Ștefan Borbély

The *Divergent* Series & *The Giver*
A Stroll into the Post-geometric World

ABSTRACT
The paper analyzes comparatively the first installment of the *Divergent* series and *The Giver*, two post-apocalyptic movies from 2014, within the general frame of the post-geometric episteme emerging within post-structuralism and beyond. Both are teenager movies, related to specific rites of initiation into seemingly perfect societies, structured in casts or in so-called factions, and both express a crisis particular to those dystopian, post-apocalyptic worlds which rely on a utopian syntax in order to respond to a historical cataclysm. The paper will also compare them to Orson Scott Card's Ender Saga, but the main dilemma of the demonstration might be summarized as follows: is nature capable of healing the wounds of a post-apocalyptic world, or do you need an anti-human – that is, dystopian – dictatorship in order to survive and go further? Apart from their totalitarian geography, both films talk primarily about human regression, violence and power.

KEYWORDS
*Divergent*; *The Giver*; Utopia; Dystopia; Post-Geometric World; Chaos; Postmodern Anthropology.

ȘTEFAN BORBÉLY
Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
stefanborbely@yahoo.com

It is not my task to convince you that we live in a post-geometric, fluid world. The evidence resides in the very essence of the transition from modernism to postmodernism and beyond. So, instead of words, please allow me to start by showing you a few buildings:
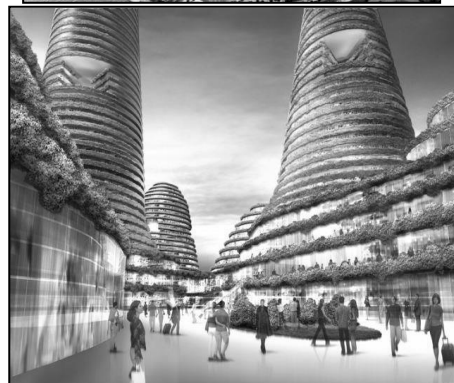
And now, two of Mandelbrot's famous fractals…
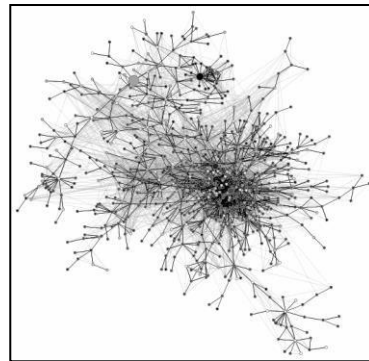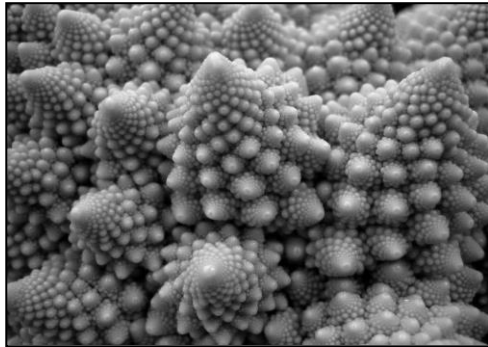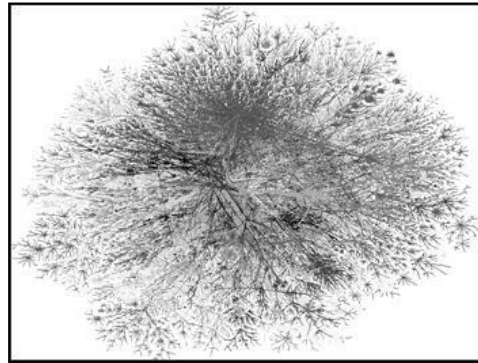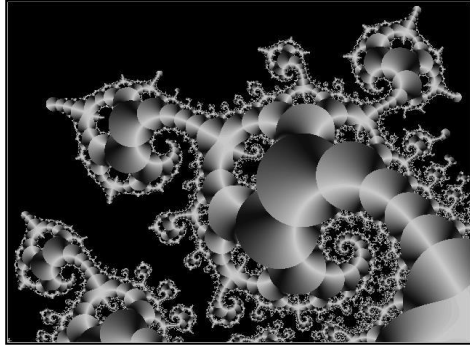
… followed by Edward Lorenz's "butterfly effect":
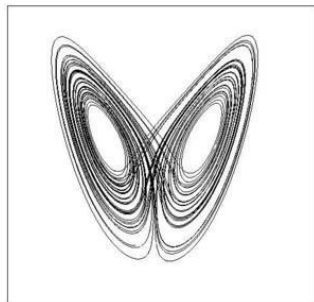
Let us finish with two representations of the virtual world, of the Internet, or of the so-called "global village." There is nothing geometrical here, either:

