

Real-Time is getting realer all the time.

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A scripted performance by Nicholas Mortimer & Kevin Rittberger

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THE SCENE:

The cast are situated in a Radio studio of Mainframe City 360/50, a city that houses the Cyberstride program, the economic algorithm of the Cybersyn Project. This is a dream space where "Statistics" reside and are recently and rapidly becoming politicised. In Mainframe City 360/50 the buildings are made up of architectural IBM mainframes - it is a vast metropolis set in a desert. Mainframe Radio has been imagined by SB as a way to communicate with the statistics - with the aim to educate them in more socially progressive views. We begin just before the show goes on the air, and after a surprise visit we end by travelling into the "Noosphere" an abstract utopia that contains all human thought throughout history.

CHARACTERS:

SB: Stafford Beer // A Cybernetician employed by the Chilean government from 1971-1973. We are inside his dream sequence where he is the host of a talk radio programme that addresses the "Statistics" - the inhabitants of Mainframe City. His programme tonight provides the story of socialist utopianism - a historical journey of key activists and projects, and he hopes that this lesson can help to educate and enthuse the apathetic and suicidal statistics who are finding it difficult to accept the changes that his project require.

CN: Constant Nieuwenhuys // A guest reader on the radio programme. An artist who produced the anti-capitalist city New Babylon as a long running artistic project from 1959-74. A non-architect architect, he promotes his ideas of nomadism and creative freedoms found in New Babylon. He is strongly in favour of ludic social behaviour and freedom of movement.

PC: Peter Cook // A guest reader on the radio programme. An Architect from the British based Archigram group, and joining the dream 1968, around the time of completing the Instant City Project. Wearing his speculative glasses nick-named "info gonks " He acts distracted and seems pre-occupied with ideas of mobility and free time, as well as a forward thinking, positive attitude towards the liberation that technology may bring.

HH: Hannah Höch // A guest reader on the radio programme. A Dadaist artist. She joins the dream from 1917 having become recently politically charged after the Bolshevik Revolution. She is beginning to imagine her transcultural collages and enters the scene with a cantankerous attitude against the negative aspects of future technological liberations.

STEVIE WONDER - LIVING FOR THE CITY - PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND

SB:

Hi Hannah, thanks for making it all the way from
1924!

HH:

1917!

SB:

Yes. Right.

Look! The statistics are suicidal again! See!
[points outside to film playing on screen] We need
to make them stop! [sighs] You know that my work in
Chile is to instigate a cybernetic form of
alternative economy and it's the first time that we
can ever experience cybernetic management in a
socialist economy! Do you know what that means to
these statistics? Everything is going so fast,
real-time, instantly! That's why they are burnt
out, depressive, suicidal! Hannah, I hope you can
help me do something about it ...

[pause]

So we only have this one song left before we go
live on the airwaves...

HH:

What is this thing?

SB:

The Ico Bass.

HH:

What does it do?

SB:

It performs.

HH:

It performs or is to be performed?

SB:

Both. It Supports something that is moving, growing, proceeding anyway, that's cybernetics.

HH:

I see. What's in the centre?

SB:

There is no centre.

HH:

Is it about fusion?

SB:

Sorry- what?

HH:

Is it collage or syncretism?

SB:

[pauses] Listen Hannah, the Ico-Bass is a portal it connects to the Noosphere - What do you mean?

HH:

Are the elements seperated or joint up?

SB:

Entangled? Confused?

HH:

Mashed up?

SB:

Sorry, Hannah. You are going to have to ask Constant about it. He is the artist. I can only tell you how a socialist economy could work from bottom up, on self-organized levels!

HH:

Can you?

SB:

Yes. Hi Peter!

PC:

Yes [pause] this is the true mediation of history - Instant City! Like a perfectly floating, upwardly mobile thought machine.....so mobile, so instant, so lightweight!

HH:

Yeah, I 've heard about tent camps, tent cities. And then you're out of the game, instantly. If you're not wanted any more.

PC:

How could you know of any tent cities? You are from 1917!

HH:

So? What about the tent camps in front of London in 1609? The palatines! German protestants living in tents for many months! It is the first mass exodus ever! Those Germans almost starving to death, Waiting for ships to take them to the new world that the queen promised! And then the British proletariat comes to beat them up! all because there is no international solidarity yet!

PC:

Don't know what she is talking about. Should I get you a coffee or something?

