scientific explanations and objective facts and findings, a memory, as well as with knowledge and meaning, is one's to own and make. It is an entirely and innately subjective activity – for not only the experiences or the extent of information pouring every second are personal, but also the maps of our neural nexuses are [123]. And along with our personalized brains and encounters, there is the

instantaneity of these formations like we've told – as with that of retrieving of memories and knowledge, just as in the encounters of Proustian memory [58-61].

The recent findings are that the way we store information is highly different from computers – not saved in a single spot but into a network dispersed through various parts of the brain, and through various inputs – linked bits – in the form of "perceptions, facts and thoughts" [123, p. 20]. The result of that is that every time we attempt to remember things or revisit them in the face of a new input; the meaning, as with the perception of a memory or knowledge, happens to change. Carey notes that this is not an overwriting process but a simple reformation – resulting in some updated versions of the old networks in the light of hidden details our brains collected during the first learning, or by the new inputs received which leads to a revisitation of a previous memory [123].

Regarding this curious altering process in our minds, and the initial, instantaneous recording work; first, we may recall Benjamin's own interconnected structure and his experience that led to its formation. Reexamining his case – and it is also visible in his diagram (Figure 3.9) – we can see how a connecting line, the bold, is also the vantage point of his, appearing at a particular instant amidst his own present. And this diagram mostly renders the map of the very scene of his initial alignment – which also illustrates the scene in which his particular distance and angle of vision are emerged, as well as with the scene in which his scenic meaning-network is formed: The first moment he was able to detect the already-vanishing features of proper storytelling in a distant object was the very same moment his neurons fired up and recorded this initial knowledge to his recollection.

From another point of view, one that specifically relates to the case of semantic memories and updating them over time; given Benjamin's previous knowledge of Leskov's and his present's literary habits [18], this moment also coincides with an alternating process regarding his previous knowledge and perception – to what Carey notes as the formation of a fresh network which "intertwines and overlaps" with the old one [123, p. 20]. So that, with the introduction of a new input, which was introduced by another adjacent, aligned world (a particular past) in this case; a knowledge is updated and changed its meaning. That is, by the natural *in-flux* condition of our recording apparatuses, and also by the new inputs our brains could derive from

around or from what it already knows; a meaning is then in a constant fluid state – always ready to change its structure and its networked bits.

Comparably, one can also apply this to the ways we obtain new information from our distant cousins and outer expanses in the cosmos. That, by each new discovery, like we've stated during the introduction and later, in the adventures of Kepler and Cassini or those of young Carlo Rovelli reading about Einstein's Relativity [16,21,55]; we are to see another facet of our known reality and existence, and our knowledge does change in our own perception. As our lonesome life-form seeks for other counterparts to inform itself, a meaning and a trace of memory often yearn for new information and perceptions to transform themselves – whether in outer space or in our minds, or, seemingly, concurrently in both expanses.

Similar analogies between the larger expanses of our universe and the rather microscopic space of the mind are recently featured in several essays – notably in Nautilus Magazine, in late July, 2017 [126]. Briefly, the intriguing similarity between the pictures of our cosmos and brains, which also became popular in a short web feature the year before [127], does tend to exceed their visual implications and seems to indicate a strong relation between their inner structures. Despite the enormous difference in scale – a variation "by a factor of a billion billion billion" – and the seemingly distant fields of neuroscience and astrophysics, the key factor is vested in studying each locale at "its largest extent" – by looking at the big picture, so to say [126]. Interesting enough, the preliminary research suggests that the number of active elements, networking neurons or floating galaxies, in each part of our unknown mysteries are similar in number and ratio – around some 100 billion pieces [126].

The rest of the article carries on with several procedures and algorithms used to examine the similarity between each universe – whether it is an inclination of human eyes to correlate two images with akin visual features. And, as it turns out, it is not. To the authors' claims, there also lies a profound relationship between the mechanisms of neural and cosmic elements, and the networks form and operate – especially in the scope of their "emergence" [126]. Striking all these may be, there is still further research needs to be conducted beyond visual pairings and analysis – and there are still much we do not know about each uncharted expanse of our overall existence.

The contribution of these similarities and recent findings to our claims is that there is a bit more than a figurative relationship between what happens in each scale. Comparably, for being an architect-author, and reading all these phenomena mostly in architectural expanses; it is the structural, mechanistic and the spatial kinship we're interested in. It all shows, in summary, how we bring things together and form temporary linings at each discovery or by each bit of information revealed inside the brain, and tend to craft meanings over these floating pieces and ever-emerging connections between. The very procedure of our relentless land-reclaim from the unknown infinite [115] – intact and parallel in both expanses: in those our curious heads are pointed at, and also "on the top of" them [123, p. 9].

In another recap, beyond the subjectivity of any memory or meaning, scenic as in the case of Benjamin's first revelation or factual as his further readings are; the basic optical notion of an *observer* renders all this mental production as innately personal as well. Once again, it all depends on who the observer is and where he observers from, besides the things he could spot on the site of his observation – that is, within his own interconnected realm. And, likewise, it is all temporary – a meaning formed within an instant, within the peculiar, association- and meaning-craving realm of the mind or in an instantaneous alignment, voluntarily or not [58,59,62].

In that sense, to the extent of how our particular function unfolds, these mechanisms and drawings do shed a light on our own two-world-connecting expeditions, and on how our minds could operate accordingly: always instantaneously, and whether by experiential events or mental linings, always looking for new connections and meaningful narratives – in a world of many stories, nearing alternatives and appearing connections, and however of frequent meaninglessness [2,6]. On a final note that also relates to this, Carey points out that our narrative-craving brains often play the role of a "director" – who not only interprets what surrounds it and puts what it receives into "a large whole" to make sense of all that, but who also "makes up a story" [123, p. 19] as the prominent neuroscientist Michael Gazzaniga once put it [128].

So, what we seek also in this study are perceptions to expand our current knowledge and resituate our beings during our planned alignments and in our own interconnected-realms; and find new tales – over the cues and inputs collected from the Babylonian planet or from those we already possess in our own. That it still is the same endless

field of potentials and possibilities, and specifically of our future days – if one is able to look both close and far, and also long enough.

With this final analogy pertaining to the presence and essential purpose of New Babylon, we may say a few things about this purpose and its primary meaning. From what we've learnt, the world is essentially what we make of it, biologically and neurologically [123,128] – and it is, in a way, all stored inside the mind. And when we run into a new information, collected from the sight of a distant planet or a piece of a distant tale – as in most literary or utopian works – what essentially or initially changes is its formation inside our neurological compartments – as with its meaning and understanding in our mental expanses [123]. So, when we've claimed, and as once did Constant, that New Babylon is not actually about itself but the lives we have and might someday have even beyond New Babylon; it was partly because of this particular way we make sense of the world and life as living beings.

In other words, it was designed and acted as merely as a set of new inputs introduced to our present memory and meaning of the world; a set of new perceptions projected to our very own conscious awareness, to bring in Carey's wording [123]. It could at best change and affect what we make of the world – which is what the world is to us. Or, at least, this, a stirring mental reallocation or an initial neuron-network reformation, was its initial objective – as with the very first utopian thinking-space it provides.

And from the same standpoint, it is no surprise that the Situationists mostly indulged in the behavioral components of their transformative constructed situations [50] – namely in our activities and the emergence of "various modes of temporal development" [30]. The primary goal was to change how we think and behave first, which is directly linked to a change in our mental compartments. It, then, indeed is the very place to start and assault upon, that is our interiors and personal vantages, from both a Situationist and neurological point of view.

More, just as any suitable "temporary field of activity" [50, p. 110] or any *décor* used in a construction was a subsidiary component [88]; any discovered planet or any tale told by Constant was merely a means to that mental goal. A means, which was essentially of an informative, stirring importance and presence, for a more profound end: A change in the way we think about our world, or about any instant of life or

urban surrounding as Letterists framed it [49]; so, we may then act on it – different than we since came to think and act before.

At the end, the first thing that we can change about our world or lives, and the first thing that naturally changes, is its image and meaning in our mental reserves. As we've stated at the beginning of this sub-chapter, it all starts, other than some neurons firing or reassembling in our minds [123], with a *nearing* act – that is *nearing* those inputs, or decors, and letting them into our vantages. Only then, we can start looking a bit closely, towards what we've neared and the one to which we've neared what we've neared – and our own utopian places, however and often temporarily-available, could be there. With most of its parts in our altered minds, meaning, in our new and updated vantages; and some of its parts in the surrounding world of decors and inputs.

3.1.3 Space of meanings: From the outside

Now, let's see how meanings change – other than in their neurological linings. Bit unsurprisingly, the case of networks and their constant re-formations pose some eminent metaphors and relevant types of structures regarding the postulations here. Our additional guidelines here and on that end come from a well-known philosopher and sociologist, who helps us with switching our place from the space of an actual mind to that of meanings – and through bit more profound theories.

According to Bruno Latour [129], the space of ever-shifting meanings, and as with its reflection in our biological allocations, appears to be a social one. Bit contentious this may sound, and he is fully aware of that it does, such view is of a different kind regarding the very meaning of the word or term *social* – especially parted from those used by commonplace sociologists. To his approach, the term posits a rather over-disciplinary implication, with less of an adjectival merit for defining things that are about society or themselves officially are regarded as social. And he finds the grounds for that, other than in the failures of current social sciences and the shrinkage of the concept until his time, in the very sense of the word and its etymological roots – coming from the latin *socious*, which means "a friend" or a relational counterpart: "In this meaning of the adjective, social does not designate a thing amongst other things, like a black sheep among other white sheep, but *a type of connection* between things that are not themselves social" [129, p. 5].

By listing some examples from various cases like socio-biology, medicine or religion, he keenly states that the context of society and social relations cannot be confined into the limits of mere social forces – and that our precious society and relevant studies are all affected by all these and other fields, and by the assemblages and re-assemblages of their constituents [129,130]. And, by that, he calls for a widening of the term and the related research focusing on our social problematics – which, to his view, is of a process of expanded observation and of "resuming" [129, p. 8] these various connections and reassembling processes, which were otherwise undermined or disregarded by the shrunk, established school of sociology.

The key in his standpoint and change of perception is vested in the word association, which can actually stand between many things, even amidst those exceeding the boundaries of his respective discipline – such as "chemical bonds, atomic forces" or "legal ties" [129, p. 5]. It is a re-theorization of social and what social things are – a widened sense that pertains to the form of things and the way they stand or are associated together, rather than their content. At the core of his expansion, we should underline the notion of *association*, which is also directly linked with the very word itself, and its rather *active* or *fluid* undertones which ground such expansive theoretical coverage. That any form of association or network could become and be treated as *social* for they can be reframed, or "re-assembled" in Latour's saying, in the light of new inputs and in a new state of affairs [129, p. 128].

In other words, other than the wider area of social influences and causes he gives examples of, it is the unstable and ever-reassembling condition of these various associations which place them into Latour's widened sense of the term. And that's where things become interesting for our own theses – and also become undeniably *social* too:

> Far from being a mind-boggling hypothesis, this is on the contrary the most common experience we have in encountering the puzzling face of the social. A new vaccine is marketed, a new job description is offered, a new political movement is being crated, a new planetary system is discovered, a new law is voted, a new catastrophe occurs. In each instance, we have to reshuffle our conceptions of what was associated together because the previous definition has been made somewhat irrelevant. [129, pp. 5-6]

It seems as, he talks about a very similar story we've recently told, only with a different wording. And there are some implications to our ends, along with two similarities regarding our imaginary spaces and their biological counterparts located in our brains. The first and probably most apparent one is that our perceptions or the previous meanings we've constructed are subjected to change in a new setting – say when a new input, whether by a partially-optical experience as in Benjamin [18,84] or by the discovery and *nearing* of a new Earthlike exoplanet [16,17,54], is introduced to the equation. Just as the reshuffling in our neuron-networks and intellectual vantages [123], with any new data, we tend to, and also are required to, reshuffle and reassemble our previous understanding and associations between things, which were once part of the same equation (Figure 3.13). As Latour himself noted, with each new input, even the very conception of *we* seems to change – for *we* are bound with the same "ties", which are constantly being reframed and renewed, and also tend to exceed the mere boundaries of "social ties" [129, p. 6].

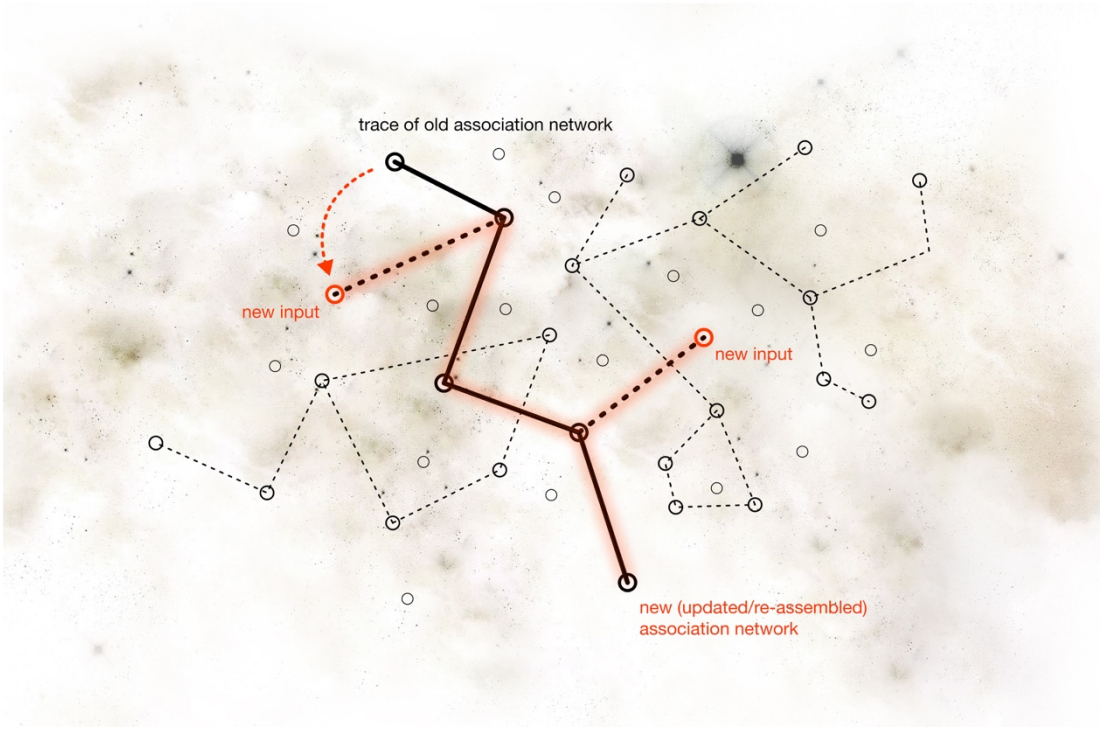

Figure 3.13 : Updating of associative networks (meanings) with new inputs.

So that, by the particular structure and operations visible on Figure 3.13, this appears much comparable with the others; there appears to be almost a mirroring scheme between what happens in our minds and so-called imaginary, interconnected realms, and what happens in the space of meanings and the associations they are constructed

on. Our temporary networks are not only of moral, philosophical, utopian or neurological origins – but also are of very social entities.

More, there is another similarity in such operation as well. The Latourian expansion is essentially based on an expeditionary process which prefers to visit "wherever new heterogeneous associations are made", and does believe that any network or input deemed social could only be seen by the "traces" they leave behind, especially in their reformations [129, p. 8]. And, for being in a constant fluid state, these reformations are as well of instantaneous happenings – becoming visible only when some new input is introduced into previous formation, and when subsequently changes it, however for a very brief period of time (Figure 3.13). To the extent of observing these *traces* and the spaces they transpire in, our postulations and somewhat unconventionally-architectural methodology are founded on similarly instantaneous events and spaces – bit like Agrest's *cuts*, the fragmentary spaces of interrelations in which the hidden workings of these non-design or non-architectural phenomena could become visible and be read [104].

In another saying, the way we employ architecture and focus on spaces is highly analogous to the way Latour reframes and uses his own field: It, too, works on highly transient openings and faint traces – that are represented in the form of ever-weaving lines in our drawings – in order to elaborate on their interconnections and implications, and thereby making these networks and their spaces visible. And, from a rather practical point of view, that is also to say that we do need some sort of a new input for us to track these faint lines and visit these brief openings – as in what Latour calls "trials" [129, p. 8].

For a rather short *trial* of ours, and for we've already included several examples, we might consider what another well-known science writer offered – namely in regards to our age-old aspiration for finding actual living cousins somewhere in the deep dark space [17,34,112]. What this person, William Sanford Nye, who is better known as Bill Nye and as a prominent promoter of such expeditions, suggests is an intriguing possibility – if not through his personal research, but for his take on the questions it might raise given our so-called, seemingly-prevalent "cosmic loneliness" [17]: "The discovery of life on another world would change our own. It would fundamentally change the way each of us feels about being a living thing in the cosmos" [20].

For Nye [20], such discovery, while being horizon-expanding and also “humbling” at the same time, is of a case that also belongs to many similar others we’ve covered since. Whether it is the revelation that we are not standing at the center of the universe or even not our sun does [131]; it is the same instance where a new variable is inserted into the equation – and we are subsequently forced to alter our perceptions, especially about our otherwise precious place in the universe. And with the possible existence of another life-form, our previous associations, especially about what living means and the forms the living could take, would greatly be affected.

With each new data and a possible setting for housing life, a new counterpart, that is a new input, enters into the frame. Thus, this frame is updated – or so is the greater picture about aliveness and being a part of this massive universe; a picture which we might be forced to reconsider and look deeper at regarding “our origins” [20] and our planet – “as a place and as our home” as Messeri once put it [17]. As Overbye noted, all these probabilities and inputs collected elsewhere could, at best, affect our present whereabouts and existence – if not in practical or immediate outturns [55]. Indeed, it all amounts to here and now, to us and to our minds, and to what we make of these pouring candidates and data, along with the ever-expanding picture of our universe and our ever-shifting space of meanings.

And, besides this picture and space, there also expands a debate, deepening and widening by each new contribution and revelation, by the pioneers like Kepler or Constant – the ongoing discussion about the life at hand and the ones we might have, regardless of the billion-light-years or currently unfeasible socio-economic conditions stand between us [8]. Namely, by Constant’s own discovery and projection of a Babylonian way of living and the necessary conditions sustaining it; we were forced to alter, or at least rethink, our previous conceptions about living and our own conditions – our present means, practices, technologies etc.

That it is no big surprise to our understanding that Constant shared a similar kind of desire and sought a horizon-expanding trajectory that noted by Bill Nye and Dennis Overbye – that another way of life, if not scientifically discovered and coded through incoming transmissions from a far seeing-device, could likewise deeply change the way each of us feel about our own lives and spend our lifetimes. The life in New Babylon would change our own, and update and enlarge the same picture, which now

can stand as an alternative term for our imaginary realms and vantages, relating to our very wondering souls and existence as living beings.

In the light of our recent findings and previous drawings, we might assert that this ever-enlarging picture, which is as well of mostly philosophical and mental origins with a partial physicality, is made of many smaller pictures – and does seem to enlarge with such additions. What we mean by these rather miniscule pieces, in a metaphorical sense, is that with each alignment, thinking-experiment or a Latourian reassembly, we do take "cosmic selfies" [20] which are equally critical – with us in the frame along with our possibles, at times at the very center as in the case of star maps.

What's more, as in the case of our vantages directed at the night-sky, it is only a temporary image – a momentary registry as we did once call it. So that, the great picture, as with the ongoing debate, is made of not only smaller frames but also of temporary ones – procuring whenever we align ourselves to another possible world, and are forced to reshuffle our previous conceptions. And, the wider picture of our existence and the trajectory of our conquests, made of scrutinies, comparisons and also of possibilities, would therefore expand.

So, how do this picture and the space of meanings expand exactly? Let us try to summarize that through drawings – for they still entail highly spatial undertones. If we were to take a look at our previous diagrams of interconnected realms belong to Benjamin and Kepler-452 to their fragmentary spaces of interrelations in Agrest's terminology [104], what we see is both an instance of a single alignment and many of these momentary constructions in the same image. Like we've pointed out before, a single alignment is visible on the part of the primary link, the bold straight line. When the other further links, the dotted markings, are added; we do get a sense of this whole operation of looking, thinking and moving – as with some visual hints about this mainly-mental and ever-expanding big picture.

Whereas, in a more practical level, while the connections and further alignments proliferate, if conceptually; the diagram does not seem to expand. In fact, despite the figurative aspects of the drawing, if we were to represent the ever-going associations and ever-forming networks between two worlds, the drawing would be covered with ever-weaving lines, and eventually become indecipherable. But the point we are trying to make is not about the visual readability of a diagram, or the literal expansion of this

so-called big picture. It is actually more about finding a proper way of representing these peculiar operations unfolding with an incessant pace – to the extent of our interest in the spatial workings of these so-called fragmentary realms reserved for making meanings in the presence of another counterpart.

To represent a rather corrected version of further alignments and a more accurate version of such spatial expansion, we might draw another set of diagrams – especially to the extent of momentary vantages of star maps, or the smaller pictures we take, and the observer's movement and subjective re-associations made during this motion. What we see in this set of drawings (Figure 3.14, Figure 3.15), three consecutive instances of nearings and a rather exaggerated one, is that, if conceptually and nonspecifically, the neared systems start to change their places and *reappear* in different positions – in relation to one other.