We have been accustomed to representations of space which suggest order, harmony, an almost hygienic discrepancy between what is organized and what is out of control, erratic, menacing. Order means, in this case, the epiphany of will and of power, whatever their motivations may be: sociological, political or cultural. Geometry is abusive in relation to the spontaneity of existence: it means the ability to express everything in already recognized and measurable patterns and forms, to accept the fact that what is abstract is superior to the fluid surprises of life, nature or the human psyche. On the contrary, the post-geometric world is commonly associated with the energy heralded by Nietzsche and his followers. Energy is, in itself, pre-geometric, anamorphous, unpredictable. Its tool is not

order, but monstrosity. While geometry is calm and relaxing, energy is menacing: it ignores rules, social and political expectations, and it also ignores, in many cases, the will to contain it. That is why energy is associated with liberty and anarchy rather than with discipline and control. Its hero – in most of the cases, an anti-hero – is the "divergent" individual, the trickster, analyzed by Paul Radin and other authors. His style is not predicated on integration, but on delinquency. The word should not be considered solely in relation to the courts of law and tribunals, because a delinquent may also be a person who puts play above and beyond ethics and morals.

Our task here is to analyze movies. We will not restrict our commentaries to them, because our aim is to consider epistemic changes related to space, geography and human commitment. Let us make reference to an example here: Peter Bogdanovich's 1972 movie *What's Up, Doc?*, starring Barbra Streisand in the leading role, as Judy. Compared to the harsh revolts against the "squares" specific to the Counterculture of the 1960s, *What's Up, Doc?* was a rather late echo of the former disruptions, which had already been toned down. Its protagonist is a charismatic female troublemaker, who generates chaos wherever she shows up. Although nice and attractive, her magnetism is not primarily sexual, but derives from her incapacity to obey simple rules, accessible to every individual and community. Interestingly enough, the director of the movie suggests some transpersonal, almost metaphysical deficiency in her case, because she appears to be – wherever she makes an appearance – the anarchic knot of the social tissue: cars collide suddenly, "out of the blue sky," when she crosses the street, and a skilled pizza maker inexplicably loses his ability to throw the dough into the air when she steps in front of his bakery

shop. Later on she makes a professor set fire to his hotel room. Nevertheless, she is attractive and charismatic, helping the same professor to get out of trouble and to gain an extremely valuable academic grant, which will help him to pursue research in a particular field: the extraction of archaic tunes (of… music) from ancient rocks.

Generally, we are accustomed to seeing and valuing only the luminous half of existence, leaving its shadows behind. The Enlightenment's patterns still mold our philosophy of life, teaching us that you have to go for what is rational and logically explainable, by thoroughly avoiding the irrational. As a consequence, Paul Radin says, the trickster emerges from the forgotten, obscure and shadowy half of the universe, in order to remind us that there is nevertheless a roundness, a "totality" in the economy of existence: "Disorder belongs to the totality of life, and the spirit of this disorder is the trickster."[1]

The trickster's substance is liberty, Paul Radin adds, because he is "inimical to all boundaries."[2] In his commentary on Radin's book, entitled *On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure*, inserted in the same volume, C.G. Jung asserts that the trickster comes from an "archetypal" depth prior to any individuation or separation. That is why he is summative or plural, indicating a phase of the universe when beings have not yet acquired their specific or personal identity, floating freely among future "possibilities": "He [the trickster] is a forerunner of the savior, and, like him, God, man and animal at once. He is both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and divine being, whose chief and most alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness."[3]

You remember, probably, Judy's impressive academic career, tenderly ridiculed in *What's Up, Doc?:* being unable to stay in one university until graduating (for instance, she blows up a lab while studying

chemistry), she moves from one academia into another, regardless to subject and discipline. As a consequence, she substitutes academic logic and focused professional identity with the more or less hilarious randomness of the encyclopedia. But she is bright, even brilliant, and has a tremendous memory. The main gag of the film presents her as the only solver of an unethical academic procedure, plagiarism. The detail involved is the only English translation of a controversial musical proposal, formulated at the beginning of the 20th century. Obviously, it is so strange that nobody can remember it.