CN:

So Stafford, will we get the chance to connect with the nervous system of the statistics? - And get the Statistics to come and play with us? Or are they

just listening... This could give us a greater feedback? We need to educate and besoul them! Otherwise they will stay depressive, and we need to make the Statistics soulful, because Big Data needs to be a soulmate. doesn't it? Our fate depends on our soulmate. No?

SB:

[Distracted]

Yes, yes.. the feedback, this is just what I have in mind for the cyber folk - millions of algedonics and what is this BIG DATA you mention? Sorry Constant, we shouldn't loose any time, we must start the show! Are we all plugged in?? In 3 - 2 - 1 -

[music fade-out] [LIVE BROADCAST BEGINS]

SB:

Welcome, are you tuned in OK? This is of course your host speaking. [pause] My name is Stafford Beer, projecting to you all on mainframe radio. Listen, statistics, you are not simply data, you are much more than that, and it is important to know about our past, our heritage, we all have to know where we've come from! Boys and girls, our journey towards Salvador's socialism is getting closer all the time, and we have come a long way up to arrive here! Just think, you could be transporting the dead labour of past utopian visionaries!

CN:

True.

HH:

What you mean by boys and girls? Why do you have to keep up this silly binary gendering?

PC:

Hey Hannah. I got you a coffee. You seem to be tired.

HH:

I am not tired.

SB:

And tonight we will delve into the mechanics of utopian social endeavour, a complete vista of projects to engage you on the issues we all face here today... We will speak about the homo gurbanator! The homo ludens! We will talk about the Drop, the Quick, the Instant City! And last but not least about New Babylon! And without further distractions we will introduce you to tonight's guests:

PC:

Good evening, I am Peter Cook, a metamorphosed architect, I want to mobilise and produce the ideas that are necessarily floating and fleeting inside an Instant City...

CN:

Hello - I am Constant - a nomad from the streets of New Babylon, I want to make you become creative, besouled players in a multitude of situations - in a world without frontiers.

HH:

Hello Listeners - my name is Hannah Hoch, look at my mask!

SB:

Hannah, remember - this is radio! We're on air.

HH: I Don't care. I am talking about cultural transformation.

PC:

We will come together now as a unit, the 4 of us will combine to form one networked brain that we'll use as a vehicle for you Statistics to access these lessons.

SB:

Right. One synteegrated brain, that's what I would like to call it. From More to Cabet from Morris to Constant.... Because it's all about SYNTEGRATION. Not only of our individual brains, it's also about a synergy of some of the greatest ideas of mankind - a third skin now is forming, Ah! the Noosphere! A complete network of all thoughts on the planet!

PC:

Utopia is floating within the stream of history, the wheel of life, the wheel of fortune, no, I mean the spokescouncil, you know what I mean...

HH:

What's a spokescouncil?

SB:

Ready Listeners? Well here we go.... Hannah, would you like to start? You already mentioned 1609. Maybe you can go back a hundred years more?

HH:

More? Sure. In 1516 Thomas More writes his famous conceptual state "Utopia". From our point of view today, the island Outopus is a gigantic, gated community, sealing itself off from the outside, deciding if it will let intruders in or let them drown. Mores patriarchally-governed, insular state consists of 54 absolutely uniform cities, identical in customs and languages, and could legitimately be described as dystopian. More's criticism is quite up-to-date, if one compares the lucrative sheep farming of early capitalism at the end of the 16th

century to the land-grabbing phenomenon of today for the purpose of bio-fuel or other cash-crop monocultures.

PC:

What the hell is bio-fuel?

HH:

Therefore, More states... Peter! Could you read the quote please, maybe you're already seeing sheeps through your gonks anyway..

PC:

Sure! So here is Thomas More: [reading in exaggerated tones - to annoy Hannah)

"Your sheep that were wont to be so meek and tame, and so small eaters, now, as I heard say, be become so great devourers and so wild, that they eat up, and swallow down the very men themselves. They consume, destroy, and devour whole fields, houses, and cities. And as though you lost no small quantity of ground by forests, chases, lawns, and parks, those good holy men turn all dwelling places and all glebeland into desolation and wilderness."

