

The City as the Place of Augmented Imagination

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1 ABSTRACT

A “natural history of the imaginary” allows understanding how the imagination has become a resource. It was discovered at the start of the 19th century, then it has developed. Today the imaginary is everywhere in the city which is an artified city. Many professionals are in charge of it: artists, architects, advertisers, urban scenographers... The “natural history of the imaginary” shows that there is a “domesticated imaginary” and also a “spontaneous imaginary”. The “spontaneous imaginary” appears when there are “urban trances” (Music Day ...). They pose problems of urban governance. The example of the night of the 15th of July in Paris (after the victory of the French soccer team in the World Cup) is dealt with. One explains why this event caused no trouble thanks to the tools from the sociology of the actor-network (translation, actants). One can use the notion of cognitive dissonance, also. This question is dealt with: could the imaginary be coded? The answer seems to be no.

Keywords: urban governance, imagination, city, urban trances, natural history

2 INTRODUCTION

A “natural history of the imaginary” is possible. There are four successive stages: (1) the 18th century is a dawn: materialist philosophy, atheism, discovery by artists of fantasy ... (2) at the start of the 19th century, the imagination is discovered by artists (Stendhal, Baudelaire...) and doctors (Moreau de Tours). The definition of imagination is brought by Stendhal, with his “crystallization”. The doctors discover the drugs, the study of sleep, dream, trance etc. Psychology starts. At this time imagination is considered as a resource (3) at the time of the industrial city the imagination is augmented, because of many phenomena. Also, it enters Science (psychology with Freud, sociology with Durkheim, anthropology with Spencer ...). From this time, it is “gardened”, to use the word of the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (“gardened” means cultivated, carefully controlled). So many professionals are in charge of the imaginary: psychologists, advertisers, intellectuals, artists ... After Bernays, who invented marketing and advertising, the imaginary is “domesticated” and serves the consumers society (4) at the time of Internet and the social networks, the imaginary is everywhere (fashion, music, movies, videogames ...). It is the time of augmented imagination. The City also is devoted to augmented imagination. The “domesticated imaginary” corresponds to the artification of the city: art and beauty everywhere, fashion, city as a décor, urban scenographies ... There remains a “spontaneous imaginary” which corresponds to “urban trances”. Are involved various “fiestas” in the city, which pose problems of urban governance.

In the paper is presented the “natural history of the imaginary” and the coexistence of a “domesticated imaginary” and a “spontaneous imaginary” is described. The two exist in the city, which can be considered as the place of augmented imaginary. Concerning the “urban trances” they are allowed by various means: (1) a collective “cognitive dissonance” can be reduced thanks to conventions, and (2) “social devices” in the sense of the sociology of the actor-network can be used, which involve translation and actants. Examples are given. The coexistence of the “domesticated imaginary” and the “spontaneous imaginary” will last a long time. There are arguments showing that the imaginary cannot be coded, at least if democratic values remain.

3 A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE IMAGINARY (1): THE DAWN

In the Middle Ages the people’s imagination was in the hands of the Church. The function of augmented imagination was for the Cathedral. According to the historian of Art Ruskin, one of the seven characteristics of the Gothic Art is imagination. In his well documented novel “The Cathedral” the French writer Huizmans indicates that theories present the Cathedral as the “mirror of the world”. It stimulates imagination. Then the function passes to the book. The famous French poet Victor Hugo wrote: “Ceci remplacera cela” (“this will replace that”, meaning that the book will replace the Cathedral). Then the 18th century is the dawn of the imaginary, with the materialistic philosophy, and atheism which weaken the religious imaginary. Fantasy appears in Art: the fantastic architecture painted by Piranesi, the Potocki’s “The manuscript found in Saragossa” (1794) or the Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein” (1818) ...