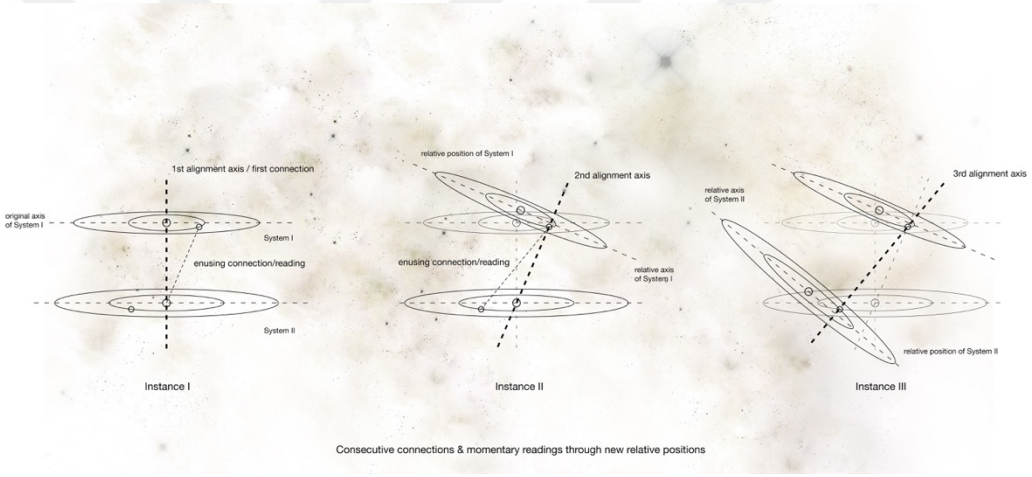

Figure 3.14 : Consecutive alignments and readings in an interconnected realm.

What moves and reinserts them into the picture or the drawing is the new appearing links – those further found between two realms, and also according to their new *relative* positions. A preliminary connection prods a thinking-experiment and then a further movement, which prods a new connection, which then results in a new relative appearance, which then prods another connection and so on. So that, in a single image and in this example, we do observe several incarnations of same planets at once, changing their location at each lining – and filling the entire space with their further *relative* versions.

From the scope of making meanings or comparisons, then, all these accumulating and repositioning planets do offer chances to reframe our previous conceptions and gain

new vantages about the things otherwise existed singularly – within the field of these ever-appearing traces and the ever-expanding space of interrelations. And, from the scope of the number of constituents involved, there are, if in theory, always new versions of any constituent inserted into the frame, resituated according to another *relative* constituent and also to the observer's position and connections appearing – all alongside new meanings and network formations they tend to procure (Figure 3.15). It shows, if conceptually, how these realms expands spatially, alongside the mental enlargement they bring to our field of thinking – in the form of a consecutive set of *twofold-locating acts* and *Latourian re-assemblies*.

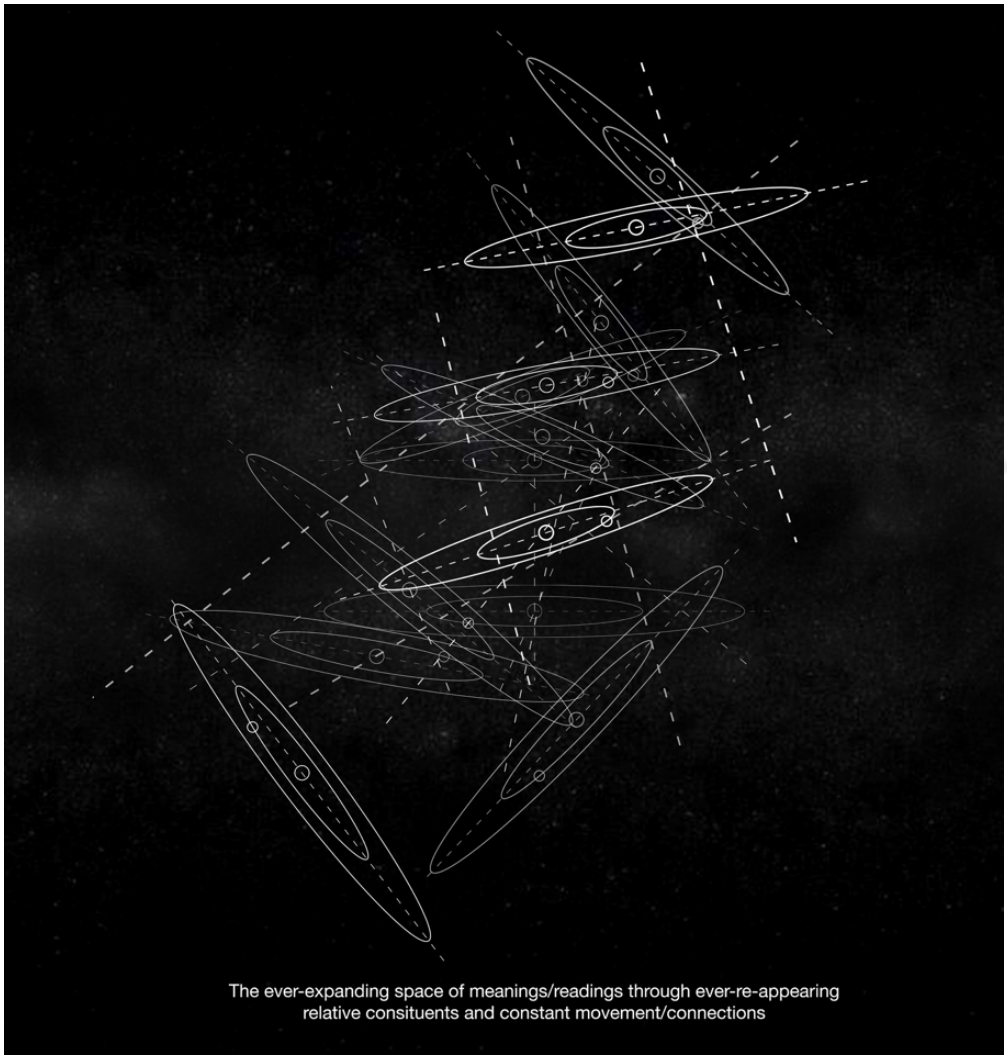

Figure 3.15 : The ever-expanding space of meanings and consecutive readings.

On a final note, in the scope of all this fluidity and what these drawings could show, we can again see that this space is retained and expanded by the connections appearing, and by those being discovered by an observer. And, like in any star map, which doesn't

necessarily show a movement but implies it with its momentary being; we can discern, if not directly see, that the space expands and the pieces move with the movement of the observer – however in mental units. In other words, also in those of Latour [129], during this progressive course of assemblies and re-assemblies of various constituents; the observer at once travels and constructs that particular space in a *simultaneous* manner – just as in the maps and thinking-experiments of early Letterists [28,87].

3.1.4 Space of meanings: From within

Aside from the accomplishments of the drawings presented earlier, where the space visually expands and resumes along with the function it houses and constructed by; there is an essential notion and component missing in all that. According to what we've explained earlier and just recently, that would be the *observer* – the very crucial component to all this fluid expansion. To elaborate on the reasons of such absence and those natures, we might go back to where we had the presence of an observer and its respective notation within a drawing: the star maps.

To the extent of our rather conceptual thinking, we've previously likened the diagram of Kepler-452 to our momentary pictures of the night-sky (Figure 3.5, Figure 3.6, Figure 3.7). The reasons were they both represent a kind of "cosmic selfie" [20], an image where we, in the form of an entire system or a small plus marking, are situated together with some greater or alternative entity in respect to our larger existence. And there was also the notion of a great distance between our presence and the others – which, in a way, made the case for disregarding the difference between a planar view and a vertical, mostly conceptual drawing. Whereas, as also visible in each image, while our presence was intact in both pictures and we deem each one as a sort of *temporary alignment*; only a star map had the indication of an actual worldly observer, alongside with its *relative* location within these interconnected realms.

In the scope of that difference, we might as well reconsider the diagram of Benjamin – the other example likened to these two. Despite being another conceptual and non-planar kind of drawing (Figure 3.8), there is a profound difference in that – especially in regards to the previous depictions of Kepler's nearing: It depicts an observer, Benjamin himself, alongside his vantage point – and along with his ensuing motion, conceptually marked by red surface movements and faint further connection lines, in his own imaginary space.

For that, while the drawings of Kepler tend to represent what we call as the space of meanings at large and in their expanding natures; the drawing of Benjamin displays a rather comprehensive, if figurative, image of the same spatial structure where each alignment is occurring with the movement of the observer and his subsequent act of looking. However, despite these comprehensive details, the presence of an observer and his much-essential motions shown, the drawing of Benjamin could as well be overfilled with the lines of his ensuing movements, vantage points and alignments – just like that of Kepler-452 (Figure 3.9).

More, again for being a conceptual drawing with its own natures and purposes in itself, it doesn't accurately draw the entire operation as well. To put its fallibilities more explicitly, given its figurative meanings, the connections established and represented with dotted lines are mainly to show his ever-appearing vantage points – therefore neglecting ever-appearing *relative positions* of involved constituents, or of different timespans and their parts. In other words, at its very best, this image depicts the moment where and when the first picture is taken – but not what that picture actually depicts, or the following ones for that matter.

The reason for that is it just happens to be another sort of map – which could also be likened to a planar view in general – that mainly shows the movement and vantage points of an observer without his actual sights. And that's also on the part of the nature of such drawings, including those of Kepler, those that portray the general outlines and operations of a system without actually getting inside it – showing *how* the function unfolds but not what it actually unfolds. It is basically another outsider view where we could locate and track the observer and his motions and subsequent acts of looking, if conceptually – but not what he could actually see from these positions or where these positions actually are.

It seems like there are portions in each drawing that are essential to our entire operation and spatial postulations, but also there are missing parts in each, too. And, on a critical note, this is what makes star maps somewhat unique cases for us – and that we might need to revisit them in our current expansion. A star map stands somewhere between the limitations of these other drawings, and, in a way, seems to compile all the missing parts – but without the conception of an enlarging picture to say. And that is vested in its own nature, for being an only momentary depiction – so, not an actual limitation per se.

Therefore, rather than portraying and investigating such realms of shifting meanings and expanding vantage points further; it would be again wise to remain within the scopes of a single alignment, and in a single vantage point of an observer for the time being. And for that, we need to reconsider what a star map entails in terms of architectural drawings, especially to the extent of its planar layout.

According to basic logs, a planar view is an orthogonal drawing, which is essentially devoid of a subjective observer, and is produced to represent any object – a spatial system, a building or an industrial product – according to its exact dimensions, often with a respective scale [132]. In that sense, although being mostly conceptual and scale-free diagrams, the drawings of Kepler and Benjamin could be considered in that category. In technical terms, a plan is a type of parallel projection where, unlike a perspective drawing, the observer is considered at an infinite distance to the object, and so the projectors – the observer's lines of sight – pass parallel by the object being observed (Figure 3.17) [132]. That they tend to produce the same image of the same object, other than any scale used, regardless of where you look at them – for you always look from the same, infinite location.

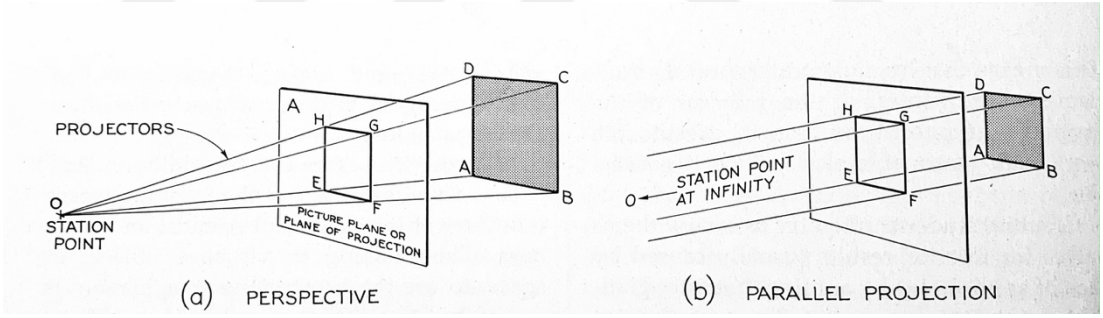

Figure 3.16 : Projection types in technical drawings. Adapted from [132].

So, how does a star map could then entail an actual observer, let alone his own subjective vantage point? One part of the answer is, again, in the great distance between ourselves and our celestial neighbors lingering in the heavens. Simply, for being very far away from the stars and galaxies standing on the earth; in a star map, our lines of sight are considered as if coming from an almost infinite distance – where, the resulting parallel projection of our celestial sphere would be almost identical to a perspective projection of the same sphere [117].

More, also in technical terms, a planar image then would not be changing according to our position – for we stand at the infinite – unless the object depicted is changing in

itself [132]. From what we've learnt, the heavens above are in constant motion, although again at some great distances. And, so are we. What we mean by that, given the time- and location-specific appearance of our night-skies; a star chart, the planar view of stars, is eventually altered according the observer's respective position [117]. In that sense, what makes these essentially-objective projections as partially-subjective entities – other than functioning as a perspective drawing at the same time – is both their dynamic content and the movement of the observer, who is indicated with a tiny plus at the center of the projection plane.

For that, we might call these charts as *subjective plans* – a parallel projection that is capable of a temporal objectivity, and with a subjective observer at its very making. That each time we change our position, the visible facets of our unknown parts do change – as with the connections, which might as well correspond with the astronomical concept of *constellations* [133], we can draw between them.

Furthermore, for we know that these images and openings are all but temporary, in addition to the sense of a temporal objectivity; we might refer to these charts as some *momentary cartographies* – namely those of our own imaginary, interconnected realms. So, the notion of subjectivity is procured not only by their fluid structures; but as well in this very sense of temporality vested in their imagery. What's more, in line with what we've learnt from our previous drawings, each constellation or each coordinate of any celestial being is a *relative* one – that is situated according to our position and the time of our observation [117,118].

For that, other than being partially subjective and temporal projections; we might as well call them as *relative plans* which posit *relative objectivities* in their own particular features. And that would be the key reason for us to revisit such drawings – that they entail the very operations of our realms, where a meaning is both temporary, subjective and thus relative to the one who makes it. And, in our own terms, a relative meaning is constructed upon all those relative versions of any constituent or neared worlds before one's own vantage, during a relative measurement or a twofold locating act – that is, a *critical alignment* in our terminology.

By the same sense of momentarily-available and observer-specific cartographies, we may say that, at least to our understanding and in the scope of our mental operations, there is not one, single objective reality – that is transpiring before our eyes and when

it comes to the very production and updating of meanings. A similar case, transforming our general understanding of the universe and additionally the matters in life, was made by a great physicist – much before Albert Einstein, who, in his own part, had been crucial to Rovelli's own understanding of the world and its subsequent transformation in his own vantage [21].

According to Isaac Newton, and especially to his theses focusing on a realm that is seemingly in constant motion, an exact, *absolute* position of an object is always debatable [134]. Other than its implications in physics, what this asserts to our own intellectual horizons is the conception of a profound *relativity* – with apparent cues to Einstein's groundbreaking model. That we cannot be sure of any object's exact position in space, and that it is always contingent on the one who observes its movement. Later, in addition to the absence of an absolute space, other researchers and their experiments concluded that there was also no absolute time – that the timely distance between two different events can also differ according to different observers [134].

Configured by Einstein, what the latter model introduces by the absence of a common time-measurement system and in addition to that of a fixed space, is a joint framework known as *space-time* – where the two variables are considered as dependent on each other [134]. Within this sort of a joint realm, as stated by the physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking [134], a definition of an event or a position of an object is always relative – in terms of time and space coordinates – and could be defined differently by any observer. This position, measured in space and in time, is deemed subjective to the one who observes it – and also to the way they do it. According to Hawking [134], this revelation and a rather subjective conception of the universe did have a great impact in our overall understanding of it, as it once did in Rovelli's [21].

What it does to our claims is much similar, if not completely new, all but corresponding with our theses that argue about the *relative* positions of distant constituents – and that they keep repositioning according to our own positions, along with the connections we find between. That, the space of meanings and momentary alignments is founded on all but subjective positioning and on somewhat ever-subjective or ever-relative beings; and that it is retained and expands with a fluid structure by our constant repositioning and Latourian sort of re-assemblies in the face of ever-flooding inputs.

Based on the fact that any observer can define an event or an object by his own means of measurement; Hawking says of this realm, defined according to our perception and measurement system, is a kind of "a collection of overlapping patches" [134, p. 27]. A collection where, in each patch, any observer can use a different set of measurement according to the type of object or event, and to his subsequent position in the universe – whether it is an address in London or the location of the sun [134]. So, in each patch, one has a subjective setup for measuring distances, and a set of relative objects to locate. In that way, a temporarily-available star map would be a single and personal patch amongst many others that could be used and drawn by many other observers.

We may as well extend this analogy into our imaginary spaces and mental operations, too. Our interconnected realms, where new meanings are made or the old are transformed, also consist of some subjective and also temporarily-available patches – which are visible and traceable for a limited period of time, and could be succeeded by another momentarily-available patch, and also could be replaced by another observer given his own vantage point and the things he could see from that point.

Given our highly-conceptual location within such highly-conceptual and imaginary spaces, then it is an important matter whether we are looking for a city address or locating a distant planet. And for the measuring units would change for each case, so do our mediums for drawing their maps. For instance, when the consecutive and instantaneous nature of ever-assembling networks are considered; we've tried to elevate our previous depictions of Kepler's nearing into another form – by including the re-appearing relative versions of planets and juxtaposing each repositioning instant in a single drawing (Figures 3.15, 3.16).

Comparably, when we've realized the absence of an observer and their own vantage of these realms; we resorted to the star maps with their unique and temporal planar projections. And, now, in order to find a suitable form of projection and set of units for our own patches, in which we incline to locate something other than an actual city square or a member of the Kepler-452b system; we may distance ourselves from the infinite distances of parallel projections and the conceptual diagrams produced by NASA.

In retrospective, a star map's unique and observer-specific appearance is also, and much largely, due to the movement of the celestial beings depicted in it. Yet, the most

conceptual and metaphorical emphasis that it is nevertheless a momentary image, and a relative repositioning – which is dependent on the where the observer is and when they incline to look above. Before leaving such ingenious recordings of our ever-aligning impulses behind, we can produce another drawing, a derivational diagram to say, in the very structure and spirit of these celestial artifacts.

This image, a kind of similar charting with different and figuratively bigger constituents, shows a similar observer-centric and momentary picture where, instead of constellations and faraway galaxies, we see the members of our own planetary system and those of Kepler-425 floating, if not literally moving, in their relative repositioning (Figure 3.17). To the extent of its information and layout, it is really not much different than the original ones – there we are, looking straight and above, with a *Zenith* plus at the center. Here, one of the first images of our *interconnected realms*, in a juxtaposed formation, is now present right before our eyes – those that peeking at our current state and other possible ones at once.

Figure 3.17 : An interconnected realm seen from the observer's position.

Here we make an attempt, rather visually and directly, of bridging between our own imaginary realms and their multiple depictions – mostly became visible in the drawings of Kepler – and those of star charts referred in our postulations. On the other hand, to their most central distinction, this image of ever-aligning and repositioning planets, if for a single moment, is different than that of any celestial linings. And that's, at one part, because of the natural movement of the stars and galaxies underlined recently – that, again in practical terms, they move regardless of our looking and moving.

The other part of the difference is that, although the neighbors of Kepler-452 and its sun are somewhere there and faraway, it is now us, the observer, who complies the very picture – along with the alignment and relative positioning it propagates. As told in our respective postulations and drawings, it is us who cares to look but also finds the *meaningful* connections [16.17,19]; and, subsequently, constructs that momentary picture of these imaginary realms. These planets and their relative versions are not there, if conceptually, as with the very space they appear in – unless we care to look above and detect some worldly connections between.

However, despite its strengths for a comprehensive depiction of our imaginary realms, namely the presence of an actual observer and its actual vantage, this vantage is more or less a mental kind – rather abstract and nonphysical in essence – something that is more compatible with neurological models of Carey [123]. And, by the same natures, for all the mental expansion and new readings it procures, the space before our eyes is limited to that of the paper it is projected on – a rather two-dimensional, flat realm that is indifferent to the observer's actual distance to things observed. So, while the presence of the observer and their vantage are present in these drawings, their actual place in it is not. And that's because it is a space to which the observer cannot penetrate – a place, in essence, that is devoid of depth and therefore of a true observer actually inhabiting it [132].

So, rather than forcing the inherent limitations of such projections, we should look for a space where the observer can be a part of – so that we could trace the ever-changing vantages in relation to its actual movement, say its ever-changing positions, within the same space. A rather proper seeing-model, or a rather correct visual model, for our own patches would therefore entail a visual field that is not only propagated by our sights but also by our further movements those sights further effectively prod.

Bit naturally, a rather suitable form of drawing and distance, considering our spatial excursion and the very notion of subjectivity and relativity exerted by our recent references, is to be found in perspective projection. For our very realm is *observer-centric* by nature, we need to see things from the very eye of an observer, via a personal vantage – that is, the very space of our respective mental function, in which things do reassemble by our very position. By doing so, we would also, if momentarily, go back into the somewhat commonplace spatialities of architecture – to that of human scale, respectively. Yet, it is not that much of a stretch between scales – considering where the early antecedents of similar critical practices and the first makers of utopian spaces had once operated.

For that, and before revisiting where these dreamers once acted and constructed some form of alignments on their own terms; we may take a variation of three different perspective drawings of the same figurative space – which could as well be from a cityscape. According to the basic notions of optics and the rules of technical drawings[134], the same three objects located in the same space is viewed differently according to three different positions of the observer (Figure 3.18). In each position, the resulting composition on the projection plane is different – producing different linings of the three objects being observed. We can as well replace these objects with some planets neared in an interconnected realm, or with things or notions ready to be renewed in their associative networks in a Latourian sense [129].

