As I watch the world through the porthole, I get a little bored…

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At the time of the transformation of the industrial economy into the post-industrial economy, we are witnessing yet another mobilisation of powers for yet another adjustment of the world. The underlying logic is the one of uninterrupted production, extending henceforth from the battlefield of World War I (which gave a decisive development to the universe of the factory), colonising the whole of society. The domination of modern technology stretches out over the world which, on that level, loses the quality of being just a tool in the hands of humans, to become the real objective of productive and economical action. It is the post-Fordist era, that operates according to the law of "production of production". Work extends de facto everywhere, the yielding of profit is not confined to the activity when one goes to work, but is integrated into the lymph nodes of the system that has to be reshaped based on that model. Profit is not only produced through the circulation of goods or investments, but also by the circulation of information and con-

sequently the monopolistic management of information. In this world whatever object, living being and ecosystem can be turned into data, become a number, a function. Its insertion in "integrated systems" corresponds to the claiming of an exact control of a given environment; to supervise, to direct, to remodel.

Since the Second World War the use of technology in the management and treatment of information takes on an important strategical increase, specifically with the boom of the internet from the '90s. The digital revolution has created a world in which compatibility and interconnectedness – made possible by the progressive convergence of information and telecommunication technology and by the total globalisation of networks – are undoubtedly two pillars on which the modern information society rests. It becomes increasingly important to be able to manage the continuously growing amount of information and data, put into circulation quickly and effectively. The ICT (information and communications technology) complex – that among its many fields of applications finds fertile ground in the cities – handles this.

The improvement of quality of life, respect for the environment, the promotion of organic food, etc. are presented as the winning "of minds" and not as new, juicy profit opportunities. In parallel, public services change face to adopt a more friendly one... While they are talking about active participation in co-planning and while they are developing tools of digital democracy, they are hiding the fact that the "human, intellectual and social capital" of the citizen-customers is put at the service of urban and regional development. There needs to be innovation, there needs to be originality, there needs to be a consenting and enthusiastic mass to compete on the global economical level. No more, no less... Global means doing business, and cities become businesses. They attract investments and companies, supplying performances and a competent work-force. The commodity city, in perpetual valorisation of itself, demands a radical urban and social restructuring.

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It is not a coincidence when, since some decades, we are witnessing processes of "regeneration" and "gentrification", that deliver the transition of the old, industrial economy into the post-industrial economy. Industry has left corpses to be revitalised, the metropolis created zones of degradation that have to be turned into a profit. Propaganda advertises them as zones of a strategic economical importance, re-evaluates them and decides the price too of the replacement of one class by another. The marginal and often criminalised categories of the urban jungle make place for "new settlers from the middle to high levels of the bourgeoisie."

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Recently, in Naples, a small group of international vultures has been welcomed into the discomfort of one of those places where power has left corpses behind, as the bringers of new and mythical hopes. A training college of Apple for programmers of iOS will soon be build to form an army of competent technicians who will function as the search engines of their computers. A smart city, in which the virtual and concrete dimensions integrate increasingly intensely, needs smart people who not only know to use technologies that make it "smart" but also develop unique and specific competences that make it competitive. Diffusing the competences plays a crucial role in triggering technological development, which opens up the door towards new innovating processes... in a circle that is self-reinforcing. Diffusing the competences so that one can live in this kind of world, and because one wants to live and create this kind of world... All this for the profit of those who are living off this machine, like companies and institutions.

Certainly, it is not an innovation for the political propaganda which sells this as a novelty, as it has previously sold the future high-speed train line between Naples and Bari; yet another occasion to integrate this underdeveloped and eternally lagging behind South with the "expansive networks of the global world". What better opportunity to finally enter Europe when we're also blessed by the arrival of high-speed in these desolate lands? Unnecessary to

say that the hysterical internet squabbling between a Renzi [Prime Minister at the time] and a Magistris [Mayor back then] is apt to create a smokescreen for those who don't want to see that there is a single underlying logic that unites all people in power. That of distributing here and there the innovations of strategic interest while, on one side they persuade the spectators that they are witnessing the turn-around of the South of Italy, on the other side they are occupied by the mirage of their fake participative democracy.

During this time cities are more and more becoming arenas of strategic interests that of course are well protected. They develop an entire security industry that through the "active prevention" concept sells the "assistance of the military to the national policy" as indispensable. To acclimatise the population to the hindering presence of the army in the streets seems a good start. They have to prevent, to dissuade all potential of interior revolt that would be harmful to the important sites of the global economical machine. The latter feeds itself with resources that are not only in faraway places, paired with war scenes, but it also has vital interest to protect in its birthplace, this rich West which it tries to pacify. Actually the resources are also human intellectual capital that can continue to advance this winning model of profit and social control. The resources are also the works that multinational companies put in place, with the unconditional support of politicians, in key places for the reproduction of the global economy. Power takes less and less shape as an enclave shielded at who knows what distance from earth. They continue to pretend that capital is a supernatural entity, a sort of Biblical monster; distant and impalpable, without a precise face and anyhow tending to omnipotence. But never before has domination put on display so much uncovered faces, even common faces, of young men and women that sacrifice their individuality at the service of development and technological progress, for example. Technology, beyond the illusion, is not at the service of society but of profit. And the city is "a visible sign of power".

