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(Article begins on next page)

Dissonant Times

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Abstract: The contribution aims at analyzing the different layers of meanings contained in the notion of "dissonance" from the aesthetic, cognitive and emotional point of view. To then make them available for the exploration of the different forms of "dissonant time" analyzed by contemporary thought, in particular by thinkers such as H. Blumenberg, R. Bodei, R. Koselleck, E. Traverso, E. Bloch, H. Rosa and the studies on the "new urban world." In this context, notions such as the following become relevant for understanding the temporal experience of late modernity: gap between world time and life time; intertwining and overlapping of future-facing past and present; changing and at different speeds "geologically" multi-layered relations between space of experience and horizon of expectation; "presentism" and breakdown of social frameworks of memory and individualistic reification of the past; "contemporaneity of the noncontemporary"; montage and kaleidoscopic temporal dialectic; disconnection between spheres of economic, social and generational life and lack of time; multiple temporalities and cross-connections across urban spaces. So that dissonance seems to be the most appropriate conceptual and figural tool to effectively render the condition of contemporary temporal experience in its real irreconcilabilities and perspectives.

Keywords: Dissonance, Dissonant times, Resonance, Temporal Multiversum and Multilayers, H. Blumenberg, R. Bodei, R. Koselleck, E. Traverso, E. Bloch, H. Rosa.

1. The use of the musical metaphor of resonance, right from its Romantic origins as a "magic word" that gives voice to the world, has found in Hartmut Rosa's monumental work a kind of manifesto that opposes our age's tendency toward temporal acceleration, precisely the concept of resonance as a key to revealing late modernity's underlying fear for the transformation of the world and, at the same time, the driving hope for the realization of a responsive relationship with it, using the categorical tools of a sociology of our relation with the world [1]. For the preliminary purpose of delving instead into the epistemological premises of such a framework in order to discuss on another occasion the possible alternatives between the two definitions, an attempt will be made here to explore briefly a complementary and opposite metaphorical direction, again of musical origin, namely that of dissonance, of its own more adequate to render the condition of temporal displacement and disarticulation of contemporary society, as sketched in the introduction to this volume and further developed in the second part of the text which follows.

Within the humanities, there has been widespread use of the term and metaphor of dissonance over the past three decades. For example, following the canonical reference to Turnbridge and Ashworth [2], the dissonance implied in "Dissonant Heritage" involves as much an idea of discrepancy and incongruity, i.e. a discordance and lack of agreement and consistency, as it does an allusion to the field of music and harmony theory with its classification of disharmonic combinations of sounds, which in turn recalls the psychological notion of cognitive dissonance as a state of psychic tension caused by the simultaneously holding of mutually inconsistent attitudes. Therefore, in parallel with the task of developing an analysis of the three main sources of dissonance (implicit in commodification; implicit in place products; implicit in the content of the message), it seems appropriate to reflect on the ways of knowing and the criteria of relevance that act in the definition of what is dissonant, starting from their aesthetic dimension. To this end, this contribution aims to

analyze the different layers of meaning that the term sediments in different areas: musical, literary and artistic in what was defined at the beginning of the last century as "emancipation of dissonance", in cognitive psychology according to its implications of "pressure to reduction" and in social psychology as "emotional dissonance" (§ 2). Once the set of meanings that converge in the notion of dissonance has been articulated, and after showing its possible implications in parallel in memory studies (§ 3), the second part of this paper turns to the exploration of the possible ways in which divergent, juxtaposed and multilayered temporal dyscrasias – finally, dissonant times – can be detected, connected and coexist in contemporary experience of time. For how they can be analyzed by drawing on the elaborations of Hans Blumenberg and Remo Bodei (§ 4), Reinhart Koselleck and Enzo Traverso (§ 5), Ernst Bloch and Hartmut Rosa (§ 6), and field studies of new urban worlds (§ 7).

2. If we understand "epistemology" at its broadest level of determination, as a second-level investigation, i.e. a reflection on the very modes of knowledge that are adopted in a given field, in our case, it is a question of analyzing the different layers of meaning that the reference to the musical metaphor of "dissonance" produces. In particular, the levels of meaning related to the following should be made explicit: the musical sense of "musical dissonance"; the wider aesthetic sense in art and literature; the so-called "emancipation of dissonance"; the sense more closely linked to cognitive processes, of "cognitive dissonance", and the psychological sense of "emotional dissonance".