HH:

That is why Utopia is about the Oikos, the sensible economic community. An alternate housekeeping, that makes the sheep and the people happy. Nevertheless the domestication of the savages on that former island Abraxas strongly resembles the extermination of indigenous cultures by European colonial powers. What is not disputed however, is that ever since and parallel to the development of capitalism, the 'other place' keeps bobbing up and down in the heads of enlightened Europeans, to finally bring equality, freedom and fraternity - later also sisterhood or simply solidarity - and more generally, prosperity.

But where will this place be located? On a remote island? In the city? Or in between? And how do I get there? By land? By sea? By air? By Airbnb? Or will it merely be found in thought? Or after catastrophies?

PC:

What is Airbnb?

CN:

Speaking of catastrophes - In 1755, at the time of the great earthquake in Lisbon, which can be considered as inspiration for Voltaires "Candide", the mechanisation of english cloth production is picking up speed and only one to two percent of Europeans are not living in the countryside; "The city is still an island in the ocean of rural civilisation". But soon the urbanisation would begin with a "disastrous irreversibility". Since the "primordial accumulation" at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the expropriated peasants and tenants are urged into the cities; their Lords acquire more opportunities from sheep farming then from the rural subsistence farming. The gentry appropriate the common land. Those who remain, unless they attempt to stop the containments as "Levellers" and "Diggers", in order to articulate an alternative concept in the shadows of the modern age, tender to the trading companies, which are striking out into the new world, or are being criminalised or vanish into numerous prisons. Shakespeare calls the redundant and dispersed the unorganised and have-nots by their real name - "the Multitude".

HH:

By the way, Candide is programmatic for Cabaret Voltaire! Voltaire as a principal character during the age of Enlightenment. And in 1916 my friend Hugo Ball is seeking, without any irony, to subtend

"our kind of Candide" to the immediate present. So what is the Candide of our present I want to ask you guys! What does Candide mean anyway? Literally it's meant to be...

SB:

Thank you very much, Hannah, but can we please wait with the discussion until...

[distracted by scenes outside of the studio]

See, they are still suicidal! Maybe we should get closer to the present? Peter, do you want to...

PC:

Sure. In the nineteenth century, as industrialisation experiences a tremendous boost, several Utopias emerge. In 1840 Etienne Cabet first writes a novel about "Icaria", and 8 years later his literary Icaria is no longer a fictive insular state but a real cooperative community for a few thousand inhabitants. Upon consultation with the already experienced, Scottish utopian Robert Owen, Texas got chosen as the first location for a Icarian settlement. As factory manager in the cotton industry since 1800, Owen had already drastically improved the conditions of the workers in New Lanark, Scotland, but subsequently failed in the state of Indiana in 1825, with his cooperatively structured colony "New Harmony", which was supposed to re-shape the already existing small town "Harmony". Anyway, returning to Icarian, it seems that in front of the 500 dwellers Cabet behaves like a dictator and later Icaria goes bankrupt, because after 1860 money sources from France run dry.

But much more entertaining is the conception of the clerk Fourier, on the other hand. A "guarantistic" city of transition, with concentrically arranged housing blocks, courtyards and workshops, which later, after the assumed societal maturation, was supposed to lead to the harmony of the

"Phalanstery" - a single building of 1200 metres not unlike Versailles, which would accommodate the highly communicative community under one roof, a "miracle castle". And here it comes! : It was intended for workers to change their workplace every two hours to prevent alienation; the architecture also included a generous glazed gallery, not dissimilar from a consumeristic temple of goods. Furthermore the "ministère de la cour d'amour" were tasked to create a new world of making love. Who would be part of the 1800 inhabitants and if it would be possible to link several phalansteries all around the globe weren't issues yet. Neither was Stafford Beers Cybernetic Management yet invented, nor Cedric Princes Fun Palace.

SB:

Thanks for the credit, Peter.

PC:

I think we have to go back to Fourier if we want to create Instant Cities today, to bring the spirit of the Metropolis to the people everywhere.

CN:

And all the work will be done by machines of loving grace. So that we can be homo ludens all day long. Stafford?

HH:

Fourier is the first one talking about feminism, at the same time he is anti-semitic.