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thus legitimising it as inherently innocent. The rest of the world, if we consider the long-term effects, can only be screwed.

The technological "development" has never been neutral, it always had one-sided objectives and has also always produced one-sided effects. The most invisible and unpredictable effects are the effects in the long-term that it provokes in the depths of our perceptions of ourselves and of the world. The skies it hopes to conquer, at the benefit of the science that creates it and the economic-political power that finances it, are those of a global technocracy capable of reprogramming people, surroundings, societies, economies, as if they were computers. Nonetheless, its innovations have birth-places that are not the underground caves of a mad genius, but are universities, technological colleges, multinationals.

We'll have to see how this high-tech society will resist the blows of a world that collapses, when the difference that separates the included from the excluded will become an irreconcilable chasm.

Behind the realisation of the project of the "Smart City" are the biggest digital multinationals. IBM and Cisco Systems are at the centre of huge turnovers, to a point that certain critiques coming from the same official circles speak of these cities as markets for the goods proposed by these multinationals. But the question is much more thorny.

The objective, decried as well as pleaded for by the new millennials, would be "intelligence", the idea of giving an active role to objects present in the city, through the internet... From dull and outmoded street furniture to collectors and distributors of wide ranged information and data, that, obliging and obedient, assist those performing the management of the infrastructure. Actually "the internet of things" doesn't essentially mean intelligence but rather, possibility of identification, traceability... legibility ultimately. Today, as yesterday, IBM is working for power in providing advanced technology for the identification of individuals. As one of its advertisements says: "Let's build a smarter planet for smarter data". How do individuals react faced with this work of meticulous registration that power wants to get increasingly better at? By becoming nothing but sterile users, will they stop being obstacles for the rest of time? How long will it take before the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion – that always legitimised the exercise of power – completely takes shape in the difference between those who have a smartphone and those who don't, between those who are *tagged* and those who are *untagged*?

Becoming used to an increasingly intense integration with the machines – which in the domesticated and sick heads of some persons has to become total – has been facilitated by the generalised use of tools such as GPS and the internet, only two of the numerous presents of research linked to the military sector. This is not surprising since a lot of technologies that occupy the daily life of the average person carry the stamp of state defence and security. A lot of so-called "convergent technologies" are in fact "dual", meaning that their function is at once civil and military. They are at the basis

for one part of the economic growth and of the international dominance of the countries that develop them, and for another part of the security of the West and its strategic interests present a bit everywhere. To defend its hegemony, the technocratic power of the world follows a path to the development that changes the character of its armies, wars, cities.

On the other hand, nanotechnology, biotechnology, IT, telecommunications, robotics... the so-called "convergent technologies" in short, are either the consumption product of civil industry, or the outcome of research activities with military aims. But technology is also and above all a logic. One that has the intention of annihilating the essence itself of the individual, namely the incalculability and unpredictability that can make it escape from an integrated and controlled existence. This logic can unite these different research fields in one convergent project that can not only manage the living but also remodel it in all its aspects.

We're still surprised that so many things seem to be sufficiently legitimised by the simple fact that they (henceforth) exist, that their nature is not put into question. The internet is maybe one of them. Since the beginning of time, the fact that something exists has never been a good reason to not reflect on it a bit. And it is not enough to get off the hook by claiming its existence is after all comfortable and its use "only" instrumental, if only to find yourself one day with a chip implanted in the brain, and only understand it once it already devoured three quarters of our identity. At this moment when technology functions faster than thought, this is only a question of time. If the technological change is exponential, our thought is not. It is so difficult to follow that we are constantly surpassed, and we always run a risk. Namely to not be capable of thinking through in its totality the nature and the effects of what we are using, if not later, if not when we are already totally submerged.

Machines came into our lives because they were of service, and they stayed because they made us to be at their service. This new

world build around our always more transparent and permeable bodies is littered with portals that open up to ten, a thousand other worlds in one click. Worlds that, even if they are defined as real because of the undeniable relation they have with the reality that has activated them, actually initiate a new conception of time and space that belongs to the virtual. Immediateness and ubiquity are the time and space of technology. The contraction of time and space that widens our small individual worlds, brings us to see things that our eyes would never see, there where our legs would never take us.

An uninterrupted flux of information reduces our bodies to communicating vessels in permanent interconnection with the net. A network, a system of electronic machines of which humans will be an always more integral part (it's enough to think about the development of RFID technologies), that is a transmitter of data to be consumed by multinationals and governments, for financial and controlling advantages. We should ask ourselves where this need comes from for even an individual in struggle for all this information diffused on the internet about actions and experiences coming from anywhere at any moment, because it cannot be considered as *input* to action (that would be sad), and neither is pointing towards a real knowledge of what is happening elsewhere. All real knowledge is proscribed by the nature itself of the media, its media being, its operational mediations and its filters between the disclosed facts, the context that produced it and the person that received it. Maybe we have to answer that this need is the child of its times and to imagine how much a continuous "elsewhere" can distance us from the present that we can hold in our hands. It cannot be reduced to a problem of the relation of the individual with a tool and how to use it. Let's remember that it is the powerful defenders of the techno-scientific supremacy that make these superficial distinctions to explain that there is a good and bad way of using their innovations, to assign the responsibility of the meaning to the individual, and