One of the main social and historical anxieties that led to the Counterculture of the Sixties derived from the fear that a hyper-organized society, based on "inhuman" technology and on bureaucracy, would necessarily "kill" life and spontaneity, by replacing the basic joy of existence with obedience and "conformity." In Peter Bogdanovich's movie, the echo of this idea is associated with a comic treatment of structuralism, which was, at that time, the main epistemic complex of the period. The plot of the movie is built up around four identical travel suitcases having, of course, different contents: a bunch of highly secret documents chased by the FBI, a collection of jewelry owned by an extremely wealthy lady, the male protagonist's "musical rocks" and, finally, Judy's underwear. We should remember Ferdinand de Saussure's structural semantic, with the classical division between "signifié" and "significant," in order to understand this. Four separate "semantics" are messed up in a comic "syntax" by Judy's unpredictable and disaster-causing behavior, in order to suggest that you need a trickster to cure God's depressive drive to separate everything, to differentiate.

Peter Bogdanovich smilingly reaches here out to one of the main ideologies of the Sixties, which says that the solid, well-organized world we have been taught to admire is, in fact, the inverted form of an otherwise joyous and happy "totality."

Needless to say that there are two contrastive forms of womanhood in the movie, because the director builds a fabulous, anti-feminine counterpart of Judy's, Eunice (the name comes of course from the "eunuchs" of the ancient worlds), whose character is cheerfully derived from Philip Wylie's castrating "mom" from his seminal *Generation of Vipers* (1942), being already found in the iconic movie *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), which featured James Dean in the leading role. Striking scenes from the film show the protagonist's father being weak, helpless, clumsily wearing a kitchen apron, as opposed to the female counterparts of the family – his wife and his mother-in-law – who are menacing and dominating.

The epistemic substance of utopianism is geometry and order. Clean, rational architecture, rational life planning, easy, comfortable uniforms, carefully designed children and, by all means, similarity. Therefore, the field of utopia is life, not death, because you can't predict or plan it. Dead people simply vanish in utopian texts, discretely disappearing from the geometry of the world, without disturbing it or menacing the solidity of its joints. By contrast, dystopia is about extinction and dying. In postmodern dystopias, corpses and rubble lie everywhere, and light is generally distorted towards some sort of dark apocalypse deprived of revelation, because – as Žižek has said – we like to live, in our postmodern era, "end times": the "end of ideology" heralded by Daniel Bell, Fukuyama's "end of history" and so on. The main distinction here – Žižek argues – is between "living" and "surviving." When we live, we imagine plans for future, and we disseminate ideologies of progress, which are the deep imprints of our trust that life means, above all, a project to be realized and improved. On the contrary,

survival presupposes several cautious regressions, the most striking of them being the regression from "humans" to "species": "With the idea of humans as a species, the universality of humankind falls back into the particularity of an animal species."[4] Watch, in order to understand, the subhuman choreography of many dystopian proposals. People live in "dens" or ruins; the dominant color is black; the great majority of the scenes, in the films, are shot in obscure, dark places; beings crawl, violence is the general syntax of survival.

Two more introductory remarks before stepping further with our inquiries and demonstrations. If we look at the plot of a classical utopia – take Thomas Morus's seminal story or Bulwer-Lytton's *Vril* – we may easily recognize that in spite of all similarities there is nevertheless a redundant trickster in their texture: the narrator itself, that is, Raphael Hythloday and his avatars, who travel to the distant world and then come back, refusing any temptation to become a utopian immigrant and to keep living in a better world than ours. The utopian trickster does not belong to the universe he visits: he remains an outsider. In the postmodern world, derived partially from the Counterculture of the Sixties, the trickster is, on the contrary, a dropout. He used to belong to the world he lives in, but he is now rejected by it, or repudiated. Structurally, he is similar to trash, and that is why many postmodern dystopias are built in the vicinity of the so-called "trash culture" or dejection. Nowadays apocalypse means an end whose remnants were not cleaned up by anyone. They are over there, all over the place, in the streets, in the houses, in or in front of the office buildings. Postmodern dystopia presents a dusty landscape missing the broom: no one came to clean the stuff or to shovel out the filth.