Layer of meaning: Musical Dissonance. From the Latin *dissonantia* (Boethius, *De Institutione musica*) is etymologically "the fact of not sounding with" and is therefore defined in relation to consonance: it is non-consonance. The term indicates two or more sounds (forming an interval, a chord or a harmony) that seem heterogeneous, and whose simultaneity requires resolution, a consonance. But – suggests Lyse Florenne – the boundaries between consonance and dissonance are variable and bring into play mathematics and physics, physiology and psychology, as well as customs and traditions. Particularly in the Renaissance and Baroque music, it was used for expressive purposes of tension, torment or restlessness, of waiting for the resolution and restoration of consonance. Nevertheless, the imbalance, heterogeneity, strangeness and extraneousness of dissonance often constitute an exciting pleasure for the ear and spirit [3].

Layer of meaning: Aesthetic Dissonance. In a figurative sense, dissonance has come to indicate a disruptive element in other artistic forms: in painting, dissonance is used to refer to colors that do not harmonize well with each other and about which we can say that they are astonishing; in literature, dissonance of style is used to denote a heterogeneous mixture of, for example, the noble and the vulgar, the sad and the laughable; a dissonance in the discourse can be a break in style that destroys the harmony and can have an exciting stimulating effect or a hurtful shock.

Layer of meaning: Emancipation of Dissonance. The year 1910 constitutes, according to Tom Harrison's reconstruction, the turning point in the evaluation of dissonance and finds expression in the formula adopted by Arnold Schönberg in his *Theory of Harmony* (1911): the emancipation of dissonance. Its novelty consists in the manifestation of a torment, in the transcription of a dilemma. Similar assertions, in the years when Schönberg abandoned classical harmonic structures for atonality, are supported by other artists, for example, Vasily Kandinsky. According to him, the harmony of the time can only be that of "contrasts and contradictions": "struggle of tones, loss of balance, fall of principles"... "seemingly purposeless tensions, impetuses and nostalgia: this is our harmony" [4]. Following Schönberg, as the ear becomes acclimatized to a sonority within a particular context, the sonority will gradually become 'emancipated' from that context and seek a new one. The emancipation of the dominant-quality dissonances has followed this pattern, with the dominant seventh developing in status from a contrapuntal note in the sixteenth century to a quasi-consonant harmonic note in the early nineteenth. By the later nineteenth century, the higher numbered dominant-quality dissonances had also achieved harmonic status, with resolution delayed or omitted completely. The greater autonomy of the dominant-quality dissonance contributed significantly to the

weakening of traditional tonal function within a purely diatonic context. Following Wilhelm Worringer, “The imaginative life of mankind obeys a very simple law; it lives on antithesis” [4]. No un-historical generalization: but it results from a specific historical moment. Emancipating dissonance is not just about recognizing, suffering or reflecting that dissonance, it is about making it the basis for a new kind of art by virtue of the metamorphosis and dislocation of form. The pictorial motifs are transformed into the cipher of a network of universal forces in which unions and contrasts are one and the same. Schönberg later abandoned atonal music and Kandinsky his transitional style: aspiring to be prophets of a more sophisticated consonance than language could comprehend, these artists became witnesses and martyrs to the dissonance they themselves had liberated. Finally, what appears to be emancipatory is the conflict between consonance and dissonance through which the scenario, the larger cultural scenario of dissonance that these artists produce, expands. Dissonance is not what is emancipated in the emancipation of dissonance. Dissonance itself – the search for resolutions not found – bears the emancipatory charge. So that we can understand it as an emancipation of dissonance, considering the genitive “of dissonance” as a subjective and not objective one [5].

