Linear and multiple Horizons,
Landscapes of social complexity.

A continuous horizon, no alterations in height, just a straight line and what emerges from the ground is either trees or cityscapes. The only scars on the soil are the canals; also linear most of the times they constitute a huge drainage network that reflects the constant and amazingly fast alterations of the lively sky. The landscape itself is also lively, has also been subjected to tremendous changes and is still altering in such a way that becomes the archive of its own history. It is not a mere a container of history. No matter how much formable or deformable a container can be it is always detached from what it carries but here landscape and history are one, embedded to each other, the one exists as the result of the other and they are not preconditions to built upon them, they are built conditions that participate actively and formatively. What is the dominant as a formative condition is the artificial flatness with its great benefits for the functionality, efficiency, production and the exploitability of usable ground by maximizing the land area.

But what Holland has is what it lacks. Multiple horizons, curves of the ground smooth or dramatic forming hills and mountains are absolutely absent from both the Dutch landscape and the Dutch city. What is there instead is a flatness that defines equality but also kills spatial multiplicity.

This multiplicity the Dutch landscape lacks is to be found elsewhere; in the society itself which is a real mosaic of different identities and forms a social field of extremely complex and interesting interrelations connecting people that are different in any sense one could imagine, concerning, job, income, origin, ethnicity, language, political ideology, religion, sexual orientation etc. This social-scape though is not having an impact on the ground and is not a result of the ground itself, it is detached. Social grouping and exclusions, high concentrations of specific social characteristic and activities and low ones take place on two axes, on a surface where height and depth are absent. Instead of them, water dominates as the main factor of a landscape complexity and in the same time as the paragon fort the spatial articulation of different social characteristics.

But still an anomalous ground and a more complex topography have many important characteristics that it is difficult to substitute. They have certain ways of interacting with the society and activate social mechanisms only with the use of different viewpoints and altering visibilities.

A panoptic supervision as it is imposed by a viewpoint high over a city is often connected with the idea of centrality and the spatial accumulation of power. In his "Herostratus", Jean Paul Sartre describes the feeling of superiority someone has while looking other people from above, from a high viewpoint. It is this ability of height to signify power that explains why palaces and castles were so often built on spots like that. But apart from concentrating and signifying the power such places have always been privileged for the development of cities. Ideal for defense against intrusions and in the same time able to function as places of gathering, as places for anticipating the surrounding landscape and for cultivating the idea of the city as polis, as a social formation, while the urban fabric was developing around them both literally and metaphorically. They were called Acropolis.

On the other hand, apart from height, there in a landscape there is also depth. The cavity of the ground was always to function as place for someone to be hidden, imposing a feeling of protection, becoming a shelter or a haven which when it was extending underground was resembling Kafka's "Der Bau" adding a new layer to the city, contributing to its complexity and multiplicity.

The *high* and the *low* are so strongly connected with the *exposed* and the *hidden*, the *public* and the *private*. Terms that are carriers of binary oppositions that are binding them together and often inscribe them in space, making the city a result of their continuous interrelation forming multiple horizons and several layers of experiencing it.

Of course such a kind of complexity is a result of the natural preconditions. It cannot be planned or designed; it's not a result of any kind of technical, technological or artificial approach towards the design process or the design product but rather the outcome of the combination of the topography of the ground and the intuition of people that built on it. It is the result of dynamic autopoetic processes that take place on the landscapes themselves, not on blank papers. The author is not one or two, is not even a system o authors since the idea of authorship is connected to the concept of authority and a city, or to be more precise a polis, should not be about authority or control but rather about losing control and sharing authority. It's not about a designer looking the 2D plan from above as a superior creator who is detached from it. It is rather about experiencing the 3D landscape and cityscape as social fields, from their inside participating actively to the dynamic production of them.

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