4 A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE IMAGINARY (2): THE BIRTH

In 1822, Stendhal published “De l’amour” (“On love”) where he presented his theory on “crystallization”. Let a twig in a salt mine during several weeks and it will be covered with white, shining crystals of salt. To see it make dream and is pleasant, while the rough wood under the salt is forgotten. It is “crystallization”. Stendhal described four kinds of love (love passion, love taste, love vanity and physical love). Love passion triggers a crystallization (passion stimulates imagination). But also, Power (“Imagine that you have been appointed minister by Napoléon a quarter before”, writes Stendhal). Or ... mathematics. Also, Stendhal defines what will be called later “pleasure principle”: “Man is not free of not doing what provides him with more pleasure than other actions” (the translation is by the author of the paper). This is not to say that Stendhal is the universal genius who discovered the pleasure principle (it is Freud), the will to power (Nietzsche), or the modern notion of loss aversion (Stendhal remarks that the pleasure because of what is loved is less than the pain caused by the lack of it). But what is new is that imagination is considered as a resource. The classical criticism of Religion (Auguste Comte, Ludwig Feuerbach, Jean Marie Guyau) denounced illusions, that is to say explanations thanks to imagination instead of explanations thanks to observation, experiment and reasoning. According to Auguste Comte the second stage of the history of Man is metaphysics, which has recourse to imagination to explain phenomena. After, philosophy and science refuse imagination.

At the start, the imaginary was an affair for artists and doctors. For instance, Moreau de Tours, a psychiatrist, wrote “On hashish and insanity” on the effects of drugs. He remarked the similarity of dream, effects of drugs and insanity. Baudelaire described how the shock of the city on the soul of the poet triggers dreams (“the spleen of Paris”). One often considers that his poems capture the poetic character of the modern city. Interestingly, Stendhal thought that the Court was the place of love taste (and perhaps love vanity). The City was the place for love passion, which requires no work (it is impossible in the countryside), refinement but also some solitude (favorable to crystallization). The characteristics of the three places (Court, City, Countryside) could be (with the personalities having studied them):

Court	City	Countryside
Taste	Passion	Sincerity
Style	Imagination	Convention
Political intrigue	Drama	Tradition
Norbert Elias	Stendhal, Baudelaire	Tolstoy

5 A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE IMAGINARY (3): MATURITY

At the end of the 19 th century, imagination is considered as a resource not only by artists but also by many other professionals: doctors (in their theories or when they recommend drugs), sociologists, anthropologists, sellers ... It is enough to quote four names: Freud, Bernays, Spencer and Durkheim.

According to Freud imagination is a dimension of the human being, represented by the Id. Imagination is a resource and a threat (pathology is possible) and the Id is contained by the Super Ego. In the Freud’s topical scheme, the Id represents the pleasure principle and the Super Ego the reality principle. Imagination is taken into account in a norm (concerning mental health).

The nephew of Freud Edward Bernays was far more positive. He is one of the inventors of marketing and advertising. For him the imagination of people is a very precious resource: it allows to sell to consumers the products which trigger their happiness. This knowledge is used to stimulate, create needs and propose the products allowing the satisfaction of these needs.

Herbert Spencer, in “Principles of sociology” has in some way achieved the program of the French philosopher of the 18 th century Condillac, “sensualism”. The aim was to deduce the ideas of human beings from the five senses. Spencer explains the appearance of mythical creatures, gods etc. by some odd states during which consciousness stops: dream, hallucinations (because of drugs or illness), syncope, trance... Added to the poor precision of language at the dawn of the humanity, it triggers beliefs concerning the presence and survival of deads and interpretations of phenomena like death. Concerning the selection of the beliefs the Spencer’s argument is Darwinist: when a tribe is favored by its particular imagination (its beliefs) it survives and the beliefs develop (this use of Darwinian selection by Spencer has been criticized). What is interesting for us is that imagination has become a resource for theorists.

In the same way, for Durkheim the collective imagination in the case of Totemism is a resource allowing intellectual progress of the humanity (appearance of concepts like division, opposition ...).

To sum up, for Spencer imagination is a resource in the struggle against Nature, for Durkheim it is a resource to invent concepts... Imagination is accepted as a resource by these theorists. Later an anthropologist like Mauss will put the stress on "Culture" in which a particular imaginary is paramount.