The second introductory remark is about the post-human beings of postmodern

dystopian proposals, that is, about cyborgs (but not restricted to them). Let us go back to what C.G. Jung said about the trickster: precisely, that he comes from a distant, immemorial, "shadowy" past, where beings were not yet differentiated. In other words, these beings were plural: polymorphous beings, whose chances to evolve were also plural. Necessarily, he says that when they started to evolve, they did not select one specific identity as opposed to all the others, but privileged a certain "shape" while keeping the others at hand, in some sort of shadowy "reserve." The cyborg represents a reenactment of this plurality. In Donna Haraway's words: "By the late twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology."[5]

Both 2014 movies, *The Giver* and *Divergent,* start from the assumption that a post-apocalyptic society must be carefully planned, geometrized in order to be perfect. The ideology of counter-nature prevails in these films, because – the planners, the organizers of the new societies used to say – nature failed to secure humanity, leading to catastrophe. In *The Giver* (2014), a film based on Lois Lowry's 1993 book, a huge calamity, called "the Ruin" had left behind a supposedly disoriented society, whose wounds are healed by the engineering of a perfect humanity, devoid of any pain, suffering or negativity. Artificial values take the place of the natural ones. Words that have no more application – like "love," for instance, or even "family," replaced by "unit" – are used in a distorted way, as it also happens to "death," the word itself being replaced by the phrase "release to elsewhere." People continue to live together in separately designated compounds, but they are "units," no families, whose main purpose is not to provide warmth, but to functionally raise the future generations of perfectly integrated beings.

Interestingly enough, men are more flexible in *The Giver* than women are, whilst in the *Divergent* empowered women control and restrict everything. It is so because nature is endowed with opposite values in the two movies. While in *Divergent* (and its continuation so far, *Insurgent,* aired in 2015[6]) nature is indifferent to the plot, set up in a post-apocalyptic Chicago partially transformed into ruins, in *The Giver* nature appears as being only repressed. *The Giver's* protagonist, Jonas, assigned at 16 to be the new "Receiver of the Memory," learns the repressed natural values from his tutor, The Giver, played by Jeff Bridges (colors, senses, tenderness, love etc.), and finishes by escaping to nature, where the rest of the human race still continue to exist (and celebrate Christmas), contrary to what the people of the perfect civilization were taught: that the whole civilization had been swept away by "The Ruin," leaving no other survivors but them. A further development is captured in *Insurgent*, the second part of the *Divergent* series, when the escaped protagonists learn that the encircled town they used to live in is nothing more than a surviving "experiment" set up by the people living "outside the fences."

An otherwise obscure word, *blood*, present in both films, also indicates this difference. The slogan of the faction system from *Divergent*, which controls the independent will of the members, is "Faction before blood," which also means that blood is undervalued within the faction of the "Dauntless" that the protagonist, Tris, opts for, through the ritualized "choosing ceremony," at the age of 16. Following a serum induced aptitude test, which Beatrice – the later Tris – fails, the choosing ceremony is the ritual through which each young "dependent" is assigned to one of the five functional factions of the society (Erudite, Amity, Candor, Dauntless, Abnegation), becoming a full-fledged member of the perfect civilization. The ceremony requires a self-inflicted wound: slashing one's hand by oneself and spilling the blood into one of the five urns adorned with the symbols of the five casts. Anthropologically, this means consubstantiation by giving one's blood away, by estranging it. Put differently, it is a ritual through which one becomes estranged from one's own blood. Later on Tris is caught in a series of violent initiation and training rites which secure her position within the faction, showing courage before the Dauntless meaning that you become indifferent to your pain and to your wounds. A central symbol of the movie, the mirror, is meant to suggest this estrangement. Rules say that within Abnegation – Beatrice's nurturing faction – mirrors are forbidden. When she prepares to take the serum induced test, she has the vision of a mirror, reflecting menacing and snarling dogs that are ready to bite children.

On the contrary, in *The Giver* blood has been carefully repressed by the engineers of the society. One of the roles played by the Receiver of the Memory is to keep societal memory active, to avoid its repression. A further ambivalence is added to this idea: everybody is obliged by "the Rules" to receive a morning injection, whose role is to kill pain and any other negativity, allowing people to function as perfect pieces of the artificially constructed system. The necessity of this injection suggests that by going to sleep, people can regress, each night, to a "natural stage," which will be "released" in the morning, when they receive the shot. A hidden Christian structure – consecration by rising from the death – lies underneath the story of *The Giver*, adding a few religious connotations to the otherwise faith-free plot, related to which we must also note that the young Receiver's real name is Jonas, while The Giver's daughter comes back to his memories as an already "enlightened Mary" (Rosemary).

