

## Quo Vadis, Sustainability?

or

How to make living places of balanced equilibrium and belonging.

By Milan Jaros

The *Cosmos of Aristotle* was a stable, purposeful unity of Gods, things and humans. Apples, men and women have belonged to the 'out there', to Nature given to us by God - or later by Galileo. Today the status of apples, of nature, is "problematic".

The born and the made, the I and the out there, have been absorbed into *runaway networks*, into *systems of knowledge we do not control but on which we depend*. These systems are propelled towards higher *complexity* (read economics of growth, consumption) by scientific advances and seem therefore immune to any limits imposed from outside the science that drives them. That makes modernity - our society - *intrinsically unstable*; to talk about 'sustainability' of such a system is a fantasy!

Question: What would the *change in our attitude to material practices* have to be to restore the capacity for maintaining a dynamic equilibrium between humans and things, a *built-in consensus on limits*?

It follows that the self depends for its ability to recognise and maintain such quasi-equilibrium on collisions with the material and spiritual world that *suspend the flow of objectified complexity*. The sites of such collisions are places where the smooth technological space is rendered momentarily ineffective, where the *generic openness of any material system* outside the confines of a science laboratory is made visible.

These are '*space warps*', places where a *gap* has been created between on the one hand the apparent rational closure of technology-imposed *organisation of space and time* and on the other their openness to imaginative patterns of the human unconscious grounded in the natural tendency to preservation of life. These are spatio-temporal openings of '*free play*' (e.g. conceptualised in the Schmarsow-Benjamin's 'elbow room' (Spielraum)).

Good examples of *meta-design* stimulating such 'warps' are *pata-machines* and *pata-systems*, i.e. physical structures (remember papa Ubu!) that explicitly remind the user of parallel existence of the smooth functioning characteristic of aggressive machinic progress making and the playful 'fractal' engagement with reality naturally inclined to 'preservation of the species'.