6 A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE IMAGINARY (4): THE INDUSTRIAL CITY

The industrial city has been often described in terms of work, knowledge ... that is to say in terms of Progress. Indeed, imagination developed also in the city at this time. The sources were some particular products (like drugs), Science and Technology, new medias and the society itself (which was observed and commented in newspapers, for instance):

- Particular products: of course, it is drugs and alcohol. Consumption of opium was frequent in the American cities around 1900. Doctors invented and praised drugs (Freud worked on cocaine). They recommended them. Concerning alcohol many sociologists considered it as a universal scourge. It was also considered as a problem by urban planners. It stimulates poets and novelists and is present in many novels.
- Science and Technology: the theories of the chemist Chevreul stimulate the painters. Technology triggers dreams (science fiction). The big machines suggest a style to painters (Fernand Léger, the Mexican muralists). Musicians are fascinated by them: locomotives (Pacific 231 of Honegger), steel mills (Iron Foundry of Mossolov), the George Antheil's and Pierre Shaeffer's concrete music ...
- New medias: photography triggers dreams about the other. Mac Luhan has remarked that photography stimulated the curiosity for the other and contributed to the appearance of psychology. Movies have given the first role to objects (compared to theater). For the German sociologist Kracauer there is a "redemption of the objects" in movies. It is something like crystallization, objects which make dream are innumerable in movies: cars, planes, weapons etc.
- The society itself: low life in the cities (prostitution, violence) has permeated jazz. The passion in the cities anticipated by Stendhal explains many novels. The detective novel appeared.

In brief, imagination is part of the modernity which appears in the cities at the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th century.

7 THE CITY AS THE PLACE OF AUGMENTED IMAGINARY

Today, at the time of Internet and the social networks, the city is a huge sound box for imagination. According to the French sociologist Lipovetsky, it is artfied: art and beauty are everywhere (stores, façades, plazas...). The imaginary is the affair of many professionals: artists, advertisers, architects, scenographers ... More, there are many hybridizations: Art / Fashion, Art / Technology (as when monuments are illuminated and moving pictures are shown), Art / urban décor, Art / urban scenography etc. The themes which are scenarized in the city are the past, the future, local features (like products), music (Techno Parade in Paris).

It remains that there is not only the imaginary formatted by professionals, "domesticated". There is also a "spontaneous imaginary". It is mainly that of the youngsters. They like drugs, alcohol, sport and ... violence. This appears during "urban trances": Music Day, "botellons" in Spain, 14th of July in Paris ... Of course, it poses problems of urban governance. We deal with the case of the night of the 15th of July 2018 in Paris, after the victory of the French team of soccer in the World Cup, later in the paper.

The problems of urban governance can be solved.

There will be a "domesticated imaginary" and a "spontaneous imaginary" for a long time.

The imaginary cannot be "coded" (completely "gardened", in the meaning of Zygmunt Bauman).

8 THE IMAGINARY CANNOT BE CODED

Let us return to Stendhal. When he presented his project (the book "On love") he wrote that he wanted to imitate the Ideologues. They were intellectuals, his contemporaries. One of them Destutt de Tracy, defined Ideologie as the science of the "generation of ideas". Indeed, when Stendhal describes crystallization as a process with stages (admiration, pleasure, hope, crystallization...) his topic is generation of ideas and