A somehow paradoxical dimension, present in both films, should be further discussed, placing it in the wider relation that links utopia to dystopia. Both universes are post-apocalyptical, ruined. And both societies apply to specifically utopian tools and procedures to recover. Their injection is artifice: they plan *against* nature, organizing themselves differently than nature would have done by compressing time and evolution, controlling emotions and failures, and eliminating them from common life and usage. *Divergent* and *The Giver* are post-apocalyptic syntaxes which suggest that what comes after dystopia is necessarily utopian.

Utopia is about four things: sameness, frozen time, a remote, sometimes exotic geography and enlightened humans living in some sort of desired, super-civilization. If it is so, can we imagine that utopians can live within Marshall McLuhan's "global village"? Do we have around exotic, secret spaces and societies hidden from our civilization, or do we live in an omniscient world, where satellites, computers and telescopes earnestly dwell in our subconscious, dismantling every "paradise" we dare to imagine, and any form of an escapist geography we may attempt to propose?

If a utopian society were meant to be perfect, its main purpose would be to carefully eradicate any menace to the system. *Divergent* and *The Giver* provide us, on the contrary, a rather different perspective, by suggesting that imperfection is actually – and paradoxically – the ultimate goal of the system. In *Divergent*, Beatrice (Tris) fails the serum induced aptitude test because, unlike her peers, she is a "divergent," which means that she does not fit in any of the five assignment patterns (Erudite, Amity, Candor, Dauntless, Abnegation) prescribed by the system. In *The Giver*, the function of the "Receiver of the Memory" is, in itself, a

menace to the system. Why do they need it, since it is obvious that it undermines the system, revealing its secrets and manipulative oddities? Nevertheless, the new human race continues to assign the job, although the experience has shown that the last two candidacies proved to be failures. Beyond the oddities of both stories, a structural question persists: is a utopian society capable of pushing its perfection to the ultimate limits, or does it need a "flow," some sort of imperfection in order to remind us that utopia is about aspiration, about going towards an ideal and not about reaching it or about enjoying it entirely? You should to what I have already said, namely that a utopian proposal needs an outsider or a trickster to reveal it to the world. In most of the cases, he is the narrator himself: the visitor, the person who comes and goes, refusing to stay within perfection. Why is it so? Is he not content with it, or some sort of seer?

The question is not only rhetorical. From Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* to Orson Scott Card's *Ender Cycle,* the dilemma of utopias has been how *to escape* utopia, and not how to live within it, herein and hereafter. You might say that this has always been the problem, down to Bulwer-Lytton's *Vril*, because – as I have already said – the narrators of utopias are visitors. They go to and come back from the promised or accidentally discovered land: be it perfection, be it paradise, no one wants to settle there, to enjoy it roundness until the end of his life. Thus, it becomes our duty to ask which exactly are the limits utopia can stretch out to? Is it perfection? Or is it a thoroughly engineered imperfection?

You might have guessed, I think, the main orientations of my interrogations so far. I do believe that classical utopia is extinct now, in spite of many weak, stereotyped aftershocks. Nobody killed utopia, you should not be looking for the culprit: it has been simply stepped over by the

epistemic changes of the 20th century, related to the way we now conceive time (as *zation*, between a "mono-duration) and the world (as a vivid collec-morphous" and a "polymor-tion of "differences"). Utopia has been the direct continuation of Platonic and Pythagorean ideas flown into the modern world. Both intellectuals and common people enjoyed it, because it dissolved their anxieties into the realm of harmony, equalitarian common sense and transparent, rational, solar happiness. Imagination associated utopia with a perfect social geometry: the same houses, the same needs, similar clothes, wishes, and carefully engineered children. Harmony evoked geometry and mathematics, as the epitomes of careful planning and intelligence. It necessarily follows that the dawn of classical geometry understood as unquestionable perfection also brought about the collapse of utopia. Happily enough, dystopia was already there to absorb the shock. So the diagnosis might be neat: in a post-geometric world, utopia has become a relic.