Layer of meaning: Cognitive Dissonance. Concept introduced to describe the condition of individuals whose beliefs, notions, opinions conflict with each other, or with trends in behavior or with the environment in which the individual operates [6]. It may arise from logical inconsistency between two incompatible opinions, from cultural customs that are at odds with the context in which one operates, from inclusion when a given opinion is included in a more general opinion (e.g. someone votes left but is right-wing or vice-versa: discordance between corresponding cognitive elements), from past experience that has created beliefs that do not fit in with new experiences. The presence of dissonance gives rise to pressure to reduce or eliminate it, prompts action in order to obtain reduction through change of opinion, behavior or environment, and addition of new consonant cognitive element. It cannot always be reduced [7].

Layer of meaning: Emotional Dissonance. By emotional dissonance the psychology means the discrepancy between expressed and felt emotions, when the former are in accordance with emotional norms but are discrepant with the emotions felt 'inwardly' and which one would like to express. Emotional deviance is the behavioral expression of emotional dissonance, genuine acting is the behavioral expression of emotional consonance. When a condition of emotional dissonance or deviance is present, emotional labor and elaboration represent the effort that is made to try to reduce this discrepancy. It requires to focus on criteria to which we culturally refer to judge whether an emotion is in consonance or dissonance with the emotional rules of the context [8].

3. The relationship between consonance and dissonance describes a condition similar to the insurmountable tension between remembering and forgetting, as far as it relates to the internal dissents within the sphere of public or collective memory and the field of cultural heritage, from whose example we took our cue. Some possible directions for this research include three perspectives that diverge from the unilateral results of excessive remembering, the hypermnnesia that crowds memories and, by hardening them, makes them indiscernible, and of excessive forgetting, the amnesia that reacts to an excess of voluntary remembering but ends up confusing the physiological processing of forgetting with the questioning of immovable history underpinned by the ethical link with memory. The three examples are those of providing spatial experience through the building of places having a strategy of reawakening “dormant memories”, the conflicting relationship between monuments as aids to memory and counter-monuments as attempts to escape the paradoxical erasure of memory induced by the former, and finally of the recovery of a perspective derived from Georges Perec’s infra-ordinary to experience crucial places of remembrance where time and human destruction have left nothing but pale traces of the horror that took place in them, as in the exemplary case of Auschwitz Birkenau [9]. In relation to dissonance and to dissonant times, a consequence can be drawn from this comparison according to which dissonance can be a way of giving voice to differences, of seeking a terrain in which opposing terms without overcoming each other in a higher chord become a form of

antinomian coexistence, a tension that, instead of resulting in conflict or harmonize a priori in a conciliatory perspective, keeps different forms of solution open.

4. Once we have gained a definition of the notion of dissonance, it is a matter of comparing it, again in terms of sketching out a research track, with the articulations of modern temporality and the possibility of reading them as dissonant times. It dates back to 1986 when Hans Blumenberg attempted to give shape to the basic contrast that opposes life time and world time, a sign of the temporal dyscrasia that afflicts modernity and undermines the structures of consciousness that have governed the forms of experience accredited up to that point [10]. "Ars longa, vita brevis": as long as the state of the world appears to be immobile or seems to be transforming only slowly, bound to repeat itself by strict obligations and institutions, the ancient adage of wisdom appears to resonate as reliable and true, while the feeling that life goes on after us cannot present itself as a feeling of having had to give up something essential. In this perspective, the extreme resentment of a sense of deprivation arises from the perception of reduced possibilities as a consciousness of a backlog of missed life possibilities, based on the additional assumption that the realities given as the conditions of one's life might have been so different. Any divergence between the time of the world and the time of life potentially contains the scandal, that is the basis – as Blumenberg reminds us – of every apocalyptic thrust, which for the individual is the fact that the world continues to exist unperturbed beyond the end of his or her life. It is not about heroic self-enjoyment or aesthetic distance, i.e., it is not about the stoic *vir impavidus*, who endures amidst the hail of the world's rubble, nor is it about the spectator of the shipwreck to whom the epicurean Lucretius makes enjoy his foreignness. Instead, it is a matter of having to endure the indifference of the world, of its existence before or after us, as *the* rejection of meaning. Hence comes the desire that, given our transience and finiteness, everything else must also be transient and finite. The desire that time of the world and time of life end up coinciding, which has found the extreme historical case in the violent reduction of one to the other emblemized according to Blumenberg by the personal and public history of Adolf Hitler, where the psychic disposition is not to accept and wait, to beg for acceleration and to keep oneself out of the world, but to *pursue* the end [11].