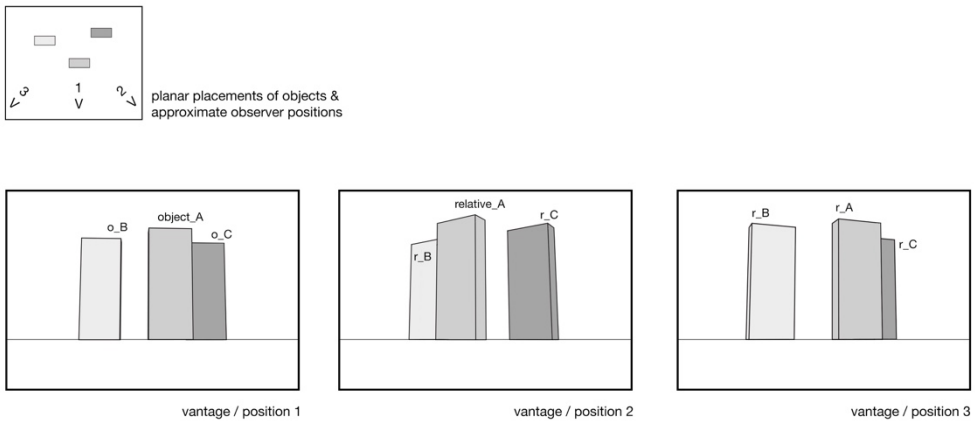

Figure 3.18 : Three static objects viewed from different positions.

By this highly simplified example, we can see how the movement of the observer, or his subjective position, shapes the picture before our eyes – producing several subjective images of the same reality; and thus multiple, relative versions of the same group of objects. It illustrates, if simply, the very basic sense of looking the same entity from different locales, or finding non-existing vantages of the existing reality – that is, the very crux and essential operation vested in New Babylon and similar instruments as far as our findings are concerned.

In terms of making meanings or reshuffling previous conceptions, then, in each image with distinctive linings; our perception changes – both literally and metaphorically – as with the connections and meanings we could derive from them. And we can restate that each picture is temporary – of a single position of the observer – and further can be multiplied by one's subsequent movements in one's interconnected realm, which, in this example, is composed of three figurative objects. More positions, more reshuffling; more pictures of the same entity, and with more meanings to make of it.

On that final note, we may also consider the notion of Latourian *traces* [129] – the momentary reformations of associations and meanings when a new input enters into the frame and alters the previous networks between things. One can imagine, within this simple figurative space of three objects, when another object is introduced, the resulting image in the observer's vantage would also change, as with his reading, for there is another relative being added to the same projection plane (Figure 3.19).

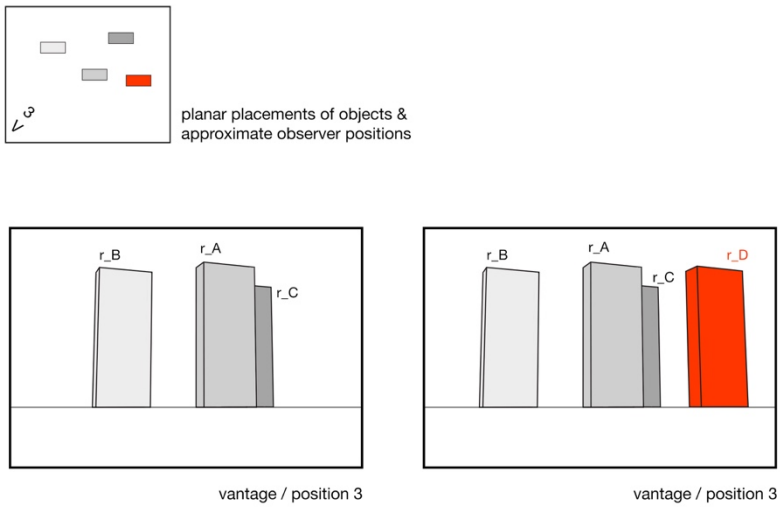

Figure 3.19 : Perspective views (projections) of three and four static objects from the same position.

In all, the fluid structure of ever-shifting meanings, and the imaginary space they form in, are essentially based on our own sights with our own (subjective) distance to them, and also are shifted or succeeded by our movement which would produce other sights, and also by the foreign inputs entering into the frame, or into the equation, which would similarly alter our subjective readings of the same reality. More positions, more reshuffling; more objects, and even more reshuffling; more relative patches of the same reality – and with more and more meanings to make and update of it. And, still seemingly, it happens mostly in our minds, which is where the world becomes what it becomes to us – much like its utopian and alternative counterparts.

3.2 Encounter of Meanings

Regarding the postulations until here, we have mostly operated in visual and optical fields of drawings and diagrams, and in different scales and modes of representation – at times in conceptual and also in spatial expanses – in order to chart a proper image of our so-called imaginary spaces for making meanings. To some practical degree, with each image and model, we were to take different shots of those realms; and tried to expand it as much as we could – both in terms of their overall structure and the functions reserved – occasionally by drawing their spaces from inside and outside, and by lining them up side by side.

Mainly, we've referred to four types of spaces so far: That of our interconnected realms, courtesy of our thesis and humanity's cultural eagerness and inborn curiosity, where inputs from close or far realities neared and added into our mental equations, and which seems to expand constantly; the wider but momentary pictures of our wider universe or of some objects standing nearby, with our vantage point at the center; the *Latourian*, transient space (openings) of ever-shifting meanings and their faint traces; and, lastly, the biological space of our minds. In a recap, given the presence of temporarily-forming and ever-reframing networks in each realm; we found out that there was a much similar, almost mirroring, scheme in all these fields and their spatial operations.

Regarding the latter contributions, our own imaginary space is mostly associated with that of Latour – that is the very space where we perform the humanly function of finding and re-assembling connections, and making and remaking meanings [129]. So, it is mostly a Latourian kind of opening, which is also temporary and a sort of relative

patch in Hawking's wordage [134]; and further heightened with the presence and movement of the observer, which are expanded by the unusual planar projections of star maps and the perspective drawings of an actual observer with a rather finite distance to the things being observed.

In detail, and if figuratively, among these four kinds of spaces, or three, given the fact that star maps or the sights of an actual observer primarily display the same Latourian space from within; the much complex realm of our biological storytellers appears to be located somewhere other than the rest – that is, actually, on the opposite side of the others. While the temporary pictures of our night-skies or a visual field filled with reincarnations of the same planets tend to appear before our vantages; the network formations responsible for the making and re-making of meanings and perceptions happen to occur behind them – that is, in our interior expanses, right behind that little Zenith mark. And, a final assertion would be that, based on their highly mirroring structures and operations, those network formations transpiring in different locales around our bodies happen to coincide as well – at least for some particular occasions.

This theoretical mirroring, in fact, was a bit clear in the postulations of Benedict Carey – that while our brains tend to compile various inputs floating around in order to make a sensible narrative; in a more biological level, our neurons are recording all these inputs in the form of various linings and in various parts of our brain tissue [123]. More, when considered alongside the widened social theories of Bruno Latour [129]; all these inner operations also appear to be much similar to how previous meanings and associations were becoming obsolete and irrelevant – that they needed to be updated in the face of a new input or a new state of affairs.

Therefore, we can say that, when it comes to the very function of making meanings, there isn't a territorial distinction between what happens at the back of our vantages and in front of them – at least to a certain level. The world around changes our perception, say when a new medicine, a job description or a new exoplanet comes into the frame; and, that, in turn, changes what we make of the world – which is what the world is to us. A somewhat curious but subtle form of interaction, happening alongside the border of our very physical beings. And, it happens, as with the very conception of the world and the meanings we constantly make and update of it, within an entire, singular type of space, if still figurative and imaginary: *A unitary opening of meanings*

and perceptions so to say, in which this curious interaction transpires – somewhere between the outside world of pouring inputs and the expanses of our own minds.

In the light of all these, now there are a couple of transformations and convergences concerning the number and extent of the type of spaces we've been examining, and are to explore little further. One of the results would be that we might assume that there is actually one type of space encompassing all these mirroring activities – those happening on a biological level and also figuratively before our vantages, which may also stand for what happens in the space of meanings in a Latourian sense.

The second, connected to the first, is that this single type of space – the one which we've just referred as *the unitary opening of meanings and perceptions* – specifically pertains to what we've since disclosed as our so-called imaginary space and a model that is central to the core operations of New Babylon, our very own *interconnected realms*. An imaginary space, of which we've since drawn some portions both from outside and inside, where, likewise, things before our vantages and their perceptions in our understanding seem to reshuffle and form new linings in a binary pace.

In that sense, we can redefine and reposition our own respective spaces referred in the thesis, and reduce the ones we've referred to earlier. And it is reduced to a single type: Although being mostly a figurative, largely-mental, much-hypothetical, human-made and kind of an optical model we've introduced in respect to New Babylon and then drawn some portions of, and also partially being of biological origins; it is an *intermediary* space, and so is again imaginary, which is situated between the outside world and the space of our actual minds. Or, and elaborating on the concept of *intermediary*, it can be seen as an *extension* – an extensional representation, which naturally is figurative as well, of the space of our actual minds, including its peculiar networking operations.

In a practical level, for we are primarily interested in the world of meanings and how we form them conceptually – an aim that is less of the territory of Carey and more of Latour – then it is this *extensional* space that our own imaginary realms mostly relate to; and, thus, the one that we will further be charting and exploring onwards. In their order of appearance in this chapter, that figurative space we've referred as the interconnected realms represents the biological space of the mind; and their operations related to meaning-production and updating are explained in the course of Latourian

theses of ever-shifting associations and *trials* [129]. Out of all four, and later of three; now there is one type of space – possessing a similar sort of structure and set of operations with those of previous types. However, there's still one other space remaining outside of these operations – if not all irrelevant to these operations.

Not surprisingly, that so-called final type would be the realm of inputs – the outside world to say. A realm that once was referred and appeared in the guise of some distant stories, newly discovered planets, or any kind of *décor* affecting our very interiors and conceptions about the world. And, between those two realms, say the inside and the outside world, there occurs that curious interaction – the one that transpires alongside the border our physical beings – about the world and what we make of it. So, out of all those; now there are two spaces for us to work with.

Given the notion of instantaneous openings and traces in Latourian definitions (the *trials*), and also from our emphasis on the optical, observer-centric and momentary natures of such interactions [129]; we may refer to those activities as some particular *events* – happening in our unitary space of meanings. While these events seem to transpire in a single, unitary and a much-personal space, at least in their upmost outcomes; the interaction nevertheless occurs between two type of spaces.

In fact, and a bit more to the extent of reading all these phenomena as a certain type of evenet, what primarily seem to matter is not the number of spaces or the types that involved – but whether there occurs an interaction between these two spaces. That whether any outsider input, say a new type of medicine or any kind of *décor* in Situationist terminology [50], can affect and alter the previous conceptions in our understanding and memory – either in our figurative vantages, or in our actual neurological linings. It is whether we can start seeing things anew, or from a different position as Constant or Bill Nye hoped for – which stands, at least for the rather humble premises of this thesis, as the simple definition of a utopia: If there is any change or re-assembly taking place in our personal networks, semiotically, visually or neurologically; then it makes a *meaningful* encounter or an event per se – or, in other words, an exceptional *situation* in the definitions of some earlier utopians [30].

The summary of all these could be that such an event matters more than the actual space it transpires, or how it biologically transpires – although we might guess that it surely does somewhere between. After all, we know that these highly fragile and

mostly transient utopias, the moments or brief openings where the existing world seems bit altered, have some of their parts in our mental reserves, and some other in the outside world of decors and inputs. One may as well remember that, however different it was once claimed to be, another world could and ought to be found nowhere but within the existing one [29,85,88,89].

So, at the end, it all comes down to whether we have a utopian opening or not – so that, we may or may not think bit differently about the world and its possibilities, or about any instant of our life or our immediate surroundings. Once again, all but a mental reconstruction, so it surely does start within our insides – at least for some earlier phases of our course towards an entirely utopian world: A world constantly being seen or is seeming different, and constantly being renewed – along with its mental image in our minds.

3.2.1 The event

Following upon the notion of encounters and events, and the emphasis on the presence of interactions, now we can go back to the case of multiple objects being renewed in their perceptions to our sights, and with that, to the scale of human perspective and rather intimate entanglements with the realm of inputs. A visual space, where, instead of some free-standing objects, the observer is confronted by many variables like light, motion and sound accompanying the urban *décors*, along with the daily deeds and happenstances of a rather spontaneous, shared environment. To follow, one may recall the infamous maps of Letterists – the *Naked City* and the likes – where the inaugural bits of a utopian world, or those of a world seemed bit different than before, were visible and collected on an actual print.

A traveler strolls around a city quarter, presumably in mid-century Paris or mid-century Venice, a boulevard or a canal with a particular view; notices some certain qualities of that view affecting on his feelings or that it creates some sort of stimulus; and then either chooses to walk forward or chooses another direction [86]. In the example of the *Naked City* (Figure 2.3), the portions disentangled from an actual map and re-assembled on paper mostly represent the quarters of Paris that the traveler had chosen to stay and explore deeper – with a certain spatio-temporal quality [94].

In each of these cut-out pieces, or in the photographic fragments of Rumney (Figure 3.20), both in terms of durational and physical chunks collaged; there is a particular

sort of interaction occurs between the traveler and the surrounding city decor – that is, the realm of inputs in this case. In the wording of Wark [28], one can recall that these pieces, where that interaction was present, were some *intersubjective spaces* – those being constructed upon that same interaction, and somewhere between our insides and the surrounding, outside world.

Figure 3.20 : *Pyschogeographic* investigations of Venice by Ralph Rumney (1958) [95].

What happens during such interactions with an urban setting, in terms of the type of spaces and presumably mirroring or parallel activities transpiring in each realm (the optical space and our actual minds), is that in each stimulus provided by the physical environment, our neurological parts respond accordingly; and then, the same physical environment is coded according to our perception – or, actually, *in* our perception – and it somehow seems differently to our eyes, and as well to our insides. This instance and that space is where the outside world becomes what it becomes to us – same or different, bland or interesting – and that, given the chunks of intersubjective spaces connected with several big red arrows, we are directly entangled, or engaged in the words of Constant [39], with the surrounding world – that is, the realm of inputs.

To assess this sudden interaction and seeing-event, or seeing-different-event per se, from the territory of the outside world; it is surely not that the street or boulevard physically changes – but the way we see and perceive it does. And this scheme, of a

curious and direct interplay with what surrounds us, one may recall, had been the main field of interest and research of all Letterist and Situationist practices in general. Those that were searching for those hidden zones and favorable *décors* [50,85,86] within the urban terrain or elsewhere; those which may act "on the emotions and behaviors of individuals", as the exact definition of *psychogeography* exerts [30].

For a second conclusion, and also in line with our previous chapters examining these revolutionary and utopian agendas, one may also see that – again, regarding the theoretical mirroring between the figurative or perspective space and the neurological one reserved for meaning-production – there is a twofold transformation present in both realms. That is to say, at the very same time, if still in theory, both the visual appearance of these urban decors and the way we personally perceive them seem to be changing together and almost at once.

This sentence, at the outset, might mean not much, or might mean one and the same thing. But, it actually doesn't – for there are, in fact, still two compartments in play. Yes, although this seeing-event transpires in a singular and subjective opening as we've explained; there are still more than one space – and that we still do not know which part has the primary or inceptive role in this presumably-mirroring and interplaying structure.

As a provisional opposition to these arguments, we may recall that any sort of utopian agenda or *psychogeographic* practice mainly was interested in the presence and natures of this interaction – say what kind of a *décor* engenders what kind of a feeling or what kind of a desire can be accompanied with what kind of a setting [51,86] – but not in the exact source of this interaction. In short, a utopia or a utopian moment was mostly of its presence and surely of its components – yet not of its exact or prescribed workings. Regardless of which component starts the interaction or procures the *event*, it was essentially a matter of whether there was an *event* or not.

On that note, now we may drop, if momentarily, our intentional disregard about the origins of the exact source – and start looking for answers. For that, before examining the rather direct and intact encounters of early utopians further, we may borrow some rudimentary theses about events in general from another well-known philosopher.

According to Slavoj Žižek, in his book titled with the exact name of the concept, an *event* is basically defined as "something shocking", a being coming into being out of

nowhere, which, sided with this suddenness, appears to "interrupt the usual flow of things" [135, p. 2] – a wordage akin to Latour's [129]. To the extent of what causes it and what it affects in turn, other than this interruptive and reframing capacity; it is actually defined in this very ambiguity between these two verbs, or in what we've recently referred as the uncertainty about its original source in the light of its effects: "It is a manifestation of a circular structure in which the *evental effect* retroactively determines its causes or reasons" [135, p. 2]. This circular and ambiguous structure, which also has some Situationist reciprocal undertones in itself, is applicable to many types of occurrences and interruptions – including political or daily events, or the peculiar belief and affection systems of love and religion [135].

Other than drawing an ambiguous type of relation, what Zizek posits is an ambiguous recipe for defining such occurrences: In each case, we cannot clearly determine the specific reasons or responsible components of this "surprising emergence of something new" [135, p. 5] – and the effect it yields, say seeing things anew or falling in love with someone, is often mixed and can be replaced with those uncertain sources. What these preliminary definitions lend to our case is that not only we may not be able to determine whether the surrounding inputs or our mental reserves were actually causing the change in our perception – but also that we should not be.

In other words, along with this very uncertainty, the always-replaceable, thus circular or looping, nature of causes and effects, or those of interplaying realms during a personal interaction, is what essentially render these ambiguous and sudden entanglements as true *events*. That's just the nature of these things in life – a nature that cannot be ordered and explained in its exact nature.

To the extent of Situationist schemes, while we cannot really determine whether the décors or our behaviors commence our interaction with the outside world; it, then, is meant to be defined and encountered in that way – in this very ambiguity or uncertainty of its primary source. It is a whole, built-in package: These highly-thorough and personal encounters, or the interplay between ourselves and the surrounding realm of inputs, naturally come with that ambiguous scheme – as a kind of inherent byproduct. So, then, it is not only a recipe, however ambiguous, to determine *events* in general; but as well as for our utopian openings or the constructed situations.

As for what Situationists were mainly interested, it was the close-up study of this "perpetual interaction", which now can also be referred as a circular kind, to the extent of how one component, "the material environment of life" or "the behaviors which it gives rise to and which radically transforms it", interacts with the other [88] – but, certainly, not which part actually affects or causes the other. A rather practical disregard, if not intentional.

Furthermore, recalling both ours and these early utopians' emphasis about such personal encounters, and along with the presence of such peculiar interactions; Žižek does also contribute to the same emphasis through his further postulations on the matter. What he says of these unexpected occurrences of life is of a certain focus which, likewise, centered on the outcomes rather than the actual reasons: "At first approach, an event is thus the effect that seems to exceed its causes" [135, p. 3].

By that, now, a disregard once seemed intentional and practical becomes kind of entirely natural – and the *event* merely, if not in a degrading sense, becomes the effect it generates. To explain this in our own examples, say in the making of the Naked City or any utopian opening where things seen anew, the transformational *event*, that is the change in our own perception and the very effect the *situations* or *psychogeographic entanglements* incline to propagate, naturally exceeds its actual origins. And, bit eventually, it exceeds that question to which we've been trying to find answers. One can say that there is no correct answer, or, that the answer can always be replaced with the other.

In a rephrase, and also in-line with any Situationist agenda, these *seeing-events* themselves, or the *evental effect* outlined by Žižek [135], in which we are directly engaged with the surrounding atmospheres or decors of the material world, are what actually seems at stake. In another, namely the outcome, which "undermines every stable scheme" [135, p. 6], an outcome defined similarly by Latour for the instances where we are forced to reshuffle our previous conceptions [129], or one that long sought by Constant or his earlier companions so that we can look at the existing world from a different standpoint, was the primary goal. A *situation* both becomes an *event* itself and naturally the effect it creates; so has both the role of a means and an end – over and over, in an ever-looping structure – until this circular scheme and the upmost effect, the very transformation of our mental reserves or the mere chance of seeing things differently, become prevalent throughout our entire lives.

It all starts, if in theory, with a preliminary situation – whether by pre-constructed setting, or running into a favorable *décor* during a *dérive* [50,86,88], or by hearing a Babylonian story, or by looking at some distant planetary system and nearing it – that is, however and yet naturally undisclosed in its exact operations, with a *Žižekian event*. A type of occurrence, again, with some highly-mental implications, parts and origins.

3.2.2 The transcendental frame

With a couple of final notes from our most recent reference and from other Situationists, we may conclude this part. Respectively, what lies next is our very own *seeing-events* – in the light of these past events took place more than half-a-century ago. So, prior to that, let's hear a final word from Žižek, which comes in the scope of a rather general and largely philosophical inquiry concerning the very nature of reality.

On that almost universal issue and inquiry, Žižek recites two major sorts of philosophical approaches to the origins of the world – specifically focusing on the terms as we know, or actually do not, or cannot, know the world. The two are the *transcendental* and the *ontological* readings of reality [135]. The former, which most relates to our own approach and the essential grounds of our thesis, is based on a model that we've also recited parallel to the findings of Benedict Carey – that the world, briefly, is what and how it appears to us [123]. So, while the latter field concerns the actual origins and *co-ordinates* of reality outside of our existence or perception; the transcendental approach studies that very *frame* through which we see and engage with the outside world [135]. This, now, should sound quite relevant.

What Žižek asks [135], or the questions he repeats along the long course of existential philosophy, is whether the world at large is actually what we personally make of it. Besides the answers to this seemingly major question, he tries to enlighten the possibility through the perspective and actual meaning of an *event*. And, bit unsurprisingly, he utilizes the same circular structure and the uncertainty between an event's causes and effects, asking whether these sudden occurrences in life are of "a change in the way that reality appears to us" or there is "a shattering transformation of the reality itself" [135, p. 5]. For some preliminary answers, for which we had too some questions of our own, he goes with the first presumption, and recites a revelation about physics, the Galileo's model of *inertia* for defining and experiencing motion – a

revelation similar to which experienced by Rovelli [21], or one that already explained in the scope of Latourian type of openings [129].