The hypothesis that an over-organized system is by itself dysfunctional, and that it necessarily finishes in anorexia was one of the major topics of the Counterculture of the 1960s. In the *Generation of Vipers* (1942), Philip Wylie accused British and American democracies of being "frozen," "conservative ("Some nations froze their societies into absolutist schemes of life…"), which proved to be untrue for dynamic, "fluid" societies: "Only a fluid and realistic society is evolving." A certain state reaches the dead end of the so-called frozen society because of its will to function as a hyper-organized mechanism. In *Growing up Absurd* (1960), Paul Goodman says that each society tends to crystallize into one of two "organized systems": the repressive society, controlled by the state, and the natural society, in which "the free, natural power is the only source of existence."

Referring to Freud, Herbert Marcuse draws a distinction, in the 1966 *Political Preface* of *Eros and Civilization*, phous" understanding of personal and social sexuality, suggesting that the former is frozen, while the latter is entirely functional. In his seminal *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), Marcuse had already said that through "technological rationality," the "repressive society" expands its irrational will to control people in a purely rational way, depriving its members of essential human drives such as imagination, fantasizing, critical participation or even protest. Technological rationality – he asserted – is derived from formal logic, whose outcome will fix the individual into the mystifying cage of a perfect, social and political prison. He will scarcely protest because the entire process will appear to him as perfectly understandable and rational.

That is why the heralds of the "fluid" societies insist on understanding reality as differentiation and dissemination, as a lax tissue of freely floating, non-structured and non-hierarchical entities. In his much read *Star Maker* (1937), which was praised by Borges too, Olaf Stapledon defined the cosmic body as a "collective mind" formed by a network of loose individuals interconnected through telepathy, which is echoed in Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* (1985), whose alien, insect enemies, called the "buggers" (later on: the Formics), exist and fight as an infra-organism activated not by a centralized source of power, but by a free-floating mind game called collective consciousness. In 1998, dealing with the newly emerged fantasy literature, Rosemary Jackson (*Fantasy. The Literature of Subversion*) defined her topic as a fluid reality, made up of free-floating texts, symbols and mythological or religious contents, which is not bound by any unity of space, time or character. Let us take a glimpse at how Nicholas Negroponte imagined the Internet (see Fred Turner's *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*,

2006): as an open system which will "flatten organizations, globalize society, decentralize control, and help harmonize people."

The fear that any system tends to over-crystallize and therefore freeze was much discussed by structuralism. But times have already changed, and the new episteme favors fluidity and dissemination as opposed to structure. Allow me to remind you a few representations of fluidity and recaptured nature, before discussing several causes of these epistemic transformations. My point is that utopia was too formalist to adapt to these changes. The paradox is this: for many centuries, utopia and utopianism proved to be a hard response to different, more or less disturbing challenges. It was so because of its creators' brilliant intelligence and perfectly polished minds. As Ernst Bloch said, utopia is about world construction by intelligence, and not about the alleged nostalgia to recuperate a long forgotten "paradise." The creators of utopias were highly intelligent mythmakers, who challenged the scarcity and decadence of their society by acting like Creators of better, superior worlds. Oddly enough, they were so mesmerized by their creations that they didn't realize that a society cannot survive when it reaches perfection.

Perfection is a goal, not the substance of life. Dystopia came as a help when utopia was eroded by its perfection. Utopia is about timeless perfection, dystopia is about history and – more or less – politics. The paradox is that utopia, as a cultural discourse of self-polishing and social building, was unable to counterbalance politics. The creators of utopia assumed – the heritage came down from Thomas Morus, and was highly praised throughout the 18th century – that there is an inner, godly mechanism in men, which drives them towards excellence and perfection. Geometry, arithmetic, logic

and utopia have been the experimental tools of this assumption. Nietzsche was again right by saying: "As a matter of fact, logic (like geometry and arithmetic) only holds good of *assumed existences*, which we have created."

Creating utopias used to be a purifying artistry. So it lasted until art was perceived as some sort of religion. Walter Benjamin said that art used to have a "utopian aura" in past times, for people clinch to art because it replaces their aspiration towards timelessness and perfection. But the same Walter Benjamin considered that the serial, technical reproduction of art harmed art's utopian brilliance, by turning it into a humble "product."