SB:

I think we have to talk a bit more of labour as the reward of life. We cannot forget about "News from Nowhere" by Willian Morris. In 1890 Morris' anarcho-communist utopia "News from Nowhere" is disappointed by the failure of the Parisian

commune, and understands the difficulties of early social democracy. His hymn on the merging of work and art, of city and countryside, in the peaceful, post-industrial Arcadia cannot help but initiate, after a couple of joyous first chapters, a bloody civil war which caused the huge transformation. Utopia, previously had been the assumption of a picture, a leap into a peaceful future, now informed by the massive changes around it, believes that transformation can't take place non-violently. Morris' community breathes a far more righteous zeal and, less hedonism than the "Phalanstère", and thereby initiates the definitely sensuous "Arts and Crafts"-movement.

This affected the Garden City movement of Ebenezer Howard in Letchworth, while as of 1900, and almost at the same time Gustav Landauer and other life reformers tried to give shape and soul to a "New Society". Monte Vèrita comes out as the most famous example for dropping out of the industrialised-capitalist world.

Even if the Russian Avantgarde includes a few poets who want to leave the planet for good as Cosmists and Immortalists; the exodus of those who are not associating themselves with the anonymous city dwellers any more, but with communes, collectives, cooperatives, corrals and other alternative ways of life, is henceforth referred to as topical. In the 1960s the ideas of the turn of the century life reformers got picked up, and were adapted by Steward Brands "Whole Earth Catalog". So today we are standing on the treshold of techno-utopia - in the middle of a new cyberculture and neo-primitivism.

CN:

Ok now finally we are arriving at present tense. That's what I'd like to talk about!

HH:

Where are you? Somewhere in the future?

PC:

We're in 1968.

SB:

No I am in 1973.

CN:

I am now. Always.

HH:

Ok, tell me! How did the Russian revolution end?
How did the Dada movement end?

PC:

Failed.

HH:

Failed what? What failed?

SB:

Failed states.

HH:

States of mind?

CN:

Can I talk about New Babylon now? Can I talk about
the present?

HH:

You are talking about the future. I will meditate
on transculture. Seems to be something timeless.
Endless. Devine immortelle. Can I use this for
meditation, Stafford?

SB:

Sure. It's an enneagramm.

HH:

I know what it is.

CN:

Ok, now concentrate. Everybody. I have been labouring from the late 50s onwards, for decades I suppose, on this anti-capitalistic city model "New Babylon". The city I would like to anticipate is a so called Dériville, a Drift City, and it will become a city of hospitality, of conviviality and radical inclusion. It is the attack of the non-architect on architecture, the artist's gesture against art. I always hated "De Stijl" for their religious fetishization of the line. Therefore New Babylon is an evasion of geometric formalism: every line extinguishes the previous one. The people who live here are nomads, not dwellers, they draw their own lines, they practise their ludic social behaviour. Everyone is co-creator of a new form of horizontal architecture. I prefer to call New Babylon a realistic project because it distances itself from the present conditions which has lost touch with reality. The culture of New Babylon does not result from isolated activities, from exceptional situations, but from the global activity of the whole world population. Freedom of movement is common sense. We are creating a -according to Deleuze- rhizome-like, worldwide network. There is no masterplan. I am libertarian, but not like the New Economy will claim it.

SB:

What do you know about New Economy?

HH:

What are you talking about?

PC:

Let's stay optimistic. What's so wrong with a new economy, it's going to help us to build robots that will do the work that nobody wants to do. I see it through my speculative glasses, sorry, info-gonks. Nobody needs to work anymore, the machines are serving the humans now, the horizontal society, so everybody will be a homo ludens, connected, creative, in free association with their fellow human beings. It's a life of peaceful continuous activity, full of encounters with who-ever, real and virtual, across the globe. Love. Love. Love. A helluva lot of love.

HH:

A hell.

PC:

It's "Instant City". It's Zurich meets London, it's Venice meets Panama. It's bringing Eames Chairs to child soldiers in Swasiland. It's everywhere. It's an adorable society of spectacle, ever-changing. Every generation has to build their own city", isn't it? – we are floating with the zeitgeist, lightweight, with a great ease, don't you feel it? I am delighted! Don't you consider the city as monumental work, Constant! Don't you consider your work as monumental work, Stafford!

HH:

This is hell. I can see borders, frontiers, fences everywhere, scissors in your heads...

SB:

Hannah!

PC:

I'll get you another coffee. you're tired again. Low energy.

HH:

I am not tired. You are fast tracking running into the abyss of gamification. And your utopia will always be white, male, heterosexual, so you are only seeing Baywatch girls through your info gonks. Is it instagrammable, Peter? And nothing will be solved. You can fuck your robots. That's all. Until they fuck you. I'm here to stop social deskilling.