Given such revelation, that is the *event* in his example, the case is that it appears more of a revision in our perception of the reality rather than a change within reality itself – a change "in our understanding of motion", respectively [135, p. 10]. Here, it is concluded that the events are mostly of internal happenings: a shift, or a reframing, in the very frame, or "the transcendental horizon", of our entanglement with the outside world [135]. In short, the crucial change once again takes place in our own and mental expanses and nowhere else – now put in a different wording by this philosopher.

As a result, other than such reading of events and the nature of reality being parallel to our own theses and those of most utopian endeavors; now we are able to find another label for our imaginary and mostly-mental interconnected realms reserved for making meanings. That our hypothetical expanse that once called as a Latourian opening and a figurative extension of the realm of our minds, or as our very own personal vantages (visual or intellectual), which is the space of meanings to say, now acquires a rather philosophical, if also universal, denotation: *the transcendental horizon* or *the transcendental frame*. A wording that exactly pertains more to that little *Zenith* – both regarding what appears before and behind it.

It is a frame in which the world becomes what it becomes to us, and also where it changes to what it changes to. The very same frame where meanings and their related networks are being reshuffled – either by our personal sights and further movement, or by other inputs or decors entering into the same frame. A frame where we can reshuffle our conceptions about our entire lives or immediate surroundings; where we can start asking questions once asked by Constant himself. The very frame where New Babylon essentially is located or can appear, and also the one that the primary one had been always after. And, finally, it is the very frame – essentially connected to our behaviors and their temporal developments – where all utopian openings, in the humblest and simplest definition of the term, and where all constructed situations essentially reside. And, yes, still with some of their parts in the outside world.

So, aside from that as well points to the tactical presence of New Babylon and its essential meaning residing in the lives further than it might host and those we can build on our own; it does likewise explain why all Situationist tactics and programs were

essentially targeting our own, eager-to-change and often-receptive, transcendental frames or horizons. For that's where the crucial change resides, so it was the place they all went after.

On that note, one may easily recall the denotations of another prominent Situationist and of an early Letterist. On the words of the latter, it is explained that by Chtcheglov [49], such transformation in our personal vantages and understanding of the world at large, namely the "various modes of temporal development", was much crucial – specifically to the extent of how we understand and utilize space and time, along with the discipline of architecture, besides motion. And, remembering Asger Jorn in that regard, any constructed situation or attempted development aiming for the transformation of everyday life and culture was aiming for our perceptions of these fundamental givens and for our daily practices – but not on the things perceived or practiced [89].

In short, the very transformation, according these revolutionaries, was again of our insides – and could be achieved within the scopes of the existing culture or reality. It was basically a matter of perspective, say a matter of *transcendental frames*; and, according to Debord, was of dramatically altering it – by an intentional and tactical flooding of our "intellectual market" by "a load of desires" within the capacity of present means, those that would hopefully steer us towards outside of our current mental or transcendental margins [85, p. 61]. Any means or occurrence that serves for a *Latourian opening* or a *Žižekian event*, so to say.

Returning to these fundamental definitions and utopian recipes, we may re-underline the twofold transformation with a footing in the urban sphere – as once mentioned in Letterists' excursions and the notion of an "experimental city", courtesy of, if not only, Ivan Chtcheglov [49]. In our respective chapters, it was once told that the new city itself, as a natural and simultaneous extension of these events and interactions, was to exist as both the research field and the eventual product of this intertwined and so-called circular experimental process [28,86,88]. So, at least in theory and further phases of the cultural revolution, the world outside, say the "ontological" part of reality [135], would also change accordingly – parallel to our innermost and transcendental discoveries.

This paralleling transformation on both departments, on the outside and the inner world, was stressed for many occasions. As for Chtcheglov [49], the new city, along with the new conception of architecture being its primary means of action and knowledge, would be the perfect statement of this new, experimental civilization. And as for Constant, "the urban network", the department of everyday and material decors, would likewise be "the natural expression of a collective creativity" [29] – a rather direct expression of a life and an overall culture in which "every human being engaged in a dynamic relation with his surroundings" [39, p. 160].

So, the new city, be it New Babylon or someplace else, hence would, other than housing such activities, be the eventual statement of this theoretically-consecutive series of mainly-transcendental happenings – which, according to Constant, entail both social and creative degrees [23], and, according to our findings, do consist of a highly-internal one. As for its rather miniscule and earlier example, one may also remember that the Naked City or any other recomposed form of Paris, other than being a temporal version, was mainly a subjective entity – a city specifically cut and designed according to one's encounters and desires [28,87]. A city made and cartographically drawn by the transcendental events of one traveler, and made in the image of his own transcendental frame.

As for the case of paralleling and twofold transformations or discoveries pursued, or the city being the direct expression of those events; once again, the very excursion within ourselves would be the most prominent one. For the very change in our modes of behavior, that is in our own transcendental frames where the world becomes and changes to what it becomes and changes to, is the primary source and the requisite component of all that life-long or world-sized ambitions; it is then the main experimental field, the internal one, that one should primarily consider. The resulting city would always retain a secondary eminence – as did the decors used for behavioral developments. In Constant's theses, this so-called experimental city, although being transformed along with our very selves, would merely entail the necessary and mostly material conditions accompanying our ever-transforming selves [23]. The very life, composed of our own *transcendental events* and circular interactions, was what New Babylon essentially was about.

According to our basic findings, these desires and versions would be found in a place somewhere amidst our existing means and surroundings, and a little outside of our

present mental compartments [29,85]. As told many times, that's where any utopia starts, and a possible utopian world is eventually located: with most of its parts in our *transcendental reality*, which is to be hopefully and constantly altered and expanded; and the rest in the existing, say in the *ontological* one.

Respectively, this version, if theoretically and for some basic groundwork, drawn by Debord marks a rather *exponential* type of interaction – going beyond the early discoveries pursued by Letterists in a rather static city. By assuming the department of accompanying décors would also change, and rather literally, along with our own interiors and behaviors, that is, parallel to our ever-shifted frames; we would be able not only to change what goes or is perceived in our visual field, say by moving within the city, but also to change what goes in directly. To repeat Constant's words, it marks a rather *dynamic relation* found and ever-present in New Babylon [39] – along with a brainwashing effect wherein "the intensity of each moment destroys the memory" of one's travels in such constantly- and exponentially-fluctuating reality [23, p. a13].

After all, by mentioning the possible future of "cities" that "will be built for *dérive*" [86, p. 85], other than Chtcheglov himself [49]; the major secretariat was to signal the conception of such twofold, exponentially- and ever-changing, and ever-integrated reality – a world changes simultaneously or circularly both in its *ontic* reality and in the frames it appears to us. Maybe without entirely knowing, he was defining the path towards an entirely Babylonian living as Constant saw it – which would be the much-eventual next stage after the Naked City:

> As a way of life, homo ludens will demand, firstly, that he responds to his need for playing, for adventure, for mobility, as well as all the conditions that facilitate the free creation of his own life…Homo ludens himself will seek to transform, to recreate, those surroundings, that world, according to his new needs. The exploration and creation of the environment will then happen to coincide because, in creating his domain to explore, homo ludens will apply himself to exploring his own creation. Thus we will be present at an uninterrupted process of creation and recreation, sustained by a generalized creativity that is manifested in all domains of activity. [39, p. 160]

As a matter of fact, this sort of heightened entanglement and exponential interaction were what already had been stressed by Chtcheglov – rather obviously in his urbanistic

laments regarding the downfall of a "closed landscape" and the limitations of an "emotionally still-alive past" [49]. While also pointing to the direct relationship between one's surroundings and his feelings, recalling that "all cities are geological" and some "certain shifting angles, certain receding perspectives" offer some magical conceptions of space like the lost corners of some swimming pools, forgotten bars and police stations of old Paris; he seeks for a brand new, built-from-scratch type of urban setting [49]. "You will never see the hacienda", he notes, referring to the imaginary Spanish estates of the literary worlds and their absence, and calls for their firsthand construction: "The hacienda must be built" [49].

This was a setting which, as also outlined by Constant for his own *hacienda*, is rather dynamic and fluid in its appearance and making, resembling "the image of a kaleidoscopic whole" [39, p. 160] – a city made by a rather dynamic and fluid version of architecture: A world of "new, changeable decors"; a new reality, constantly being transformed in both ontological and transcendental levels, that is both made of and constructed upon the "influences in accordance with the eternal spectrum of human desires and the progress in fulfilling them" [49].

Here was a life where we, and in the exact definitions of the first Babylonian, are to both behave and discover according to our internal impulses and the surrounding environment, which possesses a major and intimate effect on these impulses [23]. That it is indeed a twofold and simultaneous excursion towards one's insides and the outside world; and one that transpires through their sudden and momentary interplays – but in a rather singular place which we may now suitably refer as *the transcendental frame of reality*.

What this type of interaction would procure was the most grand-scale ambitions and long-term prospects of New Babylon, if not its essential ones. Namely, for the *décors* and behaviors, which would also produce new pairs as Debord noted [50], would continually change and fluctuate in a gradual degree given their "perpetual interaction" [88]; the possibilities, say the possible constructions and experiences, were, if theoretically, endless – as noted in several other texts [85,86]. On the side of a twofold excursion, there was a twofold set of potentials – resides both in the outer world of decors and the inner world of ourselves, and, of course, in their exponential interplays and endless mixtures. Respectively, this was what Chtcheglov once was referring as "the eternal spectrum of human desires" – an ever-expandable collection which would

be coupled and constantly altered by an eternal spectrum of "new, changeable décors" [49].

In the light of all these, Constant was fairly right to presume that "New Babylon ends nowhere" [39, p. 161]. And not only for the spherical shape of the earth, and the new technologies and behavioral studies were advancing; but so are we – endless and ever-expandable in our hidden desires and potential versions, however in a much-hopeful and theoretical sense. So, other than the general saying we've fairly justified, that the world is essentially what we make of it; a new world, be it New Babylon or someplace else, is essentially what we make of ourselves – mostly contingent on our inner potentials, curiosities and desires. On that note, one may comparably recall the opening remarks of Constant's much seminal text from his days with the Situationists, talking about a different city for a different culture – that clearly puts forward this keen, circular and reciprocal relationship in its very title [29].

All in all, this brings us back to the very definition of utopias – and to such openings that we're also after henceforth in the remaining parts of the thesis: Whether commenced by an outsider input or by our own seeing; and whether taking place in the larger space of floating inputs, of new discoveries or the possibilities of different lives, or within our immediate surroundings; any *seeing-event* that provides the mental opportunity or the altered point of view to see things differently – that would essentially constitute an adequate amount of utopian substance.

To rephrase in our own terms once more, whenever these networking activities in those we see and in the way we see them came to happen, in theoretically-parallel or naturally-circular episodes; then it marks a time for development and reevaluation in the presence of possible and other realities. While some parts of these brief openings come in the form of some parables or ambiguous pictures from a distant life, or as some hypothetical conversation and nearing with a distant exoplanetary system, or as some rather immediate surroundings somehow speaking to some deeper and yet-to-be-discovered expanses of our very selves; they, primarily, have to be found within and by our own compartments.

In all, it still pertains to the same primary excursion pursued within ourselves, and asks the primary question of who we actually can or wish to become once raised by Wark [28] – sided with what might be necessary to suit these aspirations in the material

world. Aside from any answer or immediate results; that's just the necessary, practical and utopian nature of things. Natures that cannot be ordered and explained in their actual nature but just may materialize in the very potentials they presume – the very potentials that we have to work with and towards: A mere chance to reconsider and hopefully change what we make of the world and of ourselves at once, and then to act on both – in one way or another. That's the path to our rather feasible utopias, and is what they just might entail at their best – as with those of New Babylon itself.

3.2.3 The cloud

Within the scope of *events* and necessary conditions, it was essentially a matter of encountering some "certain shifting angles" and "certain receding perspectives" in a city, or finding the necessary evening light to see Dr. Pinel's statue in a different sight amidst the fragments of a long-lost magical Paris [49]. Or it could be choosing the appropriate season, decorations, tunes and the proper drinks inside a house or on a busy street with the appropriate conversation and lighting for "the realization of a chosen affective situation" in a party-like setting [85, p. 60]; or stumbling upon a revelation about how things actually move and then reframing our understanding of motion [135]; or running into a little piece of talk given by Constant and then acquiring a brand new frame to rethink our worldly resources, cities or technologies – if only for a single instant or two. All in all, and through the circular structure of these happenings and the effects they yield; it all directs us back towards the very Earth we own – and towards the reserves, the protocols and the lives we have on it.

Along the same course, it also fundamentally leads us towards our own *transcendental horizons* and their shifting, namely those frames Ivan Chtcheglov, Guy Debord, Constant and Bill Nye was after – in their rather intimate and visual incarnations, or those operating at an equally-critical and more intellectual altitudes. For their shifting naturally equates with the events they caused by or resulted in; it does eventually lead us towards the *events* or the *situations*, composed of our actions and necessary conditions, make such frames possible.

As for our eternal conquests coded and prodded by our most human natures, those we've recited along with Wells, Huxley and Sagan [112,114,115]; then all these recipes of a different world or lifestyle do not only entail the reclaiming of some larger expanses of our largely-unknown universe – but also those of our own eager-to-enlarge

intellectual horizons and potentially-unknown behavioral reserves. In that sense, it entails another conquest pursued towards our insides – in search of the appropriate events or openings that allow us to see not only the reality or the statue of Dr. Pinel [49], but also our very selves from a different angle.

Likewise, it portrays a conquest, a specific journey, which then acquires a binary virtue as well, pursued at times by staring deep at the galaxy in search of our long-gone cousins [17,34]; or just by walking within the same city with a different manner and eye, searching for the appropriate *décors* and street corners to bring our still-possible, yet-to-be-discovered cousins into life. A conquest for the life beyond and for the one at hand, to repeat in our earliest phrase – one that is pursued in a twofold manner and seemingly on opposite directions during the same interval.

So, without further due, we might conveniently stress the movement of the observer once more, or the concept of *further motion* in other words – namely, what we do after such preliminary events or *alignments* take place. And what we do, basically, is to continue moving – and to continue looking and thinking in doing so. In that way, it explicitly refers to the natures of the *dérive*, where we move according to our experiences and to our personal frames being shifted – a twofold excursion now reframed in a wider sense that exceeds its space as solely urban environments, and exceeds its function of moving as progressing from one sensual ambience and intersubjective encounter to the next.

So, in a sense, here is where we may conflate and liken various journeys, the rather physical one and the intellectual sort, as some versions of the other. And, in both versions, what we do afterwards, basically, is to continue altering our frames – by continually letting further inputs make their ways into them; and, eventually, letting them form new associations between those entering and those already entered, or those we already possess in our mental reserves.

Back at the spatial level, what we are looking at from our personal vantage or move across as a certain kind of space – bit like in our alternation of star maps where we see relative and multiplied versions of planets instead of some stars and constellations – is kind of a *cloud-structure*: Not of stars, but one that is cluttered with these inputs, that are ever-appearing and ever-forming new networks; and, eventually, with the new connections forming between them. It also pertains to the very methodology and

auxiliary reading model of subjective constellations mainly used in this remembering – including revisiting New Babylon in a distant time setting.

For all we know, this cloud-like structure expands by the movement of the observer – who, according to the connections appearing and forming in his own vantage, proceeds with gaining new perceptions and new associations between these inputs collected on the go. So, given the reciprocal necessity between the space and the function reserved for making meanings; it is a *cloud* specifically allocated to our meaning-production and intellectual discoveries – a space where we venture onwards from one temporarily-available vantage to another, say from one fresh network formation or re-formation to the next in Latourian terminology [129].

Respectively, we should once again remember that whenever there is a connection, then the traveler starts to move – and the mind naturally can follow. For instance, just like Constant's collecting of his own components throughout his Babylonian adventure, Benjamin likewise expands his own search and overall discussion – all through some momentary alignments and consecutive network-formations. His mind carries on with further comparisons and critical readings involving both realms and several notions like counsel, information or storytelling in general [18]. And, he keeps his interconnected realm intact by constantly moving, looking and thinking within this *cloud* of ever-appearing or ever-summoned inputs. A subtle but perfect example of a function reserved for the mind – one that much resembles an urban-drifter meandering around a city, and through his own utopian openings and situations: A *dérive* made within a rather figurative cloud reserved for critical readings and new meanings.

To summarize all these in a final attempt, and in a rather tangible way which elucidates a spatial being both visible from outside but constructed and explored from within; we may, this time, visit an artist and his ingenious motivations. An artist, who likewise seems very keen on the construction of spaces for the peculiar, if not sole, purpose of making meanings; and on spaces where meanings are to be made by the visitors of his constructions – by those with their actual distance and perspective to his constructions. Although not literally expanding in their overall presence – for they are practically confined in a gallery space – but so do through the prospective readings that could be made by the visitors; this artist's fairly light-weight and much-fragile compositions work in the same expansive way that might be likened to Sagan's largely-unknown

ocean of cosmic origins [112]. His is an ocean that we can literally see, and is much less figurative for us to comprehend easily – if not more differently.

Jacob Hashimoto's rather physical and often-colorful ocean, which could also be viewed as a cloud built from paper and bamboo sticks, is made of small kites (Figure 3.21) [136,137]. Owing his method to his own cultural origins and to those of various geographies like India and China; each small and meticulously-constructed piece stands for his collected interests and own musings – allocated to various themes with specific graphical codes [137]. When they are assembled together, chosen from many pieces his studio produced, they become much relevant and dynamic in their co-existence and greater form: "By the time these various references are filtered through the architecture of the artwork, they become mine. The narrative is about these objects moving around each other and creating meaning by proximity" [136].

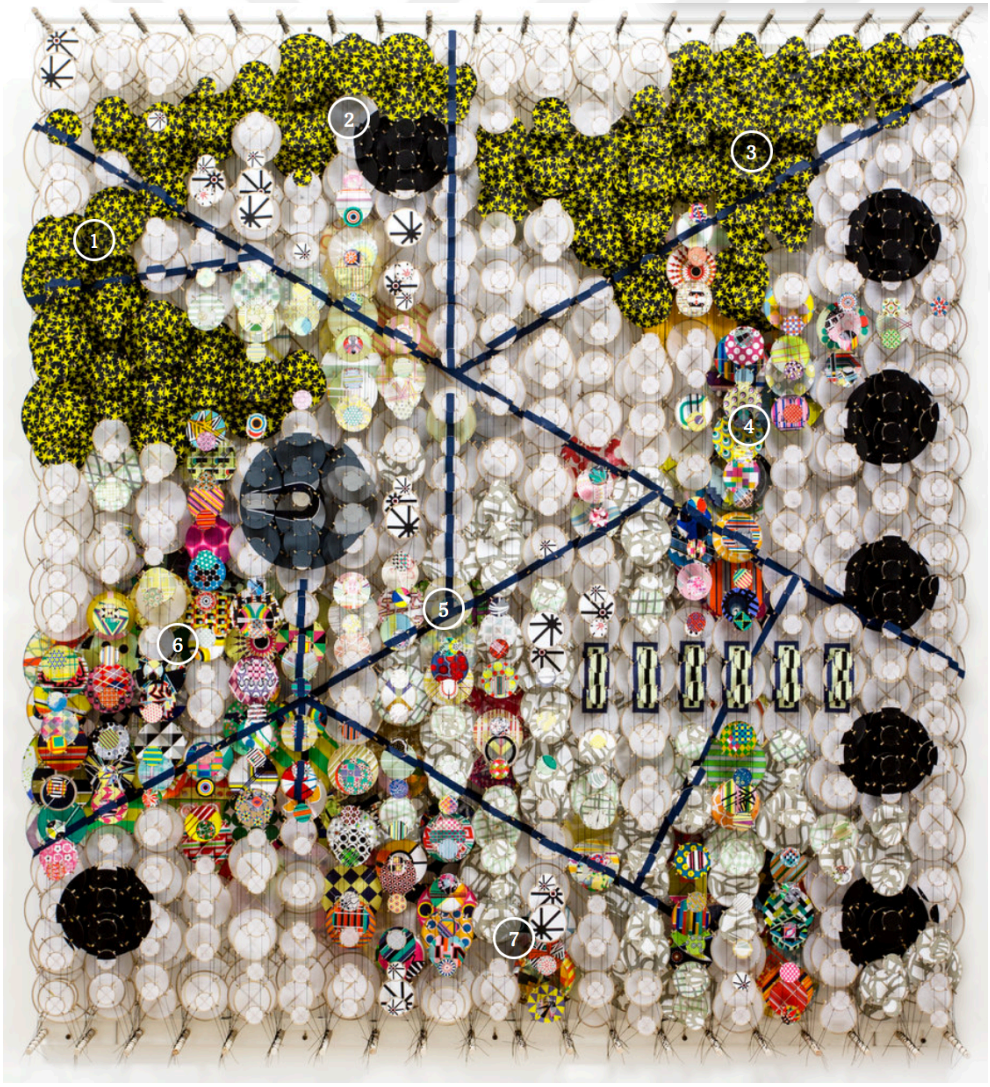

Figure 3.21 : *The First Known Map of the Moon* by Jacob Hashimoto (2016) [136].

While these notes of the artist seem to be directly pertaining to the spaces and operations of our kinds; it also specifies a particular kind of universe – along with the particular ways pertaining to its structure and specific operations that both retain and expand it: A universe, constructed by the artist and his own interests, made of smaller pieces hanged in space – that is built for the stimulation and production of further readings and meanings. According to the same remarks of Hashimoto [136], the meanings are produced between and upon these individual pieces floating in his cloud or universe made of kites – a model that we've already drawn in relation to the narrational procedures of our brains, especially those explained in Carey's references [123].

