

## **Après le déluge. A pluri-scientific and artistic approach to the Greek crisis**

Franz Schultheis and Nikos Panayotopoulos

Workshop Documenta 2017, Athenes

14 May 2015

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Aussitôt que l'idée du Déluge se fut  
rassise,  
Un lièvre s'arrêta dans les sainfoins et les  
clochettes mouvantes et dit sa prière à  
l'arc-en-ciel à travers la toile de  
l'araignée.  
Oh ! les pierres précieuses qui se  
cachaient, – les fleurs qui regardaient  
déjà.  
Dans la grande rue sale les étals se  
dressèrent, et l'on tira les barques vers la  
mer étagée là-haut comme sur les  
gravures.  
Le sang coula, chez Barbe-Bleue, – aux  
abattoirs, – dans les cirques, où le sceau  
de Dieu blêmit les fenêtres. Le sang et le  
lait coulèrent.  
Les castors bâtirent. Les "mazagrans"  
fumèrent dans les estaminets.  
Dans la grande maison de vitres encore  
ruisselante les enfants en deuil  
regardèrent les merveilleuses images.  
Une porte claqua, et sur la place du  
hameau, l'enfant tourna ses bras,  
compris des girouettes et des coqs des  
clochers de partout, sous l'éclatante  
giboulée.  
Madame\*\*\* établit un piano dans les  
Alpes. La messe et les premières  
communions se célébrèrent aux cent  
mille autels de la cathédrale.  
Les caravanes partirent. Et le Splendide-  
Hôtel fut bâti dans le chaos de glaces et  
de nuit du pôle.  
Depuis lors, la Lune entendit les chacals  
piaulant par les déserts de thym, – et  
les églogues en sabots grognant dans le  
verger. Puis, dans la futaie violette,  
bourgeonnante, Eucharis me dit que  
c'était le printemps.  
– Sourds, étang, – Écume, roulez sur le  
pont, et par dessus les bois; – draps noirs  
et orgues, – éclairs et  
tonnerres – montez et roulez; – Eaux et  
tristesses, montez et relevez les Déluges.  
Car depuis qu'ils se sont dissipés, – oh les  
pierres précieuses s'enfouissant, et les  
fleurs ouvertes ! – c'est un ennui ! et la  
Reine, la Sorcière qui allume sa braise  
dans le pot de terre, ne voudra jamais  
nous raconter ce qu'elle sait, et que nous  
ignorons.

Arthur Rimbaud, *Après le déluge* (Les  
Illuminations, 1872-1875)

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Rimbaud's poem *Après le déluge* from the cycle *Illuminations* creates space for a variety of approaches to and engagement with the burning social questions: "What kind of a world are we living in?", "What kind of a world do we want to live in?" and "How can we get there?" Against the background of the massacre of the Communards by the French army with the support of the German troops Rimbaud, in spite of all the destroyed Utopian projects and lost political illusions, calls in his poem for resistance and, with a variety of metaphors and subtle word-play, he diagnoses and interprets the social tragedy of this age and its material and moral misery. The timeless parable encourages us to approach the dramatic crises of our contemporary society in free variations on its great themes, interpretations and prophecies as an object of study to be undertaken together by artists of different genres, social and cultural scientists of various disciplines, committed intellectuals and inspired people of widely differing political orientation.

The project is to be understood as a practical implementation of a public sociology, of a form of sociological commitment to the social hot spots and crises beyond the sterile self-referentiality of academic circles, with the goal of bringing critical social diagnosis based on empirical research to the attention of a wider interested public.

Thanks to its openness and often seemingly enigmatic allusions the horizon unfolded by Rimbaud offers sufficient scope for a broadly based orchestra with the most varied instruments, accompanied by a polyphonic choir, to take up these contemporary questions at a very symbolic place – Athens – and to approach the contemporary social issues and questions in the highly focused, condensed and intensive form presented by the Greek context, applying the various artistic and scientific methods autonomously and nonetheless taking advantage of interdisciplinary knowledge by means of cross-reference and mutual reinforcement.

How can we talk about society? This question was brought up and tested again and again by a doyen of sociology, Howard Becker. Colleagues such as Pierre Bourdieu made use of photography or theatrical realizations of their research, for example in the form of staged interviews, in order to open up the austere

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As soon as the idea of the Flood was finished, a hare halted in the clover and the trembling flower bells, and said its prayer to the rainbow through the spider's web.

Oh! The precious stones that hid, – the flowers that gazed around them.

In the soiled main street stalls were set, they hauled the boats down to the sea rising in layers as in the old prints.

Blood flowed, at Blue-beard's house – in the abattoirs in the circuses where God's promise whitened the windows. Blood and milk flowed.

The beavers built. The coffee cups steamed in the bars. In the big greenhouse that was still streaming, the children in mourning looked at the marvellous pictures.

A door banged, and, on the village-green, the child waved his arms, understood by the cocks and weathervanes of bell-towers everywhere, under the bursting shower.

Madame \*\*\* installed a piano in the Alps. The Mass and first communions were celebrated at the hundred thousand altars of the cathedral.

Caravans departed. And the Hotel Splendide was built in the chaos of ice and polar night.

Since then, the Moon's heard jackals howling among the deserts of thyme – and pastoral poems in wooden shoes grumbling in the orchard. Then, in the burgeoning violet forest, Eucharis told me it was spring.

Rise, pond: – Foam, roll over the bridge and under the trees: – black drapes and organs – thunder and lightning rise and roll: – Waters and sadness rise and raise the Floods again.

Because since they abated – oh, the precious stones burying themselves and the opened flowers! – It's wearisome! And the Queen, the Sorceress who lights her fire in the pot of earth, will never tell us what she knows, and what we are ignorant of.

Arthur Rimbaud, *After the flood*  
(Illuminations, 1872-1875)

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unilinearity of their discourse for a visual social science and to find a public for their message beyond the narrow circle of experts in the "ivory tower" of academia. Our Greek-German research team takes up this tradition and wishes to systematize it and to broaden its basis for presentation on the occasion of a truly ideal-typical cultural event – the Documenta 2017. We will bring our findings from various research projects on the current social crisis in Greece into the shared space of public debate and, in intercommunion with artists of various genres, try out in a practical context new ways and means of mediating the issues to the international public attending the event.

In order to preempt the suspicion that strategies are being used by the initiators from the field of sociology to instrumentalize and take in the artists invited to participate we take Rimbaud's legacy as a door-opener from the literary field, whose aura and reception by the most varied arts makes it, as a go-between and intellectual catalyser, an ideal means of gaining consensus. Metaphorically speaking his poem should, like a billiard ball, initiate a wide variety of dynamic effects, configurations and unpredictable "outcomes".

To this end we need space in a twofold sense of the word: physically in the sense of a locality for production and presentation – factory, stage, showroom, screen, auditorium etc. – but also symbolically in the form of legitimate participation in the events planned for 2017. As far as the location of such a project is concerned, we are negotiating with a possible sponsor who could make suitable space available to us. Alternatives are welcome and will be investigated. As far as the symbolic location is concerned, the intercommunication with the artistic director of the Documenta is the very first step pointing the way ahead.