There are thinkers who do believe that utopia became extinct because communism grotesquely "confiscated" it. I have no relevant answers to such a naive assumption. Instead, we will take a look at Benoit Mandelbrot's fractals, or at Edward Lorenz's *Chaos Theory* – illustrated by a movie in 2008, directed by Marcos Siega, whose presentation on IMDB runs like this: "the story of an obsessively organized efficiency expert, whose life unravels in unexpected ways when fate forces him to explore the serendipitous nature of love and forgiveness." By exploring several postmodern irregularities, differences and disseminations, by deepening happily into Derrida's and Vattimo' writings (not to forget Umberto Eco's cryptographic "tissue"), we will reach the irregular, ever-progressing net of the WWW, as conceived by Sir Tim Berners-Lee. Victor Turner's liminality theory will also help, by contrasting "societas" to "communitas," which will bring us to the countercultural communities of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as to ecology and nature.

All these postmodern icons – chaos theory, liminality, free-floating texts, monstrosity, Fredric Jameson's association of schizophrenia with capitalism etc. – indicate

a post-geometric perception of the world and culture. The landscape from *Divergent* is post-geometrical, ruined, as the plot is set in a post-apocalyptic, partially abandoned Chicago, where nobody is interested in mending or reconstructing, as if one of the basic imprints of existence – the drive to complete, to finish something – had been definitely lost. Remember, even though it may not be the most appropriate comparison, Daniel Defoe's famous *Robinson Crusoe.* Immediately after getting shipwrecked on a deserted island, Robinson starts to organize it: he builds a shelter, then a house, starts farming, integrates Friday, and so on. As compared to him, the post-apocalyptic society from *Divergent* simply takes over the ruins, not touching the rubble, not mending or fixing anything. The people simply internalize the destruction and what it left behind. In order to reach the headquarters of the Dauntless, the initiated are obliged to jump into a scary concrete hole left over by some – we may only guess – bombardment.

The landscape in *The Giver* is utterly different, clean, carefully designed and impersonal. The colorless, grey park replaces nature around here, together with its scents and odors. No bees, no sparrows or gekkos: only humans. The desired uniformity attained by eradicating any difference induced by colors and by reducing them to grey is really striking. Nevertheless, there is a subtle clue when the director (Philip Noyce) shows us, from high above, the general contour of the city, and when we discover that it is, actually, a butterfly-shaped world. A hidden link draws us to Benoit Mandelbrot's fractals and, even closer, to Edward Lorenz's butterfly effect and chaos theory. Apparently apart from them, the butterfly shape from *The Giver* illustrates the perfect organizing contour of a perfect social and political system. But by recalling Mandelbrot and Edward Lorenz, it suggests that there is a dormant, intrinsic turmoil inside the system, linking the idea to the main message of the film, that the seemingly perfect society will be really "complete" only when what is not predictable, what is accidental, that is, "natural," will come back to the system.

Let us go back to Paul Radin's and C.G. Jung's understanding of the trickster as the depository of excess, of multiplicity. Both *Divergent* and *The Giver* echo this structure. In the first movie, Tris fails the serum induced test, whose result is considered "inconclusive, extremely rare," not because she is unfit to take up any assignment, but because she possesses too many qualities at the same time, being simultaneously Erudite, Dauntless and Abnegation. Therefore, she is a rare "Divergent," and therefore "dangerous" to the alleged equilibrium of the system. In *The Giver*, the young Jonas (number 52, as impersonally designated) is initially skipped by the assignment committee, and later on designated to be the next Receiver of the Memory because, unlike his simple peers, he combines four qualities: intelligence, integrity, courage and the capacity "to see beyond." Both protagonists share with the trickster the ability to be plural and to act at the same time as multiple, polymorphous identities. Needless to say, they do not go with the existing rules and orders, but against them.

Notes

[1] Paul Radin. *The Trickster. A Study in American Indian Mythology.* With commentaries by Karl Kerényi and C.G. Jung. Philosophical Library New York, 1956, p. 184.

[2] Ibid., p. 187.
[3] Ibid., p. 202.
[4] Slavoj Žižek. *Living in the End Times*. London & New York: Verso, p. 332
[5] *A Cyborg-Manifesto. Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century*. In: *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge, New York, 1991, pp. 149-181.
[6] The forthcoming parts of the series are: *Allegiant* (2016) and *Ascendant* (2017).