sentiments (sensations are also concerned). But the Ideologues had this program: grammar, morals, instruction, education and good government. According to Zygmunt Bauman, the Ideologues were typically intellectuals wanting to fashion Man. At the dawn of the modern era (Renaissance and Classical Age) something paramount occurs: Education and Science are in the hands of intellectuals. They want to become the legislators, not only the advisors of the Power (notice that the Ideologues were advisors or the Power at the time of Napoléon). The Ideologues and the Philosophes (the intellectuals in France at the time of the French Revolution) had an elitist vision of Education: it should be reserved to the upper class (Condorcet is an exception). They wanted to take over on the Jesuits: their ambition was to rule thanks to a deep influence on the ruling class, due to Education in their hands. The successor of the Ideologues, Auguste Comte, wanted France ruled by an assembly of “general intellectuals” (meaning intellectuals not too much specialized). A name one can quote is Erasmus, who wrote a book on good manners for the young boys (of the Upper Class) (Elias, 1997). It concerned eating and drinking, personal hygiene, attending the mass, playing, sex. The book was read by many readers. Good manners are no more an advantage which is admired, but have become indispensable (in the Upper Class). According to Elias, the transition was from “courtesy” (at the time of the Knights) to “civility” (in the 17 th century) and “civilization” (in the 19 th century). And for Bauman, the merit is no more the “lineage” (like in the Middle Ages) but “virtue” (after Renaissance), meaning good manners, beautiful language, competence in some affairs. Another interesting name is Leon Battista Alberti (1404 -1472), who is quoted in the book of the sociologist Werner Sombart “The bourgeois”. Alberti praised the “masserizia” (Italian word meaning mastery). The passions are balanced by motivation and interest. It is interest for the monetary gain, of course, but also for honor and good reputation. Paramount is mastering money spending (the expenses being always less than the revenue). Interestingly, the masserizia is a secular model for the Upper Class. Alberti himself was a nice man, gifted for sport, a polymath talented in philosophy, architecture, mathematics ... He was an accomplished humanist, an “honest man”.

Stendhal had no political project. He wanted to change the education of girls so that they would be incited to love passion. He was not understood. The book was a little read. Later it was praised in the most famous feminist book, the Simone de Beauvoir’s “Le second sexe” (“The second sex”). Stendhal wanted happiness for people. He thought that the city inciting the most to love passion was Naples. Milan and Paris also, but not Berlin, London or New York ... Vienna, “only the extension of the Imperial Court” was more devoted to love taste. Love passion requires the city (no work), refinement of the large cities but also a little solitude ... Finally, the aim of Stendhal was no boredom.

Now we live in the consumers society where boredom has been removed. The imaginary is more than accepted, it has developed, it is augmented. But this question is posed: could it be coded? It seems that no. It would require a profession able to supervise (code) this vast field (the imaginary) which includes Art, Fashion, Movies, Architecture etc. This profession could be only the intellectuals. But according to Bauman, the intellectuals can no more be (or can no more have the ambition to be) the legislators (Bauman, 2007). They have become interpreters useful to sectors of the consumers society, they have a role in Medias, Fashion, advertising, newspapers ... Their particular knowledge is appreciated by many sellers. They are no more legislators like at the time of modernity. They are translators who make understandable a tradition for another one, at the time of post-modernity (Bauman, 2007). One can compare their situation to another profession, the doctors, who supervise the vast domain of Health. The sociologist Bruno Latour has described how they have won this role, in “Les microbes: guerre et paix” (“The microbes: war and peace”). When Pasteur and his colleagues discovered the microbes and many vaccines, their allies were the hygienists, not the doctors who were removed from any important role if the means of health was the vaccine. Later, the discovery of serums and serotherapy by the successors of Pasteur allowed the rallying of the doctors to the Pastorian revolution: they could have a role in accordance with the traditional definition of the practitioner (to recommend a treatment to a patient who is his customer). After that the doctors seized the Power in the vast sector of Health, against other groups of specialists (hygienists, biologists, bacteriologists, immunologists ...). The ultimate explanation of the whole process is the political will to “reconcile Health and Wealth” (Latour, 1984). In other words: an affluent society owes to grant health to all (rich and poor) . Now such political will does not exist when the imaginary is concerned: when values are democracy and individualism, it is accepted that one should not control the cravings, the individual choices to reach happiness ... A consequence is that the appearance of a profession supervising (coding) the imaginary

becomes impossible. All the more since the profession which could do that is the intellectuals, who can no more be legislators (supervisors). They have become interpreters (Bauman, 2007).

9 AN EXAMPLE OF URBAN TRANCE: THE NIGHT OF 15TH OF JULY 2018 IN PARIS

After the victory of the French soccer team in the World Cup, there was feast in the streets of Paris all the night. There were no police, no buses, no taxis in the streets. Two groups occupied the streets. Young boys coming from the suburbs in cars, drinking beer, using klaxon, showing French flags circulated in the streets. Also, at some crossroads, where there are many cafés (which were open) were drinking and shouting “We have won” Parisians, young boys and girls. There was no violence (only several cars were burnt). Indeed, in the “fanzones” (places where the fans are gathered to watch the match on a large screen while immersed in a warm atmosphere) there were a few policemen, because large crowds pose problems. And there was a little violence in these places.