PC:

What?

HH:

They say "access, not possession". And then they take it all, while we are streaming our own lives!

PC:

Could anybody translate, please?

HH:

The inability to imagine a different life is capital's ultimate triumph? It's about a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It's about a common urban right. It's about a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. One day we will have carried out production as human beings. "Our products would be so many mirrors in which we saw reflected our essential nature." One day the organization of work will be carried out differently, there won't be a clear separation between brain work and manual work any more. The division of labour will always stay, some experts will be needed, but complemented by things to be done by everyone. There won't be no work to be done, but much less, so that work would ultimately cause joy and pleasure and - this is still the biggest utopian blind spot - wage labour will disappear - covered by a global basic income. And now you guys tell me, does my manifesto sound like

sharing economy or a p2p, worker-owned, self-governed cooperative?

PC:

Shared what? What do you mean with global basic income?

HH:

I mean everybody gets basic income. All over the globe.

PC:

Ok. And then everybody would be happy and creative. Right?

HH:

Yes, that's what I'm talking about. Artists could work without any economic pressure, especially them.

CN:

Yes. That's New Babylon. And everybody would be free to go wherever he or she wants to.

PC:

So can I ask you a question? When did you create your mask?

HH:

It was just last week.

PC:

Ok. So you were very happy and financially balanced when you made this wonderful piece of art?

HH:

Well no, honestly, when I did this mask I was almost starving.

PC:

See. No money, great art.

HH:

I will cut off your ear right now! Next thing you postulate is poor people in underdeveloped countries are happier than we are!

SB:

Sorry guys, we are in 1973. Could we please stay here?

CN:

Yeah. We're now. I feel like I have to stand up and dance a bit. [pause] Hey, there is someone outside. Looks like a statistic.

SB:

Really?

CN:

And it's knocking at the door.

HH:

I will open the door!

SB:

Who are you?

ST:

I am an anonymous armadillo!

PC:

What?

SB:

A statistic! - but not at all apathetic - this one is truly energised...!

HH:

How cute! I wanna touch you!

SB:

Who are you?

ST:

I am an anonymous swamp frog. And I am sick of you speaking about us!

HH:

Wow.

SB:

Excuse me? What are you?

ST:

I am an anonymous Wolpertinger.

HH:

Yes!

PC:

It is changing all the time!

HH:

A collage creature.

ST:

And I am sick of you speaking about us!

HH:

And I am Trinh T. Minh Ha and the only thing that works is speaking nearby!

ST:

Exactly. I have been travelling through glass fibre networks for a very long time. You would be surprised, that real-time is getting realer all the time. Just recently I streamed a song from Ulan

Bator to Tierra del Fuego in 0,000000000000001 seconds. So basically I know the whole world by heart. There was a power cut when I was in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and as I had 0,2 seconds time, an eternity, I could connect to slime, krill and some more agency I could find at the bottom of the sea.

We will leave the script now. We will leave Mainframe Radio. Let's change, and move into the Noosphere, to digital transcendence. Anybody want to come with me?

HH: Me.

ST: Word.

HH: Ballet.

[Hannah and The Statistic plug into the ICO - face each other and begin to perform a word ballet as they transport to the Noosphere]

[The Ico-Bass is activated and SB moves into position to control the portal to the Noosphere]

[Words below can be used in the chant by any other cat member if desired]

Timeless	Digging
Archive	Speaking
Data	Agency
Dada	Voice
Mining	Non-Human
Soul	Ontology
Instantly	World-brain
Nearby	Unknowability

Dance
Topos
top-less
Gurbenation
Capacity
Potentiality
attractive
Labor
Derives
from
Release
the
Libidinal
Forces
Harmonius
and
Principle
Integration
Eros
found
Civilisation
Unreal
Time
Data
Besouled
Diggers
Mining
Neoteny
Platform
Hub
Rejuvenate
Cooperativism
Neoprimitivism
Trans-anything
Datalifeform
instant
ludens
mobility
desire
cybernet

mammalian
Real-time
rhizoma
conviviality
ecology
inevitability
situation
drowning
exhumation
Pill
Mother
Nature
White-Knight
Red-queen
Rabbits
Backwards
Growing
Hazelnoot
Cobnut
Numberless
Limitless
Monument
monolith
Sakrosankt