In comparison, rather than some streaming inputs from the outside world or those recollected from some remote parts of our brain; now the *meaningful* networks are being complied between these individual paper-and-bamboo nodes and what they represent or summon from the larger reserves of our cultural and personal memories. On that note, Hashimoto's rather materialized space of meanings do tend to operate on both expanses – the neurological and the figurative or visual – with a similarly mirroring scheme as well.

By mentioning "proximity" and motion amongst his singular objects [136]; Hashimoto also suggests an innately-relative and much-fluid reading model that we've also underlined during Hawking's *patch* metaphor [134], and also in various observer-centric models we've since cited. By walking around the gallery space and viewing this cloud of kites from different angles, the visitor is to make his own meanings according to his own position: All through the individual, perspective frame of his and the individual readings he can come up with – a sort of procedure that we've first introduced in our example of three free-standing objects (Figures 3.18, 3.19). And, regarding the emphasis on motion, by these consecutive meanderings and readings; the *cloud* expands in itself, if not literally – but significantly through the meanings made by the *travelling-visitor*.

Respectively, it is not a coincidence that we've used the term *universe*, along with the metaphor of a cloud. Hashimoto, who included those sentences in the scope of a newspaper piece featuring one of his recent works, *The First Known Map of the Moon*, was personally interested in the various visual models the humanity explores and orders the universe [136]. Through his own ordering of his own universe of many

stories and references, those ranging from old video games, some adaptations of the visual imagery of artists like Mondrian and others to some earliest depictions of celestial-beings; and through his intricate kite-building by countless glued papers [136,137]; his work attains the guise of both a personal diary, and of a communal library in Latourian form – if limited to these subjects.

In the same way, his seemingly-floating universe, however static and physically closed in an installation, then attains a rather fluid, expansive and open-ended presence – thanks to the plural readings its singular components prompt: Both by their various concatenations allowing different linings and narratives, as in constellations; and by our further movements in this universe allowing further concatenations of his seemingly-floating kites – a virtue, perhaps, true to their native history and purpose.

In a final comparison with what the delicate and meaning-saturated craft of Hashimoto might exert, we may now line up the various labels and models we've postulated for the similar incarnations of similar expanses – namely, the *spaces*, the *openings*, the *clouds* or the *universes* of *ever-shifting meanings*. For the earliest we've presented, namely for the *interconnected realms*; this most recent example, which would be the most physical and tangible kind we've ever brought up in our thesis, comprises a rather-dispersed collection of inputs – an overall-interconnected realm per se.

Whereas, despite the difference in its respective reference-realms and their quantity; it is once again the very spatial structure and the very function this structure exerts and also requires, we've primarily interested in. That is, whether by summoning some distinct pasts or planetary systems from afar; or by compiling a universe of inputs from many origins, cultural reserves and timespans; the first apparent and rudimentary necessity is that we are required to see and read these references or inputs in their ever-changing proximities and ever-reframing networks – and all through our personal vantages. And, secondly and much comparably, we are also required to continue moving around and further – as Benjamin and Constant did – in order to bring in new inputs into our frames, and as well to gain further sights and proximities to reshuffle our previous conceptions, all along with the possibility of gaining new conceptions, insights and meanings for our own recollections.

In retrospect, the rather literal version of Hashimoto's reference-cloud points to somewhere between the types of ventures, the two types of *dérives*, we've outlined so

far. And, in a much convenient and eccentric way, it as well conflates them – however in a much singular case, yet in a very profound level. Simply, by meandering across his kite-universe, we both indulge in a physical excursion, if only in a gallery space; and as well in an intellectual kind where we perceive the floating references in their ever-changing proximities and along with the prospective meanings they procure.

So, in that same eccentric way, it becomes, however as a singular instance, a rather physical and inhabitable incarnation of our very own hypothetical space of meanings – a space that literally is composed of inputs and references, and is visible right before our eyes. More, it comprises a networking activity, or a series of them, taking place both before our eyes, that is, right between the floating kites; and, in an almost-corresponding level, inside our intellectual compartments – that is, right behind the little *Zenith*: A movement of the mind, that is also accompanied by a movement of body.

In the same manner, we may see Hashimoto's universe and the intended encounters in Mary Boone Gallery as an episode of a rather intimate Letterist *dérive* – but one that mostly offers openings and revelations pertaining to our knowledge, worldly narratives and intellectual horizons. Aside from the visual experience of the artworks, regarding the apparent mirroring or even coinciding activities transpiring within two expanses; we may as well conceive his universe as comprising several utopian openings in its own right and content – however being limited to the visitor's own recollections and to the artist's chosen subjects and respective kites.

On that note, we might reinstate that all these journeys still do retain some highly-subjective, observer-centric and relative natures in themselves. That, whether for any drifter exploring Paris or any scholar nearing some literary or planetary realms next to his own, or for any visitor meandering around *The First Known Map of the Moon*; all readings and meanings, as with all the sights and mental openings acquired, are for the observer to make and gain on his own. Once more, it all depends on who the observer is, on what their personal recollections and interest are, and, much naturally, on their ensuing steps and what they can see from their own distance and angle to the things being observed – whether they are some urban decors, some distant fables and planets, or some colorful kites of secretly-coded references.

With this reminder, there again comes the notion of a spontaneous travelling – where the scope and the length of the observer's stops and meanderings would be contingent on these very same givens. To extent of this chapter's particular content, and to conclude on Hashimoto's own musings and choice of titles; the first known map of our white round satellite was to procure many individual maps henceforth; and that they could only be drawn simultaneously in the form of some relative and partial *patches* [134] or subjective constellations of meaning – during the course of our journey towards the moon, or towards New Babylon for that matter, and across its ever-expanding cloud of many interconnected realms and stories might further be found.

3.3 Babylon in Present

In this part, in respect to our long history of revisiting pasts, we are now to summon and near things from Constant's own distant planet or particular past – and in a way that it needed to be neared, used and remembered, in respect to what've remembered so far. Luckily, given the extensive time spent in its provenances and remains, the author's own memory is just ready to do that – and, in fact, already was doing that – for it was for long filled with the fables and facets of its strategically-multiple yet intrinsically-singular and mental legacy.

The question of whether we would able to compile a larger dream at the end of our journey like Constant himself once did, or rather would come up with a larger scrutiny about the century we are in like Constant also did – and with a list of few potentials and further non-existing viewing spots – still stands. Just as we can't really estimate our path or the length of our travels or the number of stops we would make beforehand; the decisive outcomes of our venture would be decided when we are done with it.

Yet, although we cannot be sure of any of these – any more than the academic prospects we've outlined at the introduction – the theoretical chase outlined above prescribes a path similar to that of the first dreamer – Constant himself. A path in which he utilized his glosses and collected many smaller dreams to forge his own grand-scale dream at the end; a path that is still more important than where it leads, just as his story was mostly about the road before it – advocating for the departures rather than the arrivals. We are to follow the essential protocols provided within the device, by

engaging in one thinking-experiment after the other – hewing to the traditions of all Situationist explorers, Constant himself and the rest of future Babylonians.

Moreover, in the scope of the opposite side of where we would be looking at, namely back in our own reality, we would also be searching for the similar sort of small utopian places – or atmospheres – where the anticipated kinds of interior developments may occur. As outlined recently, other than some critical takes on our present resources and the ways we use them in our present lives, we would be visiting couple of already-occurring forms of these utopias in the contemporary world, other smaller Babylons to say, where our thinking and living customs already appear to be in transition. What we would be looking at is the already-present incarnations of Babylonian living, regardless of their duration or scale, and both to the extent of newly-forming behaviors and the conditions (*décors*) sustaining them – as in Constant's twofold reading of the accelerated long-distance travels and the transitory atmospheres redeeming such modern nomadities [25].

These already-occurring bits and places of utopias, for all we've learnt, also resided in the heart of every Situationist project. As long as we have the favorable, stimulative atmospheres [50] and "present means" to *détourn* as proclaimed by Debord [85, p. 61], within a cityscape or elsewhere; we do have an alternative world in our hands, however often as a possibility, but sometimes in the form of a direct bit of all-but-personal experience – as it should be. So, by searching for those atmospheres and experiences, we would be having not only a critical scrutiny about our contemporary culture and resources, but also a fairly utopian one – a favorable portion of hope mixed with potentials for our hesitant souls longing for directions in an age of profound uncertainty [6,42].

Lastly, other than some optimistic ammunition, some heart-lifting outlooks and locales deemed necessary for our intellectual compasses or more-connected moments; such utopian bits and places could also give us the chance to investigate them further in favor of other alternative world-pieces – in-line with the Situationist principle of direct examination and progressive learning [50,88]. On the rather encouraging ends of the same practices, this somewhat present-day utopian list may as well be added to the assuring merits of the original Babylonian story, or to those of the scarce but beautiful transcriptions of the long-lost *Naked City* and *Haicendas* of the past [49], now included in their most-recent appendixes unfolding in these pages.

3.3.1 Proceedings to the final revisit

Given the introduction of our final journey here, other than this is what our outline suggests, there is an apparent question needs to be asked right here, too: Given that all those previously not known or not assumed were revealed and then procured the grounds of an entire thesis work, and that the author had spent considerable amount of time in the widened provenances of New Babylon coupled with the knowledge of its essential meanings, that he had been able to see the project from "the perspective of an idea" long enough [8, p. 236]; how much of an involuntariness or spontaneity could be accorded for this remaining journey?

Well, the answer is likely to be found in the earlier chapters where we ventured into the schemes and natures pertaining to memory, along with the reasons for allocating our remembrance into more than one stage. Alternatively, one could simply consider what any actual remembering entails and how it is actually performed. So, just like revisiting our third journey (making of a *digital* Babylon) and some connections appeared during its unfolding, we can simply look into our academic endeavor in an introspective fashion – namely, considering the time spent in and around Babylonian provenances where we sought for further connections.

During that interval, we can see that the author's memory is now, and for some years even before starting this work, filled with many Babylonian fables and along with their hidden content and purposes – a bit like Benjamin's was with those of Leskov. For that, the similar *Proustian* memory-operations and instances are much likely to take part in some prospective encounters for the author's case, which then form similarly-unexpected but much-fruitful alignments before him, and on a level that these adjectives take on rather technical connotations – such as the effortlessness or the absence of any planning beforehand [64].

The case is that, and also noted during the chapter pertaining to our methodologies which were much centered on the operations of memory at large, many of the alignments we're supposed to be further chasing, in fact, already did transpire a while back – namely, during the course of this entire work. And, they did transpire in the way that Proustian memory usually does – where oftentimes a present-day experience causes a previously-recollected piece to resurface, and then the past is somewhat revisited or rediscovered in the presence of the present [58-61,138], or vice versa for

that matter. So, similarly, they all were involuntary or unplanned occurrences, courtesy of one's memory and encounters, which then results in some *above-times* Proustian instances where these two timelines coincide and viewed together.

Another definition, taken from the same parts, would be that these involuntary coincidences caused by memory were to induce some critical openings, indeed reserved for our meaning-production, wherein we could look into both parts in the presence of the other – that is, using each piece as a critical gloss on the corresponding party. Like we've noted before, they would constitute a rather fragmented collection of some personal travel records – tracing and logging these momentary openings and their prospective sights as coherent as possible.

Whereas, regarding the matter of unfinished prospects, this journey might just never be actually or entirely completed given how memory works – namely for it seemingly works almost on its own. For some pieces once stored in one's memory always tend to surface involuntarily and independently, these alignments or coincidences between the author's present and Constant's past could occur whenever possible, say when the right distance and angle of vision is present [18]. They might even appear now, right around the time of these pages' inscription – or even after the completion of this work.

Again, that's just the nature of things as we often claim, including the things that could not be explained in their exact nature. Another of those natures, one that we've also underlined in our methodologies, is that the act of writing operates as another agency of recollection in particular, and is much of an active component in the course of remembering things – as noted by Hellmann and other sources on the otherwise destructive effects of memory production [2,65,139]. During our re-assembling and inscription of these occurrences, we might as well summon some parts from Constant's past for the first time and bring in other pieces into our own interconnected realms. So, in that way, such proceedings are also quite akin to Benjamin's [18,84] – especially in terms of the open-ended, subjective and incremental expansion such imaginary spaces reserved for new readings.

In another comparable level to Benjamin's journey, namely for his chosen medium and methodology of revisiting pasts and looking for meanings in them, the writing, the making of the final text per se, then becomes the essential agency of our own mental *dérive*, too. And just like the general workings and transformative acts of memory,

where it paints a renewed image of things once seen, and, in a way, distorts them as told in several examples [57,63-68,139]; during the course of reciting these involuntary instances, even the original notes and alignments could be altered and steer towards further musings.

This in fact posits not a problem. Aside being just another nature of things, on the contrary, it is a well-intended and well-received trait regarding our own proceedings. As stated, we deliberately favor the fallibilities and distortive effects of recuperative operators and narrative-hungry storytellers [123]. Recalling Szondi's reciting of Rilke's otherwise-failed yet transformative remembrance of his childhood days [63,66], we are here after new pictures of Constant's occasionally-painted and modelled legacy – both in terms of the pictures it might show elsewhere and the possible appearances it might take on amidst our current timespan, that is, in a *twofold* fashion.

According to our own derivations and understanding of utopian formations, these memory-pieces correspond with the same sort of openings where things might seem a little different than they did earlier and affect our thinking, if not altering the way we behave right away. And, on a more philosophical level, they comprise the momentous, so-called smaller pictures we take in our own transcendental horizons, where the existing reality is coupled with another possible counterpart within the same passing vantage – all but paralleling with the very purpose and function of the infamous Babylonian *mirage-mirror*.

Revisiting the reasons for the rather spontaneous content and open trajectory of upcoming logs, it is, again, to be found in the open-ended, subjective and serpentine progression of all drifting ventures in pursuit of utopian openings and nearings. It could be seen in Debord's own memoirs of the collective, or in the highly-patchy documentations of Letterist cartographies, or in the countless, ever-meandering scores and overlapping lines drawn by a global population in Constant's pieces [9,28,32,87]. To our findings, such protocols also correspond with the very ways by which memory often operates – and especially in the very structure of instances that trigger these *nearings* in the first place. For the author's memory chooses to retrieve things on its own and according to any present-time encounter, and corresponds them with whatever it causes for their retrieval; one cannot even estimate the starting point of

such mental travels – say what would be the first aligning pieces – or when they might occur.

On one account, one might liken these final logs a sort of personal memory book comparable to Auster's, for it is the space of memory, amongst other types we've charted, where these connections and subsequent meanings could initially arise. It is the same place, however imaginary for us and not entirely charted biologically, where the initial distances between far worlds are bridged as Matar and Messeri noted [17,37], and where things might change in their appearance and respective networks as Latour and others put it [57,63,123,129]. A place where things are both themselves and are other things, and might as well linked to other things [2].

One should also recall the very daily availability and somewhat likely attainability of these instances, given what we've learned from Constant and his cultural antecedents – that all utopian encounters are deemed to transpire within the premises of one's everyday spaces and moments. Much to our luck, these much necessary notes and nearings were to occur during the ordinary life and deeds of the author – say whenever a proper distance and angle of vision is prescribed in his present [18], and also according to what is recollected in his memory and whatever it is that triggers them to resurface. The assembled instances in the final part, in another portion of luck, belongs in a present that is seemingly shattering in its ordinary pieces and attains a utopian pretense of its own.

Recalling our introduction, we are mainly after new meanings and further connections – which were also necessary for all Babylonian lives to begin. And, according to what we've learned here and since the beginning, meanings are likely to change in the presence of other things, and whenever occurs a new connection between things [123,129]. Just as Charles Jencks noted [140], both in respect to his own work and the theories of emergent systems and complexity, when many things combine, they produce more meanings – as the "most benevolent principle behind the universe" [141, p. 158]. It is how we tend to create new knowledge for many ages – forming new links between existing pieces, as Adam Gopnik recites in respect to our ancient way of dealing with information overload and gathering relevant parts from different sources to come up with mind-altering narratives [142].

Aside from the fact that Constant's world had lived up to such premise of mental reconstructions, and built upon these endless possibilities founded on the coexistence of many and seemingly-distanced things – like many utopians had; we've already accepted that this might be just something that is adequate and rewarding as it is. Ours is a search for some temporary but uncharted positions to see the existing sun "the other way around", to put in Elizabeth Bishop's much poetic wordage [1] – let this sun be Constant's past or our present home.

However innately-personal and thus subjective to the one who chooses to see whatever it is to see, and besides all we could see with our new eyes in our world; what's to be presented in the following pages is Constant's New Babylon revisited, if for a final time – in respect to our primary agenda and the title of our thesis. Another revisit, which would be another episode of our understanding this extensive legacy, in the light of its foremost purpose and in the form of a possibly-appropriate afterlife. For that, it might as well be called the *Mental Babylon* resumed, or the actual one simply expanded on its central premise – regaining its timeless self in accordance with its true legacy.

In another saying, this is New Babylon once forgotten and then re-remembered by the author, who had once been the third traveler and now is the fourth one, on the side and in the presence of many other things. Regardless of possible meanings our final act entails, let us hope this be another rewarding journey filled with fresh vantages as much as the original expeditions. And, lastly, let us hope that our proposal here succeed in making meanings at large and further, and not only for New Babylon but for the provenances beyond its shores.

Chances are these personal logs would be a comparable and fitting episode in New Babylon's primarily-mental culture – sided with the hopeful premise they would provide further decors to its primarily-mental instrument, added to its ever-expanding collection, to be used by other travelers in their further alignments. And, whether as a temporary place to inhabit or as an instrument to look through, and however scattered and fleeting they might seem; in an imaginary expanse comprised of two realities, chances are all we still have – as we had ever since. New Babylon, where we still try to look at, and according to what we've seen, is a world made *of* and *for* possibilities.

3.3.2 Presentation of the logs

These readings trace the certain instances during the early period of COVID-19 Global Pandemic started in 2020 – few years before the completion of this study. Such moments allow the author to retrieve certain parts of New Babylon in relation to what's happening both on physical and intellectual degree around his reality. These entanglements and couplings are assembled and presented in a series of observations, enactments of Constant's instrument and critical evaluations – using both personal recollections and as well as contemporary references on the matter. For the premises of this study and the theories presented since, they correspond with *the two-world-bridging alignments*, which stem from of several spontaneous memory operations, that allow to view the present sided with the particular past of Constant.

Using such instances as a starting point, and proceeding on a *mental dérive* from the comparisons and new meanings acquired on its path; these subjective logs attempts to lay out a critical appraisal of the reality and the planetary extremes we currently inhabit, now even more enhanced with this pandemic, with the help of a seemingly-distant counterpart. Seeking both our fallibilities and hidden potentials in the midst of our existing surroundings – material and cultural; the twofold reading here proceeds with revisiting a particular past once imagined, or a utopian future for that matter.

In effect, and as the final part of remembering, the imaginary world of Constant becomes of a critical gloss to contemplate upon the immediate present – and, given our postulations, vice versa. Through the peculiar similarities arise in the author's memory and personal encounters, the twofold assessment presented here will try to offer a critical and cultural rundown of our worldly belongings, as well as a timely measurement to another planetary alternative and lifestyle – all the while of attempting to make new meanings of New Babylon from a faraway distance.

Regarding their consecutive inceptions and inherent connections between, and for the somewhat seamless stream of thinking present in a *mental dérive*; the logs of the final revisit are presented in an interconnected series of written portions – only divided by numbers as in a prose poetry. Not heeding to the regular chaptering protocols of a doctoral dissertation, and the division it would cause; the titles, as summaries of each piece's content, can be found in Table 3.1. Whether it's an observation, an introduction of a Babylonian parable to see things twofold, or a critical assessment following an

alignment; each log is of a mental encounter and represents a threshold – where, afterwards, things previously seen change in their appearance and potentially in meanings, according to our constellations; and make way for further encounters and ensuing logs of the author's most recent journey.

Table 3.1 : The contents/titles of logs.

Log Number	Title / Content Summary
I	A Daily Utopia: Empty Cities, Overloaded Homes, Disappearing Clocks
II	The Shuffle of the Pandemic
III	Constant's Shuffle
IV	A Partial Babylon: An Asynchronous Life and a Virtual Nomadity
V	Home: Centralized and De-centralized

3.3.3 Logs of the final revisit: A naked 21st century

(I)

A cocktail in the morning? If sounds a little unusual, let us just say it sort of used to be. According to Amanda Arnold [145], the Cut's staff writer, it now certainly is not. One could pour cups of vodka and Cointreau into a pitcher much early in the day – a cocktail hour devised for a special moment of crisis. It is a special moment which, as Arnold puts it, calls for a reconsideration of what the proper time for drinks would be, along with the very conception of hours and days – and, especially, the weekends [145]. And, while the unusual recipes of Ina Garten, maybe not in its ingredients but in its timing, are made for a special hour and for special occasions; the very meaning of being special, say to any certain period of any day, seems to be evaporating at the moment.

So, we might have just lost the track of time, or the very need of tracking it altogether. That's what Arnold tries to stress in several short pieces [145,146] – a rather witty yet prompt take on what appears to be the conceptual collapse or the rather expansive transformation of the humanly perception of time. The reason our clocks recently don't indicate much of what they normally used to is the sudden appearance of a global pandemic during the first weeks of 2020, known as COVID-19 [147] – an event that

seemingly shattered much of our daily and worldly conventions. Seems almost forced upon us and without any forewarning, it is a new reality finding its form and own conditions at a great deal of speed, and at times appears comparable to a utopian counterpart.

Whereas, this time, other than some drawings, maps and passages that are emblematic of its transmissions, now the utopia is delivered in the form of direct life-bits – where we experience many rapid changes and unfamiliar settings firsthand, like the evaporation of collective clocks and weekends, in the course of what many sources now call the "new normal" of the pandemic [148]. What we currently observe and try to navigate surely is a strange territory, albeit not confined in an imaginary island like in Thomas More's famous version, not really sitting quietly and far away from our reality [44]. It actually appears to be the very opposite.