In that case, the borderline case of paranoia, the one and only life a man possesses becomes the condition for a historical and political empowerment to take place. Of the failure of the purpose of his own life he can then make the failure of the meaning of the world: if he is doomed to perish, whatever factual circumstances have compromised his life program, then everything is doomed to be at an end. A single existence defines to itself its own meaning precisely by claiming to be something after which there must be nothing else and, broadening Freud's language, one could speak of "absolute narcissism.". As Hitler himself had occasion to tell his aide for the Luftwaffe, "We do not capitulate, ever. We may perish, but we will drag a world with us" [12]. In this, for its consequences, terrible decision to synchronize time of life and time of the world is defined the destruction of the essential institutionality of historical time, since institutions are based precisely on the fact that the time of life is not the measure of all things, that on the contrary it is necessary to make arrangements that override the limits of life, to fix and accept traditions that go beyond it. In order to be able to endure this one must be able to relativize one's life, in other words, one must possess the horizon of the world. If, again according to Blumenberg, epochs and cultures represent second-degree life worlds in themselves, their structures of meaning give rise to what – thanks to and within their horizon, that is, by contemporaries and co-participants in their conferral of meaning – is considered the obvious. The emergence of contingency, in the opening of the temporal gap – the *Zeitschere* or time scissors – between the time of the world and the time of life, inevitably raises the problem of accepting this incongruity. But there is a viable way to escape the temptation to reconstitute both to congruence. It is the way Blumenberg describes as decoupling the time of life from the time of the world, beginning with the possibility of avoiding the trauma of their disproportionality by the descriptive affirmation of their incomparability. If leaving the life world means that life time and world time begin to diverge, asking for meaning is already a phenomenon of deficiency, whose therapies never restore the original

state but, if anything, its surrogates. However, it is possible, in agreement with Blumenberg, to enact de-dramatizations, decouplings or mitigations (*Entschärfungen*) that, by disengaging the time of life, allow the regaining of the time of the world. Such de-dramatizations have occurred historically. For example, as idealization of space and time that made them the conditions of every possible experience. Or as the genesis of time in consciousness for phenomenology in which space and time are forms by which consciousness adapts to its own narrowness, its own disproportionality to the world. Or, from the point of view of the later Husserl, as non-indifference of what is because it has been, whereby leaving memories, becoming remembrance, would be precisely the sense of a world that has arisen exclusively for the purpose of putting intersubjectivity into operation, and according to which decisive determination of our consciousness is the fact that we can say that I remember not only me but also these and these others. According to this renewed conception of anamnesis, the concept of recollection must be broad enough to encompass the totality of a world that is past, it must be the memory of a world [13].

As Remo Bodei reminds us, bringing these considerations of temporal dyscrasias back to a phenomenology of the present, individual consciousness today retains less of the past and is losing the ability to unwind it to rejoin the present. Human memory, in fact, is constituted by the permanence in us of a past considered significant, the result of a selection, conscious or unconscious, of events and notions that mark the different stages of life. His is not merely a passive recording of events, but a quest, a Proustian *recherche*, directed toward the future through an endless network of references and allusions. If the mutual isolation of present, past and future exceeds a certain threshold, the symptoms of a true pathology of time manifest themselves, and events deprived of any intrinsic order of succession or coexistence are placed in parameters that are unclassifiable according to the usual criteria of experience [14].