How to interpret that?

In the terms of the sociology of the actor – network, the explanation is a “social device” which involves translation and actants. The absence of police is not a social device, it is a professional device. And the sociology of the actor – network does not accept the vocabulary of the actors themselves to analyze what they do. With police in the streets, the night would have occurred, but very different (more violence). The absence of police can be interpreted in terms of translation: the authorities show that they trust the youngsters during the night. The aim of translation, according to Bruno Latour, is to “shift” the other actor (that is to say, to change his mindset and his behavior).

In the same way “actants” were used by the youngsters to succeed in translation:

- The klaxon and the beer cans were actants which diffused the clear message “we are here because we are happy and celebrate an event”.
- The French flag was the symbol of the French team and diffused the message “it is a celebration for all the French people”. Curiously, some youngsters wanted to put the stress on the African character of the team, since five on eleven players were black Africans. This could have triggered violence, but the displayed symbol (the French flag) was clear: it was the victory of the French team which was celebrated, and no incident occurred ...

This night can also be described in terms of cognitive dissonance. According to the American psychiatrist Festinger, a cognitive dissonance is a psychological discomfort or tension because of logical contradiction between cognitive elements (beliefs, opinions, values) or between a cognitive element and an element of behavior (Festinger, 2017). The cognitive dissonance can be reduced by several means: a cognitive element is changed, or an element of behavior is changed, or a new cognitive element is chosen etc. An example is a decision. It creates a cognitive dissonance because the rejected alternative is regretted. So, if a new cognitive element makes the chosen alternative more attractive, the cognitive dissonance is reduced. During the night, a collective cognitive dissonance appeared. It is the case when the effects of the “spontaneous imaginary” are displayed in the city. The youngsters occupying the streets are in contradiction with an idea of Order in the city. The absence of police in the streets made more attractive the choice of the youngsters (to be peaceful). It reduced the cognitive dissonance for them. Therefore, their peaceful behavior was more granted. And concerning the citizens’ opinion, the peaceful behavior displayed by the youngsters made more attractive the choice made (to accept the feast in the streets). The collective cognitive dissonance for the citizens was reduced.

10 CONCLUSION

Imagination has three aspects: illusion, resource and threat.

To understand imagination as a resource, one can have recourse to a “natural history of the imaginary”. At the dawn of the humanity, imagination was the affair of priests and it pushed tribes and clans where their collective adventure led them. Collective adventure means struggle against Nature and between tribes (Spencer distinguished industrial societies, decentralized and relying on exchange, and militant societies, centralized. The societies of the first kind struggled against Nature and those of the second kind between them). Then at the time of Renaissance two paramount events occurred:

- Imagination emerges from the religious imaginary, develops, is discovered (it will be later called “imaginary”). Imagination is present in Art and literature. Then, according to Bauman, a “culture of consumption” appears, the charm of which being that it allows frequent changes to consumers. Imagination is everywhere: Art, Architecture, Movies, Videogames and even in the objects used in the daily life (design, kitsch). The city is artfied. It becomes the place of augmented imagination.
- Education becomes paramount and is a norm. The influence of intellectuals triggers the appearance of a “gardened” culture. However, from the time of tribes and clans remains a “spontaneous imaginary”, beside the “domesticated imaginary”. Therefore, the question of the possible coding of the imaginary is posed. But the professionals who could do that, the intellectuals, have become interpreters (Bauman, 2007). And the democratic values incite to refuse such a coding. The answer to the question seems to be that the coding will not occur.

The spontaneous imaginary which exists mainly among the youngsters explains the “urban trances”. Imagination appears as a threat, when they occur. And problems of urban governance are posed. The example of the night of the 15 th of July 2018 in Paris shows that the problems of urban governance can be solved. “Social devices”, according to the sociology of the actor – network, are useful .

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