Rather than offering a safe travel and burden-free thought experiment for our horizons, it is something we encounter daily in the current material world, one that gradually distances us from the ordinary reality we all came to know. It's an island that feels imaginary but not actually imagined other than some national security professionals and scientists several years ago [147], or not even separated from our own shores – metaphorically or else. It is materializing right in the midst of where we dwell – no mental or physical travel required. In fact, the latter sort of movement is currently almost out of the question in this daily and unexpected utopia, while the former is almost a requisite given the amount of adjustment one needs to make.

To give you a sense of these changes and their range, much of our communal spaces now appear as nearly deserted – except for some unlikely visitors which add even more to the utopian *mise en scène* [148] – with very few people seen in the streets, offices, schools or busses. Meanwhile, some of us, namely those that were lucky enough to keep their jobs and have professions that don't require physical contact [149,150], are adjusting to do our tasks from one domestic quarter right after breakfast made in another [146]. Students attend their classes in some room or desk that is probably not very far via computer screens – which currently appear to be the new universal place for many of our daily activities [151]. Seemingly, much of what normally used to transpire in the city and outdoors are now relocated to a singular space and require an internet connection. The main reason for this displacement and a home-centered life is

the measures of social distancing and isolation, instructed by many governments and health institutions, in order to prevent the spread of the virus [152,153].

Accompanying this much visible absence in the cityscape, and a result of that, is an over-presence and an eventual overloading of the house – much with the activities and cycles of the former [146,154]. Yet, in any new condition such as this, a relocation does not necessarily mean a direct translation – but more of a reprogramming per se. Comprising the novel instances we deem somewhat utopian in themselves and find resemblance with another utopian scheme, namely with that of New Babylon, there occurs considerable changes in the very life and space of our homes – along with what constitutes such entities, otherwise deemed private. For instance, while the ordinary confinements of the house turn into a multi-functional venue whose physical limits are being tested [154], the new full-time dwellers of the house encounter several novel conditions in person – mostly materializing in the form of changing habits, altered psychologies, and, significantly, a distorted perception of time [155,156].

In this new normal set by the limitations of the pandemic, the established boundaries between common concepts and routines, such as the differentiation of day and night or ordinary stretches of when to work and not, became much blurred [157]. Arnold's offer [143] is just a small, if entertaining, portion of these daily shifts – a rather optimistic account of things changing rapidly and us adopting, or trying, almost involuntarily. Thankfully, our pre-pandemic technology comes to our aid with speed – proving they might just be a little more adaptive than its makers. Now, through our tools of online communication and virtual platforms, many people can attend work- or school-related affairs without having to be in the same physical space or even in the same timeline – where, as a result, such activities appear to be performed more individually, and more asynchronously as well.

On the side of these technological amenities, the disruption of the sleep-cycles due to such fluctuations in our daily rhythms and the overall psychological effects of the pandemic all the more adds to the novelties and swings in our experience of days and their previously-allocated slots for work, rest and leisure [158]. This somewhat accidental allocation and rearrangement of material conditions and worldly concepts then yield a situation in which some of us are relatively freed from our physical locations and common timetables, and, if rather unconsciously, become able or are forced to experiment with new ways and patterns of using our time [159,160].

(II)

While the current pandemic posits a psychological strain and anxiety on those sheltering, given the scale and the unknown trajectory of the crisis [144,158], and sided with the more realistic matters of rapid spread, death tolls and economic downturn around the globe [159]; one should also note these novelties and changes in everyday life for the potentials and questions they offer. Especially in the scale and now-virtually-extended confinements of our homes, the moments in which our previous patterns, such as daily routines and collective clocks, are disturbed and at times disappear give rise to some critical cultural discussions and possibilities regarding other ways of living – if not yet visible entirely. And that's where we arrive at New Babylon, both for the curious similarities we could now notice in the light of its existence, and also for a critical situating and measurement we've been seeking since the beginning of this academic work.

Respectively, to our own interest and our culture-sensitive utopian instrument that is devised for such alignments and discussions, these unexpected conditions and this strange reality presents something that we've stumbled upon in our readings many times, and something that appears much natural concerning the way things might transform in a reciprocal manner: the very relationship and interaction between one's surroundings and one's behavioral practices [50]. And that's where we might further look into in this *alignment* – all in the midst of what appears to be a tragic event on a global scale.

One may actually liken this sudden shifting of cultural and material pieces, some of which seem to disappear altogether, to a *shuffling* act – just like in a card game. In this *shuffle*, courtesy of the pandemic, we are faced with a new situation, as in a new hand dealt yet from the same cards, where our previously-established conceptions and habits are reassembled and thus redefined – causing some substantial changes both on a practical and mental level. Referring to situations like this, and using a highly similar vocabulary, we could again recall what Latour [129] talks about – namely, the associations between things and concepts that make up our knowledge and perception of the world, which are then forced to reassemble and change in their associative networks whenever a novel concept or event comes into the scene. The pandemic and the changes it gives rise to – both on a personal, collective, practical and unconscious level – might just be a perfect example of such instances.

Speaking of such changes and what they may entail on a more day-to-day level, on the side of cocktails or any other weekend plans, many other things at the moment, which were used to be tied to certain occasions, timeframes and locations, become more available – namely, more frequently and in larger stretches. Or, alternatively, we might be those became more available as well. Take the extensive use of social media platforms for instance. Now, more than often, our social media feeds are filled with live broadcasts both from friends and those rather famous personas and accounts – almost at any hour of any given day [160,161]. We can now watch an Q & A by our favorite celebrity in the middle of night [161], or stare at what other sheltering companions do different, if ever possible, in the confinements of their several-square-feet-worlds [160-162]. Seems like, these days, what entails a content and makes it fit to share are also less of a discussion.

For cases that offer rather interesting content and in rather surprising occasions, look at the number of live performances and in-house events we can catch from our mobile screens and comfort of our sofas [163]. Many concerts and public gatherings are cancelled, many venues and social spots are closed, and these seemingly-spontaneous acts seem to offer an alternative in a more intimate degree [163,164]. All in all, because of the large amounts of time spent in our homes, and sided with the disruption of sleep schedules and of the very concept of day and night [157,158], there are now more online content and virtual presence than ever. And, because of that, the likelihood of running into a friend or a concert in our own houses is greater – and, seemingly, regardless of what time it is or whose time it actually is.

As Kaitlyn Tiffany [162] notes in her piece, we might have found (and still finding) other, if stranger, ways of getting intimate and connecting with each other – whether in exposing friends to our mundane sheltering activities on screen or enrolling in online workout sessions [161]. The margins of our physical shelters, with a hint of fresh air, might still provide an alternative to this online and heightened presence, which is still affected by the confinements of common timelines – as seen in the pandemic diaries of people gathering in alleys, balconies and backyards [165]. Still, as told in same piece, people tend to seek alternative ways of gathering and facetime now and then – in the form of virtual birthday parties and yoga classes [165].

What we could see in these new forms of sociality, made of seemingly-spontaneous meetings and heightened online presence, is the emergence of a new culture, if shaping

somewhat unconsciously. And this is where we can observe the rather promising and alignment-inducing episodes of this *shuffle* – a partially-universal rearrangement in the forms and timeframes in which we used to do things, however transpiring unintentionally and not simultaneously in all communities. Still, perhaps, it is something Constant or his former partner would have been interested in deeply for all the unlikely potentials they offer [25,29,52]. Remember, whenever there is new shift and becoming in culture, and in the way we do and look into things, the Babylonian instrument zooms in – right in their becoming.

To our own interest, and in another way that it relates to Babylonian tales, this *shuffle* mostly manifests itself in that likelihood we can be more present and are able to come across one other more often – transcending conventional modes, timelines and locations of sociality and interpersonal activity. The same, partially-planet-scale mix-up is also applicable in a level that affects our previously-designated stretches for work and leisure – contributing to the material conditions that render these spontaneous and frequent encounters possible. In another extent that connects to Constant's vision and his premises on culture, due to the ability to work from our homes and connect virtually, the conventional workhour and schedules are largely stretched and altered – if at times causing some detrimental effects to our health [157,158].

Regardless of the side effects, from the condition- and attitude-sensitive lenses of our instrument, the mere possibility of running into one other at the scale of a larger population and in a larger stretch of time is now much greater. And that's highly because, as examined in our findings, the ordinary timelines of individuals seem to be evaporating – as with their choices of what to do with them. And, while the daily activities of an individual shuffles along this new house-centered lifestyle, so do the possible interactions between individuals spending unconventional hours before a screen. So that, it is not just the statistical likelihood of our encounters that increases – and not only with those we know or consider a friend – but the variety of activities or situations we might run into and share in the virtual realm does enlarge, too. Once again, it's a matter of possibilities, that of interpersonal experiences and encounters, and how often we could catch one in our ordinary living – albeit now mostly on digital rectangles and in highly-disrupted calendars.

In short, as a somewhat inadvertent and playful outcome of this otherwise drastic situation, say when seen from the play- and interaction-driven life told in another

utopia [23,29]; our very personal and otherwise-concealed spaces could even be more of the venue to come across strangers, friends and collective affairs – and even in more extended timeframes and regardless of our physical location. While all these could be seen as a practical and natural outcome of our location-defying technologies and online platforms – not that foreign to our experience; the mere rise in their use and our increased virtual presence elevate this to a new level where it creates a new social sphere beyond the physical and, in a way, what it used to offer.

What we see here is a novel, exclusively-virtual social space and a layer of interpersonal activity, as an alternative to our emptied cities and an extension to our over-crowded homes, that operate beyond our previous physical limitations. It's a virtually-driven randomness materializing amidst an unknown territory and our rearranging mentalities – a *shuffle* operating at the level of people, hours and encounters on a partially-global scale. So that, in a curious and unexpected way, the ever-present interpersonal encounters of Constant's alternative reality [23], one that is completely freed from local clocks and our physical addresses [39], appear to be materializing in the very spontaneous and proliferated coincidences we currently experience in a pandemic-centered reality – if only partially and on a virtual level. That's something to consider, and something to move forward upon.

One other crucial condition could be added to all these similarities between two different worlds is again the *décor-behavior* interactions underlined in the theories of Situationists [50], which were also seminal to what Constant imagined as an ordinary activity in his ever-changing reality that was full of momentary encounters and such reciprocal interactions [23]. Namely, if we were to take all these fluctuations and changes in our daily lives – such as the disruption of quotidian cycles, heightened virtual presence and experience of new timeframes – as decors with material presence and at times in the form directly lived experiences; then it would only be natural that these full-time dwellers would be affected in their subsequent behaviors, habits and mental expanses during their meandering in this new, rapidly-shuffling normal.

To cue from Latour's theses again [129], each of novel instances in which we happen to behave different than earlier and outside of our previously-established customs and patterns, do also coincide with the meaning-shifting moments where much of worldly concepts and practices we take for granted – like perception of time, differentiation of day and night, work and leisure, private and public etc. – are re-assembled in what they

entail and are associated with. Simply put, other than our relation to our homes, computers and clocks; our inner selves and transcendental frames do simultaneously change – however inadvertently. A change both in the world around us and what we make of it at the same time. And that's another thing to consider, and, as Situationist and Babylonian perspectives go, another thing to move forward upon.

(III)

Eventually, where we are to move upon from there is the other side of our alignment – a faraway future that curiously being neared to what we currently experience in an unfamiliar present. And this would be a move not only necessitated by our twofold readings and bi-directional bridges employed in our thesis and its theoretical model of interconnected worlds and instantaneous alignments. Again, other than to make sense of a present critically situated across a distant past, our movement would also give us some fresh vantages to critically read, and re-remember, that very past, Constant's New Babylon, itself. Speaking of which, the composer of that past, or a long-forgotten future, provided some descriptions – those with surprising connotations with this new reality we're facing at the moment, if not at first glance:

> Given their huge size, the sector interiors depend on the system of distribution of energy needed for lightning, ventilation and air conditioning, but this 'dependency' implies a freedom from the monotonous alteration of day and night, which humanity has sought since the dawn of time. [39, p. 161]

Defying what our terrestrial circumstances came to offer, or deliberately attempting to defy them in his own version with the necessary elements, Constant imagined a scenario in which our cities and ordinary common areas were, too, deserted [39]. In another yet consciously-devised shuffle of sorts, one that appears to be very physical, we were to leave our streets and squares for another altitude, a new level raised right above the good old ground zero. Explained in our first remembering chapter, where we relocate ourselves was a network of special structures, called *sectors*, which depicted in numerous displays of New Babylon [9,23,39].

Preserving its very publicness and in an attempt to maximize its essential program, where we convene and encounter one other, this additional layer of massive public zones was just an extended, almost endless version of the old one in Constant's own

shuffle – linked across the globe without any interruptions and filled with technological amenities that could free us from the earthly constraints such as day and night, and eventually any sense of time [39]. In a way, in Mumford's poetic wordage [47], the world within our heads, which metaphorically were lingering in the air, is literally situated above the one upon which our feet circumnavigate. In Constant's head, the place we dream and walk upon were the same. And, needless to say, his dream was mostly of moving, if not just walking – and without any clock or timetable needed [25,39].

In the long years of his dreaming and sharing that dream with others, particularly in his written work and lectures, Constant insisted on the highly-worldly origins of his proposal – both on a cultural and material level [8]. That all he had to suggest and project in his countless images and descriptions had their roots in the existing reality we inhabit, yet often obstructed by economic and cultural conventions of our time [29]. Remembering that New Babylon was born out of "the cultural situation of today" [23, p. a9], the world in his head was mostly a critical assessment of the one we walk upon, both in its inception and overall mechanics – in a way that could address the problematics within the latter through "a virtual object" devised from the existing reality itself [7, p. 86]. This, after all, was the main purpose and starting point of all utopian products and similar voyages to unfamiliar lands, according to well-known utopian author Le Guin [166].

In another prominent scholar's accounts, responding to what's around as a sort of moral task could only be exerted by the creation of another world – that is "unique, individual", evoking some alternative or higher standards for our current society and conditions [167, p. 233]. And this happens, as once noted by Hisham Matar [37], by telling stories of a distant place – distant in the way it initially appears, but then becomes something of and about us – for they offer commons and "evoke our common humanity in narratives with which we can identify, even though the lives may be remote for own" – as Susan Sontag notes [167, p. 235]. These places are all and innately connected to here and now on one end – pointing us towards other directions and possibilities with a departure point found right where we currently stand [41,47].

At the same time, as told in the previous chapters, any criticism or assessment requires an alternative, that "virtual object" [7, p. 86] or that "exciting reality" [23, p. a11], that is, another counterpart to make comparisons and find connections at a critical distance

and then to measure that same distance: where we currently are and where we could rather be. And, for all we know about the twofold mentality of Constant and his cultural antecedents, where the criticism and alternative were of the same thing [28]; he was to devise a tangible substitute reality through his own critical assessment – which in turn magnified the same criticism and addressing of problems within the real.

Also found in our studies in this twofold mentality, all that he was to address and found problematic in this reality were at the same time coupled with potentials unearthed within the same reality that could somehow surpass these problematics – especially by the agency of that same critical outlook. So, in all, just like More's island and all the other distant places born out of our current location; New Babylon was essentially tied to this world – both in its mental inception and along with all the material needed for its becoming. One only needed a couple of new eyes to see what already lies within the old, and an imagination with a side of some courage to ponder on what they just might allow.

In Constant's vision, what was then required, courtesy of this critical and highly-Situationist perspective [28,30], is to reconsider what we currently possess and what could they otherwise yield an alternative lineup. So, the distance he had been drawing and showing for all those years was both measurable on a critical extent but also seemed coverable – given those that are already present within the real: both our humanly desires and our available material depository [29]. What had been missing was a critical reallocation – say a set of critical shuffling and *détournements* that play with the pieces of the old one and somehow could replace it as a whole – an alternative reality mostly and naturally derived from the existing.

This was, for all we learned from its chronicles, what New Babylon entailed at best as a realistic proposal. And for its instrumental guises and as a mental place in which such critical allocations could start, at least in our own vantages and minds, he wanted to raise a viable discussion of replacing the old while offering a profound sense of probability given all the familiar and worldly pieces that were only shuffled for a more connected, adventurous and playful version [29]. His project was, in the spirit of all Situationists, a remix of the previous one – with some of its pieces were critically re-situated. And one of the most essential pieces of this critical allocation, say a humanly or user-centered episode of his proposed shuffle, was a new version of ourselves, namely Huizinga's *Homo Ludens,* a much playful and adventure-seeking kind that also

had its instinctive roots in the existing or previous us [23,39]. In all the transient atmospheres he orchestrated, as the micro and maybe the most realistic versions of New Babylon, he sought for this new persona to come forward among us – if only for a moment or two [23].

So, other being an intellectual product of Constant's own critical outlook and playful persona as a true Babylonian, the pieces that make up his alternative were in fact not that unfamiliar to our knowledge. Similar to our definition of a *shuffle* in respect to what occurs during the reality of the pandemic, in New Babylon, we could see that several worldly pieces and concepts we all know and are familiar with were just lined up and redefined in a way that is unfamiliar or never thought of. And this was the main promise and one of the essential parts of his orchestrations of smaller Babylonian atmospheres filled with possibility and encouragement – in which an otherwise improbable world made feasible before many by simple, if not small, worldly *re-arrangements* [9,29].

For instance, besides an extended version of our public spaces raised up in the air for an uninterrupted and maximized social life, our ordinary air-conditioning systems, which are normally used to maintain a stable temperature and indoor comfort, were utilized for altering the atmospheric qualities of micro environments as desired – in what appears to be a highly dysfunctional manner [23,39]. In another and much profound sort of Constant's critical allocations, we see that the urban space and our days, which were previously fragmented into standardized, functional chunks for economic efficiency, are re-programmed and freed in a way to allow uninterrupted leisure, and again for us to use in any way we prefer [23,28]. These rather conscious *shuffles* were basically another name for critical *détournements*.

Now, if we cross our bridge the other way and return our new current reality with many of its pieces shuffling before us on a daily basis, we see a similar situation in which some of our established concepts, material conditions and worldly means are re-arranging in different lineups and taking up different forms – all the while of offering new possibilities and discussions on how we since used to and could further live at large. The distanced forms of working, education and sociality, all the freed and new stretches of time experienced, and the current discussions concerning society and its practices are all examples of these shifts and what they may offer on the long run [168-170].

While all these take place because of a vital condition and our humanly needs, and in a somewhat obligatory and unintentional manner; Constant's shuffle was consciously devised for a more experimental, connected and creative life, and for all humanity to experience [29,39]. Yet, despite the difference in their occurrence and scale, one thing reveals in these similarities and in our alignment is that we somehow possess a capacity to change and rather rapidly, and with a little bit of experimentality evidently present in our spirits. While all these seem to back up Constant's theses to some degree [23,29], what it also shows is that New Babylon works as originally intended regardless of the timespan it is aligned with: An instrument to see the existing and our whereabouts with new eyes – and even in its rather drastic episodes – exposing some of the problems but also of potentials already reside in it. And, from what we've learnt so far, that's how and where New Babylon begins.

(IV)

Our motion again redirects us back to the critical past of Constant, so we could see what it might else show amidst the unknown territories of the pandemic – an unlikely counterpart nearing with an almost equal utopian guise in itself. According to its maker, in a world devoid of work, quotidian rhythms and collective clocks, the *Homo Ludens* of New Babylon would be able to spend their time as they wish – travelling across the globe within the endless floors raised above ground, indulging in momentary social encounters and shaping their environment and desires at will [23,25,39].

One of the main grounds for this extensively-liberated time and endless creativity, and as another episode Constant's major allocations with its roots found in an already-shaping reality, was the fully-functional automation that was supposed to take over all humanly labor [8,23,39]. The automated machinery, deemed to be in charge of all production, would give us that undivided hours free of work. And as in any Babylonian mental practice, here in Constant's own thought experiment, from a new material condition there comes a possibility – sided with a crucial inquiry in regards to the life it might just allow: "The question is now how the free man of this future will use his unbound forces, in which way he will realize his freedom, what his life will be like" [23, p. a10].

While his response to this was that very same life of endless excursion and creating [23,39], we might as well return our newly-shaping reality for we are also a recipient of that question as a society – albeit some several decades later. Well, although most of us still have to work now and then, and at times forced to leave our homes at a certain hour; some of our collective work stretches were extended and became asynchronized. As a result, we could do our tasks at different periods, all the while of attending social and leisurely activities in unfamiliar hours and settings. While our very sense of day and night is proportionally disturbed during these shifts like in Babylonian sectors, we could also synchronize with many and distant locations through our virtual platforms. In short, however transpiring inadvertently and not in the scale of whole population or all timelines, we somewhat experience the very location- and time-free setting in Constant's world that consists of unexcepted encounters and gatherings that also vary in form and content [23,39]. Yes, something to consider, and also to move forward upon.

According to what we've studied extensively in the second chapter and at the onset, an alignment often leads to another, and thus we are to follow and continue with our bridging motion, searching for new connections and vantages. In another interesting coincidence between our unfamiliar reality and that of New Babylon, these very online tools and virtual extensions make an unlikely appearance in the latter one almost sixty years earlier, if not with practical details but with some critical descriptions:

> The fluctuating world of the sectors calls on facilities (a transmitting and receiving network) that are both decentralized and public. Given the participation of a large number of people in the transmission and reception of images and sounds, perfected telecommunications become an important factor in lucid social behavior. [39, p. 162]

Hinting what largely appears as the internet and global communication systems of current day, a location-free infrastructure for collective activity and connection that was later invented in the previous century with a crux seems more compatible to its decades-earlier descriptions above [171]; Constant pinpoints the importance such technological tools in a fully-nomadic and schedule-free living. Basically, for we were to change our locations at will and rapidly as a whole population, other forms of encounters and connectivity would be required and welcomed – and likely to be used as another layer added upon the physical sectors of New Babylon with the same

purpose of creativity, experiment and interaction. Just like his overall critical perspective he'd acquired from Situationists [9,28], the main focus was not on the technicality of the means themselves, but rather how we employ them and how they might accompany our ever-changing behaviors and adventures, both as individuals and as a whole society [50,51,89]. And like the air-conditioners, the use was never functional.