5. Returning in his later years to the relationship between space of experience and horizon of expectation, more than two decades after *Future Past* (1979), Reinhart Koselleck insisted on the multilayered dimension of historical temporality. In his *Zeitschichten* [Time layers] (2000) he questions the two categories, noting how historical time is notoriously difficult to make intuitable and it is necessary for it to resort to spatial background meanings that can only be described metaphorically. They are, precisely, the two anthropological categories of space of experience and horizon of expectation. No historical action can be accomplished without relying on the experience and expectation of the actors involved in it. Both categories are available to thematize historical time, since past and future are delimited in the present of experience and expectation, and even in empirical terms they orient the individual units of action in political and social movements. The two temporal extensions condition each other in varied ways, as historical knowledge is gathered in experience and transposed not seamlessly into expectation. If this were possible, however, history would only, fundamentally, repeat itself. Similarly, as remembrance and hope, the two dimensions have a very differentiated status. What is expected for the future is manifestly circumscribed in other ways than what has been experienced in the past. Expectations to which one aspires are exceeded, experiences made are instead gathered. Space of experience and horizon of expectation should therefore not be put in statistical relation to each other, but constitute a temporal difference in the now, as they delimit and establish a relationship between past and future in a different way each time. Koselleck's historical thesis is that, since the modern age, the difference between experience and expectation has steadily increased. Or, more precisely, that the modern age has been conceived of as a new time in which expectations have become increasingly distant from the experiences that have been made up to that point. Since the 18th century, with a radical turn marked by the Enlightenment, this process has profoundly altered the entire political and social vocabulary, which has adopted an internal temporal structure in which the experience share and the expectation share have completely changed their respective weights. Concepts almost deprived of experience content and with increasing claim to expectation are asserted, defining a temporal asymmetry that makes them more properly anticipations. We are facing a temporal tension that, once it arose, also characterizes our political and

social systems today. Political and social concepts thus become guiding devices of the changing historical movement. They do not merely record or survey existing states of affairs, but become factors in the construction of consciousness and orientation of action [15].

The consequences Koselleck draws for the definition of historical temporality in terms of social history are related, in addition to the experience-expectation pair, to the temporalization of modern history and the ability to separate and distinguish between different temporal planes. In the field of spatial metaphors, "layers of time" refer to geological formations that penetrate with different amplitude and different depth and that in the course of the so-called history of the earth have changed with different speeds and differently spaced. Its translation into human, political, or social history and the history of structures makes it possible to separate analytically different temporal planes or levels, on which people move, events take place, or their long-term preconditions are investigated. History always has to do with time, with times that not only metaphorically but also empirically remain related to spatial specifics. History, in German, *Geschichte* refers to the verb *geschehen*, to happen, which literally means to keep moving, to move forward. Every historical space is constituted by force of time, through which it is measured, in order to be dominated in economic or political terms. But the spatial metaphor that pluralizes the concept of time has a specific advantage. As in the geological image, the layers of time refer to temporal planes of different durations and origins that are nevertheless present and effective at the same time. Even the contemporaneity of the noncontemporary (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*), one of the most revealing historical phenomena, is brought back, thanks to the "time layers," to an overall concept. All conflicts, compromises and consensus building can be traced back, in terms of time theory, to tensions and breaklines, and can be triggered by them. This plural dimension also allows us to connect to metahistorical factors that are not available to humans, such as geographical and climatic conditions that can be influenced by them but which they cannot control and direct [16].

In the wake of Koselleck's elaborations, the historian Enzo Traverso has come to define the contemporary relationship with temporality under the banner of compression in the present, thanks to the notion of "presentism." With this expression, coined by François Hartog, he defines the regime of historicity generated by neoliberalism as the perception and representation of time crushed and compressed in the present: the past no longer announces the future, no longer contains any promise of redemption, past and future remain encapsulated in an eternal present. The other salient feature of the presentist historicity regime – Traverso continues – lies in its apolitical nature: "The new forms of capitalism progressively erase the social frameworks of memory, destroy their traditional channels of transmission and deprive collective action of any historical legacy." [17]. This process produces a displacement of memory into the individual sphere, however much it is expressed through a myriad of social vectors ranging from commemorations to the culture industry, and it ends up being reduced to a set of stories, images and emotions that replace collective reflection and action. From such depoliticization also descends – according to Traverso – a further characteristic of presentism, the "reification of the past": "The end of transmissible experience generates the 'places of memory,' a set of sites, objects, images and symbols that organize the past as a kind of heritage, an inherited property, fit only to be preserved in a museum, ready for commemorations, to be turned into merchandising for the cultural industry and consumed individually" [18]. In the presentist iron cage, the past no longer generates utopian imaginations because its perception is structured by mercantile consumption. Just as it privatizes the imaginary, the future as a project of individual success, neoliberalism tends to privatize the past, making the self its observatory and at the same time its laboratory. Whereas, to force the iron cage, one must make the effort to inscribe individual destinies in a larger historical scenario.