Coming back to today, however utilized out of practical necessities and for resuming some of our previous habits, we see that our own perfected telecommunications and online platforms are also being used for random and distanced gatherings, performances and shared moments – and, much critically, in a gradually expanding scale. Moreover, somewhat similar to Babylonian micro-atmospheres that are shuffled constantly and by the Babylonians, we constantly create transient virtual *décors* through visuals, stories and broadcasts that sometimes involve our homes as background – causing interactions that transcend our physical confinements and addresses. In a way, albeit lacking a lively physical space that is constantly being shifted through social encounters, and almost as a substitute for that; our lives, moments and desires are gradually being moved to these place- and time-less venues during the pandemic.

Here, again in terms of scale and appearance, the way that such means are utilized for such activities differs in each reality. Namely, for Constant, such placeless tools and interactions were a natural outcome and necessity of a society constantly on the move, and used for playful purposes, accompanying and almost doubling what's taking place in the physical space. In our reality, where we collectively stuck into a single location of our own, it is where we experience another form of *nomadity* and freedom beyond our restricted circumstances – however inadvertently and out of our material conditions. Almost in a reversed causality, while these virtual extensions arise because of a ceaseless travel and creativity in New Babylon [39], in our case they act as the sole channel and instigator of such acts and impulses. What lies in Constant's head as an additional layer and appendage of a limitless movement herein becomes the eventual result and the very substitute for a society that experiences a heavily-limited physicality.

(V)

To these ends, if we are to look into these coincidences and similarities at the level of psychological inputs other than the means they are channeled through, we could reach to other interesting readings and comparisons. What we mean by that is now our alignments lead us towards the domain of behavioral components rather than the material decors per se, say towards that of the human psyche – a seminal ingredient in Constant's own critical shuffle, and as well as in Debord's continuous transformational pairing which was crucial on our path to a fully-liberated self and society [39,50,51].

Now we can see that the very inherent creative impulses that would supposedly link us with the free-spirited *Homo Ludens*, in accordance with Huizinga's theses [28,73], seem to materialize and be liberated all by themselves in the very material circumstances forced by the pandemic. For Debord, what we experience as a global crisis, which is a textbook situation in his terms nevertheless, can be said to be providing the necessary ingredients and psychological backdrop for cultivating "a temporary field of activity favorable" for certain desires – or even for uncharted ones to come into sight [50, p. 110]. To once again speak in his terms, the strange reality now we are all facing might just be the "new reality", if not consciously built as a situationist product, that offers the appropriate "material roots" for triggering some novel desires all by itself [50, p. 110].

Namely, during our constant residence in our homes, and in the presence of the psychological effects and shuffled timetables, our very creative and experimental tendencies seem to make a much natural appearance, especially visible in the way we tend to use our online tools and spend our new hours during the day – a concept currently losing its meaning as in a Babylonian shuffle. Some of these could be seen in the various creative, social or even dull activities that people would not normally do or would even think of doing before the pandemic [161,162,172].

In a way, almost like a socio-psychological experiment, one that Constant was keenly interested in [23,39], the novel and fairly-limiting conditions of our new reality provide us some answers regarding what we could do and how we could behave with a relatively freed time and during unfamiliar stretches – given the appropriate material and psychological setting, if not an entirely social one. Still, what we witness is the leisure and our experimental attitudes taking up a relatively-extended freedom and in

a rather spontaneous level – if not at the scale once aspired by Constant – offering us an interesting conversion between two different worlds and what our very instinctive potentials could attain in each one, after all.

Moving forward with our bridging travels in the midst of this strange alignment, we see some other and interesting overlaps at the level of a place- and hour-less nomadity, and also in respect to the very concept of home. Remembering what our precious living units came to be in New Babylon, we read about its complete absence due to the lack of necessity of being concentrated in ordinary towns and cities given the termination of a work-centered lifestyle, which would otherwise require us to be around the same locales at same hours [8,39]. More, the whole notion of a place in general, if not the space itself but say its location and our respective attachment to it, disappears given the ceaseless travels of Babylonians and temporary shifting of their micro surroundings [39]. This would not only cause constant transformation and disintegration of places as we know them, but also of their memory in our minds [7,23].

In the other side of this alignment, where much of what we know, too, appears unfamiliar, we currently witness that our homes transform into the sole locale and one of the physical decors of this Situationist event, in a highly opposite fashion. They now attained a renewed centrality in which we spend most of our lives, and are even upgraded with a much complex program that houses fairly-foreign activities like work and education. While these changes and overloading cause a physical *shuffle* inside our homes as we've mentioned [146,154]; by the help of some asynchronized activities and newly-invented forms of sociality, this heavily-singularized locales are now able to temporarily synchronize with far and other homes in an instant – extending beyond its physical borders and local timelines. It's a *shuffle* that rather relates more than to what they might contain but where they might reach, if not physically – theoretically depicting something strangely similar to the endless and faint travel lines shown in Babylonian maps. And, frankly, it's much more interesting than the former – say, from our shortened steps between a breakfast and a work meeting.

So that, although confining their residents and their daily deeds in a singular location, we could now observe these units' unexpected potential of being the very place of a freer, more spontaneous and asynchronized lifestyle that relates to Constant's world – all thanks to the shifting of our personal timelines, our fairly-liberated instincts and digital means of communication. Here, what we see is a new notion of home which –

rather than disappearing in the midst of a global nomadity – seems more connected, more fluid and more nomadic in itself.

Remembering what happens in those Babylonian maps, those devod of any trace of a housing unit, we now witness a sort of *Babylonian home* which otherwise ought to evaporate along with the concept of cities; yet evolves into a new version that could house and enable far beyond what it officially allows and conceived for. As we've found out in our previous journeys and readings, mostly for being of a certain spirit without a certain form and fixed set of conditions redeeming it, a Babylonian living can occur anywhere – even within the very place it deemed limiting and supposed to surpass. But one can remember, as in all Situationist and Babylonian practices, a possible new version of anything could be achieved often from its older version.

And, sometimes, it can be achieved without any intention, as in this case where we both see some unplanned situations giving rise to undiscovered forms of behavior, and some unlikely and heavily-fixed material confinements enabling novel forms of mobility and connection. Perhaps, as with New Babylon, a new notion of *home* might be possible – as long as we could find novel ways to occupy and utilize it, both in our pratices and spaces. And the pandemic might just be the *situation* that allows all that.

4. CONCLUSION

In this part, the thesis is concluded with an evaluation of its findings, overall trajectory and methodologies in respect to its main claims and objectives. To rephrase, the latter comprises the so-called instrumental, formless and nomadic potentials of New Babylon; and, connected to this, a possibility of it being appropriated as such a tool, a seeing-device per se, to make meanings and critical scrutiny about the present timespan. Following that, another chapter is presented, discussing the possible uses and future appropriations of such findings and the main subject of this study, Constant's New Babylon – exactly at the position and through the appearances it gained during and at the end of several journeys made since the beginning.

4.1 Findings

Starting with the multiple remembering acts favored by thesis, what was intended was to read and recuperate Constant's legacy at two phases – one from its own chronicles and its own contextual relevancy; and later at a timely distance of nearly 60 years and in a different present. During both phases, and the twofold reading favored meanwhile, the main objective, which was formed around our main hypothesis, was to unravel and demonstrate the open-ended and rather formless prospects of New Babylon. And, a second objective, based on a comparable claim, was to make visible a proper course, if not be proposed directly or to be generalized, to utilize this so-called *seeing-device* in the form of a firsthand mental experiment. Pointing to where these two objectives or agendas collide and support each other, both phases tend to illustrate these prospects in different settings and readings, but also in a joint narrative in the form of this entire thesis.

Our first conclusion, as with the main one, is that Constant's project lived up to those prospects since – being the very intellectual tool to see things beyond itself. In the scope of our overall findings, it retained its nomadic potentials; as an open-ended, multi-faceted story with several endings and appropriations that could still inform our

current whereabouts regardless of our timespan; opening up new discussions and chances of seeing the existing with new eyes, as it often claimed by its maker [23].

4.1.1 Methodologies

In the first phase of our recuperation, starting with the most recent entanglements of the author and later towards its official provenances; several instances, accounts and references altogether tended to support our hypotheses. Initially presented were some personal enactments of the author, where he encountered the rather formless, mostly written and principle-oriented essence of New Babylon, during a creative project prior to the inception of this thesis.

Introduced in two separate parts, first at the beginning and as a final *digitized* version concluding the first remembrance and its circular historiography; these personal chronicles firsthand demonstrate how Constant's project could be read and re-made in a personal take in a different setting and timespan, and in a completely different medium – both to the extents of its open-ended premises and of its rather illustrative merits stirring further discussion. In short, as the original was somehow possible on paper, model and screen; newer and other Babylons could as well and indeed be possible – as demonstrated in this recent and digital version.

Following these cues on an expanded field of references and back to its official conception, Constant's work in his own enactments and introduction became all the more of a formless entity, despite acquiring many guises and visual forms in its lifetime – all but centered around a discussion about our current lives and those we might reach in the future. Respectively, the countless forms of representation and displays of the project, as the firsthand examples of many possible Babylons that could be reached and re-made from the original *mental* kind, were only to enhance and work in favor of this discussion – as a set of intriguing objects to arouse curiosity of its audience and stimulate their imagination.

As said, the more forms the project acquired, the more formless and conceptual it got throughout its nearly two-decade journey – as a particular anomaly in the history of architecture and its representation [7,9,40]. The visuals, presented in a strategic blur and always in fragments, were to conceal what New Babylon looked like in its entirety – for there was not a final or a singular one – but merely to stir others' imaginary takes about what New Babylon possibly could be.

Whereas, to acquire these sights, one needed to look behind the visuals and spend a considerable time in the written chronicles – where both the tactical story behind its problematic displays, and the ongoing debate along with Constant's own and truly Babylonian critical thinking practice are revealed. Here, several fragmented parables, critical outlooks and ever-changing appearances of the project seemed to enhance and support very singular and central quality of New Babylon – that is, its mostly mental, open-ended and thought-provoking self. Meanwhile, several personas and acts of the first Babylonian as well tended to coalesce; in which his own critical practices of thinking and making, simulating the Babylonian lifestyle in person, were ultimately to serve his rather tactical agenda – stimulating the mental capacities of its audience and engaging them in the central discussion of a new world that could be found in already-existing potentials of the old.

This was where Constant's story became one with the place and the ways in which it was told; offering the listeners a transient opening, as the coupling of an atmosphere and a mental state, where it could both be seen and experienced directly as a certain lifestyle. What his story was about is to be found in how and where it's told; Constant's own Babylon were merely a demonstration of its mental potentials, and also of what could that atmosphere and living could feel like for a moment or two. As a theoretical place to inhabit and a fleeting atmosphere to experience, and as an instrument to see through; it mostly materialized as a *thinking-slash-seeing practice* coupled with the necessary setting, and altogether served a collective discussion – one to be expanded by others, and about other places beyond New Babylon.

In that way, it appeared to be the perfect example of a *transitional object* – in order to engage with our own world and stories from a rather safer and critical position, and to be left behind afterwards [35,36]. Likewise, it heeded to the prospects and workings of a *constructive utopia* which refrains from a final or totalized destination; and rather advocates for all the possible places that lie between the existing and the imaginary – providing a starting point, several clues and necessary excitement for further departures [41-47].

While some of these findings were presented in the respective chapters as endnotes and recaps; other references and scholars who also engaged with the project in depth appeared to support these claims, besides Constant's own accounts and enactments. Especially, the findings and observations provided by Mark Wigley's own and lengthy

journey around New Babylon [9,75,76], and the rather recent recuperations of McKenzie Wark [27,28], regarding the Situatonist legacy and Constant's place in it, tend to align with what both the author and Constant himself claimed of this peculiar project. Additionally, in certain cases, other references comment on such potentials of New Babylon, and as well utilize it to assess the present setting from a different perspective in short intervals – as in the example of Constant's former partner [52]. Given the exact date of these takes and appropriations, New Babylon seems to offer alignments and critical outlooks whenever it's revisited – all but bracing its timeless potentials.

At the final part of the first remembrance, where we dive to the cultural and mental background of New Babylon in the light what's revealed since; its utopian intentions further seemed to acquire rather attainable and practice-based undertones – that could be enacted and tested within the premises of current world and ordinary lives of the present. Taken from the theses of prominent members of respective collectives, the conserved program was essentially of practices and perspectives; and aimed at rather miniscule, daily utopias – a profoundly mental entity that could be found somewhere between the province of the same existing surroundings and our different selves. In these parts, New Babylon regained its most Situationist pretenses, as a series of *constructed situations* that were essentially aiming for the mental transformations of its audience; while Constant's persona and tactics revealed as truly Situationist. And Constant retained these tactical agendas, and centered his project upon these practice-based, often-mental and personal transformations.

As a result of these findings, New Babylon, both as a transient place and a lifestyle, which could now be summarized as its main legacy, was revealed to be about thinking and making connections between the existing and the possible – as a continuous, seamless practice of critical seeing and moving in doing so. This could as well be conducted on an actual city and on any given day, or alternatively on a mental level – say by any encounter in Constant's lecture shows or engaging with its remains decades after – by altering our sights and our conception of the existing with the nearing of another possible. In its official lifetime, it offered its audience the very first instances of nearings, as much as being complied of same mental acts. It was the very first gloss offered to others – and what was really seen from that gloss, other than a possibility of different world not very far, was further other glosses that we could devise on our own.

In these nearings, as the Latourian theses go [129], the pieces of the existing reality could acquire new meanings and associations in the presence of new inputs – namely provided by the stories of some faraway realities, as in what most utopias are built for. And, as explained in the same chapters, all those changes take place in our mental compartments first – in our very inner selves as Situationists and Letterists intended in their acts and constructions [49,88], or in our own *transcendental frames* as Zizek put it [135].

In several theoretical constellations and accompanying drawings, Constant's legacy as a seeing-device is coupled and assessed alongside other forms of bridging with distant realities, to the extent of how far we can connect and inform our present whereabouts. As a result, New Babylon appeared to be working in line with these far-reaching expeditions, their outcomes and their particular procedures in relation to our mental operations – acting as a distant planet or as a timeless story we might need to near ourselves with.

In the light of these largely-proven potentials and these certain protocols, the thesis then conducted its final remembrance – in order to test its second hypothesis and to see whether New Babylon can be appropriated as a seeing-device to take *critical selfies* per se. A certain interval that parallels with the making of this study is taken as an appropriate setting and a fruitful logbook of sorts; providing the certain instances in which the previously-remembered pieces of New Babylon resurface in relation to one's present encounters. Here, as proclaimed, the operations of spontaneous, Proustian-type of memory [58-61] appears to be much effective – as with the intentional parting of remembering Constant's legacy into two phases.

Considering our recuperative methodology regarding how to engage with such an extensive and idiosyncratic legacy, a true remembering essentially requires forgetting and distancing oneself – and, for one to forget, one needs to remember certain parts first. In respect to what we've collected in the first remembrance and in the scope of our secondary agenda, this proceeding largely corresponds with the ways in which Constant's work ought to be remembered, and could be taken as a timeless instrument to scrutinize the present – as often claimed both by its maker and the findings of this thesis. So, in that regard, such methodology and a two-phased remembrance prove to be successful and in line with both what this thesis investigates and how it attempts to do that.

For another conclusion that parallels with the one at the beginning, in these parts as well, New Babylon operates as a nomadic, time-defying counterpart that allows twofold readings and assessments – whenever it's revisited, spontaneously or not. The main reason, which also pertains to our now largely-proven hypotheses, is to be found in the very connections it offers with the certain parts of a certain present; and also in the very essence and particular structure it's built up on. The former attributes owe to the many smaller and plural pieces found in the Babylonian storybook – such as numerous critical assessments, various proposed principles and partial fables in written or intentionally-fragmented visual episodes – which were essentially centered on the simple, if not easy, practice of living. Again, Constant's story was about the same life we have, which is of any present, and upon the very same earth we still possess. That were the *commons* already embedded in his story, connecting us to otherwise far places with ease, as a central trait of all good stories told or written [18,37,56,167].

Besides these, the very foundations and mental genealogy of the project proved to be another reason behind these timeless enactments – namely, the two-world-bridging connections inherent to its making, and as well as the critical thinking it offers and upon which it's constructed. Other than what the story entails; the way the story itself constructed, one that is built through Constant's own critical takes and alignments, and this mentality and practice being its most essential promise and message altogether play a large role in its instrumentality.

In retrospect, while one may still find connections and revisit certain parts of New Babylon in relation to their present, the recuperation of such essence proves to be further useful when making connections and new meanings – besides what is told in its chapters. The ways to incorporate and use New Babylon was already included in its story – if one could look deep and long enough in its entirety. At the end, these parts can only be truly effective when read in the context and peculiarities of the larger story – which also explains how and why these parts came into being.

Regarding the Babylonian parables re-remembered and their connective capabilities, both their content and the forms they're conjured in were critical. Retrospectively, we were keen on ranging deeper towards the written remains of New Babylon after what we've found in there without looking in a separate project – decided not to take things at face value. And the written parts, comprising key outlooks on current state of things and descriptions of its renewed surroundings, were the ones that most tend to resurface

and make connections with the present. So, regarding the way New Babylon ought to be remembered and utilized further, the written pieces indeed proved to be much useful and effective – compared to the enigmatic and beautiful visuals mostly known to the academia.

As said, both for understanding Constant's legacy and using it effectively, the *Written Babylon* largely proves to be the one that should be recuperated first – and, only then, as the visual counterparts were meaningful when read in the context of the former, one could also incorporate these fragments into their critical alignments. For that, not only a first remembering was necessary, namely to forget things and reclaim them as relevant parts; but the provinces we initially remembered and expanded New Babylon were convenient in that regard. At the end, with these written portions and fables inscribed to the memory of the author, and with the memory of their essential meaning and place in Constant's agenda; one can retrieve and use them as inputs wherever they seem relevant, and engage in a critical debate and a seeing event as Constant had intended [9,23] – as exemplified in our final revisit to Babylonian lands.

4.1.2 Positions and strategies

Evaluating the ever-changing positions and the twofold reading in a cloud-like structure used in the thesis; such undertaking appears all but necessary – both for the objectives set, and for the assessment of its findings in relation to its main hypotheses. This can be explained in two stages. First, as seen in the first remembrance, an engagement could both be personal and relatively objective – and the thesis' very inception owes much to the former type. Whereas, a research could be conducted on both extents, say, looking at outsider references and literature in the light of what was revealed personally – and vice versa. Especially in the first part, it proves to be an attempt of a fruitful comparison and a rather objective balancing – namely between the claims and encounters of other scholars, Constant himself and those of the author.

Comparably, that explains the cloud-like structure used and visible in both remembrances, where new meanings of New Babylon continually proliferate our sights – during a process in which the main subject is constantly and repeatedly encountered in several instances. At the end, for a project with too many guises both in itself and in literature, it once again comes down to how and from where you look at it.

One final requisite for such undertaking could again be found in the very subject of this study and its built-in particularities – a project that, in its most visible enactments and also in its most hidden messages, primarily calls for personal engagements and appropriations of others for its eventual construction, and for constant relocations whenever seems fit [8,23,51]. That was the so-called open-endedness of the project; so was the trait the thesis intends to examine. One should play by the rules, at least for certain instances – whether to understand the game, or to see if it could actually be played in the way foreseen by its maker.

Finally, this twofold scheme also proves to be necessary to test the thesis' larger claims; to examine its successes and fallibilities in respect to its hypotheses. For the project's so-called instrumental and far-reaching capabilities can be examined not only in an expanded field and outsider accounts, but also, and more effectively, in rather intimate engagements and subjective appropriations; such claims could only be appraised through the comparison of both encounters and their findings. The questions of Constant directed to its audience about life and things in it [23], and whether we could find any answers, were also those of its instrumental merits.

On that note, the logs and trajectory of our second remembering largely correspond with the findings and sights revealed in the first one. At the end, New Babylon largely proved to be a timeless, nomadic instrument as claimed; acting as an intermediary object to see things anew and in a double vision – offering us its parts and life-centered fables whenever they seem relevant. For its multi-faceted and open-ended genealogy, the project also gained many new guises and associations in our positions, and later offered many of its plural pieces in many of those double visions. While all this makes a largely successful outcome for both of our hypotheses and the secondary agenda; one could also see that we were able to make even newer meanings of New Babylon in the second remembering – where we first examined and expanded it as an instrument, and then used firsthand as such.

So that, one of the central theoretical models favored by the thesis in relation to New Babylon's instrumental prospects, namely the concept *of interconnected realms* and *two-world-bridging alignments* of Walter Benjamin [18], as well appears to be practical and rewarding. In the final journey, while we were to assess a particular present, largely shaped by the pandemic, through the relevant and resurfacing pieces

of New Babylon; that very particular past or alternative future tends to gain new sights and readings at each alignment.

With that, we can once again underline the necessity of movement and continuously conjuring new alignments, following what reveals in the preceding ones. In both parts of the second remembrance, within our theoretical and timely constellations, several new meanings and sights were procured for all entities as we've kept moving – both for what we've neared with, and where we neared it. For instance, after their introduction, we were able to expound further on the philosophical extents of star maps or Situationist practices in their proximity to New Babylon's instrumentality. Comparably, we were able to underline some hidden potentials in our practices and surroundings during the pandemic; while Constant's world attained even more formless and mental pretenses to its part, when revisited again from these temporary constellations.