6. To the plural co-presence of different times, their possible differentiated dilation and the detection of the utopian latency of the present had been devoted a large part of Ernst Bloch's work, starting, precisely, from the notion of the non-contemporaneity of the contemporary. He focused on defining the issue of spatial and temporal discrepancies, that is, the fact that no matter how much we live in

the same chronological time and on the surface of the same planet, time and space are not the same for everyone. To denote the mismatch between non-congruent historical times coexisting in the same chronological present, Bloch uses the term "Ungleichzeitigkeit," literally "non-contemporaneity" or, affirmatively, "anachronism." Through it, Bloch obtained the theoretical key to the interpretation of Nazism and the structure of social classes in Germany, but also, more broadly, to understand how different historical times are condensed and intertwined in the current time and we are dispersed and distributed along different temporal and spatial axes, along gradients that are both historical and geographical. The opposition between big and small town, city and country, center and periphery are also temporal, historical. The small town and the countryside, with their inhabitants, are not simply backward compared to the metropolis, they do not simply live in a "gap time," a time of backwardness, but in another time, which does not coincide with that of big cities and other social groups [19].

Bloch proposes to consider time in a plural and multiverse key, as in the case of dream time, which does not coincide with the quarter-hour in which one dreams. The instant, invisible and without depth, is outside time and touches with eternity. We have "immense moments" that are the revelation of something, and if we mean by eternity not a long time but the fullness of living, then eternity is not necessarily an infinite time but is found in those moments of great intensity of experience, grasping eternity in the moment. It is an idea of non-homogeneous time in which each minute is not the same as the next and of the fullness of experience. The possible connection between temporal gradients is not implemented for Bloch through a kind of harmonization, but through an enhancement of the partial and divergent aspects, taking as a model the experiences of the artistic avant-gardes of the early twentieth century, particularly Expressionism and the technique of montage. The Expressionists' gaze shines in a new, and thereby instantly exploded, contemporary depth, and produces a distortion of the flatness of reality aimed at revealing the real violence and lacerations that humans and things suffer in this world. Similarly, montage blows up the connections considered "natural", the parts no longer coincide, they are removable and reassembled, to the point of the possibility of constructing – in literature – a coexistence of times based on the kaleidoscope model. In the more properly musical sphere, too, Bloch points to a multi-layered dialectic through polyrhythmics and counterpoint of different tempos, aimed at a critical rather than contemplative totality [20].

On the sociological level, Hartmut Rosa (2010) defined the ways in which temporal acceleration tends to increase the degree of estrangement and alienation. On the societal level, different degrees of acceleration are possible for different social spheres. While the speed of economic transactions and technological innovations seems to have grown exponentially in recent decades, the pace of politics has not accelerated at all, Rosa notes, and the pace of cultural reproduction, i.e., the generational passage of symbolic knowledge, has accelerated very little. The same process that makes social, cultural and economic changes accelerate slows down the process of forming democratic political will, and this leads to a desynchronization between politics, life and socioeconomic evolution. The dysfunctional desynchronizations of the late modern time fabric include those internal to economic life, such as the mismatch between the timing of financial markets and the timing of the real economy, those internal to the world of life, which is being dynamized to such an extent that there is very little intergenerational stability and generations are virtually living in different worlds, threatening a collapse of the symbolic reproduction of society. Moreover, society's creative ability to provide truly innovative responses to new conditions seems to require a considerable amount of free or otherwise abundant time, which for the bulk of the population is completely unavailable. So that it would be precisely the late modern society's tireless struggle to change and be incessantly in motion that would undermine its ability to truly innovate and adapt in a creative way. The hyperdynamic surface of such societies would thus hint at a very solid form of sclerotization and freezing [21].