In the scope of how one remembers things, and makes newer meanings of things previously recollected; the particular memory enactments belong in the involuntary happenstances seem to correspond with the recuperative methodologies and auxiliary strategies favored by thesis – as well as those offered by Constant's instrument. What reveals here is that the required movement of an observer, across consecutive alignments with a looping trajectory repeatedly bridging two realms, occurs mostly by the agency of these particular memory operations. At its first stage, one piece is retrieved in the light of another piece from another realm or timeline, and is re-remembered; then they effectively become entangled for the first time.

Whereas, for the mind would follow and continue moving in search of more narratives and readings; the entanglements, along with the retrievals, would only increase – finding more links and procuring more *relative patches* and readings in this interconnected state. It then results in a condition where the original source of the first alignment, say the piece causes the retrieval of a forgotten memory or the piece retrieved, would be insignificant and too far away to pinpoint. Now the observer, as exemplified in our final revisit, finds themselves in an ever-enlarging *cloud* built upon ever-appearing connections and twofold readings; unable to identify or rather disinterested in what really is on the foreground or in the background in their memory – a scheme as well drawn by Zizek [135].

Heeding to that scheme, while moving within our second and larger cloud centered around New Babylon; we constantly and repeatedly revisited both Constant's past, other mental instruments and the present reality – changing our positions and glosses at each encounter. What once was in the background, say a certain fragment from Constant's story, then comes to the foreground in another coupling, but in a different guise and with renewed associations. This constant back-and-forth movement of pieces, those reappearing or revealing for the first time in these temporary vantages, again parallels with what we may call a series of Proustian memory *events* – availing the meaning-rich premises of interconnected realms. So, the movement can be said to be not only entirely intentional or compulsory but rather natural – given both what these imaginary realms and our most humanly practices entail.

For a conclusion, a proposal for a recuperative and constructive methodology considering New Babylon and possible other utopian stories, if only provisional and derived from one single observer, can be devised upon the rather natural, if particular, operations of our memory-production. Given that, in order to make newer meanings and find critical vantages of the present, and use these utopian entities in the light of their most critical and essential purposes; one initially requires to recollect a considerable amount of their native fables and pieces. Only then, one might truly and effectively remember these portions amidst their own present and setting – given that they would be as fragmentary as New Babylon was, and filled with life-centered commons.

Despite the fact that it is not thesis' intention or currently ability to make such a larger claim or posit a general methodology for all utopias; it once again explains why New Babylon was a favorable, if not the most, counterpart in respect to such ends. At the end, both in its own worded claims, distinct practices and physical enactments; and in the encounters and accounts of other scholars, including the author himself; and also amidst foreign domains, philosophical models and different presents; it appears as one perfect story one needs to revisit in our long history of revisiting pasts, hearing well-crafted stories and staring into the heavens – looking into places we were once at, could be and are still not.

For belonging in the list of these intermediary objects and seemingly-impossible locations, one could again see the anomalies of New Babylon's utopian pretenses – despite the fact we were able to put it in a constructive category. While this was to be

found in our incentives and now proved in our final assessments; Constant was both to define and illustrate what a truly reconstructive utopia is and how it might work – particularly by showing what it could really achieve through his own enactments.

For all its visual depictions and globe-sized versions; it constantly advocated for its other versions in its unconventionally-long journey, along with the very mental practice and opportunity to picture these – particularly through the versions made by one individual. If Constant's version was somehow possible in the midst and out of the pieces of the existing reality, so was others. This was his foremost utopia, as with his very legacy – a possibility of a mental outlook coupled with the necessary props and atmosphere, where the existing things could be seen from a different perspective, and re-arranged or *shuffled* for another life, if only for an instant or two.

To its particular place in the list of many faraway places we've conjured or been eager to peek at, Constant's composition appears to be the one that most openly and repeatedly illustrates this far-reaching and reconstructive agenda – in as many forms and guise as possible. Again, this is what makes it not only a truly reconstructive kind, but also one that defines it – an ever-changing and ever-appropriable entity that could be taken to unforeseen ends by anyone; devised for such practices and through the use of such practice. His utopia sought experiment, multiplicity, individuality and a chaotic, creative life; rather than an all-settled, peaceful, harmonious end. To these ends, and to the extents of this thesis; we were able to see that these experiments and open-ended prospects of New Babylon were effective and possible after all, if by one visitor decades later – particularly by heeding to the instructions and practices both advocated and performed by its maker.

In respect to the successes of our chosen methodology, one that incorporates subjective enactments; we were able to achieve that by the agency of one's natural memory procedures – where we strategically remembered, forgot and then re-remembered a fairly-forgotten story. At the end, as with our rather miniscule but more attainable definition of utopias, at least in the context of New Babylon and its cultural antecedents; a memory is for one's to make and update – so is inherently subjective. And, in the light of what we've uncovered, one might say that for New Babylon itself – as an *intermediary object* and a circumstantial *seeing-device* that could essentially be materialized in the altered visions and *transcendental frames* of its visitors.

In a final appraisal of what this work intended and achieved at the end; we can see that we were able to find both the appropriate places to remember such an entity, and the appropriate methodologies to do that. Other than the innately-subjective natures of our memories, given New Babylon mostly appeared in fragmentary pieces and fleeting instances, as encountered in its original version or a digitalized one decades later [9,33]; it can as well be read and further utilized in similar episodes. Throughout our timely alignments and involuntary recollections, Constant's work, too, resurfaced in fragmented pieces; offering momentary couplings or revealing in them, and then disappearing altogether – only to be resurfaced with another piece in another coupling.

In the light of these, we can see that, by such operations of memory and the particular memory we've acquired of New Babylon; Constant's timeless instrument appears to be mostly effective in fragments, as experienced and delivered in its own lifetime and here several decades later. And, as seen in the latter, one can shuffle the sequence of its original story, leaving some parts and retrieve any relevant part as desired – as in remixing, a concept that is not entirely foreign to the project's mentality or to its cultural backdrop [9,27,28]. As one's mind and memory are subjective, any retrieved piece would be different for those remembering it – as well as how and where they remember it. So, it again depends on who the traveler or the remembering individual is, and from where they look at – aside from what they can remember and see elsewhere. As memory is innately personal, so is seeing – and both essentially occurs fragmentary by nature.

Here, if we were to remember the original depictions of New Babylon, in its most actual reincarnations in several lecture rooms, or even in its most actualized version where our memory would be paralyzed due to the intensity of collective creation and ceaseless movement [23]; we will see that it was all but fleeting and erratic at best – made of countless exchanging and ever-evolving parts that don't pertain to a proper whole. So that, this randomness and inherent subjectivity, explained in our memory theses and illustrated in our enactments, all the more seem to enhance the instrumental capacities and proposed uses of New Babylon.

As it appears, one's space of memory, courtesy of the author, along with its particular cueing and looping operations, can be said to be one of the most natural remixing mediums – as with one's mind. So, it might be a possible appropriate vehicle and medium for engaging with an entity which openly advocates free use and appropriation

of our collective resources and concepts – and one that essentially and effectively consists of a large-scale remix both in in its own making and firsthand delivery.

And, finally, for the project claimed no final or singular end, and left the actual completion to its future citizens [23,53]; such procedures favored and taken in this work would be relatively fitting – if only, and by nature, enacted by one single traveler. On the other hand, given what we've found in our final revisits, some discussions are taking on rather global and societal expanses – if without a revisit of Constant's world. But, again, we were able to locate these discussions, and mark them as possessing critical potentials, by the very retrieval and presence of New Babylon in that particular present.

So that, as with our experience concerning memory and our particular definition of utopias, New Babylon once again appears to be mostly subjective – appearing and meeting some of its objectives in an individual memory and *alignments* of an outsider visitor. And that offers, according to our findings, one possible way in which it might be prolonged and became of the very instrument its maker once claimed – decades after its official termination. An appropriate location to store its remains then could also be one's memory, other than the museum collections. Whereas, for a rather detailed take, a more compherensive study on the role of memory could further be done on these accounts.

At the very end, while a comprehensive recollection of a rather basic and voluntary sort of memory was all but required to attain such sights, as exemplified and proposed by this very thesis; such methodology and memory procedures could also show how and why Constant's work doesn't only belong into its own timespan and not only consisted of some magical objects circulated around exhibitions and in many parts of the academia [8]. By these accounts, courtesy of this thesis, it can then still be around in some airport terminal somewhere, or as well be enacted within the bugs and peculiarities of a modelling software decades later, or resurface in fragments in the midst of a world-shattering pandemic.

It still, and if only in parts, may travel and make appearances regardless of where we stand in the worldly calendars or how far we are from its prospects – particularly, in the memories and encounters of future travelers and visitors. New Babylon was to end nowhere [39]; not only for the earth and its habitants can possibly be remade – but also

one's memory, as it seems, is often eager to remake New Babylon at every encounter. One just needed to forget, then remember.

4.2 Projections

Regarding the alignments and readings made in the final part of the study, one may as well find other one may as well find other connections and proceed towards further vantages to see certain things in the light of other things. Whereas this was the main premise of our academic work and its very foundations, that is, a journey mainly about seeing and moving in doing so; the crucial point here, other than paralleling with the life in New Babylon at some instances and often unconsciously, is whether we possess the capacity to imagine other possibilities and bridge our distances on a mental scale by the help of those similarities. It is again about enriching the discussion concerning our present and where we might lead further from there.

Remembering those who built their utopias upon highly-transient, momentary versions of such distances and possibility-centered discussions, and that both Constant and previous Situationists were mostly proficient in remembering and logging those fleeting moments, possibly as the highest remnants of their true legacy and craft [9,26-28]; it would be wise to compile a quick rundown of what we've found in this rather short journey, and list the potentials and possible points of discussion that we've encountered during the several consecutive alignments occurred between two different realities. And, needless to say, just like other journeys made within the true spirit of New Babylon and amidst what it allows us to see elsewhere, the rather brief logs of this final journey, of our very own *mental dérive*, would be added to its collection of thought-provoking *décors* and instrumental armory – to be further used and extended by possible other travelers.

One of the things that unearthed here in our readings are the novel behavioral models and patterns that inadvertently arose during what we called the *shuffle* caused by the pandemic, which suddenly shook and re-organized our daily routines, collective timelines and activities. As said, one can see these newly-shaping forms of behaviors and, if briefly, liberated instances of ourselves as a social experiment – providing cues both for the possibility of a Babylonian lifestyle in our current material conditions, and, maybe more importantly, for that of a potential Babylonian within our very beings.

In that case, other than Constant, this experiment would be something most Situationists, Debord to begin with, would definitely be interested in. However, for them, this was not just an experiment – for what appears to be the process and the means to a higher goal, the very practice of experimental living per se, were forever the end and the higher goal at the same time – and vice versa [59,86]. As far as the results of this experiment go, however limited in its scale, the outcomes seem promising – say not devoid of potentials – at least from a behavioral point of view.

Back to what else we've found in our journey, while these novelties exhibit the promise of other ways of using and allocating our time, along with a new perception of it and the possibility of a rather experimental and freer culture in general [173]; we could also see that some working populations, which are now gradually becoming asynchronized thanks to technology and renewed mindsets, are already forming their own rhythms and traveling patterns, establishing new models in the so-called work-life balance [174,175].

Another discussion parallel to these centers around the very notion of *automation*, currently being debated for some time and long after Constant had shown its potential outcomes [8,23,53]. Similar to what we've previously discussed, and as another sort of small experiment, we can find some answers to the question of what our days devoid of collective work, now filled with more leisure and interpersonal connection, could look like in the case of a fully-operational automation.

One other experiment, if again limited to a certain degree, can be said to be pointing some unseen potentials of our virtual platforms and global communication systems – especially when used extensively and outside of traditional purposes and localities. What we currently see is that these digital realms, with their extensive and hour-defying occupation, tend to regain their original form and purpose of its inceptive days [171] – namely as a seemingly-limitless, hour- and place-less landscape that can be wandered for discovery, spontaneous interaction and individual creation. On that note, where we see that Constant was already on point about the true essence of the internet before its actual creation several decades later [9]; we could as well argue that these virtual spaces could sustain, if partially and in another form, the very life that New Babylon offered on a physical level – and may just act as the very place and agency of its experimental culture.

One final assessment pertains to spaces in general, namely to its rather physical form whose use nowadays is largely limited. Considering the frequent occupation of its virtual counterparts, and the new forms of activities that they admit and all the other practical uses we've underlined; one could contend the previous and generally-accepted superiority of the physical over the virtual – and the latter being just an alternative to the so-called original or realistic conception of space. Given what the virtual currently allows and how the physical can be so ephemeral or globally governed and easily restricted; what we've thought as the mere and somewhat lesser alternative may just be an appropriate substitute, and might subsequently change roles with the other. The potentials are there, and ready for further discovery and investigation – if not only on Babylonian grounds. On a final note, the similar restrictions and governance of our digital platforms are due to another, if topical, scrutiny in the light of both this temporal liberation but also of its extensive use beyond the pandemic at large [176,177].

While its previous domination could be questioned during the constantly-shuffling parts of our lives and minds during this current real-world utopia, there are still other discussions visible regarding what the physical space could allow and should be about. To give an example, and one that pertains to a global scale and customs of societal practices, we see that the very program of education and learning is being debated along the lines of sociality, interpersonal exchange and the whole educative process being integrated with, and actually requiring, a collective interactive environment – say, as an actual atmosphere in the very terminology of Constant [178,179].

On that note, we could consequently argue that when planning these environments and during the re-allocation of our physical spaces after the pandemic, we might restructure our educative spaces in a way that maximizes social interaction and collectivity – concepts that are likewise being underlined and seem to be greatly lacking in the new reality shaped by this global crisis [179]. Comparably, as something we also could derive from the social and physical models of New Babylon, we could as well minimize the physical spaces for rather mechanical and practical activities such as work, commerce and servicing – all of which now appear to be easily performed remotely and in much flexible timelines.

Seemingly, there are many lessons and possible change of mindsets, which are now being debated and already in place, offered by the pandemic and amidst its *shuffling*

pieces. And, on the side of these, there are lessons we could borrow from Constant and how he treats and makes use of both the physical and the virtual realm; and how the *social*, both as a certain type of space and a general concept, is integral to our most humanly and crucial practices.

For a wider account on what New Babylon might show in the midst of this daily utopia or any other present, we can see that it offers its many relevant parables both as alternatives and as something actually probable and already-happening, if only for short intervals. And this is again due to the particular structure and content of its story – one that centered on our most common living practices and the material conditions make them possible. For that, rather than being seen as a total and overwhelming entity, it can appear and form alignments in smaller fragments; offering thinking experiments in relation to various compartments of our current world – such as our living units, customs, technologies and social practices. Through the naturally-remixing deeds of one's memory, and amongst the shuffling of our existing reality and habits, one may retrieve any relevant parable and utilize it as a gloss – using this instrument in the way both advocated and used by its maker.

While many other critical distances and subsequent chances of re-assessment take place during the still-ongoing pandemic, one might as well include and welcome other possibilities that seem far at first into such discussions –as we've exemplified above. For being a proposal of a larger *shuffle* that simply suggests a critical re-allocation and re-ordering of mostly existing pieces of the existing world; it appears as an important and much timely attempt to near a distant alternative such as New Babylon to our own world – one that is already accustomed to change and reshuffle itself with each global event [170], and one that is currently being distanced from its normal state on a daily basis.

In fact, other than the fragmentary revisits made in one's memory, such faraway places' significance and purposes appear to be most effective when our reality is already facing rapid changes – both on a mental and physical degree. As the world is subjected to such changes, or is unconsciously presented some openings to stretch and remake itself, if mostly in fragments and on a scale that is hard to comprehend from within; the very fragmented fables of New Babylon then tend to resurface in the most convenient and appropriate instances – bridging us to is distant shores when we are already in the process of questioning and nudging our current boundaries. A utopia is

much possible in the presence of another – especially when experienced in smaller portions.

In other words, why not look a little further beyond, to another possible island that also has its roots in the mainland, while we are already and collectively drifting away from what we normally know and where we normally live. It is to say that while we all but naturally seem to be distancing from our previous world and conceptions of it whenever a reality-shattering event or a new input comes into the scene, as Latour insists [131]; we might just be nearing to an imaginary one, if partially, at the very same time after all.

And, as we've already stated and exemplified numerous times before in these pages, one might just need couple of new eyes and a new instrument to see this – available in the lengthy logs of an old traveler who himself had been to faraway places, and later shared his logs to instigate such critical vantages. Finding ourselves in the midst of similar departures and distances now, New Babylon might just be one "possible beacon" we seem to be needing, if not actually or entirely reachable, to quote from the words of van Loon, referring to the necessity of such faraway lands [47, p. xi]. A beacon that faintly but unfalteringly flickers out in the distance, amidst the sea of possible other realities; one that already becomes visible and near when the very ground beneath our feet, and everything we take for granted on it, start to shatter into unfamiliar pieces.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Footnote 3.

APPENDIX A

In his critique of the movie *Arrival* (2016), Jared Canfield [22] notes a crucial point in the main protagonists' conclusive reaction to the events took place and in respect to the overall plot. Louise Banks, the linguist played by Amy Adams, decodes the message delivered by the seemingly "non-aggressive" aliens and solves the mystery behind their arrival and what they had to deliver. What she also realizes the otherwise-concealed order of events told in the movie, along with those transpire in her own life, which turns out to be circular rather than linear – also a particular feature of the language and reality owned by the aliens; and then she was able to view her own reality from this circular perspective, for being exposed to it rather intensively. At the end, as Canfield stresses [22], despite being able to see the often-sorrowful events would happen to her in the future in the form of her past (given the circular timeline) and being able to communicate across timelines, she chooses to accept them as they are, and favors a rather philosophical stance that has to do with an overall perspective and clearance in the light of this circularity and omnipresence of linear episodes of life. In other words, what she chooses and embraces is an understanding of the events in their relationships and the structure of the world at large, and she finds peace in that, rather than attempting to change them at all. In her journey, too, as Canfield notes [22], it is about the road travelled altogether rather than any destination – which won't be meaningful in a circular mindset after all; and "a new prism by which we can better view own lives" is already a much-valuable outcome. Louise chooses this fresh vantage on her life, a gift of her transcriptions and exposure to the aliens, over any change in it.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name Surname **:**Ali DUR

EDUCATION **:**

- **B.Sc.** **:** 2008, İTÜ, Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture
- **MArch II** **:** 2010, The Cooper Union for The Advancement of Science and Art, School of Architecture, Master of Architecture II (Post-Professional Degree)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND REWARDS:

- 2016-ongoing: Full-time Faculty (Lecturer) at Department of Architecture, Kadir Has University, İstanbul, Turkey
- 2022: Jury Member, Archiprix Turkey Competition 2023
- 2022: Selection Committee Member for Arkitera Mimarlık Seçkisi 2022, İstanbul
- 2012-2016: Full-time Faculty (Lecturer) at Department of Architecture, Yeni Yüzyıl University, İstanbul, Turkey
- 2015-2016: Visiting Lecturer at Department of Architecture, Abant İzzet Baysal University, Bolu, Turkey
- 2013-2015: Editor for Architecture, THAT Magazine, İstanbul, Turkey
- 2013-2014: Advisory Team Member for The 2nd Int. Design Biennial of Istanbul
- 2011-2012: Visiting Lecturer at Department of Architecture, İstanbul Technical University, İstanbul, Turkey
- 2011: Research Assistant at Eugene Lang College for Liberal Arts, The New School, New York, US
- Full Scholarship, Master of Architecture II Post-Professional Graduate Program, The Cooper Union, New York, US, 2009-2010
- Shortlist for 2nd Stage & 1st Prize Award Equal Award for 1st Stage, Eskişehir Old Bus Maintenance Shops & Young Town Project for POLİMEKS, 2015
- 1st Prize Award, Archiprix Turkey Competition 2008
- 1st Prize Equal Award, SOS: AKM Idea Competition, 2007
- 1st prize award, Beylikdüzü Cumhuriyet Street and Close Vicinity Urban Design Competition, 2006 (with Ferhan Yürekli & İrem M. Falay)

PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS AND PATENTS ON THE THESIS:

- **Dur, A.,** Erdem, A. 2020. Kültürel Bir Tamirat Şansı: Pandeminin Yarattığı Yeni Kültürel ve Materyal Gerçekliğin Yeni Babil Üzerinden Okunması, *Ege Mimarlık*, 108 (2020-04), 118-125.
- **Dur, A.** 2020: Seeking Potentials in the New Cultural & Material Reality of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Critical Appraisal from the Lenses of New Babylon. Architecture and Urbanism in the Age of Planetary Crisis International Conference, October 23-25, 2020, London, UK.
- **Dur, A.** 2020: An Utopian Moment: Lost in Translation / Found at Home. Guest Lecture for Beykent University Architecture Club, April 4, 2020, İstanbul, Turkey.
- **Dur, A.** 2019: Acts, Lines and Distances. Guest Lecture for AURA İstanbul Soriee Series, July 31, 2019, İstanbul, Turkey.
- **Dur, A.** 2014: Excursions into Ambiguity: Re-reading Constant's Polemical Reality. 7th International Deleuze Conference, July, 2014, İstanbul, Turkey.
- **Dur, A**. 2012: New New Babylon and The Beach Beneath the Street: A Lecture & Discussion with Ali Dur at IndigoLounge, March 12, 2012, İstanbul, Turkey.
- **Dur A.,** Wark, M. 2011. New New Babylon. *October*, 138, 37-56.
- **Dur, A.,** Wark, M., Burnett D. G., 2011: The Beach Beneath the Street. Screening of New New Babylon Movie (2011), Discussion & Book Launch at Cabinet Brooklyn, July 27, 2011, New York, US.
- Wark, M., Greenfield, A., Townsend, A., Grima, J., 2011: First Public Screening of New New Babylon (2011) by McKenzie Wark & **Ali Dur** at The Networked City Panel, Festival of Ideas for the New City, May 5, 2011, New York, US.