7. On the more decidedly empirical level of the analysis of new urban worlds, authors who have devoted themselves to field analyses, especially in Africa and South Asia but with implications for

Latin America as well, such as AbdouMalik Simone and Edgar Pieterse (2017), have also mapped a series of multiple temporalities and transversals of connection that operate across and through urban spaces [22]. They noted how within the "real urban " it is difficult to draw clear demarcations between functions, flows, territories and events. Similarly, institutional life has been largely distributed across a network of seemingly divergent practices and actors, prioritizing the non-contractual and the disavowal of overly congealed forms of inhabitation. The very fact, noted by Ravi Sundaram (2015) in the wake of Arjun Appadurai's insights into the different "scapes" of the migrant experience, that now everyone, no matter how settled they may be, possesses and lives through various media devices, making things public in ways that cannot be controlled, as individuals circulate through various experiences and information whose dispositions are difficult to anticipate [23]. Any attempt to cope with such a volume of interactions through data collections and simulations runs into the perverse effect, pointed out by Luciana Parisi (2013), whereby an increasing volume of data is generated that cannot be compressed and, thereby, readily systematized. She stresses that data are always mobile and are always being recombined and retrieved, moved around, stored and restored in different settings, which are also mobile. So, while these "histories" of data cannot always be computed, they can still affect any algorithmic operation that attempts to interrelate the variables at work in the production of an "actual project": ironically the actuality of any project then has to consider its own incomputability [24].

For their part, Simone and Pieterse, propose a strategy based on several moves, among which re-description, the detection of paradoxical situations and the possibility of inhabiting divergences and dissonances play a central role. The notion of "re-description" serves to interrogate how specific spaces, built environments and ways of living according to different times can be re-described not as elements that make evident certain principles, macro-forces or structural articulations but as aspects of what they *might* be, as other dimensions of space or states of existence. This is not simply a matter of imagination, fantasy or forward visualization, they suggest. Instead, the task at hand is – with motions that would be of detecting the potential elements of a concrete utopia, although not deliberately here – to re-describe existing conditions as components of a process that could take place even now but is opaquely occluded or rendered inoperative. That is, it is a matter of grasping an ambiguity and ambivalence of what is in front of us and that involves simultaneously a sense of aspiration, of making things different, but also of seeing in what exists something other than what we think we are seeing. Not dissimilarly, if the analysis of flows and fluxes suggests that precariousness and uncertainty represent a material and psychic threat, they may also provide an opportunity to reimagine and re-enchant the world: "In other words, we cannot access an imaginary about alternative urban futures without confronting the violent impossibility of that future" [25]. Of great importance is to maintain a multiplicity of story lines; divergences will have to be part of the same story, a story of density within the relationship between all things, even as a unique urban future. The possibility of coping with the very blockage of resonance that even in some detected aspects of the most unlikely urban realities seems possible, therefore, appears to depend, in this perspective, on the ability to inhabit dissonant times and account for the divergent stories connected to spaces and temporal processes that are indeed divergent [26].

We have with this come to the threshold of the possible comparison between resonance and dissonance strategies announced as the development of the research in the opening. Thus, dissonance is connoted: aesthetically as discrepancy and incongruity, lack of agreement and coherence, rejection of harmony, representation of tension, torment and restlessness, disruptive element in form, mixing of the heterogeneous and contrast of tones and colors, "emancipated" presence of antithetical terms; cognitively as a conflict between knowledge and actions, and, emotionally, as discrepancy between prescribed and aspired emotions. On the other hand, dissonant times present the salient features: of showing the gap between world time and life time to the extreme of loss of meaning and deinstitutionalization of time; of possible intertwining and overlapping of future-facing past and present; of changing and at different speeds "geologically" multi-layered relations between space of

experience and horizon of expectation; of "presentism" and risk of one-dimensional compression of time with the breakdown of social frameworks of memory and individualistic reification of the past; of paradoxical contemporaneity of the noncontemporary as the co-presence in the same present space of different times and forms of life, open to both utopian or retrograde latencies and different qualitative experiences of the same time; of disconnection and assemblage between the parts as a composite and kaleidoscopic temporal dialectic; of disconnection between spheres of economic, social and generational life and lack of time to unlock the only seemingly hyperdynamic societies of late modernity; as well as, finally, of multiple temporalities and cross-connections across urban spaces. So that dissonance seems – at present – the most appropriate conceptual and figural tool to effectively render the condition of contemporary temporal experience in its real irreconcilabilities and, perhaps more than resonance, also to allow in perspective to hold together its harshness and the possibilities of reopening.

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